

South
Atlantic
Review

34

Volume 79

Journal of the South Atlantic
Modern Language Association

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In Appreciation. *South Atlantic Review* wishes to acknowledge the generous contributions and support provided by Ashley Cowden Fisk, Michael LeMahieu, and the Pearce Center for Professional Communication at Clemson University, by the Clemson University Department of English chaired by Lee Morrissey, and by the College of Arts, Architecture, and the Humanities.

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Introduction: John Gower's Twenty-First Century Appeal

Kara L. McShane and R.F. Yeager

The contributions to this issue have grown from conversations at the Third International John Gower Society Congress held at the University of Rochester in July of 2014. Now fully reimaged and re-written for print, these pieces capture the complexity, interdisciplinarity, and energy currently present in the field of Gower studies.

Prolific across languages, learned, and politically invested, John Gower is a key figure of the later Middle Ages. While Geoffrey Chaucer is the English author most readily associated with the period (and has enjoyed far more critical attention), Gower in many ways better exemplifies his historical moment. His body of poetic work is enormous, amounting to almost 90,000 lines spread across the three major languages of his period (Latin, French, and English); the number of genres he touched, in short poems and long, is equally capacious, ranging from advice to princes, vernacular romance, frame tales, and healing narratives. Gower's work is, for the most part, explicitly political, referring directly to the reigning figures of the day. Indeed, Gower gives us the sole literary witness of the Great Rising of 1381, a political event that transformed English culture and literature. Gower's range is especially exciting in the present moment, because his work resonates as well for scholars working in the medical humanities, disability studies, multilingualism, and translation, all fields pertinently receiving scholarly attention. Yet amidst this wide spectrum of engagement, Gower's work is signally unified in an intense concern for social welfare—what Russell A. Peck has famously called “common profit”: the well-being of the individual and society.

The several initial essays consider Gower's linguistic, material, and structural contexts. Gyongyi Werthmüller of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest offers a fresh comparison of Chaucer's and Gower's linguistic practice, taking up again—albeit armed with contemporary tools—both poets' use of the final *-e*. In “Final *-e* in Gower's English Poetry, in Comparison with Chaucer's,” she demonstrates that Gower's final *-e* is much more consistent than Chaucer's use; it is skillfully and deliberately employed throughout Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Werthmüller suggests further that the complexity of Gower's language is as worthy of study as Chaucer's, in no small part because of his trilingualism, and

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she concludes by considering what role Gower's French poetry played in shaping his English linguistic choices.

Martha Driver (Pace University) brings attention to lexical choices in a particular manuscript of the *Confessio Amantis*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.126, the work of a scribe known as Ricardus Franciscus. In "More Light on Ricardus Franciscus: Looking Again at Morgan M. 126," Driver explores Ricardus's emendations and edits to the *Confessio* text and examines his lexical choices to determine whether the scribe's native language was French or English. This examination sheds light not only on the importance of multilingual capabilities for scribes during the fifteenth century but also provides a case study of Gower's reception at this historical moment.

In the essay to follow, "Excerpting Gower: Exemplary Reading in New Haven, Takamiya MS 32," Joseph Stadolnik (Yale University) closely examines another manuscript of the *Confessio*, exploring possibilities that particular tales may have been read outside the framing context of the larger poem. While many readers may have encountered the *Confessio Amantis* as a whole text, Stadolnik considers the way that the Takamiya manuscript provides evidence of how the moral framework of the tales was adjusted via excerpts. By removing both the tales from the apparatus common in *Confessio* manuscripts and also Genius's moralizing voice, the manuscript prepares the tales for a free-standing existence in which they might be read for recreation. Stadolnik concludes by examining how the frames of these tales compare to the frames of the *Canterbury Tales* in the same manuscript, by way of considering the manuscript's treatment of Gower and Chaucer.

The issue then moves from the material to the structural. Jeffery G. Stoyanoff of Spring Hill College focuses on the framing of the *Confessio Amantis*, demonstrating how Gower's use of a circular frame throughout shapes and directs the reader's interpretive possibilities. In "Beginnings and Endings: Narrative Framing in *Confessio Amantis*," Stoyanoff argues that this circular frame requires that the reader consider the entire work retrospectively, reexamining all that has come before in light of the frame's close. In the process, he emphasizes, the position of wisdom, rather than love, reveals itself as crucial to the *Confessio*'s project.

Turning toward the social and political, the following five essays all address, in one or another way, the tensions Gower identified in a realm he found to be increasingly fractious, and some of the solutions his poetry proposes. Emily Houlik-Ritchey of Rice University considers the role of the neighbor in her "Fellows in the Wilderness: Neighborly Ethics in 'The Tale of the Jew and the Pagan.'" The tale substitutes a righteous heathen version of the "golden rule" in order,

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she asserts, to create an alternate ethical foundation for Christianity and thus limit Christianity's ethical indebtedness to Judaism. By placing the Jew and the pagan in the same geographic liminal space—as travelers along a road—Gower creates a space where ethics and civilization are challenged and explored. At the same time, by positioning the pagan as a type of proto-Christian, Houlik-Ritchey argues that the tale in fact reinforces Judaism and Christianity's troubled—but neighborly—relationship.

In “Social Healing in Gower’s *Visio Angliae*,” Kara L. McShane (Ursinus College) continues this focus on social relationships through a fresh examination of Gower’s account of the Great Rising of 1381. The essay considers the first book of Gower’s Latin poem *Vox Clamantis* through the lens of social healing and narrative medicine. McShane argues that by creating a narrative that reinscribes the class hierarchy, Gower seeks to recreate societal unity after the existing social order has been fractured. Further, for McShane the allegory marks Gower’s concern with common welfare early in his poetic career and thus demonstrates consistency between his major Latin and English works.

Building as well on Gower’s concern for social healing through narrative, Pamela M. Yee (University of Rochester) in “So schalt thou double hele finde’: Narrative Medicine in the ‘Tale of Constantine and Sylvester’” offers a new reading of Gower’s “Tale of Constantine and Sylvester” through the lens of Rita Charon’s three-step model of narrative medicine. In the process, Yee resituates the tale, in which the Emperor Constantine is cured of leprosy by faith, in the broader context of the *Confessio Amantis*, particularly in the relationship of Genius and Amans.

In “Old Words Made New: Medea’s Magic and Gower’s Textual Healing,” William Rogers (University of Louisiana, Monroe) emphasizes the connections between magic and medicine in Middle English literature, turning for his example to look closely at Medea’s healing magic in the “Tale of Medea” (and Jason) through medicine. By reading Medea’s tale alongside *On Tarrying the Accidents of Age*, a treatise on rejuvenation, Rogers highlights how Gower thinks of age in medical and textual terms, and argues for what he calls a “poetics of rejuvenation” in Gower’s *Confessio*.

In “‘The science of himself is trewe’: Alchemy in John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*,” Clare Fletcher of Trinity College, Dublin, approaches Gower and the sciences from the perspective of alchemy. Fletcher suggests that the alchemical passages of the *Confessio Amantis* uncover their centrality to two of Gower’s major concerns: the decline of the world and the decline of language. As a response to this deterioro-

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ration, Gower emphasized the transforming force of labor in reforming both the individual and society.

