Grief, Emotional Communities and Anglo-French Rivalry in Late-Medieval English and French Literature

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Summary

This thesis provides the first extended study of the representation of grief in late-medieval English and French literature. It examines a range of medieval emotional communities in which grief is expressed in a specific way, through shared emotional vocabularies and distinct emotional regimes. Written in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the range of texts included in this study combine the themes of grief and community to respond to the cultural rivalry and military conflict between England and France.

In the first chapter I examine the anonymous fourteenth-century dream-vision, *Pearl*. I demonstrate how the narrator and Pearl-Maiden form an emotional community of the family. With the loss of the pearl, parental loss and longing are placed in dialogue with the desire of French marguerite poetry to examine the limits of human emotion in the heavenly space.

Chapter two concentrates on Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, in which the narrator addresses the grief of a member of the noble, courtly community. Chaucer's text examines how French literary tradition generates emotions in members of different emotional communities, some are authentically expressed, and others artificially performed. Ultimately, the narrator's misunderstanding of the knight's grief allows the nobleman to move from a state of isolated grief to a return to his emotional community.

Chapter three focuses on two texts written after the battle of Agincourt: Charles d'Orleans' English *Fortunes Stabilnes* and Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*. This chapter argues that grief plays an essential role in the formation of new emotional communities within the noble, courtly class; in Charles' text a community with his English captors and in Christine's text a female community of grieving noblewomen.

Chapter four concentrates on the first two texts in Thomas Hoccleve's *Series*, the 'Compleinte' and 'Dialogue'. In this chapter I argue that these texts script Hoccleve's

grief over the loss of his emotional community of fellow clerks and bureaucrats. Written in a period of Lancastrian dominance in France, Hoccleve also explores the roles of masculine communities in the maintenance of English power at home and abroad.

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Introduction
Loss, Grief and Anglo-French Communities in Late-Medieval Literature

On 7th June 1394, Anne of Bohemia, queen of England and first wife of Richard II, died suddenly at the age of twenty-seven. Her funeral – which took place nearly two months after her death on the feast of her name saint, St Anne – was a moment of emotional and social cohesion in England, an occasion to honour her good character, her devotion to God and her skill in settling disputes. The queen's exemplary qualities were commemorated in poetic form in a series of verse eulogies written for the occasion of her funeral, including the poem titled 'Femina famosa':

> Here lies a renowned lady, a noble woman.
>
> Her brother reigned as an Emperor, and also her father.
>
> Anna she was called, whom the people rightly adore:
>
> For she harmed no one and pleased many.
>
> Pure, she was married to the pure Richard II.
>
> She kept the faith, and so was considered faithful.
>
> She was also queen of two realms:
>
> England bears witness, France is granted [to her] by right.
>
> She gave nourishment to the sick, going to them on foot, however far off;
>
> What she concealed from the king, she extended to the poor.
>
> She wished to visit the ill, those enduring childbirth,
>
> And [she did so] poorly dressed: often she went about this way.
>
> She wanted the Mass of the Holy Spirit to be said for her;
>
> In putting faith in this mass, she carried forth the faith.
>
> The Holy Spirit inspired her, loved her.
>
> As is proven by her apt rest, good death, worthy day:
>
> On Pentecost the queen withdrew from the enemy,

Whom she deserved to conquer because she forsook him.

You who pass by, please comfort her soul

So that, though overcome by death, she may thus be made whole by prayer.[1]

'Femina famosa' reveals the ways in which Anne of Bohemia was remembered after her death and how public memorialisation was used to advance specific political and cultural agendas. The poem first remarks upon Anne's noble lineage and status as the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV. Having arrived in England in 1382 to marry Richard II, the eulogy commemorates that this daughter of imperial Bohemia became queen of two realms, reigning over both England *and* France, which was 'granted [to her] by right' (l. 8). By emphasising Anne's equal claim to the queenship of both kingdoms, the text reflects the close dynastic ties and interwoven histories which underpinned the relationship between England and France in the fourteenth century. England had, after all, been an integral part of France until the previous century and when English kings later renounced their claims to Normandy and Anjou, the loss of French territory did not make them any less 'French'.[2] Medieval kings did not see their identity as being distinct from France, which they believed was granted to them by right.[3] The Hundred Years War –

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[1] Michael Van Dussen, 'Three Verse Eulogies of Anne of Bohemia', *Medium Ævum*, 78 (2009), 231-260 (p. 252). Van Dussen argues that this collection of Latin verse eulogies served a specific public purpose; placed on display at Westminster Abbey – the location of Queen Anne's funeral – the poems were available for anyone who knew Latin to read and record.

[2] John H. Fisher describes the complex history of the Anglo-French connection: 'From 1066 to 1217, England was the property of the dukes of Normandy, who were in turn subjects of the kings of France. The French connection was so strong that when Pope Innocent invested Duke Jean, whom we call King John, of his lordship, he ordered the French king to carry out the sentence; and when the barons fell out with John over the implementation of the Magna Carta, they offered the English crown to King Louis of France, who came over to England to take possession. England ceased to be a province of France when William Marshall defeated King Louis in the Battle of Lincoln in 1217' in Fisher, 'A Language Policy for Lancastrian England', *PMLA*, 107 (1992), 1168-1180 (p. 1168).

[3] Ardis Butterfield argues that we should see the assertion of the right to the French throne by successive English kings as 'more like a family conflict, a means of seizing back control from a rival sibling. The enlarged family structure here sees England not as an independent state so much as a constituent and parallel area of aristocratic life' in Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 20. For more on the intertwined, familial relations between the English and French ruling powers, see Deanne Williams, *The French Fetish from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), especially 'Introduction' (pp. 1-18) and chapter 2 (pp. 18-77).

during which time Anne was queen of England – was a conflict driven by the Anglo-French relationship of antagonism and affinity, as successive English kings asserted, and attempted to implement, their claims to the sovereignty of France.

By commemorating Anne's dual queenship, the eulogy also signals how the courtly culture of the English aristocracy was shaped by England's relationship with France. French had long been the central language of the English royal court; English kings largely spoke French and invariably married French speaking wives throughout the medieval period.[4] Anne of Bohemia, for instance, had very little English and instead spoke French whilst in England.[5] Throughout the Middle Ages, French in England was the language of authority; used for royal and parliamentary record, diplomacy, aristocratic correspondence and devotional treatises. It was also the language of high literary culture in England, as evidenced by the number of romances and fabliaux written in Anglo-Norman.[6] It is true that by the end of the fourteenth century English was on the rise as a literary language, however, the vernacular 'greats' of this period – Chaucer, the *Pearl*-poet, Langland, and Gower, amongst others – continued to engage with the pervasive presence of French in English culture by writing texts in French and using French as another language of England. French, in other words, was an 'English' language. Furthermore, owing in part to the presence of figures from the Continent within the English court and the active contact between English nobles and the French court, French

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[4] Butterfield argues that in order 'to think through the nature of the Anglo-French relationship' and fully comprehend its significance, 'we need to take account of this vital fact, that the two cultures shared a language for four centuries' in Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, p. xx.

[5] See Andrew Taylor, 'Anne of Bohemia and the Making of Chaucer', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 19 (1997), 95-119 (p. 95) and Derek Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 16.

[6] See William Rothwell, 'The Trilingual England of Geoffrey Chaucer', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 16 (1994), 45-67. Williams argues that from 'records of the vast numbers of French books owned by kings, the nobility, and monasteries (often to the complete exclusion of English ones), it is clear that Anglo-Norman [French] was *the* literary language of thirteenth-century England'; Williams, *French Fetish*, p. 9.

remained an influential language of prestige and authority in England.[7] Indeed, the reign

of Richard II marked the high point of the influence of French culture in late-medieval

England.[8] Therefore, in 'Femina famosa', Anne of Bohemia – remembered as a foreign

queen who represented the possibilities of Anglo-French cultural connections – acts as a

symbol of the 'internationalism' of the English court in the late medieval period, when

aristocratic cultural identity was engaged in a fruitful cross-Channel dialogue and contact

between the communities of England, France and the wider continent.[9]

Yet, despite the assertion of the queen's political and cultural significance in this

verse eulogy, when Anne had first arrived in England to marry Richard II, her position

had been a precarious one. Landing on English shores in 1382, Anne of Bohemia brought

neither dowry nor property, thus provoking antipathy amongst members of the English

court who viewed Richard's foreign bride as 'a purchase rather than a gift'.[10] Anne was

also viewed with suspicion and hostility during her first years in England; understood to

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[7] Nigel Saul describes the levels of mutual contact between the French and English courts in the late fourteenth century: 'Many of the older generation of courtiers, like Burley and de la Pole, had spent long periods on active service in France. Many more of [Richard II's] nobility and civil servants had had contact with the French court through the workings of diplomacy. High-level English missions had been sent to France on many occasions in the 1380s; and in April and May 1392 John of Gaunt and Thomas of Woodstock attended a two-week conference at Amiens, at which they had been lavishly feasted and entertained. In the years of truce from 1389 there was a burgeoning of informal contact between the two sides. Waleran, count of St Pol, a leading French courtier and Richard's brother-in-law, for example, came to England twice, in 1389 and 1390. At the Saint Ingelvert tournament in 1390 knights from England, France, and the Low Countries and elsewhere gathered to joust, converse and socialise for nearly a month. And in the early to middle years of the decade the knights Louis de Giac and Otto de Granson were active in England recruiting for Philippe de Mézières's crusading order. Relations between England and France had hardly ever been closer'; Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 351.
[8] See Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 349-54; and Gervase Matthew, *The Court of Richard II* (London: Murray, 1968).
[9] Elizabeth Salter, 'Chaucer and Internationalism', *English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art and Patronage of Medieval England*, ed. by Derek Pearsall and Nicolette Zeeman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 239-345 (p. 241). For more on the exchange between England and Bohemia and its contribution to international court culture, see Alfred Thomas, *The Court of Richard II and Bohemian Culture: Literature and Art in the Age of Chaucer and the Gawain-poet* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2020). For discussion of Anne of Bohemia's role as an intermediary in the translation of culture from her native Bohemia to her adopted England, see Thomas, *A Blessed Shore: England and Bohemia from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).
[10] The author of the Westminster Chronicle observes that 'About this Queen somebody wrote the verse: "Worthy to enjoy manna | To Englishmen is given the noble Anna"; but to those with an eye for the facts it seemed that she represented a purchase rather than a gift, since the English king laid out no small sum to secure this tiny scrap of humanity' in *Westminster Chronicle 1381-1394*, trans. and ed. by L.C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 24-5.

be culturally other, she was accompanied by a large retinue whose members were as little acquainted with the English language and customs as she was.[11] From this unpromising start, however, Anne negotiated a position for herself and became an important figure in the English court with the ability to exert significant influence within the kingdom. Anne was the figure of queenly intercession, seeking to unite the interests of the querulous king and his subjects on numerous occasions.[12] She also gained a reputation for charity, humility, and piety and in 'Femina famosa', the exemplary qualities of Good Queen Anne – as the chroniclers came to call her – are the poem's central focus. The poem lays heavy emphasis on Anne's generosity and her ability to offer comfort to disparate people, including the sick, the poor, and those experiencing childbirth. Anne of Bohemia's death was therefore an occasion for widespread national mourning as the kingdom was united in a shared, public expression of grief for a queen renowned for her goodness and wisdom.[13] The English nation became an emotional community joined in grief. The

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[11] Comparing Chaucer's representation of Custance in the *Man of Law's Tale* to the experience of real foreign women in England, Keiko Hamaguchi argues that women like Anne of Bohemia were often victims of hostile and xenophobic attitudes within English society; Hamaguchi, 'The Cultural Otherness of Custance as a Foreign Woman in the *Man of Law's Tale*', *The Chaucer Review*, 54.4 (2019), 411-440. Other critics have noted the English opposition to the marriage, including May McKisack who comments that 'The marriage was, at first, unpopular; for, although the new queen was pious and well-educated, she was also plain and poor and the chroniclers considered that she had been bought at too high a price'; McKisack, *The Fourteenth-Century, 1307-1399* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 427. Andrew Taylor also recognises that 'The role of the foreign queen was perilous; as an alien and a woman she could all too easily become a scapegoat for the extravagance of the feudal court' in Taylor, 'Anne of Bohemia and the Making of Chaucer', p. 102.

[12] Anne directed her intercessory efforts not only at the king. In 1388 she interceded with the Earl of Arundel and the other Lords Appellant to save the life of the king's tutor, Sir Simon Burley, but this act of intercession was unsuccessful. For a full examination of Anne's role as a political intercessor, see Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-century Texts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 105-119. Andrew Taylor also addresses Anne's intercessory role, commenting that 'in her numerous acts of intercession Anne appears to have followed an analogous pattern, achieving a degree of freedom and self-expression within the social constraints of chivalric culture' in Taylor, 'Anne of Bohemia and the Making of Chaucer', p. 99.

[13] John M. Bowers also notes that the queen's death united the country in a shared expression of grief because 'Anne of Bohemia was the only queen to have died in more than a quarter-century'; Bowers, *The Politics of Pearl: Court Poetry in the Age of Richard II* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), p. 156. The verse eulogy contains echoes of the inscription on Anne's tomb at Westminster Abbey, which emphasises her ability to unite the country through her actions and intercession: 'she was well known for her deeds: | She was always eager to give her gifts to the poor, | She settled quarrels and relieved pregnant women' (ll. 3-5); quoted in Van Dussen, 'Three Verse Eulogies of Anne of Bohemia', p. 235.

opening lines of the verse eulogy include a poignant allusion to the collective grief felt at

her death; Anne is a queen the English 'people rightly adore' as 'she harmed no one and

pleased many' (ll. 3-4). The occasion and commemoration of Anne of Bohemia's death

demonstrates how the experience of loss has the capacity to aid in social cohesion, uniting

disparate people as an emotional community joined in a collective state of grief.

For Richard II, however, Anne of Bohemia's death was a more personal, and, it

seems, a more painful source of grief. The royal couple had been married for just over

twelve years and developed a bond of remarkable strength and intimacy within the

emotional community of their marriage.[14] Richard II was distraught by the queen's death

and experienced a profound, long-lasting grief which had significant political

repercussions. For the rest of his life, he avoided entering any place where he knew Anne

had been. In another act of extreme emotional the Chronicle of Adam Usk recounts how

Richard ordered the destruction of the royal residence at Sheen 'on account of the fact

that this Lady Anne's death occurred there'.[15] As a king, Richard's personal, private

feelings of grief were also expressed through public performance and actions which

signalled his kingly authority and power. Furthermore, Richard's grief exacerbated

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[14] Unusually for a medieval consort, the queen lived as Richard II's constant companion and did not maintain a separate household. Contemporary English chronicler Thomas Walsingham comments that the king rarely if ever allowed the queen to be away from his side, in Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: The 'Chronica maiora' of Thomas Walsingham, Volume I: 1376-1394*, ed. by John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs and Leslie Watkiss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), p. 737. Nigel Saul comments that the marriage 'was one of the most companionate at this level of society in England in the Middle Ages. Richard and his bride had been brought together by the imperatives of international diplomacy, but the tie between them developed into one of deep mutual attachment. More than any other English medieval royal marriage, the marriage to Anne bore witness to the theologians' claim that affective love could develop within an arranged match'; Saul, *Richard II*, p. 455. The tomb effigies of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia in Westminster Abbey are a visual reflection of the intimacy of their marriage. Portrayed in full regalia as a queen consort, Anne is also depicted as a loving wife through an intimate gesture in which she clasps her husband's hand. See Phillip Lindley, 'Queen Anne of Bohemia', *The Funeral Effigies of Westminster Abbey*, ed. by Anthony Harvey and Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1994), pp. 37-9 (fig. II).

[15] Adam Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, ed. and trans. Christopher Given-Wilson (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 19. A writ of the Privy Seal, dated 9th April 1395, records that Richard ordered that entirety of Sheen be destroyed 'as well as the houses and buildings in the court within the moat and the court without the moat, as the houses and buildings in la Neyt beside the manor'; H.M. Colvin, R. Allen Brown, and A.J. Taylor, *The History of the King's Works* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1968), p. ii, n. 998.

existing antagonisms and gave rise to violent conflict. Chronicles record, for example, that Richard was so angered by the late arrival of Richard Fizalan, Earl of Arundel to the queen's funeral that he 'struck the earl violently upon the head with such force, that he collapsed, and his blood flowed profusely over the pavement', an act which polluted the sanctified ground of the church. Richard II's emotional response to Anne of Bohemia's loss demonstrates how easily grief could be channelled to anger, fostering division and conflict between individuals who mourn and other members of their community.[16]

Anne of Bohemia's commemorative verse eulogy provides a meaningful frame through which we can interrogate and understand the larger themes of this thesis. It sheds new light on the close cultural and political ties and tensions between England and France during a time of conflict and invites readers to consider the larger significance of this connection, particularly for members of the aristocratic, courtly class, a class which is often the focus of the texts included in this study. The verse eulogy also allows us to reflect upon the degree to which reactions to loss vary according to time and place. The eulogy's public purpose demonstrates how expressions of collective grief shape and produce new emotional communities, making grief an important community-builder for particular groups of people, often joined by class, gender or professional idenities. Furthermore, considering 'Femina famosa' alongside Richard II's emotional response to Anne of Bohemia's death alerts us to the conflation of private feeling and public expression of grief in late-medieval literature. At the same time, however, tensions often existed between the private feeling of grief felt by an individual and the spoken, public expression of grief in the wider context of late-medieval literature. This thesis will

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[16] Anne of Bohemia's loss has also been credited for much of Richard II's tyrannical bent after 1394, as Richard was – according to David Wallace – 'no longer moderated by a queen who was celebrated for her meek supplications'. Richard's increasingly tyrannical behaviour has also been seen to precipitate another disastrous loss in Richard's life: his deposition in 1399. For a full discussion, see David Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 371, and Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 459-67.

demonstrate that grief creates complex tensions *between* the communities of different classes, nations and genders, and creates complex tensions *within* emotional communities which should be united by their shared emotional regimes and vocabularies. As the texts included in this thesis will demonstrate, however, the tensions which exist between (or within) different emotional communities are frequently productive, allowing grief to be resolved and directed towards a form of consolation. The thesis examines how English and French poets used grief to examine these tensions between different emotional communities and to respond to the larger issues of cultural rivalry and military conflict which underpinned the relationship between England and France in the fourteenth centuries.

The late-medieval texts included in this study – written in both French and English – demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the complexities inherent in all experiences of grief. Grief is shown to be an uncompromising and challenging emotion, at times overwhelming and without relief, and a near constant presence for those who experience different forms of loss. Grief can bring moments of anger, guilt, despair, and shame, alongside its more common feelings of sorrow and dejection. It also has the ability to diminish a person's fundamental sense of self and undermine their place within their sustaining networks and communities. This study's chosen texts demonstrate how grief can isolate individuals *within* their emotional community, creating a sense of pervasive isolation for the individual and a disengagement from the community's emotional regimes. Grief – particularly in those cases of grieving male (and often aristocratic) speakers within medieval texts – must be 'resolved', left behind or relinquished in some way in order for the significance of the community to be reasserted and the individual man's place within the community to be re-established. The profound pain of loss also naturally tests language and linguistic expression, and the chapters of

this study examine how language is presented as coming up against its own limits, exploring questions of *what* can be expressed, and *how*, in the face of intense grief. At the same time, however, language is presented in late-medieval texts as the 'solution' to the isolation and despair caused by grief. Speaking of grief or articulating one's feelings loss and sorrow – particularly when these feelings are communicated to another individual, often a member of another emotional community – is shown to be the only way to alleviate or remedy the overwhelming pain of grief. To this point, the study of the experience of grief has been frequently overlooked in favour of emotions such as anger and shame.[17] This thesis seeks to redress this balance and argues for the importance of understanding the experience of grief in the wider emotional landscape of particular communities in late-medieval English and French literature and culture.

This thesis argues that in the literature of late-medieval England and France, representations of grief were profoundly shaped by the cultural rivalry and conflict between the two kingdoms. This cultural rivalry between England and France was, however, not a straightforward binary. For one, English kings had dynastic as well as

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[17] Anger, fear and shame are feelings which are frequently experienced alongside grief, and thus critical studies of these emotions have been beneficial to the current study. However, there has yet to be an in-depth study of the representation of grief in medieval literature. There are some edited collections which focus on the emotion: *Grief and Gender: 700-1700*, ed. by Jennifer C. Vaught and Lynne Dickson Bruckner (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), which considers the relationship between grief and gender in late-medieval and early modern literature. *Laments for the Lost in Medieval Literature* ed. by Jane Tolmie and M. J. Toswell (Belgium: Brepols, 2010) is a collection of articles on various forms of medieval grief and lament. There have been a number of studies on the feeling of anger in medieval texts, with a particular focus on the emotion's significance for aristocratic men, these include the influential edited collection of essays, Barbara Rosenwein, ed., *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998) and Albrecht Classen, ed., *Violence in Medieval Courtly Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004). For an assessment of the feeling of fear in medieval culture, see *Fear and Its Representation in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS and Brepols, 2002); *Fear in the Medical and Literary Imagination, Medieval to Modern*, ed. by Daniel McCann and Claire Mason-McKechnie (London: Palgrave, 2018). In recent years the subject of shame has been of particular interest to Middle English scholars, who focus on its gendered and embodied expressions. Recent studies include Mary C. Flannery, 'The Concept of Shame in Late-Medieval English Literature', *Literature Compass*, 9.2 (2012), 166-182; and Flannery's book-length study, *Practising Shame: Female Honour in Later Medieval England*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020); Stephanie Trigg, "Shamed be …": Historicizing Shame in Medieval and Early Modern Courtly Ritual', *Exemplaria*, 19.1 (2007), 67-89 and Trigg's historical contextualization of shame in late medieval England, *Shame and Honour: A Vulgar History of the Order of the Garter* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

geographical claims across the Channel throughout the medieval period. What is more, many 'English' authors also wrote in other languages, including Latin and French. French was therefore an 'English' language and an important language of England. Therefore, between 1368 and 1440 – the period which encompasses the texts included in this thesis – whilst the kingdoms of France and England were engaged in a constant rivalry, their cultures and literary traditions were in constant dialogue.[18] A key observation led to my current subject: a considerable number of the major Middle English texts within the English literary canon – including some of the most affecting and memorable works of medieval poetry – focus on an individual's experience of loss and have grief as their central emotion. Furthermore, a number of grief-focused Middle English texts, particularly those written during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II, simultaneously draw on specific French texts for inspirations and experiment with French poetic forms, subjects and motifs.[19] The grief described in the dream-visions of Chaucer and the *Pearl*-poet, for example, bear traces of a significant French influence; in these texts, the figures who grieve are closely linked to courtly ideals and the grief they express is reflective of the shared aristocratic cultural practices which existed across English and French national borders. In the fifteenth century, however, as the Anglo-French conflict intensified and the English vernacular became an increasingly important language of literature and

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[18] These dates offer the widest possible range for the texts included in this study. The earliest text, Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, was written to memorialise John of Gaunt's first wife, Blanche of Lancaster, who died in 1368, and thus 1368 is the earliest possible date for this work. The study's latest chronological text, Charles d'Orléans' *Fortunes Stabilnes* was written during his twenty-five-year captivity in England but when the duke returned to France the manuscript was left behind in England. Therefore, the latest possible date for this text is November 1440. For more on the dating of the two poems, see chapters two and four.

[19] This study moves beyond the studies of French sources and analogues for English medieval texts and considers how the connections between French and English culture shaped the literary representation of emotions. There is a vast bibliography on French literature's influence on medieval English texts, key works include Charles Muscatine, *Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in Style and Meaning* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1957); James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and his French Contemporaries: Natural Music in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); William Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

bureaucracy, the Anglo-French cultural relationship also shifted.[20] In the fifteenth century

works of Christine de Pizan, Charles d'Orléans, and Thomas Hoccleve, all three authors

represent different forms of loss and the figures who grieve come from a broader range of

communities and classes. Each chapter of this thesis presents two texts - one in English

and the other in French - to examine the affinities and differences between English and

French expressions of feeling and chart the changes in the cultural rivalry between the

two kingdoms. By examining these texts through the emotional lens of grief, the research

presented in this thesis reveals a new facet to our understanding of the intertextual

relationships between late medieval English and French texts in the fourteenth and

fifteenth centuries.

By considering the relationship between the cultures of late-medieval England and

France and comparing their literary representations of grief, my broader concern is to

reflect upon the ways in which emotions are used to create and destabilise notions of

identity. The thesis will interrogate how grief acts as a community-builder and as a cause

of division, conflict and strife within particular communities, communities which are

already joined by a shared class, gender or familial identity. My approach builds upon the

work of Barbara Rosenwein, who defined 'emotional communities' as groups in which

'people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the

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[20] On the changing status of English language in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, see William Rothwell, 'Language and Government in Medieval England', *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, 93.3 (1983), 258-270, and 'English and French in England after 1362', *English Studies*, 82 (2001), 539-559; Richard Ingham, 'Mixing Languages on the Manor', *Medium Ævum*, 78.1 (2009), 80-97; Gwilym Dodd, 'Changing Perspectives: Parliament, Poetry and the 'Civil Service' under Richard II and Henry IV', *Parliamentary History*, 25 (2006), 299-322 and 'The Rise of English, the Decline of French: Supplications to the English Crown, c. 1420-1450', *Speculum*, 86-1 (2011), 117-50; Emily Steiner, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Malcolm Richardson, 'Henry V, the English Chancery and Chancery English', *Speculum*, 55 (1980), 727-50, who argues that Henry V's shift from French to English language usage after his second invasion of France in 1417 'marks a firm commitment to the vernacular – equivalent in the public world to Chaucer's commitment to English in the literary world, and of equal importance' (p. 727). For further discussion of the changing status of the English language, particularly for the bureaucracy of the Lancastrian regime, see chapter four.

same or related emotions'.[21] Within an emotional community, 'people have a common stake, interests, values, and goals' and thus 'it is often a social community'.[22] Rosenwein's study, however, is largely concerned with a particular social stratum: the elite emotional communities of the royalty, aristocracy and religious orders, an approach which understates the diversity of medieval emotional communities. In this thesis, I identify a more expansive range of emotional communities in late-medieval texts; from the closest and most intimate forms of community in families and marriages, to communities defined by social class, gender and national identity. The inclusion of a more expansive range of emotional communities allows the thesis to argue that in each emotional community, grief is expressed in a specific way, through shared emotional vocabularies and distinct emotional regimes. The way in which grief is experienced, articulated and understood – or misunderstood – by members within these emotional communities is essential to their shared or communal identity. In this thesis, I am particularly interested in how grief has the potential to simultaneously disrupt and create the bonds of an emotional community. In some texts, grief disrupts the mourner's connection to their emotional community, and they are expected to reform their emotions in order to return to the fold of the community. In other texts – particularly those written in response to a specific event, often linked to the larger military conflict between England and France – grief plays a central role in forming a new emotional community and shaping its emotional regimes. I posit that the texts discussed in this thesis also demonstrate that the emotional practices of one emotional community could overlap with another. Aristocratic communities, such as the those explored in Charles d'Orléans' *Fortunes Stabilnes* and in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, for example, could exist within

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[21] Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 2.
[22] Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 25.

and across the boundaries of English and French identity, even in a time of conflict and cultural rivalry. For these French and English aristocratic, male emotional communities – with their shared linguistic, cultural, and emotional codes – class and cultural affiliations appear to be more powerful than feelings of 'national' identity across different classes within the same polity. Equally, gender is a facet of communities which both underscores and complicates 'national' as well as class connections within different emotional communities.

The History of Emotions and Grief in Late Medieval Literature

This is the first extended study of the representation of grief in late medieval literature, and as such, it counters the common misconception that medieval people 'were not particularly conscious of emotions' and were lacking in a 'vocabulary to discuss emotional experience articulately'.[23] Numerous medieval works both describe grief and consider its expression and articulation, as the texts in this thesis prove. Medieval writers used the term 'grief' in various ways, demonstrating a sophisticated and complex understanding of the emotion.[24] Indeed, one of the first uses of 'grief' to signify the 'mental pain, distress, or sorrow ... caused by loss or trouble' comes from the late fourteenth century.[25] Throughout this thesis, grief will be understood as an emotion akin

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[23] Carol Zisowitz Stearns and Peter R. Stearns go on to suggest that, as a result of this lack of emotional vocabulary, 'emotional ills most commonly occurred as a vague melancholia, the kind of generalised malaise that in twentieth-century Western society occurs most often among the less well educated. […] this lack of attention to emotions began to change in the more individualistic seventeenth century, leading to greater sophistication about feelings and, ultimately, to the application of ethical concepts to emotional experience and inner control'. Zisowitz Stearns and Stearns, *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 22. While the work of Zisowitz Stearns and Stearns has been valuable in providing a framework for the field of the history of emotions, the increasing presence of medievalists into the field has demonstrated the limitations of their views and shed new light on the diversity and complexity of medieval emotions.

[24] See Jennifer C. Vaught, 'Introduction', *Grief and Gender: 700-1700*, ed. by Jennifer C. Vaught and Lynne Dickson Bruckner (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 1-17 (p. 3).

[25] 'Grief' in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online], < https://www.oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/81389> [accessed February 2018]. The reference comes from *Pearl* ('The adubbemente of þo downez dere | Garten my goste al greffe for-ȝete', (ll. 85-86)), one of the texts included in this thesis. The semantics of 'emotion' are more complex as the word emotion is not a medieval term. The earliest references to 'emotion' in both the French and English language denoted conflict and social upheaval, definitions which relate to this study's discussion of grief and Anglo-French conflict. In the '1429 *Chronique du Bon duc Loys de*

to the intense sorrow which results from a powerful form of loss such as the death of a

loved person. I adopt a different approach from previous studies as I assume a more

inclusive definition of grief, which encompasses the emotional response to separation

from a beloved and the loss of country or identity.[26] This allows me to demonstrate the

ways in which grief can elicit different emotional responses at different times and in

different texts. The different forms of grief and its different modes of expression in the

thesis' chosen texts reflects the complexities of loss and grief.

This thesis engages extensively with the field of the history of emotions, seeking

to integrate theories of emotion with literary analysis to provide the fullest picture of the

representation of grief in late-medieval literature. The study of emotions in medieval

literature is an emergent area in the field: Middle English literature has been the main

focus in this respect.[27] Sarah McNamer has made the strongest case for the value of

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Bourbon, 'l'esmotion du duc de Bretaigne' (the 'emotion' of the Duke of Brittany), leads directly to a siege of the French town of Troyes. The *OED* puts the earliest reference to 'emotiones' in English over a century later, in 1562, where it was also used to describe manifestations of social unrest: 'the great tumultes and *emotions* that were in Fraunce between the king and the nobilite', from Stephanie Downes, Andrew Lynch and Katrina O'Loughlin, 'War as Emotion: Cultural Fields of Conflict and Feeling', in *Emotions and War: Medieval to Romantic Literature*, ed. by Stephanie Downes, Andrew Lynch and Katrina O'Loughlin (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1-24 (p. 1). See also Philippa Maddern, 'How Children Were Supposed to Feel; How Children Felt', in *Childhood and Emotion Across Cultures, 1450-1800*, ed. by Claudia Jarzebowski and Thomas Max Safley (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 121-40 (p. 121). Furthermore, in a semantic point relevant to the theme of Anglo-French cultural contact, many of the Middle English terms describing emotional states or conditions – including 'sens', 'sentement', 'affectioun' - 'developed through the close contact of English with French throughout the medieval period', from Stephanie Downes and Rebecca F. McNamara, 'The History of Emotions and Middle English Literature', *Literature Compass*, 13.6 (2016), 444-456 (p. 445).

[26] Studies of the elegy or lament, for example, focus only the emotional response to the death of a loved person. See Peter Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); Abbie Findlay Potts, *The Elegiac Mode: Poetic Form in Wordsworth and Other Elegists* (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967); *Laments for the Lost in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Tolmie and Toswell (2010).

[27] The turn to the history of emotions by critics of Middle English literature has been largely reliant on the framework provided by historians. Key works, which have all contributed to the formation of the history of emotions as a distinctive field, include Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities* (2006) and 'Thinking Historically about Medieval Emotions', *History Compass*, 8.8 (2010), 828-42; Peter Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *American Historical Review*, 90 (1985), 813-36; William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, trans. by Keith Tribe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Damien Nagy and Piroska Boquet, *Medieval Sensibilities: A History of Emotions in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Robert Shaw (Cambridge: Polity, 2018).

Middle English texts in developing the field.[28] She proposes 'conceiving of a wide array of Middle English texts as literal scripts that vigorously enlist *literariness* as a means of generating feelings and putting them into play in history'.[29] Stephanie Trigg has also proposed that medieval poetic texts are valuable sources for understanding emotion, arguing that the nature of poetry – its allusive, indirect quality – opens up new, rewarding perspectives on past emotions.[30] These studies provide a valuable framework for the study of emotions in medieval literature, but their focus on the 'literariness of literature' has yet to be applied to the complex language of grief or to the expression of the emotion across cultures and languages.[31] This thesis seeks to address this lacuna through the close examination of poetic techniques in English *and* French texts, further advancing the case for an understanding of past emotion across languages and cultures.

The thesis concentrates on poetic representations of grief in medieval English and French literature. The focus on poetry rather than prose reflects the dominance of poetry in the literary traditions of medieval England and France; where relevant to the analysis of grief, however, I include the discussion of a prose epistle. The texts included in this thesis cover a range of genres, including lyrics, *dits*, and epistolary texts. The medieval dream-vision is a genre which particularly comes to the foreground in this study. The texts which are the focus of the first two chapters, *Pearl* and the *Book of the Duchess*, are

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[28] Sarah McNamer has shown that Middle English literary scholars have been 'reluctant to look at emotion directly, to hold it up to the light as an entity separate from as well as linked to the sexual or political or devotional'. Owing in part to the nature of literary texts – the 'untrustworthiness' and lack of clarity in literary texts – historians of emotion have 'gravitated towards what appear to be [literature's] least dishonest forms – letters, chronicles, conduct books', from McNamer, 'Feeling', *Middle English*, ed. by Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 241-58 (p. 243).

[29] Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p. 246. This line of argument is further developed in McNamer's discussion of the *Pearl*-poem, in 'The Literariness of Literature and the History of Emotions', *PMLA*, 130.5 (2015), 1433-1442.

[30] Trigg suggests that the analysis of medieval texts 'needs to remain alert to the verbal textures of poetry and the material qualities of its linguistic signifiers, as well as its powers of suggestions: poetic texts sometimes say more, sometimes rather less than the emotions they evoke by name', from Trigg, 'Langland's Tears: Poetry, Emotion and Mouvance', *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 26 (2012), 27-48 (p. 30).

[31] McNamer, 'Literariness of Literature', p. 1436.

dream-visions which share a number of tropes, conventions and affective structures. In both narratives in the dreamer-narrator falls asleep in the midst of an emotional impasse, then encounters another figure who belongs to a different class or community, and finally proceeds through a dialogue with this figure in order for the emotional impasse to be alleviated.[32] In both dream-visions, the reader encounters a dreamer-narrator who misunderstands; in Chaucer's text the narrator misunderstands the significance of the grief of the other speaker in the dream, and in *Pearl* the narrator misunderstands the heavenly lessons which are offered to lessen his overwhelming sorrow. In both texts, grief (and the misunderstanding of this emotion) does particular work to highlight the connections and tensions between different emotional communities.

All literary works discussed in this thesis - whether they be poetic dream-visions, *dits*, lyrics or prose epistolary texts – are, however, written in the first-person. Within medieval literary works, the textual first-person creates the effect of proximality and experientiality; readers feel *with* the poetic speaker over the course of the text.[33] Some medieval texts conflate the fictive and historical 'I'; in these works, the study of grief is intimately tied to what we know about the poet's lived experience and the text's composition.[34] In Hoccleve's *Series*, for example, in order to situate the text within its proper social context and understand the source of the narrator's grief, it is vital to

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[32] For more on the tropes and conventions of the medieval dream-vision, see A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[33] A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Autographies: The 'I' of the Text* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), p. 24. Spearing, however, asserts that the 'medieval textual 'I' does not necessarily refer to any existing and substantial individual, whether real or fictional. It is autographic rather than autobiographic and need not be understood as giving voice to any specific consciousness', from Spearing, *Medieval Autographies*, p. 143.

[34] Stephanie Trigg suggests that the study of emotion in literary texts is also tied to what we know about the material conditions which shaped the history of the poem's composition - the 'making and unmaking' of the different manuscripts or versions of a particular text. 'Where there is such fluid mouvance of versions', she argues, 'emotional responses inevitably play a role in our judgments about authorial and scribal composition and revision in the multitude of competing readings', from Trigg, 'Langland's Tears', p. 31. For discussion of the circumstances of composition and emotional expression, see chapter three which focuses on the circumstances in which Charles d'Orléans wrote his English works.

consider the close connection between the textual first-person and the documented evidence about Hoccleve's life as a clerk of the Privy Seal. In others, such as the anonymous *Pearl*-poem, autobiographical readings can limit our understanding of the scope and complexity of the literary text and the emotions being described. Whether the first-person experience of the speaker is identified directly with the author or not, first-person expressions of grief imbue the texts with a sense of emotional authenticity, heightening and producing emotional effects within the reader. William Reddy's concept of 'emotives' – those 'first-person, present-tense emotion claims' which 'do things to the world', by functioning as 'instruments for directly changing, building, hiding [and] intensifying emotions' – is a useful framework for understanding how first-person utterances generate feeling in those who engage with literary texts.[35] The texts in this thesis invite the reader to feel *with* the 'I' of the text, experiencing the speaker's feelings of grief and following in their journey of affective experience.[36] Given the cross-cultural nature of this thesis, I argue that the choice to write in the first-person 'je' or 'I' had a profound effect on the expression of grief and the production of feeling in the reader. This thesis includes several bilingual authors; Chaucer, for example, chose to write in English rather than French, and the noble French prisoner, Charles d'Orléans, who was writing for his English captors, expressed feelings of grief in the English vernacular. I consider how these linguistic choices impacted upon the performance of emotion in literary texts, and the political and cultural effects of these choices.

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[35] William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, p. 104-5.

[36] McNamer acknowledges that 'literary texts have always served – some kinds and genres more overtly than others, and in some cultures more overtly than other – as affective scripts, capable of generating complex emotional effects in those who engage with them', and thus, she suggests a conception of literary texts 'as literal scripts that generate a performance of feeling', from McNamer, 'Literariness of Literature', p. 1436. Mary Carruthers has also argued for the value of cultural sources in generating emotional effects: 'works of art do not just simulate or represent human feelings but *produce* them in those who are experiencing the work – artefacts are agents in our emotions and thoughts as well as our sensations', from Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 168.

Historically speaking, my focus is the Hundred Years War (1337-1445), although this is not a study of the conflict's representation in literary texts or an analysis of the emotions of war.[37] Some texts discussed in this thesis were written in direct response to specific events and battles, but in other poems the conflict is a more allusive presence. I argue, however, that it is vital to consider the ebb and flow of the Hundred Years War, its political conflicts and intermittent military engagements, as they reflect the fluctuations in the cultural relationship between England and France, which in turn impacted upon the types of literature produced and the emotions represented in this literature.[38] Beginning as a conflict over territory between different branches of the same aristocratic family and the same emotional community, the Hundred Years War eventually became a large-scale conflict between the 'French' and the 'English'.[39] Early in the conflict, English victories at Crécy (1346), Calais (1347), and Poitiers (1356) tipped the balance of in favour of the English. Henry V's later military strategy to conquer the French kingdom, with his famous success at Agincourt (1415), also gives the impression that the English were the stronger political and military force. Culturally, however, the French were entirely dominant, and this had a profound impact on representations of grief in the literatures of England and France. I demonstrate that it was rare (though not unheard of, as Charles d'Orléans' *Fortunes Stabilnes* will demonstrate) for French authors to draw upon English

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[37] For discussion of the emotions of war, see Downes, Lynch and O'Loughlin, 'War as Emotion', pp, 1-24.

[38] I do not include a full description of the events and battles of the Hundred Years War, as my argument focuses on the effects of the conflict in relation to Anglo-French culture and the representation of emotions in medieval literature. Ardis Butterfield's *The Familiar Enemy* (2009) has been an invaluable source for my understanding of the conflict in its cultural context. For a detailed analysis of the events and progression of the Hundred Years War, see Anne Curry, *The Hundred Years War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War, c. 1300-c.1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus*, ed. by L.J. Andrew Villalon and Donald J. Kagay (Leiden: Brill, 2005). By far the most comprehensive account is Jonathan Sumption's series of volumes, which offer a meticulous narrative of the Anglo-French conflict, four of the five volumes have been released thus far. Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War* (London: Faber, 1990-).

[39] Deanne Williams notes that 'It is possible to see these early decades as a kind of French civil war: the Englishmen who were pressed into the service of the English king may have felt that they were really fighting a French war' but that it is also possible to trace an evolving sense of English as distinct from French as the conflict progressed, from Williams, *The French Fetish*, p. 10.

works, but English poets frequently emulated the models of French literary tradition. I do not suggest, however, that English representations of grief were meekly imitative. Rather, I argue that feelings of grief in English texts were in dialogue with and experienced a tension with the feelings of grief present in French texts. The English and French traditions frequently focused on the grief of similar emotional communities but generated feeling in different ways; ultimately each of the texts included in this thesis understands the complexity of grief in their own distinctive way.[40]

Summary of Chapters

In the first chapter of the thesis, I examine the fourteenth century dream-vision *Pearl*, in which the dreamer struggles to come to terms with the loss of his precious pearl – an object which represents both a precious gem and the narrator's two-year-old child. The chapter argues that in life, the pearl and narrator formed an emotional community of the family. With the loss of the pearl, therefore, the narrator not only grieves for the loss of his child but also for the loss of his paternal identity. Bereft without his child, the isolated narrator haunts the place he associates with her loss. When the narrator enters the dream, it becomes clear that the roles between father and daughter that the narrator had expected in life have been reversed; the Pearl-Maiden is the forceful figure of authority whilst the narrator is the questioning, vulnerable child. Over the course of their dialogue, the narrator repeatedly misunderstands and misreads the heavenly lessons provided by the Pearl-Maiden and continues to seek reunion with his child. *Pearl* also appropriates the symbolism of French marguerite poetry and places desire in dialogue with the complex

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[40] Different contextual considerations other than the Hundred Years War may have also had an impact on the frequent focus on grief in late-medieval texts. For example, the Black Death – during which according to some estimates, approximately half the population of Europe died – made death, loss and grief constant presences within the medieval world. David K. Coley, for example, argues for the Black Death's profound impact on medieval literature, exploring pestilential discourses in all texts attributed to the *Pearl*-poet; see Coley, '*Pearl* and the Narrative of Pestilence', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 35 (2013), 209-262 and *Death and the Pearl-Maiden: Plague, Poetry, England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2019).

work of grief. Seeing the pearl again should result in the narrator's desire being fulfilled, but the heavenly community in which the Pearl-Maiden resides ultimately eludes these earthly emotions.

Whereas my discussion of *Pearl* focused on a parent's grief for a daughter and the loss of the familial emotional community, my second chapter examines Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, in which the dreamer-narrator addresses a nobleman grieving the loss of his wife. The poem was written in response to the death of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster and composed for her husband, John of Gaunt, and thus a real, lived experience of grief underlies the text. Yet, for this poem about death and grief, Chaucer chooses to emphasise his indebtedness to contemporary French love poetry. In this chapter, I argue that Chaucer uses the language, forms, and emotions of *dits amoureux* to confront the subjects of death and loss, exploring how literary texts shape the way emotional communities performed emotions, even in the context of grief. I argue that Chaucer positions the relationship between the narrator and the Man in Black as a means of exploring the constraints in emotional understanding between different emotional communities: although both figures articulate emotions through the examples of French literature, the narrator's emotional performances are learnt and artificial, whereas the Man in Black's are authentic and efficacious in expressing his grief. I conclude the chapter by comparing the exchange of emotions between narrators and noble speakers in the Book of the Duchess - an encounter characterised by failure and *mis*understanding - and Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse* – an encounter characterised by openness and understanding.

The third chapter shifts focus from the fourteenth to the fifteenth century and discusses two texts, one written in French, and the other in English, both occasioned by the battle of Agincourt. Charles d'Orléans' English language lyric sequence, *Fortunes Stabilnes* was composed in the English vernacular for the emotional community of the

English nobility with whom Charles was imprisoned after he had been captured at Agincourt. This text combines conventional modes with elements of Charles d'Orléans' lived experience to explore the feelings of grief, loss and absence associated with his captivity and enact change to the terms of Charles' imprisonment. Christine de Pizan, by contrast, writes her *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* for the women left behind after Agincourt, namely the mothers, wives, daughters and other female relatives who grieved for men who had been killed, captured or injured in the battle. I argue that these noblewomen constitute an emotional community formed by grief, through whose influence Christine envisages political change within the fractured state of France.

The final chapter examines Thomas Hoccleve's 'Compleinte' and 'Dialogue', the first two texts in a larger collection, named the *Series*. This chapter will examine how Hoccleve enacts his feelings of grief for the loss of his emotional community – the clerkly, bookish and exclusively male community of his fellow bureaucrats. Through the marginalised figure of Hoccleve, the text examines the emotional effects of exclusion and the grief which is experienced when an individual loses their participatory voice within an emotional community. The chapter will also address the cultural and political context in which Hoccleve was writing. Written within the context of the Lancastrian regime, I will examine how Hoccleve's s translation of Christine de Pizan's asserts his authority as a male, English writer and explores active masculine communities through the figure of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who as a potential patron figure, signals Hoccleve's return to his emotional community of bureaucrats.

Chapter One
Emotional Communities in *Pearl*: Fathers, Families and Visions of Heaven

The fifth fitt of the *Pearl*-poem opens with the narrator's poignant address to his lost pearl - an object which represents both a small, precious stone and the narrator's two-year-old child - and which he now encounters in the heavenly realm as a transformed Pearl-Maiden:

> "O perle," quoth I, "in perles pyght,
>
> Art thou my perle that I haf playned,
>
> Regretted by myn one on myghte?
>
> Much longeyng haf I for the layned,
>
> Sythen into gresse thou me aglyghte.
>
> Pensyf, payred, I am forpayned,
>
> And thou in a lyf of lykyng lyghte,
>
> In Paradys erde, of stryf unstrained.
>
> What wyrde has hyder my juel vayned,
>
> And don me in thys del and gret daunger?
>
> Fro we in twynne wern towen and twayned,
>
> I haf ben a joyles juelere." (ll. 241-252)[1]

In this stanza, the narrator's first instinct upon seeing the Pearl-Maiden is to question whether she actually *is* the pearl for whom he 'wayted' (l. 14) and 'playned' (l. 53) so acutely in the poem's opening section. He questions his powers of recognition, repeating the word 'pearl' three times in this stanza's first two lines as though attempting to solidify his knowledge of this changed figure. The narrator is, however, not wholly certain, as he struggles to place '*my* perle' (l. 242) [my emphasis] in a new setting and to recognise her

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[1] *Pearl*, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Cleanness, Patience*, ed. J.J. Anderson (London: Everyman Library, 1996); hereafter cited parenthetically by line number.

elevated status and changed appearance as the Pearl-Maiden. Yet the Pearl-Maiden

clearly recognises the narrator; the previous stanza has described her greeting the narrator

and subsequent removal of her crown: 'Enclynande lowe in wommon lore, | Caghte of her

coroun of grete tresor | And haylsed me with a lote lyghte' (ll. 236-8). These are acts of

humility and gentility which initiate a dialogue between the narrator and Maiden as

earthly and heavenly figures who stand on either side of the 'myry mere' (l. 158) that

divides them throughout the dream vision. By contrast, the narrator fails to respond in a

suitably courteous manner and instead confronts the Pearl-Maiden with his emotions,

specifically his feelings of pain and distress at her loss, chastising her that 'Much

longeyng haf I for the layned […] Pensyf, payred, I am forpayned' (ll. 244-6). The

narrator's feelings of grief and loss saturate the stanza, eventually leading to a pointed

accusation that whilst he 'Regretted by myn one on myghte' (l. 243), the Pearl-Maiden

lives 'in a lyf of lykyng lyghte | In Paradys erde, of stryf unstrained' (ll. 247-8). The

narrator's conflicting emotions – his resentment at his perceived abandonment, combined

with his joy at being reunited with his pearl – are reminiscent of the feelings of a child

confronting a parent who has abandoned them, a poignant reversal of the narrator's

earlier recognition of the Pearl-Maiden as his dead child as 'Ho was me nerre then aunte

or nece (l. 233).[2] The stanza also demonstrates that the narrator and Pearl-Maiden had

shared closed relational ties through the narrator's culminating statement that 'Fro we in

twynne wern towen and twayned, | I haf ben a joyles juelere (ll. 251-2). The pearl and

jeweller, father and daughter, had been 'we in twynne' (l. 251), the two joined together as

one. 'Twynne' conveys the numerical value two but it is also a word that reflects how a

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[2] Critics have noted that this is not the only line to indicate a parent-child between narrator and Maiden. In *Pearl*'s closing stanza the narrator commits the pearl to heaven '[i]n Krystes dere blessyng and myn (l. 1208), a phrase which appears frequently in written addresses from a parent to a child. See A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 125; Norman Davis, 'A Note on *Pearl*', *The Review of English Studies*, 17 (1966), 403-405.

child's life is entwined with that of their parent, demonstrating that the narrator, in his dual identity as both jeweller and father to the lost pearl, continues to consider himself to be the pearl's creator, keeper and carer and therefore grieves both for her loss and the loss of his identity which has been brought about by her death.[3]

The questions and emotions expressed by the joyless jeweller in this stanza do much to illuminate the argument of the current chapter, which focuses on the narrator's overwhelming grief and its implications for the unique relationship between father and child, narrator and Pearl-Maiden. It is in the opening stanza of the fifth fitt that the narrator first expresses his sorrow towards the figure who is the focus of his grief, an emotion which is then rebuffed by the Pearl-Maiden as 'Unavysed, for sothe […] Thou ne woste in worlde quat on dos mene; | Thy word byfore thy wytte con fle' (ll. 292-4). In other words, the Pearl-Maiden believes that narrator's words demonstrate that he continues to cling to his grief and that his articulation of feeling is flawed, reflective of his obstinate determination to retrieve his lost pearl. Indeed, a number of critics of *Pearl* echo the Pearl-Maiden's attitude, dismissing the narrator's 'injured' and 'self-pitying' emotions as an element of the text which 'complicates the reader's sympathy for him'.[4] As Elizabeth D. Kirk observes, there is a tendency in modern commentary 'to lean over backwards to validate the theological and cognitive side of [*Pearl*] and to assert that any feelings articulated in the poem that are in conflict with its orthodox conclusions are to be

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[3] 'Twin(ne)' in *The Middle English Dictionary* [online], < https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED47517/track?counter=1&search_id=6344392> [accessed 20th November 2019]. There are three entries for 'twin(ne)' in the *Middle English Dictionary (MED)*, ranging from 'two', 'double, dual, twofold; of two kinds', 'two persons, a pair' to 'in two parts, apart, asunder'.
[4] *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. by Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), p. 66 (241-52n). Charlotte Gross, who argues that the Pearl-Maiden's authority is demonstrated through her perfect use and understanding of courtly language, observes the narrator's 'pitiable but often comic misapprehension of spiritual matters'; Charlotte Gross, 'Courtly Language in *Pearl*', in *Text and Matter: New Critical Perspectives on the Pearl-Poet*, ed. by Robert J. Blanch, Miriam Youngerman Miller and Julian N. Wasserman (Troy, NY: Whitston, 1991), pp. 79-92 (p. 83).

regarded with suspicion'.[5] This chapter argues that far from regarding emotion and feelings with suspicion, it is vital that we attend to the emotions expressed in *Pearl* and place the narrator's grief at the centre of the analysis of the text. In the poem's opening section, the narrator has allowed his grief to overcome all aspects of his life, but, when he encounters his lost pearl again within the heavenly space of his dream-vision, he is full of questions, frequently misreading or misinterpreting the answers provided by the Pearl-Maiden. The narrator's questions, inflected with the sorrow, longing and disorientation associated with grief, serve a specific purpose, as they allow the narrator's dialogue with the Pearl-Maiden to become more expansive as he presses the Maiden to address his emotions and explain her elevated position within this heavenly realm. Whilst the narrator's grief often comes into conflict with the Pearl-Maiden's heavenly perspective, his emotions should be considered on an equal standing with her doctrinal lessons as both play an active role in the processes of a dream-vision which provides the narrator with the space and perspective to consider his changed identity and his place within a larger Christian community through the fellowship of the Eucharist.

This process begins with the narrator entering a garden to mourn the loss of his 'lyttel quene' (l. 1147) who 'was me nerre then aunte or nece' (l. 232) but 'lyfed not two yer in oure thede' (l. 483). As these allusions reveal, this two-year old child was the narrator's daughter, a child treasured as a jewel beyond compare whose death has trapped the narrator in a state of isolated and overwhelming grief. This chapter argues that in the narrator's grief-focused mind, he believes and understands his emotional bonds to the pearl – which once so closely connected father and daughter in life – to constitute an emotional community of the family. When the young pearl-child was alive, the emotional

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[5] Elizabeth D. Kirk, 'The Anatomy of a Mourning: Reflections on the *Pearl* Dreamer', in *The Endless Knot: Essays in Old and Middle English in Honor of Marie Borroff,* ed. by M. Teresa Tavorima and R.F. Yeager (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), pp. 215-225 (p. 215).

regimes of the familial emotional community were rooted in the cherishing, nurturing and joyful nature of parental love, a type of love which is also mixed with feelings of protection and possessiveness for the child. However, with the noticeable absence of the pearl-child's mother or siblings (more of which will be discussed later in this chapter), and the death of the pearl-child, upon whom the narrator's emotional bonds and regimes are focused, the bonds of the familial emotional community are wholly lost.[6] In the poem's opening section, the narrator's grief is mingled with this parental protection and possessiveness as he fixates on the child's lost body and its deterioration in the grave. His grieving is disordered and destructive, demonstrating that *Pearl*'s emotional perspicacity lies in its recognition that grief and mourning are 'not so much about what has happened to the dead person as about what has happened to the living, what the survivor must do'.[7] It is a text which explores how the death of a loved person is a fundamental challenge to the identity of those left behind:

> Death is a massive challenge to human identity, the disclosure of an utter powerlessness framing our will to control others, our environments, and our selves. Death shatters networks in which human identity is created and sustained: we mourn, inevitably, for our selves and the unwelcome reminder of the contingency of all that gives us a sense of identity, the reminder of the precariousness of all that we habitually take for granted.[8]

Pearl addresses these challenges through the isolated figure of the narrator, for whom the loss of the pearl has shattered all sustaining networks and dissolved the bonds of the familial emotional community. A jeweller without his pearl may still be a jeweller, but a

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[6] 'Familie' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED15237/track?counter=1&search_id=6344392> [accessed 1st April 2021]. This entry gives only one illustrative example which refers to family as meaning 'household'. For discussion on the different roles within the medieval family unit, see *Medieval Family Roles: A Book of Essays*, ed. by Cathy Jorgensen Itnyre (London: Routledge, 2000).

[7] Kirk, 'The Anatomy of a Mourning', p. 217.

[8] David Aers, 'The Self Mourning: Reflections on *Pearl*', *Speculum*, 68 (1993), 54-73 (p. 56). In Aers' examination of the mourning processes in *Pearl*, he reflects on the judgments of the *Pearl*-narrator as foolish, sinful and self-pitying, arguing that these judgments 'take one's attention off the crushing pain we experience in the loss of those we love' (p. 58).

father without a child is no longer a father, an identity which appears to be so troubling to our collective consciousness that language fails to provide a title for it. Bereft of his emotional community, the narrator moves from a position of authority to powerlessness, from community to isolation, and from feelings of affection to desolation as his 'identity is effaced, and he must cultivate a new one' or recover his lost pearl.[9] The dream-vision has a clear emotional arc as the *Pearl*-poet scripts the narrator's journey from a solitary 'longeyng' (l. 244) for both the lost pearl and his emotional community, to a state in which, while not wholly consoled, he 'yern[s] no more then was me given' (l. 1190) and reaches an understanding of his changed identity within a Christian community 'in the forme of bred and wyn' (l. 1209).[10]

The second part of this chapter will explore the presence of another community in *Pearl* through the text's engagement in a linguistic and literary dialogue with contemporary French literature. *Pearl* is, after all, the most French of the works written by the *Pearl*-poet,[11] particularly when set against 'the more provincial practices of *Gawain*'.[12] *Pearl* is a dream-vision that adapts contemporary French poetic forms by employing octosyllabic stanzas and a complex pattern of end-rhymes. In its form and genre, therefore, *Pearl* appeals to an elevated audience of aristocratic readers 'with

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[9] Noelle Philips, 'Meeting One's Maker: The Jeweller in Fitt V of *Pearl*', *Glossator*, 9 (2015), 91-109 (p. 94). A.C. Spearing notes that the narrator's loss of identity means that his 'grief is really more for himself, not for her', in *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, p. 121.

[10] Helen Cooper offers a consolatory reading of *Pearl*'s narrative trajectory, writing that, as the poem reaches its conclusion, the narrator must return to 'the vale of tears [...] but with a new understanding of the order of nature in which he lives'; Cooper, 'The Supernatural', in *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet*, ed. by Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 277-293 (p. 285). Sarah Stanbury's reading, on the other hand, sees little comfort or consolation in the ending of the poem as she argues that the narrator 'must return to human losses and to the melancholic recapitulations of grief' when he returns to waking world; Stanbury, 'The Body and the City in *Pearl*', *Representations*, 48 (1994), 30-47 (p. 40).

[11] E.V. Gordon argues that '*Pearl* is closer to French poetic tradition than the others [Gawain, etc.] and less closely bound to the alliterative technique. There is about the same proportion of French words as in the works of Chaucer and Gower'. Gordon, ed., "French Element," in *Pearl* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 101-102.

[12] John M. Bowers, '*Pearl* in Its Royal Setting: Ricardian Poetry Revisited', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 17 (1995), 111-155 (p. 121).