Gower's concern for the rightly ordered society is the topic also of Candace Barrington (Central Connecticut State University). Her contribution moves the focus from science to law, a field with which Gower was quite familiar. She explores the tension between ecclesiastical law and common law, especially focusing on the problem of intentionality, in "Common-Law and Penitential Intentionality in Gower's 'Tale of Paris and Helen.'" Through its depiction of Paris, Gower's tale offers a productive reflection of a crisis that occupied English thinking at the time. While intention was essential to ecclesiastical law, the difficulty of determining intention plagued common law cases. As a result, the tale—and indeed Gower's work more generally—demonstrates for Barrington the intersections between law and literature, emphasizing how the two mutually informed each other in Ricardian England.

The final three essays take up reception and reimagining of Gower's work by two of his authorial descendants, Lydgate and Shakespeare. Stephen R. Reimer (University of Alberta) explores the connections between Gower and fifteenth-century author John Lydgate in "A New Arion: Lydgate on Saints, Kings, and 'Good Acord.'" While conventionally many have seen Lydgate as a Chaucerian imitator, Reimer's article claims a place for Lydgate as a major poet in his own right. For Reimer, Lydgate might be fruitfully aligned with Gower in terms of political agenda and relationship to poetic authority: in *Lives of Ss. Edmund and Fremund* and the *Lives of Ss. Alban and Amphibal*, Lydgate presents models of good governance in hopes of creating the good society. Thus, both poets are politically engaged, more directly than Chaucer, in their concern for the common welfare and "good acord."

In "Lydgate and the Trace of Gower," Robert R. Edwards of Pennsylvania State University considers the several ways that Lydgate crafts his own authorial identity in relation to Gower and Chaucer. While Lydgate explicitly claims Chaucer as a poetic master, Edwards posits that in fact it was Gower who served as a model for Lydgate in the delicate work of negotiating sponsorship and urging political change. As Edwards notes, "Lydgate turns to Gower in works that speak about power and to power," so that Gower provides an example of how a poet might successfully advance an effective public poetry, balancing praise and defense of political figures.

In the final essay in this issue, Jonathan Baldo (Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester) explores connections between Gower's work and Shakespeare's *Pericles* through a consideration of memory's role in Shakespeare's play. In "Recovering Medieval Memory in Shakespeare's *Pericles*," Baldo argues that the play seeks not only to

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recover Gower's voice but also the medieval perspective on memory represented in Gower's writing. The essay thus moves beyond "John Gower's chorus-like presence in the play, which many critics have considered, to explore instead the ways in which the play revives and dramatizes medieval memory culture. Shakespeare's medievalism thus presents England's own past as "Other," reminding audiences of the changing place of memory in English culture.

About the Authors

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McShane is the general editor of *Visualizing Chaucer*, a Robbins Library Digital Project, and has contributed to *The Camelot Project* and *Once and Future Classroom*, an open-access journal dedicated to teaching the Middle Ages. She also serves as an assistant editor for *medievally speaking*, an open-access review journal supported by the International Society for the Study of Medievalism (medievallyspeaking.blogspot.com). Email: kmcshane@ursinus.edu.

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Final *-e* in Gower's English Poetry, in Comparison with Chaucer's

Gyöngyi Werthmüller

0 Introduction¹

0.1 Aims and Objectives

Most of the analyses devoted to Gower are “high-level”: discussing, for instance, the meaning of Gower's sentences, attempts on finding out what he means to say, etc.; on the other hand, most of the analyses that go “low-level,” examining the Middle English language and meter (some of which are cited in this paper), are usually not really concerned with Gower. The present paper does intend to go “low-level,” and it is certainly concerned with Gower. In fact, not only is it concerned with him, but—although it compares the phonological and metrical practice of two poets (Gower and Chaucer)—its focus is slightly tilted towards Gower. While I would like to reveal as much about Chaucer's language and meter as possible in a paper where Chaucer is of somewhat lesser importance, my main aim is to show that there is at least as much to say about Gower as about Chaucer; and to scrutinise his practice as much as possible within the scope of this paper.

We shall be taking a close look at his use of final *-e*, comparing it with that of Chaucer's. However, we will not attempt to make any claim about the phonetic quality of this sound (see Lass for an analysis in that direction). What interests us here is when it was pronounced in Gower and Chaucer: and if it was not pronounced, how and why it was not pronounced. (On the ensuing pages, unless otherwise indicated, Chaucer means the *Canterbury Tales* (CT), Hengwrt MS, and Gower means the *Confessio Amantis*: I used Macaulay's edition.)²

It is a typical view that Gower's metrical skills and linguistic practice are inferior to those of Chaucer. Bihl, for instance, states the following (translation mine):

Gower reveals himself as a skilled verse-artist, but his language shows some conservative traits. Sometimes in metrical,

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but occasionally also in grammatical respects it is dominated by archaising norms. Chaucer, however, is entirely progressive in his treatment of the language. With an unfailing eye, he lifted everything presented by art and life into his language, so that two centuries could draw from this fountain of youth, until Shakespeare, the next language genius, appeared, who continued and crowned the edifice raised by Chaucer. (2–3)

Ian Robinson's observation, most of which is meant (of course) as criticism, is also worth considering:

If these three writers, Orm, Gower and the Palladius translator, are not writers of verse which ten Brink could have recognized as metrically regular, nothing can be known of Middle English verse. No hard questions about poetry are raised by this proposition, since all three are in their different ways hacks (and it seems right that this sort of argument should lead us to pay more attention to hacks than to Chaucer). (96–97)

Robinson is right to suggest that (like that of the other poets mentioned) Gower's metrical regularity is highly informative. That regularity in itself, however, does not imply anything in terms of poetic worth. I hope to be able to show, by the means of linguistic analysis, that though the metrical devices Gower could apply, or chose to use, were certainly more limited in number than those at Chaucer's disposal, he could use them equally skilfully.

0.2 Theoretical Preliminaries

Before going any further, let us revise the three ways *-e* can be pronounced or suppressed.

(1) Definitions

Retention: (default case). The final unstressed vowel (= *-e*) is retained (forms a syllable).

(Example: *this oldē wyht*)

Elision: if the final unstressed vowel (= *-e*) is followed by (an optional *h* and) another vowel in the next word, this final vowel *must* be dropped.

(Example: *the thriddē^o_office*)

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Apocope: the final unstressed vowel (= *-e*) of a word *can* be dropped.

(Example: *this blynde^o Britoun*)

In a sense we may say that retention is the default case; and *-e* can be suppressed in two ways: by elision (which is a “rule”) and apocope (which is an option). Elision is expected: we are not surprised when it happens, in fact the interesting (and very rare) occurrence is when it does not (which is called *hiatus*).³ In contrast, apocope is an option, and we are interested in when and why the poet takes it (if he does). We must note here that apocope is by no means something artificial—it may be unexpected in a particular poet’s (poetic) language, but final *-e* was already on its way towards being lost in the language: we certainly do not have it today (*name*—from Old English *nama*—has just one syllable, not two), but one has to take just one look at Lydgate’s language to see he had much less of it than Gower and Chaucer, even though they were almost contemporaries. (See also the discussion in 1.1 on *love*.)

1 *-e* in Nouns and Adjectives

In this section we are going to see how final *-e* is treated in two syntactic categories (nouns and adjectives) by Gower and Chaucer. In nouns, final *-e* is lexical (that is, etymologically part of the word), as in *fortune*;⁴ in adjectives, it can be both lexical and inflectional (that is, having a grammatical role), such as all those in (1). Within the boundaries of the present paper we do not have the possibility to extend our examination to verbs. The *-e* at the end of verbs is always inflectional, and it can have various functions (much more than in nouns and adjectives). Moreover, the *-e* at the end of verbs is often interchangeable with *-en*, which would make such an examination even more complicated.

Two things must be stated before we can proceed to look at the data. Firstly, whether the *-e* is pronounced or not, in this study ‘monosyllabic’ and ‘disyllabic’ means monosyllabic or disyllabic without the *-e*: so *grene* is monosyllabic and *fortune* is disyllabic. Secondly, line-final examples do not form part of the data, as in their case we cannot apply the same metrical methods to make observations about the sounding or not sounding of the *-e* as we can within the line; and certainly the definition of elision and apocope does not make sense at the end of the line.

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1.1 Nouns

Now let us consider the first set of data, given in (2):⁵

(2) *-e* in Monosyllabic Nouns

Word		Retention	Elision	Apocope	Total 100%	plus line-final
<i>name</i>	Gower	43.9% (50)	56.1% (64)	0	114	59
	Chaucer	39.1% (9)	47.8% (11)	13% (3)	23	34
<i>tyme</i>	Gower	47.9% (171)	52.1% (186)	0	357	15
	Chaucer	29.5% (36)	50.8% (62)	19.7% (24)	122	12
<i>tyme</i> in (mostly adverbial) compounds— <i>som tyme, ofte tyme</i> , etc.	Gower	27.3% (15)	72.7% (40)	0	55	0
	Chaucer	12.7% (7)	54.6% (30)	32.7% (18)	55	0
<i>love</i> in first (approx.) 10,000 lines	Gower	35.4% (74)	64.6% (135)	0	209	26
	Chaucer	7.1% (5)	47.1% (33)	45.8% (32)	70	18

What we can see here is that with regard to apocope, Gower is even: he simply does not have it. Chaucer does: in some nouns more than in others. Of the three nouns listed, *love* is the most spectacular. In Gower it behaves like the other nouns we have seen (and those we will see); in Chaucer, here we can really see that the *-e* was in the course of being lost, and perhaps we can say that the *love* examples with *-e* were more atypical than those without it, even though the percentage data do not exactly suggest that (in that the sum of the retained and elided cases is slightly greater than that of the apocoped ones). This atypicality is doubtful, but the possibility is worth examining. Donaldson notes that elision “greatly reduces the number of examples available to students of the pronunciation of final ‘*-e*’” (1103). With the word *love*, however, perhaps the reverse of this might be the case. To understand this, let us compare the word *love* (from Old English *lufu*) to the word *bok* (from OE *boc*). *Bok* does not end in an *-e*: it cannot have more than one syl-

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lable. If in the verse line it is followed by a vowel, the environment is the same as the elision site; if by a consonant, the environment is the same as it is for apocope. But in fact the *-e* is absent because it was never there. What Chaucer's *love* table shows is that *love* has an unusually high number of occurrences where the *-e* is missing if the next sound is a consonant. This might suggest that in fact Chaucer's *love* is largely like *bok*: the *-e* is (most often) not considered to be there, so when *love* is followed by a vowel, there is nothing to be elided. We have to notice, however, that there are a few examples in *CT* where the *-e* of *love* must be sounded, as in [fful sooth |is seyð |bat lo|uë ne |lordship|e] (*CT* I.1625). Therefore it cannot be claimed that the *-e* was not there at all: what can be suggested is that this word may be more advanced in the process of *-e*-loss than the other monosyllabic nouns we have seen; and if we assume that Chaucer used a more formal, possibly more archaic register than what was usual in the London of his time (Samuels 9), then his poetic use of this word could be closer to more advanced dialects of the time than his use of most other words.

Guthrie believes this *-e*-dropping has a phonological explanation, suggesting that it is the [v] before the *-e* that triggers it (392). This argument, however, is not convincing, since he brings no other examples that would exploit this feature; indeed he could not, as hardly any word ends in [v]. *Have* does, but that Guthrie—rightly—treats differently from words of real notional value.

The next table shows the distribution of *-e* in disyllabic nouns.

(3) *-e* in disyllabic nouns

Word		Retention	Elision	Apocope	Total 100%	plus line-final	Dominant stress pattern
Nouns ending in <i>-a(u)n(e)</i> (cf. 10)	Gower	25.9% (14)	74.1% (40)	0	54	113	<i>-á(u)n(e) > -a(u)n(e)</i>
	Chaucer	13.9% (5)	80.6% (29)	5.5% (2)	36	62	<i>-a(u)n(e) > -á(u)n(e)</i>
<i>fortune</i>	Gower	34.6% (35)	65.4% (66)	0	101	10	<i>fortúne > fórtune</i>
	Chaucer	10.2% (5)	69.4% (34)	20.4% (10)	49	6	<i>fórtune ≈ fortúne</i>

We can see the same pattern again: no apocope in Gower, and there is some in Chaucer: but as expected, not to the same extent in every noun. As these nouns are disyllabic, one of the two necessarily has to be (phonetically and metrically) more prominent than the other. Though stress placement is not the main concern of this paper, we can

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observe a difference in Gower and Chaucer in that respect as well: and at least in Gower, stress placement is probably influenced by the lexical presence or absence of *-e* (see Werthmüller, “John Gower’s Germanic and Romance English”). That is why I consider it necessary to include some very rudimentary information on stress placement here. These nouns are borrowed from French, where they were stressed on the last syllable. The English (Germanic) way would be to stress them on the first syllable (as they are stressed today: *fórtune*, *báalance*). That is what Chaucer normally does (see Minkova, “Middle English prosodic innovations,” and the data presented in this study); Gower, however, not only does not apocope but tends to keep the stress in the French way. His usage is therefore not only more consistent but also more conservative.

Another such noun is *maner(e)*, which in Gower’s language deserves special attention.

(4) Gower’s *maner(e)*

	Retention	Elision	Apocope	Dominant stress pattern
Noun:	2	47	0	<i>manér(e)</i> > <i>máner(e)</i>
Attributive (‘kind of’):	0	0	40	<i>máner</i> =100%, <i>manér</i> =0%

Manere seems to have split into two words. If it is a noun, it behaves like other Gowerian nouns of this type normally do. It is usually end-stressed and its *-e* is never apocopated, it can only be suppressed by way of elision, as in this example:

/ x x /
(5A) |In the |manere°_ |as I |schal tell|e| (CA II.280i)

In contrast, if it is in attributive use (meaning “kind of”), it behaves like a completely different word (and differently from any Gowerian noun): metrical scansion never shows a retained *-e* in it; and as every word after it begins with a consonant, elision cannot be assumed. The dominant stress pattern is also different: actually no end-stressed instance occurs. An example for this *maner(e)* is the following:

x / x / x
(5B) |Of e|ny ma|ner wor|thines|se| (CA I.1926)

The question of *maner(e)* is certainly worthy of the attention of those scholars who research the language of Gower’s (or the language of any other mediaeval poet’s) French poetry.

1.2 Adjectives

The syntactic category that has perhaps been most systematically and widely researched from a ME metrical respect is that of adjectives; in particular, the monosyllabic premodifying ones; and even more specifically, mainly the so-called “weak” ones (definite determiner + adjective + noun—the *yonge sonne*). The reason for this is that this inflection was relatively slow to disappear (Minkova, “Adjectival inflexion relics” 413), and that this kind of phrase is “unambiguous in its metrical structure” (Pearsall 179).⁶

The tables in (6) present my findings with respect to Chaucer’s and Gower’s monosyllabic premodifying adjectives.