Continental rather than narrowly insular tastes'[13] and situates itself within the international, francophile culture of Richard II's court, during a period when royal marriage contracts and peace treaties sought to deescalate levels of Anglo-French rivalry.[14] Illustrating the dominant role played by French culture and the elevated status of French literature in England, the *Pearl*-poet also presents the poem's most elevated visionary community – heaven, or the New Jerusalem - as being united by emotions associated with French cultural practices and lexicons. In addition, *Pearl* draws upon Guillaume de Machaut and Jean Froissart's marguerite poetry, which depicts 'the *marguerite preciosa*, the Biblical pearl of great price (Matthew 13: 45-6): an image of absolute desire, of absolute perfection, by definition unattainable in this life, and nameable only metaphorically'.[15] In *Pearl*, the image of the pearl develops this symbolism and appropriates the emotions expressed in marguerite texts, particularly the intimacy and frustration associated with the feeling of desire. The *Pearl*-poet, however, complicates this emotion by placing it in dialogue with the narrator's grief. In his state of grief, the narrator desires nothing more than to be reunited with his pearl, a desire that is fulfilled in the dream-vision. Yet, despite the narrator's desire being fulfilled, he remains unconsoled either by the pearl's presence or her elevated status as a heavenly bride of the Lamb. The *Pearl*-poet shows that the living and dead, and those in heaven and on earth

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[13] John M. Bowers, *The Politics of Pearl: Court Poetry in the Age of Richard II* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), p. 152.

[14] Bowers, *Politics of Pearl*, p. 186. Bowers, however, argues that *Pearl* was written as an elegy for Richard II's wife Anne of Bohemia, a view which my reading of a parent-child relationship refutes. There is general consensus that the poem was composed for an aristocratic audience, although the authorship of *Pearl* remains a contentious issue. On theories of authorship see, Ann R. Meyer, 'The Despensers and the *Gawain*-poet: A Gloucestershire Link to the Alliterative Master of the Northwest Midlands', *The Chaucer Review*, 35.4 (2001), 413-429 (pp. 413-16); Oscar Cargill and Margaret Schlauch, 'The *Pearl* and Its Jeweller', *PMLA*, 43.1 (1928), 105-123; Clifford D. Peterson, 'The *Pearl*-poet and John Massey of Cotton, Cheshire', *The Review of English Studies*, 25.99 (1974), 257-266; William Vantuono, 'John de Mascy of Sale and the *Pearl* Poems', *Manuscripta*, 25.2 (1981), 77-88.

[15] Daisy Huot, 'The Daisy and the Laurel: Myths of Desire and Creativity in the Poetry of Jean Froissart', *Yale French Studies*, 80 (1991), 240-251 (p. 251).

cannot be fully reunited, thereby illustrating the more complex processes of emotional resolution and consolation which are involved in the work of grief.

The complex work of grief is also explored through the narrator's act of revisiting the loss of his daughter again and again over the course of the dream-vision, transforming the pearl into a figure who is both familiar and unfamiliar, someone who *is* and *is not* the child he once knew. In the heavenly dream landscape the dreamer clings to his understanding of hierarchy and authority, yet this perspective is wholly incompatible with heavenly logic. As he stands on the other side of the river, looking towards the Pearl-Maiden and her heavenly home, the narrator is caught between an earthly and heavenly perspective, seeing but not comprehending how the daughter has become the authority figure, the parent the questioning, dependent child, and the living a disturbed spirit, haunting those who have died.[16] By contrast, the Pearl-Maiden – the dreamer's child, jewel and treasure – has been incorporated fully into the emotional community of heaven. The final part of the chapter will examine the *Pearl*-poet's vision of the heavenly emotional community, who are all joined in blissful contemplation of the Lamb. In this heavenly community all elements which bind an emotional community and cause division and conflict, including class, nation, gender, and language, no longer exist. In the heavenly realm, there is perfect harmony. *Pearl*'s description of the heavenly community aligns the community with the language of Revelation or biblical language, yet the individuals within this community transcend language and are shown not to speak at all to one another. Thus, the sense of wholeness and unity as a community undermines the very existence of an emotional community – all individuals within the community adhere to the same 'gret delyt' (l. 1105), but no other emotions exist to be valued or devalued by

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[16] Jane Gilbert, *Living Death in Medieval French and English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 151.

the community. The narrator must therefore come to terms not only with the loss of his child and his earthly emotional community, but also the final loss of all emotional communities in heaven, a place where emotional communities no longer exist. As *Pearl* reaches its culminating moment and the narrator attempts to cross the river to reach the Pearl-Maiden, the *Pearl*-poet demonstrates the ultimate elusiveness of heaven as a space and community beyond earthly understanding and human emotions.

The Narrator's Isolation and Loss of the Family Community

The opening lines of the *Pearl*-poem introduce the pearl as a treasured, yet enigmatic and allusive object:

> Perle, plesaunte to prynces paye
>
> To clanly clos in golde so clere;
>
> Oute of orient, I hardyly saye,
>
> Ne proved I never her precios pere.
>
> So rounde, so reken in uche araye,
>
> So small, so smothe her sydes were,
>
> Quere-so ever I jugged gemmes gaye,
>
> I sette hyr sengeley in synglere. (l. 1-8)

The passage describes the pearl's unique qualities and value as a jewel treasured above all others. The pearl was 'clanly clos in golde so clere' (l. 2), finely set in the most precious of materials and its exceptional quality means that it was 'pleasaunte to prynces paye' (l. 1) and thus pleasing even to royal tastes. The narrator states that he never found the pearl's equal or 'precios pere' (l. 4) amongst other fine materials and he therefore set the pearl 'sengeley in synglere' (l. 8). The narrator is an astute assessor of the pearl's quality as he 'jugged gemmes gaye' (l. 7), identifying himself as a jeweller who is able to appraise the size, shape, and condition of the gem which was 'So rounde, so reken in uche araye, | So small, so smothe her sydes were' (l. 6). Here, the reader is privy to the

assessment of a professional jeweller whose expert eye moves from the object's overall shape to the closer details of its small, delicate size and smooth quality – the characteristics of the most exemplary and expensive pearls.[17] As Felicity Riddy has observed, *Pearl*'s opening lines first present the narrator as a professional jeweller, and the 'language of the jeweller's craft and trade' precedes that of the narrator's other identities. [18] The narrator's professional appraisal of the pearl and his estimation of its material value at first suggest that the poem's opening stanza conspicuously lacks any focus on emotion and intimate feelings.

Yet, *Pearl* is a poem which resists singular meanings and the lines describing the size and shape of the pearl are carefully selected to be equally appropriate to describe the form of a small child. This precious pearl-child was 'so smal, so smothe' (l. 5), adjectives that evoke the roundness and softness of a small infant's form. Thus, the physicality of the description – 'we might imagine the Jeweller acting out the process of holding the pearl as he recounts her dimensions'[19] – is the first indication that the pearl is not only a beautiful gem but is also a small child who was not yet two years old when she died. When the reader is attentive to the different levels of signification in this opening stanza, therefore, the poignant quality of this memory of a child's lost body is made clear.

If the pearl represents both a gem and a child, this also means that the narrator is both jeweller and father to the lost pearl. Within *Pearl,* father and pearl-child are joined

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[17] Beatriz Chadour-Sampson, *Pearls* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum Publishing, 2013), p. 3-4. For discussion of the various meanings of pearls in the late-medieval period, see Theodore Bogdanos, *Pearl: Image of the Ineffable, A Study in Medieval Poetic Symbolism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), pp. 14-19; A.C. Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 135; P.J. Heather, 'Precious Stones in the Middle English Verse of the Fourteenth Century', *Folklore*, 42.4 (1931), 343-404.
[18] Felicity Riddy, 'Jewels in *Pearl*', in *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet*, ed. by Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 143-155 (p. 145).
[19] William M. Storm, 'The Arbor and the Pearl: Encapsulating Meaning in "Spot," *Glossator,* 9 (2015), 1-19 (p. 4).

together as a family and are therefore bound together as an emotional community.[20] As demonstrated by the narrator's attachment to the pearl throughout the poem, the family relationship between father and pearl-child constitutes an emotional community because their bonds were based on the shared emotions of love, affection, attention and care between family members[21] - emotions which are most pronounced and strong within the parent-child relationship.[22] It must be acknowledged, however, that the emotional life of the medieval family has been described as 'indisputably the most elusive of subjects'[23] and the critical tradition has long asserted that medieval people not only lacked sensitivity towards children and childhood, but that emotion and affect were absent within medieval families.[24] These views remain influential, but recent research has done much to reconfigure views of the medieval family by examining the relationships, responsibilities, and expectations of family members.[25] Paul Binski has argued that the inclusion of

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[20] Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy observe that the men and women of the Middle Ages 'were *bound*: to their family and relatives first and foremost, but also to their community or a larger social group, to their followers or to a lord, and of course to the Lord', in Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, p. 50.

[21] Claudia Jarzebowski's use of the term 'family emotions' references the concept of 'emotional communities' but does not distinguish the family as an emotional community. Jarzebowski, '"Will we ever meet again?' Children Travelling the World in the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in *Gender and Emotions in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*: Destroying Order, Structuring Disorder ed. Susan Broomhall (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 215-233 (p. 218).

[22] Medieval parental expressions of feeling for their children are more pervasive than those of children for their parent, particularly due to a lack of children's sources. Phillipa Maddern has however, addressed some of aspects of this overlooked topic in 'How Children Were Supposed to Feel: How Children Felt: 1350-1530', in *Childhood and Emotion: Across Cultures 1450-1800,* ed. by Claudia Jazebowski and Thomas M. Safley (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 121-141.

[23] David Herlihy, 'The Family and Religious Ideologies in Medieval Europe' in *Family History at the Crossroads: A Journal of Family History Reader*, ed. by Tamara K. Hareven and Anrejs Plakans (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 3-19 (p. 11).

[24] Philippe Ariès famously questioned the concept of childhood in the Middle Ages in *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (London: Vintage Books, 1962). Historians of the Early Modern and Modern period are the most vocal supporters of Ariès's view, see Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), Lloyd DeMause, *The History of Childhood* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 1974).

[25] Medieval families were varied and not only encompassed fathers, mothers and their children, but could also include grandparents, stepparents and other children. For a discussion of the varied relationships and types of family in the medieval period, see *Love, Marriage and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Isabel Davis, Miriam Müller and Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), Jenny Kermode, 'Sentiment and Survival: Family and Friends in Late Medieval English Towns', *Journal of Family History*, 24 (1999), 5-18, Peter Fleming, *Family and Household in Medieval* England (London: Macmillan, 2000), *Finding the Family in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, ed. by Elizabeth Ewan and Janay Nugent (London: Ashgate, 2008); Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001). Much historical research into the

images of children, both living and dead, on the tombs and monuments of their parents indicates an increase in the importance of the family in the fourteenth-century.[26] Heidi Dawson's study of such memorials recognises that images of descendants may indicate that 'parents gained status through their children and the size of their family', but she also suggests that they might equally imply that children were 'important and loved by their parent for their own sake'. [27] In relation to *Pearl,* the memorialisation of families in late-medieval imagery indicates that absent family members, specifically those children who had died, were important and continued to be part of the emotional community of the family, even after death.

Indeed, there is an increasing critical focus on the affective element within medieval families and within the parent-child relationship, demonstrating that there was 'a clear emphasis on the cultural and social benefits of creating emotional bonds between fathers and children' within medieval culture. [28] Expressions of parental love are evident throughout *Pearl*'s first stanza. The description of the pearl's elegant setting, 'clanly clos in golde so clere' (l. 2), evokes the protective enclosure of the child within a father's love. When the narrator describes the pearl's body as 'so smal, so smothe her sydes were' (l. 6), we might imagine the parent holding their child and observing the soft fragility of an infant's form, a description which evokes a parent's close, nurturing care for the child and

medieval family has been influenced by the work of Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) and *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[26] Paul Binski cites the royal example of the tomb of Edward III (d. 1377) which had small bronze figurines attached to the tomb. He suggests that the imagery of descendants replaced that of ancestors. Binski also examines the memorial brasses of children who had died, with the example of Eleanor, granddaughter of John Corp (d. 1391) at Stoke Fleming, showing the child lifted up onto a pedestal and demonstrating her value as a loved child. Binski challenges the views of Ariès, suggesting that the high infant mortality rate of the late medieval period may have led to an increase in the value and affection shown towards children by their parents and families. *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 105-106.

[27] Heidi Dawson, *Unearthing Late Medieval Children: Health, Status and Burial Practice in Southern England* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014), p. 18.

[28] Juliann Vitullo, *Negotiating the Art of Fatherhood in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

the love and protection that are fundamental to the emotional bonds of the family. The

stanza closes with a repeated phrase connecting the five stanzas of the fitt, as the narrator

describes his infant daughter as his 'pryvy perle wythouten spot' (l. 12). 'Privy', which

carries the sense of personal, intimate, or one's own, conveys the father's intimacy with

the pearl.[29] The narrator's focus on his child's innocence and purity, her being 'wythouten

spot' (l. 12), also relates to a parent's loving affection for a child as it signifies that she

was comparable to the spotless purity of a clean, white pearl. What is more, the phrase

reflects the Church's teaching that 'if infants were baptised and their original sin washed

away, until they were old enough to commit personal sin (usually thought to be around

the age of seven), they would go straight to heaven'.[30] Thus, the pearl-child is without

spot because her young soul was innocent and untainted by the corruption of sin, a detail

which makes her father's grief all the more acute.

    Pearl's vision of the medieval family also reflects an emotional community in

which 'the deferential love owed to a father was fundamental', as this emotion acted as a

stabilising force that asserted the father's position as the head of the family. [31] The

narrator's dual identity as a jeweller and a father is central to understanding the

importance of paternal authority in the medieval family. Jewellers and father share a

number of characteristics, as both are the maker, preserver and keep of the pearl. As the

pearl's maker, the jeweller has 'the power to preserve, judge and craft his jewels'[32] and

his sustained focus on the pearl's singularity suggest that his joy at the recollection of the

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[29] The word 'privy' derives from Old French, and carries the sense of personal, intimate, one's own; *Pearl*, ed. by Sarah Stanbury (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), n. 12. 'Privē' in *MED* [online], < https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED34713/track?counter=3&search_id=6394722> [accessed 1st December 2019].
[30] Adrienne E. Gavin, *The Child in British Literature: Literary Constructions of Childhood, Medieval to Contemporary* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 12.
[31] Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, p. 51.
[32] Phillips, 'The Jeweller in Fitt V of *Pearl*', p. 96.

pearl is contingent on his ownership of the object.[33] When the narrator later refers to the

pearl as '*My* privy perle' [my emphasis], the use of privy, a word which conveys a close

or intimate connection, when used in combination with the personal pronoun, conveys a

sense of paternal ownership: the pearl is the narrator's created child and is therefore *his* to

treasure and worship. Indeed, within the medieval family, the father would have a legally

and socially enforced position of authority as 'he had the absolute right to govern the

household as he wished'.[34] Children were expected to show obedience and deference

towards their father as it was the natural order for the lesser to obey the greater.[35] Paternal

authority was of even greater importance in families with daughters as the father's role

was to govern and guide, and the daughter's was to 'obey in silence, or at least with little

speech, as '"idle talk" [was] something for which medieval women were often

chastised'.[36] We will see that these roles will later be reversed in the dream-vision,

however, at the beginning of *Pearl*, the narrator's joy at the recollection of his child is

contingent on how she affirmed authority as a father and his role as a moral and

emotional guide for the emotional community of the family. Yet, the narrator states that

he has 'leste' (l. 9) his pearl, a detail that demonstrates that neither the jeweller nor the

father have permanent ownership of the pearl or the daughter. The jeweller would be

expected to craft the precious gem and then pass it on to a wealthy patron. Similarly, the

father would be expected to care, preserve, and support the daughter through her

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[33] Helen Barr argues that the choice of the jeweller persona 'embeds a commercial and social outlook at the centre of the poem and that the poem's opening section reflects the commercial, financial concerns of a jeweller who 'grieves for a pearl which he identifies as belonging exclusively to him'; Helen Barr, '*Pearl* – Or the Jeweller's Tale', *Medium Aevum*, 69 (2000), 59-79 (p. 60).

[34] Rachel E. Moss observes that medieval paternal power was nearly limitless and from the historical evidence of real medieval families, 'it is clear that the father was the ultimate source of power, and he expected to be obeyed'; Rachel E. Moss, *Fatherhood and its Representations in Middle English Texts* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), p. 187.

[35] The canon lawyer Gratian stated that 'It is the order of nature among human beings that women obey men and sons obey their parents, because it is justice in these matters that the lesser obey the greater'; in Elizabeth Archibald, *Incest in the Medieval Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 145.

[36] Moss, *Fatherhood and its Representations in Middle English Texts*, p. 116.

childhood and then pass her to a different emotional community through her marriage or the entering of a convent. By representing the narrator as both father and jeweller, and pearl as both gem and daughter, the *Pearl*-poet establishes 'a language that is used throughout to address ideas of human preciousness, value and loss'.[37]

The loss of the pearl is described in the final lines of the first stanza, where the narrator describes her loss in a garden of spice plants and flowers:

Allas! I leste hyr in on erbere;

Thurgh gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.

I dewyne, fordolked of luf-daungere

Of that pryvy perle wythouten spot.

Sythen in that spote hit fro me sprange,

Ofte haf I wayted, wyschande that wele

That wont was whyle devoyde my wrange

And heven my happe and al my hele. (ll. 11-18)

Here, the link-word of the first stanza group, 'spot', shifts meaning from a sense of blemish to one of place and exact position. The narrator turns his attention to the 'spot' as the location of the pearl's grave. His physical proximity to the place of her burial and 'morbid focus on her ubiety' [the condition of being in a definite place] centres his feelings of grief and 'reveals his emotional and spiritual affliction'.[38] The location of the pearl acts as both an emotional anchor for the narrator's grief and a physical anchor, as if he is unable to leave the spot in which his child now resides. His rootedness to 'that spote' (l. 14) seems even starker when we consider the impermanence of medieval graves as resting places for the dead:

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[37] Riddy, 'Jewels in *Pearl*', p. 145.
[38] Katherine H. Terrell, 'Rethinking the "Corse in clot": Cleanness, Filth, and Bodily Decay in *Pearl*', *Studies in Philology*, 105 (2008), 429-447 (p. 432).

> Children in medieval England, like their elders, were normally buried in churchyards
> beneath shallow mounds. The mounds had no permanence or lasting memorials, because
> the ground was constantly re-used for burials, especially in towns. Children's graves
> might be scattered among those of adults, or clustered in one spot. […] Burial inside
> churches was restricted to adults and children of rank: clergy, nobility, gentry,
> merchants.[39]

Just as a small, round pearl would be difficult to find if it 'trendeled doun' (l. 41) into the earth, the pearl-child's body may be similarly difficult to locate within her burial ground given the impermanence of burial mounds. The word spot then becomes a word associated with both absence and presence. The pearl, in death and in her burial place, is made wholly intangible, yet the narrator haunts the spot of her loss in order to focus his grief upon a space which is perceptible and physically present before him.

In his acute state of grief, the narrator focuses only on physical knowledge, fixing his emotions on the pearl's small form now enclosed within the ground, rather than acknowledging – and finding consolation in – the knowledge that in death her spiritual form has transcended earthly existence and physical pain. The absence of any references to the spiritual significance of the pearl's loss demonstrates that grief has made the narrator's perspective both earthly and earth-focused, as he articulates the process of the pearl-child's loss in terms that associate her with the earth in which she now lies. The narrator describes the moment of her loss as a movement away from the safety of his grasp towards the ground and 'Thurgh the gresse to grounde it fro me yot' (l. 10). We might imagine this movement as the parent allowing their growing child to move from the protection of their arms to crawl, walk, or play on the open expanse of the grass. Yet, as *Pearl* describes the moment of loss, the parent's care has been unable to protect the

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[39] Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 120.

child and the most terrible of parental fears has been realised as the pearl-child has moved from the 'gresse' to the 'ground' (l. 10) of the grave.[40] Richard Newhauser has observed that the process of the pearl's loss is depicted as a downward motion that evokes the downwards movement of the corpse frequently depicted in medieval lyrics, as the body moves from the bed, to the floor, and finally to the grave.[41] The 'spot if fro me sprange' (l. 13), therefore becomes a physical focus for the narrator's love, guilt and grief for his child as his memories fixate on the event of the pearl's loss, and the physical proximity of a lost person who remains close yet wholly unreachable within the grave.

As the narrator contemplates the 'pryvy perle' (l. 12) which now lies in 'that spote' (l. 13), he continually returns to thoughts of death and decay. He first contemplates the natural processes of generation and decomposition undergone by the flowers covering the grave where 'such ryches to rot is runne' (l. 26), observing the place where the pearl 'doun drif in moldes dunne; | For uch gresse mot grow of graynes dede' (ll. 30-31). The narrator's grief-focused perspective causes him to link these naturally cyclical processes with the processes of decay which are happening to the pearl-child's body:

> To thence hir color so clad in clot.
>
> O moul, thou marres a myry juele,
>
> My privy perle wythouten spotte. (ll. 22-24)

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[40] A number of theories have been proposed as to the reason for the pearl-child's death, including David K. Coley's comprehensive argument that *Pearl* is a 'lament for one young plague victim'; David K. Coley, '*Pearl* and the Narrative of Pestilence', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 35 (2013), 209-262 (p. 216). My reading of this particular line, however, might align the loss of the pearl-child with some form of accidental death. Barbara Hanawalt has examined details of the accidental deaths of children in the medieval period, suggesting that the rate of such deaths was dramatically higher amongst children in infancy under the age of four. The parents of children involved in accidents were often overcome by guilt and grief at the loss of their child, in Barbara Hanawalt, 'Childrearing Among the Lower Classes of Late Medieval England', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 8 (1977), 1-22; 'Medievalists and the Study of Children', *Speculum,* 77 (2002), 440-60.

[41] Richard Newhauser, 'Sources II: Scriptural and Devotional Sources', in *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet,* ed. Brewer and Gibson, pp. 257-75, quoted in Terrell, 'Cleanness, Filth, and Bodily Decay in *Pearl*', p. 432.

In these lines, the narrator's perspective conforms to the 'traditional belief that the pearl survived untarnished its burial in mire' and he is therefore 'unconsciously betraying his earthbound view'.[42] In his state of grief, the narrator is only able to focus on the pearl's physical absence and her body within the grave, neglecting entirely any focus on how the pearl's soul has now transcended all physical concerns. Again, the narrator describes the pearl as being 'wythouten spotte' (l. 24), but in this stanza, his contemplation of her purity in life appears to make the processes of decay being wrought upon her body cause even greater emotional pain. The father's love, which once held the pearl so 'clanly clos' (l. 2), is now replaced by the 'clot' in which she is now 'clad' (l. 22). She was a 'myry juele' (l. 23), a treasured, perfect form, which is now being spoiled and disfigured by the 'clot' (l. 22) and 'moul' (l. 23) of the earth. In the narrator's view, 'the image of the corpse is the antithesis of the image of the pearl: filthy instead of clean, corrupt instead of perfect, the corpse evokes only horror in the Dreamer'.[43] Nevertheless, the descriptions of the body's processes of decay always remain somewhat elusive and frequently appear to deliberately lack explicit detail.[44] This restraint not only reflects a parent's inability to conceptualise fully the decay of their child's body, but it also ensures that the narrator's concern for his absent child's physical form has a greater emotional impact. The depiction of the narrator as a grieving father haunted by images of the pearl-child's decay has an emotional effect on *Pearl*'s readers, who feel the pain of his contemplative thoughts, reflects how grief is an emotion which is viscerally experienced, practiced and processed by those who mourn.

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[42] Andrew and Waldron, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, p. 55, 22f.n.
[43] Terrell, 'Cleanness, Filth, and Bodily Decay in *Pearl*', p. 433.
[44] Terrell argues that *Pearl*'s emphasis on decay is slight in comparison with the 'more grisly imagery' of other poems, particularly the macabre art and literature that flourished in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Terrell, 'Cleanness, Filth, and Bodily Decay in *Pearl',* p. 434.

The narrator's focus on the grave and the body which lies within it continues until the final stanza of *Pearl*'s first fitt when he reiterates his feelings of desolation at the pearl's loss:

> Bifore that spot my honed I spenned
>
> For care ful colde that to me caght;
>
> A devely dele in my hert denned
>
> Thagh resoun sette myselven saght.
>
> I playned my perle that ther was spenned
>
> Wyth fyrce skylles that faste faght. (ll. 49-54)

The narrator struggles to accept what his 'resoun' knows to be true; that 'the lost pearl is not lost merely in space but in time: the child whom he remembers belongs to the past, and exhuming her body would hardly remedy his grief'.[45] He rejects reason in favour of emotion, giving himself up to thoughts of his child and the visceral experience of grief as a 'devely dele in my hert denned' (l. 51). He turns to thoughts of enclosure and imprisonment as he 'playned my perle that ther was spenned' (l. 53).[46] This preoccupation with imprisonment and the pearl being 'spenned' (l. 53) within the burial mound gestures towards the way the pearl-child was likely to have been buried, enclosed either in a coffin or in a shroud, the most common burial practices of the medieval period.[47] Indeed, later in the dream-vision, the Pearl-Maiden also reminds the narrator that she is 'in cofer so comly clente' (l. 259). The word 'cofer' has a number of meanings, and can be defined as both 'a trunk, chest, or case of any size for storing or carrying

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[45] Terrel, 'Cleanness, Filth, and Bodily Decay in *Pearl*', p. 433.

[46] 'Spennen' in *MED* [online] <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED42126/track?counter=1&search_id=6394722> [accessed 8th January 2020], definition 1c. to enclose (sth.), to imprison.

[47] Deirdre O'Sullivan, 'Burial of the Christian Dead in the Later Middle Ages', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial,* ed. by Liv Nilsson Stutz and Sarah Tarlow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 259-281 (p. 261).

valuables' or 'a coffin or casket'.[48] The Pearl-Maiden acknowledges then that her body

lies within the burial ground and that she is now wrapped in her burial shroud and placed

in her coffin.[49] In this interaction, however, the Pearl-Maiden also indicates to the

narrator that her soul now resides in the 'cofer' (l. 259) of the paradisal landscape, the

'gardyn gracious gaye' (l. 260) which is a heavenly structure which contains and sustains

the pearl within the jewel box of the heavenly city.[50] Yet, despite this reminder of the

spiritual significance of the pearl's loss, the narrator clings to his earthbound perspective

as he is only able to contemplate how her body is separated from him ('your perle is

awaye' (l. 258)) and decaying beneath the earth.

For the grieving narrator therefore, the 'cofer' (l. 259) and shroud within which

the pearl is 'spenned' (l. 53) not only physically cover the body and prepare it for the

grave, they also symbolically mark the dead as being separate and enclosed away from

the living. Even within the protective space of the coffin, the body would be 'spenned' (l.

53) by the grave and exposed to the earth, dirt and 'moul' (l. 23), again indicating that in

death, the pearl is no longer 'wythouten spot' (l. 12). Furthermore, the pearl's enclosure

within a burial shroud might also represent a morbid inversion of the swaddling clothes

that the daughter, as a child who, having lived 'not two yer' (l. 483) and only reaching the

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[48] 'Cofre' in *MED* [online] <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED8258/track?counter=1&search_id=6394722> [accessed 26th January 2020], definition 1a. a trunk, chest, or case of any size for storing or carrying valuables of any kind and 3b. a cradle or basket.

[49] In the late-medieval and early modern period, it was customary that 'once shrouded or dressed, the body would have been put in a coffin', Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England: 1066-1550* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 40.

[50] 'Cofre' in *MED* [online], definition 2a. a treasure chest or money box. Sarah Stanbury's psychoanalytic reading proposes that the narrator's grief projects the landscape of the dream-vision into being. Through this dream landscape, the pearl's lost body is transformed into a structure which will last for eternity. The New Jerusalem 'becomes an imagistic crypt in which her body is transposed and preserved by stone'; Sarah Stanbury, 'The Body and the City in *Pearl*', *Representations*, 48 (1994), 30-47 (p. 40).

later point of the *infantia* stage of development,[51] would have so recently worn.[52] If the pearl-child was close to two years old when she died, she would have reached an age at which she would be able to crawl, walk and talk, a view supported by the verbs used to describe the pearl's movement away from the narrator: 'for me yot' (l. 10), 'fro me sprange' (l. 13), 'trendled doun' (l. 41) descriptions which all evoke the tottering, though sudden movements of a small child. In the narrator's memories of the pearl-child, however, he returns the pearl to an earlier stage of infancy, gurgling rather than speaking, and contained in swaddling clothes rather than moving away from the father's protective embrace.[53] Swaddling involved the 'baby's clothes [being] fastened into a compact bundle […] achieved with long strips of cloth, known as 'cradle-bands', 'swaddle-bands', or 'swaddling-bands', wound in a criss-cross fashion'.[54] It was a custom that 'reflected the belief that babies' bodies were flexible and that limbs, if not constrained, would grow crookedly' and was a means of providing warmth, containment and protection for the infant child. [55] For the pearl-child, however, the swaddling clothes that had so recently contained, covered and protected her small body have been swapped for the shroud, a different type of enclosing cloth which symbolises how the pearl's death has created distance from the emotional community of the family and separated her from the protection of her father's love.

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[51] Medieval concepts of the stages of childhood defined the *infantia* proper stage as being from birth until two years, in Heidi Dawson, *Unearthing Late Medieval Children*, p. 14. For further discussion of the stages of childhood in the Middle Ages see Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990); Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); and Barbara A. Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); *Growing Up in Medieval London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[52] The evidence detailing the age at which infants stopped being swaddled is limited, but it is likely that a child would have been swaddled for the first few months of life. Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, p. 115.

[53] Sophie Oosterwijk has argued that representations of swaddled infants on medieval tomb monuments 'illustrate a need on the part of parents and siblings to commemorate the brief lives of those children who might otherwise have been ignored by history', in Sophie Oosterwijk, 'Chrysoms, Shrouds and Infants on English Tomb Monuments: A Question of Terminology?' *Church Monuments,* 15 (2000), 44-64 (p. 48).

[54] Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 62.

[55] Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 63.

It is not only the pearl who is 'spenned' (l. 53) in the burial ground; the narrator is also enclosed within the space of the 'erbere' (l. 9) where he contemplates his lost pearl. The arbour, a 'curious mixture of cloister garden and romantic bower', is depicted as a cultivated, green space in which trees and plants form a natural border which contains the narrator within the garden. [56] The arbour clearly draws on depictions of enclosed gardens found in scriptural tradition, including the Garden of Eden and the *hortus conclusus* of the Song of Songs, examples of sacred natural spaces which symbolise the perfection, purity, and life-giving fruitfulness of the natural world which must be protected from the corruption of the world outside their boundaries. *Pearl*'s manuscript illustration shows trees and plants forming a number of natural borders which contain the sleeping dreamer in the garden space.[57] Yet, this is also the arbour in which the pearl is buried; death and decay have already entered this garden and the narrator is therefore imprisoned within a space where thoughts of loss, absence, and decay are often close at hand. The arbour therefore acts as a place which emotionally imprisons the narrator; it is a private space which contains only himself and his lost pearl and, in his state of grief, he becomes wholly absorbed by the location of her burial and a contemplation of her absence. The private, intimate nature of the arbour means that it appears to be a substitute 'domestic space' in which the narrator attempts to re-establish a connection to, or recapture the memory of, his lost emotional community of the family.[58] This domestic space is not circumscribed by the roof and walls of the family home but by the natural, more

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[56] Jim Rhodes, 'Exile and the Kingdom in the Middle English *Pearl*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer,* 16 (1994), 119-142 (p. 127).

[57] C.A. Luttrell's description of the manuscript image emphasises this sense of borders and containment: 'Along the foreground, plants for one border; two rows of plants and one or two trees marking off other borders, and converging towards the background from left and right, to indicate, by their recession, the shape as a square or a rectangle; a curve, by a form of perspective, defining the limits of the erber – and beyond it trees in the distance', in C.A. Luttrell, '*Pearl*: Symbolism in a Garden Setting', *Neophilologus*, 49 (1965), 160-176 (p. 164).

[58] Georges Duby, *A History of Private Life,* 4 vols, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1988), II, p. 7.

ephemeral coverings of trees, vines, and ivy.[59] The narrator's family, and the domestic space in which this emotional community had previously been contained, now no longer exist, and the arbour becomes a space of retreat into memory and the past. Indeed, when the narrator describes his pearl, it is always in the past tense. His joy at her existence, his position as her father, and his place within the emotional community of the family are 'all but a memory; the world has faded away, and all that remains to him is a small, green arbour where he lost his Pearl'.[60] His grief for all that he has lost casts a shadow on all the narrator surveys within the garden and nature only serves as a reminder of death and decay. The aromatic plants 'Gilofre, gyngure and gromylyoun, | And pyonys powdered ay bytwene' (ll. 43-44) are not appreciated for their restorative scent or natural beauty, but instead 'Schadowed' (l. 42) the 'huyl' (l. 41) where the 'perle hit trendeled doun' (l. 41). The arbour becomes a prison of grief, containing and sustaining the narrator's mournful contemplation, whilst also shutting out the world beyond, to make the arbour a private or 'privy' (l. 24) in which to remember his 'privy perle' (l. 24).

Despite the private, introspective nature of the narrator's memories, the emotion words expressed by the narrator towards his pearl offer a stark contrast to the images of imprisonment. He describes how,

> Sythen in that spote hit fro me sprange,
>
> Ofte haf I wayted, wyschande that wele
>
> That wont was whyle devoyde my wrange,
>
> And heven my happe and al my hele (ll. 13-16)

The narrator's wishing and waiting for the pearl evokes feelings of yearning, longing and reaching out towards the loved object, an impression which is heightened by the

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[59] 'Arbour' from *OED* [online] <https://www-oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/10234definition> [accessed 5th January 2020], definition 5.a. a bower or shady retreat, of which the sides and roof are formed by trees and shrubs closely planted or intertwined, or of lattice-work covered with climbing shrubs and plants, as ivy, vine, etc.
[60] Storm, 'The Arbor and the Pearl', p. 12.

elongated, open sound of the alliterative 'w' used in these lines. The physical

manifestations of his emotional pain are also described as outward movements as the

narrator goes on to describe how his 'hert thrange' (l. 17), his 'breste in bale bot bolne

and bele' (l. 18), and at the end of the poem's opening section he reaches out to clasp the

lost pearl (l. 49). The narrator's deeply felt, embodied grief makes him the 'needy, hungry

and vulnerable person', whilst the absent pearl becomes the 'nurturer and physician, the

source of life-giving plenitude'.[61] In this courtly language, the lost object appears as a

desired object, 'the ground of all his bliss',[62] and thus, the narrator's grief becomes

inextricably linked with the courtly emotion of desire.

This is the first indication, prior to the dream, that the narrator's emotions

are participating in the emotional regimes of French poetry, specifically those found in

the marguerite tradition. The term *marguerite* can be closely associated with the popular

saintly and courtly name Margaret, but it is also translatable into English as a daisy or

pearl, and it is therefore a poetic tradition which has been associated closely with the

Middle English *Pearl*-poem.[63] Defined by its central image, marguerite poetry engages

with the feeling of desire for the loved object, a complex feeling which balances between

the need, want or desire for something and the resistance to the pleasurable fulfilment of

that desire.[64] The chapter's next section will include a more detailed discussion of the

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[61] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 54.

[62] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 57.

[63] James I. Wimsatt recognises that marguerite poetry had a significant impact on Chaucer's Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* and Usk's *Testament of Love* but is more hesitant to firmly associate marguerite poetry with *Pearl*, arguing that that it 'perhaps' influenced the Middle English dream-vision, in James I. Wimsatt, *The Marguerite Poetry of Guillaume de Machaut* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 22. Jane Gilbert is much more decisive in affirming the influence of marguerite poetry on the *Pearl*-poem, arguing that '*Pearl* is also a marguerite poem', in *Living Death*, p. 155.

[64] Jane Gilbert's Lacanian reading coincides with Lacan's account of courtly love, and defines desire as being 'torn between an impulse towards a fulfilment which would be the death of desire, hence the destitution of the subject, and an inertia impelling us towards a frustration that enables desire to spring anew, and therefore subjective life to continue. […] Humans move within this field, now nearer, now more distant, and our constant circling around the goal allows anything that stands within the field to masquerade as the ultimately fulfilling object of desire. Approaching the goal provokes anxiety, and it is with relief as well as disappointment that we fall back under the sway of the (un)pleasure principle, whose job it is to allow us to enjoy as little as possible', in *Living Death*, p. 179.

presence of desire in Pearl's dream-vision, but for now it is important to note that early in the poem, the *Pearl*-poet is both drawing on and subverting the desire expressed in marguerite poetry. Jean Froissart's 'Le Dit de la Margheritte', for example, describes the marguerite as an object of desire:

> Tant est plaisans et belle au regarder
>
> Que dou veoir ne me puis soeler
>
> Tous jours vodroie avoec li demorer
>
> Pour ses vertus justement aviser
>
> Il mest advis quelle na point de per
>
> […]
>
> Son douls veoir grandement me pourfite
>
> Et pour ce est dedens mon coer escripte
>
> Si plainnement. (ll. 10-25)
>
> [She is so pleasant and beautiful to gaze upon, that I can't get too much of looking at her. Every day I'd like to stay by her side, so as to take proper notice of her virtues. […] The sweet sight of her does me much good, and thus she's inscribed within my heart.][65]

Froissart's text depicts the marguerite, and the narrator's desire for it, as life-giving and affirmative, as if it is only the sight of the marguerite that 'me pourfite' (l. 23) [benefits me]. She is a living object, full of vitality, as she is singled out as a peerless 'florete' (l. 29) [little flower] who is also 'La souverainne' (l. 31) [a sovereign mistress] who looks out onto the natural world 'Ou nourie est dun so douls element' (l. 42) [where she is nourished by fair weather]. For Froissart's narrator, then, physical proximity to the marguerite is important, with the repeated use of the present tense suggesting his direct contact with the loved object. The marguerite is a desired object which can be seen,

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[65] Jean Froissart, 'Le Dit de la Margheritte', in *Jean Froissart: An Anthology of Narrative and Lyric Poetry,* ed. & trans., Kristen M. Figg and R. Barton Palmer (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), p. 480-481. English translation in Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 182, hereafter cited parenthetically by line number throughout the chapter.

assessed, and admired, and the narrator is consumed by his desire to have direct, visual contact with her. *Pearl*, by contrast, describes a form of desire based on absence; the pearl is beyond the narrator's reach, both a precious gem which is lost in the earth, a body that is decaying in the grave, and a child who has died. He yearns to recapture the happy memory of his life before the pearl's loss because the pearl's presence, much like the marguerite's, had cheered and sustained the narrator, as she was 'my happe and al my hele' (l. 16). Yet the visual presence of the marguerite means that her ability to sustain the narrator surpasses that of the pearl. Froissart's narrator explains that there is

> Neut le parel de joie vraiement
>
> Que javerai seurs le me consent
>
> De ce penser mont espoir fait present
>
> Un long termine' (ll. 37-40)
>
> [[no] joy equal to the one I will obtain, if fate consents to it. Hope made me a present of this thought, for a long time].

The marguerite, this peerless object, unmatched in beauty and virtue, represents possibility for the narrator and provides hope for 'further joy in return for his devotion'.[66] In *Pearl*, the narrator has focused throughout the opening section on the pearl's death and absence, rather than on the spiritual significance of her loss, which might offer hope and further joy. Instead, the grieving narrator retreats into memories of his child and an emotional community which no longer exists. Reaching out in a hopeless search for his lost pearl, the narrator heightens his isolation and separates himself from other forms of emotional community which might provide hope and solace.

Indeed, there is a conspicuous absence of any reference to other emotional communities in the opening section of *Pearl*. The poem begins 'In Auguste in a high

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[66] Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 181.

seysoun, | Quen corne is corven with crokes kene' (ll. 39-40), a time of religious festival

and a gathering of the community to bring in the harvest.[67] Yet the narrator does not

participate in these celebratory, communal activities and instead sits alone in a space set

apart from the rest of the community. As David Aers argues, this 'isolation cuts him off

from the past and present communities of the Church'; [68] communities which should be

comprised of people who share in the same resources, activities, faith, and emotions as

himself. Historians of emotion have observed that shared emotional events, particularly

religious festivals and sacramental events, have the potential to bring about the formation

of emotional communities amongst disparate people:

> Festivals, weddings, hunts, business gatherings, and liturgical procession are just some of
>
> the essential moments that generate and regenerate shared beliefs and emotions. These in
>
> turn create or reinforce collective identities. Emotional events unite the people who
>
> participate in them, setting off processes of emotional communion and identity fusion.
>
> The social sharing of emotions fulfils precisely this function of bringing collective
>
> identity to life.[69]

The harvest would be an event with the capacity to 'generate and regenerate shared

beliefs and emotions',[70] reinforcing collective identities which the grieving narrator

absents himself from. *Pearl*'s allusion to the harvest in its opening section also recalls

other unifying 'emotional events', such as the welcoming of a child into a family and into

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[67] Critics have suggested a number of holy days as the correct festival to mark this 'seysoun'. Elizabeth Petroff argues for the Feast of the Assumption when 'lay and religious people brought medicinal plants from their kitchen or infirmary gardens so that the healing power of the herbs might be sanctified'; in 'Landscape in *Pearl*: The Transformation of Nature', *The Chaucer Review*, 16 (1981), 181-193 (p. 181). Michael Olmert suggests Lammastide, a time when the 'traditional sports and gifts of harvest helped the work to go forward cheerfully', in 'Game-Playing, Moral Purpose and the Structure of *Pearl*', *The Chaucer Review*, 21 (1987), 383-403 (p. 395). Whichever festival is correct, all celebrate the joining together of disparate members of the community, making the narrator's absence from such events all the more conspicuous.

[68] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 58.

[69] Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, p. 225.

[70] Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, p. 225.

the wider community centred around the village or town.[71] As a child within a community, the pearl-child, while she lived, would have played a central role in the collective identity of disparate people. Children were not only 'the private concern of individuals, but central to how communities defined themselves, negotiated their relationship with the divine and articulated emotional norms and values'.[72] They were often placed at the heart of communities, both as 'key to family lineages and identity, and the communities' investments in their future selves'.[73] Children signify potential; 'both literally and figuratively they carry a society's hopes and dreams',[74] and an emotional community's collective identity is therefore formed through the desire to protect and care for those who symbolise the future. The death of a child, such as the pearl who 'lyfed not two yer in oure thede' (l. 483), is therefore a trauma not only for their immediate family, but also for the wider community. It is an emotional event which generates shared emotions of sorrow and has the potential to unite disparate members of a community, joined in sympathy for the grieving family. For the community, however, the emotional event of the child's funeral is often sufficient to alleviate their collective sorrow. *Pearl*'s narrator - the father and maker of the lost pearl - continues to grieve, sitting alone in the arbour and consumed by thoughts of the loss of his pearl; he is wholly without the emotional capacity to engage in the collective events of the community which surrounds him.

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[71] Boquet and Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities*, p. 225. For further details on the importance of the village community in medieval England, see Edward Britton, *The Community of the Vill: A Study in the History of the Family and Village Life in Fourteenth-Century England* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977); Zvi Razi, 'Family, Land and Village Community in Later Medieval England', in *Landlords, Peasants and Politics in Medieval England*, ed. by T.H. Aston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 360-394; Christopher Dyer, 'Power and Conflict in Medieval English Village' in *Medieval Villages: A Review of Current Work*, ed. by Della Hooke (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1985), pp. 27-32 and 'The English Medieval Village Community and Its Decline', *Journal of British Studies*, 33.4 (1994), 407-429.

[72] Gavin, *The Child in British Literature*, p. 10.

[73] Gavin, *The Child in British Literature*, p. 12.

[74] Gavin, *The Child in British Literature*, p. 13.

The narrator's isolation is further emphasised by his detachment from the Christian communion of the Church. Aers has commented on the 'haunting absence'[75] of the Church within the narrator's consciousness, a detail which seems particularly conspicuous given that *Pearl* is a text that 'gives constant attention to Christian teaching and iconography in a Christian […] setting'.[76] In the poem's opening section, the isolated narrator inhabits a decidedly secular space, detached from the Church as a social community of fellow Christians. The absence of the Church in the narrator's consciousness also suggests that he is not partaking in the eucharist, the sacrament which is instrumental to the individual's engagement with both the earthly and divine community of the Church. Indeed, the narrator does not show any desire to engage with the Church in *Pearl*'s opening section, 'let alone belief in it as the sacramental form of Christ's body, the Christian community'.[77] However, towards the end of this opening section, the narrator acknowledge that 'Thagh kynde of Kryst me comfort kenned, | My wrechd wylle in wo ay wraghte' (ll. 55-56). In this line - the first to acknowledge any sense of communion offered by Christian teaching - the narrator acknowledges that his knowledge of Christ's human nature and resurrection should offer comfort, as all Christian souls, including his pearl, will share in the same resurrection. Yet, this fundamental Christian truth does not console the narrator, instead he makes the choice to labour on in sorrow, focusing only on the absence of his pearl and the emotional community she once represented.

The emotional community which acts as the most significant 'haunting presence'[78] in the text is the pearl's extended family, including her mother and siblings. This emotional community might also extend to what Barbara Hanawalt has described as

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[75] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 72.
[76] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 55.
[77] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 71
[78] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 72.

a 'child's network of kin',[79] encompassing the child's aunts, uncles and grandparents from both the mother's and father's families, all joined by shared feelings of familial love and protection for the child. The adult members of these networks or communities often acted as guardians and benefactors, contributing to the social as well as emotional welfare of the child. Godparents were also highly significant in a child's community as they 'formed a spiritual kinship network'.[80] In addition, godparents were expected to play a nurturing role in a child's life as they would be viewed as co-parents outside the bonds of blood kinship and were usually of a higher status than the parent, offering important social protection to the child under their care. Yet none of these people, all important figures in the pearl-child's life, are mentioned over the course of the text. Even when the narrator later describes his connection to the pearl-child, 'Ho was me nerre then aunte or nece' (l. 233), he assiduously avoids any mention of his wife and his other children who would also be vital members of his familial emotional community. *Pearl*'s opening section may intimate the reasons for the absence of the pearl's wider family. The narrator's arbour is filled with spice-plants and flowers, but death, decay and fruitlessness are always present, a motif which may, potentially, indicate that the mother and other children have also died, meaning that there is no prospect of a continuation or future for the narrator's familial emotional community. Alternatively, the absence of other family members might reflect how grief often isolates a person from others, and the impossibility, even for those experiencing similar sorrow, to communicate and understand an individual's experience of grief. Thus, within *Pearl,* grief is not an emotion which unites members of an emotional community (a stark contrast to the unifying qualities of grief in Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, as

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[79] Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London*, p. 49.
[80] Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London*, p. 49.

this thesis will later argue). Instead, with the death of the pearl-child, the narrator's overwhelming grief has broken his bonds with other members of his close emotional community and made him a wholly isolated figure.

Therefore, the narrator's isolated grief casts him off from all other forms of emotional community, communities which have the capacity to offer solace and alleviate the intensity of his grief. Instead, in the fifth stanza the narrator returns to his desire to be physically close to the pearl, as he is seized by the desire to clasp the pearl: 'Bifore that spot my honde I spenned | For care ful colde that to me caght' (ll. 49-50). 'Spenned' and 'caghte', the end words of both lines, suggest an emotional intensity behind a physical movement, particularly in the relatedness of both words to actions of clasping, gripping and seizing.[81] The narrator's desire to grasp the object, to hold it closely and protectively is mirrored by the intensity of the desire that suddenly seizes and holds the narrator's heart. Anne Baden-Daintree argues that desire is the cause of the narrator's 'slepyng-slaghte' (l. 59) as the 'visual and sensory delights […] prior to the dream, overwhelm the narrator and send him into a state of sleep'.[82] As the narrator feels this emotion he falls onto the pearl's grave:

> I felle upon that floury flaght,
>
> Suche odour to my hernes schot;
>
> I slode upon a slepyng-slaghte
>
> On that precios perle wythouten spot. (ll. 57-60)

The word 'slaghte' is derived from the Old English 'slæht', which can mean 'slaughter' and 'death by violence' on the one hand, and 'stroke', 'blow' on the other.[83] The

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[81] 'Spennen' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED42126> [accessed 31st January 2020], definition 1a. to grasp, to cling. 'Cacchen' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED6442> [accessed 31st January 2020], definition 1a. to grasp, seize, take hold of; pick up.
[82] Anne Baden-Daintree, '"Delyt" and Desire: Ways of Seeing in *Pearl*', *Glossator*, 9 (2015), 380-399 (p. 382).
[83] Andrew and Waldron, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript,* p. 57 (57-60n).

dreamer-narrator therefore appears to fall into a sleep like death, or to fall asleep so suddenly that it falls like a blow. Both meanings demonstrate that the action of falling onto the grave reflects the dreamer-narrator's desire to identify with the pearl and her death, 'to *become* that which we mourn'.[84] The image of the pearl brings the poem's opening section to a close, demonstrating the lost object's power over the narrator and the strength of his continued emotional identification with his lost pearl-child.

French Emotions and Visions of Heaven

Pearl's second section opens with the narrator's description of the process of entering the dream-vision; his 'spyryt ther sprang in space' (l. 61) from the 'spot' (l. 61) of the arbour but his body remains asleep on the ground (l. 62). The link word 'spot' connects the two sections, reminding the reader that there is a narrative continuity between the narrator's emotional state in the first section and the events which take place within the dream. The word 'sprange' (l. 61) is a repeated word which is also used to describe the moment of the pearl's loss, 'Sythen in that spote hit fro me sprange' (l. 13). The movement of the narrator's spirit from his body mirrors the moment of the pearl's loss, when her spirit 'trendeled doun' (l. 41) to the earth, and thus 'both movements figure as the separation of the spirit from the body at death'.[85] The sleeping narrator finds himself in an Edenic landscape of 'adubbement' (l. 72), the fitt's link word which is derived from Old French and signifies adornment, beauty or splendour:[86]

> I ne wyste in this worlde quere that hit wace,
>
> Bot I knew me keste ther klyfes cleven.
>
> Towarde a foreste I bere the face,

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[84] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 58.

[85] Kevin Mart, '*Pearl*: Fitt II', *Glossator*, 9 (2015), pp. 20-44 (p. 27).

[86] 'Adubbement' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED569> [accessed 12th February 2020]. 'Adubmnet' in *OED* [online] <https://www-oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/2809> [accessed 12th February 2020].

> Where rych rokkes wer to dyscreven.
>
> The light of hem myght no mon leven,
>
> The glemande glory that of hem glent;
>
> For wern never webbes that wyyes weven
>
> Of half so dere adubbement.
>
>
> Dubbed wern alle tho downes sydes
>
> Wyth crystal klyffes so cler of kynde.
>
> Holtewodes bright aboute hem bydes
>
> Of bolles as blwe as ble of Ynde.
>
> As bornyst sylver the lef on slydes,
>
> That thike con trylle on uch a tynde.
>
> Quen glem of glodes agayns hem glydes,
>
> Wyth schymeryng schene ful schrylle thay schynde. (ll. 65-80)

Andrew and Waldron suggest that the repeated use of '*adubbemente* focuses attention on the supernatural splendour of terrestrial paradise', with details such as the 'crystal klyffes' (l. 74), the tree trunks 'as blwe as ble of Ynde' (l. 76) and the leaves of 'bornyst sylver' (l. 77) creating a rich picture of both natural and supernatural splendour. [87] The landscape is visually stimulating, creating dazzling light effects which evoke heavenly spectacle and inspire a sense of awe and wonder in the narrator. Yet, despite the awe-inspiring quality of the heavenly landscape the narrator surveys, he repeatedly compares the paradisal details to human capacities. He asserts that human hands could never weave cloth as exquisite (ll. 71-2) as the 'glemande glory' (l. 70) of the 'rych rokkes' (l. 68) and that neither 'sytole-stryng nor 'gyterne' (l. 91) players could ever reproduce the beautiful song of the birds that 'songen with a swete asent' (l. 94). By creating an analogy between this

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[87] Andrew and Waldron, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, n. 61-120, p. 57.

celestial world and human craft, the narrator fails to fully comprehend the presence of divinity or acknowledge the influence of a divine creator within the paradisal landscape. What these descriptions make clear is that 'the *Pearl*-poet shows the dreamer enjoying a delight which seems not at all directed to God'.[88] The earliest moments of the dream-vision show that the narrator's perspective will remain earthbound throughout much of the dream-vision and he will understand all that surrounds him through the prism of earthly understanding, rather than comprehending fully the spiritual significance of his vision.

At the same time, however, the landscape has a marked impact on the narrator's emotions, as he describes how 'The adubbemente of tho downes dere | Garten my goste al greffe foryete' (ll. 85-86). In the transition from waking to dream state, the narrator moves from the enclosed garden, where he was imprisoned by grief and the contemplation of the pearl's loss, to a dream landscape which is characterised by openness and dazzling light. The tall trees of the 'Holtewodes bryght' (l. 75) and the 'klyfes [which] cleven' (l. 66) to the firmament, draw the narrator's eye upwards to the open sky, a perspective which contrasts starkly to the opening section's focus on the grave and downward movements. The landscape's features are full of gleaming brilliance; the combined effect of highly alliterative phrases such as 'glemande glory' (l. 70) and 'schymeryng schene' (l. 80), together with the descriptions of materials from which the light emanates, including the crystal, silver, pearl, 'emerad, saffer, other gemme gente' (l. 118), create the impression that the dazzling light acts as a powerful distraction from the narrator's state of grief. It is not only the landscape's visual aspects that cause a change in the narrator's emotions: he also observes the birds that 'flowen in fryth in fere' (l. 89) and 'quen thoses bryddes her wynges bete, | Thay songen with a

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[88] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 59.

swete asent' (ll. 93-4). The birds are the first sentient creatures the narrator has

encountered either in the enclosed garden or the dream landscape, and the music of their

wings is his first reference to the sense of sound. His heart is awakened to the possibility

of joy as the 'music of bird song breaks into the Dreamer's silence, the loneliness he has

felt, and hearing the song is sweet to him. The song effects an emotional change, a shift,

within him that prepares him for greater joy'.[89] Until this point, grief had made the

narrator's life a colourless, tuneless existence, but the heavenly landscape 'draw[s] him

away from the fixation on death and the dead', suggesting that he will soon begin to be

able to experience emotions other than grief. [90]

As the narrator is refreshed by the sights, sounds and scents of 'The playn, the

plonttes, the spyse, the peres, | And rawes and randes and rych reveres' (ll. 104-5) the

poetry becomes 'repeatedly mimetic, inviting one to experience the wonder of the new

world' and the narrator's emotional reactions to it. [91] Indeed, there is a strong

onomatopoeic quality to his encounter with the glowing river in which 'Swangeande

swete the water con swepe, | Wyth a rownande rourde raykande aryght' (ll. 111-12), an

effect which heightens the visceral qualities of the natural descriptions. This river,

however, has another significance, as the current of the narrator's emotions shift and

change much like the currents of the water. As he trails along the river's banks 'bowed in

blys' (l. 126) at the beginning of the third fitt, the narrator demonstrates a growing

awareness that the river acts as a barrier to the vision of paradise he sees on the other side.

Joy is associated with desire in the narrator's heart, it is precisely *because* he feels 'blys'

(l. 126) that he longs to cross to the paradise he sees on the other side of the river; he

explains that because of his 'gladnes glade' (ll. 36), 'Forthy I thoght that Paradyse, | Was

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[89] Jane Beal, *The Signifying Power of Pearl: Medieval Literary and Cultural Contexts for the Transformation of Genre* (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 70.
[90] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 59.
[91] W.A. Davenport, *The Art of the Gawain-Poet* (London: Athlone Press, 1978), p. 12.

ther over gayn thos bonkes brade' (l. 137-8), with the word 'forthy'[92] suggesting a cause, the 'gladnes' (l. 136), and effect, the longing for 'Paradyse' (l. 137). The heavenly river is therefore the first detail to elicit the feeling of desire in the narrator. This natural feature inspires specific emotions within the narrator as he explains that,

> I hoped the water were a devyse
>
> Bytwene myrthes by meres made.
>
> Byyonde the broke, by slente other slade,
>
> I hoped that mote merked wore.
>
> Bot the water was depe, I dorst not wade,
>
> And ever me longed ay more and more. (ll. 139-144)

The word 'hoped' is repeated twice within the six lines, indicating that the narrator's thoughts are focused on traversing the water, reflecting the processes of expectation and seeking which are essential to hope being renewed in a state of desire. However, this hope is quickly dashed by the realisation 'the water was depe, I dorst not wade' (l. 143). The immediacy of the line's opening word 'Bot' (l. 143) has an abrupt quality, which, when combined with the monosyllabic words used in the rest of the line creates a sense of absolute impermissibility. There is an almost childlike quality to this line, as though the narrator is echoing the commandments of a parent. Yet, just like a child reaching for that which has been forbidden, the untraversable, dangerous quality of the river makes the narrator's desire to traverse it even stronger as he acknowledges that 'ever me longed ay more and more' (l. 144) to cross and reach the heavenly vision on the other side. He assiduously seeks a place where he might cross:

> Abowte me con I stote and stare,
>
> To fynde a for the faste con I fonde;

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[92] 'For-thī' in *MED* [online] <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED17242> [accessed 21st January 2020], definition 1. For that, on that account, therefore, consequently, accordingly.

Bot wothes mo iwysse ther ware,

The fyrre I stalked by the stronde.

And ever me thoght I schulde not wonde

For wo ther weles so wynne wore. (ll. 149-154)

The narrator creates a connection between mind and emotion; there is a direct correlation between what his mind knows, 'me *thoght* I schulde not wonde' (l. 153) [my emphasis] and the 'wothes'[93] (l. 151) and 'wo'[94] (l. 154) he feels at the prospect crossing to a place where there are such delightful joys. Until this point in the dream, the landscape had been a source of joy and consolation, but the river is the first detail to create a more complex emotional state in the narrator, one in which uncertainty, pleasure and pain are combined, feelings that are more akin to the grief he felt in the poem's opening section. Furthermore, Andrew and Waldron argue that the narrator's feelings of woe connote 'the risk of discovery, rather than physical danger. The Dreamer's state of mind is that of a social inferior trespassing in the grounds of a castle'.[95] Therefore, the narrator's desire for something which is just out of his reach establishes a metaphor of social class and inferiority that will be highly significant to his later exchanges with the Pearl-Maiden.