(6) Distribution of final *-e* in the monosyllabic premodifying adjectives of the first 10,000 lines of the *Confessio* and in 8,000 lines from *CT*

	Retention	Elision	Apocope	Total 100%	Total silent (apo + eli)
Gower	89.4% (496)	9.9% (55)	0.7% (4)	555	10.6% (59)
Chaucer	88.1% (576)	7.5% (49)	4.4% (29)	654	11.9% (78)

The purpose of this table is just to show the distribution of *-e* in Gower and Chaucer in adjectives, and that the tendency is not different from that seen in (2)–(4). Hence I made no finer distinction with regard to the role of the *-e*: that is, the table also includes adjectives in the plural (*smale foweles*) where probably neither Gower nor Chaucer apocope in the examined sample;⁷ and as hinted at in the introduction, those adjectives whose *-e* is lexical, like that of *swete* or *grene* are also included, although there are not many of those. What strikes us here immediately is that for the first time, we can see apocope in Gower. The number is insignificant though, and the count is permissive: in fact, I believe two of the four occurrences can be argued to be parts of compounds instead of premodifying adjectives, and one of them can have a phonological explanation which at least partly accounts for it.⁸ Thus, Gower’s tendency does not change, and it cannot be claimed that in this category his *-e*-retention is any more regular than in his nouns.

2 Examples, Practical Implications

After this theoretical analysis, let us see some examples for what this can imply in practice.

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2.1 Linguistic Devices and Effects

First of all, if we bear in mind only the fact that both poets wrote iambic lines, we will find equally ambiguous lines in both poems. However, if we observe these tendencies regarding *-e*, we can decrease the likelihood of some of these ambiguities. And because there is less metrical freedom in Gower than in Chaucer, it is very difficult (if it is possible at all) to find lines in Gower where the *-e* would cause any degree of ambiguity in reading. Let us first consider this Chaucerian line:

(7) Ambiguity in Chaucer

The brode_ē Ryuer som tyme_ē wexeth dreye (CT I.3024)

If we pronounced all the *-e*'s in (7), we would get one syllable too many. Thus we have two options:

(7A) |The bro|dē Ry|uer som |tyme^o wex|eth drey|e|

(7B) |The brode^o |Ryuer |som ty|mē wex|eth drey|e|

Both of the *-e*'s that could be subject to suppression are followed by a consonant, so the *-e* can only get suppressed by apocope. As we can see in (2) compared with (6), in *som tyme* apocope is more likely than in a weak adjective (such as *brodē* in *the brode Ryuer*).⁹ Obviously, we cannot tell for certain, but what we have seen so far lets us conclude that (7A) and not (7B) is the intended reading. We must point out that the two readings are distinguished by differences in stress placement as well: in (7B), the less likely one, we have (*the brode^o*) *Ryuér* and *som tyme*; in (7A), the more likely one, (*the bródē*) *Rýuer* and *sóm tyme^o*. There is no significant difference between the number of occurrences of *som tyme* and *sóm tyme*; however, *rýuer* is far more frequent than *ryuér*. This, too, is an argument in support of (7A) as the preferred reading.

Let us now observe a Gowerian line with an apparently similar ambiguity:

(8) Ambiguity in Gower?

|In tyme_ē comende_ē after this (CA Prol. 11)

Again, theoretically, we could have two readings:

(8A) |In ty|mē co|mende^o af|ter this|

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(8B) |In tyme° |comen|dē af|ter this|

Here, however, it is far easier to decide which of the *-e*'s to pronounce. If we chose (8B), then the *-e* of *tyme* ought to be apocopated—a scenario highly unlikely in Gower. Furthermore, in *comendē after*, *-e* and a stressed vowel would stand back-to-back: something that Gower does not do (see note 3—in Chaucer it is somewhat more frequent). So this is no real ambiguity, and only (8A) is probable.

As we have seen, Chaucer has more mechanisms (apocope and elision) than Gower (who only has elision) at his disposal to suppress an *-e*. It is worth examining how consciously Gower uses elision. The following example is just a preliminary and a suggestion.

(9) Gower's "silent" *-e*

(9A) |Mi time°_ |in ta|riinge |he drowh|
|Whan ther |was ti|mē good |ynowh|
|He seide, |An o|ther time°_ |is bettr|e| (CA IV.35–37)

(9B) |Seith as |ther is |a time°_ |of pes|
|So is |a ti|mē na|theles| (CA VII.3595–96)

In both these examples, *time* appears in consecutive lines: in three lines in (9A) (the only such example), and in two lines in (9B). No *timē* and no *time°* appear in consecutive lines—neither here nor in the other three examples Gower has for two consecutive lines with *time*. In other words, if *timē* occurs in a line, then in the next line Gower always has *time°* and the other way round. Elision, of course, is perfectly mechanical: but this usage may be a conscious avoidance of repetition. But there is certainly more to this question, as (9C) shows:

(9C) Pride°_ is the cause of alle wo,
That al the world ne may suffise
To stanche of Pridē the reprise:
Pride°_ is the heved of alle Sinne,
Which wasteth al and mai noght winne;
Pride°_ is of every mis the pricke,
Pride°_ is the werste of alle wicke. (CA I.3812–16)

Here, too, a monosyllabic noun ending in *-e* gets repeated; and indeed, *pride°* does get repeated in two consecutive lines (*pridē*, however, does not). Certainly, the repetition of *pride* in this passage has its rhetorical effect. I do not mean to suggest that the avoidance of repetition in (9A)

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and (9B) is perfectly regular or that it should be a rule and (9C) is an exception, just that the degree of regularity ought to be explored further: how much of a tendency it is; whether it is only elided examples that get repeated (we have no *timĕ* and *pridĕ* in consecutive lines but we do have *pride*^o); and whether there is repetition at all in units of just two lines like (9B).

2.2 *Same Story, “Different Language”*

The title of this subsection is to show that even if the two poets retell the same story (*The Tale of Constance* [Gower] and *The Man of Law’s Tale* [Chaucer], in which the heroine is called *Custa(u)n(e)*, their language use is not made identical by this fact. First let us look at the distribution of final *-e* in the names *Constance* and *Custaunce*.

(10) *Constance* (Gower), *Custaunce* (Chaucer)

	Retention	Elision	Apocope	Total (100%)	Plus line-final	Dominant stress pattern
Gower	40% (8)	60% (12)	0	20	8	<i>Constánce</i> > <i>Cónstance</i>
Chaucer	10.8% (4)	62.2% (23)	27% (10)	37	17	<i>Custáunce</i> > <i>Cústaunce</i>

Gower’s data show what we are by now used to: no apocope; and, as *Constance* is a disyllabic noun, stress is generally on the last syllable. If we look at Chaucer’s data, however, we can see something different from the expected. Stress is generally on the last syllable (in 24 cases vs. 7—the rest are ambiguous in this respect): as in Gower. But there the similarity between Chaucer’s and Gower’s use of this word ends: because Chaucer, as expected, apocopates; actually here the presence of apocope is much more significant than in Chaucer’s other disyllabic nouns ending in *-a(u)n(e)* (see (3)).

Let us observe another linguistic difference involving the same word.

(11) What Gower could not do—imaginary line!

!!! |O faire^o |Constan|cĕ God |thee gy|de|

Compare Chaucer:

|Now faire^o |Custaunce^o_ |al mygh|ty god |thee gy|de| (CT II. 245- and 3 further examples with a “weak” monosyll. adjective)

In *faire*^o *Constance* the *-e* of the weak adjective would have to apocope—and apocope is a device that Gower virtually does not use. As we have seen, the likelihood of this in Chaucer is somewhat higher, and indeed we do have examples for apocope when the weak adjective modifies *Custaunce*.

Finally, there is a third difference concerning Chaucer's and Gower's weak declension with regard to (respectively) *Custaunce* or *Constance*.

(12) What Chaucer could have done but did not (weak adjective with *-e* retained)—imaginary line!

!!!|My goo|dē Cu|staunce wol|de God |in hevene|

The absence of *-e* in a weak adjective is far less usual than its presence; yet, before *Custaunce*, Chaucer has examples for the former (11) but not for the latter (12). Gower has no such grammatical irregularity in this story. We have to notice, however, that Gower had no example for (12) either: so from his rendition of the story the monosyllabic adjective + *Constance* sequence is absent altogether.

Perhaps there is a metrical explanation for all this. As I mentioned, in Chaucer *Custaunce* (unlike his other *-a(u)nce* nouns—and most of his other disyllabic nouns) has its stress mostly on the last syllable. That is the case in (11), too, whereas in (12), with the *-e* of the weak adjective pronounced, *Custaunce* would have to be stressed on the first syllable. Perhaps that is what Chaucer wanted to avoid. The same explanation could hold for Gower, too: in his usage, not only *Constance*, but disyllabic nouns ending in *-e* in general, have the stress on their last syllable. That can make a configuration like *fairē Constance* unlikely for him; and because for him apocope is not really an option, (11) would be a last resort. Of course it must not be assumed that for Gower this lack of monosyllabic adjectives before *Constance* is just a question of language use: that Genius does not address Constance the way the Man of Law addresses *Custaunce* is also a matter of difference in story-telling. But what is evident is that although Chaucer and Gower retell the same story, their language use remains different, and especially in Gower's case, very regular.

3 Conclusions

This paper has highlighted the difference between Gower's and Chaucer's language use from various points of view, though with its

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main focus on final *-e*. It has intended to bring attention to the ways in which Gower is more regular than Chaucer, arguing that his consistency, and his skilled use of the metrical/phonological tools at his disposal, certainly make him as worthy of research as Chaucer is.

We have dealt with the nature (or the “internal causes”) of Gower’s regularity, and we have, though perhaps not this explicitly, mentioned what I believe is its most important external cause: the French connection. Duffell points out that it was Gower who reintroduced syllabic regularity into Insular French; it was there in Mainland French, with *-e* counting as a syllable if unelided (83–84). Gower wrote in French and Latin before writing English poetry—so his French practice certainly might have had an impact on his English output. We have seen not only that Gower is more regular with his *-e*’s than Chaucer, but also that with regard to stress placement, he treats disyllabic *-e*-final words in the French way. Note 3 also brings a parallel between Gower’s French and English output. Further research—optimally, in collaboration between scholars of the respective languages—is needed to reveal more on the phonological/metrical impact of Gower’s French on his English.

Notes

1. I am grateful to the following people for their invaluable assistance (in alphabetical order): Zsófia Gyarmathy (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf) for her typographical help; Dr. Ádám Nádasdy (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) for the many discussions and his non-ceasing advice; and Dr. Winthrop Wetherbee (Cornell University, Ithaca, NY) for his advice and for his part in that the oral version of this paper could be delivered at the 3rd International Congress of the John Gower Society.
2. A machine readable version—without the critical apparatus—is available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/266/266-h/266-h.htm> (Last accessed: 27.10.2014).
3. For Gower, Macaulay observes—I believe correctly—that the only instance of hiatus is *That he his Sone Isaac* (CA VIII.110), adding that “the same thing occurs with the same name in the *Mirour*, 12241, ‘De Isaak auci je lis.’” (CXXV). Note that within the word *Isaac* itself there are also two vowels (aa) back-to-back, which is again unusual—perhaps the word *Isaac* is so foreign that here Gower consciously disregards the usual metrical rules.
4. There are a handful of nouns (*bed, child, hous, ground, hond* etc.), which do not end in an *-e* lexically, but the *-e* appears regularly in some grammatical structures (what Donaldson (1948: 1108) calls “petrified”—for example, *to bedde, in honde*. Cf. Present-Day Standard German *Haus* (‘house’), but *zu Hause* (‘at home’) and *nach Hause* (‘to(wards) home’), where the *-e* is a dative inflection, no longer present in most nouns (and in fact not even in most other constructions with *Haus*) either.

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5. Here and in what follows, the few ambiguous cases found in Chaucer are excluded from the counts.
6. See also Samuels and Burnley.
7. In the *CT* (both in the Hengwrt and the Ellesmere MS) V. 956 is given as *Ther yong folk kepen hir obseruaunces*. Here the verbal inflection (*en*) suggests that the subject (*folk*) is in the plural; and in terms of meter, one syllable is missing: thus this is probably a scribal error, and the line is most likely to have been meant as |*Ther yon|ge folk |kepen |hir ob|seruaun|ces*.
8. See a detailed analysis of this in Werthmüller, “Final *-e* in Gower’s and Chaucer’s monosyllabic premodifying adjectives—a grammatical/metrical analysis.” Table (6) was prepared for that paper.
9. (2) includes other compounds as well, but if we restrict our count to *som tyme*, we get the same result.

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Gyöngyi Werthmüller is a doctoral candidate at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, where she earned her M.A. in English language and literature. She is currently working on her dissertation in English historical linguistics, which focuses on the interaction of language (mostly phonology and morphology, but to a lesser degree also syntax) and meter in fourteenth-century English, mainly Chaucer and Gower. As her paper in the present journal also shows, she is especially interested in the sounding and non-sounding (and the reasons behind these) of word-final -e, and she has published articles and given papers at various international conferences on these subjects. Her research interests include languages and linguistics (both synchronic and diachronic): most of all, Middle English, with special focus on Gower, and the interface(s) between language and literature (and meter). In addition to her dissertation work, she is collaborating with Winthrop Wetherbee (Cornell University) and others to create a series of recordings of the Middle English poetry of John Gower. Werthmüller has also done several translations of Chaucer's and Gower's poems into Hungarian, and since 2008 she has been one of the pre-readers of Prof. Ádám Nádasdy's new Hungarian translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia* (in preparation), providing ample commentary (mostly) on language and meter. Email: gy.werth@gmail.com.

More Light on Ricardus Franciscus: Looking Again at Morgan M. 126

Martha W. Driver

Morgan M. 126, a deluxe illuminated manuscript of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* in the Morgan Library & Museum in New York, is one of four signed texts by the mysterious scribe Ricardus Franciscus, who produced some seventeen surviving documents and manuscripts (though two or three of these are contested) in the mid-fifteenth century. All of the manuscripts copied by Ricardus had English associations or owners. These included Sir John Fastolf, John Smert, Garter King of Arms, and those in the immediate circle of Edward IV. M. 126 (Fig. 1) may have been made for Elizabeth Woodville, Edward's queen.¹ Ricardus collaborated with some of the preeminent artists known in this period, including the Fastolf Master, the Abingdon Missal Master, the Quadrilogue Master, and William Abell. Among other literary texts copied by Ricardus are two texts of Christine de Pizan's *Epistle of Othea* (one in French and the other in English) and John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*.² This essay looks at Ricardus's copy of Gower's text in M. 126 in order to analyze his facility with Middle English as well as to detect traces of his native language (several scholars have thought him to be French) and to explore the ways in which this very competent scribe corrected and edited the *Confessio*. Reconstruction and analysis of his scribal habits may bring us a bit closer to Ricardus and also serve as a case study of the later reception of Gower.