The new feeling of desire awakens another level of perception in the narrator as he becomes aware of 'A crystal clyffe ful relusant' (l. 159) beyond the water, at the foot of which sits a figure who is both 'a faunt' (l. 161) and a 'mayden of menske, ful debonere' (l. 162).[96] Here the narrator directly encounters the subject of his grief, the

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[93] 'Wōth' in *MED* [online], < https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED53508> [accessed 21st January 2020], definition a. the risk of harm or injury, danger, peril.
[94] 'Wo' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED53247> [accessed 21st January 2020], definition 1a. misery, distress, or wretchedness.
[95] Andrew and Waldron, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, p. 61 (n.149-54).
[96] Brewer observes that the desire to be reunited with this child drives the narrator's actions: 'he wants his daughter, and without her he wants to go on wanting her'; Derek Brewer, 'Introduction' from *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet*, ed. by Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 1-23 (p. 7).

pearl who had been 'my happe and al my hele' (l. 16). Yet she appears as a vision of a child and an honourable lady, a figure who is both reassuringly familiar and strangely unfamiliar. As the fourth stanza progresses, so too does the narrator's understanding of the maiden's identity as the pearl-child who was once part of his emotional community of the family. The narrator's initial reference to the pearl is as a 'faunt' (l. 161);[97] he then begins to realise that 'I knew hyr wel, I hade sen hyr ere' (l. 164), and, as he continues to gaze at her 'On lenghe I loked to hyr there; | The lenger, I knew hyr more and more' (l. 168). The stanza is saturated with references to seeing and looking, as though the more the narrator looks on the figure, the greater his desire to know 'hyr more and more' (l. 168). This focus on visual contemplation and a developing knowledge of her identity signals the narrator's hope for a return to a sense of closeness and community with the figure he gazes upon. Sensory language shifts at this point in *Pearl*; the language which characterised the poem's opening section, so closely associated with the sense of touch, now shifts to focus on the language of sight.[98]

The visual nature of the narrator's desire for the pearl is drawn directly from the marguerite tradition. One example of this visual motif can be found in Guillaume de Machaut's 'Dit de la fleur de lis et de la marguerite', a text in which the lily is a masculine flower and a symbol of the lover, whereas the marguerite is a feminine flower and a symbol of the beloved.[99] The marguerite's white petals signify purity and chastity

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[97] 'Faunt' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED15364> [accessed 17th February 2020]. The *MED* defines 'faunt' as a 'young child of either sex, an infant, babe'. Its second definition, 'a son or daughter', is further evidence that the poem mourns the narrator's deceased daughter. For more on the reference to the 'faunt', see Malcolm Andrew, '*Pearl*, Line 161', *The Explicator*, 40 (1981), 4-5.

[98] For further detail on the importance of sight within the *Pearl*-poem and the other works by the *Pearl*-poet, see Sarah Stanbury, *Seeing the Gawain-Poet: Description and the Act of Perception* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), especially Chapter 2; Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[99] Guillaume de Machaut, *The Marguerite Poetry of Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. by James I. Wimsatt (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 15. Wimsatt goes on to explain that the significance of these genders 'is not simply a reference to the grammatical gender of the flowers' names; it rather capitalises on the grammatical circumstances of the gender to give some broad hints about the real

and her gentle appearance is so celebrated that 'qu'il n'est creature, | S'il la voit, qu'il ne s'en resjoie' (ll. 214-15) [there is no creature who does not rejoice on seeing her]. Indeed, the lily's existence is wholly dependent on seeing the marguerite and being in her physical presence:

> En li veoir tant se delite,
>
> Tant li vault et tant li profite;
>
> Car s'elle n'estoit il morroit. (ll. 179-181)[100]
>
> [Looking at her gives so much delight, so much to want her and so much to enjoy, for not being near her the lily will die].

The form of desire described in Machaut's text is significant for understanding the *Pearl*-narrator's desire for the pearl. In the 'Dit de la fleur de lis et de la marguerite', the desire the beholder feels for the marguerite is not the longing of lust, instead it is that the sight of her which provides joy and consolation. The qualities of the idealised marguerite make her worthy of praise, but more specifically, it is the gaze, the act of looking upon the marguerite, which wholly sustains the lily's life and identity, creating a sustaining bond between the two flowers. The marguerite, however, looks to another, as the poem's opening lines explain:

> J'aim une fleur, qui s'uevre et qui s'encline
>
> Vers le soleil de jours quant il chemine,
>
> Et, quant il est couchiez sous sa courtine
>
> Par nuit obscure,
>
> Elle se clot, einsois que li jours fine. (ll, 1-5)

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subjects of the poem. One infers that, though in the poem the virtues of both flowers are compared to those of the lady, the lily is also a symbol for her lover, and the Marguerite for the beloved. The two flowers, then, perhaps represent a member of the royal house of France and a lady named Marguerite', p. 16.

[100] Guillaume de Machaut, 'Dit de la fleur de lis et de la marguerite', *The Marguerite Poetry of Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. by Wimsatt, p. 47.

[I love a flower that opens and that inclines towards the sun by day when he is out and

about, and when he has retired behind his curtain in the dark night, she closes herself up

before the day ends].[101]

In many works of marguerite poetry, including those written by other French authors such

Froissart, the marguerite's gaze follows the path of the sun in the sky, demonstrating that

she belongs to the sun who is her 'lord and beloved', just as the Pearl-Maiden will turn to

Christ as her lord and beloved.[102] The marguerite's life and joy emanate from the elevated

figure of the sun, while the poetic speaker continues to be sustained by looking upon her

and contemplating her qualities. The Pearl-Maiden mirrors this moment in her connection

to Christ, while the narrator struggles to be sustained by only the sight of the beloved

pearl. Over the course of Machaut's 'Dit de la marguerite', as Jane Gilbert explains, 'the

marguerite's physical presence recedes while its emotional presence to the poet increases,

and he declares himself satisfied with increasingly distant meditations'.[103] While the

poetic speaker's devotion to the marguerite does not diminish, the marguerite does offer

some satisfaction, releasing the poetic speaker from the cyclical feelings of desire. The

poetic speaker in Machaut's 'Dit de la marguerite' accepts the marguerite's devotion to

another, as though his faithfulness towards her reflects his deference to the sun, the

ultimate source of power and life, since 'C'est li solaus qui escalire et qui luit' (l. 178) [It

is the sun which gives light and shines].

By contrast, over the course of *Pearl*, the narrator shows that he is unwilling to

accept the pearl's devotion to the Lamb, who now becomes her beloved and the focus of

all her bliss within the heavenly realm she inhabits. The narrator's failure to recognise

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[101] Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 180.
[102] Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 180. 'Margarite' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED26905> [accessed 2nd February 2020], definition 1(c) *fig.* that which is precious or excellent, a priceless quality or attribute; also, used as an epithet for Christ, Mary, etc.
[103] Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 181.

that the pearl's devotion has transferred to another is first indicated by the changes to the narrator's emotions during his first encounter with the Pearl-Maiden. The narrator explains that the more he looks upon 'hyr fayre face' (l. 169), the more he felt 'Suche gladande glory con to me glace | As lyttel byfore therto was wonte' (l. 171-2). As he looks upon the lost pearl, the narrator is reminded of the grief he felt before he entered the dream-vision, and the memory of this emotion begins to taint his joy at the sight of the pearl. The memory of grief reawakens the memory of the pearl's loss, causing the narrator to fear that now he has seen his pearl again, her loss will be repeated once more within the dream-vision: 'I drede on ende quat schulde byfalle | Lest ho me eschaped that I ther chos' (ll. 186-7). The movement from joy to grief and then to fear suggests that a paternal possessiveness has begun to inflect the narrator's feelings towards the pearl within the heavenly dream-vision. Eventually, the narrator's fear and dread subsume the feeling of longing which had, until this point, been growing 'more and more' (l. 80):

> More then me lyste my drede aros;
>
> I stod ful style and dorste not calle;
>
> Wyth yyen open and mouth ful clos
>
> I stod as hende as hawk in halle. (ll. 181-184)

The narrator is rendered speechless and becomes rooted to the spot on which he stands. He is described as a 'hawk in halle' (l. 184), a simile which highlights a hawk's 'confused, dazzled, controlled impotence – hawks in human halls have been turned from birds of prey into […] domesticated upper-class fowl (under the falconer's control)'.[104] Comparing the narrator to the courtly image of a hawk, a creature which is associated closely with the elite and their authority, the *Pearl*-poet signals that in his encounter with

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[104] Aers, 'The Self Mourning', p. 60 (n.24).

the Pearl-Maiden, the narrator's emotions will have the capacity to transform him into an increasingly vulnerable, powerless and subjugated figure.

The narrator's fear that the pearl will elude him once more means that he focuses less on her identity as his child, and more on her changed identity as the Pearl-Maiden. His gaze focuses on her elevated social status and her on her transformed identity as 'a courtly heroine in a setting of unearthly brilliance'.[105] In choosing to depict the Maiden as a courtly lady, the *Pearl*-poet alerts the reader not only to her changed relationship with the narrator, but also to the social and cultural significance of her changed identity. The Pearl-Maiden no longer belongs exclusively to the narrator as she is no longer part of his emotional community of the family. She belongs to a different community in heaven, one which is depicted as aristocratic and courtly because, from the narrator's earthbound perspective, this is the most effective way to conceptualise the highest form of community in heaven.

Continuing to contemplate the pearl's transformed appearance, the narrator describes the Maiden's dress in close detail as his gaze becomes 'resolutely focused on courtly embellishment':[106]

> Perles pyghte of ryal prys,
>
> There moght mon by grace haf sene,
>
> Quen that frech as flor-de-lys
>
> Doun the bonke con bowe bydene.
>
> Al blysnande whyt was hit beau biys,
>
> Upon a sydes and bounden bene
>
> Wyth the myryeste margarys, at my devyse,
>
> That ever I sey yet with myn yyen;

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[105] Derek Brewer, 'Courtesy and the *Gawain*-Poet', in *Patterns of Love and Courtesy: Essays in Honour of C.S. Lewis*, ed. John Lawlor (London: Arnold, 1966), pp. 60-82 (p. 63).
[106] Barr, 'Pearl – Or the Jeweller's Tale', p. 62.

> Wyth lappes large, I wot and I wene,
>
> Dubbed with double perle and dyghte,
>
> Her cortel of self sute schene
>
> Wyth precios perles al umbepyghte.
>
> A pyght coroune yet wer that gyrle
>
> Of mariorys and non other ston,
>
> Highe pynakled of cler quyt perle,
>
> Wyth flurted flowres perfet upon;
>
> To hede had ho non other werle.
>
> Her lere-leke al hyr umbegon,
>
> Her semblaunt sade for doc other erle (ll. 193-211)

The narrator first observes that the Maiden is adorned with a setting of pearls of royal value, the 'perles pyghte of ryal prys' (l. 193) which encapsulate her appearance. The narrator assesses the value of these pearls 'at my devyse' (l. 199), a phrase which recalls his focus on the value of the pearl at the beginning of the poem, however, the focus now is on the value of the pearls as symbols of aristocratic wealth. The Pearl-Maiden also wears the garments of an aristocratic, courtly lady: 'her beau biys' (l. 197) is shining white and has broad hanging sleeves which are embellished with a double row of pearls (ll. 201-2). As Helen Barr argues, words such as 'pyght'; 'bounde'; 'dubbed'; and 'umbepyghte' form a 'cluster of vocabulary concerned with courtly fashioning'.[107] Furthermore, in the second stanza, she wears an elaborately decorated crown, which John Bowers argues closely resembles a crown which was part of Richard II's royal treasury and is likely to have been the crown worn by the king in the Wilton Diptych.[108] The

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[107] Barr, 'Pearl – Or the Jeweller's Tale', p. 62.

[108] Bowers cites a royal inventory which 'contains the description of a crown closely resembling the one worn by Richard in the Wilton Diptych, as well as the one worn by the Pearl Maiden. [...] This is probably the royal crown sent as part of the dowry of Blanche, daughter of Henry IV, when she married Ludwig III

narrator also observes that 'Her semblaunt sade for doc other erle' (l. 211), as though her face was as dignified or grave enough for a duke or earl, a description which associates the Maiden's emotions and expressions explicitly with an aristocratic elite.

There are also several details which demonstrate that the narrator is observing a woman who is the epitome of a specifically *French* form of courtliness. The stanza includes a profusion of French-derived words and imagery associated with French cultural motifs. As the Pearl-Maiden rises up 'in hir araye ryalle' (l. 191), she is described as 'frech as flor-de-lys' (l. 195). The fleur-de-lis recalls Machaut's 'Dit de la fleur de lis et de la marguerite',[109] but the flower was also a symbol of France and central to French royal heraldry.[110] The pearls which adorn the Maiden's courtly garments and decorate her crown are also described as 'margarys' (l. 199), a French-derived word which the *Pearl*-poet appears to reserve only for references to heavenly and courtly detail, emphasising the links between an elevated social status and heavenly motifs within the text. For the narrator, the Pearl-Maiden's French-inflected courtliness elevates her further and 'reflects the experience of living in a country in which French is the marker of membership in a privileged class, and in which learning French is a major factor in upward mobility'.[111]

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of Bavaria [Elector Palatine] in 1401. It consists of an elaborate twelve-part circlet from which rise twelve golden lilies with trefoil leaves at the tops and sides, decorated with various gems including 132 pearls'; Bowers, '*Pearl* in its Royal Setting: Ricardian Poetry Revisited', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 17 (1995), 111-115 (p. 139). For more detail on the text-image relationship and the significance of feeling in the *Pearl*-poem, see Anke Bernau, 'Feeling Thinking: *Pearl*'s Ekphrastic Imagination', in *The Art of Vision: Ekphrasis in Medieval Literature and Culture*, ed. by Ethan Knapp. Andrew James Johnston and Margitta Rouse (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2015), pp. 100-123.

[109] Gilbert argues that of 'the two flowers in Machaut's ['Dit de la fleur de lis et de la margeurite'], the Pearl-Maiden is closer in presentation to the lily' as she is 'Authoritative, severe and otherworldly' in Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 177.

[110] Mary Channen Caldwell, '"Flower of the Lily": Late Medieval Religious and Heraldic Symbolism in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 146', *Early Music History*, 33 (2014), 1-60 (p. 1). Other sources which examine the fleur-de-lis as a symbol of France include W.M. Hinkle, *The Fleurs de Lis of the Kings of France, 1285–1488* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991); Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France*, trans. by Susan Ross Huston, ed. by Frederic L. Cheyette (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), esp. pp. 201–25; Nicholas Civel, *La Fleur de France: Les Seigneurs d'Ile-de-France au XIIe siècle* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

[111] Williams, *The French Fetish*, p. 19.

The Pearl-Maiden is depicted as a French, courtly lady because she has come from her new heavenly emotional community in which the elect all become kings and queens within heaven's social organisation. This French, courtly Maiden also acts as precursor for the culminating vision of the heavenly city, preparing the reader for the French-inflected vision of the emotional community within the New Jerusalem described in the final stanzas of the narrator's dream-vision.

The Pearl-Maiden's identity as a French, courtly figure is also significant because it creates an emotional boundary between the narrator and pearl, between father and daughter, and between his earthly grief and her heavenly bliss. The Pearl-Maiden's reaction to the narrator's plea 'Art thou my perle that I haf playned | Regretted by myn one on nyghte?' (ll. 242-3) confirms her superiority and authority over the narrator:

> That juel thenne in gemmes gente
>
> Vered up her vyse wyth yyen graye,
>
> Set on hyr coroun of perle orient (ll. 253-55)

The Pearl-Maiden had courteously taken off her crown - the symbol of her elevated, royal rank - before the narrator addressed her. However, when the narrator confronts the Pearl-Maiden with his emotions, specifically his feelings of pain and distress at her loss, he fails to acknowledge her changed status. He seeks to create an emotional bond with the Pearl-Maiden and to bring her back into the fold of their familial emotional community. However, this means that she is compelled to reinforce her elevated position and authority by setting her crown on her head again as the 'self-possessed, independent Pearl-Maiden's apparition makes it plain that the infant of less than two years with the neediness, affection and babbling which are part of its charm for adults, has been suppressed in the process of sublation into the Maiden'.[112] The Maiden adopts a formal,

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[112] Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 152.

courtly demeanour in front of the narrator.[113] This moment makes clear that the narrator's emotions and his attempts to create an emotional bond of community with the Pearl-Maiden will be met with formality, distance and a spiritual superiority.

Indeed, the Pearl-Maiden is immovable in her efforts to distinguish herself from the narrator's effusive emotional expressions, and she asserts an absolute control over her emotions and her heavenly identity.[114] In the narrator's memory, when the Pearl-Maiden was the narrator's living child, father and daughter were contained together within the emotional bonds of the family community. By contrast, the dream-setting serves to emphasise the marked differences between the narrator and the Pearl-Maiden, including their age, gender, and status. Yet the most profound difference, and the one which causes the narrator the greatest emotional pain, 'is their radically different levels of emotional control'.[115] Where the narrator is full of uncertainty about his place and identity within this new dream landscape, the Pearl Maiden has clear and 'sharp boundaries to her identity'.[116] The narrator passionately questions the Pearl-Maiden, struggling to place her in frames of reference that he can understand. To his questions, she builds a sharp boundary, responding 'with answers that are both learned and measured, and occasionally even disciplinary, meeting the range of his questions with cool theological puzzles'.[117]

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[113] The narrator has already alluded to the Maiden's courtliness in his extended description of her figure, a description draws on the conventional tropes of feminine beauty found in courtly literature, including works such as *Le Roman de la Rose*. The act of replacing her crown asserts the Maiden's nobility and the courtly part of her identity. But her courtliness is also emphasised by details such as her 'yyen graye', which is mirrored in the picture of Guinevere as a paragon of female beauty in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (l. 82).

[114] Carolyn Walker Bynum describes the typical attributes which medieval readers would associate with women: that all are irrational, emotional, excessive, silent, passive rather than active, and, perhaps most significantly for the current chapter, considered to be driven by extreme desire. In the *Pearl*-poem, however, these expectations are turned on their head as it is the male narrator/father rather than the female Pearl-Maiden/daughter who is defined by these characteristics. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 151.

[115] Jennifer Garrison, *Challenging Communion: The Eucharist and Middle English Literature* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2017), p. 66.

[116] Garrison, *The Eucharist and Middle English Literature*, p. 66.

[117] Stanbury, 'The Body and the City in *Pearl*', p. 4.

Thus, the Pearl-Maiden defines her boundaries even more clearly as the dialogue between narrator and Pearl-Maiden reverses the usual positions of authority between father and daughter, a reversal which 'symbolises the superimposition of a new order on the order of earthly power relations'.[118] Boundaries are also emphasised in the narrator's initial encounter with the Pearl-Maiden when he focuses carefully on the boundaries of her body and the hems and borders of her courtly garments; Jennifer Garrison argues that the Pearl-Maiden is therefore 'like a jewel whose beauty is marked by its sharply defined edges'.[119] Simultaneously, the narrator focuses on the Pearl-Maiden's form being 'so smothe, so small, so seme slight' (l. 190), a phrase which echoes the narrator's opening reference to the pearl-child's form; 'So smal, so smothe her sydes were' (l. 6). This attention to the Pearl-Maiden's physical boundaries, together with his desire to create a connection between her heavenly, courtly form and her earthly, child's form, 'indicates that the dreamer has not yet engaged discursively with the maiden, and so at this point, all of his knowledge is external; it also suggests that, to some extent, she holds the status of an object for him'.[120] The Pearl-Maiden holds the status of an object for the narrator because he continues to cling to his position as her father and his identity within the emotional community of the family which she represents.

Yet the Pearl-Maiden's boundaries are not just intellectual and physical, they are also emotional. As we have seen, the narrator is initially overjoyed to see the Pearl-Maiden but his emotions change frequently throughout the dream-vision, fluctuating from joy to grief, and from longing to disappointment. The narrator's thoughts and emotions propel the narrative forward, evoking a sympathy between reader and narrator through his continual quest to engage with the Pearl-Maiden emotionally. By contrast, the Pearl-

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[118] Kirk, 'The Anatomy of a Mourning', p. 63.
[119] Garrison, *The Eucharist and Middle English Literature*, p. 66.
[120] Garrison, *The Eucharist and Middle English Literature*, p. 67.

Maiden expresses a very small range of emotions. She alludes to her death at so young an age, 'Thow wose wel when they perle con schede | I was ful yong and tender of age' (ll. 411-12), but without reference to the pain and grief which this has caused the narrator, her father. This leaves the narrator frequently confused and frustrated by her refusal to sympathise with his feelings and to engage with him on an emotional level. While he understands very quickly on seeing her that 'I knew hyr wel' (l. 164) and that 'Ho was me nerre then aunte or nece' (l. 233), the Pearl-Maiden makes a conspicuous effort to avoid an explicit acknowledgment of the intimacy of their earthly relationship and their belonging to the same familial emotional community. She chastises the narrator for attempting to re-establish the emotional bonds of their familial community,

> Me think the put in a mad porpose,
>
> And buyses the aboute a raysoun bref.
>
> For that thou lestes was bot a rose
>
> That flowred and fayled as kynde hyt gef
>
> Now thurgh kynde of the kyste that hyt con close
>
> To a perle of prys hit is put in pref. (ll. 267-272)

The Pearl-Maiden equates emotional expression with a sense of instability, as she states that the narrator's grief has set him on a 'mad porpose' (l. 267). Instead, he must accept that her brief life was like a rose that flowered and failed as nature requires. For the Pearl-Maiden then, the reason of God's natural order, rather than the narrator's cleaving to emotion, is the path to consolation and relief.

In fact, the Pearl-Maiden repeatedly implores the narrator to regulate his emotions and even argues against emotional expression when she tells the dreamer that the only solution to his grief is to stop his expressions of grief and mourning altogether:

> Deme Dryghtyn, ever hym adyte,
>
> Of the way a fote ne wyl he wrythe.

Thy mendes mountes not a myte,

Thagh thou for sorwe be never blythe.

Stynt of thy strot and fyne to flyte

And sech hys blythe ful swefte and swythe;

Thy prayer may hys pyté byte

That mercy schal hyr craftes kythe.

Hys comforte may thy langour lythe

And thy lures of lyghtly fleme;

For, marre other madde, morne and mythe,

Al lys in Hym to dyght and deme. (ll. 349-60)

The Pearl Maiden's use of emotion words, including 'madde, morne and mythe' (l. 359) are used in a context of chastisement and control. In a reversal of the roles between father and daughter which the narrator had come to expect in life, it is now the Pearl Maiden who appears as a strict parent encouraging their child to limit their emotional expression. There is a particularly uncompromising tone to lines such as 'Stynt of thy strot and fyne to flyte', (l. 353) which, emphasised by the monosyllabic quality of the line, evokes the quality of a parent reprimanding their child. The link word of the eleventh fitt, 'inoghe' (l. 612) reflects the Pearl-Maiden's unyielding efforts to direct the dreamer-narrator's emotions away from his attachment to herself to a different source of consolation in God: 'For the grace of God is gret innoghe' (l. 624). Within heaven, the dreamer-narrator's emotional expression makes him a more childlike, vulnerable figure while the Pearl-Maiden becomes the authoritative parent whose interior life need not be revealed because she is always in perfect emotional control. Emotional control can be achieved in this heavenly realm because there is nothing to disturb the emotions, no currents of earthly feeling or attachment which might trouble the mind, such is the devotion to the Lamb.

Pearl suggests that this emotional control is the Christian ideal because her complete incorporation into the heavenly community makes her perfect in the eyes of God.[121]

Yet the Pearl-Maiden's changed status only seems to exacerbate the narrator's emotions as he continues to identify with the Maiden as the child he once knew. Attempting to bridge the gap between his emotions and the Maiden's heavenly logic, the narrator 'attempts to overcome his grief through identification—the process of building up his own identity by claiming the pearl maiden's identity as a component of his own',[122] particularly within the emotional community of the family. When the narrator speaks to the Pearl-Maiden he expresses great sorrow at the difference in their emotional states and attempts to overcome the differences between them:

> Rebuke me never wyth wordes felle,
>
> Thagh I forloyne, my dere endorde,
>
> Bot kythes me kyndely your counforde,
>
> Pytosly thenkande upon thysse:
>
> Of care and me ye made acorde,
>
> That er was grounde of all my blysse. (ll. 367-371)

The narrator is not just describing his own emotional suffering but also expressing his surprise that the Pearl-Maiden's emotions are so different to his own. From the narrator's perspective, as members of the same familial emotional community, they should share in the same emotional regimes and their feelings should be in 'acorde' (l. 371). However, the Pearl-Maiden has told the narrator that he ought not to grieve for her because she is not lost (ll. 265-76), but he refuses to acknowledge that she understands herself as independent from his emotional community now that she inhabits the heavenly realm with the source of her devotion, the Lamb. Instead, the narrator addresses the Pearl-

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[121] Garrison, *The Eucharist and Middle English Literature*, p. 67.
[122] Garrison, *The Eucharist and Middle English Literature*, p. 67.

Maiden as 'my dere endorde' (l. 368), a term of endearment which attempts to re-establish a paternal bond of love and protection.[123] He also reminds the Pearl-Maiden of her emotional responsibility to provide 'coumforde' (l. 369) to her father in his state of grief. His previous happiness was wholly reliant on his possession of her as his child and as he refers to her 'my blysse' (l. 371), treating the Pearl-Maiden, a socially superior, courtly woman, as his dependent child rather than as a Queen of Heaven.

The narrator's engagement with the Pearl-Maiden also sheds light on one of the most remarkable aspects of *Pearl*: that it focuses on a father's grief over the loss of a two-year old *female* child. By making the death of an infant girl the focus of the dreamer's grief, the *Pearl*-poet not only 'centralise[s] a normally marginal familial and gender category to evoke poignantly a female-centred family drama',[124] he also examines the complex emotional regimes and systems of value within a familial emotional community comprised of a father and daughter. At the start of the poem, the narrator focuses intently on the emotions associated with the loss of the pearl-child, but the dream-vision offers a view of his daughter had she lived and reached maturity. As the Pearl-Maiden explains, having died so young, she was able enter into a marriage with the Lamb:

> I was ful yong and tender of age,
>
> Bot my Lorde the Lombe, thurgh Hys Godhede
>
> He toke myself to Hys maryage,
>
> Corounde me quene in blysse to brede
>
> In lenghe of dayes that ever schal wage.
>
> And sesed in alle Hys herytage

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[123] 'Endorde' in *MED* [online],<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED13705> [accessed 20th July 2020], defines the word as meaning revered or venerated, however, Gert Rønberg argues that 'endorde' derives from OF 'endorer', meaning to 'invest with gold or a gold-like quality'; in Rønberg, 'A Note on "Endorde" in *Pearl* (368)', *English Studies*, 57.3 (1976), 198-199 (p. 198).

[124] Sarah Stanbury, 'The Gaze on the Body of *Pearl*'s Dead Girl', in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. By (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 96-116, p. 109.

> Hys lef is. I am holy Hysse -
>
> Hys pyese, Hys prys; and Hys parage
>
> Is rote and grounde of alle my blysse. (ll. 412-20)

The Pearl-Maiden's formality with the narrator therefore reflects the movement from the emotional community of her father's family to a new family through marriage, in which, had she lived, she would have created new emotional regimes with her husband and children. As both the medieval marriage service and the giving of a dowry declare, the daughter would be voluntarily and overtly given away by the father to a new emotional community which would transform her identity through the giving of a new name in the husband's name. She would therefore become 'holy Hysse' (l. 418) in the emotional community of marriage. Furthermore, as the husband held the position of authority in this community, the husband's emotions would take precedence and the wife would share in his emotional regimes within this community; 'Hys pyese, Hys prys; and Hys parage | Is rote and grounde of alle my blysse' (ll. 419-20). In a similar way to an earthly marriage, the Pearl-Maiden's appearance as an articulate young woman, joined in a union with the Lamb, reflects her position in relation to the narrator had she lived and married; close yet separate, loved yet distant and part of another emotional community through marriage. However, the emotional community of marriage within *Pearl*'s dream-vision is made more complex and further removed from the dreamer's understanding because this is a heavenly marriage in which the bliss being experienced is beyond the earthly comprehension of the dreamer. The narrator's earthly perspective can only comprehend joy as a contrast to sorrow, and a marital bond in terms of exclusivity and gender, yet these are not important considerations within a vision of heaven that 'values innocence

and purity above everything and which permits each individual to enjoy absolutely sufficient good without encroaching on any other's similarly absolute enjoyment'.[125]

Pearl's heavenly logic means that the Pearl-Maiden's death 'represents an acme of Christian aspiration' and having died innocent, her 'spirit has been incorporated properly – indeed, ideally – into the society of the afterlife'.[126] In other words, as a baptised Christian and 'As inoscente [she] is saf and ryghte' (l. 672). The Pearl-Maiden has been incorporated fully and ideally into the emotional community of heaven and is therefore able to impart new Christian knowledge to the narrator and to share in the emotional regimes of the heavenly group. The *Pearl*-poet provides the reader with a visual representation of the characteristics of this heavenly emotional community:

> So sodanly on a wonder wyse
>
> I was war of a prosessyoun.
>
> This noble cite of rych enpryse
>
> Was sodanly ful wythouten sommoun
>
> Of such vergynes in the same gyse
>
> That was my blysful anunder croun.
>
> And coronde wern alle of the same fasoun,
>
> Depaynt in perles and wedes qwyte;
>
> In unchones breste was bounden boun
>
> The blysful perle wyth gret delyt. (ll. 1095-1104)

Here, the narrator witnesses a hundred and forty-four thousand virgins all adorned with the same crowns and pearls and wearing the same white robes. The conformity of their appearance reflects the conformity of their emotions as the narrator observes that since their dress and general appearance are all alike, it is equally difficult to discern and 'knaw

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[125] Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 156.
[126] Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 151.

the gladdest chere' (l. 1109). Amongst this heavenly community of virgins there is no competition, comparison or hierarchy of feeling and all share in the joy and delight at the vision of the Lamb who 'byfore con proudly passe' (l. 1110). The narrator goes on to describe the community's shared joy and feeling of

> Delyt that hys come encroached,
>
> To much hit were of for to melle.
>
> Thise aldermen, quen he aproched,
>
> Grovelyng to his fete thay felle.
>
> Legyounes of aungeles, togeder voched,
>
> Ther kesten ensens of swere smelle.
>
> Then glory and gle was new abroched;
>
> Al songe to love that gay juelle.
>
> Thae steven moght stryke thurgh the urthe to helle
>
> That the Vertues of heven of joye endite.
>
> To love the Lombe his meyny in melle
>
> Iwysse I light a gret delyt. (ll. 1116-1128)

The stanza highlights the uniformity of the community through the repeated use of plurals, the use of collective pronouns and an emphasis on actions and emotions which are experienced 'togeder' (l. 1121). There is also an emphasis on shared sensory experiences, such as the 'swete smelle' (l. 1121) of the scattered incense and the sound of the songs of praise. Most significantly, all share in the 'gret delyt' (l. 1104) at the sight of the Lamb of God. In their state of great delight, all members of the community are sharing in a French derived emotion, as 'to have delight' in its medieval usage was equivalent to the French *avoir envie*, or 'to desire'.[127] There is also a high density of

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[127] 'Delīte' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED10979> [accessed 12th January 2020], definition 1(a) an emotion of pleasure; esp., sensuous delight; definition 1(b) spiritual or intellectual delight. 'Delight' in *OED* [online],

French-derived words, including 'prosessyoun';[128] 'noble';[129] 'croun'[130] and 'coronde',[131] words which all refer to the shared elevated status of the members of the procession.

Pearl's nineteenth fitt therefore offers a vision of a perfect emotional community, joined by courtly symbolism and a shared nobility. In the heavenly community all the things which bind an emotional community, including class, nation, gender, and language, are no longer important but are shared and equal amongst all who inhabit the heavenly city. Admittedly, these are factors which bind a community in the earthly realm, but they are also factors which cause division and conflict. In the heavenly realm, once these factors no longer exist; when all people are joined, men and women, rich and poor, English and French, then there is perfect harmony. In the procession's absolute emotional focus on the enthroned Lamb of God, there is perfect obedience to lordship. The hierarchy is absolute and perfect, as demonstrated by the image of the Lamb as 'that gay juelle' (l. 1124) to whom all sing in worship. The Lamb sits amongst 'his meyny' (l. 1127) with the procession encompassing his followers and courtly retinue. What is more, the blessed members of the community are part of the nobility as the 'wearing [of] crowns and jewels suggests the portrayal of the nobility in an aristocratic pageant'.[132] The image of perfect obedience to one lord is also reinforced by the wearing of 'livrés' (l. 1108) by the processing virgins.[133] This is 'the livery which denotes service to a particular

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<https://www-oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/49382> [accessed 12th January 2020], definition P1b. to have desire to do something, to wish to do.

[128] 'Prosessyoun' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED34763> [accessed 16th January 2020].

[129] 'Noble' in *OED* [online], <https://www-oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/127484> [accessed 16th January 2020], Anglo-Norman and Middle French *noblee*, nobility, magnificence (14th century).

[130] 'Crown' in *OED* [online], <https://www-oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/45059> [accessed 16th January 2020], a borrowing from Anglo-Norman *coroune*, Old French and Middle French *corone*.

[131] 'Crowned' in *OED* [online], <https://www-oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/45066> [accessed 16th January 2020], Anglo-Norman and Old French *coroné*, Middle French, French *couronné* invested with a royal crown, wearing a crown or wreath.

[132] Barr, 'Pearl – Or the Jeweller's Tale', p. 68.

[133] As Bowers and others have shown, these visual, uniform aspects of the poem are highly redolent of artworks like the Wilton Diptych. See Bowers, *Politics of Pearl*, pp. 96-108 and '*Pearl* in Its Royal Setting', p. 139; Riddy, 'Jewels in *Pearl*'; Barr, '*Pearl* – Or the Jeweller's Tale', p. 67-68.

lord, and so the ideas of service and of coherence of appearance are also tied to the courtly hierarchy, the identification with one another, and with 'belonging' to this 'lord'.[134] Furthermore, boundaries are absolute as 'the procession of the poem enforces the boundary between earth and heaven, the living and the redeemed, the male narrator and the female soul',[135] but there is no discord, only peace and perfect unity in the 'triumphal celebration of eternal life'. [136]

Yet, by the poem's nineteenth fitt, the narrator's attention – and more specifically his emotional attention – is diverted away from the Lamb of God to focus once more on the sight of his 'lyttel queen' (l. 1147). It is not the sight of the perfect emotional community within the New Jerusalem for which he longs, instead, he longs for one individual within this community as he continues to distinguish the individual qualities of the Pearl-Maiden amongst her companions, seeking to recover his daughter as part of his familial emotional community. At this moment, the dreamer's 'luf longyng' (l. 1152) is different to the emotion which drove his grief at the start of the poem. As we have seen, in *Pearl*'s opening section, the narrator had felt that the return of his pearl would restore his family community, but by the culminating moments of the dream-vision the Pearl-Maiden has demonstrated explicitly that she neither wants to return to him nor does she wish for him to attempt to enter the New Jerusalem with her:

> Thou may not enter wythinne Hys tor.
>
> Bot of the Lombe I have thee aquylde
>
> For a syght therof thurgh gret favor.
>
> Utwyth to se that clene cloystor
>
> Thou may, bot inwyth not a fote;

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[134] Baden-Daintree, 'Ways of Seeing in *Pearl*', p. 388.
[135] Bowers, *Politics of Pearl*, p. 140.
[136] Bowers, *Politics of Pearl*, p. 140.

> To strech in the strete thou has no vygour
>
> Bot thou wer clene wythouten mote. (ll. 966-972)

If the narrator were able to cross the river, the Pearl-Maiden suggests the narrator's grief would become even more inwardly focused, as he would wholly dismiss the Pearl Maiden's message and violate the boundaries and laws of the purity of the heavenly Jerusalem. The dreamer-narrator's inability to understand this proves that 'the other world in *Pearl* is ultimately incommensurate with human language and logic, abstracted from time and space, and therefore fundamentally alien to the expressions we invent to speak of that realm - the truly undiscovered country'.[137] The narrator's individualised perspective ultimately underlines the elusiveness of heaven in relation to human emotions and affective understanding.

Such is the elusiveness of heavenly understanding that in the *Pearl*-poem's culminating moments it is shown that the narrator's grief has neither been consoled nor abated. The narrator's state of mind reaches a highly agitated state as he experiences a feeling of 'Delyt' (l. 1153) at the sight of the Pearl-Maiden, an emotion which drives his 'mynde to a maddyng malte' (l. 1154) as he flings himself across the water:

> Quen I sey my frely, I wolde be there
>
> Byyonde the water, thagh ho were walte.
>
> I thoght that no thyng myght me dere,
>
> To fech me bur and take me halte,
>
> And to start in the strem schulde non me stere
>
> To swymme the remnaunt, thagh I ther swalte.
>
> Bot of that munt I was bitalt.
>
> When I schulde start in the strem astraye,

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[137] J. Allan Mitchell, 'Figuring the Unfigurable', p. 88.

Out of that caste I was bycalt;

Hit was not at my Prynces paye.

Hit payed Hym not that I so flonc

Over mervelous meres so mad arayde.

Of raas, thagh I were rasch and ronk,

Yet rapely therinne I was restayed.

For ryght as I sparred unto the bonc,

That brathe out of my drem me brayde.

Then wakned I in that erber wlonk;

My hede upon that hylle was layde

Ther as my perle to grounde strayd.

I raxled and fel in gret affray,

And sykyng to myself I sayd,

"Now al be to that Prynces paye" (ll. 1155-1176)

In the narrator's attempts to be with the Pearl-Maiden, his behaviour becomes frenzied and unrestrained, demonstrative of a 'mad arayde' (l. 1166), which proves the Pearl-Maiden's warnings of the narrator's madness ("Me thynk thee put in a mad porpose" (l. 267); "Wy borde ye men? so madde ye be! (l. 290)) to be true. In addition to the narrator's grief being akin to a type of madness, the stanzas are saturated with verbs associated with an intensity of feeling and movement: 'flonc' (l. 1165, 'flung'), 'sparred' (l. 1169, 'sprang) and 'brayde' (l. 1170, 'hurled').

The poem's conclusion demonstrates that the narrator's loss is not forgotten, the emotional community of the family cannot be restored and that it must instead be subsumed into a different form of intimate emotional community, through God,

in the forme of bred and wyn

The preste uus schewes uch a daye.

> He gef uus to be his homly hyne
>
> And precious perles unto his pay. (ll. 1209-12)

This emotional community is 'expressed not in transcendent mystical terms or in terms of an aristocratically splendid court, but of the realities that surround those who still live in the cycle of nature and of the sacraments'.[138] The narrator must find solace in something which, like the Pearl-Maiden, is almost tangible but impossible to fully grasp or possess – the divine. His only way to do this is through the eucharist which can effect spiritual reform and, for the time being, until he reaches heaven, reunite or reconcile the narrator to an emotional community on earth where he is able to exist within the family and community of the Church.

Conclusion

Ultimately, *Pearl* focuses on a grieving narrator whose excessive attachment to the Pearl-Maiden has cast him into a state of acute emotional and spiritual despair. The *Pearl* narrator provides readers with a complex and frequently poignant picture of the profound experience of grief. Grief is shown to isolate the narrator away from his sustaining networks and communities, whilst also isolating him *within* the memories of the lost emotional community of the family. In the narrator's limited way, his comprehension (or, more accurately his lack of comprehension and continued misunderstanding) of the Pearl-Maiden's attempts to teach him reveals his inability to see beyond his grief-focused mindset. In the next chapter we will encounter another narrator for whom the misunderstanding of grief is more productive, but in *Pearl*, the narrator continually demonstrates a cleaving to his emotional pain and to the emotional community of the family, rather than a willingness to understand the Pearl-Maiden's lessons. Despite having been granted a visionary perspective of the heavenly community

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[138] Elizabeth Kirk, 'Anatomy of a Mourning', p. 225

by God through Pearl-Maiden, in the concluding stanzas of the poem this visionary perspective merges with the narrator's grieving perspective and he begins the cycle again by waking and returning to the spot in which he began his dream. *The power of Pearl* lies in its ability to allow the reader to proceed on this journey *with* the narrator, experiencing his grief and sorrow, as he remains unable to relinquish the pain of loss, the ache of isolation and the poignancy of memory over the course of the dream-vision.

Chapter Two
Reading Grief in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*

On 12th September 1368, Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, died at the age of twenty-two.[1]

Only nine years earlier she had married John of Gaunt, the fourth son of Edward III and

earl of Richmond.[2] As a consequence of their marriage, John of Gaunt became the

wealthiest nobleman in the kingdom and 'the dominant figure' in the royal court.[3] There

can be no doubt that the marriage was politically advantageous for Gaunt, but when

Blanche died, he was deeply affected by her loss and treasured her memory.[4] Annual

commemorations of Blanche's death were established and celebrated for the rest of his

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[1] 1369 was the long-accepted date for Blanche of Lancaster's death. See, for example, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by F.N. Robinson, 2nd edn. (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 266. However, J.J.N. Palmer has provided evidence that Blanche died the year before, meaning that the earlier date of 1368 is now generally accepted, in 'The Historical Context of the *Book of the Duchess*: A Revision', *The Chaucer Review*, 8.4 (1974), 253-61. Linda Ann Loschiavo argues that Blanche of Lancaster was born in 1347, making her twenty-two when she died in 1368, in 'The Birth of "Blanche the Duchesse"': 1340 versus 1347', *The Chaucer Review*, 13.2 (1978), 128-132. Further evidence is provided by the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*, in which Froissart refers to the death of Blanche, the 'fille de lancastre' [daughter of Lancaster] (l. 241): 'Elle morut jone et jolie | Environ de .xxii. ans' [She died young and beautiful, Around twenty-two years of age] (ll. 246-47), in *Jean Froissart: An Anthology of Narrative and Lyric Poetry*, ed. by Kristen M. Figg and R. Barton Palmer (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 267-479.

[2] The wedding was celebrated at Reading Abbey in May 1359 in a 'flamboyant ceremony attended by the king and queen and massed ranks of the English court', W.M. Ormrod, *Edward III* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 391. The celebrations were equally as lavish; expensive gifts were exchanged, jousts were held at Reading and over the course of the procession to London, and when the procession reached the capital, another grand tournament was held at Smithfield in honour of Blanche. Anthony Goodman, *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (Harlow: Goodman, 1992), p. 35. It has also been suggested that as part of the household of the Countess of Ulster, Chaucer may have attended the wedding of Gaunt and Blanche, Derek Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 35-39.

[3] As Prince of Aquitaine, the Black Prince spent most of his time at his court in Bordeaux; Lionel, the king's second son was mostly in Ireland, and Edward III had mostly retired from court life, making John of Gaunt the dominant figure at the English court. Pearsall also observes that his 'marriage to Blanche had turned out spectacularly well: her father, Henry, Duke of Lancaster, died in the second visitation of the plague, leaving her as co-heiress with her sister Maud to the vast Lancastrian estates, and the Maud died without issue in 1362. John, who had become Earl of Lancaster in 1361 by right of his wife, was now created Duke of Lancaster, and was for the rest of his life the richest man in England, with his own splendid household in his father-in-law's palace of the Savoy', Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 92.

[4] W. M. Ormrod observes that the marriage between John of Gaunt and Blanche of Lancaster took place during a period of active political manoeuvring by Gaunt's father, Edward III. As well as providing Gaunt with great wealth, the marriage 'was designed to provide Gaunt with a power base in northern England from which he might more easily control interests marked out for him in due course within the realm of Scotland', *Edward III*, p. 391.

life. Furthermore, when Gaunt died in 1399, he was buried next to his first wife in an elaborate tomb at St Paul's.[5]

Geoffrey Chaucer served in the royal household during the period in which Gaunt and Blanche were the most important and influential members of the English court.[6] Records also show that Chaucer was also paid as an esquire of the king's household for his services during Gaunt's military campaigns in France.[7] For these reasons, it seems likely that Chaucer would have had ample opportunity to observe the young couple within the circle of the court.[8] Indeed, it was in response to Blanche of Lancaster's premature death that Chaucer would compose his first significant narrative poem, a dream-vision he would title *the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse*,[9] now known as the *Book of the Duchess*.[10] The dream-vision's narrative, in which the narrator encounters a grieving knight and attempts to offer consolation and comfort, suggests an affinity between the reality of John of Gaunt's grief and the fiction of the text. Furthermore, the *Book of the Duchess* includes several allusions to 'good faire White' (l. 948) (Blanche), to

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[5] Like the tomb for Richard II and Anne of Bohemia discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the now destroyed effigies of John of Gaunt and Blanche of Lancaster depicted the couple with joined hands, see Phillipa Hardman, 'The *Book of the Duchess* as a Memorial Monument', *Chaucer Review*, 28.3 (1994), 205-15 (p. 208).

[6] By 1367, Chaucer had been transferred from the household of Lionel, Duke of Ulster and made a *valettus* in the king's household. Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 47.

[7] Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 54.

[8] Sara Sturm-Maddox, 'Tribute to a Duchess: The *Book of the Duchess* and Machaut's *Remede de Fortune*', in *Chaucer's Book of the Duchess: Contexts and Interpretations*, ed. Jamie C. Fumo (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2018), pp. 119-135 (p. 122). Pearsall observes that Chaucer and Gaunt are 'are likely to have met' on several occasions and to have known each other over several years. However, Pearsall cautions against readings of a further personal connection between the two: 'The desire to turn their association into a long-running soap-opera, which has inspired two biographers of Chaucer to prove how every one of Chaucer's writings turns upon some event in his supposed patron's exciting life, must be regarded as wishful thinking', in Pearsall, *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 83.

[9] For discussion of the poem's various titles and an examination of how titles impact the critical interpretations of the text, see Steve Ellis, 'The Death of the "Book of the Duchess"', *Chaucer Review*, 29.3 (1995), 249-58.

[10] Some scholars have sought to discount this association or suggested that the association has been overstated by the critical tradition, see, for example, Simon Meecham-Jones, 'Blanche, Two Chaucers and the Stanley Family', *Critical Survey*, 30.2 (2018), 94-119 (p. 98). However, there is general critical consensus that the Chaucer intended for the *Book of the Duchess* to be linked to Blanche's death. In the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, for instance, Alceste includes 'the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse' (l. 418) as one of Chaucer's more redeeming texts.

a 'long castel with walles whyte' (l. 1318) (Lancaster and Blanche) and to 'Seynt Johan,

on a riche hille' (l. 1319) (John, earl of Richmond), which all connect Gaunt to the

grieving Man in Black and Blanche to his Lady White.[11] Whether the *Book of the*

Duchess was written in the same year that Blanche died, or composed as a

commemorative verse many years later,[12] it is clear that Chaucer considered John of

Gaunt during the poem's composition and wrote the text with a particular audience in

mind – the emotional community of the English court.[13]

Yet, if Chaucer intended for the *Book of the Duchess* to assuage John of Gaunt's

grief or offer public consolation to one of the most powerful men in the kingdom, his

approach is a curious one.[14] The expectations of a consolatory work are largely absent;

there is no Christian message of a joyful reunion in heaven, such as we see in *Pearl*, nor

does the work convey a sense of Boethian consolation. Instead, with this first major work,

Chaucer appears to be more focused on signalling the 'self-confident insertion of himself

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[11] Throughout the *Book of the Duchess*, however, Chaucer constantly emphasises the allegorical nature of the representations of the Man in Black and Lady White, and their correspondence to John of Gaunt or Blanche cannot be absolutely certain. Alastair Minnis summarises the difficulties inherent in these associations: '[t]o equate the Man in Black with John of Gaunt would be absurd, while to deny the connection would be perverse', in Alastair Minnis, V.J. Scattergood, J.J. Smith, eds., *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Shorter Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 154. All quotations from Chaucer are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. by Larry Benson, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Book and line numbers are given parenthetically in the text.

[12] The dating of the *Book of the Duchess* remains a source of fierce critical debate. Some critics argue that the poem was written in the months immediately after Blanche died. Palmer, for instance, argues that Chaucer began the text very soon after Blanche's death, completing and circulating it by November 1368, 'The Historical Context', p. 255. See also, R.M. Lumiansky, 'The Bereaved Narrator in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*', *Tulane Studies in English*, 9 (1959), 5-17. Other critics argue for a later date, generally the latest proposed is 1372, the last year in which John of Gaunt was earl of Richmond, see David Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985), p. 56; Hardman, 'Memorial Monument', (1994), 205-15; Edward I. Condren, 'Of Deaths and Duchesses and Scholars Coughing Ink', *Chaucer Review*, 10 (1975), 87-95.

[13] Diane M. Ross identifies John of Gaunt as 'a reader (or, at least an auditor) of the poem', and it is likely that as part of the courtly community, John of Gaunt was a targeted audience for the *Book of the Duchess*, 'The Play of Genres in the *Book of the Duchess*', *The Chaucer Review*, 19.1 (1984), pp. 1-13 (p. 2).

[14] Ardis Butterfield observes that there are 'elusive and evasive aspects' to the connections between the *Book of the Duchess* and Gaunt's real bereavement. Seen beside other French elegies written in the fourteenth century, the 'often echoed description of the *Book of the Duchess* as the supreme example of public elegy in the courtly style seems an overstatement'. However, Butterfield goes on to acknowledge that '[t]his is not to deny the poem's widely acknowledged effectiveness in dealing with death; merely to point out that its means for doing so differ markedly from those chosen by his contemporaries', 'Lyric and Elegy in the *Book of the Duchess*, *Medium Ævum*, 60.1 (1991), 33-60 (p. 41).

into the French poetic tradition'.[15] Chaucer draws heavily upon the French *dit amoreux*

throughout the *Book of the Duchess*, and the echoes of works by Jean Froissart and

Guillaume de Machaut are abundant.[16] It is to Machaut that Chaucer's poem is most

indebted, specifically to the *Fonteinne amoureuse*, a text associated with another

aristocratic male, Jean, duc de Berry, a son of king Jean II of France, for whom the poem

was composed as he was to be sent to England as a hostage.[17] In the *Fonteinne*

amoureuse, Chaucer finds an exemplar for his narrative dream-vision, as Machaut's poem

charts the journey of a narrator who overhears the lament of a man identified as a prince,

encourages the prince to reveal the source of his sorrow, and then offers him

consolation.[18]

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[15] John M. Fyler, 'Froissart and Chaucer', in *Froissart Across the Genres*, ed. by Donald Maddox and Sarah Sturm-Maddox (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998), pp. 195-218 (p. 198). Chaucer was writing 'to please a French-speaking court audience, one whose ideas about literature were defined according to French models and whose love of France and all things French extended to an utter inability to relinquish their claim to the French throne', Williams, *French Fetish*, p.21.

[16] As I will discuss later in the chapter, the first two verses of the *Book of the Duchess* are a close translation of Froissart's *Paradis d'amour*. G.L. Kitteridge identifies several works by Machaut which have parallels in the *Book of the Duchess*, including the *Fonteinne amoureuse*, *Dit dou lyon*, *Jugement dou roy de Navarre*, *Jugement dou roy de Behaigne* and *Remede de Fortune*, 'Guillaume de Machaut and *The Book of the Duchess*', *PMLA*, 30 (1915), 1-24. Machaut and Froissart exerted considerable influence over English literature in the fourteenth century, in part due to their associations with England. Froissart, for example, began service as a poet-courtier in the household of Edward III's queen, Philippa of Hainault. Froissart was witness to Jean, duc de Berry's time as a hostage in England. As Sara Sturm-Maddox observes, '[y]ears later, in the *Chroniques*, he wrote with enthusiasm of the diversions that the French nobility shared with their English 'captors'. Among them the composition and performance of love poetry apparently retained its prominence: he records fond memories of composing for Philippa 'beaux dittiés et traittiés amoureux [fair poems and compositions treating of love]. Sturm-Maddox, 'Tribute to a Duchess', p. 121. Machaut may have also had contact with English poets of the Ricardian era, see Wimsatt, *French Contemporaries*, chapters two, five and six.

[17] Jean II, the king of France, had been captured at the battle of Poitiers in 1356 and taken as a prisoner to England. When the Treaty of Brétigny was signed at Calais on 24th October 1360, Jean was temporarily released to raise the ransom. As part of a hostage exchange, two of Jean II's sons, Louis, duke of Anjou and Jean, duke of Berry, as well as his brothers the duke d'Orléans and the duke of Bourbon, were sent to England in his place. For historical detail on the Treaty of Brétigny, see Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Trial by Fire*, Volume II (London: Faber 2009), chapter two, pp. 711-798.

[18] Guillaume de Machaut, *Le Livre de la fonteinne amoureuse*, in *Guillaume de Machaut: The Fountain of Love (La Fonteinne Amoureuse) and Two Other Love Vision Poems*, ed. and trans. by R. Barton Palmer (New York and London: Garland, 1993). Unless otherwise stated, all references to the *Fonteinne amoureuse* come from Barton Palmer's edition and line numbers are given parenthetically in the text. James Wimsatt observes that the *Fonteinne amoureuse* 'forms the major connecting link of the *dits* with the *Duchess*', in *Chaucer and the French Love Poets: The Literary Background of the Book of the Duchess* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 10.

In the chapter which follows, I examine how Chaucer underscores the presence of French texts at every turn, constantly drawing attention to his appropriation and translation of the language, forms and feelings of his French contemporaries. I argue that Chaucer deploys French love poetry in the *Book of the Duchess* to explore how literary texts shape the way different emotional communities – represented in the figures of the narrator and the Man in Black – understood, experienced and performed emotions, even in the context of grief. The narrator is shown to translate, purloin and parrot the language and forms of the French *dits amoreux*, and then shape his emotions according to these poetic models. However, by focusing on the misappropriation, misunderstanding and misreading of French texts, Chaucer depicts the narrator as a comically inept reader of both texts and emotions. This text shares a number of similarities to *Pearl*, the focus of the previous chapter. Both are dream visions which enact a process of an emotional journey or transformation in their narrators. Both include narrators who misunderstand the emotions being communicated to them, however, in the *Book of the Duchess* this misunderstanding is a productive force in alleviating the grief of another person, in a way it is not in *Pearl*. Therefore, this chapter will also explore how Chaucer's Man in Black, in contrast to the narrator of the *Book of the Duchess*, uses the language and forms of French poetry in a different way; to express his profound grief over the loss of his Lady White. The Man in Black's formal and linguistic borrowings from French texts signal his membership in the emotional community of the noble, courtly class 'whose ideas about literature were defined according to French models'.[19] For the Man in Black, the language

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[19] The Man in Black's emotional community corresponds to Chaucer's 'French-speaking court audience, one whose ideas about literature were defined according to French models and whose love of France and all things French extended to an utter inability to relinquish their claim to the French throne'. As I will argue in more detail later in the chapter, the narrator's emotional community coincides with another audience for the *Book of the Duchess* - the members of Chaucer's own class, 'a privileged élite of clerks and government servants, for whom a knowledge of French provided access to powerful positions in the administration of England at home and the representation of its interests abroad', in Williams, *French Fetish*, p. 21.

and structure of French love narratives is an authentic, efficacious way to perform his

emotions and express the complexities of grief and loss.[20]

Chaucer's Suffering Narrator and Emotions of French Texts

The *Book of the Duchess* begins by introducing the narrator, who appears to be in

the throes of an intense, almost debilitating emotional crisis. The opening lines describe

symptoms which seem to exacerbate his suffering, including his restless thoughts and

inability to sleep:

> I have gret wonder, be this light,
>
> How that I lyve, for day ne nyght
>
> I may nat slepe wel nygh noght;
>
> I have so many an ydel thought
>
> Purely for defaute of slep
>
> That, by my trouthe, I take no kepe
>
> Of nothing, how it cometh or goth,

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[20] My analysis of the *Book of the Duchess* focuses on key moments within the text, but I refer to parts of the narrative which do not receive an extended analysis. For this reason, I provide a brief overview of the narrative of the text: The text opens with an insomniac narrator troubled by unhappy feelings and a sorrowful imagination. In an attempt to alleviate his sleeplessness, the narrator reaches for a book to drive the night away. He proceeds to retell the story contained within the book; an adaptation of the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone. The tale's central events and elements – the grief caused by the loss of a beloved spouse, the prayers to Juno, the visit from the god Morpheus with his message of Ceyx's death – are not the narrator's central focus. Instead, the narrator is most struck by Morpheus' ability to grant sleep, offering the god a richly decorated bed if only he would make the narrator sleep. However, as soon as this offer is made, the narrator promptly falls asleep upon the book he has been reading. In the dream which follows, the narrator wakes to find himself in a richly decorated chamber after having been startled out of his sleep by the sound of birdsong. Hearing a horn blast, the narrator moves outside to join a hunting party in pursuit of a hart, but he is soon distracted by a puppy who leads him to verdant grove filled with flowers. It is here that the narrator encounters a knight, dressed all in black and sitting alone with his back to an oak tree and who speaks a complaint in which he laments the death of his beloved lady. The narrator listens to the complaint but having either not understood the gravity of its message or choosing to feign ignorance, he approaches to greet the grieving knight. The rest of the dream vision involves a dialogue between the narrator and Man in Black. There follows a chess allegory in which the knight explains that Lady Fortune stole his queen, but the narrator fails to understand the reason for the Man in Black's sorrow. The Man then proceeds to convey his grief more plainly, providing a sustained account of Lady's White's exemplary qualities. Yet, the narrator still fails to understand. The knight begins once more, describing his first unsuccessful attempt and then ultimate triumph in winning to win the love of Lady White. This tale prompts the narrator to ask where Lady White is now, which leads to the Man in Black's culminating declaration that she has died (l. 1309). This pronouncement allows the Man in Black to rise from his solitary state of grief and mount his horse to ride towards his castle. Within the same moment, the narrator wakes and resolves to put his dream into rhyme.

Ne me nis nothing leef nor loth (ll. 1-8).[21]

In his sleeplessness, the narrator appears to be trapped within the contemplation of his immediate troubles; he has no interest in the outside world and asserts that he has 'felynge in nothyng', such is his focus on his 'sorwe' (l. 21) and 'melancolye' (l. 23). As consumed as he is by his sorrowful sickness, the narrator is unable to give an account of the reasons for his sorrow, explaining that 'Myselven can not telle why' (l. 34) he is unable to sleep. He only understands that his symptoms are part of 'a sicknesse | That I have suffred this eight yeer' (ll. 36-7). The narrator also appears to be unable to self-regulate his feelings or provide a remedy for his sickness. Instead, he relies upon another to act as his cure: 'there is phisicien but oon | That may me hele' (ll. 39-40). Through these opening lines, Chaucer creates a vivid picture of the suffering, melancholic lover. The characteristics of the narrator's sickness – that it has lasted for eight long years, that it has robbed him of sleep, and that its remedy can only be found in only one lady – are all conventional signs of the debilitating effects of lovesickness.[22] Furthermore, for the first time in an English love narrative, the poem begins with a first person 'I', lending the description of lovesickness a personal quality which conveys greater emotional power.[23] The reader of Chaucer's text is immediately enfolded within the textual 'I' of the poem and shares in the narrator's emotional experience.

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[21] Geoffrey Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess* in *Dream Visions and Other Poems*, ed. by Kathryn L. Lynch (New York: Norton, 2007), pp. 3-39.