Fig. 1
Nebuchadnezzar's dream of precious metals. New York, Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 126, folio 4v. About 1470. By permission of the Morgan Library & Museum.

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Ricardus copied the majority of the manuscripts ascribed to him in a calligraphic style influenced by *lettre bâtarde*, a script that originated in France or Flanders in the 1430s. One finds it, for example, in the deluxe manuscripts made for two dukes of Burgundy, Philip the Good (1419–1467) and Charles the Bold (1467–1477). During the Hundred Years War the script appeared in books made in France for French patrons and became fashionable as well among English patrons living in France. The script is thought to have traveled to England with French scribes who crossed the Channel with English patrons and later influenced printed letter forms.

Ricardus copies secular and religious texts using variations of *lettre bâtarde*. Cursive elements of this script include an elongated tall *s*, and an *f* with a thickened middle stem that descends below the ruling or line, characteristics found also in charter hands. Certain letters are simplified: the script features a single-compartment *a*, a *q* represented as an Arabic numeral 9, and a round *s* on the end of words (Parkes, *English Cursive* xxi–xxii, plates 15(i), 15(ii); Clemens and Graham 169–70).³ Ricardus's script is marked by its use of strapwork, banderoles, and idiosyncratic flourishing.

Some of these elements appear as well in documents and perhaps also derive from observation of features of contemporary illumination. The Fastolf Master, a French illuminator, who illustrates four manuscripts copied by or attributed to Ricardus, also uses banderoles and speech scrolls in his work. One example comes from a Book of Hours now in the Getty Museum, illuminated between 1430 and 1440 (Fig. 2). The use of banderoles as markers of Ricardus's style is particularly interesting.⁴ He often adorns ascenders

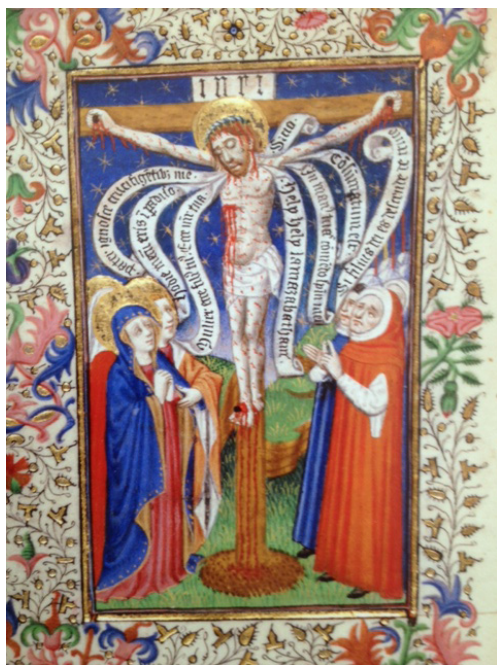


Fig. 2

The Crucifixion and the Seven Last Words of Christ. Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, MS 5, 84 ML. 723, folio 16 v. Master of Sir John Fastolf, about 1430 to 1440. By permission of the J. Paul Getty Museum.

of contemporary illumination. The Fastolf Master, a French illuminator, who illustrates four manuscripts copied by or attributed to Ricardus, also uses banderoles and speech scrolls in his work. One example comes from a Book of Hours now in the Getty Museum, illuminated between 1430 and 1440 (Fig. 2). The use of banderoles as markers of Ricardus's style is particularly interesting.⁴ He often adorns ascenders

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and descenders with cadels and scrollwork. These decorative spaces are sometimes filled in with inscriptions that include mottoes, names and lines of poetry, and in one case, his first name.

The scribe signs his name four ways in four different manuscripts: in Latin (as Ricardus Franciscus), with his initials (R.F.), possibly in French (as R. Fraunceys), and in English (as “Rycharde” in a decorative box in M. 126, fol. 65v). The Latin signature with the date 1447 occurs at the end of a copy of the Statutes of the Archdeaconry of London, which is also written in Latin; this manuscript is housed in the Huntington Library.⁵ In another manuscript, this one illuminated by the Fastolf Master, the scribe inserts his initials “R.F” in a decorative motif.

This is Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 570, a copy of Christine de Pizan’s *Epistre d’Othea* and the *Livre des quatre vertus* written in French in 1450 for Sir John Fastolf, the British landowner and campaigner who spent much of his military career in France (Driver, “Me fault” 421, fig. 32.1; 436, fig. 32.8; Bühler 123–28; Watson 1:100, item 613).⁶ Lisa Jefferson identifies the same hand and a French version of his name, which appears twice in a copy of the Statutes of the Order of the Garter, a manuscript written in French in the reign of Edward IV; here the scribe signs his name

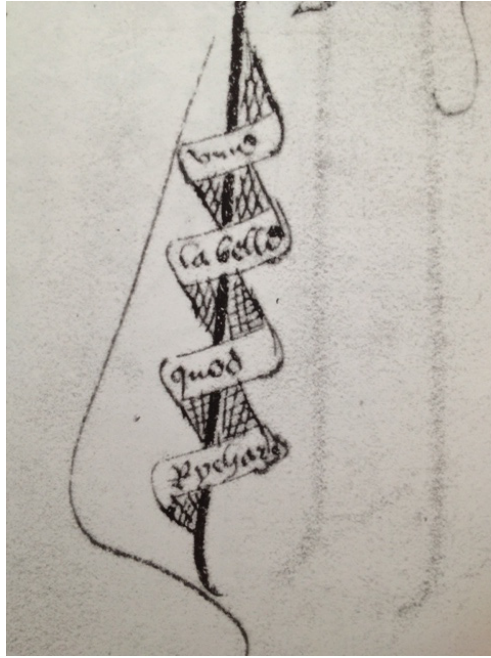


Fig. 3

“R. ffranceys” and dates the second signature, 1467 (Jefferson 19, 20, plates 1, 2). Finally, he writes the name “Rycharde” upside down in a scroll winding up an ascender in M. 126 (Fig. 3, fol. 65v). In two other banderoles in M. 126, he supplies his initials with a brief word or phrase: “qd R” (fol. 39v) and “a mon plesir qd R” (fol. 101).

We can say for certain that all of these manuscripts were written by the scribe Ricardus, though the variations in signing his own name

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seem to suggest a crisis of identity or perhaps his sense of himself as a multilingual citizen of the world. Several scholars (including me) initially hypothesized that Ricardus was French (Driver, "Me fault" 422.) In 1983, Richard Hamer cited some of the characteristic spellings of this scribe, which he obliquely suggests may have been French in origin; however, when he directly states that Ricardus was French ("He seems to have been French, or at least strongly influenced by French scribal models"), Hamer carefully cites Kathleen Scott and Malcolm Parkes, thanking them both for "the benefit of their knowledge" (69, n. 7). Jefferson says more directly that the adept expansion of abbreviations in the Garter document copied by Ricardus indicates "someone fully fluent in continental French" and speculates further that his signatures in the Order of the Garter document are "the French form of his name" (22, 24),⁷ while Carol Meale identifies him as being among the "alien craftsmen" who "were presumably encouraged to seek employment in England" (201, 202).

Turning to M. 126, let us see what it might tell us about Ricardus. M. 126 was not known to G.C. Macaulay, whose scholarly edition of the *Confessio Amantis* remains the standard. The manuscript was bought by J.P. Morgan from Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., in 1903, three years after Macaulay published his edition. Macaulay knew only of the nine miniatures cut out from M. 126, which were later restored when the manuscript itself came to light.⁸ The text of M. 126 is the first recension and was copied around 1470, about the same period that Ricardus produced Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* and some eighty years after Gower composed the poem. In some passages, it seems to draw from the text of Bodley 902, an early fifteenth-century copy of the *Confessio* and Macaulay's A text, which he calls "a very good one of the revised type" (1:cxxxix). Because M. 126 has not been collated with other editions, I have done some spot transcriptions (74 pages of them) and compared these with lines from Macaulay's edition of Bodleian Fairfax MS 3, a third recension of the text, copied near the end of the fourteenth century. I find M. 126 to be a very close copy of Fairfax 3 with very few errors, though the spelling has been much updated and there are minor but perhaps telling variations, some consonant with the A text, others that seem to be Ricardus's own emendations, as Macaulay does not cite these as occurring in other *Confessio* manuscripts.

Hamer called Ricardus "a very close and accurate copyist" who "copied extremely faithfully," and Hamer was right (69). There is some misunderstanding of the names of classical gods, goddesses, or characters in M. 126, but these names, however mangled, consistently appear the same way. Ricardus always writes "Jubiter" with a "b" for the god "Jupiter," for example. He tends to omit letters from other names, using

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“Pogne” for “Progne,” as Procne’s name appears in Fairfax 3, “Pernelle” for “Peronelle” in Gower’s “Tale of Three Questions,” and “Samarius” for “Sameramis” (Semiramis) in Fairfax 3. The word “duke,” which in Macaulay’s edition is often transcribed “Duck,” the common usage found in most *Confessio* manuscripts, never appears that way in M. 126; Ricardus uses either “Duk” or “Duke,” which is the modern form, but then Ricardus is writing his text some eighty years after the Fairfax manuscript, Macaulay’s base text, was copied. Ricardus also abbreviates words like “ever,” “every,” and “with” fairly consistently throughout the manuscript, even when there is room on the line to spell these words out. Hamer says Ricardus “copies most words exactly, even if they appear in a variety of forms,” which may be one reason one can find various spellings of the word “with” along with an abbreviated form in the same line (70).

On the other hand, “The general accuracy in Franciscus’s copying of the spellings of his exemplars made the words that he *did* change particularly striking,” as Holly James-Maddocks and Deborah Thorpe note in their essay identifying another Ricardus document, a petition seeking exoneration of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, copied in 1450 (249, emphasis in the original). Ricardus never employs yogh at the end of a word, preferring the “gh” form of spelling, but he occasionally uses it at the beginning of words. In the Confessor’s description of Socrates as a model of patience (3.702–09), for example, yogh is found only at the start of a word:

And 3if it falle in eny stede
A man to lese so his galle
He ought among the wommen alle
In lous court be Jugement
The name bere of pacient
To 3eue ensample to the goode
Of pacience how that it stooede (fol. 54v)

As Hamer further notes, Ricardus never uses the thorn.⁹ He also tends to double the o’s in words like “wo,” “so,” “anon,” the more frequent forms found in Fairfax 3. One strange and idiosyncratic usage that is perhaps related to the ornateness of the script is the eliding of articles with nouns, which occurs fairly frequently in M. 126. For example, near the end of the “Tale of Three Questions,” when Peronelle claims the hand of the king in marriage, she says that if her father “were alord,” there would be no reason for the king not to marry her, for he who was once “abachelor” is now an earl (fol. 28, 1. 3364–74). There seems to be

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a consistent confusion about elision between articles and nouns in the M. 126 which might possibly derive from French usage.

Ricardus also tends to overwrite some of Gower's original linguistic forms, which were so clearly tracked in M.L. Samuels and J.J. Smith's 1981 essay on "The Language of Gower" (295–304). According to their analysis, save for the hand, the content of Fairfax 3 is very close to an autograph copy of Gower's own text. For the Kentish form "oghne," which is characteristic in Fairfax 3, Ricardus supplies "owne" or even "own." While Fairfax consistently uses "sch" spellings, Ricardus dispenses entirely with these, using "she" or "shewed," for example, for "sche" and "schewed" in Fairfax 3. For the word "soster" for sister, primarily Kentish and South-Western usage that also appears in Fairfax 3, Ricardus uses "suster," as in the story of Procne ("ha suster if ye knewe," fol. 123r; compare 5.5759, "Ha, Soster, if ye knewe"). Samuels and Smith also note the prevalence in Fairfax 3 of "ie-spellings as the reflex of OE" from West Essex and West Kent (298). Words like "lieve" for "believe" are emended by Ricardus to "leue" in the story of Pauline and Mundus, for example. Ricardus writes: "men schulde noght / To lightly leue [believe] al that thei here" (fol. 12v). Compare Macaulay, "men scholde noght / To lihtly lieve al that thei hiere" (1:1062–63). For "selver," a Southern and South West Midlands form used in Fairfax 3, Ricardus consistently employs "silver," a term that appears in the description of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of precious metals: "His brest his shuldres and his armes / Weryn al of siluer" (fol. 4v), while the more common reading is "His brest, his schuldris and his armes / Were al of selver" (Prol. 1.608). Gower mentions the metal as well in his later descriptions of alchemy, "Of gold and siluer the nature / For thei two ben extremetes" (fol. 82v), where Macaulay's edition again uses "selver" (4.2488–89).

Ricardus also emends another Gowerian form, "therwhiles that," used in the *Confessio* for "while," which Samuels and Smith find in Kentish texts, "with a narrow belt from there into the South Midlands" (298). This usage is found in the description of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of Empires: "Therwhiles that the Monarchie, / Of al the world in that partie, to Babiloyne was soubgit" (Prol. 673). Compare M. 126: "Ther whiles the monarchie / Of al the world in that partie / To Babiloyne was subgit" (fol. 5r). In this case, Ricardus simply omits the word "that," possibly as redundant. However, in Book 5, in the tale of Jason and Medea, Ricardus retains Gower's older idiomatic form: "Ther whiles that he shal ben oute" (fol. 109). Perhaps Ricardus was following his exemplar or perhaps he forgot to emend it, or "therwhiles that" may make particular sense in context. This is in the portion of text when Jason asks Hercules to be his lookout while Jason repairs to Medea's

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room for their secret wedding (and their wedding night), and here “Ther whiles that” seems to mean “all the while that” Jason was in his lady’s chamber.

In very few cases Ricardus leaves out some lines or part of a word, but these passages are rare. In Book 1, in the description of Amans’s meeting with Venus (ll. 148–54), four lines are omitted from M. 126, including “Sche cast on me no goodly chiere,” though Venus is clearly glaring in the accompanying miniature (Fig. 4, fol. 8v). Macaulay does not note the lack of these lines in other *Confessio* manuscripts, so this remains a puzzle. In other cases, omissions are clearly an error caused perhaps by eye skip; part of the word “that” is missing in the story of Pygmalion (Fig. 5, fol. 70v), who prays in Book 4 to Venus to make his statue human:



Fig. 4 Amans meets the King and Queen of Love (detail). New York, Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 126, fol. 8v. About 1470. By permission of the Morgan Library & Museum.

Be this ensample thou myght fynde
T[blank] word may worche aboue kynde
For thy my sone if that thou spare
To speke loste is all thy fare
For slowthe bryngeth in all woo. (fol. 70v)

Compare Macaulay:

437 Be this ensample thou miht finde
438 That word mai worche aboue kinde.
439 Forthi, my Sone, if that thou spare
440 To speke, lost is al thi fare,
441 For Slowthe bringth in all wo.