[22] See R. M. Lumiansky, 'The Bereaved Narrator in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*', *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 9 (1959), 5-17. The passage from Guillaume de Machaut's *Jugement dou roy de Behaingne*, in which the lady states that she has devoted herself to Bonne Amour for seven or eight years (ll. 125-33), is cited as one of the sources chooses for the narrator's eight-year sickness is to be understood as lovesickness. Guillaume de Machaut, *The Judgment of the King of Bohemia/ Jugement dou roy de Behaingne*, ed. by R. Barton Palmer (London: Garland, 1984). For an in-depth study of the conventional sources and symptoms of lovesickness, see Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and its Commentaries* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990). Some critics, however, challenge the lovesickness reading of the opening passage of *BD*. John M. Hill, for example, argues that the narrator is suffering from a variety of *melancholia* known as head-melancholy, in 'The *Book of the Duchess*, Melancholy and that Eight Year Sickness', *Chaucer Review*, 9 (1974), 35-50.

[23] Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy,* p. 271.

However, upon closer examination, the cause of the narrator's suffering is not entirely clear, and there is a vague, evasive quality to the narrator's descriptions of the nature of his sickness. Insomnia and sorrow are caught in a pattern of cyclical opposition: he 'may nat slepe wel night nought' (l. 3) because he has 'so many an ydel thought' (l. 4) which then causes his 'defaute of slepe' (l. 5). The narrator's pattern of idleness and sleeplessness conveys a sense of stasis, as though the narrator is trapped in an inescapable cycle of sleepless inertia. The phrase 'many an ydel thought' (l. 4) emphasises this sense of inertia and stasis. Definitions in the *MED* and *OED* for the phrase's key word 'ydel'/'idle' shed further light on the narrator's emotional state. 'Idle' can convey a sense of being empty or void, a definition which would confirm the narrator's assertion that he has 'feling in nothinge' (l. 11).[24] The definition of 'idle' which offers the most interesting possibilities for my reading of the narrator's emotions is 'Of actions, feelings, thoughts, words, etc.: Void of any real worth, usefulness, or significance; leading to no solid result; hence, ineffective, worthless, of no value, vain, frivolous, trifling'.[25] This could, therefore, suggest that the narrator is an empty vessel in which the emotions expressed in French texts are able to take root.

Yet, the narrator also makes the choice not to examine his feelings too closely, he can but 'gesse' (l. 35) and speculate about the true cause of a sickness with which he has 'suffred this eight yere' (l. 37). Furthermore, after having discussed the 'phisicien but oon, | That may me hele' (ll. 39-40), the narrator marks with a sense of absolute finality:

> that is doon
>
> Passe we over until efte;

[24] 'Idle' in *OED* [online], <https://www-oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/91064> [accessed 2nd March 2017], definition 1a. 'empty, vacant, void'. 'Idel' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED21670> [accessed 2nd March 2017], definition 2 (a) Of material objects: empty; (b) of persons, a soul, a spirit: empty.
[25] 'Idle' in *OED* [online], <https://www-oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/91064> [accessed 2nd March 2017], definition 2a.

That wil nat be, mot nede be lefte;

Our first matere is good to kepe' (l. 40-44).

Chaucer's inclusion of this cryptic passage - in which the narrator states that he will skip over this part until later - raises more questions for the reader, however, the narrator fails to provide the answers he promises to address 'eft' (l. 41) or later in the text. Considering the ambiguous and evasive quality of this opening passage then, the heavy repetition of 'I' also suggests the narrator's self-focused entrapment in his own plight and an obsessive contemplation of his feelings without any certain understanding of these same feelings.

How, then, do we account for the narrator's evasiveness? Matters become clearer when we consider that the narrator's opening expressions of sorrow and despair are not his own words but a near direct translation of the opening lines of Jean Froissart's *Le Paradis d'amour*, the poet's first experiment in the *dit* form.[26] Froissart's text also introduces a narrator who is tormented by his inability to sleep:

Je sui de moi en grant merveille

Comment je vifs quant tant je veille,

Et on ne poroit en veillant

Trouver de moi plus traveillant,

Car bien saciés que par veillier

Me viennent souvent travillier

Pensées et merancolies

Qui me son tens au coer liies

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[26] James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and his French Contemporaries: Natural Music in the Fourteenth-Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 180. Wimsatt suggests that the poem was written around 1365, when Froissart was already well established in Queen Phillipa's household. Peter F. Dembowski, however, sets out the case for the *Paradis* being Froissart's first *dit*, a view which is more generally accepted. Dembowski's date would mean that Froissart wrote the text either whilst he was still in his native Hainault, or when he had very recently arrived in England, from Dembowski, 'Tradition, Dream Literature and Poetic Craft in *Le Paradis d'Amour* of Jean Froissart', in *Chaucer's French Contemporaries: The Poetry/Poetics of Self and Tradition*, ed. by R. Barton Palmer, (New York: AMS Press, 1999), pp. 277-91 (p. 278).

Et pas ne les puis deslyer,

Car ne voile la belle oublyer

Pour quele amour en ce traveil

Je sui entrés et tant je vel. (*Paradis d'amour*, ll. 1-12).

[I marvel at myself, how I live when I stay always awake. There is no one who could find someone as troubled by sleeplessness as I, for you must know that in my sleeplessness there come to trouble me thoughts and melancholies which are lodged within my heart. And I cannot undo them, For I don't wish to forget the beautiful one, For whose love I began this suffering, And lie awake so much.] [27]

The lines of poetic inheritance from Machaut, to Froissart and then on to Chaucer are established in this section, as the structural and linguistic echoes of Froissart's text serve, according to Wimsatt, as 'a compositional model […] based on the dits of Machaut'.[28] The characteristics of the narrative voice in the *Book of the Duchess* are not only inspired by, but are directly drawn from the French tradition.[29] Froissart's central ideas, such as the sleepless, melancholic dreamer who is preoccupied by sad thoughts and concerned that he will not survive his sustained period of insomnia, are clearly emulated in the opening section of Chaucer's text. In Froissart's text, the word 'veille', (meaning to stay awake, or the state of sleeplessness) is repeated and set alongside 'traveille' (meaning to be troubled, troubles), throughout lines 2-6 and again in lines 11-12. This repetition indicates that the mind of Froissart's narrator is imprisoned within a cyclical pattern in

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[27] Jean Froissart, *Le Paradis d'Amours* in *An Anthology of Narrative and Lyric Poetry,* ed. by Figg and Barton Palmer, pp. 35-103 (p. 36). Unless otherwise stated, all translations of the *Paradis d'amour* come from Figg and Barton Palmer's translation and are referenced parenthetically throughout the text.

[28] Wimsatt, *French Contemporaries*, p. 178. Wimsatt observes that 'Froissart's poem has a dream frame inspired in part by Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse*, with the substance of the work modelled on the *Remede de Fortune*. In turn Chaucer's elegy has a dream frame inspired first by Froissart's *Paradis* and second by the *Fonteinne amoureuse* (Froissart's source), with the substance modelled mainly on the *Remede de Fortune* (also Froissart's source) and the *Jugement de roy de Bahaigne*. Thus, in making his opening passage of the *Duchess* a near-verbatim translation of Froissart's first lines, Chaucer ostentatiously announces that he is following the compositional procedure of Froissart in the *Paradis*' (p. 178).

[29] David Lawton acknowledges that while 'so much is plundered from the French tradition that hardly any structural or thematic element is unprecedented', the material '*is* plundered, rather than borrowed, for it is wrenched quite ruthlessly from its original context', in *Chaucer's Narrators*, p. 52.

which he repeatedly contemplates the troubles of his sleeplessness, a technique which

Chaucer emulates in his narrator's contemplation of his 'ydel thoughts' (*Book of the*

Duchess, ll. 3-5).[30] What is more, the emphatic 'I' used by the dreamer at the very start of

the *Book of the Duchess* is not original to Chaucer but is a direct translation of Froissart's

opening 'Je'. Ardis Butterfield has argued for Froissart's innovative use of the first

person mode, particularly as 'the use of 'je' to start a narrative *dit* is far rarer until the

fourteenth century' and that there is no evidence of an example earlier than the *Paradys*.[31]

Admittedly, other narrative *dits* (including those written by Machaut) were written in the

first person, but Butterfield's point is that Froissart's poetry is 'radical and experimental'

in beginning the poem with the first-person pronoun, thereby creating a direct beginning

to the poem and giving the first person an active function in the text, a significant feature

which is then recreated and transformed in Chaucer's text.[32]

Despite the significant presence of French poetic texts within Chaucer's oeuvre, a

number of critics appear unwilling to acknowledge the importance of directly translated

French sources in the *Book of the Duchess.* Some are wholly resistant to the similarities

between the openings of the two poems, arguing that 'There is no attempt at close

translation. Chaucer has taken subject-matter from the French, but not the style. Already

we have the characteristic Chaucerian tone of voice, self-confidently self-deprecatory, the

half-humorous 'I'. What a contrast with Froissart's style!'[33] This unwillingness to

acknowledge the evident parallels between Chaucer and French poems seems to stem

from a concern that Chaucer's originality will be diminished. For these critics, because

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[30] Keith Busby argues that images of enclosure and imprisonment, a common feature of late-medieval texts. are more developed and prevalent in poetic work by Froissart; Busby, 'Froissart's Poetic Prison: Enclosure as Image and Structure in the Narrative Poetry', in *Froissart Across the Genres*, pp. 81-101 (p. 83).
[31] Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy,* p. 274.
[32] Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy,* p. 281.
[33] Derek Brewer, *Chaucer and the Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature* (London: Nelson, 1970), p. 3.

Chaucer wrote in vernacular English, he consciously created a new, individual style that rejected the French conventions that preceded him. Lee Patterson's study of Chaucer's subjectivity goes further in its critique of Chaucer's French contemporaries by arguing that by returning to the model of antiquity in the texts of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, Chaucer 'prised himself loose from an imprisoning court ideology' exemplified in the French poetry of Machaut and Froissart. [34] Other critics, whilst acknowledging Chaucer's debt to French texts, view the *Book of the Duchess* as a successful transformation of French poetry that transcends the confines of its style and offers an improved, original poetic voice. Barry Windeatt, for example, encourages the study of 'the French poems that were in Chaucer's mind' only as a means of focusing 'attention on the sphere in which his originality really operates, by laying bare to us some of the process of co-ordinating, extending, crystallizing, by which Chaucer's imagination sees how much more he can do with the materials left by the French poets'.[35] French texts have been viewed for many years as inferior sources that only serve as points of inspiration for the far superior abilities of Chaucer as the father of English poetry.

Yet, these critics fail to recognise that the emulation of French poems in the *Book of the Duchess* would have been viewed favourably by Chaucer's contemporary audience. As Helen Phillips observes,

> It is important for us to remember that for a courtly audience who still moved between French an English with ease […] successful translation was not merely a practical service. Such an audience would delight in the artistry by which qualities already prized in one language were created in another. […] Deschamps, while hailing Chaucer as a translator, also say he controls the source of the 'authentic draught' of inspiration; the Helicon. This probably expresses

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[34] Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 59.
[35] B.A. Windeatt, *Chaucer's Dream Poetry: Sources and Analogues* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1982), p. x.

accurately the aesthetic of the period: derivativeness was not incompatible with art.[36]

The adaptation and translation of works in French gave 'English court poets an intimate acquaintance with the language of high culture, power and prestige'[37] and indicated that they were able to participate in the 'internationalism' of English court life in the late fourteenth century.[38] Writing English poetry for a courtly audience 'who still moved between French and English with ease' and whose culture was defined according to French models, Chaucer's successful translation and playful adaptation of French sources in the *Book of the Duchess* would have been seen as an enhancing feature of the final English text. But Chaucer also wrote 'to please the members of his own class, a privileged élite of clerks and government servants' for whom a knowledge of French was a signal of upward mobility and prestige.[39] The *Book of the Duchess* demonstrates Chaucer's skill in using earlier French sources to recreate in English, for an English audience, the types of French writing that were highly prized by both his courtly readers and the community of readers of his own class.

Chaucer's translation of Froissart's *Paradis d'amour* is the first of the many French texts which make up the 'mosaic of citations and larger structural borrowings' within the *Book of the Duchess*.[40] Chaucer deliberately draws attention to these instances of borrowing and translation to demonstrate that the narrator's thoughts and feelings are not only

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[36] Helen Phillips, 'Introduction', in *Chaucer: The Book of the Duchess*, ed. by Helen Phillips (Durham: Durham and St. Andrews Medieval Texts, 1982), p. 12.

[37] Williams, *French Fetish*, p. 21.

[38] Elizabeth Salter refers to the late fourteenth century as 'the cosmopolitan years' at the English court, years 'which saw the translation of leading members of the French court to England: the capture of Jean le Bon at Poitiers in 1356 meant that not only French books but French artists and poets came in his train. The king, whose household had included Guillaume de Machaut, who had received Petrarch, and who had commissioned the splendidly illuminated *Bible de Jean de Sy* from the Parisian Bondol workshop, still functioned as a patron of literature and the arts during his English captivity'; Salter, 'Chaucer and Internationalism', p. 241. The cultural prestige of Jean le Bon's time in England had lasting effects on the English court. Chaucer, in making use of French texts, was therefore signalling his affinity with the high culture which had been established with the mingling of French and English courtly cultures.

[39] Williams, *French Fetish*, p. 21.

[40] Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy,* p. 271.

influenced by, but wholly shaped by the language and emotions described in French love poetry. As French texts are emotion scripts for the narrator, their translation into English has a profound effect on the emotions expressed and understood by the narrator. As this chapter progresses it will argue that for the narrator, translating a text from one language to another is akin to 'translating' an experience like grief. The language of grief – as it is translated from one person to another, and between a man of one class to another – comes up against its own limits, restricting what can be communicated to and understood by another person.

As we have already seen, the narrator's feelings of loss, sleeplessness and despair are all conventional signs of lovesickness, but crucially, I argue that these emotions have been *learnt* from the narrator's reading of French texts. To examine the narrator's learnt feelings, I build upon Sarah McNamer's theory that medieval texts were able to act as scripts for the performance of feeling. Working with examples of religious literary texts in Middle English, McNamer recognises that literary texts frequently acted as affective scripts and were capable of generating complex emotional effects in those who read or listened to them. [41] As such, McNamer proposes that performance – 'the means through which the feelings embedded in literary texts became, potentially, *performative*, thus entering and altering history' – is central to the conception of literary texts as scripts which generate a performance of feeling in their readers.[42] McNamer's study, however, also opens up possibilities for the analysis of non-religious texts under the same

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[41] McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p. 2. McNamer's work focuses on the genre of affective meditations on the Passion, a genre made up of 'richly emotional, script-like texts that ask their readers to imagine themselves present at scenes of Christ's suffering and to perform compassion for that suffering in a private drama of the heart' (p. 1). McNamer also points to the correlation between 'medieval understandings of affect as something willed and performed' and modern studies in psychology, anthropology and linguistics that suggest the naming and acting out of emotions are of central importance to the creation of emotions and their rooting within cultures (p. 2).
[42] McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, p. 3.

directives.[43] Within the multilingual context of the fourteenth-century court, McNamer's thesis invites readings which consider the performance of emotion across languages, and which address how the language and forms of French texts script feeling and generate emotions in their English readers.

In the *Paradis d'amour*, there are various ways in which Froissart seeks to represent and *produce* feeling in his readers. The direct, active 'I' which begins the poem establishes the narrator's strong emotional expression and appears to be a deeply personal assertion of feeling directed at the reader. As Spearing argues in his examination of medieval autography, the textual 'I' is often used to draw the reader into an empathetic engagement with medieval texts. Through the first-person pronoun, the reader witnesses the performance of feeling and then becomes an empathetic witness to what is happening in the text.[44] Froissart's text further encourages an emotional engagement between text and reader by depicting the speaker as directly addressing his audience. The narrator is shown to repeatedly emphasise the strength of his feeling by stating that his emotional pain is unmatched 'on ne poroit en veillant | Trouver de moi plus traveillant' (ll. 3-4) [one could not seek to find me more caring] and then by appearing to speak out of the text and address the audience, 'Car bien saciés que par veillier | Me viennent souvent travillier | Pensées et merancolies' (ll. 5-6) [*you* must know that in my sleeplessness there come to trouble me thoughts and melancholies]. The speaker's direct address to the reader encourages Froissart's audience to imagine and reflect upon the strength of the speaker's feelings. Through the speaker's expression of lovesick emotions, Froissart intends not only to depict feeling but also to produce and affirm these feelings within his readership.

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[43] Downes and McNamara, 'History of Emotions and Middle English Literature', p. 446.
[44] Spearing, *Medieval Autographies*, p. 23.

Chaucer's translation of Froissart's text creates the effect of emotional mirroring between the two poetic speakers. By reiterating the 'melancolye' (*Book of the Duchess,* l. 23) and 'ydel thought[s]' (l. 4) expressed by the speaker of *Le Paradis d'amour*, the feelings have become performative for the narrator in the *Book of the Duchess*. Furthermore, Chaucer's narrator is similarly preoccupied by his insomnia as a physical manifestation of his emotions. In fact, Chaucer's narrator bemoans his lack of sleep six times within the first twenty-five lines of the prologue, far more frequently than the sleepless speaker of Froissart's text. The melancholy expressed in Froissart's text has been so effective in its performativity that the narrator in the *Book of the Duchess* is depicted as performing this emotion within himself. In the *Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer demonstrates an awareness of the emotional effects of literature and through the figure of the narrator, seeks to show that the act of reading produces and shapes emotional understanding and the experience of feeling.

Therefore, the narrator's identity as a reader of texts is central to emotional understanding and expression. Like other medieval first-person narratives, the *Book of the Duchess* is a text about the acts of reading and writing, but it also a text which focuses on reading as a process of reflection, consideration and the correct or incorrect interpretations of texts. [45] As we have seen, through the process of reading literary texts, particular emotions are formed and created within the narrator of the *Book of the Duchess*, and this connection between reading and feeling is key to what Monique Scheer terms 'emotional practices': the 'things people do *in order* to have emotions'.[46] Scheer's argument recognises that the processes and expressions of culture, such as including

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[45] Spearing argues that the first-person texts of '[m]edieval autography [are] a kind of writing, and the word 'writing' deserves emphasis, for, as we shall see, autography also has a strong tendency to be *about* writing'; *Medieval Autographies*, p. 9. Throughout Chaucer's oeuvre, the Chaucerian narrator is identified as a reader and writer of texts, an identity emulated by Hoccleve's narrator in the *Series*.
[46] Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And is that what makes them have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory* 51 (2012), 193-220.

reading, listening to music or watching a performance, are important emotional practices which 'can modulate our feeling to a greater or lesser degree'.[47] But Scheer also emphasises the importance of thinking about emotions as something we *do* and not just something we *have*; in the *Book of the Duchess*, reading is an emotional practice which the dreamer *does* in order to have emotions. Within the poem, the narrator's emotions are not just a passively felt experience, they are an actively cultivated one.

Chaucer, however, repeatedly returns to the dynamics of *mis*reading and *mis*interpretation throughout the *Book of the Duchess*, a characteristic which Chaucer's narrator shares with the father figure in the *Pearl*-poem. Chaucer demonstrates that the narrator is not a skilled reader or translator of French texts, and by extension, neither is he a skilled interpreter or reader of the emotions performed within these texts. The first act of misreading occurs when, in an attempt to alleviate his sleeplessness, the narrator reaches for a book '[t]o rede and drive the night away' (l. 49). The story contained within the book is an adaptation of Ovid's tale of King Ceys and Queen Alcyone, which the narrator identifies as a 'romaunce' (l. 48). Romance is a term which was used frequently in the Middle Ages to refer to works in the French language.[48] Alastair Minnis proposes that this 'romaunce' is a copy of the *Ovide Moralisé*, whereas James Wimsatt argues that it is a manuscript containing court poetry, which includes examples of the *dits amoreux*. Whichever text the narrator is reading, it is most important to note that Chaucer's narrator is reading an emotion script which is identified with the *French* literary tradition.[49] In the

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[47] Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?' p. 210.
[48] Williams cites Huon de Rotelande, who explains that he translated the Latin source of his romance, *Ipomedon*, into French so that the tale could be understood by clerics and literate layfolk alike: 'So li latin n'est translatez | Gaires n'I erent entendanz | Por ceo voil jeo dire en romanz | … Si entendrunt et clerc et lai' [If the Latin weren't translated, no one would be able to understand. For that reason, I write to you in French, so that it will be understood by both clergy and lay readers]; Huon de Rotelande, *Ipomedon*, ed. by E. Köbling (Breslau: W Koebner, 1889), p. 450, quoted in Williams, *French Fetish*, p. 23.
[49] See A.J. Minnis, 'Chaucer and the *Ovid moralisé*', *Medium Ævum*, 48 (1979), 254-7 and James I. Wimsatt, 'The Sources of Chaucer's "Seys and Alcyone"', *Medium Ævum*, 36 (1967), 231-41. For further accounts of Chaucer's use of Ovidian sources, see John M. Fyler, *Chaucer and Ovid* (New Haven, CT:

middle of his retelling of the story, the narrator declares his emotional identification with

this tale derived from the French tradition:

> … trewly I, that made this book,
>
> Had such pittee and such rowthe
>
> To rede hir sorwe that, by my trowthe,
>
> I ferde the worse al the morwe
>
> Aftir to thenken on hir sorwe. (ll. 96-100)

In reading of Alcyone's 'sorwe' (l. 98), a similar emotion is produced in the narrator

when he contemplates the emotional pain of the fictional figure. The narrator explains

that he is deeply affected, experiencing '*such* pittee and *such* rowthe' (my emphasis, l.

97) through the experience of reading the words on the page. His sorrow in contemplating

Alcyone's grief is so great that it lasts 'al the morwe' (l. 99).

However, the emotional identification between character and reader is promptly

undermined at the end of the narrator's retelling of the Ovidian tale. In Ovid's version of

the tale, Ceys and Alcyone are a devoted husband and wife who are separated when Ceys

dies in a shipwreck. Alycone's grief is profound, but the pair are reunited when, after

death, they are transformed into kingfishers.[50] In the narrator's retelling in the *Book of the*

Duchess, however, there is no transformation; when Alcyone learns of her husband's

death, she delivers the brief final line 'Allas!' (l. 103) and dies three days later. There is

no reflection upon Alcyone's sudden death nor is there an acknowledgment that she has

died of grief. Indeed, the narrator's emotions are conspicuously absent from many of the

most moving moments within the tale. When addressing the love of Ceys and Alcyone,

'Seys […] hadde a wyf, | The beste that mighte bere lyf' (ll. 63-4), or the tragedy of his

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Yale University Press, 1979) and Lisa J. Kiser, *Telling Classical Tales* (Ithaca, Ny: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[50] Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* trans. by A.D Melville, ed. by E.J. Kenney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 55-70.

shipwreck, 'That brak hir mast and made it falle | And clefte his ship and dreynt hem alle' (ll. 71-2), the narrator omits all emotion, quickly skipping over passages which, in other medieval versions of the tale, offer detailed performances of emotion. In Machaut's version in the *Fonteinne amoureuse*, for instance, Alcyone's love for Ceys is the poem's starting point: 'Elle l'amoit plus que rien d'amour fine' (l. 551) [She loved him more than anything, with a love that was most refined]. Chaucer's narrator dismisses Alcyone and focuses instead on his desire for sleep, offering extravagant gifts to Morpheus 'If he can make me slepe sone' (l.263). Chaucer underlines the limitations of the narrator's emotional understanding; he is unable to fully identify with the grief of a different emotional community, exemplified in this woman of noble class, from a different culture and language. Chaucer depicts the narrator's reading of the Ovidian text as limited and insubstantial, suggesting that his reading of emotions in his later encounter with the grieving Man in Black will be also be flawed.

What is more, the narrator in the *Book of the Duchess* is depicted as a reader cut off from the world, whose emotions are produced by the texts that he reads. As Diana Webb has explored at length, self-imposed solitude was often viewed with suspicion by medieval society.[51] Therefore, the image of the dreamer sitting alone, reading silently, presumably in the middle of the night, would have appeared strange to a medieval readership. *The House of Fame* is another of Chaucer's texts which explicitly describes the peculiarity of the dreamer's determination to read privately and alone. This text presents a similarly bookish dreamer who is berated by an Eagle for his determination to sit and read when he comes home:

> For when thy labour doon al ys,
>
> And hast mad alle thy rekenynges,

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[51] Diana Webb, *Privacy and Solitude in the Middle Ages: The Medieval Discovery of Personal Space* (London: Hambledon, 2007), p. 122-23.

> In stede of reste and newe thynges,
>
> Thou goost hom to thy hous anoon;
>
> And also domb as any stoon
>
> Thou sittest at another book
>
> Tyl fully dawsed ys thy look,
>
> And lyvest thus as an heremyte,
>
> Although thyn abstinence ys lyte. (ll. 652-60)[52]

The interaction between the Eagle and dreamer is undoubtedly comic, yet there appears to be a serious message behind this interaction. Silent reading cuts the dreamer off from the wider world, he sits as 'domb as any stoon' (l. 656) and is compared to a 'heremyte' (l. 659) whose religious convictions cause them to reject wordly considerations. The use of vocabulary related to religious figures is no coincidence, as the secular, silent reader bears a resemblance to members of the religious orders who pore over manuscripts but are confined to the safe, silent space of the cloister. Solitary readers can therefore be seen to develop behaviour patterns which do not belong to the social world. Readers are in the world but set apart from it, something which challenges defined societal roles. Reading the bookish dreamers of the *Book of the Duchess* and the *House of Fame* together, it is clear that both are depicted as detached from the world and lacking in any practical experience outside their reading of literary texts and their confined domestic settings.

I suggest, however, that reading is an essential element within the emotional community to which the narrator belongs in the *Book of the Duchess*. The portrait of the narrator in its opening section corresponds to D.S. Brewer's definition of Chaucer's social standing:

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[52] Chaucer, *The House of Fame*, in *Dream Visions and Other Poems*, ed. by Kathryn L. Lynch (New York: Norton, 2007), pp. 39-93.

He was the new man, the literate layman who was not a clerk, the courtier who was not a

knight; he was not poor, (like Langland) but not rich; a salaried man, not landed gentry

(like Gower); he was not even a merchant like his father and grandfather. […] To be such

a new

man may have created in him a sense of insecurity, strain, loss, even desertion.[53]

The extent to which literacy and learning were essential to this community of the 'new

man' must be emphasised. The access to manuscripts and literary texts, both financially

and intellectually, was essential to their position within the court and to the sense of their

own authority. Classical and Continental texts were the sources from which the 'new

man' learnt about how to operate in the courtly world, and where this emotional

community learnt their emotional regimes and vocabulary. In the case of the *Book of the*

Duchess, it must be remembered that this was 'a poem such as would have been

acceptable to all who were accustomed to reading in the sophisticated *demandes*, *saluts*,

and *complaints d'amour* of contemporary France'.[54] In writing this poem, Chaucer was

directing his efforts not only to a noble, courtly community but to the new men who also

had access to this international literature and a wide-ranging Continental cultural

tradition. Therefore, as much as Chaucer's – and the narrator's – emotional community

was set apart from the noble elite, both communities shared the same literature, placing

them on a more equal standing in terms of learning and culture. However, as Brewer also

demonstrates, this 'social fluidity creates personal insecurity and ambiguity' for the new

man.[55] The insecurity of this emotional community is made clear in the *Book of the*

Duchess through Chaucer's emphasis on the narrator's placement in solitary, silent spaces

such as his bedchamber.

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[53] D.S. Brewer, 'Class Distinction in Chaucer', *Speculum.* 43 (1968), 290-305 (p. 304).
[54] Salter, 'English and International', p. 243.
[55] Brewer, 'Class Distinction', p. 307.

Upon entering the dream, however, the narrator moves from a silent, solitary space to a dream-chamber which is filled with noise. The narrator enters into the dream landscape of a May morning and finds himself 'waked' (l. 294) within the dream by the sounds of singing birds. The birds which should have signalled the final metamorphosis of Alcyone and Ceys at the end of the tale now appear within the text and become an important element of the dreamer's imagination. Indeed, the narrator is so absorbed by the birdsong that it takes a number of lines for him to realise that he is lying in a chamber that is

> Ful wel depeynted, and with glas
>
> Were al the wyndowes wel yglased
>
> Ful clere, and nat an hole ycrased,
>
> That to beholde hyt was gret joye.
>
> For hooly al the story of Troye
>
> Was in the glasinge ywrought thus
>
> […] And al the walles with colours fine
>
> Were peynted, both text and glose,
>
> Of al the Romaunce of the Rose. (ll. 322-334)

Within this dream chamber the 'narrator's dream is literally refracted through th[e] double lens' of classical and French literature as he wakes to find himself in an interior space where light streams through stained glass images of the story of Troy and the walls are decorated with paintings of the French dream vision, the *Roman de la Rose.*[56] The chamber is depicted as a space filled with images drawn from other texts, possibly from the texts included in the narrator's collection of books from which he earlier asked his servant to reach the tale of Ceys and Alcyone. The dream chamber demonstrates that

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[56] Kathryn L. Lynch, 'Introduction' to *Book of the Duchess*, in *Dream Visions and Other Poems,* Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. by Kathryn L. Lynch (New York: Norton, 2007), p. 4.

literature has been internalised by the narrator to shape his understanding of the world. The inclusion of this literary space, set between the narrator's waking and dreaming state, is key to the narrative's literariness and suggests that the narrator views emotions through the lens of literature, specifically through the lens of French texts.

Several critics have considered the connection between the dream chamber and the literature the narrator reads just before he enters the dream. F.N. Robinson and Colin Wilcockson have searched for a manuscript of the *Roman de la Rose* with both text and commentary which would correspond to the wall paintings found in the dream chamber.[57] Michael Norman Salda has hypothesised that the king's chamber in the Palace of Westminster, referred to as the Painted Chamber due to its fine decoration, was Chaucer's source for the dream-chamber within the *Book of the Duchess* and 'inspired Chaucer to think a room might be decorated like a book'.[58]

The links between reading and dreaming are first suggested when the narrator describes falling asleep 'upon my booke*'* (l. 274). Chaucer has carefully described the postures of the narrator so that the reader can imagine an insomniac man sitting upright in bed reading his book. In falling asleep whilst reading, the narrator would drop onto the text and '[w]hen he finally opens his eyes to look around, the room that he sees is, in one sense, that very book'.[59] The book is the lens through which the narrator views his dream. There is also evidence that the images of Troy are another example of a classical text retold in the French tradition. Kathryn L. Lynch notes that 'The ill-fated lovers Jason and Medea, though not participants in the ancient story of Troy, are described in medieval Trojan romances'.[60] I posit that the narrator's reading of the Trojan story is drawn from a

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[57] See F.N Robinson, *The Poetical Works of Chaucer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).
[58] Michael Norman Salda, 'Pages from History: The Medieval Palace of Westminster as a Source for the Dream Chamber in the *Book of the Duchess'*, *The Chaucer Review,* 27 (1992), 111-125 (p. 114).
[59] Salda, 'Pages from History', p. 113.
[60] Kathryn L. Lynch makes this observation in her note to line 334, from *The Book of the Duchess* in *Dream Visions and Other Poems,* ed. by Kathryn L. Lynch, (New York: Norton, 2007) p. 14., n. 344.

French 'romaunce' such as Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Le Roman de Troie*.[61] Chaucer demonstrates that French literary texts and the emotional regimes depicted within them have become so entrenched within the narrator's mind that they now colour his dreams.

The lens of the chamber's stained glass is particularly significant in shaping the narrator's perspective on the dream. Anyone who has looked at a stained-glass window knows that it both enhances and obscures the viewer's perspective at the same time. The full effects of stained glass are only observed from *inside* a room where light streams through the windows and falls on the interior space, and the lines of the pictures depicted on the glass are only properly observed from inside a space. Stained glass, therefore, is a decorative element which principally enhances *interior* space, transforming views of the world outside the window. However, if one imagines looking at a stained-glass window, there are multiple layers of perspective; one first sees the pictures and colours of the glass and then observes the world outside the window through the coloured glass. The pictures and colours shift and change the view of the space or landscape outside the window. I suggest, therefore, that the narrator's perspective of the outside world is altered by the colours and the texture of the literary pictures depicted in the glass, images which transform rather than obscure the images of the world beyond. Therefore, whilst literature affects the dreamer's perspective on the dream, literary references will not wholly distort his views on the dream world created outside the chamber walls.

The dream-chamber is a type of antechamber between the waking state and the dream proper, or, as Nancy Ciccone terms it, a 'transitional device'.[62] Ciccone argues that the chamber is important to understanding the role of the dream in the poem because the narrator 'begins his dream in a chamber that ostensibly provides a transition into the main

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[61] Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Roman de Troie*, trans. by Glenn S. Burgess and Douglas Kelly (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2020).

[62] Nancy Ciccone, 'The Chamber, the Man in Black, and the Structure of Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*', *The Chaucer Review,* 44 (2009), 205-223 (p. 206).

part of the dream, as it occurs between his reading of an Ovidian tale and falling asleep, on the one hand, and his entrance into an Edenic landscape and encounter with the man in black, on the other'. The act of reading has sent the narrator to sleep, but, as the images within the chamber demonstrate, reading has also permeated the narrator's dream as 'therwith even | Me mette so inly swete a sweven' (273-4). The narrator moves from the reading of an Ovidian tale to a chamber filled with literary images and finally outside into an Edenic landscape that is drawn directly from the romance tradition. Therefore, the dream-chamber is a device that demonstrates that even in the narrator's dream, literature will shape his understanding of the world he encounters.

If the chamber is a transitional space from waking to dreaming, it also marks a moment of transition in the narrator's views of his own emotions. As soon as the narrator enters the chamber, he 'attends not to himself, but to his environment, to the morning, and to his chamber'.[63] This is the first moment in the poem where the narrator seems wholly focused on something other than the performance of his own emotions. Within the chamber space the dreamer is engaged by a range of senses, from the sounds of the birds that 'sate amonge | Upon my chambre-roof withoute' (ll. 298-9), to the sight of the paintings on the wall, and also by the warmth of the sun that shines through the stained glass onto his bed. Rather than focusing on the performance of lovesickness and insomnia, the narrator finally begins to engage with the world around him and find joy in his place within it. The dream-chamber marks a moment of transition during which the narrator will move from self-focused emotion to an engagement with the emotions described by the Man in Black.

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[63] Ciccone, 'The Chamber, the Man in Black', p. 209.

Reading the Man in Black's Grief

In comparison to its French sources, the *Book of the Duchess* abounds with images of the body and writes the experience of emotion on the lived body, often in extreme ways.[64] At the beginning of the poem, for example, the narrator demonstrates a much clearer sense of the physical manifestations of his sickness, particularly in comparison to his ambiguity about his emotional state. Bodies and physicality are a particular focus of the narrator's reimagining of the story of Ceys and Alcyone, particularly in his handling of Morpheus.[65] In Chaucer's version, when Ceys has 'loste his lyf' (l. 75), Morpheus picks up his corpse and carries it to Alycone to deliver the news of her husband's death:

> He take up Seys body the king
>
> That lyth ful pale and nothing rody.
>
> Bid him crepe into the body,
>
> And do it goon to Alcyone
>
> The quene, ther she lyth alone,
>
> And shewe hir shortly, it is no nay,
>
> How it was dreynt this other day (142-8)

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[64] Corinne Saunders notes medieval writers 'rely on and creatively adapt conventional notions of love and grief, exploring how these are felt in hearts and minds, and probing their physiological force. They repeatedly engage with suffering and conflicted psyches, writing the experience of affect on the lived-body, often in extreme ways. And they engage too with the processes of thinking and feeling, demonstrating the crucial interplay of affective and cognitive elements in emotion'. Saunders, 'Mind, Body and Affect in Medieval English Romance, in *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Mind, Body, Voice* ed. Frank Brandsma, Carolyne Larrington and Corinne Saunders (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 31-47, p. 31.

[65] Elizabeth Liendo argues that '*The Book of the Duchess* aligns the Alcyone and Ceyx story with the Black Knight's lament and the narrator's larger frame through its treatment of grief, structurally hinging upon the representation of "nakednesse" found in each frame tale. Chaucer first establishes the productive relationship between sleep, grief, and nakedness by representing Alcyone and the sleepers in the Cave of Sleep as "al naked." Chaucer then returns to the naked body as an image for grief by mapping the same language onto the Man in Black. This link between the grieving widow, who swoons, suddenly unclothed, and the Man in Black, who is made "naked" by Death, cues the audience to other forms of disclosure less acceptable than the nakedness itself, such as male grief' in '"In hir bed al naked": Nakedness and Male Grief in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*', *Philological Quarterly*, 96.4 (2017), 405-424 (p. 406).

The transportation of the 'dreynte' (l. 148) body to Alcyone provides a definite, if rather macabre, answer to her question of whether he 'be quik or ded' (l. 121). Yet again, however, the narrator deviates from his French sources. These interpretations of Ovid's original emphasise the poignancy of the after-death reunion between husband and wife and seek to generate an emotional response in the reader. In the *Ovide moralisé*, for example, Morpheus takes on the image of Ceys, 'l'ymage de Seys' (ll. 3551-2), but the image which delivers the message to Alcyone is 'l'umbre' (l. 3652) or shadow of her husband, communicating a gentler, more spiritually focused message to the grieving widow than the treatment of Ceys' body in the *Book of the Duchess*.[66] Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse* focuses on the emotional communication between husband and wife when Morpheus takes on the semblance of Ceys and 'se transporte […] et se bien li enorte | En sa fourme' (ll. 715-17) [transports himself […] and pleads with her in his [Ceys'] form]. Furthermore, the *Book of the Duchess* adds another death at the end of the tale when Alcyone 'deyde within the thridde morwe' (l. 214) after learning of her husband's death. Again, Chaucer's retelling deviates from Ovid's tale and its French sources as there is no metamorphosis for the couple. Instead they are reduced to two corpses which underline the finality of death.

The narrator's many misreadings of French texts and misunderstandings of their emotional import foreshadow the dynamics of misinterpretation and miscommunication which pervade the dream-encounter between the Man in Black and the narrator. Where the Man in Black performs and communicates his grief through the language of high French literary culture, the narrator demonstrates his inexperience with this discourse and his inability to translate its language, instead attempting to read the Man in Black's

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[66] Anon., *Ovide Moralisé*, ed. by Craig Baker, Marianne Besseyre, Mattia Cavagna, Société es Anciens Textes Français, 113 (Abbeville: Paillart, 2018).

emotions as they are written on the body.[67] The poem thus explores the obstacles to effective emotional communication between different emotional communities. However, while the narrator continues to misinterpret French courtly codes and literary culture throughout the encounter with the Man in Black, it is the narrator's obtuseness which eventually releases the Man in Black from the bonds of grief and isolation and allows him to return to the courtly, social world.

The narrator first encounters the Man in Black after having wandered away from Emperor Octavian's hunt (ll. 344-386)[68] and finding himself in a green grove filled with flowers and 'thikke of trees so ful of leves' (l. 418). It is this dream-landscape - 'the description of which owes a great deal to the conventional descriptions of spring in French dream visions' – which provides the setting for the central episode of the *Book of the Duchess*.[69] The narrator sees the knight sitting with his back against an oak tree. He is described as being '[a] wonder wel-faringe knight' (l. 452) with a handsome and youthful appearance: '[o]f the age of foure and twenty yeer. | Upon his berde but litel heer (ll. 455-56).[70] Yet, the Man in Black does not convey the active, vigorous portrait of a young courtly man. Instead, he is dressed in black and 'heng his hede adounne' (l. 461). Furthermore, rather than of the ruddiness of good health, his skin is 'Ful pitous, pale' (l. 471). Everything about this description communicates the grief and suffering being experienced by the Man in Black.

Unaware of the narrator's presence, the Man in Black proceeds to make a 'compleynt' (l. 464) composed 'of ryme ten vers or twelve (l. 463) which he voices 'to

[67] For more on theme of understanding the Man in Black, see Ruth Morse, 'Understanding the Man in Black', *Chaucer Review*, 15.3 (1981), 204-8.
[68] For a detailed analysis of the hunt motif in the *Book of the Duchess*, see Anne Rooney, 'The *Book of the Duchess*: Hunting and the Ubi Sunt Tradition', *The Review of English Studies*, 38 (987), 299-314.
[69] Williams, *French Fetish*, p. 28.
[70] The age of the Man in Black would not have matched the age of John of Gaunt, who, having been born in 1340, would have been 28 when Blanche died in 1368. Critics suggest that the discrepancy in age may be due to miscopying.

himselve' (l. 487) and speaks rather than sings: 'He seyde a lay, a maner song, | Withoute

note, without song' (l. 471-2):

> I have of sorwe so grete woon
>
> That joye gete I never noon,
>
> Now that I see my lady bright,
>
> Which I have loved with al my might,
>
> Is fro me deed and is agoon.
>
>   Allas, Deeth, what aileth thee
>
> That thou noldest have taken me
>
> Whan thou took my lady swete
>
> That was so fair, so fresh, so free,
>
> So good that men may wel y-see
>
> Of al goodness she had no mete! (475-86)[71]

This lyric, which is spoken 'with a dedly sorwful soun' (l. 462), constitutes the Man in

Black's first spoken words and reveals much about the source of his grief. The lyric

contains the first reference to the death of Lady White in the *Book of the Duchess* and 'so

acts as the first indication not only to the dreamer, but also to the audience, of the poem's

central subject'.[72] Furthermore, and most crucially for the subject of the current chapter,

the lyric contains the Man in Black's first and only *direct* expression of grief at his loss (l.

475-9).

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[71] Some editors, including Lynch - the source of the citations from Chaucer included in this chapter - maintain the twelve-line lyric which first appears in William Thynne's 1532 edition of Chaucer's works. Thynne includes a sixth line in the middle of the lyric, 'And thus in sorwe lefte me aloon'. However, in all the extant manuscripts containing the *Book of the Duchess*, the lyric consists of eleven lines. Lynch also acknowledges that the line may not be original to Chaucer. For these reasons I maintain Chaucer's original eleven-line structure in this chapter.

[72] Butterfield, 'Lyric and Elegy', p. 33. Butterfield notes that the lyrics have not been the focus of much critical attention, in part because critics consider the lyrics 'not so much meaningful as meaningless' and 'plain to the point of dullness' (p. 33). Butterfield, however, argues for the importance of the lyric as 'the song's reference to death is given larger structural significance' and therefore reveals 'the poem's true function: elegy' (p. 33).

With this lyric, Chaucer again signals his indebtedness to the French tradition, as nearly all of Chaucer's French sources include similar poems or lyrics which are embedded within the narrative of the dream poem.[73] I argue that the Man in Black uses the language, images and forms of the French literary tradition to effectively perform his emotions and to directly and authentically communicate the pain and sorrow of grief. Divided into two parts, comprised of five and six lines with the rhyme scheme aabba / ccdccd, the verse's form moves through the processes of grief experienced by the Man in Black. The lyric begins with the first-person declaration of the abundance, 'so gret *woon*', of the 'sorwe' (l. 475) experienced by the Man in Black and through the progression a-rhyme, this initial expression of grief is directly connected to the loss of his lady, who 'ys *agoon*' (l. 479). In his state of grief, sorrow is an emotion which the Man possesses (I have of sorwe …), but joy is known only as an absence, something he lacks and may never return: 'joye gete I never noon' (l. 476).

As the lyric moves to the b rhymes, the couplet 'Now that I see my lady bright, | Which I have loved with al my might' (ll. 477-8) joins the two individuals - the lady and the speaking Man in Black - as one, as they were once joined within the emotional community of marriage, much like the Pearl-Maiden's emotional community of marriage to the Lamb within the *Pearl*-poem. However, this reminder of past unity and happiness is contained between two rhymes of absence, 'noon' and 'agoon', (l. 476, l. 479), suggesting that in the Man in Black's grief-focused state, his memories constantly revisit the pain of his loss. Furthermore, within first five lines of the lyric, the first-person pronoun appears four times, locating the Man in Black at the centre of the lyric's expression of grief. If we assume John of Gaunt's identification with the 'I' of the Man in

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[73] Butterfield, 'Lyric and Elegy', p. 36-37. In Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse*, for example, the complaint which the narrator overhears being spoken by the knight is set apart from the rest of the poem by its use of a different meter. Froissart's *Paradis d'amours* includes a range of verse forms, including the lai and the ballade.

Black, these first-person emotion claims serve to intensify the emotions of Gaunt's lived experience of grief and his real loss of Blanche of Lancaster. As Sarah McNamer suggests, the 'first-person emotives in this poem could thus serve to generate and intensify feelings of loss, thus ennobling and elevating the marriage of Gaunt and Blanche, creating of their love a story worthy of memorialisation, never to be forgotten'.[74]

The lyric's second section elaborates on the themes of loss and separation. Here, the Man in Black moves away from first-person expressions of grief to address the personified figure of Death. Death has agency and power, with the ability to take away the 'lady swete' (l. 482) and leave the Man in Black with his painful grief. By contrast, the Man in Black is the passive victim, unable to do more than plead with Death, demanding 'what aileth thee' (l. 480) and questioning his own unhappy lot, 'That thou noldest have taken me' (l. 481), to live without his beloved. Yet these apostrophes are met with a pervasive silence; the Man in Black is unable to elicit a response from Death, just as he was unable to prevent Death from taking his lady. This movement, from the Man in Black's own expressions of grief in the lyric's first section to a focus on the figure he identifies as the cause of his grief, allows the Man in Black to move further from himself as he recalls his past happiness and the exceptional qualities of the lady he loved. The lady was beyond compare, so excellent that she can only be described with superlatives: not only was she 'so fair, so fresh, so free' (l. 483), her character was '[s]o good' (l. 484) that she had 'no mete' (l. 485).[75] The emotional significance of this description is signalled by the use of the past participle; 'she *was*' and 'she *had*' (l. 483, l. 485), emphasising that these are qualities which the lady no longer possesses, instead she

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[74] Sarah McNamer, 'Emotion', in *A New Companion to Chaucer*, ed. by Peter Brown (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2019), pp. 123-137 (p. 130).

[75] For more on Lady White as a visual object of desire for the Man in Black, see Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire*, p. 105, especially Chapter 3.

is now 'deed and is agoon' (l. 479). The qualities which once made the lady so exceptional and so worthy of love, now make her loss all the more painful for the Man in Black.

Speaking the lyric and giving voice to emotion may effectively convey the Man in Black's grief, but it provides neither comfort nor consolation, and serves to isolate him further into a state of grief, much like it does for the narrator in *Pearl*. A silence follows the end of the lyric, during which the Man in Black becomes trapped within his own thoughts:

he spak nought,

But argued with his owne thought,

And in his witte disputed faste' (ll. 503-5).

Grief causes the Man in Black to retreat from the world, he is wholly closed off from the sights and sounds which surround him: he takes no notice of the verdant grove which elicits such wonder from the narrator (ll. 406-7), nor does he respond when the narrator when the narrator stands right at his feet and greets him (ll. 502-3, l. 510). [76] By withdrawing into his own mind and retreating further into his grief and despair, the Man in Black - a member of the courtly, noble emotional community - rejects social interactions and embraces his isolation.

The narrator appears to recognise the incongruity of the picture before him: the courtly man (and member of the emotional community of noble, courtly men) sits alone, with his head hung down, withdrawn from the social world. The narrator places himself 'right at his fete' (l. 502) and 'adopts a French manner and lexicon to address (and to impress) the Man in Black': 'as I beste coude. | Debonairly and nothing loude' (ll. 517-

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[76] Entering the green grove in which he finds the Man in Black, the narrator responds with wonder and incredulity: 'As though th'erthe envye wolde | To be gayer than the heven' (ll. 406-7).

18).[77] Understanding the connection between the noble community and French courtliness, the narrator attempts to draw out the Man in Black by adopting the speech and social codes of the French manner. The narrator goes on to apologise for having 'destroubled' (l. 524) the Man in Black, and, using French terms, asks if he wishes to tell of his sorrow, '*paraventure* it may ese your herte' (l. 556).[78] In this passage, therefore, while the narrator shows that he is able to identify the French language and codes associated with the Man in Black's emotional community, he also demonstrates an inability to read the emotions being performed by the Man in Black's and associate these with a state of grief.

Indeed, despite the narrator's explicit statement that he heard the Man in Black's complaint and remembers the verse word for word – 'for ful wel I can | Reherse it' (l. 473) – the narrator does not refer to it again, wholly overlooking its larger emotional significance.[79] As Butterfield describes it, '[t]he song's words cry out for the response they fail to get'.[80] Despite the Man in Black's explicit declaration that 'my lady bright' is 'fro me deed and is agoon' (l. 477, l. 480) and that death has 'took my lady swete' (l. 483), the narrator fails to understand that the complaint is a statement of death. The narrator describes the lyric as the saddest – '[t]he most pitee, the most rowthe' (l. 465) – he has ever heard, indicating that he understands its emotional impact, but he fails to

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[77] Williams, *French Fetish*, p. 28. 'Debonair' in *OED* [online], <https://www.oed-com.elib.tcd.ie/view/Entry/47908> [accessed 12th January 2018], etymology: Old French *debonaire*, properly a phrase *de bonne aire* (11th cent.) of good disposition.

[78] 'Paraventur(e)' in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED32370> [accessed 27th February 2017], etymology: Old French.

[79] This is one of the most critically discussed, and contested, sections of the *Book of the Duchess.* For those who argue for the ignorance of the narrator, see J.O. Fichte, 'The *Book of the Duchess* - A Consolation?' *Studia Neophilologica*, 45.1 (1973), 53-67; Fyler, *Chaucer and Ovid*, pp. 182-83; Donald R. Howard, *Chaucer and the Medieval World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 156. Others argue that the narrator feigns ignorance, and tactfully overlooks the Man in Black's declaration of the death of Lady White, in order to draw out the Man in Black and offer consolation. See Spearing, *Dream-Poetry*, pp. 69-70; Derek A. Traversi, *Chaucer: The Early Poetry: A Study in Poetic Development* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1987), p. 42.

[80] Butterfield, 'Lyric and Elegy', p. 34.

correctly read this emotion as grief. It is not so much a question of the narrator's inability to understand the words or meaning of the Man in Black's 'complaynte' (l. 487), but more an inability to correctly identify the emotions performed through these words. This moment demonstrates the marked difference that an individual's direct experience of loss, together with their class identity, makes to the way in which they think about or comprehend grief.

Yet, as soon as the Man in Black has finished his complaint, the narrator closely observes his embodied emotions. In great detail, the narrator describes the ways in which emotional pain is written directly onto the Man in Black's body:

> His sorweful herte gan faste faynte,
>
> And his spirites wexen dede;
>
> The blood was fled, for pure drede,
>
> Doun to his hert to make him warm –
>
> For wel it feled the hert had harm –
>
> To wite eek why it was adrad,
>
> By kinde, and for to make it glad,
>
> For it is member principal
>
> Of the body. And that made al
>
> His hewe change and wexe grene
>
> And pale, for ther no blood is sene
>
> In no maner lime of his. (ll. 488-92)

Here, the narrator uses the language of humoral medicine to describe the physical manifestations of emotional pain. The introduction of medical and scientific texts, including Galen's humoral theory and Avicenna's *Canon,* 'gave the body and bodily processes a new prominence in European dream theory'.[81] In Galenic treatises in

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[81] Steven Kruger, 'Medical and Moral Authority in the Late Medieval Dream', in *Reading Dreams: The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare,* ed. by Peter Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 51-83 (p. 56).

particular, 'physical and mental health were linked, and they were seen to be significantly affected by the last of the non-naturals, the emotions'.[82] In the *Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer's use of medical language suggests that the body is able to act as a signifier of authentic, internal feeling.[83] The Man in Black's spirits or humors withdraw, his blood is driven by his sorrowful thoughts to move to the heart, the main organ of emotion. These internal processes then cause the skin to change colour, robbing it of a healthy rosiness and turning it green and pale as his limbs are drained of blood. It is the description of embodied emotions (ll. 488–499), rather than the preceding complaint (ll. 475–86) which gives the narrator a medical interpretation of the extent to which the Man in Black is suffering and of the potentially harmful internal bodily and mental practices which are being aggravated by his grief. The depiction of embodied emotions emphasizes that emotions are *practices* which can be recognized, read and acted upon by both the narrator and the reader of the poem.

However, even when reading the Man in Black's embodied emotions, the narrator remains unable to recognise the true cause of his sorrow. I suggest that the narrator is incapable of connecting the Man in Black's embodied emotions to his earlier declaration that his lady 'Is fro me deed and is agoon' (l. 479) because the narrator reads all his experiences within the dream as if they were a literary text. His emotional understanding is so coloured by his incorrect readings and translations of French literature that these are his only way to understand the world around him. Corinne Saunders has observed that medieval texts recognise that emotions could be learnt and produced by the process of reading:

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[82] Rebecca McNamara, 'Wearing Your Heart on Your Face: Reading Lovesickness and the Suicidal Impulse in Chaucer', *Literature and Medicine*, 33 (2016), 258–78 (p. 260).
[83] The attitude to causes of dreams in the *Book of the Duchess* contrasts starkly to another of Chaucer's texts, 'The Nun's Priest's Tale', where the beast fable, through the characters of Chanticleer and Pertelote, explores the how bodily causes of bad dreams are not linked the lofty emotions or authentic feeling, but to indigestion (ll. 2921-39).

The process of thinking was inextricable from the physiology of emotion. Emotions were understood to occur through the movements of the vital spirit and natural heat, produced in the heart and travelling through the arteries. They could be triggered by direct sensory experience, but also by the workings of imagination and memory, including, of course, the affects of reading, and they had both physiological and mental consequences.[84]

As previously argued, the narrator is depicted as having *learnt* the emotions he professes to feel by reading the literary texts of *fin'amor.* In his observation of the Man in Black, the narrator transcribes his own performed feelings of sorrow onto the Man in Black's emotional experience. The narrator's views have been distorted by the language used in his reading of *fin'amor* and he is unable to recognise the true cause of the Man in Black's pain: grief. The narrator's shortcomings as a reader of emotion are a prompt from Chaucer to his readers, indicating that they should observe closely and 'look deeply in order that they may perceive the causes and ramifications of emotion' within texts. [85] Chaucer's technique of affective engagement - both in its literary process and in the characters' responses to it – invites the reader to look beyond the artifice of literary texts, instructing the audience of the *Book of the Duchess* how to critically interpret and engage with literature in order to more effectively, and affectively, respond to it.

Discourse and Emotion Transactions in English and French Medieval Texts

As we have seen with the Man in Black's mourning lyric, when speaking 'to himself' (l. 464) and without an audience, the language, images and forms of French literary culture are a successfully means of expressing and feeling the emotions associated with the loss of his wife. For the narrator, however, the French literary tradition determines his experience and knowledge of emotion in a wholly different way. The narrator's misreading of French texts and emotions prevents him from understanding

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[84] Saunders, 'Affective Reading', p.13.
[85] McNamara, 'Wearing Your Heart on Your Face', p. 262.

what the Man in Black really means when he voices that has 'lost more than thow wenest' (l. 744). However, it is this misunderstanding which is essential in helping the Man in Black to reach the crucial point of his tale, to state and accept that 'she ys ded!' (l. 1309). Unlike the misunderstanding of the *Pearl* narrator, who remains unable to move past his grief, in the *Book of the Duchess* Chaucer shows misunderstanding to be a productive force as it facilitates a process which allows the grieving person to move past their grief. This final section will examine how the *Book of the Duchess* explores the limitations of language in articulating grief and in expressing complex and painful emotions to another person, from a different emotional community. This process creates a type of friction between the two characters of different classes and communities which allows grief to become unstuck for the person who has experienced loss. To explore this concept, I will conclude with a discussion of the narrator, speaker relationship in the *Book of the Duchess* and compare this to the open emotional discourse between poet and patron in Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse*, demonstrating that the dynamics of these relationships reveal much about the changing authority of emotional communities in a time of conflict.

I draw upon Michaela Paasche-Grudin's study of Chaucer's engagement with communication and the ways in which messages are conveyed and transferred. She proposes that 'The *Book of the Duchess* is early evidence of Chaucer's sense of discourse as an open and unfinished interaction between speaker and listener. [It is] a poem in which discourse - whether it be spoken, read, or reported, as in a dream – is presented as a series of complex transactions'.[86] Discourse is a mutual process between the narrator and the Man in Black and 'in discourse the role of the listener is as significant as the role of

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[86] Michaela Paasche-Grudin, *Chaucer and the Politics of Discourse,* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), p. 245.

the speaker'.[87] Yet Paasche-Grudin also demonstrates that the *Book of the Duchess* 'portrays most vividly the failed transaction'.[88] The completed transaction - a transaction in which resolution is achieved - is not typical of Chaucer's poetry. Instead, Chaucer suggests that discourse is an open process and that the failure of transaction results from inadequate reception between speaker and listener. Yet, Chaucer does recognise that the interaction between narrator and Man in Black shows that this failure of transaction can, in fact, be productive. A tension or friction caused by the apparent miscommunication and misunderstanding between two people (differences which are often rooted in the differing emotional experiences and class disparity between narrator and speaker) may be what allows the speaker's grief to become less self-focused and debilitating, in turn facilitating a form of consolation and a return to the speaker's rightful position or community.

Drawing on Paasche-Grudin's concept of discourse and transactions, I suggest a different way of thinking about discourse in both the *Book of the Duchess* and in the French *dit* tradition. Within these texts, discourse is presented as a series of *emotion* transactions. These emotion transactions concern the reciprocal sharing of feeling and the discourses that take place between speaker and listener are concerned with how particular emotions are communicated, understood, and, in the case of Chaucer's poem, *mis*understood between characters. Discourses concerning emotions have a greater potential to become a 'failed transaction'[89] because of the difficulty of effectively understanding not only our own emotions and those of others, but also of effectively conveying these emotions to others. In the *Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer views discourse as an open, unfinished interaction because the poem concerns grief, an emotion that has

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[87] Paasche-Grudin, *Politics of Discourse*, p. 246.
[88] Paasche-Grudin, *Politics of Discourse*, p. 246.
[89] Paasche-Grudin, *Politics of Discourse*, p. 246.

the potential to remain forever unresolved. Comparing the presentation of emotion transactions in French *dits* and the *Book of the Duchess* will shed light on the ways in which Chaucer complicates the communication of emotions and explores the limits of effectively and truthfully conveying emotions to others.

Failed (though productive) emotion transactions are central to the discourse between the Man in Black and the narrator in the *Book of the Duchess*. Over the course of the poem, the Man in Black repeatedly acknowledges the inadequacy of language in conveying the extent of his grief to another person, stating that

> This ys my peyne wythoute red,
>
> Alway deynge and be not ded,
>
> That Cesiphus, that lyeth in helle,
>
> May not of more sorwe telle. (ll. 587-90)

Here, the Man in Black compares his despair to Sisyphus who was condemned by the gods to ceaselessly roll a rock to the top of a mountain, only for the stone to fall back on its own weight. Reid Hardaway explains how this image links to the limitations of emotional expression: 'the failure of resolution in his morbid Sisyphean journey reflects the eternal distance between the signifier and signified. He may be able to push the rock of meaning a long way up the hill, but it inevitably falls back on him, crushing any illusion of semantic success'.[90] The Man in Black's feelings are beyond the descriptive capacity of language, leaving him in a state of emotional limbo, caught between grief and his desire to communicate his feelings to another.

Emotion transactions also fail because the Man in Black's strategy for expressing his emotions to the narrator becomes one of constant negation. Even in his attempts to

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[90] Reid Hardaway, 'A Fallen Language and the Consolation of Art in the *Book of the Duchess*', *The Chaucer Review,* 50 (2015), 150-177 (p. 162).

remember and describe the beauty of his lost lady, the Man in Black is frustrated by his own limitations in the English vernacular:

> Allas, myn herte is wonder wo
>
> That I ne can descryven it!
>
> Me lakketh bothe Englissh and wit
>
> For to undo it at the fulle (ll. 896-9).

Grief has not only diminished the Man in Black's linguistic expression, but it also appears to have caused his memories of his lost lady to fade. What is more, there seems to be a distance between the Man in Black's memory and the language used to describe the feelings he tries to remember. He lacks 'Englissh and wit | For to undo it at the fulle' (ll. 898-9), suggesting that his feelings are too great to be effectively expressed in the English vernacular tongue and that he has been unable to master the language's emotional expressions. Without the words or emotional mastery of language to express his grief, the Man in Black seems incapable of effective, authentic emotional communication and is therefore unable to contribute to the emotion transaction that is taking place during the discourse with the narrator.

By contrast, the transactions within French *dits* are notably open. Froissart's *Le Paradis d'amour* and texts such as Machaut's *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* rely on the openness of emotion transactions between speakers to allow the emotional debate to progress. Speakers in French *dits* and *debats* are therefore direct with their emotional expression and engage listeners in an attempt to elucidate, rather than evade, the emotional conflict or suffering being experienced. Speakers in French medieval literature express emotions openly, while listeners understand and correctly interpret these emotions. There is also a level of progression in the emotions being expressed by the speakers. Speakers within French *dits* often move from a state of emotional anguish, to an explanation of the reasons for their feelings and finally to an alleviation of their painful

emotions brought about through the discourse with the listener figure. Overall, it seems that the purpose of discourse in French *dits* is resolution and a completed transaction. Discourse aims to resolve painful emotions, particularly because the 'offer and possibility of consolation are central [to these works] … and in all cases consolation is successfully achieved'.[91] The progression towards the goal of consolation is exemplified in the depiction of the patron of the *Fonteinne amoureuse*. The patron begins the poem in a state of anguished uncertainty:

> Adieu, ma dame, je m'en vois.
>
> Ne fais ordenance ne lais
>
> Fors tant que mon fin cuer vous lais
>
> Si que sans cuer me partirai
>
> Et si ne say quel part irai,
>
> Ne terme n'ay de revenir.
>
> Si en lairay Dieu couvenir,
>
> Amours et vous, ma chiere dame,
>
> Qu'aim cent fois mieus que moy, par m'ame (ll. 200-208)
>
> [Farewell, my lady, I am going away. I am not arranging anything, except I am leaving you my heart, so that I am going away without a heart. And I do not know where I am going, nor do I have a fixed date to return. I entrust myself to God, to Love and to you, dear lady, whom I love a hundred times more than myself, by my soul.]

Machaut's poem was written for Jean, Duc de Berry as he was being sent as a hostage in England and depicts a noble figure whose emotional capacity is linked to his virtue. The patron willingly accepts that he must be imprisoned, but he is deeply distressed at leaving his lady, suggesting that he leaves a part of himself in France with her (ll. 200-204). In imagining this virtuous noble subject's willingness to accept restraint and sacrifice

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[91] Butterfield, 'Lyric and Elegy', p. 34.

himself for the service of the state, the *Fonteinne amoureuse* signals the historical circumstances of the patron for whom Machaut wrote. As Elizabeth Elliot describes,

> Under the terms of the treaty of Bretigny, ratified at Calais on 24th October 1360, Jean was pledged to travel to England as one of the hostages offered as surety for the ransom of his father, Jean II, securing the king's return to France. Machaut's poem invited the reader to identify the aristocratic figure at its heart with Jean de Berry, as it describes the mental suffering of a prince obliged to leave his beloved and travel to a foreign land, in exile with no fixed date of return.[92]

In the patron's *complainte*, the poem effectively depicts the patron's uncertainty about his fate at the point of being taken as a hostage, but crucially, the patron's expressions of emotion, particularly his feelings for his lady, seem assured and certain. In entrusting himself to God, to Love and to his lady, the patron places his lady on an equal standing to God, emphasising his unwavering devotion to his lady. Unlike Chaucer's Man in Black, Machaut's speaker describes his emotions and immediately enlightens both speaker and reader as to their cause. The openness of these emotion transactions allows them to progress and be completed by the point of the poem's conclusion.

Listeners are also integral to the emotion transactions in the discourse of French *dits,* but these listeners receive and interpret emotions in a more open way. Considering all the French *dits* from which Chaucer seems to have drawn material and ideas, most include a speaker figure, who though solitary at first is overheard by a listener figure. Overheard complaints expressing heightened emotional states are central to the transaction of emotions the French *dit* tradition. Whilst the act of overhearing seems at first to create a barrier to direct and open emotion transactions, there is little sense of indirection in listeners acknowledging the exact nature of the emotions being expressed

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[92] Elizabeth Elliot *Remembering Boethius: Writing Aristocratic Identity in Late Medieval French and English Literatures.* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 247

by speaking characters. As Butterfield recognises, 'When eavesdropping occurs, it is always revealed as such: the comforter-figures will admit quite openly either to their previously hidden presence, or to their knowledge of the complainer's source of woe'.[93] This openness on the part of the listener then allows for a progression of the discourse and a resolution to the emotional conflict being expressed by the speaker.

However, within the *Book of the Duchess*, the narrator's misunderstanding of emotion is central in denoting a social difference between speaker and listener, as well as a difference between their emotional experiences. The failed emotional transactions between speaker and listener emphasise the differences between the Man in Black and the narrator, particularly the differences of social standing between the two figures. The poem suggests that those of a lower social standing and those who have not directly experienced loss are incapable of understanding emotions correctly, particularly in the Man in Black's repeated refrain that 'Thou wost ful lytel what thou menest; | I have lost more than thow wenest …' (ll. 743-44) The significance of this refrain lies in the ways in which it uses emotion to signal and assert the Man in Black's position of power. It is the Man in Black's way of emphasising his superiority over the narrator by directly saying that *you* do not understand my emotions, *you* are incapable of understanding my loss. The fact that it is repeated three times over the course of the poem further underlines the difference in emotional capabilities between Man in Black and narrator. This emphasis on the Man in Black's social superiority also signals much about the English society in which it was created. Much of the poem underlines the authority of the English nobility at a point in the Hundred Years War where conflict with France had been revived. The narrator's gestures of subjectedness and emotional misunderstanding of the Man in Black are a means of underlining the superiority of the nobility. However, the Man in Black's

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[93] Butterfield, 'Lyric and Elegy', p. 36.

emotional and physical detachment from society hints at the vulnerability of the structures of power within England at the start of this second phase of the conflict, a phase of the war that would from the start prove far less successful for the English.[94]

Yet, the narrator's misunderstanding of the Man in Black's loss is vital to the process of easing the Man in Black's grief. As Fradenburg observes, the narrator

> [a]ccomplishes the easing of the Man in Black's heart by listening to him, trying to mirror his reflections back to him, misunderstanding him and generally engaging him in a *process* of intersubjective encounter, in *conversation.* Premodern psychologists, Chaucer among them, were perfectly aware that the relationship between healer and sufferer has therapeutic efficacy in its own right. Galen remarks on the paradoxical difficulty of attaining self-knowledge by oneself; because it is so difficult for us to understand our own problems clearly, we need to help of another to articulate them.[95]

Over the course of their encounter, the narrator's misunderstanding has a 'therapeutic efficacy'[96] in engaging the Man in Black in descriptive passages which underscore the value of the lady who has died and the extent of his feelings of grief. The Man in Black is distracted from the narrator's initial prompt to explain his loss and sorrow, and instead describes Lady White's beauty, virtues and good character at length (ll. 819-1033), and recalls his devotion to his beloved (ll. 1052-1111). Yet, the narrator also encourages 'the *process* of intersubjective encounter'[97] by directing the Man in Black to the progression of his narrative:

> "Now, good sir," quod I tho,
>
> "Ye han wel told me herebefore;
>
> Hyt ys no nede to reherse it more,
>
> How ye sawe hir first, and where.

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[94] See Jonathan Sumption, *Hundred Years War Volume 3: Divided Houses* (London: Faber, 2009), p. 18-61.

[95] L.O. Aranye Fradenburg, 'Living Chaucer', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer,* 33 (2011), pp. 41-64, p. 59.

[96] Fradenburg, 'Living Chaucer', p. 59.

[97] Fradenburg, 'Living Chaucer', p. 59.

But wolde ye tel me the manere

To hire which was your firste speche –

Therof I wolde yoy beseche –

And how she knewe first your thoght,

Whether ye loved hir or noght?

And telleth me eke what ye have lore,

I herde yow telle herebefore'. (ll. 1126-36)

In the same way as the narrator would wish for the narrative of a literary text to proceed, he discourages repetition – 'Hyt ys no need to reherse it more' (1127) – and directs the Man in Black to move on to the next part of his tale of Lady White. In this way, the narrator discourages the static state of dwelling on the past and within memories, distinct features of the Man in Black's grief-focused mind. Therefore, although the narrator does not comprehend the grief which underlies the Man in Black's narrative, he facilitates a movement towards a progression from the cycle of grief.

Chaucer demonstrates that the Man in Black needs the help of a member of a different emotional community to engage him in a process of consolation, pushing him to consider and articulate his grief more clearly. Finally, this allows the discourse to progress to the concluding revelation that

"She is deed." "Nay!" "Yis, by my trouthe."

"Is that your los? By God, it is routhe."

And with that worde, right anoon

They gan to strake forth. Al was doon,

For that tyme, the herte hunting.

With that, me thought that this king

Gan quikly hoomward for to ryde

Unto a place was ther besyde,

Which was from us but a lyte:

> A longe castel with walles whyte,
>
> By Seynt Johan, on a riche hille,
>
> As me mette; but thus it fille. (ll. 1309-1320)

At the beginning of the encounter, the Man in Black's statement that his lady 'Is fro me deed and is agoon' (l. 479) was overheard by the narrator and was neither acknowledged nor understood. At the poem's conclusion, however, the intersubjective encounter between narrator and Man in Black culminates in his repeated articulation that 'She is deed' (l. 1309), a productive articulation of his loss. In turn, the narrator's final comprehension of the extent of the Man in Black's grief completes the process of listening and misunderstanding between the two emotional communities and demonstrates that the emotion transaction has been finalised, that 'Al was doon'. (l. 1312) This is not to suggest that the Man in Black's grief is 'doon' (l. 1312) or has been cured, rather that the completion of the emotion transaction 'accomplishes the easing of the Man in Black's heart'.[98]

The completed emotion transaction has been highly effective as it also allows the Man in Black return to noble society, as represented in his 'longe castel with walles whyte, | By Seynt Johan, on a riche hille'. (l. 1317-8) By returning to his castle, a symbol of his own power and sovereignty and that of his emotional community of noble, courtly men with status and responsibilities, the Man in Black returns to his proper place within his emotional community and reasserts his authoritative standing in society. Furthermore, these lines remind Chaucer's readers of the poem's occasion as 'Seynt Johan, on a riche hille' (l. 1318) refers to John of Gaunt, Earl of Richmond.[99] The lines therefore act as

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[98] Fradenburg, 'Living Chaucer', p. 59.

[99] Critical views, however, are divided over the identity of the 'king' (l. 1314) who rides towards the castle at the end of the encounter between the Man in Black and narrator, and the simultaneous end of the hunt. Condren has proposed that this king represents Edward III, John of Gaunt's father, who was king at the time of the poem's composition. However, Edward III is absent from the rest of the poem, which makes this argument less convincing. Edward I. Condren, 'The Historical Context of the *Book of the Duchess*: A New Hypothesis', *The Chaucer Review*, 5.3 (1975), 195-212 (p. 210). Others suggest that the king is the emperor

encouragement to Gaunt to take up his authoritative place in society and engage with responsibilities which would eventually lead to his sustained involvement in military campaigns against France in the years after Blanche's death.[100]

There are parallels between the *Book of the Duchess* and Machaut's *La Fonteinne amoureuse* in their depiction of the intersubjective encounter between narrator and noble speaker. Machaut's poem establishes a relationship of simultaneous closeness and distance between speaker and listener. Unlike Chaucer's poem, however, Machaut is more explicit in naming a patron for his work and in emphasising the poet patron relationship. The *Fonteinne amoureuse* was written for Jean, Duc de Berry, whose name, alongside Machaut's, is identified through an anagram at the beginning of the poem. Unlike the elegiac *Book of the Duchess*, in *La Fonteinne amoureuse* the Duke expresses his love to his wife Jeanne d'Armagnac and his sorrow at their parting.

Machaut's presentation of a fluid, unpredictable poet-narrator informs aspects of Chaucer's narrator. The narrator of *La Fonteinne* begins 'En on lit ou pas de dormire' (l. 62) [In a bed but not sleeping] due to his melancholic thoughts brought on by love. However, just as he is about to fall asleep, 'J'entendis une créature qui se plaignant très fort' (ll. 70-1) [I heard something lamenting very intensely] through the wall of his room. Listening from a distance, the poet-narrator is roused from his own melancholy and decides to transcribe the complaint. Butterfield has observed that this is an interesting reversal on Machaut's part as he presents 'the poet as a lover who, instead of consoling himself by writing his own poetry, gains consolation by listening to another lover who is

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Octavian who was mentioned during the hunt for the hart earlier in the poem (l. 368); see Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, p. 55; David Scott-MacNab, 'A Re-examination of Octavyen's Hunt in the *Book of the Duchess*', *Medium Ævum*, 56 (1987), 183-99. Most critics, however, agree that the passage refers to the Man in Black and his return to the social, courtly world. See, Spearing, *Medieval Dream-poetry*, p. 51; Patricia Margaret Kean, *Chaucer and the Making of English Poetry* (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 60.
[100] See Sumption, *Hundred Years War: Volume 3*, esp. chapter five, p. 171-212.

playing at being a poet'.[101] Impressed by the poetic skill of the complaint, the narrator

decides to seek out the speaker and finds that he is a knight to whom the narrator offers

his services. The knight asks that the poet-narrator write him a lay concerning his sorrow

and in return the poet-narrator gives him a copy of the knight's own complaint. The rest

of the poem concerns the shared dream of the poet-narrator and knight after they fall

asleep by a fountain. In the dream the knight encounters his lady who offers comfort and

attempts to alleviate his sorrow by giving him a ring which he then finds on his finger

once he wakes.

Drawing upon Deborah McGrady's study of the poet-patron relationship in the

Fonteinne amoureuse, I suggest that the emotion transactions and communication of

feeling between narrator and prince signals a change in the dynamics of French society

and indicates the growing authority of the emotional community of clerkly writers.

McGrady has proposed that Machaut's poem offers a subversive vision of the poet-patron

relationship in which 'the subservient poet of literary convention [is] lifted from bended

knee and placed on the master's throne by none other than the patron himself'.[102]

McGrady's portrait of the poet-patron relationship is inspired by theories of gift exchange

as 'a total social phenomenon that entails three interlocking obligations, to give, to

accept, and to reciprocate. This circular exchange joins individuals and communities in a

'bilateral, irrevocable bond'.[103] Gifts are potent symbols of who holds power because

gifting is always 'the mark of a superior'.[104] Therefore, for patrons such as the prince of

the *La Fonteinne amoureuse*, a gift has the potential to be 'dangerous to take' from one in

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[101] Butterfield, 'Lyric and Elegy', p. 42

[102] Deborah McGrady, '"Tout son païs m'abandonna": Reinventing Patronage in Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse*', *Yale French Studies,* 110 (2006) 19-31 (p. 31).

[103] McGrady, 'Reinventing Patronage', p. 19.

[104] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies,* trans. by Ian Cunnison (New York: Norton, 1967), p. 59.

a subordinate role. [105] The system of gift exchange has the ability to destabilise power structures because 'when an equal or an inferior presents a gift, the recipient plays a subordinate role until the presentation of the countergift. When these principles are applied to patronage, the artistic gift freely offered by the subservient poet supplants the reigning prince, at least temporarily, until reciprocation occurs.[106] The *Book of the Duchess* places far less emphasis on the poet patron relationship and emphasises that differences in social rank result in failures of emotional exchange between narrator and noble speaker. By contrast, Machaut's poem recognises the problems of patronage and that as an act of gift exchange, poetry has the potential to transfer power from patron to poet.

Within the *Fonteinne amoureuse*, the narrator's initial encounter with the lamenting prince establishes an unusual dynamic of authority between poet and patron. Rather than presenting an image of nobility and authority, the text describes a nameless and formless 'créature' (l. 70) who is heard making sounds of 'son plaint si parfondement | Prenoit' (72-3) [complaining and groaning] rather than expressing his emotional pain through speech. The sound of this groaning is so distressing that it causes the narrator to feel 'j'en os horreur et freour' (l. 75) [horror and fear at it,] believing its source to be a spectre 'by which I might be murdered' (ll. 86-8) (mon cuer ymaginoie | Que c'estoit aucuns esperis | Dont je peusse ester peris). The text repeatedly emphasises that fear and cowardice are feelings which are essential to the emotional community of clerks to which the narrator belongs. The narrator describes himself as 'plus couars qu'un lievres' (l. 92) [more cowardly than a hare)] and compares the appropriate cowardice of clerks to the proper bravery of the nobility:

Car je vuiel tesmongnier et dire

[105] Mauss, *Forms and Functions of Exchange*, p. 13.
[106] McGrady, 'Reinventing Patronage', p. 19.

Que chevaliers acourdais

Et clers qui vuet ester hardis

Ne valent plein mon pong de paille

En fait d'armes ou en bataille,

Car chascuns fait contre droiture. (ll. 132-137)

[For I would like to testify and say that a cowardly knight, and a clerk who wants to be

brave, are not worth a handful of straw in deeds of arms or battle, for each is acting

contrary to what is right.]

Machaut's narrator emphasises the differences between the proper nature of the emotional communities of clerks and the nobility. The nobility's capacity for bravery in battle is equated with their emotional capacity and their innate ability to call upon more sophisticated emotional practices. The sheltered existence of the clerkly community means that its members are not only self-serving in their desire to protect themselves from danger but that they are subservient and inferior to the ruling nobility who engage with the dangers of the world. The narrator emphasises 'what is right' (l. 137) in a society where the nobility would have been expected to be active in their engagement with danger in order to maintain their power and position.

Yet the text also offers a biting critical analysis of the failings of the aristocracy and suggests that the social and economic problems faced by France are rooted in the nobility's failure to fulfil their duties:

…les riches hommes

S'il ne sont loiaus et preudommes,

Hardi, large comme Alixandre

Pour leur grant richesse desprendre,

Et sages aussi pour veoir

A leurs grans fais et pourveoir,

Sans gieu de dez, sans tavener,

Il ne puelent bien gouvener.

Armer se doivent volentiers,

Pour ce que c'est leur drois mestiers,

Car ja princes qui s'armera

Envis preus se desarmera

Il doivent meintenir justice

Et si doivent garder l'eglise,

Les orfelins, les vesves dames.

Hela! Or est a euls grans blames,

Que justice est vague et en fuite,

Et l'eglise est toute destruite.

Les vesves et les orfelins

N'ont maisons, ne fours, ne molins.

Helas! Car il ont tout perdu,

Et si ne l'ont pas vaillant une pomme.

Se cils qui est princes et sires

Des rois, des resnes, des empires

Par sat res grant misericorde

Envers tels gens ne se racorde,

De tels en y avra, ce cuit

Qui empetreront dou mal cuit.

Mas piteus et misericors

Est toudis a l'ame et au corps. (ll. 1169-1200)

[… for great men: they cannot govern well if they are not true and valiant men, brave, and also generous like Alexander in distributing their great wealth, and wise too in seeing and foreseeing their great affairs, without any games of dice or drinking. They should take up arms gladly because it is their true calling, for the prince who arms himself will win valour for himself. They should uphold justice and guard the church, orphans and

widows. Alas! it is nowadays a great reproach to them that justice is uncertain and in

flight, and the church is quite destroyed. Widows and orphans so not have their property,

their houses and mills – alas! for they have lost everything. If He who is prince and lord

of kings of kingdoms and empires, did not in His great compassion remember such

people, I think they would fare very badly. But He is always merciful and compassionate

to both body and soul.]

Machaut's text emphasises the nobility's unwillingness to take up arms, their inability to

protect the Church and the vulnerable and the lack of justice within France. Whereas the

Man in Black's return to his emotional community was a gentle encouragement to John

of Gaunt to engage with his duties to society as a nobleman, Machaut's text offers far

more critical reflections on rich men, suggesting that their failure to fulfil their duties is

> the origin of a contemporary social and economic crisis. The idea that the performance of
>
> duty has a direct impact upon the health of the state not only carries a particular force for
>
> the aristocracy of a country riven by war and suffering the repercussions of the Jacquerie,
>
> but it is also especially relevant to the situation of a prince pledged to become a hostage
>
> under the terms of the treaty of Bretigny.[107]

The French nobility, reacting to their more precarious position 'turned to vernacular

writing to bolster its authority' and the crown in particular exerted greater control over

the book industry and gave an increasing amount of support to writers such as Machaut.

[108] Yet, as the focus of the Hundred Year War changed and increasingly became a civil

war in which the nobility competed for control of the French crown, the king's control of

literary production diminished:

> By the time of Charles VI's reign, the dukes of Burgundy, Orleans, and Berry openly
>
> competed with the king for the same writers, artists, and bookmakers as a means of
>
> disseminating their own political ambitions. This competitive market altered the literary

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[107] Elizabeth Elliott, *Remembering Boethius*, p. 246
[108] McGrady, 'Reinventing Patronage', p. 20.

economy. While unsolicited manuscripts continued to circulate during this period, commissions drove literary production. Where poets had previously lamented the lack of generous patrons, princes now competed for an exclusive coterie of celebrated writers.[109] Writers such as Machaut were providing the nobility with a literary identity and their texts were an important means of disseminating the authority of a nobility in crisis. It might also be suggested that texts such as the *Fonteinne amoureuse* are significant in showing that particular emotions emphasise the virtue of noble figures such as Jean, duc de Berry. The emotional expression of figures in literature becomes a tool to demonstrate that even in the face of larger political realities, Jean expresses sorrowful emotion at leaving his lady and his country but that he understands that the need to fulfil his duty, implying his superior virtues in comparison to other noble contemporaries in France.[110]

Jean de Berry's exile and imprisonment would mean that his virtue would need to be emphasised in writing. Whilst imprisonment was 'something of an occupational hazard for medieval noblemen', it nevertheless carried a level of stigma, as it would also do for Charles d'Orléans, the focus of the next chapter of this thesis.[111] This stigma was rooted in the potential to lose position and status whilst one was stuck in exile. The patron in the *Fonteinne amoureuse* expresses his sorrow not only at leaving France and his lady, but also at the potential loss of prestige and honour amongst his emotional community whilst he is in England. He emphasises his youth, a time when honour could be won and one's reputation established and maintained. Instead of forging his place within his emotional community, he is 'en cage […] Ou fair puis moult po de vassalage | Que je repute a moy moult grant dommage (ll. 404-5) [in a cell […] Where I am unable to

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[109] McGrady, 'Reinventing Patronage', p. 21.
[110] For example, at the Battle of Poitiers, during which Jean II was captured by the English, the Dauphin Charles and his brother Louis, duke of Anjou fled the battle early. In France this battle reflected 'something of a growing opinion that, in spite of tradition, the nobility had no absolute right to assume positions of responsibility within the army'; Allmand, *The Hundred Years War*, p. 69.
[111] Elliot, *Remembering Boethius*, p. 59.

perform chivalrous actions / Which I consider a great injury to myself']. In a society which was defined by reputation and the perceptions of others, the patron's emotions underline the lasting damage which could be done to a nobleman's identity when they were separated from their society and their emotional community.

As the patron anticipates the relinquishing of his freedom as he goes into exile, he also appears to surrender his emotional expression to the poet-narrator. Emotional expression is an essential component in the gift exchange of poetry and Machaut demonstrates that through the process of writing, the poet takes control of the patron's emotional expression. In comparison to Chaucer's narrator, the narrator in the *Fonteinne amoureuse* has a much more defined role as a writer. The narrator possesses all the tools of a writer, describing his writing desk which is inlaid with ivory, and his writing implements which he uses to write down the complaint of the patron (ll. 229-31). Crucially, the narrator's identity as a writer gives him the emotional distance from his sorrowful subject to transcribe his complaint with satisfaction. As a writer, the narrator is detached from his noble subject, but he is also one who interprets, translates and conveys the emotions of the patron to the reader. In fact, after the patron has expressed his complaint, the narrator describes his sense of wonder at the skill of his poetic creation:

> Et puis ke lis de chief en chief
>
> La complainte qu'avoie escripte
>
> Pour vir s'il y avoit redite,
>
> Mais nesune n'en y trouvay;
>
> Et encor moult bien esprouvray
>
> Qu'il y avoit, don't j'eus merveilles,
>
> Cent rimes toutes desparailles. (ll. 1046-1052)

[And then I read from beginning to end the complaint that I had written to see if there was repetition, but I did not find a single one and what is more, I was surprised to discover that there were one hundred different rhymes.]

Machaut draws attention to the poetic skill of the complaint, and whilst the poet appears to relinquish his role as a poet within the poem's narrative, allowing the knight to compose his own complaint, in fact this is 'a witty deceit', since the complaint, and indeed the *dit* as a whole, is his own.[112] The emotional content of the patron's words is far less important, diminishing the authority of the nobility's ability to feel and perform strong emotions. The poet-narrator has therefore successful converted the patron's emotional expression into status and authority for himself. Unlike Chaucer's misunderstanding narrator, Machaut's poet-narrator understands the emotional language of the prince, and arguably understands this language better than the patron himself. By interpreting the emotion language correctly, and by writing it with such skill, the poet places himself on a much more equal footing with the noble class he describes. Where Chaucer's text maintains the authority of the noble class, Machaut's text imagines a new scenario in the poet patron relationship. *La Fonteinne amoureuse* is a product of a society which, faced with defeat in battle and upheaval at home, was questioning the nobility's absolute right to assume positions of authority within the conflict.

For Chaucer's narrator, once his acts of misreading and misunderstanding have encouraged the Man in Black to articulate his grief clearly, he awakens and reflects upon his dream:

Thoghte I, "Thys ys so queynt a sweven

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[112] McGrady 'Reinventing Patronage', p. 24.

That I wol, by processe of tyme,

Fonde to put this sweven in ryme

As I can best, and that anoon." (ll. 1330-3)

At first sight, the space into which the narrator awakens is very much like the one in which he fell asleep. He is still in his bed, alone within his bedchamber, and with his book still in his hands. Yet, once he has experienced the dream encounter with the Man in Black, his perspective has wholly changed. No longer experiencing the sorrow and lovesickness which characterised the poem's opening section, the narrator now resolves 'to put this sweven in ryme' (l. 1332). The narrator is transformed from an unskilled reader to a skilled writer of the *Book of the Duchess*. In doing so, with this English text, Chaucer marks his place amongst his French contemporaries.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on another grief-focused medieval dream-vision. In contrast to the *Pearl*-poem, however, the narrator of the *Book of the Duchess* is not the grieving figure, instead it is the grief of the Man in Black which the narrator encounters and misunderstands over the course of the dream. I have argued that Chaucer presents the relationship between the narrator and the Man in Black as a means of exploring the constraints in emotional understanding between different emotional communities. Both figures within the dream articulate emotions through the examples of French literature, the narrator's emotional performances are learnt and artificial, whereas the Man in Black's are authentic and efficacious in expressing his grief. The *Book of the Duchess* explores the limitations of language in articulating grief and in expressing complex and painful emotions to another person, from a different class and with differing emotional experiences. The processes of misunderstanding create a tension between the two

characters of different classes, ultimately allowing grief to become unstuck and resolved for men of an aristocratic class.

The next chapter will address other noble or aristocratic emotional communities and examine the ways in which these communities - comprised of noble men and women coming to terms with devastating loss and defeat – are able to address and represent their feelings of loss. As this chapter concluded with a discussion of a French exile in England, the next chapter will focus on Charles d'Orléans, another French hostage who expresses his emotional pain at the loss of his country and loved ones.

Chapter Three
Agincourt's Communities of Grief: Charles d'Orléans' *Fortunes Stabilnes* and Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*

This chapter begins with two poems of grief, the first a French by Christine de Pizan and the other a version in English by Charles d'Orléans.[1] Christine de Pizan speaks in the voice of a woman grieving after the death of her husband, while Charles d'Orléans speaks as one lamenting the death of his beloved, both voices having been interpreted as being those of the poet themselves:

Seulete sui et seulete vueil ester,	Alone am y and wille to be alone
Seulete m'a mon douz ami laissiee;	Alone, withouten plesere or gladnes
Seulete sui, sanz compaignon ne maistre	Alone in care, to sighe and grone
Seulete sui, dolente et courrouciee,	Alone, to wayle the deth of my maystres
Seulete sui, en languer mesaisiee,	Alone, which sorow will me neuyr cesse.
Seulete sui, plus que nulle esgaree,	Alone, y curse the lijf y do endure.
Seulete sui, plus que nulle esgaree,	Alone this fayntith me my gret distress,
Seulete sui, sanz ami demouree.	Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature.

Seulete sui a uis ou a fenestre,	Alone am y, most wofullest bigoon,
Seulete sui en un anglet muciee,	Alone, forlost in paynfull wildirnes,
Seulete sui pour moi de pleurs repaistre,	Alone withouten whom to make my mone,
Seulete sui, dolente ou apisiee;	Alone, my wrecchid case forto redresse,
Seulete sui, rien n'est qui tant messiee;	Alone thus wander y in heuynes,
Seulete sui, en ma chambre enserree,	Alone, so wo worth myn aventure!
Seulete sui, sanz ami demouree.	Alone to rage, this thynkith me swetnes,
	Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature.

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[1] On the identification of the connections between the two texts see Kenneth Urwin, 'The 59th Ballade of Charles of Orleans', *The Modern Language Review*, 38 (1943), 129-132.

Seulete sui partout et en tout estre;	Alone! Deth, com take me here anoon,
Seulete sui, ou je voise ou je siee;	Alone that dost me dure so moche distress!
Seulete sui plus qu'aultre riens terrestre,	Alone y lyue, my frendis alle and foon,
Seulete sui, de chascun delaissiee,	Alone to die thus in my lustynes.
Seulete sui durement abaissiee,	Alone, most welcome Deth, do thi rudeness,
Seulete sui, souvent toute esplouree,	Alone, that worst kan pete, lo, mesure.
Seulete sui, sanz ami demouree.	Alone come on; y bide but thee, dowtles.
	Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature.
Prince, or est ma douleur commenciee:	Alone of woo y haue take such excesse,
Seulete sui, de tout deuil manaciee,	Alone, that phisik nys ther me to cure.
Seulete sui, plus teinte que moree:	Alone y lyue, that willith it were lesse;
Seulete sui, sanz ami demouree.[2]	Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature.[3]

Both s build a picture of grief and isolation as the speakers lament the loss of the object of their love with lines which, with only a few exceptions, begin 'Seulete sui' or 'Alone'. In the first lines of both s the repeated word appears twice, placing a clear emphasis on the speaker's isolation from the very beginning of the texte. In the French version, 'seulete' is repeated at the start and middle of the line, creating pillars of isolation which punctuate the rest of the line. In the English, by contrast, 'alone' appears at the opening and close of the line, containing and enclosing the speaker in their loneliness. As Mary-Jo Arn comments of Charles d'Orléans' , 'The *Alone* which stands at the beginning of each line does not simply function syntactically as a recurring adverb. […] It sometimes stands

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[2] Christine de Pizan, *Cent ballades d'amant et de dame*, trans. by Jacqueline Cerquigini-Toulet (Paris: Gallimard, 2019). For an English translation of Christine de Pizan's , see Charles Martin and Johanna Keller, 'Five Poems from the French of Christine de Pizan', *The Hudson Review*, 52 (1999), 229-233 (p. 231).
[3] Charles d'Orléans, *Fortunes Stabilnes: Charles d'Orléans' English Book of Love: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Mary-Jo Arn (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), ll. 2054-2078.

completely outside the syntactical structure and, like the tolling of a bell, punctuates rhythmically the lamentations of the poet'.[4] The use of anaphora intensifies the emotions of the speaker; each line reminds the speaker of their absent beloved and their new identity as 'an ofcast creature' (l. 2061). The insistent repetition of the words also means that they appear as an oppressive refrain, allowing the reader to feel with the speaker and share in their feelings of grief and despondency.

In both poems a number of verbs are focused simply on existing - being ('Seulete sui et seulete vueil ester' (Christine de Pizan, l. 1) and 'Alone am y and wille to be alone' (Charles d'Orléans, l. 2054)) living ('Seulete sui, ou je voise ou je siee' (Christine de pIzan, l. 17) and 'Alone y lyue, that willith it were lesse' (Charles d'Orléans, l. 2077)) and enduring ('Seulete sui, en languer mesaisiee' (Christine de Pizan, l. 5) and 'Alone, y curse the lijf y do endure' (Charles d'Orléans, l. 2059)). Yet, in Charles d'Orléans' text the speaker is highly vocal; he sighs and groans (l. 2056), wails (l. 2057), and curses 'the lijf y do endure' (l. 2059). Yet, despite all these auditory signals of his despair, his utterances fail to achieve anything as he has no audience to hear his grief. In his loneliness he is 'withouten whom to make my moan' (l. 2064) and can find no one to offer comfort. His only companion is 'most welcome 'Deth' (l. 2073), who also fails to heed his pleas or offer any release.

By contrast, the speaker of Christine de Pizan's text is conspicuously silent. She offers no spoken utterances but instead expresses her grief through silent tears. In her loneliness Christine is contained within an interior space, as she stands alone within 'un anglet muciee' (l. 10) [a corner hideaway] of her solitary chamber, looking out from 'a uis ou a fenestre' (l. 9) [a door or window] to the world outside which appears to pass her by. Christine's shows the grieving speaker to be imprisoned within this lonely space,

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[4] Arn, ed. *Stabilnes*, note to lines 2054-81.

emphasising the atmosphere of stasis and confinement which pervades the poem. With neither 'compaignon ne maistre' (l. 3) [companion nor master] life is, for Christine, a prison of languor and dismay.

Many of the images and motifs found in Christine's 'seulete' , particularly her vision of life as a prison, would be developed in one of her later works, the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, the subject of the current chapter.[5] The chapter's other text is *Fortunes Stabilnes*, a collection of lyric and narrative poetry written in English by Charles d'Orléans.[6] The two texts are connected by their association with one of the most significant events of the Hundred Years' War: the battle of Agincourt. Amongst the many battles fought over the course of the conflict, Agincourt has had the most significant impact on the politics, culture and national identities of both England and France. However, as a resounding victory for the English and a crushing defeat for the French, the battle has always elicited contrasting emotions on the two sides of the Channel. For the English, victory brought joy, honour and pride. When Henry V entered London in triumph on 23rd November 1415, for example, he was met with extravagant pageantry and ecstatic crowds, demonstrating the extent of English outpourings of emotion in the wake of the victory.[7] Indeed, this 'momentous event' continues to elicit strong emotions as 'its legends and myths have continued to maintain a hold on the English psyche […] spilling over into the desire to establish whether one's brave ancestors might have fought there'.[8] On the other hand, Agincourt also had a strong impact on the French, but the absolute

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[5] All quotations and translations from Christine de Pizan, *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life with An Epistle to the Queen of France and Lament on the Evils of the Civil War*, ed. and trans. by Josette Wiseman (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).
[6] All quotations from Charles d'Orléans, *Fortunes Stabilnes: Charles d'Orléans' English Book of Love: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Mary-Jo Arn (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994).
[7] See Nicola Coldstream, 'Pavilion'd in Splendour: Henry V's Agincourt Pageants', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 165 (2013), 153-171; Christopher Allmand, *Henry V* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 410-413; *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations*, ed. by Anne Curry (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), p. 260.
[8] Curry, *Sources and Interpretations*, p. 294.

nature of the defeat meant that the battle was remembered with feelings of grief, shame, reflection and criticism. These emotions were exacerbated by several factors; the French were a numerically superior force to the English, the French were defeated by an invading force on French soil, and the battle became renowned for the high numbers of French men, particularly those of the aristocratic class, who were killed or taken prisoner after the battle.[9]

Like the previous chapter on the *Book of the Duchess*, the current chapter focuses on the grief expressed by a noble, courtly emotional community; a community whose emotional vocabulary and regimes were often connected across national boundaries. However, in contrast to the other chapters included in this thesis, this chapter examines the work of two authors with a specific and distinct French identity; Charles as a member of the French nobility and Christine as a female author who had established her authority within the French literary tradition. Charles and Christine were also associated - admittedly in different capacities - with France's political landscape and they would therefore have been acutely aware of the grief, shame and despair caused by the defeat at Agincourt. For this reason, it is pertinent to consider a central question posed in Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski's article on the work of Alain Chartier and Christine de Pizan; 'How do poets respond to disaster?'[10] This chapter, however, intends to reframe this question by examining how the emotional effects of Agincourt are represented by these two French authors but with one writing in French and the other in English. How, for example, did those who survived the battle or those who were left behind in France grieve

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[9] Anne Curry observes that news of the high number of French casualties after the battle spread across Europe, citing the Italian Chronique d'Antonio Morosini which includes a letter sent on 30th October 1415 which comments on the losses and observes that 'never had such bad fortune or such a great defeat been heard of' in France and Europe as a whole; Anne Curry, *Great Battles: Agincourt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 41.

[10] Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'Two Responses to Agincourt: Alain Chartier's *Livre des quatre dames* and Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*', in *Contexts and Continuities. Proceedings of the IVth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan, (Glasgow, 21-27th July, 2000) Published in Honour of Lilianne Dulac, Vol. 1* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 2002), 71-92, (p. 75).

for all that had been lost? And how was this grief represented in literary texts, one for an English readership and the other for a French community? A number of sources, both literary and historical, were written in response to Agincourt, but Charles d'Orléans' *Fortunes Stabilnes* and Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* can be distinguished for their representation of the battle's emotional effects.[11] In neither text do the writers choose to focus on the events of the battle itself, in fact, the word Agincourt never appears in either text. Instead, both poets focus, in different ways, on the emotional effects and consequences of the battle. *Fortunes Stabilnes*, written during Charles' imprisonment in England after he had been captured at Agincourt, combines conventional modes with elements of Charles d'Orléans' lived experience to explore the feelings of grief, loss and absence associated with his captivity. Christine de Pizan's text, by contrast, is more overtly political as she writes her *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* for the women left behind after Agincourt, namely the mothers, wives, daughters and other female relatives who grieved for men who had been killed, captured or injured in the battle.

The sustained focus on the emotional significance and human impact of the battle demonstrates that both texts are intended for particular emotional communities. For Charles d'Orléans, who wrote *Fortunes Stabilnes* whilst being held captive in several prominent English houses, to write in English was to write for his English captors rather than his French contemporaries. Charles' audience was an emotional community which was familiar with the conventional modes, forms, language and poetic speakers of courtly lyrics and valued the emotions associated with this genre. In Christine's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, written for those women who had lost their male relatives at

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[11] For more on the range of sources related to the battle of Agincourt see *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations*, ed. by Anne Curry (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000).

Agincourt, grief is an emotion which binds these women together as an emotional community. The emotional communities of both Charles and Christine's texts are linked by their belonging to similarly elevated social ranks, but they differ in their gender and national identities. Charles' poetic evocation of grief is intended to appeal to the emotional community of English, aristocratic men. By contrast, Christine de Pizan writes for an emotional community of French, aristocratic women, demonstrating that their experience of grief, sorrow and anguish after the disaster of Agincourt could strengthen their position as a newly formed community in France.

Furthermore, both texts demonstrate that the emotions, particularly those feelings of grief and loss, have the capacity to enact practical, political change. As a high-ranking French prisoner, Charles d'Orléans' decision to write about his experience of grief in the English language signalled his similarity to and affiliation with the emotional community of English aristocratic males who were his keepers. The grief expressed by the poetic speaker in *Fortunes Stabilnes* is used as a political tool to elicit sympathy in the text's English readers, a sympathy which in turn would be directed to the real Charles d'Orléans, convincing his English captors of his authenticity and bringing about change to the terms of his imprisonment. On the other hand, Christine de Pizan's intention in the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* was to not only console a community of noblewomen united in grief, but also to encourage this emotional community to use their influence and authority to heal the fractured state of France. In Christine's view, this emotional community represents the emotional future of France, leading the kingdom away from its destructive cycle of conflict and division, towards a more unified future for France.

Historical Context: France's Civil War and the Battle of Agincourt

Because Charles' and Christine's texts are more closely connected to a specific event than the other texts included in this study, it is beneficial to first have a clear

understanding of the battle of Agincourt and the political context which led up to it. The battle of Agincourt was the culmination of a particularly troubled start to the fifteenth century in France.[12] The country had been blighted by a number of popular revolts, the Papal Schism, and the sporadic military engagements of the Hundred Years' War. What is more, King Charles VI's frequent periods of mental instability, as we shall see, brought to the fore simmering tensions between the most powerful men in the kingdom. These events created a mood of despondency and uncertainty within France, as vividly described by Eustache Deschamps in *Contre le temps présent*:

> Temps de doleur et de tempacion,
>
> Aages de plour, d'envie et de tourment,
>
> Temps de langour et de dampnacion,
>
> Aages meneur pres du definement.
>
> […]
>
> Temps sanz honeur et sanz vray jugement
>
> Aage en tristour qui abrege la vie (l. 1-8)
>
> [Time of mourning and of temptation, Age of tears, of envy and of torment, Time of languor and of damnation, Age that brings us to the end […] Time without honour and without true judgment, Age of sorrow which shortens life].[13]

France entered a period of intense political crisis when Charles VI's mental incapacity worsened. This crisis was characterised by the envy, torment and lack of honour described in Deschamps' text, as the king's closest relatives - most notably the king's brother, Louis d'Orléans and uncle, Philip, Duke of Burgundy – competed for control of the kingdom and its government. The feud, which later descended into a civil war,

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[12] Kate Langdon Forhan has described this period as one of the most 'troubled, chaotic, yet evocative eras' of French history, in *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 1.

[13] Eustache Deschamps, 'Contre le temps present' in *Œvres completes de Eustache Deschamps: Publiées d'après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque nationale*, ed. by Marquis de Queux de Sant-Hilaire et Gaston Reyaud (Paris: Societé des anciens textes français, 1878-1903), pp. 113-114 (p. 113), ll. 1-24. English translation in Langdon Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, p. 2.

became 'arguably the most serious […] in later medieval Europe […] dominat[ing] the political scene in France for over forty years'.[14] The rivalry reached its pinnacle in 1407 when Louis, duke of Orléans was attacked and killed in a Paris street by followers of the king's cousin John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy. John of Burgundy argued that the crime was justified as Orléans had been a tyrant and a traitor, but this did little to appease Louis' retinue, including his son, Charles d'Orléans. France was now divided into two factions; the Burgundians, loyal to the duke of Burgundy, and the Armagnacs, named after Charles d'Orléans new father-in-law, the count of Armagnac.[15]

As the conflict worsened, Christine de Pizan felt compelled to address the political situation in her writing. *La Lamentation sur la guerre civile* (1410), for example, confronts the evils of the civil war directly and exhorts the combatants to realise the damage they are inflicting upon France. The text opens with a highly affective appeal to those engaged in the conflict:

> Pour Dieu! Pour Dieu! Princes trés haulx, ouvrez les yeulx par tel savoir, que ja vous semble veoir comme chose advenue, ce que les, apprestes de voz armes prises pourront conclurre, sy y appercevrez ruynes de citez, destruccions de villes et chasteaulx, forteresses ruees par terre. Et en quel part? Ou droit nombril de France! La noble chevalerie et jouvente françoise toute d'une nature, qui, comme un droit ame et corps, seult ester a la deffense de la couronne et la chose publique, ore assemble en honteuse

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[14] Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 9. On the Armagnac-Burgundian conflict see Bertrand Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur: le prince meurtrier* (Paris: Payot, 2005) and *Les Armagnacs et les Bourguignons. La Maudite guerre* (Paris: Perrin, 1988); Richard Vaughan, *John the Fearless: The Growth of Burgundian Power* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002). Tracy Adams discusses the relevance of the feud to Christine de Pizan's love poetry in 'The Political Significance of Christine de Pizan's Love Poetry', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales*, (2009), 353-371. Adams also devotes a study to Christine de Pizan's literary engagement with the feud in *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014).
[15] French society was divided amongst the two factions as John of Burgundy's 'talents as a ruler and his promises of financial reform brought him the support of the Parisian bourgeoisie and academics, while the Armagnacs were supported by the 'establishment', royal officials, the nobility – at least those outside Burgundy – and the rest of the royal family'; Langdon Forhan, *Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, p. 21.

bataille l'un contre l'autre, pere contre filz, frere contre drere, parens contre autres, a glaives mortelz, couvrans de sang, de corps mors et de members les trés doulereux champs.

[For God's sake! For God's sake! High princes, let these facts open your eyes […] Thus you will see cities in ruins, towns and castles destroyed, fortresses razed to the ground! And where? In the very midst of France. The noble knights and youth of France, all of one nature, one single soul and body, which used to defend the crown and the public good, are now gathered in a shameful battle one against another, father against son, brother against brother, relatives against one another, filling the pitiful fields with blood, dead bodies, and limbs.][16]

As this passage demonstrates, Christine does not shy away from blaming the combatants for the damaging France's past and present, through the destruction of its cities and buildings, but also for inflicting great harm on France's future, by involving of the 'youth of France' in the conflict. Christine's language is direct in its tone and unwilling to minimise the damage being done to the kingdom or its people. Linda Leppig has observed that the directness of Christine's language 'stands in stark contrast to the benign terms often encountered in official documents […] Christine refuses to partake in a rhetoric designed to soften an ugly reality and belittle human suffering'.[17] Indeed, throughout *La Lamentation*, Christine forcefully criticises the emotional community of French, aristocratic men, a community which, despite being divided between Armagnac and Burgundian factions, was united in both placing particular value in feelings of anger, hatred and violence. As she cries out for France's leaders to come to their senses, Christine uses the emotions of grief and despair as political tools, a strategy which she

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[16] Christine de Pizan, *Lament on the Evils of the Civil War* from *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life*, ed. & trans. by Josette Wiseman (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

[17] Linda Lepping, 'The Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan: *Lamentation sur les maux de la guerre civile*', in *Politics, Gender, and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 140-158 (p. 146).

will later adopt in the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*. In *La Lamentation* Christine directs her grief for France outwards, making an urgent appeal to the noble French princes to feel *with* the text's speaker and the French people who are the true victims of this conflict.

The divisions in France meant that when the young, ambitious new king Henry V ascended to the throne of England, he was able to ruthlessly seize an opportunity and take full advantage of France's weakened state. In August 1415 Henry embarked on his campaign to invade France, seizing the port of Harfleur by the September of that year.[18] Divisions amongst the French nobility were set aside once it became clear that Henry V's force was a credible threat, and the great lords of France heeded the call to fight in the defence of France. Events culminated on 25th October 1415, when the French and English armies met on the field of Agincourt.[19] At first it appeared that the French side had the advantage: the French had much larger army, composed mainly of men-at-arms, and the English side was exhausted after their long march in unfavourable weather conditions.[20] However, once the battle began it soon became clear that Henry V was a highly skilled military strategist who was able to communicate his resolve to the English troops and take full advantage of their higher numbers of longbow men. The French, by contrast, had very little in way of a plan and no effective leadership, with no chain of command within their army. France's divisions had a particularly damaging effect on their front line, where all the great lords were vying for a position of honour, leaving their men without

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[18] For more on the background and preparations for the battle, see Curry, *Great Battles: Agincourt*, p. 9-21.
[19] For detailed analysis of the events of the battle see Anne Curry and Malcolm Mercer, *The Battle of Agincourt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Anne Curry, *1414 Agincourt: A New History* (Cheltenham: The History Press, 2015); J.W. Honig, 'Reappraising Late Medieval Strategy: The Example of the 1415 Agincourt Campaign', *War in History*, 19 (2012), 123-151; C.J. Rogers, 'The Battle of Agincourt', in *The Hundred Years War: Different Vistas, Part II*, ed. by Andrew Villalon and Donald Kagay (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 37-132.
[20] Debate over the exact numbers of troops on both the English and French sides is still fiercely contested as chronicle sources often exaggerate the number of troops present at the beginning of the battle. Anne Curry gives a conservative estimate of 12,000 for the French at Agincourt, *Great Battles: Agincourt*, p. 31.

leadership behind them. The French men-at-arms were devastated by the near continuous rain of English arrows, and the advancing troops became found themselves funnelled into an increasingly restricted space where they became vulnerable to English sword attacks. By the end of the battle France was facing a devastating defeat, best summarised by Christopher Allmand:

> France had suffered a grievous blow to her leadership, both military and political, with the death of over 600 knights and members of the nobility, including some of the very highest, a loss of leadership which affected, above all others, northern parts of the French kingdom, which had seen all its 'baillis', or senior royal officers in the localities, killed while leading their soldiers in the action. It is likely that the effects of the defeat at Agincourt were to be felt for some time'.[21]

As we will see in *Fortunes Stabilnes* and the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, the battle would have far-reaching and long-lasting effects for many, particularly for Charles d'Orléans, Christine de Pizan and their readers.

Charles d'Orléans: Living between two Languages; Living between two Communities

In the aftermath of the battle at Agincourt, Charles, Duke of Orléans, was discovered underneath a pile of corpses and taken into captivity in England, where he would spend the next twenty-five years of his life. As a prince of the house of Valois and a grandson of Charles V of France, Charles d'Orléans became one of the highest-ranking French prisoners captured by the English. Charles was also the father of a future king of France and, after his release, he would figure prominently in the settlements ending the Hundred Years' War, making the historical import of his imprisonment considerable.[22]

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[21] Allmand, *The Hundred Years War*, p. 100.

[22] A.E.B. Coldiron, 'Toward a Comparative New Historicism: Land Tenures and Some Fifteenth Century Poems', *Comparative Literature*, 53 (2001), 97-111 (p. 101).

During his twenty-five years in captivity in several prominent English houses, Charles wrote over thirteen-thousand lines of poetry in both French and English, including the long lyric sequence, *Fortunes Stabilnes*.[23] This text - written in English, a language acquired by Charles – charts the narrator's emotional experience as he enters the service of love, wins the love of a beautiful lady, experiences a period of overwhelming grief at her loss, and eventually reaffirms his service to love with the introduction of a new beloved.[24] The aim of this section is to pay close attention to the emotional impact of Charles' English text. It argues that the feelings of grief, loss and sorrow which appear throughout Charles' English poetry – more so than in the parallel French text – demonstrate the ways in which Charles intended for these emotions to have a public effect on his readers, specifically the emotional community of his noble English captors.

Because the poetic voice in *Fortunes Stabilnes* is more 'inflected with touches of personal experience' than the other texts included this study, it is important to consider Charles d'Orléans' life and historical context to fully appreciate his poetry.[25] As a member of the royal house of France, Charles d'Orléans (1394-1465) was born into the most elevated of circumstances, but his life was also circumscribed by great sorrow and

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[23] The chapter will use the title adopted in the most recent critical edition of the text, edited by Mary-Jo Arn, *Fortunes Stabilnes* (1994). Arn has chosen this title from 'one of the author's most striking phrases, an idea which serves to sum up the whole of his narrator's circumstances' (xii; cf. 9-11). Other critics have proposed other titles, including A.C. Spearing who adopts 'The Duke's Book' to coincide with *The Kingis Quair*, a contemporary text written by another prisoner in Lancastrian England, James I of Scotland. Joanna Summers' study of late-medieval prison writing uses *The English Book*, a title which highlights the language in which the text was written and its connection to Charles d'Orléans' French works.

[24] For further detail on the view that Charles wrote in an acquired language see Stephanie Downes, 'How to be 'Both': Bilingual and Gendered Emotions in Late Medieval English Sequences', in *Authority, Gender and Emotions in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. by Susan Broomhall (London: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 51-65. Downes has compared the work of two bilingual poets – Charles d'Orléans and John Gower – and identifies Charles' English texts as a lyric sequence written 'in what sociolinguists would today call an 'L2' or acquired tongue', p. 51.

[25] Charles wrote in a way which seems 'to have incorporated fragments of individual experience into a general autographic experientiality', Spearing *Medieval Autographies*, p. 100. The most comprehensive biographies of Charles d'Orléans' life are Pierre Champion's *Vie de Charles d'Orléans* (Paris: Champion, 1911) and Enid McLeod, *Charles of Orleans: Prince and Poet* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969).

tragedy.[26] In 1407, when he was only thirteen years old, his father Louis d'Orléans was brutally murdered on the streets of Paris. Louis was the brother of Charles VI of France and his assassination on the orders of his uncle, Jean, Duke of Burgundy, had a profound impact on the balance of power in France.[27] Charles' mother, Valentina Visconti of Milan, died only a year later in 1408, after which 'affairs of state of the highest order were thus thrust upon Charles at an early age when […] he was formally recognised by Charles VI as the head of his family on December 10 of that year'.[28] Charles had married Isabelle of Valois – the daughter of Charles VI and widow of Richard II - when he was eleven and she sixteen but in 1409, she died giving birth to their daughter, Jeanne. Three years later, Charles' younger brother, Jean, Count of Angoulême was sent to England as a hostage as part of a private treaty signed at Buzançais between the Duke of Clarence and the Armagnac party.[29] In 1415 Charles would share a similar fate to his brother, when he was captured at Agincourt (25th October) and sent as a prisoner to England until his release in 1440.[30] Over the course of his twenty-five years in captivity, fortune continued to deal a cruel hand, as Charles would lose his brother Philip (1420), his daughter Jeanne (1432), and his second wife, Bonne of Armagnac (1435). The multiplicity of deaths and separations experienced in his life would have undoubtedly had a profound effect on

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[26] Charles' early years were particularly marked by tragic events and, as Arn comments, 'It was not unusual for the children of royal households to miss out on what we now call childhood, but Charles's early years, though lapped in wealth, seem in many ways to have been especially hard'; *Fortunes Stabilnes*, p. 13.

[27] Bertrand Schnerb describes the assassination of Louis d'Orléans as 'l'une des plus formidables crises du pouvoir que la monarchie française ai eu à subir avant 1789' [one of the greatest crises undergone by the French monarchy before 1789] in *Les Armagnacs et les Bouguignons: La maudite guerre* (Paris: Perrin, 1988), p. 11.

[28] Rory G. Critten, 'The Political Valence of Charles d'Orléans's English Poetry', *Modern Philology* (2014), 339-364 (p. 357).

[29] Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War, Volume IV: Cursed Kings* (London: Faber, 2017), p. 327-8.

[30] Jean remained a prisoner in England even longer than Charles, only being released in 1444. Gilbert Ouy argues that the brothers met often and shared books throughout their time as hostages in 'What their Manuscripts Tell', in *Charles d'Orléans in England*, ed. Mary-Jo Arn (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 47-61 (p. 50). See also William Askins, 'The Brothers Orléans and their Keepers', in *Charles d'Orléans in England*, pp. 29-45.

Charles d'Orléans, and his lived experience of grief and intense longing for the people and places lost to him echo throughout his poetic texts.

The sixteenth-century manuscript, British Library, Royal MS 16 f., contains a famous illustration (f.73) depicting Charles d'Orléans in the Tower of London, an image which visually encapsulates Charles' time in captivity in England. The eye is first drawn to the image of duke writing at a desk within the walls of the Tower, illustrating how Charles' periods of isolation and seclusion in England would have provided many opportunities for the unbroken concentration and exercise of the imagination required for the production of poetry.[31] Charles' life in England would also have been conducive to the process of writing because he was the captured 'property' of Henry V and a member of the French royal family, and was therefore treated as a royal guest, living in relative comfort in the households of a number of English noblemen.[32] What is more, knowledge and literature were readily available to Charles; he had access to the books and libraries of his hosts, was allowed to bring a number of books from his residence at Blois, and added to his collection throughout his time in captivity.[33] That Charles' literary knowledge and writing was able to flourish over the course of his years in England demonstrates that the elite literary cultures of England and France consistently overlapped at this time.[34] Charles D'Orléans and his English captors inhabited the same courtly

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[31] Summers, *Late Medieval Prison Writing,* p. 92. Critten observes that 'a significant portion of duke's poetry would not have been written had it not been written for his lengthy imprisonment – indeed, it is inconceivable that the English verse would have been produced at all had not Charles been forced to spend such a great portion of his life *outre-Manche*'; Critten, 'Political Valence of Charles d'Orléans's English Poetry', p. 358.

[32] Discussing two noble English prisoners, James I of Scotland and Charles d'Orléans, A.C. Spearing observes that 'Imprisonment provided enforced leisure in which those of high birth, who might normally have entertained themselves with hunting or courtly dalliance, were driven to write instead'; Spearing, 'Prison, Writing, Absence: Representing the Subject in the English Poems of Charles d'Orléans', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 53 (1992), 83-89 (p. 84).

[33] Charles d'Orléans collected a library of close to a hundred books during his time in England, for further information on Charles' book collections, particularly those books he brought back from England after his release see Arn ('Charles d'Orléans: Translator?', p. 18,27) and Askins ('The Brothers Orléans', p. 29-45).

[34] The links between Charles and his English hosts were often based on a shared knowledge and appreciation for the same literary texts/genres. Derek Pearsall demonstrates that one of Charles' hosts, William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk was actively involved in literary activities: 'As a noble gentleman, in

culture, which valued male, aristocratic perspectives, and privileged the language, motifs and emotions of love poetry and courtly literature.

Therefore, far from 'pining away' during his captivity in England, Charles' years in England were busy socially and otherwise.[35] In the course of his long captivity, Charles d'Orléans 'certainly enjoyed many civilised and peaceful days': he travelled with his host, Robert Waterton and his family to their country estate and enjoyed participating in evenings of musical and literary entertainment with other guardians.[36] Indeed, the guardian to have the most positive impact on Charles d'Orléans' time in England was William de la Pole, earl (later duke) of Suffolk, who had charge of Charles from 1432 to 1436.[37] Suffolk was near Charles' age and an admirer of French art and culture, and the two men developed a close and sympathetic friendship.[38] This friendship continued after Charles' release, as Suffolk would later visit Charles at his residence at Blois. The long duration of this friendship and the social nature of his relationships with some of his other guardians suggests that Charles d'Orléans could operate very effectively within the emotional community of his English hosts, and that there were a great number of common interests, values and emotions which were shared by both English and French noble communities.

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both England and France, he would also expect to engage in amorous activities, and their literary accompaniments, which were all part of the 'game of love'. A little story told by Guillaume Benoit, Suffolk's servant in France, […] tells how Suffolk, pining for love of some unnamed lady, had Guillaume read some love-poems to him. The servant then summoned one 'Binchoiz' (the poet Gilles Binchois), who there and then composed a rondel, 'Ainsi que a la foiz my souvient', which so pleased the earl that he gave him a handsome present. This shows Suffolk not as a poet, but as someone who appreciated love poetry, or at least as someone who was appropriately perceived in that role'; Pearsall, 'The Literary Milieu of Charles of Orléans and the Duke of Suffolk, and the Authorship of the Fairfax Sequence', in *Charles d'Orléans in England*, p. 148.

[35] Summers, *Late-Medieval Prison Writing*, p. 90.

[36] Arn, 'Charles d'Orléans: Translator?', p. 16.

[37] The earl of Suffolk had himself been captured by the French in 1429 and placed in the custody of Jean de Dunois, bâtard d'Orléans (Charles d'Orléans' half-brother); Pearsall, 'The Literary Milieu of Charles of Orléans and the Duke of Suffolk, p. 145.

[38] 'He was by all accounts a francophile, sympathetic to the French cause, or, to put it in a more neutral fashion, very interested in making peace between the English and the French'; Arn, 'Charles d'Orléans: Translator?' p. 16.

Yet, if we return to the illustration of Charles in the Tower, it becomes clear that the page is dominated by English royal iconography and that Charles is shown surrounded by well-armed guards, reminding the viewer that Charles was kept under close surveillance by his English captors and that, as a captive, he was privy to the whims of those in power.[39] In the first fifteen years of his captivity Charles was moved between London, Westminster, Windsor, Pontefract Castle in Yorkshire, Peterborough, Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire, Bolingbroke in Lincolnshire, Canterbury, and Ampthill in Bedfordshire. The frequency of Charles' movements demonstrates that he 'could never forget for a moment that he was in the hands of his enemies'.[40] While Charles could inhabit the spaces of his English hosts and operate within their literary and emotional communities, as a French prisoner he was also set apart from these communities. Indeed, from the beginning of his time in England, Charles was acutely aware of his position as a French enemy of the English and constantly sought to secure his own release and that of his brother, Jean d'Angoulême.[41] However, these efforts were far from effective and Charles d'Orléans' release became even less certain after 1417 when, after the death of Charles VI's eldest son, he became second in line to the French throne. Charles had become a prisoner of even greater political significance and it was 'probably in response to the sharp rise in the potential value of the duke to the French cause that Henry V tightened his prisoner's security before he embarked on his second invasion of France in August 1417'.[42] The king considered the duke's escape a real threat

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[39] 'English royal iconography dominates – note the large coat-of-arms supported by lions in the lower half of the page, the flags atop the turrets, and the beautifully detailed skyline of London'; A.E.B. Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans: Found in Translation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 8. Coldiron discusses the image extensively on pp. 44-5, 79-85, 182-5 and argues that overall 'we can best read this illustration less as a literal depiction of historical fact and more as a Tudor-era representation of his perceived position in England: a French writer of royal blood, but entirely surrounded by images of the power of the English Crown', p. 8.
[40] Arn, 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind', p. 16.
[41] Critten, 'Political Valence', p. 358.
[42] Critten, 'Political Valence', p. 358.

and was highly concerned that he would engage in a conspiratorial plan with England's enemies.[43] The nature of Charles' imprisonment and the levels of surveillance to which he was subjected were largely dependent on the state of political relations between France and England. After Henry V's death in 1422, 'the permission for safe conducts became stricter, stipulating that visitors and servants of Charles were to stop for no longer than one night in any one place'.[44] England was at this point ruled by a council of regency, whose members were determined to limit Charles' communications and prevent the possibility that he could create a network resolved to ensure his release.[45]

Despite concerted efforts to prevent Charles' return to France, he was finally released on 28th October 1440, an event which was marked by a large ceremony at Westminster Abbey. Charles was finally returning to his native land, but, after twenty-five years in England, he appears to have been significantly Anglicised by his experience. Hall's *Chronicle* states that Charles 'was deliuered out of Englande into Fraunce at that tyme, […] speaking better Englishe then Frenche',[46] and while this source was written a little too late to carry much authority, Charles' contemporary René d'Anjou wrote in his *Livre du Cuer d'Amours espros* (1457):

Car prins fuz des Anglois et mené en serviage.

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[43] In a letter of 1418, Henry V writes that Charles' hosts should 'set a gode ordianunce […] specialy for the Duc of Orlians […] for I am secrely enfourmed by a man of right notable estate in this lond that there hath ben a man of the Ducs of Orliance in Scotland'. On October 1419, Henry wrote from Normandy to the Bishop of Durham, commanding him that 'yee see and ordeyne that good heed be taken unto the seure keping of our Frensh prisoners withynne our reaume of England, and in especial of the Duc of Orleins … For their eschaping, and principally the saide Duc of Orliens, might never have been so harmful ner prejudicial unto Us, as hit might be now, if any of them escaped, and namely the saide Duc of Orliens, whiche God forbade'; quoted in Critten, 'Political Valence', p. 359.

[44] Summers, *Late Medieval Prison Writing*, p. 92. A copy of a will belonging to Henry V also stipulated that Charles d'Orléans and the Count of Eu should only be allowed to return to France when Henry's successor is able to order their release. Reproduced in Patrick Strong and Felicity Strong, 'The Last Will and Codicils of Henry V', *English Historical Review*, 96 (1981), 79-89 (p. 82).

[45] Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, was the most vociferous opponent of Charles d'Orléans' release, see Critten 'The Political Valence of Charles d'Orléans's English Poetry', pp. 360-1, Pearsall, 'The Literary Milieu of Charles of Orléans', pp. 146-7, Michael K. Jones, 'Gardez mon corps, sauvez ma terre' – Immunity from War and the Lands of a Captive Knight: The Siege of Orléans (1428-29) Revisited', in *Charles d'Orléans in England*, pp. 9-26.

[46] Arn, 'Charles d'Orléans: Translator?', p. 29.

Et tant y demouray qu'en aprins le langaige

Par lequel fus acoint de dame belle et saige,

Et d'elle si espris qu'a Amours fis hommaige.

[For I was captured by the English and led into servitude

And stayed there so long that I learnt their language

By which I made the acquaintance of a beautiful, wise lady,

And was so captured by her, that I gave myself to Love's service.][47]

To his French countrymen, it seems, Charles d'Orléans acquisition of English was a signal of his being 'en serviage' ['in servitude'] to and his feelings of deference for his English captors. At the same time, however, Charles' learning to speak English also signalled his belonging in England and his mastery of English as a more intimate language of love. From the perspective of Charles' English captors, however, 'there was an appreciation, sometimes expressed as a concern in the negotiations over his release of his knowledge of English customs and law as well as the language'.[48] Indeed, Charles was described by Henry V and Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, as having 'gret subtilite' and being a 'great and felle-witted man',[49] descriptions which linked Charles' command of the English language to his political threat to English interests and he was therefore 'retained for an unconscionably long life sentence'.[50] The varied testimonies of Charles's English fluency give a good indication of his position whilst being held captive in England: he became a man caught between two languages, nations and communities, navigating and compromising a position between their different emotions, customs and rules.

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[47] Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy*, p. 305.
[48] Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy*, p. 306.
[49] Jones, 'Gardez mon corps, sauvez ma terre', p. 13.
[50] Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy*, p. 306.

There can be no doubt that Charles' imprisonment in England had an impact on his poetic works, indeed it is likely that the very existence of his English verse is reliant on his being spending such a long period of time in England. However, it is true that any reader of Charles' poetry soon encounters what has been described as the ''autobiographical problem': the poetry often seems intensely and undeniably rooted in individual, lived experience, but it is composed almost entirely in traditional and conventional modes and forms'.[51] The reliance on conventional modes and forms means that many modern critics object to the view that autobiographical details can be read into Charles' English texts.[52] Joanna Summers, for example, cautions that whilst 'the *English Book* appears ostensibly a narrative book charting the poet's two love affairs, the text is actually pseudo-autobiographical'.[53] Seeking to separate the text from Charles' lived experience of captivity in England, Summers demonstrates that Charles only refers to imprisonment 'through images of confinement, and possibly through a pervasive introspection, a sense of isolation, and a concern with separation and absence'.[54] Others, including Denis Hüe and A.E.B. Coldiron have challenged the tendency to read the events and narration of *Fortunes Stabilnes* as reflecting any part of the lived experience

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[51] Robert Epstein, 'Prisoners of Reflection: The Fifteenth Century Poetry of Exile and Imprisonment', *Exemplaria*, 15 (2003), pp. 159-98), p. 161.

[52] Earlier scholarship of Charles d'Orléans' English texts addressed authorial concerns, debating whether the poems should be attributed to the duke at all. Spearing has observed that the 'authorship question has been much disputed, with French specialists generally being less willing than English specialist to believe that Charles composed the English poems', *Textual Subjectivities: The Encoding of Subjectivity in Medieval Narratives and Lyrics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 226, n.12. Those who challenge Charles d'Orléans' authorship include Daniel Poirion, 'Création poetique et composition romanesque dans les premiers poémes de Charles d'Orléans', *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, 90 (1958), 185-211; William Calin, 'Will the Real Charles of Orleans Stand! Or Who Wrote the Poems in Harley 682?' in *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honour of Douglas Kelly*, ed. by Keith Busby and Norris J. Lacy (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), pp. 69-86. Critics who are on the side of Charles' authorship include N.L. Goodrich, *Charles of Orleans: A Study of Themes in his French and in his English Poetry* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967); *The English Poems of Charles of Orleans*, ed. by Robert Steele and Mabel Day (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1941); John Fox, 'Charles d'Orléans, poète anglais?' *Romania* 93 (1972), 194-273.

[53] Summers, *Late-Medieval Prison Writing*, p. 95.

[54] Summers, *Late-Medieval Prison Writing,* p. 95.

of Charles d'Orléans.[55] However, for critics such as A.C. Spearing, who see it as 'desirable to separate the poetry from the biography as far as possible', there is also the acknowledgement that because Charles d'Orléans' English poems are written in the voice of a prisoner it is 'hard to make the separation complete'.[56] Spearing later acknowledges that in Charles d'Orléans' English text 'the abstract 'I' of the courtly tradition is inflected with touches of personal experience – the constraints of imprisonment and of being under hostile surveillance, the death of his wife while they were separated, and a pervading sense of absence from his familiar surroundings and in some sense from himself'.[57] Building on Spearing's assertion, I argue that Charles d'Orléans' English text incorporates elements of autobiography into the conventional modes and forms of his poetry. *Fortunes Stabilnes* is a text intended to appeal to the emotional community of Charles d'Orléans' English noble captors, a community which was familiar with and understood the conventional modes, forms, language and poetic speakers of courtly lyrics. By employing the lyric, a mode which was 'highly affective' and 'used on both sides of the Channel, with a strong focus on individual suffering',[58] together with a carefully crafted poetic speaker with a specific public identity, Charles d'Orléans sought to heighten the affective impact on his audience and bring about a change to his position of imprisonment. I do not suggest that the emotions described by the poetic speaker are

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[55] Other critics who contest autobiographical readings of Charles d'Orléans' poetry include Denis Hüe, 'Charles d'Orléans, livre de sable et autres plaisirs miniscules', in *Lectures de Charles d'Orléans: Les ballades,* ed. by Denis Hüe (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010), pp. 7-15; Jean-Claude Mühlethaler, *Charles d'Orléans, un lyrisme entre Moyen Âge et modernité* (Paris: Garnier, 2010); A.E.B. Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans,* concentrates 'on the construction of the writing subject, the literary persona itself, as an act neither of autobiography nor entirely political self-fashioning, but as an act primarily of literary-representation', p. 43. See also *A History of English Autobiography*, ed. by Adam Smyth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[56] Spearing, 'Prison, Writing, Absence', p. 83.

[57] However, Spearing does argue that there 'is no evidence that [Charles'] 'prison book', taken as a whole, had a political purpose', a claim which the current chapter challenges; *Medieval Autographies*, p. 100.

[58] Stephanie Downes, 'Peace and the Emotions of War in the Prison Poetry of Charles d'Orléans', in *Emotions and War: Medieval to Romantic Literature*, ed. by Stephanie Downes, Andrew Lynch, Katrina O'Loughlin (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 60-76 (p. 62).

an exact reflection of the innermost thoughts of the historical figure. Neither do I wish to conflate the voice of the speaker and the lived experience of the poet – the historical writer and the semi-fictitious persona(s) he has created are not the same[59] – but in Charles d'Orléans' English poems the connection between the poet's life and his work 'is often encouraged by Charles's texts themselves, and there are important critical gains to be made by playing into the dramatic appeal of the duke's English self-representation in particular'.[60] Admittedly, the differences between the poetic speaker, often seen as a 'foolish and ineffectual but devoted lover' and Charles d'Orléans, the skilled poet and figure of 'nobility and refinement', are profound.[61] However, the emotions of the poetic speaker and the real poet coincide enough for the voice of the poetic speaker to be inflected by the lived experience of Charles d'Orléans' imprisonment and the feelings of grief, loss and absence associated with his captivity. [62] Inflecting the abstract 'I' of *Fortunes Stabilnes* with touches of personal experience serves a political purpose, persuading the emotional community of English aristocrats Charles d'Orléans lived amongst and was held captive by that he was a figure able to elicit their sympathy and who posed no threat to their interests in France.

Fortunes Stabilnes: An English Subjectivity for an English Emotional Community

Towards the end of Charles d'Orléans' captivity, when it seemed likely that he would be allowed to return to France, Charles 'untangled the bilingual poetry' he had composed over the twenty-five years he had spent in England and collected these poetic

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[59] Anne L. Klinck, 'Making a Difference: Bilingualism and Re-creation in Charles d'Orléans', *Neophilologus*, 99 (2015), 685-696 (p. 688).
[60] Critten, 'Political Valence of Charles d'Orléans's English Poetry', p. 340.
[61] Arn 'Charles d'Orléans: Translator?' p. 19.
[62] The line distinguishing Charles' historical identity from the text's narrator is often blurred, the chapter will therefore use the terms narrator, speaker and Charles to refer to the persona in the text, whereas poet, author and Charles d'Orléans will refer to the historical person.

works into two manuscripts. [63] The French text is contained in Charles d'Orléans'

autograph manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale MS fr. 25458, and the English

sequence is preserved in London, British Library MS 682.[64] The fact that the two

manuscripts share striking similarities and were produced simultaneously within England,

again demonstrates Charles d'Orléans' ability to operate successfully within both English

and French national communities and negotiate the differences between them.[65] However,

when the duke returned to France in 1440, 'the fates of these two manuscripts whose

short lives had run parallel up to this point diverged dramatically'.[66] The unfinished

English manuscript was left behind in England, whereas the fully decorated French

manuscript returned to France with the duke and underwent significant changes. The duke

kept this personal manuscript with him until his death in 1469 and added to the work with

both autograph sections written after his release from captivity and the work of other

poets at his court at Blois, including those by his third wife Marie of Cleves. Critics have

proposed different reasons for the duke's abandonment of the English manuscript; that it

was left with the scribe but never paid for, that it was intended as a gift for one of his

captors, or simply because it was not a work he intended to enlarge later on.[67] Whatever

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[63] Susan Crane, 'Charles d'Orléans: Self-Translation', in *The Medieval Translator*, vol. 8, ed. by Rosalynn Voaden, René Tixier, Teresa Sanchez Roura and Jenny Rebecca Rytting (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 169-177 (p. 170).

[64] Both manuscripts were produced in England, though some have argued that the manuscript must have a French provinence. However, François Avril and Patricia Danz Stirnemann have confirmed its English origins, demonstrating that the manuscript's decorative features accord with other manuscripts made for the duke whilst he was in England; François Avril and Patricia Danz Stirnemann, *Manuscrits enluminés d'origine insulaire, VIIe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1987), Coldiron describes the English sequence as 'a 6,531-line experimental lyric sequence that is England's largest and earliest surviving self-contained, author-assembled body of personal lyric', *Canon, Period, Poetry,* p. 16.

[65] Mary-Jo Arn gives a detailed account of the similarities between the English and French manuscripts, including their size, layout and order of the poems. She does, however, point out that she compares the manuscripts in their pre-1440 state as the French manuscript underwent significant changes after Charles d'Orléans' return to France. She also suggests that both manuscripts are likely to have been produced under the direct supervision of the duke himself'; Arn, 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind: Charles d'Orléans and the Production of Manuscripts in Two Languages (Paris, BN MS fr. 25458 and London, BL MS Harley 682)' in *Charles d'Orléans in* England, pp. 61-79 (p. 65).

[66] Arn 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind', p. 76.

[67] See Steele and Day, *The English Poems of Charles of Orleans*, p. 45. Arn argues that the gift of the manuscript may have been a personal one, a signal of affection - 'he intended to make a gift of his English poetry to one or other of his keepers or some other friend he had made in England, Suffolk or

the reason, it remained in England, demonstrating that this was a text always intended for an English audience, and specifically for the emotional community of English nobles with whom he was imprisoned.

The existence of the parallel French and English manuscripts does allow for an examination of the relationship between Charles d'Orléans' French and English works. Within *Fortunes Stabilnes,* many of the lyrics and passages of narrative poetry have French equivalents. Indeed the text of Harley 682 runs parallel to MS fr. 25458 for about two-thirds of the text, until around line 4000. This has often meant that critics dismiss the English text as simply an attempt to reproduce the French work, which is viewed as the primary, authoritative text.[68] However, *Fortunes Stabilnes* is more than a simple translation of the French. Both are similar in their content and arrangement, but the English text is a more cohesive and expansive version of the French. Harley 682 was 'conceived of as a finished work from the outset',[69] which makes the text broader in its scope and able to hold together as 'a whole: a major work in the form of a *dit*'.[70] Furthermore, in comparison to the French manuscript - within which the poems are arranged not by content but according to their form - the narrative of the English poetry is extended considerably.[71] For example, the final section of *Fortunes Stabilnes*, which describes the narrator's continued state of grief for his first love and introduces a new beloved, can only be found in the English text. Transforming his poetry from French to

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Cumberworth, perhaps'. She goes on to suggest that 'his motivation for such a gift could as well have been political (or politic), since, uncertain of the shape of his own future, he was interested in being in and staying in the good graces of many of the Englishmen around him would be able or inclined to speak a word on his behalf if he needed it', 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind', p. 78, n.31. Arn also hints that keeping a complete English manuscript in France would be a politically unwise decision for the duke to make once he had returned to France, p. 78.

[68] Julia Boffey comments that 'the 'English' poems need have been no more than exercises in translation and comprehension', in *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1985), p. 10. Susan Crane argues that the French texts were written first, except in a few cases where the English phrasing is more effective, 'Charles of Orleans: Self-Translation', p. 170.

[69] Critten 'Political Valence of Charles d'Orléans's English Poetry', p. 346.

[70] Arn 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind', p. 77.

[71] See Arn 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind', p. 62.

English also offered Charles d'Orléans new possibilities for experimentation, particularly in his use of imagery, word-play, diction and meter.[72]

Moreover, the expansive quality of the English verse also affected the description of emotion, which appears more vivid and urgent in the English; as Klinck and Arn have both noted, the 'pain of absence and the need to write the absent beloved into vivid presence in the mind are more acute'.[73] It is the vivid, urgent quality of feelings of grief, absence and loss described in *Fortunes Stabilnes* which makes the emotions such an effective and affective political tool, allowing Charles d'Orléans' English aristocratic readers to feel *with* Charles the narrator and, by extension, Charles d'Orléans, the historical figure.

Fortunes Stabilnes is, however, a text which is less familiar than other works included in this thesis, and it is therefore beneficial to understand its narrative, form and structure before proceeding with an analysis of the performance of emotions in its poetry. The English text is a narrative poem documenting the narrator's experience of love for two different women, his metaphorical imprisonment and feelings of loss, isolation and grief, and his longing for reunion with the objects of his love. It combines its narrative sequences with two long ballade sequences and one group of one-hundred roundels. This structure identifies the text with the literary tradition of Machaut and Froissart, particularly as demonstrated in their *dits amoureux*, more so than with Charles' English sources.[74]

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[72] Using the example of ballade 10 in both the French and English texts, Susan Crane argues that the 'strong imagery, colloquial turns and accomplished meter in English are diminished in the French', in 'Charles of Orleans: Self-Translation', p. 171.

[73] Klinck, 'Bilingualism and Re-creation in Charles d'Orléans', p. 689; Arn, Two Manuscripts, One Mind', p. 33.

[74] Arn comments that 'Charles' structuring of a narrative containing dream visions interspersed with lyrics in fixed forms, which are carefully prepared for in the narrative, all on the subject of love, is evidence that he shared in the literary tradition of Machaut, Froissart, Deschamps, Grandson, Christine de Pizan, and many others', 'Charles d'Orléans: Translator?' p. 46.

Charles d'Orléans' employment of different forms within *Fortunes Stabilnes* also signals the unique nature of his English poetry. For example, the English ballades with counterparts in the French autograph manuscript are more experimental in their formation and structure. The basic requirements of French ballade forms were three stanzas, a refrain, the same rhyme scheme in every stanza and often an envoy.[75] Within these basic perameters, the stanza length, rhyme scheme and number of syllables per line could vary considerably.[76] As Arn notes, in the English ballades 'stanza length caries from seven to fifteen lines (his envoys vary from four to eight lines); he writes in both octosyllables and decasyllables; he uses thirty-four different rhyme schemes, but he uses a single set of rhymes for each poem'.[77] For Charles d'Orléans, it seems, writing in English offers new opportunities to subvert the expectations of form. Yet, it is important to note that the English ballades which experiment more with form are directly connected to the French tradition and nearly always have a French parallel text. Charles d'Orléans is able to use his knowledge of the French tradition of experimentation within the strictures of form, and transfer this over into the English tradition. These English ballades become a type of chimera, blending the French and English to make a new type of text. These ballades are evidence, therefore, of Charles' working across both the French and English traditions to create new forms within English poetry. By comparison, however, in those ballades without a French parallel text, Charles adopts the stricter structure of the English ballade form which was more fixed to seven- or eight- line stanzas, lines of decasyllables and the adoption of a new set of rhymes in each stanza. Whilst these ballades do take frequent advantage of the one freedom offered by the English form - by introducing new rhymes in

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[75] Helen Louise Cohen, *The Ballade* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1915), p. 49.
[76] Arn 'Charles d'Orléans: Translator?' p. 76
[77] Arn 'Charles d'Orléans: Translator?' p. 76.

each stanza – it seems that Charles is a more inventive, experimental poet when he is able to reconcile his French and English poetic inheritances.

Fortunes Stabilnes is a text which can be divided into three main sections. In the first section the narrator is initiated into the service of Love and subsequently becomes devoted to a lady, from whom he is separated. When this lady dies suddenly, there follow a number of poems in which the narrator mourns her loss and describes his feelings of overwhelming grief and sorrow, expressing a wish for death himself. The second part describes the grieving narrator being visited in a dream by Age who informs him that he is able to quit the service of Love. Upon waking, the narrator presents a bill outlining this withdrawal, eventually being granted a 'quytance' by the God of Love and his heart returned. The narrator retires to the Castle of No Care where he will live in the company of Tyme Apaste, seeking peace and contentment. In the third section opens with the narrator in his retirement writing poetry on the sorrow involved in the processes of love. A friend requests that the narrator write a poem lamenting 'Fortunes stabilnes', (l. 4660) the phrase which gives the text its current title. He then falls asleep and dreams of an encounter with the goddess Venus. Over the course of their dialogue Venus challenges his reluctance to love and the narrator eventually experiences a vision in which he sees a new lady sitting atop Fortune's wheel. Venus offers to carry him to meet the lady but at this point he wakes from the dream. The narrator contemplates this vision and meets with a group of 'gentil folkis' (l. 5203) playing a courtly game, amongst whom is the lady he encountered in his dream. The narrator confesses his love to the lady and there follows another ballade sequence concerning his second love. The ending has been described as 'inconclusive'[78] as the narrator bids an uncertain farewell to the lady.

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[78] Spearing 'Prison, Writing, Absence', p. 89.

The existing English text of Harley 682 opens with a letter patent from the 'god Cupide and Venus the goddes' (l. 1) admitting 'oure servaunt, which hath but yeris small / Of yowthe yit spent (ll. 7-8) and introducing him as 'the duk that folkis calle /Of Orlyaunce' (ll. 5-6).[79] Similarly, in the allegorical narrative which introduces the French text, the poetic speaker identifies himself as 'Charles, Duc d'Orlians' (l. 114), the 'jenne filz [...] Qui est sailly de la maison de France, / Creu ou jardin semé de fleur de lis' (ll. 165-67) [young man / Who sprang from the house of France / Growing up in the garden sown with the fleur-de-lis]. In both examples, Charles d'Orléans is 'eager to associate himself directly with the verses preserved in both his French and English books'.[80] Yet, there are fundamental differences in the way Charles presents himself in these self-named introductions, differences which foreshadow the differences in his self-presentation throughout the English and French texts. In the French text, Charles directly names himself, appearing as a poetic speaker who is more forthright and with his own agency. He also clearly states his French identity and asserts his elevated position as a young man of the royal house of France. By contrast, in *Fortunes Stabilnes*, Charles' identification is framed by the speech of the god and goddess of love, he is their 'servaunt' and does not directly introduce himself but is named through the English words of Cupid and Venus. Through his identification in English, Charles d'Orléans appears to be a more deferential, subservient figure. Moreover, because Charles is named by the god and goddess of love, the text associates his English persona with emotion, as though the English were a more intimate language of love. As these self-presentations demonstrate, Charles d'Orléans creates two distinct poetic speakers in the English and French versions of his text. Indeed,

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[79] This is not the beginning of the English text, however, as a considerable part of Harley 682 is missing, a section which is likely to have contained an allegorical narrative, the equivalent to which is a passage of around four-hundred lines included in Charles' corresponding French text, MS fr. 25458. Arn paraphrases this section in detail on 'Charles d'Orléans, Translator?' p. 133-135. Charles also repeats this self-identification in lines 2720, 3044 and 4788.
[80] Critten 'Political Valence', p. 342.

as A.E.B. Coldiron observes, 'the poet is a different poet, the subjectivity a different subjectivity, in French and English, even when the content is essentially the same'.[81] Charles d'Orléans creates a specific poetic speaker in his English language text, a particular type of English narrator who will appeal to his English audience - the emotional community of the English aristocracy.

The English book is a text which is deliberately and carefully planned. The emphasis is on the evolving story and the development of a consistently articulated poetic speaker. As A.C. Spearing observes, Harley 682 seems to have been 'planned to give the impression of telling the story of a specific inner life', making the text's development of a consistent persona of central importance.[82] A significant element within this scheme is to depict the narrator - 'the duk that folkis calle | Of Orlyaunce' (ll. 5-6), as an inexperienced, uncertain lover in *Fortunes Stabilnes'* opening section. At the close of Venus and Cupid's letter patent, the narrator insists he is still too young to enter into love's service, repeatedly asserting his 'childisshe ynnocense' (l. 93) and rebelling against Cupid's treatment of him (l. 83). At the court of love, the rather exasperated figure of Cupid observes that the narrator 'lakkist witt (l. 115) when it comes to understanding the subtilties of love, and offers him advice and instruction in the matter.[83] In the French version, Cupid appears as a figure of absolute authority, but throughout the opening section of the English text, Charles d'Orléans emphasises the comedic quality of this exchange between the 'unruly, childish' narrator and Cupid who 'speaks like an irritated parent' (in many ways a comedic version of the interaction between the *Pearl* narrator

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[81] Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and Poetry*, p. 6.

[82] Spearing, *Textual Subjectivity*, p. 226.

[83] Critten suggests that in comparison to the French text, where Amours deals out 'tough love', in the English text, 'the more reciprocal relationship established between the poet and Cupid in the English text appears to stall its narrator's maturation. At the point when his French counterpart is ready to embark on his first cycle of s, the English poet continues to require guidance in the basics of *fin'amours*'; 'Political Valence' p. 345.

and the Pearl-Maiden discussed earlier in this thesis).[84] Cupid goes on to inform the narrator that in order to win the heart of a noble lady he will have to speak and behave intelligently, courteously, and in a controlled manner:

> For gentill must be wonne with gentiles,
>
> Bi goodly speche and curteys countenaunce.
>
> […]
>
> Tyme to speke and not payse in balaunce,
>
> For to nobles longith sewte of curteys speche
>
> As he fynt tyme bi mouth or writyng seche. (ll. 140-41, ll. 144-46)

The struggle of a lover to take control of language and to make his love known is a frequent trope of the tradition of courtly love, one which we have observed in the case of Chaucer's Black Knight (*Book of the Duchess,* ll. 1146-1297), another figure who belongs to a similar emotional community of aristocratic males. In *Fortunes Stabilnes* the narrator makes explicit mention of his difficulty to use and control language. When first he thanks the God of Love for making him a servant, he confesses he is unable to express himself appropriately, 'y kan not athanke yow as y aught, | For to my will my tunge kan not suffise' (ll. 62-63). A little later in the same sequence, he observes that he has a tendency to misspeak: 'Fy, my speche hit squarith oft' (l. 77). In a moment which resonates with Hoccleve's poetic persona in the *Series*, Charles sits down to write the first ballades and alludes to the difficulties he has in making his mind known, of communicating his feelings for the lady into words on the page:

> . . . in my childisshe witt if y koude grope
>
> Sum praty thing that myght hir plesere bene,
>
> But even liche as hit were a swarme bene,

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[84] Arn comments that in lines 112-20, 'The God of Love's tone here is one of impatience; he is tired of dealing with this unruly, childish beginner and speaks like an irritated parent', *Fortunes Stabilnes*, p. 439.

So gan ther thoughtis to me multiply

To helpe me fynde, if they koude, remedy. (ll. 191-95)

The narrator describes the translation of feelings into words as something he does not have complete control over; his 'thoughtis to me multiply' (l. 194) as though they were a 'swarme bene' (l. 193), an image which evokes the qualities of danger and uncontrolled emotion. At the same time, however, writing is the source of his comfort and enacts the process of his 'remedy' (l. 195). The written words —the poems and epistles he produces—should please the lady and persuade her to accept his love, thereby freeing him from his torment.

By depicting his poetic speaker as an inexperienced, incompetent lover, Charles d'Orléans draws upon the English literary tradition with which his English audience would be familiar. Critics have frequently recognised that Charles d'Orléans draws deeply on a tradition of English courtly poetry which Chaucer derived from his French predecessors and contemporaries and to which he added a Boethian philosophical dimension, but that Charles also 'bring[s] to the tradition a *sprezzatura* permitting [him] to write self-mockingly without risk to the high rank that entitles [him] to write as a lover – as servants of Love rather than, like Chaucer and most of his other followers, servants of Love's servants'.[85]

The clearest example of the humorous and ironic aspect of Charles' English writing occurs in the second dream narrative (ll. 4736-5351). In this passage, which has no French parallel text, the narrator falls asleep and encounters Venus, yet, much like Chaucer's narrator in the *Book of the* Duchess, he fails to understand the significance of the figure standing in front of him. The narrator appears an incompetent figure in this

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[85] Spearing, 'Dreams in *The Kingis Quair* and the Duke's Book', p. 124. See also Julia Boffey, 'Charles of Orleans Reading Chaucer's Dream Visions', in *Mediaevalitas: Reading the Middle Ages; The J.A.W. Bennett Memorial Lectures, Ninth Series, Perugia, 1995*, ed. by Piero Boitani and Anna Torti (eds.) (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996), pp. 43-62.

encounter, undermining the courtly tone for which he appears to be aiming. His failure to recognise Venus continues until he makes a comedically inappropriate attempt at greeting her with a thwarted kiss. It is probable that Charles' English readers would have readily appreciated the playful and consciously humorous presentation of the narrator and recognised his similarity to narrators in Chaucer's other texts, including those in the *Book of the Duchess* and *The Parlement of Fowls*. Charles d'Orléans employs the tropes of the quasi-Chaucerian narrator as part of a conscious effort to develop his self-representation in his English verse as a comically inept and inexperienced lover, a figure who poses no threat, and who is familiar to his English audience. Drawing on a Chaucerian influence also emphasises the poet's familiarity with and admiration for the English literary tradition, bringing Charles d'Orléans into closer communion with the literary and emotional community of his English captors.

Scholars who compare Charles d'Orléans' French and English ballade sequences have also noted that the English texts are deliberately depoliticised in comparison to the French works, concerned only with courtly expressions of love and longing. The explanation for this change is that Charles d'Orléans was unable to include overtly political, partisan statements, instead recasting particular ballades as love poems, 'in a kind of politic dissembling with his English audience'.[86] I would suggest, however, rather than being wholly apolitical, Charles d'Orléans' lived experience and political reality are disguised behind the metaphorical language of his English verse, particularly in comparison to his French texts.[87] The poetry produced over the course of Charles d'Orléans' captivity in England is rich in the metaphorical language of siege and

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[86] Crane, 'Charles of Orleans: Self-Translation', p. 174, see also Coldiron, *Canon, Period, Poetry*, pp. 34-42 for an extended explanation of this argument.

[87] Crane uses the example of French ballade 88 and English ballade 111 to argue perceptively that 'though the English text is presented as a love poem, Charles uses the language of love to offers a political message related to the real Charles d'Orléans' imprisonment in England and the political reality of his release', 'Charles of Orleans: Self-Translation', pp. 172-177.

imprisonment in the context of love and courtship, allowing Charles to allude to his lived experiences of war, conflict and absence.[88] In the French poems, for example, Charles is more literal in his references to war and is able to explicitly state his feelings towards it: 'Je hé guerre' [I hate war], as 'guerre ne sert que de torment' [war serves only torment]. 'War', however, never appears as a noun in the English text. Instead, when Charles describes how the lady's 'greef haue welnygh deth me wrouȝt' (l. 1456), this is translated as 'her hostility has nearly caused my death', allowing the metaphor to convey a more personal, less political message. This pattern continues throughout *Fortunes Stabilnes* as the narrator represents himself as a prisoner not of war, but of love:

> To ballade now y have a fayre leysere;
>
> Alle other sport is me biraught as now
>
> Martir am y for loue and prisonere;
>
> Allas, allas, and is this not ynow? (1440-3)

The community of Charles' English hosts would be well aware of any coded references to Charles' lived experience as a prisoner of war. However, Charles uses the motif of the lover's imprisonment as 'a potentially powerful persuasive tool', allowing the poet to represent his suffering in a discourse familiar to the emotional community of the English nobility, a community for whom literary traditions were highly valued. Furthermore, presenting himself as a passive victim of Love also served a political purpose in reassuring his audience of his commitment to a peaceful, diplomatic resolution to the conflict'.[89]

Performing Grief in *Fortunes Stabilnes*

Interspersed with the inexperienced lover's comedic blunders and the seemingly depoliticised language are descriptions of profound emotional experience. Within

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[88] See Downes, 'Bilingual and Gendered Emotions in Late Medieval English Sequences', p. 62.
[89] Downes, 'Bilingual and Gendered Emotions', p. 63.

Fortunes Stabilnes, the descriptions of emotion script a 'narrative of affective experience', allowing Charles d'Orléans English aristocratic readers to feel *with* the narrator of the English text.[90] Charles' poetic self-representation is recognisable as the voice of the imprisoned poet. Indeed, at times, 'Charles seems to complain directly against the vicissitudes of his unique fate and to give voice to the real pains of imprisonment:'[91]

> O Fortune, dost thou my deth conspyre
>
> Onys let me pese, y pray thee hertily!
>
> For all to longe y fynde, withouten wyre,
>
> That thou hast had vpon me the maystry.
>
> Whi dost thou straunge when y thi mercy cry?
>
> Hast thou disdayne me, caytijf, forto here
>
> That thus with payne hast brought vnto þe bere –
>
> That how y ben so longe y mervelle, how
>
> With greef y haue endewrid many yere? (ll. 1410-19)

Yet, even in this poem, the imagery of imprisonment is subsumed by the metaphor of love as a form of prison:

> To balade now y haue a fayre leysere;
>
> All other sport is me biraught as now
>
> Martir am y for loue and prisonere;
>
> Allas, allas, and is this not ynow? (ll. 1440-43)

As Spearing observes, within Charles' references to the pain of imprisonment, literal and figurative imagery 'merge and separate and merge again in a continuous and bewildering dance'.[92] For Charles, imprisonment, and the feelings of grief, loss and sorrow which

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[90] McNamer, 'Literariness of Literature', p. 1433.
[91] Epstein, 'Prisoners of Reflection', p. 171.
[92] Spearing, 'Prison, Writing, Absence', p. 86.

accompany such a condition, are both 'fact[s] of his lived experience and conventional element[s] in his metaphorical idiom'.[93]

A pervasive sense of danger, secrecy and surveillance is also threaded through a number of Charles' English ballades, intensifying the narrator's emotional pain. In parallel French and English ballades, for example, the use of a contrasting refrain alters the sense of the ballade in each language, and also changes the emotions being conveyed. In the French, the refrain 'Car trop ennuie qui attent' [For he suffers too much who waits], makes this a poem of hopeful waiting. In the English, by contrast, the refrain transforms the ballade into a poem about the pain of absence, 'For whoo that absent is, is woobigoon' (l. 1819), and the narrator appears to grieve for all that has been lost. In the French parallel text, the narrator writes a list of hopes for himself in expectation that 'De mille l'un puist avenir' [Of a thousand one of them might be realised]. In the English ballade, however, a similar list is a source of guilt, anxiety and danger as he worries that he is being observed and that the list will be misconstrued: 'Thorugh false conspire of sum vnhappy wight' (l. 1725).

Charles d'Orléans' English text is also an extended meditation on the narrator's experience of grief after the death of an unnamed lady. There has been a great deal of critical speculation about the identity of the lady for whom Charles writes, with some scholars arguing that she is Charles d'Orléans' second wife, Bonne d'Armagnac.[94] However, while I do think that there are echoes of the lived experience of grief in these poems, my argument does not focus on the identity of the lady, rather it focuses on the emotional effects of Charles' description of grief. Each of the sixteen ballades that

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[93] Epstein, 'Prisoners of Reflection', p. 172.

[94] Summers observes that 'much scholarly research has been poured into establishing the historical identity of the two women for whom Charles professes to write. It is more likely, however, that in each case the lady is a poetic construct necessary for Charles' art, and does not represent a historical woman', *Late-Medieval Prison Writing*, p. 93.

complete the first sequence of *Fortunes Stabilnes* explore grief and the work of mourning from different perspectives. The most significant, however, are ballades 58, 59, and 60, which follow the news of the death of Charles' first beloved and describe his initial reaction to her loss. These poems are of particular interest within the larger text because they have no French equivalents and are therefore a product of Charles' English subjectivity. This sequence of mourning ballades is also of great significance as the collected poems are acutely aware of their performing pain. They are ballades which 'enlist *literariness* as a means of generating feeling'[95] within Charles d'Orléans' readers, the emotional community of the English nobility. The performance of grief, sorrow and loss through literary language is also used as a political tool to elicit sympathy for the imprisoned Charles d'Orléans, intended to bring about change to his position of captivity.

Ballade 58 draws parallels between sleep and death, describing how grief is so overwhelming an emotion that it causes sleep to become a state akin to death:

> In slepe ben leyd all song, daunce, or disport,
>
> Also prays of bewte, bote, or gentilesse
>
> Now Deth, allas, hath, to my discomfort,
>
> Enrayfid me my lady and maystres. (ll. 2026-29)

The grieving narrator is incapable of experiencing joy, no longer able either to dance, 'disport' (l. 2026) or write poetic songs in praise of beauty, nobility, and the pleasures of life. Poetry continues in the form of the mourning ballades themselves, but the differences in theme, tone, and imagery emphasise the changes undergone to the narrator's self and emphasise his feelings of loss. Such are his feelings of grief that he ponders his own existence:

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[95] McNamer, 'The Literariness of Literature', p. 1435.

> . . . what am y, quyk or deed?
>
> Nay, certis, deed, this am y very sewre,
>
> For, fele y plesere, ioy, nor lustihed?
>
> Wo worthe the fate of my mysaventure! (ll. 2034-37)

Like Chaucer's narrator in the *Book of the Duchess* and Hoccleve's speaker in the *Series,* Charles is plagued by an emptiness of feeling and finds himself in a state between life and death, a living death of grief. In the ballades' final stanza he feels even more devoid of meaning or existence, 'Me thynkith right as a syphir now y serue. | That nombre makith and is him silf noon' (ll. 2042-3).[96] He shares a similar fate to Chaucer's Man in Black, as it seems that Charles feels that he is of no value without the one he has lost.

Ballade 59, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, is an adaptation of a poem by Christine de Pizan, thought to have been written after death of her husband. In Charles' ballade, the sense of isolation is heightened as each of the poem's lines begins 'Alone'. The first line repeats the word twice, at the opening and close of the line, putting an extreme emphasis on the isolation of the speaker by enclosing him within his loneliness. As Arn notes, 'The Alone which stands at the beginning of each line does not simply function syntactically as a recurring adverb, […] It sometimes stands completely outside the syntactical structure and, like the tolling of a bell, punctuates rhythmically the lamentations of the poet'.[97] The repetition of the word becomes, for the narrator, a bell which punctuates the empty space of time before him now that he has lost the one he loves.

Many of the verbs suggest that the speaker is simply existing - being (l. 2054, l. 2062), living (as demonstrated in the refrain and l. 2072), and enduring (l. 2059). Charles also

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[96] The word 'syphir' (l. 2042) derives from 'Cifre' which in *MED* [online], <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED7723> [accessed 20th March 2020] conveys 'something which has no value in itself, but enhances another's value' (definition 1(b)).
[97] Arn, 'Charles d'Orléans: Translator?' note to lines 2054-81.

characterises the process of grief as a form of exile, he is 'forlost in paynfull wildirnes' (l. 2063) where he 'wandir[s] . . . in heuynes' (l. 2066). The majority of the verbs in Charles d'Orléans' poem concern speaking, but in each instance his speech acts appear to be futile, as he has no one to listen and thus his words achieve nothing. he has no auditors; his words achieve nothing. Charles sighs and groans (l. 2056), wails (l. 2057), and curses his fate (2059). Even Death, 'most welcome Deth' (l. 2073), would offer no solace and is a figure who gives no indication of heeding his pleas. The ballade shows the narrator as a solitary figure, crying hopelessly in the isolation of grief.

Ballade 60 is the culmination of the initial sequence of poems charting the narrator's reactions to the death of his beloved. This ballade develops the tropes of its predecessor, as the narrator moves towards a state of complete uncertainty:

> For dedy lijf, my lyvy deth y wite;
>
> For ese of payne, in payne of ese y dye;
>
> For lengthe of woo, woo lengtith me so lite
>
> That quyk y dye, and yet as ded lyue y.
>
> Thus nygh a fer y fele the fer is ny
>
> Of thing certeyne that y vncerteyne seche,
>
> Which is the deth, sith Deth hath my lady.
>
> O wofull wrecche! O wrecche, lesse onys thi speche! (ll. 2082-89)

This section is full of paradoxes; pain and ease, living and dying, certainty and uncertainty, reflecting how the interior world of those who grieve is one of bewilderment, confusion and conflict. The narrator then seems to break apart completely, dividing up the different parts of the self:

> O gost formatt, yelde vp thi breth attones!
>
> O karkas faynt, take from this lijf thi flight!

O bollid hert, forbrest thou with thi grones!

O mestid eyen, whi fayle ye not yowre sight? (ll. 2090-93)

Charles first separates the soul from the body, an image which recalls his earlier state of living death. Without a soul, the narrator turns to dividing up his body, moving from his 'bollid' (swollen) (l. 2092) heart to his 'mestid' (l. 2093) eyes. He focuses on the two parts of the body most closely associated with his feelings for his lost beloved, seeing his love and feeling this love in his heart. His misted eyes, likely to be clouded by tears continue to see even though the object of his beloved gaze is no more. The heart, by contrast, is chastised as the narrator demands that it end its feeling with the command 'forbrest thou with thi grones!' (l. 2098).

In each of the mourning ballades, Charles d'Orléans builds a picture of a speaker who is a 'wofull wreche!' (l. 2064), devoid of meaning, alienated from others and experiencing a state of extreme fragmentation. In this way, the narrator and real Charles d'Orléans share a similar emotional state. The ballades are acutely aware of performing pain and generating feeling within their readers through the language of grief and suffering. By employing this carefully crafted poetic speaker with a specific emotional register Charles d'Orléans sought to heighten the affective impact on his audience and bring about a change to his position of imprisonment.

Agincourt's Community of Grief in Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*

As is the case in Charles d'Orléans' work, the speaker of Christine's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* is similarly inflected with elements of autobiography.[98] Christine de Pizan, writer, widow and mother, addresses Marie de Berry and the community of noble mothers, wives and daughter who had experienced the loss of their male relatives

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[98] Spearing, *Medieval Autographies*, p. 100.

after the battle of Agincourt; men who were closely connected through blood or class with Charles d'Orléans. Like Charles d'Orléans' text, Christine de Pizan's epistle is acutely aware of its need to generate feeling within her readers, as she uses the language of grief and suffering to facilitate consolation and healing for Agincourt's female victims. By employing a carefully crafted poetic voice with a specific emotional register, Christine de Pizan also sought to heighten the affective impact on her audience and bring about a change to the damaged state of France.

Named as France's 'first professional woman of letters', Christine de Pizan was born in Italy around 1364 but spent most of her life in France and again, like Charles d'Orléans, was an writer who composed texts in an acquired language.[99] Her father, Thomas de Pizan, was a physician and astrologer trained at the University of Bologna who was later appointed to the court of the French king Charles V. Thomas arrived in France when Christine was still a small child, and the rest of the family joined him to make their permanent home in Paris in 1368. The family was suited to their new life in France; Charles V's court was an intensely intellectual environment, and the king was a prominent patron of the arts. At the same time, however, the whole family's fortunes were reliant on the benevolence of Charles V, a fact which would later cause great difficulties in Christine's life. For a long while, however, Christine's life in France was like a beautiful voyage, as she described it herself in the *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*. Christine's love for learning was encouraged not only by the intellectual environment of the French court, but also by her father. Indeed, in the prologue to the *Epistre Othea* (1399-1400) Christine compares her education to the process of 'pick[ing] up the crumbs

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[99] Leslie Altman, 'Christine de Pizan: First Professional Woman of Letters (1364-1430?)', in *Female Scholars: A Tradition of Learned Women before 1800*, ed. by Jeanie R. Brink (Montreal: Eden Women's Publications, 1980), pp. 7-23. The most influential biography of Christine's life is Charity Cannon Willard, *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Work* (New York: Persea, 1984). More recent French language biographies include Suzanne Roux, *Christine de Pizan: Femme de tête, dame de cœur* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 2006); Françoise Autrand, *Christine de Pizan: une femme en politique* (Paris: Fayard, 2009).

from the | High table' of her father's great learning.[100] Yet, Christine believed her education to have never reached its full potential; her mother discouraged her daughter from further learning and Christine was denied a university education due to her gender.[101] Nevertheless, reading appears to have provided a wide-ranging education for Christine, as her texts demonstrate a profound knowledge of the major works of her time.[102]

In 1379 Christine married Etienne de Castel, a notary and secretary to the French court, with whom she seems to have had a very happy marriage. Indeed, she would later describe marriage in *L'Avision Christine* as a 'sweet thing' which she can prove by 'my own experience'.[103] She gave birth to three children, Marie, who would become a nun at the Royal Convent in Poissy; Jean du Castel, who would join the royal service; and another boy. However, Christine's happiness did not last, and, like Charles d'Orléans, she experienced great sorrow and tragedy in her life. Christine's father, whose fortunes had already diminished in the new court of the young Charles VI, died in 1387. This was quickly followed by the death of her husband in 1390, and her youngest son is thought to have died sometime between 1390 and 1399.[104] Christine describes this period in her *L'Avision Christine*, focusing in great detail on her powerlessness as a widow and her

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[100] See Christine de Pizan, *L'Épître d'Othéa a désse à Hector/The Epistle of Othea*, trans. by Stephen Scrope, ed. by Curt F. Bühler (London: Early English Text Society for the Oxford University Press, 1970); *Christine de Pizan's Advice for Princes in Middle English Translation, Stephen Scrope's The Epistle of Othea and the Anonymous Litell Bibell of Knyghthood*, ed. by Misty Schieberle (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2020).

[101] Christine stated that she regretted not having taken full advantage of her education, writing that 'I was too young and foolish to drink my fill […] Alas when I had those learned masters beside me, I did not give much thought to study'; Christine de Pizan, 'L'Avision Christine', in *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Charity Cannon Willard (New York: Persea Books, 1984), p. 16.

[102] Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski observes that 'her knowledge of the major works of her time was impressive, and she made good use of the many compilations of historical and theological texts available in the royal and ducal libraries', in *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*, trans. by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee (New York: Norton, 1997), p. xii.

[103] Christine de Pizan, 'L'Avision Christine', *Writings*, p. 16.

[104] In *L'Avision Christine*, she describes herself as a widow with three children but later in the same text she describes being reunited with Jean three years later 'whom Death had left her only son'; L'Avision Christine', *Writings*, p. 19.

feelings of grief, anger and fear.[105] Among the personal details found in Christine's texts 'it is her widowhood that features most prominently and abidingly'.[106] Indeed, Christine's widowed status seems to have provided her with the practical and emotional impetus to begin her career as a writer as she turned to writing first as a source of consolation and then as a source of income. Charity Cannon Willard has emphasised the importance of Christine's widowhood in her early writing, observing that Christine's early verse gave her 'an outlet for her grief' and that 'the most original of her poems are those expressing her own emotions as she continued to mourn the loss of her husband'.[107] Throughout her career, Christine's widowhood and her experience of grief would be important aspects of her authorial persona, even as late as 1418 when she wrote *L'Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*.[108]

As previously discussed, Christine began to produce a range of texts 'offering either urgent, overt political advice or more veiled commentary on contemporary events in France' as the political situation in the kingdom deteriorated.[109] These texts reflect Christine's strong emotional ties to her adopted country. As Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski observes, although Christine was a 'femme ytalienne', there can be little doubt 'that her

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[105] Christine describes her vulnerability as a widow: 'Troubles surged upon me from all sides, and as is the common lot of widows, I became entangled in legal disputes of every sort […] How vividly I remember many a chilly winter morning spent in that palace, shivering from the cold while waiting for those representing me so I could remind them of my case or urge them to action, only to hear at the end of the session decisions that made me burst with outrage, or else puzzled me; but what hurt even more was the expense I could ill afford', in 'L'Avision Christine', *Writings*, p. 11-12. For a discussion of the link between Christine's identity as a widow and as a female author see Kevin Brownlee, 'Widowhood, Sexuality and Gender in Christine de Pizan', *Romanic Review*, 86 (1995), 339-53 (p. 339).
[106] Louise D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval': Christine de Pizan's Grieving Body Politic', in *Healing the Body Politic: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Karen Green and Constant J. Mews (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 201-226 (p. 212).
[107] Willard, *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Work*, p. 53.
[108] Liliane Dulac provides a detailed record of Christine's references to her widowhood in 'Mystical Inspiration and Political Knowledge: Advice to Widows from Franceso da Barberino and Christine de Pizan', in *Upon my Husband's Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe*, ed. by Louise Mirrer, trans. by Thelma Fenster (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 223-258.
[109] Louise D'Arcens, '"Je, Christine": Christine de Pizan's Autobiographical Topoi', in *The Unsocial Sociability of Women's Lifewriting*, ed. by Anne Collett and Louise D'Arcens (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp 18-36 (p. 19).

allegiance always lay with France' and that the 'fate of her adopted country affected her deeply and informed many of her works'.[110] The *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, written in direct response to the battle of Agincourt, demonstrates how the fate of France deeply affected Christine. The French defeat elicited strong emotions amongst many in France. In particular, the battle had a profound effect on the reputation of the French nobility and their sense of honour, feelings which are described in the Chronicle of the Religieux (Monk) of Saint-Denis:

> When news of this sad outcome was known by the king and his subjects, there was general consternation. Each felt a bitter sadness in thinking that the kingdom had been so deprived of so many of its illustrious defenders and that the revenues already much diminished in order to pay the troops would be completely ruined by the ransoming of the prisoners. But what was most galling was to think that the reverse would make France feeble and the laughingstock of other countries.[111]

In this passage, whilst the human cost of the defeat initially evokes a 'bitter sadness' in the king and his retinue, this is quickly offset by their concern for the material and economic costs of the battle. The Religieux of St Denis is highly critical of the highest lords of France, portraying their emotions as self-focused and lacking compassion. The ruling classes appear to be more concerned for their reputation abroad, with little concern for the individual suffering of members of the kingdom. However, as the English army advanced into the rest of Northern France, it was the people of France, those left behind to face the battle's consequences, who were most affected by the battle and its consequences. Most profoundly affected were women, a group which, in the words of Carla Bozzolo, often paid the highest price in times of conflict: 'Les femmes […] sont

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[110] Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'Christine de Pizan and the Political Life in Late Medieval France', in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. by Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah A. McGrady (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 9-24 (p. 9).
[111] Curry, *Sources and Interpretations*, p. 109.

dêjà, en général, les premiéres victimes des guerres. […] elles assistent non seulement à la disparition de leurs proches mais aussi à la destruction de leurs foyers'.[112] It was these 'premiéres victimes des guerres' [first victims of war] - the women who were grieving for men who had died, been imprisoned or disappeared after Agincourt - who are the focus of Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*.

The *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* was completed in January 1418, several years after the events at Agincourt. It is a consolatory treatise, addressed to Marie de Berry, duchess of Bourbon and Auvergne and the daughter of one of Christine's earlier patrons, Jean de Berry. Marie de Berry had not only suffered the loss of several members of her family at Agincourt, but her husband, Jean de Bourbon, and son, Charles, Count of Eu, had been taken prisoner by the English during the battle.[113] Christine's desire to console the wife of a prisoner of war seems appropriate given her earlier condemnation of the 'cruel and inhumane' treatment of such prisoners in *Corps de policie* (1406).[114] Pierre de Nesson in his *Lay de Guerre* describes the grieving Marie de Berry as

> […] la noble, devote, belle et bonne,
>
> Sa compaigne Marie la duchesse,
>
> Depuis luy pris, n'eust que deuil et tristesse,
>
> Et en l'abit de dueil et vesvage,
>
> En pleurs, en plains, en doloreux courage,
>
> Passe ses jours regrettent son seigneur (ll. 478-83)

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[112] 'Women […] are already, in general, the first victims of war. […] They not only witness the disappearance of their loved ones but also the destruction of their homes' in Carla Bozzolo, 'Familles éclatées, amis dispersés: échos des guerres civiles dans les écrits de Christine de Pizan et de ses contemporains', in *Contexts and Continuities: Proceedings of the IVth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan, (Glasgow, 21-27 July, 2000), Published in Honour of Lilianne Dulac, Vol. 1*, ed. by Angus Kennedy (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 2002), pp. 115-38 (pp. 119-20).

[113] Jean de Bourbon would later die a prisoner in England in 1434, and Charles, Count of Eu, was eventually released in 1438, twenty-three years after the battle of Agincourt.

[114] Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre du corps de policie*, ed. by Angus J. Kennedy (Paris: Champion, 2000), l. 15.

[… the noble, devoted, beautiful and good, her companion Marie the duchess, Since he

was taken, it is only mourning and sadness, And from this the same and sadness and

hardship, In tears, in sorrow, in great courage, Passing her days regretting her lord.][115]

There is great compassion for the grieving duchess in the poem as she is depicted as an

exemplar of suffering, sorrow and 'doloreux courage' (l. 482) [brave courage]. Pierre de

Nesson also makes great efforts to depict Marie de Berry as a chaste, faithful widow,

imbued with the virtues of nobility, devotion, beauty and goodness. In a similar way, in

the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, Christine valorises Marie de Berry by praising

the honoured duchess' goodness and 'large charité' (p. 4) [great charity][116] throughout the

text. Christine, however, also suggests that it is Marie de Berry's experience of the

emotions of grief, sorrow and pain which are essential to her goodness. Christine asks

God to reward the duchess for experiencing a grief from which 'tu n'as pas – dont il me

poise – esté, ne n'es exempte ne exceptee' (p. 2) [you have not been – or so it seems to

me – exempt or exempted]. As a 'trés noble et redoubtee Dame' (p. 2) [noble and revered

Lady], Marie de Berry's experience of hardship – and the emotions of grief and sorrow

which accompany it – enhance her goodness and personal virtue.

The *Epistre de la prison* is however not only addressed to Marie de Berry, as the

'griefve maladie et enfermeté (p. 4) [severe malady and infirmity] of the defeat at

Agincourt has affected many women, including

les roynes, princesses, baronesses, dames, damoiselles du noble sang royal de France et

generalment le plus des femmes d'onneur frappees de cese pestillence en cestui François

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[115] Pierre de Nesson, *Le Lay de Guerre* from *Pierre de Nesson et ses œuvres*, ed. by A. Piaget and E. Droz (Paris: Droz, 1925), pp. 12-19 (p. 14). English translation my own. For further detail on the textual community of French writers who addressed the themes of war and peace at this time see Deborah McGrady, '"Que tous se rallïent": Alain Chartier, Pierre de Nesson, and the Politics of Peace', in *A Companion to Alain Chartier (c. 1385-1430): Father of French Eloquence*, ed. by Daisy Delogu, Joan E. McRae, Emma Cayley (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 183-200.
[116] Christine de Pizan, *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life with An Epistle to the Queen of France and Lament on the Evils of the Civil War* ed. and trans. by Josette A. Wisman (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 2-70. Unless otherwise stated, all references to the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* and English translations come from Wisman's edition. Page numbers are given parenthetically in the text.

royaume, a cause tant de diverses mors ou prises de leurs prouchains, si comme maris, enfans, freres, oncles, cousins, affins et amis; les uns deffunts par bataille, les autres trespasses naturelment en leur lis, comme de maintes pertes et autres diverses infortunes et aventures obliquement puis un temps survenues; aviser comment se aucune chose proposer et reamener a memoire porroit servir et ester valable a aucun reconfort, dont du quell nombre des adoulees a ceste cause, redoubtee princesse, ma Dame Marie de Berry, Duchesse de Bourbon et d'Auvergne, tu n'a pas – don't il me poise esté, ne n'es exempte ne exceptee' (p. 2)

[the queens, princesses, baronesses, ladies and young girls of the noble royal blood of France, and in general among most of the ladies-in-waiting, who have been stricken by this pestilence in this French kingdom: because of so many various deaths and abductions of kin – husbands, sons, brothers, uncles, cousins, relatives and friends, some killed in battles, others passing away naturally in their beds – and of so many losses and other various misfortunes and adventures which have occurred unexpectedly for some time; and in order also to see if recalling anything to mind can be of help and be of use in consolation, since among many ladies afflicted by this, Revered Princess, my lady Mary de Berry, Duchess of Bourbon and Auvergne, you have not been – so it seems to me – exempt or excepted.]

Although the epistle is addressed to Marie de Berry, it is 'en ta personne qui bien en a eue sa part, je parleray a toutes semblament (p. 4) [through you, [Marie de Berry] who have had to bear your share of grief, I shall speak to all ladies alike.] The epistle is therefore written for a 'nombre des adoulees' [many ladies] and is intended for a female audience and a connected community of women. Indeed, Joyce Coleman has convincingly argued that as a political writer, Christine was not only writing for the individuals to whom her works were addressed, but that Christine also sought a broader audience for her texts. Coleman explains that Christine's works were read aloud in the homes of the nobility and the bourgeoisie, and this process is likely to have led to a discussion of ideas about

power, authority and politics.[117] In the case of the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, the intended audience is one of high social rank as Christine lists the women she addresses in a hierarchical order, from the queen of France down to ladies-in-waiting. The *Epistre*'s audience are also united by a common experience of Agincourt, the great 'pestillence', (p. 6) which has robbed France of many of its noblemen. Therefore, Christine's female audience, connected by their social status and their experience of grief after the 'diverses mors ou prises de leurs prouchains' (p. 2) [various deaths and abductions of kin] form an emotional community of noblewomen changed by the defeat at Agincourt who all adhere to the same norms of emotional expression The text uses the vocabulary of emotion, including repeated references to tears, ('lermes' (p. 4)), sorrow ('doleur' (p. 4)), and lamentation ('plaindre' (p. 4)) to define a new order of emotional community which is formed, shaped and united by a shared grief after Agincourt.

The *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* opens with an extended description of this sorrow, as Christine explains her intention for the epistle:

> Pour aucunement trouver remede et medicine a la griefve maladie et enfermeté d'amertume de cuer et tristece de pensee, par quoy flus de lermes–le quel a l'ame a tel cause ne puet prouffiter, ne au corps valoir – peust estre restraint et remis qui tant a couru et encores, dont c'est pitié' (p. 2)
>
> [In order somehow to find a remedy and a cure for the severe malady and infirmity caused by a bitter heart and sad thoughts, a remedy which might restrain and dry up a

[117] Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), see chapter five 'Aural History', pp. 109-148. The question of the audiences for Christine's texts continues to be debated. Eric Hicks acknowledges it is unlikely that the powerful addressees would have personally read their texts, yet the difficulty is ascertaining a specific audience remains: 'Who other than the queen or the Duke of Berry, could have had knowledge of the letters purportedly addressed to them? If we discount the purely moral effect of these appeals […] the question cries out for an answer', in 'The Political Significance of Christine de Pizan', in *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 1-15 (pp. 10-11).

flood of tears that can benefit neither the soul nor be of value to the body, and that has run and runs still – which is a pity].

Christine describes the grief felt by the emotional community of noblewomen as a disease, a 'griefve maladie' (p. 2) [severe malady] for which Christine hopes to 'trouver remede et medicine' (p. 2) [find remedy and medicine]. The disease of grief has two symptoms, a bitter heart and sad thoughts, which act as oppressive forces on Marie de Berry and the other noblewomen within the emotional community who continue to contemplate the tragedy of Agincourt. The strength of their grief means that the emotion can only be expressed through a near continuous 'flus de lermes' (p. 2) [flood of tears] which threatens to overwhelm the members of the emotional community. By depicting grief as a disease, Christine's writing demonstrates an awareness of the physical manifestations of emotional pain. The symptoms of grief – its bitter hearts and sad thoughts – are introspective and internalised, suggesting that grief has caused the women to look inwards, closed off from the world around them. We might also recall that the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* describes the kingdom of France as diseased, having been afflicted by a 'pestillence' (p. 6) at the battle of Agincourt. The two separate maladies of a shared female grief and a shared experience of France's defeat are connected in the reader's mind, suggesting that the healing of France's body politic is dependent on the consolation of this emotional community of grief.

In the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine,* Christine seeks to direct the emotional community away from the overwhelming flood of tears which 'ne puet prouffiter, ne au corps valoir – peust estre restraint et remis qui tant a couru et encores' (p. 4) [that can benefit neither the soul nor be of value to the body, and that has run and runs still], towards a more constructive form of consolation. Christine does not suggest that the emotional community abandon their grief, rather, she demonstrates that the emotional

moderation will serve a more practical purpose, helping the emotional community to come to terms with their loss and recognise the value of their position within a post-Agincourt France. Christine employs the genre of *consolatio* and draws upon many of its traditional topoi: that life is a prison, death is God's will, life is only lent by God and must be returned to Him, and death is a means of escaping the tribulations of the world. Parallels can be drawn with Charles d'Orléans' use of the prison motif, but Christine places greater emphasis on the futility of earthly life, which 'puet estre a un chascun figuree a la prison' (p. 8) [can be, for all of us, compared to a prison]. Earthly life, as represented in the earthly body, is 'fors terre et pourreture' (p. 10) [only earth and rot] separate from the soul, 'la plus noble partie est de l'omme' (p. 10) [which is the noblest part of man]. Beautiful and strong as the body may be, it remains a prison which will inevitably die, and it is only the soul of the Christian and the virtuous man which is destined for eternal life. This idea is intended to offer comfort to those who had lost relatives at Agincourt, and Christine goes on to focuses on the virtues of the noblemen lost at the battle,

> la Dieu grace, tous sans reprouche, ains trés honnorablement, des trespassez: les uns naturelment comme catholiques en fin glorieuse et congnoissance de leur Createur, trés crestiennement et en grant humilité; les autres contre les ennemis anglois, assaillans d'une part, et eulx deffendeurs de l'autre, avec les martirs de Dieu esleus en la juste deffense par bataille, fais obeissans jusques a la mort pour justice soustenir et le droit de la couronne françoise et leur souverain seigneur. (p. 12).
>
> [all of the deceased, by the grace of God, died beyond reproach and honourably – some naturally as Catholics in a glorious end and in knowledge of their Creator, in a very Christian manner and in great humility; others, attacking the English enemies on one side, and resisting on the other as just defenders, were elected with God's martyrs through

battle, and were made obedient until death to sustain justice and the right of the French

crown and their sovereign Lord]

Christine suggests that even these great men, who lived their lives with honour, justice,

and virtue, were not able to escape death. Each man, no matter their position in the world,

must consider themselves a prisoner. Nevertheless, since the dead of Agincourt were

good men – unlike 'les ennemis anglois' (p. 12) [the English enemy] who are compared

to 'mauvais cruelz' (p. 12) [sorely cruel] figures such as 'Judas', 'Caym', and 'Absalom'

(p. 12) – they will be released from this prison and be assured of God's love. Christine's

focus on the national identity of those lost at Agincourt directs the emotional community

to take comfort in the connections between French identity and virtue. Christine's goal,

therefore, is to help the emotional community of grieving noblewomen to transform their

grief from an introspective contemplation of their loss, and instead take comfort in their

national identity and the assurance of God's justice and love.

Emotional Authority in the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*

Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison* has been recognised as a 'a rare

document' for its time as very few writers, on either side of the Channel, were concerned

for the plight of women directly affected by the conflicts of the Hundred Years' War. [118]

The only other major literary work to focus on the battle of Agincourt was Alain

Chartier's *Le Livre des quatre dames (The Book of the Four Ladies)*, written in 1416.[119]

Chartier's poem also focuses on the women of Agincourt, as it concerns the plight of four

wives whose noble husbands took part in the battle. The first lady has lost a husband who

died bravely in battle; the second lady's husband has been taken prisoner by the English;

the third is left alone, unaware of her husband's fate; and the husband of the last lady had

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[118] Josette A. Wisman, 'The Resurrection According to Christine de Pizan', *Religion and the Arts*, 4 (2000), 337-358 (p. 341).
[119] *The Poetical Works of Alain Chartier*, ed. by J.C. Laidlaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

fled the battle, leaving the lady shamed by his cowardly behaviour. The poem takes the

form of a debate, as the ladies consider each claim to be the most worthy of pity.

However, despite the female focus of *Le Livre des quatre dames*, (particularly in

comparison to Christine de Pizan's *Epistre*) Chartier is more concerned by how the

behaviour of the fighting nobility demonstrates a decay of chivalric values, rather than on

consoling the grief of the noblewomen themselves. It therefore seems that Christine's

lived experience of female suffering makes her a more empathetic and astute writer,

because as 'a woman, an orphan, and as a widow, Christine could understand the pain [of

women] more fully'.[120] In the *Epistre*, Christine writes that the sorrow experienced by

this community of women is the foundation of her epistle:

> … et pour ce qu'achoison de mort d'amis qui souvent advient est la principal douleur qui
>
> ait grevé les cuers des loyales dames bien amantes, comme ce soit chose inrecouvrable et
>
> fort a oublier, sera le fondement de ceste mienne epistre prise sur celle matiere en
>
> donnant reconfort. (p. 12).
>
> [because the death of friends which has been occurring frequently is the main sorrow
>
> which has grieved the hearts of loyal and loving ladies, and since this is a thing from
>
> which one cannot recover and which is hard to forget, the foundation of my epistle will be
>
> set upon this subject, while giving comfort.]

Building upon this foundation of grief and sorrow, Christine asserts that her ability to

write this epistle rests on her understanding that grief 'is a thing from which one cannot

recover, and which is hard to forget' (p. 12). Christine's pity, sorrow and experience of

grief *with* this emotional community of women gives her a privileged insight into the

longstanding nature of their grief. Furthermore, as the epistle is 'a public consolation for a

private, yet universally shared matter among women', Christine alludes to the universality

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[120] Wisman, 'The Resurrection According to Christine de Pizan', p. 341.

of female suffering, aware of the strength of female emotions and the vulnerability of women when they experience any type of loss.[121]

At the same time, throughout the *Epistre de la prison,* Christine alludes to a more personal experience of grief, creating a parallel between her own widowhood and the losses experienced by the emotional community who grieve after Agincourt. Christine understands the grief felt by this community as she reminds Marie de Berry of her own 'petit estat vesval' (p. 2) [humble widowed state], a state in which she remained for the rest of her life after the death of her husband, Etienne de Castel. Christine conveys the sense that as a widow, she understands the pain of loss more acutely and feels herself 'meu de pitié et de loyale et vraie affection' (p. 2) [moved by pity and loyalty and true affection] to write this epistle. 'Pity' in this sense conveys a sense of empathy or understanding due to a common experience or state of mind.[122] Whilst Christine and the emotional community have lost their husbands in different circumstances, they share the same absence and experience of emotion. Therefore, despite Christine's position as Marie de Berry's 'humble servant' (p. 2) through the articulation of her own experience of widowhood, Christine is also able to 'inscribe herself within the national community of widows of *Prison de vie humaine*' through their shared experience of loss.[123]

Christine's experience of widowhood and grief also provide her with the emotional authority to offer consolation to this grieving community of noblewomen. She wants to offer the grieving community not only her sympathy and understanding, but the consolation of her knowledge of Christian teaching on the doctrine of the resurrection. To

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[121] Nadia Margolis, '"The Cry of the Chameleon": Evolving Voices in the Epistles of Christine de Pizan', *Disputatio*, 1 (1996), 37-71 (p. 57).
[122] 'Pitié' in *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500)* [online] <http://atilf.atilf.fr/scripts/dmfAAA.exe?LEM=piti%E9;XMODE=STELLa;FERMER;;AFFICHAGE=0;MENU=menu_dmf;;ISIS=isis_dmf2015.txt;MENU=menu_recherche_dictionnaire;OUVRIR_MENU=1;ONGLET=dmf2015;OO1=2;OO2=1;OO3=-1;s=s0d3d2f10;LANGUE=FR;> [accessed 25th April 2020]
[123] D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval', p. 222.

do this, Christine must draw heavily on the genres, motifs, exempla and arguments found in the works of her 'masculinist precedents'.[124] Christine conveys her lessons of consolation by drawing on a range of sources, from Seneca who encourages the wise man to remember death at all times, to Macrobius' lesson to always consider the brevity of life, and St. Bernard who provides the image of life as a prison. As a female writer, Christine uses these sources to legitimate her identity and facilitate the establishment of an authoritative position for herself. Through these sources, which Christine interprets in order to offer emotional succour and consolation, Christine becomes a figure of emotional authority, able to cultivate 'her voice as an intermediary, mediator, interpreter, and exegete, establishing for herself the authority of a learned speaker in the Middle Ages'.[125]

Nevertheless, despite Christine's reliance on masculinist sources in the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine,* she also actively encourages women's participation in the affairs of state. Christine suggests that the emotional community of grieving noblewomen has a role to play in healing the fractured state of France. This is a vision of political authority through which Christine 'develops, and enacts, a form of political engagement that is also distinctly feminine'.[126] Christine's idea of an authoritative community of noblewomen was not simply an idealised notion or an experiment of the imagination. Instead, Christine offers a vision of practical, emotional authority for France's grieving noblewomen, which would allow this emotional community to intercede directly in the fractured state of France and influence the direction of the nation. Indeed, the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* is part of a group of Christine de Pizan's poems which have been characterised by Eric Hicks as comprising 'ideas of a clearly political cast […]

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[124] D'Arcens 'Petit estat vesval', p. 207.
[125] Dominique Iogna-Prat, 'Aristotelian Politics and Architectural Science in France at the End of the Middle Ages: A Case Study of Christine de Pizan', from *Emotions, Communities, and Difference in Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of Barbara H. Rosenwein*, ed. byMaureen C. Miller and Edward Wheatley (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 171-181 (p. 172).
[126] D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval', p. 214.

feeling for the reality of concrete events and [...] an avowed interventionist design'.[127] In these texts, Christine articulates explicit responses to specific political events - including France's recovery after Agincourt and the continuing Armagnac Burgundian dispute - taking place in Christine's immediate political milieu. The *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* is a text which also offers direct commentary and counsel, and often attempts to intercede in, the damaged state of France.[128] As Christine herself states, in writing the *Epistre*, she was 'faisant mon devoir, par moien d'escripture' (p. 4) [doing my duty by means of the written word].

In all nearly all Christine's works the motive is to demonstrate that 'even if they are deprived of political authority, women possess tremendous moral authority'.[129] In the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine,* this moral authority and the experience of grief allows women to join as an emotional community, 'to quietly acknowledge and give thanks for their own superiority to the violence' which has surrounded them and robbed them of their male relatives.[130] This moral authority, Christine suggests, should be channelled for the common good and be used to bring about change within France's ailing body politic. The emotional community of grieving noblewomen are the emotional future of the kingdom, influencing the politics and structures of power. Christine suggests that the most effective way in which women can shift the structures of power within France is through the practical implementation of emotions within noble family structures. In the fourth chapter of the epistle, Christine addresses Marie de Berry directly, encouraging her to set a public example and rejoice in the company of her

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[127] Included in this group of political poems are the *Epistre a la royne*, *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile, Le Livre de paix, Epistre de la prison de vie humaine,* and *Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, in Eric Hicks, 'The Political Significance of Christine de Pizan', in *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. Margaret Brabant (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 8-18 (p. 9).

[128] D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval', p. 205.

[129] Tracy Adams, '"Moyennerresse de traitié de paix": Christine de Pizan's Mediators', from *Healing the Body Politic*, pp. 177-201 (p. 188).

[130] Adams, 'Christine de Pizan's Mediators', p. 188.

remaining children: 'la bonne et belle' (p. 42) [the good and beautiful] Lady Bonne,

Countess of Nevers; the 'hautement pourveue' (p. 44) [highly married] Lady Catherine of

Bourbon; the 'trés bel' [p. 44] beautiful Lord Charles who is 'tant avenant et sage selon sa

jeunece, si vif et si gente personne de corps' (p. 44) [so handsome and wise in his youth,

so quick, so open, so beautiful in the body]; and finally 'l'enfançon Loys monseigeneur'

(p. 44) [the child Lord Louis], who is 'si bel et si plaisant' (p. 44) [so beautiful and

pleasant] and the 'tresor' (p. 44) [the treasure] of his mother, Marie de Berry. Facing the

reality of a state stripped of its noblemen after the disaster of Agincourt, Christine asserts

Marie de Berry's public role as the head of the family now that her husband is imprisoned

in England. The text implores Marie to find solace in the goodness, fortitude and nobility

of her children, qualities which she has instilled in them as their mother. Christine

therefore suggests that it is the duty of all noblewomen to act as emotional guides and

moral exemplars both to their families and the wider community. The emotional

community of noblewomen should focus their grief into action through the management

of estates and households and take consolation in their children, as they who represent the

potential for a more harmonious society and a unified France in future free from

occupation by the English crown.

   However, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski has demonstrated that the *Epistre de la*

prison de vie humaine also marks a highly significant point in Christine's life and oeuvre:

'the Battle of Agincourt rather marks an endpoint. The *Epistre de la prison de vie*

humaine can be seen as a kind of farewell to the kind of political action she had pursued

in a number of forceful texts'.[131] Indeed, in the final lines of the text Christine returns to a

personal appeal as she apologises for delaying the letter due to her 'plusiers grans ennuis

et trouble de courage' (p. 66) [many great worries and a troubled heart]. From this

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[131] Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'Christine de Pizan and the Political Life in Late Medieval France', p. 22.

conclusion, it appears that Christine was acutely aware of the worries and troubles being faced by France and was unable to direct her emotions to more practical, beneficial purposes. As the next section will demonstrate, the epistle's closing emotions offer a prophetic glimpse into a Christine's uncertain future, as well as those of the community of noblewomen and the larger fate of France.

Joan of Arc: The Fulfilment of Christine's Vision?

In the years between Agincourt in 1415 and 1418, when Christine de Pizan completed the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, France had descended into a state of greater turmoil. The deaths of two significant figures marked the beginning of this period of heightened instability. The young dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, who had been absent from Agincourt, died only two months after the battle in December 1415, followed by the Duke of Berry in early 1416. As Kate Langdon Forhan observes, the 'political instability and anxiety these deaths caused in the aftermath of Agincourt cannot be underestimated', particularly as the conflict between Armagnac and Burgundian factions became increasingly hostile. [132] An eyewitness account of the period, the Bourgeois de Paris, recorded that in the years after Agincourt the prices of food doubled, the Armagnac faction behaved without pity, and rumours circulated that the dauphin had been poisoned.[133] When the Count of Armagnac was made Constable of France, the Duke of Burgundy began negotiations for an alliance with Henry V in late 1416. In the year 1417, just as Charles VI's youngest son - the future Charles VII - was unexpectedly made dauphin after the death of his brother Jean of Touraine, the English began an invasion of France. France's divisions were cemented by this event. On one side, the Armagnacs had control of Paris and supported the new dauphin, whilst on the other a rival government

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[132] Kate Langdon Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, p. 23.
[133] *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1990), 90-91, p. 132.

was led by Queen Isabeau and the Duke of Burgundy. Christine de Pizan was present in Paris at this point, completing the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, whilst around her France descended into chaos; there were severe limits on food and events such as the siege of Rouen and eventual capture of the rest of Normandy by the English made defeat and occupation seem more likely.[134] For Christine, events culminated on the 28th May 1419, when Burgundian forces entered Paris, capturing the king and murdering any suspected Armagnac sympathisers. The dauphin and his retinue, which included Jean du Castel, Christine de Pizan's son, were able to escape and a large number of Parisians, including Christine herself, fled the city in fear of being caught in the increasingly violent and brutal conflict.

Not a great deal is known of Christine's life after 1419. Despite living safely in the convent at Poissy with her daughter, circumstances appear not to have been conducive to writing as Christine produced only one known work, *Les Heures de contemplation sur la passion de Notre Seigneur*, a religious meditation far removed from her earlier, more overtly political works.[135] Yet, Christine de Pizan was not wholly isolated from political events as her son remained secretary to the exiled dauphin, providing access to news from Paris.[136] Despite initial talks between the two sides, any attempts to achieve peace were shattered when Jean sans Peur, the Duke of Burgundy, was killed on 10th September 1419. The duke had met with the dauphin and, according to a number of sources, was kneeling in homage when he was struck on the head by an axe wielded by men-at-arms affiliated to the Armagnac party.[137] The event had far-reaching consequences as the

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[134] See Christopher Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy, 1415-1450: The History of a Medieval Occupation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

[135] Christine de Pizan, *Heures de contemplacion sur la Passion e Nostre Seigneur Jhesucrist*, ed. Lilliane Dulac and René Stuip (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017).

[136] Jean de Castel, however, would die in 1425 and his widow and their children would not be able to return to Paris until 1431.

[137] For an overview of evidence related to the assassination of Jean sans Peur, see Richard Vaughan, *John the Fearless: The Growth of Burgundian Power* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), pp. 263-287.

Burgundian side formally aligned themselves with the English, eventually leading to the signing of the Treaty of Troyes in 1420. This Treaty, 'the most important treaty of the Hundred Years War', disinherited the dauphin and named Henry V as heir to the throne of France, a claim sealed with Henry's marriage to Charles VI's daughter, Catherine of Valois.[138] The English would control the majority of northern France, including Paris, for the next fifteen years.

However, circumstances changed for Christine de Pizan and the nation of France in 1429 when 'Reprint à luire li soleil' [the sun began to shine again][139] with the appearance of a new commander of the French troops in the shape of Joan of Arc. Christine's *Ditie de Jehanne d'Arc* was written on 31st July 1429, only two weeks after Joan had crowned the dauphin, Charles VII, in Reims. The text is a jubilant celebration of Joan's victories and depicts Joan as a divinely inspired saviour of France, thereby equating France's fate with divine justice. Christine goes out of her way to stress that Joan is 'Une femme – simple bergiere' (l. 198) [a woman, a simple maid], but that she is also an extraordinary female who has overcome France's enemies. The text repeatedly alludes to the miraculous nature of Joan's achievements; it is 'Chose sur toute merveillable (l. 58) [something which is more wonderful than anything else], a 'miracle' (ll. 81, 225, 260), and a 'chose oultre nature' (l. 192) [something quite extraordinary]. Joan is a woman set apart by her exceptionality, yet at the same time she is also 'the figurehead of an earthly community of women'.[140] Christine suggests that Joan's success reflects upon all women:

> Hee! Quel honneur au femenin

[138] Allmand, *The Hundred Years War*, p. 30.
[139] Christine de Pizan, *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, ed. by Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty (Oxford: Society for the Study of Meideval Languages and Literatures, 2003), p. 28, l. 18.
[140] Tsae Lan Lee Dow, 'Christine de Pizan and the Body Politic', in *Healing the Body Politic*, pp. 227-245 (p. 240).

> Sexe! Que Dieu l'ayme il appert,
>
> Quant tout ce grant pueple chenin,
>
> Par qui tout le regne ert desert,
>
> Par femme est sours et recouvert,
>
> Ce que c.m. hommes [fait] n'eussent'. (ll. 265-270)
>
> [Oh! What honour for the female sex! It is perfectly obvious that God has special regard for it when all these wretched people who destroyed the whole kingdom – now recovered and made safe by a woman, something that 5000 *men* could not have done.]

Joan of Arc is depicted here as a figure 'symbolic of the feminine as peacemaker, mediator and warrior for a just and noble cause'.[141] Joan has achieved a victory that five thousand men could not have achieved, and thus, as a woman, she has surpassed all the achievements of men. Her achievements honour all the female sex, and Christine therefore cites Joan's victories as evidence for God's approval of the female sex in general. As a female who has healed France's fractured state and returned the kingdom to communion with God, Joan of Arc appears to be the fulfilment of Christine's vision of female authority as set out in a range of her texts, including the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*. Indeed, 'All the hopes [Christine] had expressed in previous works – that women should be recognised for their true worth, that France should come together under its legitimate king, that the Church should be reunited, that peace should be at hand – now seem to have come true'.[142] Joan of Arc – 'sensible' [wise/intelligent], astute, respected and politically active – is for Christine a figurehead for the community of all women and a symbol of the fulfilled potential of the female sex.

To close this section of the chapter, I return to the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* which suggests that grief can also bring about political change. In a nation-state

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141 Tsae Lan Lee Dow, 'Christine de Pizan and the Body Politic', p. 241.
142 Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'Christine de Pizan and the Political Life in Late Medieval France', p. 19.

where powerful men are absent because they have been 'elected with God's martyrs through battle' or imprisonment, the structures of power are required to shift and become more focused on the availability of female authority. This is not to suggest that Christine is seeking to replace an exclusively masculine polity with a similarly exclusive female one. Rather, it seems that in the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine,* Christine acknowledges the ways in which women can and do contribute to public life. Daisy Delogu has argued that 'Christine obliges her readers not just to consider the political roles occupied by and available to women, but to re-examine the very structures of power and authority in which men and women are likewise enmeshed'.[143] One way in which the structures of power can be re-examined and shifted is through the emotional perspicacity of noblewomen who are grieving after Agincourt. Christine recognises that as individuals, grieving noblewomen have very little power and are unable to enact change in France. However, an emotional community united by grief may provide noblewomen with a collective female voice to enact change in the body politic of France.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed two texts, one written in French, and the other in English, both written in a language acquired by their authors, and both occasioned by the battle of Agincourt. Charles d'Orléans' *Fortunes* Stabilnes is a text which is characterised by descriptions of profound emotional experience. It insists upon tarrying with the speaker's feelings of grief and loss for all he has lost due to his imprisonment after Agincourt. Physical separation and distance from the object of his love are frequently described by Charles in his English poetry, reflecting the profound emotions of an aristocratic prisoner of war in the later Middle Ages. Christine de Pizan, by contrast,

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[143] Daisy Delogu, 'Christine de Pizan's Elaboration of Female Authority', from *Desireuse de plus avant enquerre: actes du Vie colloque international sur Christine de Pizan (Paris, 20-24 juillet 2006): volume en hommage à James Laidlaw*, ed. by Liliane Dulac (Paris: Champion, 2008), pp. 50-68 (p. 59).

addresses the community of noble mothers, wives and daughters who had experienced the loss of their male relatives after the battle of Agincourt. Like Charles d'Orléans' text, Christine de Pizan's epistle is acutely aware of its need to generate feeling within her readers, as she uses the language of grief and suffering to facilitate consolation and healing for Agincourt's female victims. For both Charles and Christine, by employing a carefully crafted voice of profound emotional experience, they sought to heighten the affective impact on their audiences and bring about specific changes. Both texts address an audience of English/French aristocratic emotional communities, united by a shared language, culture and emotional regimes. However, the texts also demonstrate that the signs of national divisions between English and French emotional communities are becoming more distinct as conflict becomes a more pressing and divisive concern for both nations.

Chapter Four
Grief for the Bureaucratic Community and Lancastrian Masculinity in Thomas Hoccleve's 'Compleinte' and 'Dialogue'

Thomas Hoccleve, the fifteenth-century poet and clerk of the Privy Seal, is well known for inscribing the events of his life into his literary works and for representing himself as a vulnerable and isolated figure.[1] Hoccleve's self-representation is most developed in the collection of five poems known as the *Series*, which in part detail his recovery from a mental breakdown, his difficulty in regaining his position amongst his friends and colleagues, and his grief at being ostracised from this community.[2] This feeling of being isolating by his community contrasts starkly to the isolation of the Man in Black in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, where the Man in Black rejects social interactions and embraces his isolation. In the 'Compleinte', however, Hoccleve's isolation causes significant emotional distress, as is evident from the poem's opening when he is consumed by a 'þouȝtful maladie' ('Compleinte', l. 21) and is unable to sleep, tossing and turning in his bed as he contemplates:

> The greef aboute myn herte so sore swal
>
> And bolned euere to and to so sore
>
> That nedis oute I muste therwithal.

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[1] Spearing argues that it is misleading to refer to the *Series*' first-person speaker as a narrator or persona. Instead, 'The 'I' of the *Series* is named as 'Hoccleve' and 'Hoccleve', and what we learn about him (chiefly in the *Complaint* and *Dialogue*) has much in common with what can be learned or deduced from the documentary record of the real Hoccleve's life – so much so that it seems justifiable to refer to the 'I' simply as 'Hoccleve'. Spearing, *Medieval Autographies*, p. 173. I will refer to the 'I' speaker as Hoccleve and Hoccleve throughout the chapter.

[2] The *Series* is a collection of five linked texts. The first, the 'Compleinte', introduces the isolated speaker, set apart from his friends and colleagues who refuse to believe that he has recovered from a previous period of mental instability. In the second text, the 'Dialogue', the speaker is visited by an unnamed friend and the two engage in an extended dialogue concerning Hoccleve's recovery and literary production. Two translations from the *Gesta Romanorum* follow. The *Tale of Jereslaus's Wife* tells of a Roman empress who is deceived by three men. Its counterpart, the *Tale of Jonathas* recounts the story of the deception of the emperor's son by his lover Fellicula. The *Series* also includes an excerpt from a work by Henry Suso, 'Lerne for to Die', and two further interludes between Hoccleve and the friend which are included between the tales.

> I thou₃te I nolde kepe it cloos no more,
>
> Ne lete it in me for to eelde and hore,
>
> And for to preue I cam of a womman,
>
> I braste oute on þe morwe and þus bigan. (ll. 29-35)[3]

Drawing on the terms of medieval physiology, Hoccleve suggests that the experience of 'greef' (l. 29) has a dramatic impact upon the body; it causes his heart to swell and emboldens him to burst out with an expression of feeling. There is an implication that by keeping sorrow locked within, Hoccleve has experienced physical pain, but now his feelings can be kept 'cloos no more' (l. 32) and they must be forced 'oute' (l. 31) into the wider world. This expression of 'greef' (l. 29) will also 'preue I cam of womman' (l. 34), a statement which underlines Hoccleve's human frailty and the universality of sorrow (as all are born of women), but which also implies 'that there is something unmasculine about this excessive self-expression'.[4] This passage encapsulates many of the central issues Hoccleve will encounter over the course of the *Series*: how to articulate emotions to others; when, where, and to whom should inner emotions be expressed; the value of emotional control; and the gendered dynamics of particular emotions. Hoccleve's colleagues and friends are acutely aware that his mind 'went to pleye as for a certein space' (l. 51), and so as a bureaucrat, a poet and a man, Hoccleve's emotions remain highly suspect. Yet, Hoccleve's emotions continue to 'braste oute' (l. 35) throughout the *Series*, as he expresses profound feelings of grief, anxiety and sorrow in an attempt to renegotiate his place within his community of friends and colleagues.

Throughout his poetic oeuvre, Hoccleve detailed his life as a clerk in the office of the Privy Seal, wandering the streets of London, visiting its taverns and commuting by

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[3] All quotations from the *Series* will be cited by line numbers from *My Compleinte and Other Poems*, ed. by Roger Ellis (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001).

[4] Spearing, *Medieval Autographies*, p. 181.

boat from his home at one of the Inns of Chancery to his workplace at Westminster. It is in these locations that Hoccleve encounters his colleagues and friends, who, while remaining largely anonymous in his poetic works, are connected by their group identity as fellow bureaucrats. However, in the 'Compleinte' and 'Dialogue' – the first two poems of the *Series* and the primary focus of this chapter – Hoccleve is a solitary figure set apart from others. The two poems document his social ostracism and contemplative musings on the fragility of his reputation and increasingly marginalised position. This chapter will argue that these two texts are a project through which Hoccleve enacts his feelings of grief for the loss of his emotional community – the clerkly, bookish and exclusively male community of his fellow bureaucrats. Critics have explored how Hoccleve's works draw on his bureaucratic experience and the sociopolitical significance of this professional grouping of people.[5] I will argue instead that Hoccleve's fellow bureaucrats constitute an emotional community because its members 'have a common stake, interests, values, and goals'; they are a 'social community' of bureaucrats who not only lived and worked together, but also experienced the financial precarity and social vulnerability which were key aspects of their occupation in this period.[6] Members of the bureaucratic community often collaborated to cope in difficult times and relied on each other for material and emotional support.[7] The bureaucratic community's occupational and literary culture was also shaped by 'the world of textual production they inhabited', producing documents and ensuring correct written communication for the newly established Lancastrian regime.[8] However, in the 'Compleinte' and 'Dialogue', the lonely Hoccleve is left 'Forʒeten' (l.

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[5] See Ethan Knapp, *The Bureaucratic Muse: Hoccleve Hoccleve and the Literature of Late Medieval England* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). See also Julie Orlemanski, *Symptomatic Subjects: Bodies, Medicine and Causation in Late-Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).
[6] Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 24.
[7] Clerks would sometimes 'act in collective economic units' for mutual financial gain, pooling resources and acting jointly as moneylenders, Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, p. 26.
[8] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, p. 26.

80) by this emotional community and grieves for the loss of the people, places and community he once knew.

Unlike the other texts included in this study, the grief expressed in Hoccleve's *Series* is not related to a physical death or the loss of a loved person. Hoccleve's loss is quite different. After having experienced a period of mental instability five years previously, Hoccleve's emotional community refuse to believe that he has recovered, and he loses his place within this community. I argue that Hoccleve experiences a social death in the 'Compleinte' and becomes a living revenant who haunts the people and places of the bureaucratic community. Through the marginalised figure of Hoccleve, the text examines the emotional effects of exclusion and the grief which felt when an individual loses their participatory voice within an emotional community. The bureaucratic community described in the 'Compleinte' is one characterised by strict behavioural codes, emotional regimes and surveillance, which are used as tools to observe, regulate and control both the actions and the feelings of members of the community. The chapter will pay close attention to acts of observation and reading in the *Series,* demonstrating that Hoccleve's emotional community insists upon unilateral and orthodox perspectives in their reading of people, emotions and texts. Hoccleve indicates that the community's unilateral perspectives cause its members to misread people and poetry. Hoccleve writes his complaint poem in an attempt to remedy these misreadings.[9] In the poem which follows, the 'Dialogue', the Friend is introduced as a representative of the collective voice of the emotional community. The Friend is a person well known to Hoccleve who appears to be good reader of his work and to be capable of facilitating his social recovery. Yet even in this relationship there are misunderstandings and misreadings of Hoccleve's self,

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[9] Sarah Tolmie argues that the 'Compleinte' 'is produced both as a therapeutic utterance for the poet himself and as a specimen of his work: it establishes the credibility of its author, functions as an aesthetic sample, and demonstrates a restorative power'; Tolmie, 'The Professional: Thomas Hoccleve', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 29 (2007), 341-373 (p. 353).

his emotions and his literary output. Where the Friend insists on forgetting and diminishing Hoccleve's grief, Hoccleve refuses to move on and presents his complaint as a reflection of his inner self. However, I argue that Hoccleve's insistence on tarrying with his grief is constructive, much like the productive energies of grief which are present in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* and Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*. For Hoccleve, grief facilitates greater emotional reflection in the Friend, fostering empathetic connection amongst members of the bureaucracy and furthering a deeper sense of communal belonging.

The chapter's final section will argue that given Hoccleve's bureaucratic proximity to the throne as a clerk of the Privy Seal, his poetry also engages with the political, social and cultural environment of the new Lancastrian regime. Following the deposition of Richard II, England was riven with internal dissension and communal fragmentation and, of course, the ongoing military interventions with France. The Friend reminds Hoccleve that he owes a text to an important member of another class and a different emotional community, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, brother of Henry V, soldier and literary patron. Hoccleve describes Humphrey as an exemplar of active masculinity who was ensuring English victories in France. Through written communication, bureaucrats working with Lancastrian regime also played an active role in the maintenance of the English king's interests at home and abroad. The emotional community of bureaucrats is being coalesced through alliance with someone of a higher social standing and more authoritative emotional regimes. For Hoccleve, by associating with Humphrey as a potential patron, he can regain power in his professional life and rehabilitate his position within his emotional community.

The chapter begins, however, with another epistolary work by Christine de Pizan. Three years after Christine de Pizan had written the *Epistre au dieu d'Amours* (1399),

Hoccleve adapted the work into the English poem known as the *Letter of Cupid.* The circumstances of the translation of Christine's *Epistre* and the composition of Hoccleve's English text reveal much about the connection between the two writers and the cross-cultural links between France and England at the start of the Lancastrian era. The comparison of the two texts will also introduce the themes of misreading, selfhood and emotional communities, which will be examined in further detail over the course of the chapter.

Misunderstanding, Translation and Gendered Authority in Christine de Pizan's *L'Epistre au Dieu d'Amours* **and Hoccleve's** *Letter of Cupid*

I begin with a passage from the end of the 'Dialogue' in which the Friend offers a sustained, though oblique warning that Hoccleve has offended his female readers. Hoccleve responds with confusion and uncertainty, asking 'But what haue I agilt, for him þat dyde? | Nat haue I doon why, dar I me auante, | Out of wommennes graces slippe or slyde' (ll. 751-53), to which the Friend replies that it is *Letter of Cupid*, a text written at the beginning of Hoccleve's career, which has caused women to be 'swart wrooth and ful euele apaid' (l. 756).[10] Hoccleve pleads his innocence, insisting that the poem is written in favour of women (ll. 757-80) and asking the Friend for advice on his perception of the text: 'The book concludith for hem, is no nay, | Vertuously, my good freend, doth it nat?' (ll. 779-80). However, it quickly becomes clear that despite the Friend's advice to atone for the *Letter of Cupid* and to 'Prolle aftir wommennes beneuolence' (l. 744), the Friend has not read the text, responding to Hoccleve's request for advice with the admission

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[10] All quotations are cited by line number from 'L'Epistre de Cupide', in *My Compleinte and Other Poems*, ed. by Roger Ellis (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001), pp. 93-108. Rory G. Critten observes that the poem 'is given a variety of English, French, and Latin titles in the extant manuscripts, reflecting the medial position it occupies between late medieval England's literary languages'; Critten, 'Imagining the Author in Late Medieval England and France: The Transmission and Reception of Christine de Pizan's *Epistre au dieu d'Amours* and Thomas Hoccleve's *Letter of Cupid*', *Studies in Philology*, 112.4 (2015), 680-697 (p. 682). In order to clearly differentiate between the two texts, I have chosen to refer to Hoccleve's poem by its modernised English title.

'Hoccleve, I not, for neuere it yit I say' (l. 781). For Hoccleve, the *Letter of Cupid* has been wholly misunderstood and judged without evidential proof. Hoccleve equates the Friend's misreading of his literary text with the misreading of his own selfhood:

> What world is this? How vndirstande am I?
>
> Look in the same book. What stikith by?
>
> Whoso lookith aright therin may see
>
> Þat they me ogthen haue in greet cheertee (ll. 774-77)

Hoccleve's 'misinterpreted poem is a metaphor for his misinterpreted self;' both have been maligned, misunderstood and castigated without justification.[11] Just as Hoccleve implores the Friend to look in the book for truth and evidence, throughout the 'Compleinte' and 'Dialogue' he has insisted that members of the emotional community read his actions and behaviours for evidence of his recovery.

However, Hoccleve also reminds the Friend and the reader that he was not the original 'auctour' (l. 760) of his misunderstood *Letter*. Instead, he was 'but a reportour' (l. 761) of Christine de Pizan's earlier French text, *L'Epistre au Dieu d'Amours*. Christine's epistolary text speaks through the voice of Cupid, the god of love and is addressed to 'tous noz vrays loyaulx servans subgez' (l. 6) [all our true, loyal servant-subjects].[12] The women of France present Cupid with a petition lamenting their treatment at the hands of men, especially those who falsely claim a place in Cupid's court. After a summary of men's offenses, the poem concludes with Cupid's banishment of all those who 'blasment, diffament et acusent' (l. 773) [blame, defame, and accuse] women. Christine's *Epistre* rejects the influence of the Ovidian love tradition and critiques Jean de Meun's section of *Le Roman de la rose* (ll. 389-406), making it 'one of the earliest

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[11] Danielle Bradley, ''By communynge is the best assaye': Gossip and the Speech of Reason in Hoccleve's *Series*', *Mediaevalia*, 40 (2019), 187-217 (p. 205).

[12] Quotations from *L'Epistre au dieu d'Amours* are cited by line number from *Poems of Cupid, God of Love: Christine de Pizan's Epistre au dieu d'Amours and Dit de la Rose; Hoccleve Hoccleve's The Letter of Cupid*, ed. and trans. Thelma S. Fenster and Mary Carpenter Erler (Leiden: Bril, 1990), pp. 33-89.

examples of the brilliant and highly important raids she was to make on the masculine preserve of medieval literate culture'.[13] It is also Christine's first long text to voice the complaints of women against men and her first sustained challenge to the anti-feminism of her contemporaries, marking an important point in Christine's career and establishing her position as an authoritative voice within the French literary tradition. Christine also presents her specific female experience as a valuable source of authority, demonstrating 'that she was uniquely qualified, *as a woman*, to comment on the alliance of theological misogyny and *fin amor* so central to the cultural imagination of gender at this moment'.[14] Christine's authority was further consolidated by the *Epistre*'s wide-ranging influence in both France and England. Christine explains in *L'Avision Christine* (ll. 112-12) that when the *Epistre* was received by Henry IV in England, his approval was so great that he issued an invitation for Christine to join his court.[15] Christine, however, refused the invitation and never made the journey to England. Yet, the episode has a larger significance in

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[13] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse,* p. 47. *L'Epistre au Dieu d'Amours* also anticipates Christine's contributions to the *Querelle de la rose*, the exchange of letters between key members of the early-fifteenth century French literary community in which they debated the representation of women in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*. For an account of the debate see Charity Cannon Willard, *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works* (New York: Persea, 1984), pp. 78-79.

[14] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, p. 47. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Christine's assertion of female experience as a source of authority will also be echoed in her *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*.

[15] Christine de Pizan, 'L'Avision Christine', *Writing*s, pp. 112-13. Christine's *Epistre* was also used as a diplomatic tool. In 1399 Christine had sent her son, Jean du Castel, to England to join the service of John Montague, earl of Salisbury. She had been sending Salisbury her poems since 1398, but after Montague's execution for his part in a rebellion against the new Lancastrian regime, the poems passed to Henry IV. After Montague's fall Christine sought her son's return to French soil and her writing was used to ensure this happened. After sending further poems to Henry, Jean left England with the task of conducting his mother back to the English court. Jean, however, remained in France. Christine's herself describes using her texts as a bargaining chip in the negotiations for her son: 'Je … dissimulay tant que mon dit filz peusse avoir, disant grant mercis et que bien a son commandement estoie. Et a brief parler, tant fis a grant peine et par le moien de mes livres que congié ot mon dit filz de me venir querir par de ća pour mener la, qui encore n'y vois' (Avision, 113) [I dissembled and thanked the king, saying that I was at his command, all this in order to get my son back. To be brief, I went to great trouble and sent some of my books so that my son finally got leave to come and accompany me to some place – a trip which I have not yet made], 'Christine's Vision', from *The Selected Writings of Christine de* Pizan, ed. and trans. by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee (New York: Norton, 1997), pp. 173-201 (p. 195). For more detail on Christine's dealings with Salisbury and the English court, see J.C. Laidlaw, 'Christine de Pizan, the Earl of Salisbury and Henry IV', *French Studies*, 36 (1982), 129-143.

demonstrating the close cross-cultural links between France and Lancastrian England, and the value of Christine's work to the most powerful members of the English court.[16]

As Hoccleve's earliest dateable text, the *Letter of Cupid* - written only three years after Christine's original – also marks an important moment for the poet. At the very start of his career, it was important for Hoccleve to establish his authority and his position as a writer. By aligning himself with a text written in French, Hoccleve was drawing on the cultural value of the French language in England and its associations with 'high culture, power, and prestige'.[17] Furthermore, by emulating Christine's French epistolary style, the *Letter* 'aligned itself perfectly with the courtly tastes of the moment' and appealed to the literary tastes of the Lancastrian court.[18] By translating the work of a French female author so highly praised by the new king, Hoccleve made a claim to Christine de Pizan's authority and sought to assert his position as a native poet who might be supported by the Lancastrian regime.

However, to fully understand Hoccleve's construction of an authoritative authorial identity, it is important to consider the dynamics which underpin his translation of Christine's French work and the intertextual relations between the two texts.[19] Critics have long noted that medieval translation was based on the transfer of authority, with Rita Copeland arguing that changes in rhetorical theory in the Middle Ages led to translation

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[16] Sebastian J. Langdell argues that the speed with which Hoccleve translated Christine's text is another indication that her literary influence and authority was considerable. 'The very fact that Hoccleve was able to translate Christine's *Epistre* within three years of its being written indicates the remarkable ability her works had to cross borders quickly at this time'; Langdell, *Hoccleve Hoccleve: Religious Reform, Transnational Poetics and the Invention of Chaucer* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), p. 47.

[17] Williams, *The French Fetish*, p. 21. See also Michael Bennett, 'France in England: Anglo-French Culture in the Reign of Edward III', *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100-1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan Browne (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), pp. 320-34.

[18] John M. Bowers, 'Hoccleve Hoccleve and the Politics of Tradition', *The Chaucer Review* (2002), pp. 352-369, p. 358.

[19] My reading of Hoccleve's translation of Christine's *Epistre* is indebted to Ethan Knapp's consideration of the *Letter* in the second chapter of *The Bureaucratic Muse*, pp. 45-75.

being considered 'a form of aggressive rivalry'.[20] Copeland suggests that a translated text

has the capacity to displace 'the very text that it proposes to serve' and that 'like

commentary, translation tends to represent itself as 'service' to an authoritative source;

but also like commentary, translation actually displaces the originary force of its

models'.[21] In the case of the *Letter*, Hoccleve's methods of translation fluctuate between

tension and balance, demonstrating the complex dynamics of service to Christine's

authoritative source and a desire to displace the original text. For example, where

Christine's text offers the following lines:

> Ovide en dit, en un livre qu'il fist,
>
> Assez de maulx, dont je tiens qu'il meffist,
>
> Qu'il appela le *Remede d'Amours* (ll. 281-83)

Hoccleve instead offers his own unique interpretation:

> Ouyde in his book / callid Remedie
>
> Of loue / repreef of wommen writith
>
> Where in I trowe / he dide greet folie
>
> And euery wight / þat in swich cas delitith
>
> A clerkes custume / is whan he endytith
>
> Of wommen be it prose / rym or vers
>
> Seyn they be wikke / al knowe he the reuers (ll. 204-10)

In this passage – indeed, throughout the *Letter of Cupid* – Hoccleve translates a sentence

of Christine's *Epistre* in the stanza's first two or three lines, and then proceeds to fill the

rest of the stanza with his reflections or expansions of Christine's ideas. Christine's

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[20] Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 4.

[21] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, p. 4. For more on the political ramifications of translation and its connection to ideas of cultural rivalry, see Ruth Evans, 'An Afterword on the Prologue', in *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor and Ruth Evans (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1999), pp. 371-9.

original text is the foundation of Hoccleve's verse, but by providing gloss and commentary, Hoccleve's *Letter* supersedes the original, thereby 'displacing the very text that it proposes to serve'.[22] What is more, Hoccleve's tone in this passage is lighter and more jocular than that of Christine, whose tone has a direct and spare quality. Christine's directness in this passage foreshadows the severity of her of condemnation of writers such as Ovid (ll. 321-40, ll. 507-18), passages which have been described as 'perhaps the most caustic in the entire poem'.[23] When Hoccleve's *Letter* addresses authors such as Ovid, however, the tonal change is so marked that one critic has argued that Hoccleve seeks to 'to display his wit and stake a place in the poetic canon alongside Ovid, Jean de Meun, and Chaucer. One might imagine the author of the *Letter* joining the homosocial banter criticized by Christine'.[24] While it is difficult to pin down the *Letter*'s slippery tone with complete accuracy, the tonal changes made to Christine's original do suggest that Hoccleve sought to align himself with this community of male writers and assert his authority as a poet able to take up their mantle.[25] On one hand, the translation of the

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[22] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, p. 4.

[23] Jonathan Stavsky, 'Hoccleve's Take on Chaucer and Christine de Pizan: Gender, Authorship, and Intertextuality in the *Epistre au Dieu d'Amours*, the *Letter of Cupid*, and the Series', *Philological Quarterly* 93.4 (2014), 435-460 (p. 442).

[24] Stavsky, 'Gender, Authorship, and Intertextuality', p. 444. A number of critics have debated the extent to which Hoccleve's poem took Christine's proto-feminist message seriously. On one side, Jerome Mitchell argues that the *Letter* 'is at least as feminist in outlook as its French source', whereas Diane Bornstein argues that Hoccleve 'undermined the purpose of the *Epistre*', offering a 'parody of feminism rather than a judicious, courtly defence of women'. See Mitchell, *Thomas Hoccleve: A Study in Early Fifteenth-Century English Poetic* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), p. 53; and Bornstein, 'Anti-Feminism in Thomas Hoccleve's Translation of Christine de Pizan's *Epistre su dieu d'Amours*', *English Language Notes* 19 (1981), 10-21 (p. 14). Other critics who have entered into this debate include Roger Ellis, 'Chaucer, Christine de Pizan, and Hoccleve: *The Letter of Cupid*', in *Essays on Hoccleve Hoccleve*, ed. by Catherine Batt (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 29-54; and Anna Torti, 'Hoccleve's Attitude Towards Women: "I shoop me do my peyne and diligence / To wynne hit loue by obedience"', in *A Wyf Ther Was: Essays in Honour of Paule Mertens-Fonck*, ed. by Juliette Dor (Liège: Université de Liège, 1992), pp. 264-274.

[25] Lee Patterson discusses the ambiguous tone of the *Letter*, suggesting that by 'endowing the poem with a cryptic ambiguity', Hoccleve rejects the 'absolutist categories' of Christine's text and creates 'a text that was open to a variety of interpretations'; Lee Patterson, '"What is me?": Self and Society in the Poetry of Hoccleve Hoccleve', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 23 (2001), 437-470 (pp. 451-3). Robert Meyer-Lee suggests that by translating Christine's work, Hoccleve was cultivating his position as Chaucer's heir: 'Hoccleve chose to translate what was at that time likely Christine's best-known poem, hoping, we may suppose, to build a career as a court poet on the model of Chaucer, whose reworking of contemporary French poetry marked the first phase of his career'; Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt*

Epistre offers Hoccleve the opportunity to draw upon the prestige of the French tradition and declare himself as the rightful heir to the reputation established by Christine de Pizan. At the same time, Hoccleve's translation transforms both the language and message of the Christine's text, superseding the female-authored original and making his own claim to the poetic authority of his male precedents.[26]

It is also important to consider how language and national rivalries affected the dynamics of translation in the *Letter*. As previously discussed, Hoccleve was writing in Lancastrian England and sought to establish himself as a writer who might be supported by the new regime. Therefore, his English translation of the French *Epistre* needs to be read in the context of Lancastrian efforts to assert their legitimacy through 'state-generated linguistic nationalism'.[27] In the three years between the composition of Christine's *Epistre* in 1399 and Hoccleve's translation in 1402, Henry IV had claimed the English throne, deposed Richard II and thwarted Richard's steps towards peace with France. As John Fisher and Paul Strohm have argued, in a conscious move away from the francophile tendencies of Richard II's court, the new Lancastrian kings developed a political strategy to consolidate their reign and assert legitimacy by presenting themselves as the patrons of English national culture.[28] The new regime promoted the English language in state proclamations and petitions, which, Fisher argues, elevated the use of English and led to a vast output of literary translations into the English vernacular. In making translations from French literature, 'English poets were aggressively

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 95. The links between Chaucer and Hoccleve will be further explored later in the chapter.

[26] 'Taking as his source a work of a fashionable continental author and freely adapting this material to his own idiom and purposes much like Chaucer did, Hoccleve insinuates his succession to his master's place', Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, p. 95.

[27] Lee Patterson, 'Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and Lydgate', in *New Historical Literary Study*, ed. by Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 69-107 (p. 82).

[28] See John Fisher, 'A Language Policy for Lancastrian England', *PMLA* 107 (1992), pp. 1168-80; Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399-1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

reconstructing, even stealing, the chief ornaments of a rival court'.[29] Hoccleve's *Letter* is

a product of this political and cultural environment. By translating Christine's *Epistre* into

English, Hoccleve was demonstrating his willingness to assert the prestige of the national

language and sought to appeal to his Lancastrian rulers. Hoccleve's powerful Lancastrian

readers and patrons were an emotional community of aristocratic males connected by the

assertion of authority, military prowess, and the 'remasculinisation of England'.[30]

Hoccleve's *Letter,* with its assertion of an English, male voice over a female-authored,

French work would therefore appeal to such a community. Based on this strategy of

translation, I suggest that with the *Letter*, Hoccleve was also attempting to initiate himself

into another masculine coterie defined by textual production and the maintenance of

Lancastrian power – the community of male bureaucrats closely involved in the writing

of Lancastrian documents and the regime's promotion of an English national identity.[31]

Yet, if we return to the discussion of the *Letter* in the 'Dialogue', it appears that

Hoccleve has not met with great success in appealing either to the bureaucratic

community, women, or to powerful Lancastrian nobles. Based on the Friend's admission

that he has not read the *Letter*, the bureaucratic community have paid little attention to

Hoccleve's early literary output and focus only on the offence caused to other groups. In

the case of women, despite Hoccleve's strenuous denial that the *Letter* was intended to

offend, by 'endowing the [*Letter*] with a cryptic ambiguity', Hoccleve has created a

'greuance | So greet' (ll. 719-20) between himself and his female readership. [32]

Furthermore, as Lee Patterson and others have argued, Hoccleve had a tendency to create

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[29] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, p. 51.

[30] Ruth Nissé, '"Oure Fadres Olde and Modres": Gender, Heresy and Hoccleve's Literary Politics', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 21 (1999), 275-299 (p. 291).

[31] Hoccleve's fellow bureaucrats and civil servants were an important audience for literary texts in this period. As John Bowers observes, the period in which Hoccleve began work at the office of the Privy Seal 'was a propitious time to have arrived on the scene in London […] Chaucer had just completed *Troilus* and was embarking on the *Canterbury* Tales, and Hoccleve began moving in the circles of the literate civil servants who participated as members of Chaucer's first audience'; Bowers, 'Politics of Tradition', p. 353.

[32] Patterson, '"What is me?"', p. 451.

texts open to a variety of interpretations, but these ambiguous texts were ill-suited to a

Lancastrian political climate 'committed to the regulation of discourse'.[33] The

misunderstood Hoccleve must therefore concedes to the Friend's counsel that he must

'negotiate the needs of both audience and author' and play the part of the dutiful writer as

the *Letter*

> displesith hem, amendes make.
>
> If þat some of hem thee therof vpbreide,
>
> Thow shalt be bisy ynow, I vndirtake,
>
> Thy kut to keepe' (ll. 786-89).[34]

To make amends, Hoccleve agrees to produce 'a palinode [for the *Letter*], both to regain

the good graces of women and to please Humphrey, duke of Gloucester', a member of the

emotional community of the Lancastrian nobility, and a patron to whom Hoccleve refers

earlier in the *Series*.[35] Through the production of a new text, Hoccleve will not only

satisfy the duke's request but also work to make amends with his female critics.

Furthermore, by working to get back into the good graces of two different communities,

Hoccleve demonstrates that just as he can amend his written texts, he too should be read

as a changed, recovered text and should be allowed re-entry into the emotional

community of bureaucrats. He draws the Friend's attention back to the work itself and

implores the emotional community to 'Looke in the same book' (l. 775) in order to 'seyn

it is nar as yee wende' (l. 784). Hoccleve suggests that the emotional community will also

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[33] Patterson, '"What is me?"', p. 453. In his discussion of the *Letter*, Patterson poses the question, 'within the context of the Lancastrian household, dominated by Henry's understandable anxiety about disloyalty and betrayal, would ambiguity have been highly prized?' p. 452. Bowers argues that in seeking a powerful Lancastrian audience for his *Letter*, Hoccleve made a political miscalculation as 'The French courtliness that he sought to imitate quickly came to resemble the Francophile enthusiasms of the Ricardian court during the 1390s, while England under the Lancastrian kings began an aggressive nationalist campaign that eventually renewed hostilities with France'; Bowers, 'Politics of Tradition', p. 358.

[34] Amy N. Vines, 'The Rehabilitation of Patronage in Hoccleve's *Series*', *Digital Philology* 2.2 (2013), pp. 201-221, p. 207.

[35] Patterson, '"What is me?"', p. 453.

have to amend the way they read people and texts, becoming more attentive readers of Hoccleve's written words and of Hoccleve's self.

Hoccleve as a Living Revenant in the 'Compleinte'

The themes, forms and language of Hoccleve's poetry draw heavily from his bureaucratic experience, including its sense of camaraderie and community.[36] To examine the nature and characteristics of Hoccleve's emotional community, I first address his earlier works, including 'La male regle' (1405-6),[37] the *Regiment of Princes* (141-12),[38] which tell the story of a government employee whose existence was defined and circumscribed by interactions with his emotional community of fellow bureaucrats.[39] In his profession as a clerk of the Privy Seal, Hoccleve would spend his days with his fellow clerks, composing letters according to strict formulas.[40] After working hours, Hoccleve also relied on the community of his colleagues for his social interactions, as he 'must have talked, dined and roistered almost exclusively with other clerks'.[41] This emotional

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[36] See Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, pp. 17-43.

[37] Ethan Knapp, 'Bureaucratic Identity and the Construction of the Self in Hoccleve's *Formulary and La male regle'*, *Speculum*, 74 (1999), pp. 357-76.

[38] Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999).

[39] Holly A. Crocker considers the 'workaday masculinity of Hoccleve's clerkly persona' in documenting 'the daily vicissitudes that might define a man of middling station writing in bureaucratic London in early fifteenth-century England'. Crocker, 'Engendering Affect in Hoccleve's *Series*', in *Medieval Affect, Feeling and Emotion*, ed. by Glenn D. Burger and Holly A. Crocker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 70-90 (p. 70).

[40] Patterson gives a rather dispiriting account of the Hoccleve's work: 'In the Privy Seal he was little more than a scribe, composing letters according to strict formulas, the nature of which he himself exemplified in his *Formulary*, with some 1,100 differently worded but equally dehumanising bureaucratic prototypes', in Patterson, '"What is me?"', p. 464. Sarah Wilson describes in detail the changes undergone to the office of the Privy Seal, demonstrating that this created a precarity in the working conditions of those clerks employed within the office: 'The office of the privy seal dated back to the reign of Edward III, when it was predominantly a royal institution that produced official documents for the monarchy. Towards the end of the fourteenth century and during Hoccleve's career, the office moved from its position within the king's household to become part of an emerging class of 'gentlemen bureaucrats' who were expected to earn an income by asking for commissions from noble patrons as well as the king. Though the clerks' primary occupation was writing letters for the king, a member of the nobility or a merchant who, for example, needed a letter to settle a petition or a suit could pay for the clerk's labour; thus, they could also act as freelancers. Because of this gradual shift in the privy seal's status, the clerks' social rank and compensation were often uncertain, as they were neither properly members of the gentle class nor able to align themselves with clerical work, and it was unclear whether they should earn their income from royal annuities or from noble commissions'; Wilson, 'The Politics of Precarious Grief', p. 23.

[41] Malcolm Richardson, 'Hoccleve in his Social Context', *The Chaucer Review* 20.4 (1986), 313-322 (p. 314).

community not only worked and socialised together, they also shared lodgings. Hoccleve

tells his readers that he lived in the company of other clerks 'At Chestres Inn, right faste

by the Stronde' (*Regiment*, l. 5), one of the Inns of Chancery attached to the Middle

Temple. The narrators of both *The Regiment* and 'La male regle' even refer to the Privy

Seal as 'hoom' (*Regiment*, l. 1486, 'Male Regle', l. 188), emphasising the extent to which

Hoccleve's colleagues were more than just a work community. Indeed, as Isabel Davis

observes, it is this 'work community', made up of Hoccleve's friends and colleagues,

'that is homely, and with which the narrator unthinkingly and intimately identifies. The

homosocial world of the 'Westmynstre' 'press' is at the emotional heart of Hoccleve's

verse, is its home and *summum bonum*.[42]

       Yet, Hoccleve's poetry also demonstrates that living and working under these

close conditions fostered an atmosphere of competition and rivalry amongst members of

the bureaucratic community. Malcolm Richardson's description of the Inns of Chancery –

where Hoccleve and his colleagues lodged – alludes to the competing ambitions which

underpinned the fraternal *bonhomie*:

> …they were filled not only with various levels of king's clerks, but also with attorneys,
>
> apprentices to the law, and scriveners, all young men who hoped to make their way in life
>
> through the use of the written word. They were united, whatever their grades, by the
>
> study of the English writ systems and the medieval *dictamen* or art of letter-writing. [43]

This disparate group of men, from a diverse range of backgrounds, *became* an emotional

community through their profession, unlike the other emotional communities encountered

in this thesis, communities which are based an individual's social status at birth. In

Hoccleve's works, this group of bureaucratic men was essential to the copying and

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[42] Isabel Davis, *Writing Masculinity in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 141.
[43] Richardson, 'Hoccleve in his Social Context', p. 314.

transmission of official documents, and so this was an emotional community united by the exchange of written words and correct written communication. Yet, this is also a community in which the exchange of spoken words is essential. As Danielle Bradley has explored in detail, the bureaucratic community depicted in Hoccleve's works is 'a gossip community that regulates members in and out of the workplace'.[44] As Hoccleve demonstrates in his earlier works and in the *Series*, gossip is a form of surveillance, used as a tool to observe, regulate and control both the actions and the feelings of members of the community.[45]

Hoccleve's poetry also demonstrates that emotional practices of the bureaucratic emotional community increased a sense of social isolation within its members. Within *The Regiment of Princes*, for example, Hoccleve describes how the intermittent payment of annuities left himself and his colleagues in a precarious financial position. Yet, because they are afraid to lose their employment, the clerks are afraid to speak out: 'Lest our compleynte ourselven overthrowe' (l. 1562). By demonstrating that the bureaucratic community react to their shared vulnerability with fear and silence, Hoccleve signals that this is a community fearful of dissenting voices, which will silence those it suspects of disturbing the status quo. Furthermore, Lee Patterson has demonstrated that the work practice of Privy Seal also heightened social isolation. Patterson describes how the unity and uniformity of the work of bureaucratic transcription caused bureaucrats to so become absorbed in their solitary tasks that it caused 'a denaturing segmentation of the individual'.[46] From what we can surmise about Hoccleve's emotional community from

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[44] Bradley, 'By Communynge is the Beste Assay', p. 191.

[45] For more on gossip in late medieval literature, see Susan E. Phillips, *Transforming Talk: The Problem with Gossip in Late Medieval England* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007).

[46] As Patterson explains, Hoccleve's 'description in the *Regement* of his work at the Privy Seal shows the way in which psychic and bodily unity is brought at the price of social isolation and physical pain. The mind of the writer is both coordinated with eye and hand – 'Mynde, ye and hand – noon may from other flitte, | But in hem moot be joynt continaunce' ll. (997-98) – and made 'al hole, withouten variance' (l. 999). But the result of this unity is social isolation: the typical urban worker 'Make[s] game and play, | And foorth his labour passith with gladness; / But we laboure in travaillous stilnesse' (ll. 1011-13). Hoccleve is

existing historical evidence and his earlier autobiographical works, it is clear that he is a poet 'more alert to the solitude of the man who lives among the crowd than to the possibilities for intimacy'.[47]

Indeed, the 'Compleinte' begins by introducing Hoccleve as a solitary figure contemplating his period of madness and engaged in the private, cloistered acts of thinking and reading. Hoccleve's contemplative mood matches the turn of the season as autumn brings in its fading colours and diminishing light:

> Aftir þat hereust inned had hise sheues,
>
> And that the broun sesoun of Mihelmesse
>
> Was come, and gan the trees robbe of her leues,
>
> That grene had ben and in lusty freisshenesse,
>
> And hem into colour of ȝelownesse
>
> Had died and doun throwen vndirfoote,
>
> That change sanke into myn herte roote. (ll. 1-7)

The leaves change from a green freshness to hues of yellow and brown, and then fall from the trees to be trodden underfoot. The imagery of autumnal decay roots itself within the speaker's heart, demonstrating that 'this is a poem begun with the narrator already at the end of his rope', and establishing a despondent tone which continues for much of the 'Compleinte'.[48] Hoccleve lies in his bed but 'sleep cam noon in myn ye' (l. 20) as he is consumed by a 'þouȝtful maladie' (l. 21) and can only reflect that 'Ther is noþing but change and variaunce' (l. 10) in the world. Hoccleve appears to be so fixated on thoughts of change and uncertainty that his 'spirite' (l. 27) is wholly diminished and he is left with 'no lust […] ne no delyte' (l. 28) in his life. In this way, the thoughtful, melancholic

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describing not only the difference between one kind of labour and others but the way in which a fully developed bureaucracy like the Privy Seal establishes a specialised division of labour that requires both social isolation and a denaturing segmentation of the individual.

[47] Patterson, '"What is me?"', p. 464

[48] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, p. 165.

speaker of the 'Compleinte' recalls the insomniac narrator of the *Book of the Duchess*, who feels that he will die of melancholy and dread (ll. 23-24).[49] Hoccleve's opening lines also refer back to another of Chaucer's texts, as the image of autumn's withering leaves transpose the image of April's 'shoures shoote' (l. 1) from the opening lines of the 'General Prologue' into 'a substantially more bitter key'.[50] Where Chaucer's springtime pilgrimage emphasises the importance of 'felawshipe' (l. 8) and 'compaigne', (l. 6) the cold, lifelessness of the setting of the 'Compleinte' reflects Hoccleve's equally lifeless isolation. Chaucer's pilgrims travel as a group to Canterbury to thank 'the hooly blisful martir […] that hem holpen whan that they were seeke' (ll. 17-18), but Hoccleve's 'wilde infirmite' (l. 40) which 'ful sore my frendis affriȝt' (l. 46) has made him an unpredictable and isolated figure. Instead, Hoccleve's friends and colleagues embark on 'pilgrimages … somme on hors and somme on foote, | God ȝelde it hem, to gete me my boote' (ll. 46-49). There is a sense of care and community involved in these pilgrimages and other acts of friendship. They are communal practices, which while not specific to only one community, are practices which illustrate emotional concern and connection with Hoccleve. Yet, at the same time, Hoccleve remains conspicuously absent and isolated from the community's collective efforts to find a cure for his madness.

By emphasising Hoccleve's confinement and marginalisation, the opening lines of the 'Compleinte' suggest that his isolation is comparable to a physical condition, a 'bodily sikenesse (l. 38) which 'drives Hoccleve in upon himself in solitary meditation'.[51] The descriptions of Hoccleve's madness emphasise its physical nature, as though it were

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[49] Hisashi Sugito compares the lovesick dreamer-narrator of the *Book of the Duchess* to the speaker of the *Series*, arguing that 'Hoccleve's melancholy, devoid of love, leads him to dream in another way. His *thought* puts him in a state of heaviness or dullness, and it is in this state that he achieves the effect of dreaming without actually dreaming a dream'; Sugito, 'Reality as Dream: Hoccleve's Daydreaming Mind', *The Chaucer Review* 49.2 (2014), 244-263 (p. 251).

[50] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, p. 164.

[51] John Burrow, 'Hoccleve's *Series*: Experience and Books', in *Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays*, ed. byR.F. Yeager (Hamden, CT.: Archon Books, 1984), pp. 254-272 (p. 261).

a separate part of the self which is able to detach from Hoccleve's person. He says that his 'wilde infirmite … oute of mysilfe caste and threwe' (ll. 40-42) and 'the substaunce of my memorie | Wente to pleie as for a certein space' (ll. 50-51). Describing his madness as a 'self-fragmentation' also allows Hoccleve to distance himself from this difficult phase of his life and creating a distance between his fragmented, unstable mind and Hoccleve's essential self.[52] Hoccleve describes his recovery in terms of return and reunion, as though the scattered parts of the self are returning home. He describes how God made his mind 'retourne into the place | Whens it cam' (ll. 54-55) and 'my wit were hoom come aȝein' (64), assuring himself that now 'My wit and I haue bene of suche acord | As we were or the alercacioun (ll. 59-60).

However, despite Hoccleve's declaration that thanks to God's help and intercession it 'Was fiue ȝeere, neither more ne lesse' (l. 56) since his recovery, he remains a figure for whom solitude appears to be a near-permanent, stifling state. Hoccleve's assertion of his recovery is complicated by the judgment of his friends and colleagues, because 'þouȝ that my wit were hoom come aȝein, | Men wolde it not so vndirstonde or take' (ll. 64-65). This is Hoccleve's essential problem in the 'Compleinte': no one believes he is truly recovered, and therefore he is 'locked into a cycle where there is nothing he can say, or write, or do to establish that he is sane. The more he protests, the more absurd he appears'.[53] The fear that his madness will return causes Hoccleve to be ostracised from the emotional community, yet he remains on its peripheries, listening to speculation and gossip about his mental state. This profound isolation transforms Hoccleve into a living revenant, one of 'those who while alive exist under a deathly shadow that forecloses their engagement with life and isolates them from their fellows'.[54]

[52] Patterson, '"What is me?"', p. 444.
[53] Bradley, 'By Communynge is the Beste Assay', p. 188.
[54] Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 4.

Over the course of the 'Compleinte', Hoccleve is rejected, ignored and dismissed by his friends and colleagues, and thus he becomes imprisoned in a state of non-existence, powerless to act or respond to the hurtful talk of others.

Hoccleve has already acknowledged that the 'wilde infirmite' (l. 40) with which he suffered over five years before brought about a detachment from his emotional community. [55] Separation from the self and others is key to literary depictions of madness in the Middle Ages, as the condition constitutes:

> a corruption of identity, a dislocation: the madperson is 'hors du sens', 'outside' of his or her rational faculty. […] the mad are severed both from the defining framework of their own lives, their own memories, and governing faculties of intellect; and from the shared framework of the community, of language, of mutual role-playing and interaction. They become so unlike themselves, so absent from themselves, that they cannot be recognised, sometimes even by their closest associates. No identity can be conceived without some mark of difference from others, but the mad are different in an absolute sense, a troubling presence that is ultimately a sign of an even more troubling absence: an irreducible and inaccessible Otherness. [56]

During his period of madness, people spoke about Hoccleve a great deal as 'Howe it wiþ me stood was in euery mannes mouþe' (l. 45) but Hoccleve is conspicuously absent from these conversations, either hidden away or wholly silent. Yet the speculation and gossip about Hoccleve's state 'ful sore my frendis affriȝt' (l. 46). That his friends fear Hoccleve's instability suggests that his madness has rendered him so unlike himself, so absent from himself that he appears to be 'different in an absolute sense' and a 'troubling

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[55] Because this chapter addresses Hoccleve's recovery and his attempts to return to his emotional community, the nature of his mental illness is not discussed at length here. For detail on Hoccleve's illness see Penelope D.R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 208-31 and Matthew Boyd Goldie, 'Psychosomatic Illness and Identity in London, 1416-21: Hoccleve's *Complaint* and *Dialogue with a Friend*', *Exemplaria* 11 (1999), 23-52.
[56] Sylvia Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature: Identities Found and Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 3.

presence' even to his closest associates.[57] Hoccleve's period of madness therefore brought about a form of social death: he appears to have been unable to speak or communicate, people speak *about* him rather than *with* him, he has been hidden away from the outside world, and appears to have been unconscious of the events taking place around him.[58] Hoccleve has also been the focus of the community's prayers and pilgrimages (ll. 47-49) - rituals and sacraments which are used to intercede on behalf of both the mad and the dead. But Hoccleve has not died, and instead insists on his recovery and return to the fold of the community. Yet the 'recouered' (l. 176) Hoccleve is only able to return to the peripheries of the community and appears to exist within a liminal space, like those revenants 'who, although dead, actively speak and will, disturbing the properly living'.[59]

The emotional community still believe that Hoccleve continues to carry the taint of madness and signs of a 'corruption of identity, a dislocation'.[60] To his 'felawis of the Priue Seel' (l. 296), Hoccleve's mark of difference is frequently made manifest through his expression of emotions. Hoccleve explains how emotional expression has been viewed as transgressive or unacceptable to the emotional community:

> Sithen I recouered was, haue I ful ofte
>
> Cause had of anger and impacience,
>
> Where I borne haue it esily and softe,
>
> Suffringe wronge be done to me, and offence,
>
> And not answerid aȝen, but kepte scilence,
>
> Leste þat men of me deme wolde, and sein,

[57] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, p. 3.
[58] Huot observes that madness, 'in its reduction of its victims to partial or absolute unconsciousness and effacement of personal identity […] blurs the distinction not only between waking and sleep, but between life and death', *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, p. 4.
[59] Gilbert, *Living Death*, p. 4.
[60] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, p. 3.

'Se howe this man is fallen in aȝein'. (ll. 176-82)

Hoccleve's bewildered, angry tone is palpable in this stanza, as he experiences the frustration and isolation characteristic of a state of grief. He grieves not only for himself and the 'Suffringe wronge be done to me' (l. 179), but also for his incompatibility with his former emotional community; where he feels justified in his expression of 'anger and impacience' (l. 177), the community values emotional restraint and he must appear to bear his hardships 'esily and softe' (l. 178). Under the watchful gaze of the emotional community, Hoccleve must conceal or alter his emotions lest they be taken as proof that he has 'fallen in aȝein' (l. 182).[61]

In a passage from the middle of the 'Compleinte', Hoccleve's emotions come to the fore as he looks back on the period before his affliction, when he was a valued member of the emotional community. I quote at length to demonstrate how Hoccleve's current circumstances contrast starkly with his previous position within the community:

> But algatis, howe so be my countinaunce,
>
> Debaat is nowe noon bitwixe me and my wit,
>
> A[l]þouȝ þat ther were a disseueraunce,
>
> As for a time, bitwixte me and it.
>
> The gretter harme is myn, þat neuere ȝit
>
> Was I wel lettrid, prudent and discreet.
>
> Ther neuere stood ȝit wiise man on my feet.
>
> The sothe is this, such conceit as I had
>
> And vndirstonding, al were it but smal,

---

[61] Medieval beliefs about mental illness held that madness would manifest externally. Those who were deemed to be lunatics would be legally judged by observations of their behaviour and manner. Matthew Boyd Goldie observes that 'Verdicts discharging a case often refer to the subject's 'sober and discreet carriage and behaviour', furthermore a 'civil and quiet manner' were important', in Goldie, 'Psychosomatic Illness', p. 28.

Bifore þat my wittis weren vnsad,

Thanked be oure Lorde Ihesu Crist of al,

Such haue I nowe, but blowe is ny oueral

The reuerse, wherþoruȝ moche is my mornynge,

Wiche causeth me thus syȝe in compleinynge.

Sithen my good fortune hath chaungid hit chere,

Hie tyme is me to crepe into my graue.

To lyue ioielees, what do I here?

I in myn herte can no gladnesse haue.

I may but smal seie but if men deme I raue.

Sithen oþir þing þan woo may I noon gripe,

Vnto my sepulchre am I nowe ripe. (ll. 246-66)

In lines which echo the images of self-fragmentation from the beginning of the

'Compleinte', Hoccleve again acknowledges that 'A[l]þouȝ þat ther were a

disserueraunce' (l. 248) between his mind and the self, 'Debaat is now noon bitwixte me

and my wit' (l. 247). Hoccleve's repeated images of division and separation further

emphasise his marginalised status and suggest that he is a lone figure who has been

abandoned by all those parts of the self which had previously anchored his identity.

However, more unsettling to Hoccleve's sense of self is the thought that his reputation

has been damaged by his period of madness. He remembers having been a 'wiise man'

who was seen by others to be 'wel lettrid, prudent and discreet' (l. 251), qualities which

would have been essential to a successful clerk in the office of the Privy Seal.[62] The

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[62] Bradley observes that 'the popular mirror-for-princes genre, with its descriptions of diligent counsellors and meticulous secretaries, reveals the high standards to which government scribes were held', 'By Communynge is the Beste Assay', p. 195. Accuracy in the creation of documents was mirrored in ideals about the behaviour of government scribes. As Andrew Hershey observes, the copying of government documents 'demanded exactness in all its particulars and scribes had no room for error'; 'Justice and Bureaucracy: The English Writ and 1258', *English Historical Review* 113 (1998): 829-51 (p. 838).

consistent use of the past tense in these lines emphasises that these qualities have been so wholly forgotten by others that it is almost as if they never were. The sustained contemplation of his changed circumstances causes Hoccleve to feel that 'moche is my mornynge' (l. 258). Hoccleve grieves not only for the life he once had, but also for his reputation and standing within a community from which he has been cast adrift: 'Such haue I nowe, but blowe is ny oueral | The reuerse' (ll. 257-8) Without his emotional community, it is almost as though Hoccleve is no longer a solid form, he has been scattered with the winds and blown 'ny oueral' (l. 258). He does not shout and rail at the reversal of his fortunes, instead, his 'compleinynge' is accompanied by a 'syʒe' (l. 259), a quiet, intimate gesture of sorrow which heightens the emotional impact of his words.

In the passage's third stanza Hoccleve becomes preoccupied by thoughts of death. This passage is often overlooked by critics, yet Hoccleve makes the striking claims that 'Hie tyme is me to crepe into my graue', and that since 'I in myn herte can no gladnesse haue', then 'Vnto my sepulchre am I now ripe'. (ll. 261, 263, 266). These are 'powerful statements of a death-focused mindset', and demonstrate that Hoccleve's separation from the community has fostered a deep disaffection with life.[63] The impact of Hoccleve's death-focused mindset is heightened by the blunt, confronting question: 'To lyue ioielees, what do I here?' (l. 261). The direct, near monosyllabic quality of this line suggests that Hoccleve is desperate to give vent to his troubles, yet the rhetorical nature of the question indicates that it has no audience other than the reader. There is a hopelessness to this question, as Hoccleve ponders his very existence and suggests that his joyless life has become a type of living death. The lonely, isolated Hoccleve is therefore caught in a liminal space between life and the finality of the grave.

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[63] Rebecca F. McNamara and Juanita Feros Ruys, 'Unlocking the Silences of the Self-Murdered: Textual Approached to Suicidal Emotions in the Middle Ages', *Exemplaria* 26 (2014), 58-80 (p. 67).

Even amongst other people, when Hoccleve steps out from his private, cloistered space and makes his way onto the streets of London, he is a silent, overlooked figure. He explains that

> For ofte whanne I in Westmynster Halle,
>
> And eke in Londoun, among the prees went,
>
> I sy the chere abaten and apalle
>
> Of hem þat weren wonte me for to calle
>
> To companie. Her heed they caste awry,
>
> Whanne I hem mette, as they not me sy. (ll. 72-77)

As a clerk in the office of the Privy Seal, Westminster Hall and the streets of London should be familiar spaces to Hoccleve. However, when his friends and colleagues turn their faces away, avoiding his eye and pretending they do not see him, these spaces appear hostile and unfamiliar. Hoccleve becomes a ghostly figure who walks about 'among the prees' (l. 73) but remains unseen and unacknowledged. Yet his physical and emotional dissociation from his former friends also invokes a 'simultaneous isolation and claustrophobia'.[64] While the emotional community read Hoccleve's countenance for signs of strangeness and instability, to Hoccleve it is the world which 'me made a straunge countinaunce' (l. 70). The outside world presents Hoccleve with the face of a stranger who is hostile, suspicious and unfamiliar. The people Hoccleve meets are not identifiable as individuals or recognisable as members of the emotional community. Yet their scrutiny seems to press in on Hoccleve and he describes how his 'herte sore gan to tourment' (l. 71) as he is confronted with the face of a crowd he is unable to read or fully understand.

Hoccleve's spectral isolation becomes more pronounced when his 'loneliness and solitude begin to manifest themselves in terms of remembrance and forgetting'.[65]

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[64] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, p. 169.

[65] David K. Coley, *The Wheel of Language: Representing Speech in Middle English Poetry 1377-1422* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012), p. 136.

Hoccleve observes that 'Forȝeten I was al oute of mynde awey, | As he þat deed was from hertis cherte' (ll. 80-81). There is an ambiguity to this phrase. On one hand, it suggests that Hoccleve has been absent from the community for so long that he has begun to fade from their collective memory, as though he had died. On the other hand, it may suggest that the emotional community are making a concerted effort to forget Hoccleve, a troubling and unwelcome presence in their community. Either way, Hoccleve feels that he is so far from the 'hertis cherte' (l. 81) of the emotional community that he is no longer remembered with love or affection.

Instead, Hoccleve becomes a source of speculation and gossip to the members of the emotional community. Friends and colleagues choose to speak around Hoccleve, talking *about* him rather than *to* him:

> Thus spake manie oone and seide by me:
>
> "Alþouȝ from him his siiknesse sauage
>
> Withdrawen and passed as for a time be,
>
> Resorte it wole" (ll. 85-88).

Hoccleve overhears these conversations but appears unable to respond and passively receives 'Tho wordis, hem unwar, cam to myn eere' (l. 91). He cannot bring himself to stop listening to their hurtful comments and retreats further into his solitary thoughts:

> I leide an eere ay to as I by wente,
>
> And herde al, and þus in myn herte I caste:
>
> 'Of longe abidinge here I may me repente.
>
> Leste that of hastinesse I at the laste
>
> Answere amys, beste in hens hie faste,
>
> For in þis prees amys me gye,
>
> To harme wole it me turne and to folie'. (ll. 134-40)

Hoccleve is terrified of speaking words or expressing feelings for which he might have to 'repente' (l. 137) and so he 'sequesters himself into silence', haunting the company of friends who diagnose and speculate about his condition. [66] David Mills has argued that by approaching him 'through a diagnostic vocabulary', the people who speak about Hoccleve 'imprison him – and themselves – in their discourse'.[67] Hoccleve, imprisoned by speculation and gossip, is trapped at the peripheries of the emotional community and their spoken, emotional discourse. Indeed, frustrated at his inability to verbally express himself and fearful that whatever he says is held not 'worth a leek' (l. 143), Hoccleve decides to act as though 'I had lost my tunges keie' (l. 144). His silence becomes more profound and he keeps himself 'clos' (l. 145), creating further distance from his associates and consolidating the feelings of isolation, fear and shame so closely associated with a state of grief.

Yet, despite being silenced and marginalised by his friends and colleagues, Hoccleve's state of grief means that he still seeks to be reunited with his lost object, in this case the emotional community of scribes and bureaucrats.[68] As a living revenant, Hoccleve has been unable to access the spoken discourse of the emotional community and so he presents himself - specifically his face and its emotional expressions – as a text through which his recovery can be read and he can return to the fold of the emotional community. In this way, Hoccleve again draws upon Chaucer's poetic inheritance, as Chaucer was the first author in the English language to make his 'narrators and characters 'read' the expression on another character's face and translate that expression into

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[66] Coley, *Wheel of Language*, p. 137. Hoccleve repeatedly makes reference to repentance and confession, for more on Hoccleve's complex engagement with late medieval penitential discourse in the *Series* see Robyn Malo, 'Penitential Discourse in the *Series*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 34 (2012), 277-305.
[67] David Mills, 'The Voices of Hoccleve', in *Essays on Hoccleve,* ed. by Catherine Batt (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepolis, 1996), pp. 85-107 (p. 90).
[68] In this way, the *Series* shares similarities with the dream narrative of the *Pearl*-poem; the grieving speakers of both texts seek desperately for reunion with the lost object.

words'.[69] I argue that Hoccleve develops Chaucer's concepts of facial reading by reflecting on how its processes can go wrong. Hoccleve recognises that by presenting himself as a text to be read by the emotional community he makes himself more vulnerable, and that there is the risk that his inner emotions can be misread and misunderstood by the friends and colleagues with whom he hopes to be reunited.

Hoccleve explains that due to the gossip and speculation of those he has encountered in the 'prees' (l. 139), he has made a concerted effort to amend his facial expressions so that they convey acceptable behaviours and emotions:

> My spirites labouriden euere ful bisily
>
> To peinte countenaunce, cheer and look,
>
> For þat men spake of me so wondringly,
>
> And for the verry shame and feer I qwook (ll. 148-51)

Hoccleve draws upon the understanding that the face is one of the most expressive parts of the body, able to reveal inner emotion and disclose much about a person's identity. By observing the face's 'shapes, colours, and aspects, and its conscious and unconscious movements and gestures', we feel that we are able to read, recognise and comprehend what another person is thinking and feeling.[70] Hoccleve paints his 'countenance, cheer and look' (l. 149) in an attempt to project meaning out to his friends and colleagues so that they might read recovery and stability in his face.[71] However, presenting the face as a text carries risks as 'acts of reading and looking produce very different kinds of information, which may or may not be reliable or consistent'.[72] Hoccleve's use of the phrase 'To *peinte* countenaunce' (my emphasis, l. 149) demonstrates his awareness of the unreliability of facial reading. In Middle English to 'peinte' conveys a range of meanings,

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[69] Stephanie Trigg, 'Chaucer's Silent Discourse', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 39 (2017), 31-56 (p. 31).
[70] Trigg, 'Chaucer's Silent Discourse', pp. 31-32.
[71] See Ethan Knapp, 'Faces in the Crowd: Faciality and Ekphrasis in Late Medieval England', in *The Art of Vision: Ekphrasis in Medieval Literature and Culture*, pp. 209-223.
[72] Trigg, 'Chaucer's Silent Discourse', p. 35.

including to portray, to write, to adorn, to describe, and also to feign, deceive and disguise.[73] Given the ambiguous nature of this word, it seems that on one hand, Hoccleve does have a measure of control over how his face is read, as he composes his face and writes the correct 'cheer and look' (l. 149) onto the facial text. On the other hand, his 'spirites labouriden euere ful bisily' (l. 148) to feign an expression that will persuade those who 'spake of me so wondringly' (l. 150) that he is fully recovered and able to return to the emotional community to which he belongs. Therefore, despite Hoccleve's diligent control over the expressions on his face, he cannot control how others read his countenance or interpret the looks he so carefully and consciously presents to the world. Hoccleve's face remains resistant to easy reading by the emotional community he hopes to rejoin.

Hoccleve's attempts to correct his face's expressions and emotions culminate in the much-discussed mirror scene, in which Hoccleve retreats back into his chamber and stares at his reflection:

> And in my chamber at home when I was
>
> Mysilfe aloone I in þis wise wrouȝt.
>
> I streite vnto my mirrour and my glas,
>
> To loke Howe þat me of my cheer þouȝt,
>
> If any other were it than it ouȝt,
>
> For fain wolde I, if it not had bene riȝt,
>
> Amendid it to my kunnynge and myȝt (ll. 155-61)

Moving from the public scrutiny of the London streets into the private space of his chamber, Hoccleve presents his face as a text open to his own interpretation, through which he can learn and generate correct emotional responses in his own person. If his

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[73] 'Peinten' in *MED* [online] <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED32738> [accessed 3rd March 2019].

expressions do not seem right, he resolves to 'Amendid it to my kunnynge and myȝt' (l. 161), much like a Privy Seal clerk would correct a faulty text.[74] He final resolves on a correct expression, assuring himself that 'This countinaunce, I am sure, and þis chere, | If I it for the vse, is nothing repreuable | To hem þat han conceitis reasonable' (ll. 166-68). Hoccleve convinces himself that if he can read normality in his own appearance, there can be nothing 'repreuable' (l. 168) to others and thus his sanity will be accepted by the emotional community. However, even with the aid of the mirror, Hoccleve admits his uncertainty about whether he can see and know himself accurately. Hoccleve's reflected image is both himself and not himself, as the mirror's image creates two Hoccleves, one with a physical form and another the image reflected back at the real person. Hoccleve's reflected image is an aid to self-examination, but it does not provide absolute clarity about the self or definitive knowledge of how he is read by others. He comes to realise that 'an authentic knowledge of his own appearance is finally not available to him', stating that:

> Men in her owne cas bene blinde alday,
>
> As I haue herde seie manie a day agoon,
>
> And in that same plite I stoned may.
>
> How shal I do? Wiche is the beste way
>
> My troublid spirit for to bringe in rest? (ll. 170-75)[75]

Because men 'bene blinde alday' to themselves and their 'owne cas' (l. 170), Hoccleve suspects that if people cannot know themselves, they cannot truly know others. Hoccleve's questions suggest that there is no 'beste way' for his 'troublid spirit' (l. 174, l. 175) to convey his recovery and sanity to those who speculate about his condition.

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[74] Knapp recognises that in this mirror scene, Hoccleve 'draws on the language of artistic representation, using terminology most applicable to a scribe's correction of a faulty text'; Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, p. 170.
[75] Meyer-Lee, 'Apprehension of Money', p. 208.

Hoccleve recognises the futility of amending his emotions, behaviours and expressions for the appraisal of the emotional community. Indeed, it is here in the mirror scene that Hoccleve 'recognises the absurdity of his situation – he is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't'.[76] The emotional community suspect that 'Full bukkish is his brayn' (l. 123) whatever Hoccleve does. Certain in his recovery, Hoccleve finds fault in the emotional community's flawed readings of his person and its failure to recognise that he is now 'hool' (ll. 288-89). He refers to the emotional community's judgments as 'ymaginynge[s]' (l. 307), suggesting that they have little basis in fact or reality. He describes their readings of his person as restricted, as though 'A dirke clowde | Hir siȝt obscured withynne and wiþoute, | And for al þat were ay suche a doute' (ll. 292-94). The emotional community have sought out particular readings of his gestures and emotions, looking for specific signals of instability, rather than allowing Hoccleve to be a text open to change and interpretation.

Hoccleve turns to another text at the end of the 'Compleinte' when he begins to read a borrowed copy of Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma*, a Boethian consolation.[77] For three stanzas, Hoccleve speaks in the voice of another 'Vnhappi man' (l. 327) and then responds with the voice of the text's consoling figure of Reason, who explains that 'Woo, heuiness and tribulacioun | Comen aren to men alle and profitable' (l. 350-351). This new text generates complex emotional effects in Hoccleve, providing him with a new voice to articulate his sorrow and grief. Through this voice, Hoccleve recognises his own condition and receives some consolation, a consolation that allows him to break his silence and write his own 'Compleinte' which he intends to present to his emotional community. As a grieving, revenant figure, Hoccleve 'had lost [his] tunges keie' (l. 144)

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[76] Bradley, 'By Communynge is the Beste Assay', p. 200.
[77] Hoccleve does not name the text in the *Series*, but A.G. Rigg identifies it as the *Synonyma* in 'Hoccleve's *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville', *Speculum* 45.4 (1970), 564-574. See also J.A. Burrow, 'Hoccleve's *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville Again', *Speculum* 73.2 (1998), 424-428.

but now he appears to find a way to alleviate his grief and return to the life of the emotional community: by providing his friends and colleagues with the 'Compleinte', a text which not only seeks to reform their reductive readings of Hoccleve's recovery but also invites an acceptance of his emotions.

Resolution and Return in the 'Dialogue'

Hoccleve has been hidden alone within the confines of his private chamber, but a sudden knock on the door signals the end of the 'Compleinte' and the beginning of the 'Dialogue':

> And, endid my compleinte in this manere,
>
> Oon knockid at my chamber dore sore
>
> And creide allowed, 'Howe, Hoccleue, art þu here?
>
> Open this dore. Me thinketh ful ȝore
>
> Sithen I the sy. What, man, for Goddis ore
>
> Come oute, for this quarter I not the sy,
>
> By ouȝt I woote': and oute to hym cam I ('Dialogue', ll. 1-7)[78]

Hoccleve introduces this speaker as 'my good frende of fern agoon' (l. 8), establishing a long-standing, intimate relationship between the two, also reflected in the Friend's concern that he has not seen Hoccleve in a long time (ll. 4-5). The friendly, colloquial manner in which Hoccleve addresses the Friend suggests that he is of the same status as Hoccleve and is likely to be a fellow clerk from the Privy Seal.[79] The Friend, therefore,

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[78] The abrupt transition from the 'Compleinte' to the 'Dialogue' has been the subject of much critical discussion. Many critics see this change as a movement from private contemplation to public discourse. See James Simpson, 'Madness and Texts: Hoccleve's *Series*', in *Chaucer and Fifteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. by Julia Boffey and Janet Cowen (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1991), pp. 15-29 (p. 18); Goldie, 'Psychosomatic Illness', p. 45.

[79] Goldie suggests that the Friend may represent a specific individual known to the real Hoccleve, 'perhaps even on of the many clerks frequently named in association with Hoccleve in the *Privy-Council Proceedings and Ordinances,* the *Calender of Patent Rolls*, the *Pells Issue Rolls*, and the accounts for the Keeper of the Great Wardrobe for the years 1385 through 1427: Robert Frye, John Hethe, William Flete, Richard Clifford, John Weld (Hoccleve's own clerk), or Richard Prior (his successor at the Privy Seal). Goldie, 'Psychosomatic Illness', p. 46. The dialogue form appears frequently in Hoccleve's works. Patterson, for example, has analysed how the dialogue between an almsman and Hoccleve in the *Regement*

acts throughout the 'Dialogue' as a representative of the emotional community of bureaucrats with which Hoccleve hopes to be reunited. Indeed, Hoccleve's invitation to 'Come in […] and see' (l. 13) what he was doing when the Friend 'knockede and leide / So faste vppon þi dorre' (ll. 11-12), signals the first forging of links between the public emotional community and Hoccleve, the private, isolated, revenant figure. Yet, even in this relationship – with a person well known to Hoccleve and who belongs to the same emotional community – there are misunderstandings and misreadings of Hoccleve's self, his emotions and his literary texts.

Significantly, Hoccleve does not *show* the 'Compleinte' to the Friend, which would invite an open, unmediated response to the text. Instead, Hoccleve chooses to read the text to the Friend. By reading the 'Compleinte' – a deeply personal, confessional text – Hoccleve attempts to assert some control over the composition and teach his Friend how to read both his creative production and his identity correctly. Hoccleve's 'Compleinte' is instruction on how to understand Hoccleve's grief and a written record of his attempt to return to the emotional community.

However, the Friend's reception of Hoccleve's text is not as sympathetic as he expects. The Friend implores Hoccleve not to allow his 'compleint forth to goo | Amonge þe peple', (ll. 23-24) encouraging him to consider that the text may 'awake' (l. 27) memories amongst the bureaucratic community which are now 'aslepe' (l. 29) and 'oute of mynde' (l. 30). In a line which echoes Hoccleve's earlier complaint that the gossip of his friends and colleagues 'Kepte I me cloos', ('Compleinte', l. 145), the Friend advises Hoccleve to 'Kepe al that clos for thin honours sake' ('Dialogue', l. 28). The Friend urges Hoccleve to be silent, to keep the emotions displayed in the text secret and contained. In

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of Princes demonstrates formal interactions between 'wisdom and folly, age and youth, experience and innocence'; Patterson, '"What is me?"', p. 444. The equal status of the two speakers in the dialogue of the *Series* creates an intimacy which is significant for understanding the emotional regimes of members of the same emotional community.

the Friend's view, the 'Compleinte' is too unflinching in its confessional nature. Rather than offering a means of returning to the fold of the emotional community, the emotions described in the 'Compleinte' would leave Hoccleve vulnerable to the social isolation he describes in the text. As James Simpson suggests, the Friend reads the 'Compleinte' both 'diagnostically (looking in it for signs of the narrator's ill health) and ironically (reading the professions of sanity as evidence of continuing mental instability).[80] Both ways of reading the text seem to affirm the fears Hoccleve articulated in the 'Compleinte', namely, that he is not in control of how others read him, even when he sets this out in words, and that this means he cannot yet be rehabilitated back into his emotional community.

Hoccleve, however, refuses either to silence himself or the 'Compleinte', the text which has scripted his experience of grief and isolation. After Hoccleve has spoken the 'Compleinte', he challenges the Friend's dismissal of the text and his limited understanding of Hoccleve's position within the emotional community:

> Thogh I be lewde I nat so ferfoorth dote.
>
> I woot what men han seid and seyn of me;
>
> Hir wordes haue I nat as yit forgote.
>
> But greet meruaile haue I of ʒow, that ʒe
>
> No bet of my complaint avisid be,
>
> Sithen, mafey, I not redde it vnto ʒow
>
> So longe agoon, for it was but riʒt now.
>
> 'If ʒe took hede, it maketh mencioun
>
> That men of me speke in myn audience
>
> Ful heuily. (ll. 36-45)

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[80] James Simpson, 'Nobody's Man: Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes'*, in *London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages,* ed. by Julia Boffey and Pamela King (London: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1995), pp. 149-80 (p. 156).

The accusation Hoccleve directs at the Friend is 'levied in terms of bad textual interpretation, not misconstrued gossip'.[81] In reading the 'Compleinte', aloud, Hoccleve has tarried with his grief in order to teach the emotional community how to read both his recovery and his identity correctly. Yet, Hoccleve is forced to chastise the Friend for his inattention; despite having read the text 'but riȝt now' (l. 42) the Friend has taken no 'hede' (l. 43) of the words or their emotional significance. Hoccleve suggests that careful listening and reading of the 'Compleinte' will resolve any misreading of the work and of Hoccleve himself. By correctly attending to Hoccleve's words, the Friend - and by extension the larger emotional community - will be able to correctly attend to Hoccleve's emotions and the effects of 'what men han seid and seyn of me' (l. 37).

Ultimately, Hoccleve moves from the state of grief which characterised his 'Compleinte', to a one of righteous indignation. He questions whether his interlocutor is a 'verray friend' (l. 327) as 'Certes, sore am I greeued | That ye nat leeue how God me hath releeued' (ll. 328-9), dismissing the judgments a friend who continues to believe that the circulating the 'Compleinte' will cause Hoccleve greater harm. Ultimately, Hoccleve is absolute in bringing to an end the Friend's argument against circulating the 'Compleinte':

> In this keepe I no replicacioun.
>
> It is nat worth; the labour is in veyn.
>
> Shal no stirynge or excitacioun
>
> Lette me of this labour, in certeyn.
>
> Trustith wel, this purpos is nat sodeyn.
>
> Vpon my wittes stithie hath it be bete
>
> Many a day. Of this no longer trete. (ll. 435-41)

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[81] Vine, 'Rehabilitation of Patronage', p. 214.

Hoccleve has abandoned the questions used so frequently in the 'Compleinte', and now

employs declarations and imperative verbs to respond forcefully to the Friend. The

strategy of silence which the emotional community had tried to enforce towards Hoccleve

and his emotional expressions is now reversed, as Hoccleve forecloses further discussion:

'Of this no longer trete' (l. 441). Instead, Hoccleve challenges the Friend, just as he

challenged the emotional community in the 'Compleinte', to judge him fairly: 'Han yee

aght herd of me in communynge | Wherthurgh yee oghten deeme of me amis?' (ll. 470-1).

The Friend 'This admission is key' as now that Hoccleve 'has corrected the friend's

misinformation, the two can collaborate as London literati (and members of the Privy

Seal) customarily do, and the friend is transformed into a cautious advisor'.[82] I would

further this view and argue that this is the moment when Hoccleve and the Friend are able

to finally collaborate as members of the same emotional community.

Indeed, the moment the Friend admits his mistake, he 'becomes the companion,

advisor, and assistant whom Hoccleve desperately needed',[83] suggesting that it would be

beneficial for Hoccleve to 'reenter the social world'[84] by aligning himself with a figure

who is a symbol of English military might and masculine orthodox chivalry: Humphrey,

Duke of Gloucester. The Friend encourages Hoccleve to resume his literary activity with

the reminder that Hoccleve made a past promise to write a text for the Duke. This may be

more than a promise as Hoccleve acknowledges his debt and says that 'as by couenant/

He sholde han had it many a day ago' (ll. 535-6). The word 'couenant' suggests at least

an agreement, if not an actual commission. But it is also significant as it suggests

Humphrey's active role in the promise and some form of relationship between the two

men. However, in both the 'Compleint' and 'Dialogue', Hoccleve has depicted himself as

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[82] Bradley, 'By Communynge is the Beste Assay', p. 204.
[83] Bradley, 'By Communynge is the Beste Assay', p. 204.
[84] Patterson, "What is Me?", p. 447.

an uncertain and isolated figure, who is prone to being misread and misunderstood by others. Duke Humphrey acts as a foil to Hoccleve; he is a man whose 'Euery act þat his swerd in steel wroot there' (l. 583), as he writes the text of his life with sword in hand, an image that emphasises masculine action and assertiveness.[85]

The description of Duke Humphrey further emphasises his masculine prowess, as Hoccleve employs the cultural prestige of Classical motifs and French lexicon to describe a nobleman who,

> … callid is Humfrey
>
> Conueniently, as þat it seemeth me,
>
> For this conceit is in myn herte alwey:
>
> Batallious Mars in his natiuitee
>
> Vnto þat name of verray specialtee
>
> Titled him, makynge hum therby promesse
>
> Þat strecche he sholde into hy worthynesse,
>
>
> For Humfrey as vnto myn intellect
>
> "Man make I shal", in Englissh is to seye,
>
> And þat byheeste hath taken treewe effect
>
> As the commune fame can bywreye. (ll. 589-599)

As Duke Humphrey was '[t]itled' by 'Batallious Mars in his natiuutee' (l. 592), he acts as an exemplar of a masculine identity which is closely linked to 'male courage and prowess in battle'.[86] Furthermore, Duke Humphrey's national identity is also essential to his masculinity, as demonstrated when Hoccleve translates Humphrey's name as "Man make

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[85] 'Hoccleve describes Humphrey as a foil of sorts, an anti-Hoccleve who writes his autobiography not with a trembling hand, but literally with a 'swerd in steel'; Sebastian Langdell, '"What world is this? How vndirstande am I?": A Reappraisal of Poetic Authority in Hoccleve Hoccleve's *Series*', *Medium Ævum* 78.2 (2009), 281-299 (p. 285).

[86] J.A. Burrow, 'Versions of "Manliness" in the Poetry of Chaucer, Langland, and Hoccleve', *The Chaucer Review* 47 (2013), 337-342 (p. 337).

I shal", in Englissh' (l. 597). As Roger Ellis notes, 'This punning etymologising of names – here Duke Humphrey's name is taken to mean 'homme ferai' [I shall make man], because he is a superlatively well-made man – is a common medieval practice'.[87] I suggest that it is of particular note that the 'punning etymologising' of Humphrey's name derives from French, suggesting that just as the French language 'makes' Duke Humphrey's name, France also makes his name in terms of his 'fame' and 'renoun' (l, 587, l. 589) through his active, masculine military success in England's campaigns in France.

By contrast, throughout the *Series,* the Hoccleve remains firmly rooted in the space of London, absent and excluded from France as a site of English noble success, military prowess, and above all, an *active* masculine identity. Indeed, in the case of the real Hoccleve, although a branch of the Privy Seal did accompany Henry V to France during the period Hoccleve wrote the *Series,* there is little evidence that Hoccleve travelled to France and 'nothing in the documentary or poetic evidence shows the poet as anything but a confirmed Londoner'.[88] Yet records show that Hoccleve's colleagues Richard Prior, William Alberton and John Welde (who was Hoccleve's assistant clerk) were rewarded for their service in Calais in 1416.[89] In this passage of the 'Dialogue', I posit that masculinity, whether it be linked to a noble or bureaucratic identity, is linked with an active role in France. For members of the community of noblemen such as Duke Humphrey, masculinity is linked closely with military success in France. For the bureaucratic, masculine emotional community, their active role in the administration of England's conquering of France facilitates and alignment with the community of noblemen and demonstrates their importance to the Lancastrian project in France.

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[87] Ellis, '*My Compleinte',* p. 158 (n. 597).
[88] Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve*, p. 7.
[89] Brown, 'Privy Seal', p. 290.

However, for an individual such as Hoccleve, whose fragile mental state, emotional expression and focus on the creation of texts has caused him to be set apart from this active form of masculinity, the best option available to him is the literary patronage offered by Duke Humphrey. Through this patronage, the Friend suggests, Hoccleve can also begin to align himself with a noble masculine community. In turn, by fulfilling his promise to Duke Humphrey, Hoccleve 'will establish for himself a stable and familiar social identity as a courtly maker', demonstrating his skill as a writer who will be appreciated and patronised by a noble audience, and through the written word, can be reintegrated into the emotional community of the bureaucracy. [90]

When assembling the *Series*, Hoccleve and his Friend place considerable emphasis on the way the tales will be perceived by members of Duke Humphrey's emotional community of noblemen, rather than on the literary merits or affective impressions of the chosen texts. This is particularly evident in the passage where Hoccleve and the Friend decide which tale would be suitable to translate for Duke Humphrey, a passage in which texts are considered largely for their symbolic merit. In the 'Dialogue', Hoccleve describes that he had considered translating 'Vegece | Which tretith of the art of chiualrie' ('Dialogue', ll. 561-62). Here, Hoccleve is referring to Vegetius's *De re militari*, which was written in the late fourth century and had become, by the early fifteenth century, a work that was essential to the collections of aristocratic libraries and was used as an important signal of orthodox chivalry.[91] Such texts cemented a nobleman's position within the masculine, aristocratic emotional community. Reading practice is therefore deemed to be central to successful and noble masculinity, particularly in a period in which England sought to consolidate its power within France. Furthermore,

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[90] Patterson, "What is Me?", p. 447.

[91] See R.F. Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 144-145.

in recommending Vegetius's text for Duke Humphrey, Hoccleve also reminds readers of an earlier work, the *Address to Sir John Oldcastle.* This text that had accused

> … the Lollard knight of deficient manhood, as reflected even in such details as reading practice. Oldcastle joins those thin-witted women who 'Wele argumentes make in holy writ', […] Recommended to him is reading matter appropriate to knights, including *romans d'aventure,* martial romance and Vegetius on the art of chivalry. It is 1415 and the 'rial viage' to France is underway; Oldcastle is challenged to abandon feminized pursuits and to join the royal and knightly programme of victorious conquest.[92]

In the *Address,* Hoccleve suggests that for Oldcastle, Vegetius's text could act as a mirror of successful masculinity because it offers the potential for reform and a return to masculine orthodoxy. Furthermore, Hoccleve had written for Oldcastle in 1415, the year in which Henry V's power in France was being consolidated through victories at Harfleur and Agincourt. By referring to this earlier work in the 'Dialogue', therefore, Hoccleve draws a connection between the period in 1415 when the 'royal and knightly programme of victorious conquest' was highly prized and the current French campaign in which noblemen like Duke Humphrey were proving their 'royal and knightly' credentials through victories at 'the seege of Roon' and 'Chirburgh' (ll. 610-11). [93]

In the 'Dialogue', however, Hoccleve ultimately decides that Vegetius's text would not be a credible option for Duke Humphrey and he rejects the possibility of translating it almost immediately, perhaps due to a hesitancy to draw comparisons between the Duke and Oldcastle, a man who represents transgressive and 'deficient manhood'.[94] Hoccleve states in the 'Dialogue' that 'I thoghte han translated Vegece | But I see his knyghthode so encrece | þat nothyng my labour sholde edifie' (ll. 561-64). Here, Hoccleve also appears to make reference to another of his previous works, as the *De re*

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[92] Strohm, *England's Empty Throne,* p. 184.
[93] Strohm, *England's Empty Throne,* p. 184.
[94] Strohm, *England's Empty Throne,* p. 184.

militari was a text which had formed the basis for the *Regiment of Princes*. Hoccleve therefore chooses not to translate it because this would effectively be repetition. Furthermore, in Duke Humphrey's case, there is 'nothyng [Hoccleve's] labour sholde edifie' (l. 564) because Hoccleve understands that the Duke does not need this translation as an indicator of his position, so secure is he within the masculine, noble community of Lancastrian leadership. The brief mention of the *De re militari* within the Series serves as a tool of praise for Humphrey as a member of this community and an upholder of its position, but also because it affords Hoccleve an easy transition into the discussion of Humphrey's recent military successes.

In the 'Compleinte', Hoccleve draws a clear distinction between England as a site of productive, active masculinity and France as a distant site of warfare. Any references to France within the text focus on the nation as the site of battles and destruction. Referring to Humphrey's campaigns in France in the period from 1417-19, Hoccleve states that:

Beyonde, he preeued hath his worthynesse,

And, among othre, Chirburgh to witnesse.

'This worthy prynce lay beforn þat hold,

Which was ful strong, at seege many a day,

And thens for to departe hath he nat wold,

But knyghtly ther abood vpon his pray

Til he by force it wan, it is no nay.

Duc Henri, þat so worthy was and good,

Folwith this prince as wel in deede as blood.

[…]

O Lord, whan he cam to the seege of Roon

> From Chirburgh, whethir fere or cowardyse
>
> So ny the walles made him for to goon
>
> Of the town as he dide? I nat souffyse
>
> To telle yow in how knyghtly a wyse
>
> He logged him ther, and how worthyly
>
> He baar him. What, he is al knyght, soothly. (ll. 566- 616)

In this passage, France is used as a location in which English virtue and superiority is revealed, a place '[b]eyonde' (l. 566) England where English noblemen, including Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, 'preeued' (l. 587) themselves to be 'knyghtly' (l. 614), 'worthy' (l. 615) and 'good' (l. 573), a stark contrast to the characterisation of the English as malevolent enemies within Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*.

Hoccleve goes on to suggest that Humphrey's achievements in battle – for which he has already achieved great renown – should be chronicled, as their example

> mighte and encourage
>
> Ful may a man for to taken heede
>
> How for to gouerne hem in the vsage
>
> Of armes' (ll. 604-7).

Hoccleve describes the duke as a 'mirour' (l. 608) through which other soldiers might 'see the path vnto honour' (l. 609), demonstrating that Humphrey's military exploits make him a paragon of English masculinity. However, Hoccleve, fears that recording these achievements is beyond his powers. The duke's success is so great that Hoccleve - a lowly, ignorant figure - could not possibly match his feats with adequate words:

> For to reherce or telle in special
>
> Euery act þat his swerd in steel wroot there
>
> And many a places elles – I woot nat al –
>
> And thogh euery act come had to myn ere,
>
> To e[x]presse hem my spirit wolde han fere

> Lest I his thank par chaunce mighte abregge
>
> Thurgh vnknonnynge if I hem sholde allege. (582-88).

One critic has called this stanza 'a masterpiece of clerkly self-excuse from detailed battle narrative', and his comedic avoidance of detail does seem to emphasise Hoccleve's difference from the active, militaristic duke.[95] Yet, Hoccleve is also reminding his readers that Humphrey's fame is dependent on written communication, the duke can only be a 'mirour' (l. 608) to others if people are made aware of his qualities. This is where Hoccleve, the writer of literary texts and government documents takes up his place. With Humphrey as his patron, he can regain power in his professional life and rehabilitate his relationship to audience, patrons and his emotional community.

Conclusion

Thomas Hoccleve's 'Compleinte' and 'Dialogue' are documents of the speaker's social ostracism and poignant reflections on the fragility of reputation and the pain of isolation. Thomas is misunderstood and set apart from his sustaining networks, becoming a living revenant who haunts the places and people he once knew. When the Friend questions Thomas on his poetic output, the Friend also insists on forgetting and diminishing Hoccleve's grief. Yet Thomas refuses to move on and asserts his functioning voice in poetic form, presenting his complaint as an authentic reflection of his inner self. In these texts the Friend's misunderstanding of Thomas, as well as Thomas' insistence on tarrying with his grief, are highly productive, much like the productive energies of grief which are present in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*. For Thomas, by insisting on the Friend's misunderstanding of his grief, his emotions and his recovery a tension is created between two members of the same community. This tension simultaneously allows Thomas' grief to become unstuck and facilitates greater emotional reflection in the

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[95] Andrew Lynch, '"Manly Cowardyse": Hoccleve's Peace Strategy', *Medium Ævum* 73.2 (2004), 306-323 (p. 316).

Friend, fostering empathetic connection amongst members of the bureaucracy and

furthering a deeper sense of communal belonging.

Conclusion

The texts examined in this thesis demonstrate their rich and nuanced understanding of the experience of grief. Within this medieval context, grief results most commonly from the death of another, but also from separation from country, community or beloved. As I have demonstrated in the preceding chapters, the emotional communities described in the texts - united by shared emotional vocabularies and expressions of emotion - are equally varied. Each of the texts address the emotional responses to loss, but they do so from very different perspectives. In *Pearl*, the poet uses the paternal grief of the narrator to examine the most intimate forms of emotional community, in the bond between parent and child, and the largest and most expansive, in the shape of the heavenly community. Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, which is concerned with assuaging the grief of another, examines the social and linguistic barriers to effective emotional communication between emotional communities. As the chapters progress into the fifteenth century, there is an increasing sense of distinct English and French emotional communities, in which members are united not only by emotional expression but also by an awareness of national identity. Charles d'Orléans, writing in the English vernacular, attempts to forge a community with his English captors whilst writing from his distinct position as a French prisoner. At the same time, Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine* builds an emotional community of noblewomen united in grief, who are called upon as French women to heal the fractured state of France.

The connection between grief and Anglo-French conflict may not be intuitively obvious, but we must consider that the texts included in this study were written over a seven-decade period in which Anglo-French relations were undergoing a steady but marked change; changes which brought about profound emotional responses in those experiencing them. The Hundred Years War, although predicated upon the close

territorial, linguistic, familial and cultural links between France and England, was the starting point for the assertion of cultural difference between the French and the English. The *Book of the Duchess* and *Pearl* - written during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II – borrow and translate the emotional vocabulary and regimes of their French predecessors. There is a close affinity between English and French writers, suggesting the formation of an emotional community of writers across the boundaries of kingdom and vernacular language. The Lancastrian era, however, brought about a growing awareness of relatedness between English language and a distinct English political and cultural identity, alongside which, French identity and culture was increasingly seen as other. At the same time, English writers continued to borrow and translate French texts, reifying the pre-eminence of French culture in medieval England. The study's English texts can therefore be seen to record their sorrow - which, I would argue, takes the form of grief – for the passing of this the cultural unity between England and France, even as they are enacting its breakdown.

In my introduction I examined a commemorative verse eulogy for Anne of Bohemia, an example which reflects how literary representations of grief can occupy an unusual position between private and public realm. The experience of loss begins as a private experience, but once its emotions take the form of poetry, and are read or performed, copied and disseminated, literary representations of grief become public objects. A number of texts reveal the levels of the regulation and surveillance of the performance of feeling, particularly in the context of grief. Christine de Pizan, for example, valuing equanimity over excessive passion, suggests productive ways in which an emotional community of women – more likely to be publicly scrutinised and judged – may channel their grief to enact political change within France. Yet, medieval texts are also alert to the possibility that the surveillance of grief can lead to the misreading and

misunderstanding of emotional practices, expressions and vocabularies. Chaucer describes the comic ineptitude of a narrator who misreads literary and spoken expressions of grief. Equally, misreadings of emotion can be productive, allowing those who grieve to explain and consider their grief and move from a position of isolation to a reintegration within an emotional community.

In different ways, each of the texts use dialogue to script the movement from a state of isolated grief to integration within a wider community. In expressing and articulating grief to another, the griever builds a small community between themselves and their interlocutor, a community which is able to bridge the gap from isolation to community, from grief to a form of consolation. Discourse and dialogue free the grieving speakers from the isolation of sorrow. In Hoccleve's *Series*, for example, as Hoccleve reads the 'Compleinte' - the emotional script of his despair and sorrow at the loss of his emotional community – he reveals the private language of his grief and instructs the Friend on how he should be correctly read. In doing so, he begins to forge the bonds of a small community with a friend who, once corrected on his misreadings, will be able to read the signs of recovery and initiate Hoccleve's return to the community of his friends and colleagues. Similarly,

The texts included in this thesis describe a range of feelings associated with grief – anger, guilt, shame, jealousy, desire – but they also demonstrate the capacity of medieval texts to *move* their audience, to create complex emotional effects in their readers and allow the reader to feel *with* the grieving speaker. Taking account of the emotions in medieval poetry demonstrates that literature is not is closed and sealed up but is something with which readers can engage on a personally and affective level. My approach has been to build an emotional bridge to representations of grief in the past, in order to understand the differences in medieval expressions of loss, but also to highlight

the universality of grief across time and place. Poems such as *Pearl*, for example, are effective in enacting the processes of grief; each time the text is read, it repeats the pain of loss, but also rekindles the memory of the relationship, identity or community that once was. Just as texts offered consolation to their medieval audiences, they have the capacity to do so with their modern readers.

This study examines only a small part of a vast body of medieval literature concerned with the feelings of grief and loss, and it could therefore be extended and developed in several directions. An exploration of the emotional vocabulary of the other languages employed in the multilingual context of medieval England would provide useful additional context and material for comparison. Literary works in Latin or vernacular Italian, for example, circulated in great numbers in medieval England. These sources would offer rich material for the examination of how other languages expanded and inflected the vocabularies of emotion on which Middle English poets could draw for their representations of grief. This thesis could never have hoped to provide an exhaustive examination of grief across the literatures of medieval England and France; what is has established is that grief provides a mirror through which we can better understand the communities and cultural contexts of late medieval England and France.

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