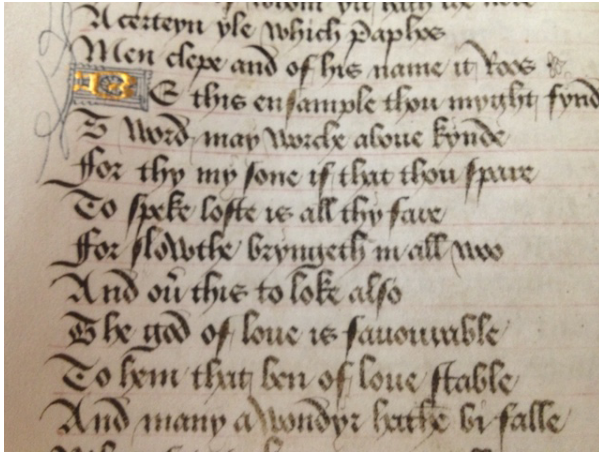


Fig. 5

Eyeskip: “T[blank] word may worche aboute kynde.” New York, Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 126, fol. 70v. About 1470. By permission of the Morgan Library & Museum.

Here, the Confessor explains to Amans that the failure to ask for love may mean its loss. It does seem strange to omit part of a word in what is otherwise so perfect a copy. When this passage from M. 126 is compared with Macaulay’s text, one observes several of Ricardus’s scribal habits, for example, in the spelling of “myght” with the added “g,” the added “o” to “woo,” and the regularizing of other spellings in Fairfax 3.

Then there are the (very few) misreadings that are, again, not noted by Macaulay, so presumably do not appear in other *Confessio* manuscripts. In Gower’s description of Orestes’s killing of his mother, Clytemnestra, by ripping off her breasts (3.2070–73), Ricardus writes “lappes” for “pappes” (fol. 63) although he gets this right earlier on in the text. This is clearly an error, and there is no French equivalent I can think of. When the magician Nectanabus in the tale of Alexander enters the king’s hall in the shape of a dragon in M. 126, the dragon somehow has a hand that he lays in the lap of the queen rather than his head in the more logical version found in Fairfax 3. Compare M. 126, “To hir he profreth his seruisse / And leith his hond vpon hir barme” (fol. 148r) with Macaulay, “To hire he profreth his servise, / And leith his hed upon hire barm (6.2190–91).

Then there are a very few variants that appear in A, the text in Bodley 902, but not in Fairfax 3 that are incorporated by Ricardus. One occurs in the story of Rosiphilee in the description of the deceased lady dressed in rags who appears before Rosiphilee and presents the lesson

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not to reject love as the dead woman did in life. Here Ricardus follows the A text quite closely: “The womman was riht faire of face / Al though hir lacked other grace” (fol. 75). This is a near rendering of A, “The womman was riht fair of face / Al þogh hire lackede oþer grace” (Macaulay 1:338, n.).¹⁰ The Fairfax 3 text reads: “This womman fair was of visage Freyssh, lusti, yong and of tendre age” (4.1361–62). In this instance, M. 126 follows the A version, though Ricardus characteristically expands the spelling of “right” and omits the thorns. This reading also makes better sense of Gower’s description of the dead speaker, who can hardly be the fresh, lively young woman found in Fairfax 3.

A final example of possible scribal intervention or correction, again unnoted by Macaulay, occurs in the story of Tereus and Philomena when Procne rails against her husband and his rape of her sister (5.5834–42). In M. 126, Procne is given a long speech about the perfidy of Tereus:

But now alas this woful strif
That I him thus ageynward fynde
The most vntrewe and most vnkynde
That euer in ladyes armys lay
And wel y woot that I may
A mend his wrong it is so gret
For he so litil of me let
Whan he my owne suster took
And me that am his wif forsook. (fol. 123v)

In Macaulay’s text, Procne also laments, but the focus is on Tereus: “And wel I wot that he ne may Amende his wrong, it is so gret” (5.5838–39). While Fairfax 3 says simply that Tereus has gone too far and cannot amend his wrongs, in the Morgan manuscript, Procne says she is taking matters into her own hands (“that I may A mend his wrong”) and avenging Tereus’s wrongs against her sister and herself, thus foreshadowing as well as justifying Procne’s future vengeance against her husband.

Though Parkes is early cited as one important source that describes Richardus Franciscus as a Frenchman (mainly in discussions), in his final publication, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes*, Parkes rethinks this position. Parkes here describes Ricardus as “An accomplished London scribe” who “adopted Lettre bastarde” initially for his copying of documents (117). I have long wondered about where the first document copied by Ricardus was made—that is, the signed Statutes of London, copied in 1447, which is a collaboration with the artist William Abell. Abell was a well-known English artist of the period who was a member

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of the London Mystery of Stationers at that time, and as Lisa Jefferson has recently discovered, Abell rented a garden in Moor Lane from the London Company of Mercers, so one would presume the Statutes manuscript was made in London (Alexander, "William Abell 'Lymnour'" 166; Christianson 59–60).¹¹ Two other artists with whom Ricardus worked seem also to have been English: the Abingdon Missal Master was active in the early 1460s, and Scott identifies him as one of the illuminators of the Middle English translation by Stephen Scrope of Christine de Pizan's *Epistre d'Othea*, which Scrope made for Sir John Fastolf between 1450 and 1460. He is also known to have collaborated with William Abell. Another artist with whom Ricardus collaborated, the Quadrilogue Master, who was active between 1450 and 1470, has been localized by Kathleen Scott to Oxford (*Later Gothic* 263–66, 264, item 94; 318–20, item 188).¹²

Against that evidence, there are Ricardus's collaborations with the Fastolf Master, who is clearly a French artist. The Fastolf Master was both prolific and peripatetic, beginning his career in Paris, setting up shop in Rouen, and possibly traveling to England with the reclamation of Rouen by the French in 1449, though this cannot be said for sure. By 1450, when the scribe and the artist made the stunning copy of Christine's *Epistre Othea* in French for John Fastolf (which possibly precedes the Middle English version translated by Scrope for Fastolf), Fastolf himself had lost most of his French landholdings. This is bitterly detailed in the *Boke of Noblesse*, composed about 1451 by Fastolf's secretary, William Worcester, who, like Fastolf, had spent time France and who also loved books. As Cath Nall points out, it is likely no coincidence that "the majority of known owners of books written by Ricardus Franciscus were associated with Fastolf's household" (210).

On a side note, it may be possible to place the Fastolf Master in England sometime in the mid-fifteenth century, based on his decoration of a Book of Hours for Sarum Use (Morgan MS Glazier 9). John Plummer says the book was made between 1440 and 1450 and localizes it to either Northern France or England. Plummer further comments that though the iconography employed by the Fastolf Master is copied from that of the Boucicaut Master, "the luxuriant borders are native," that is, made in England by English artists (Plummer, *Glazier Collection* 36, item 47; Plummer with Clark, *Last Flowering* 16, item 23; Alexander, "Lost Leaf" 251; Scott, "Mid-Fifteenth Century" 193, n. 130). In her 1996 *Survey*, Kathleen Scott firmly states that Glazier 9 was produced in England, calling it "an outstanding product of the trend c. 1450 to have Continental illuminators cross the Channel and work on books with native craftsmen" (*Later Gothic* 296–99, 297, item 108).

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So what can M. 126 tell us about Ricardus? The manuscript reveals a careful scribe whose spellings are, in many cases, closer to our own than to Gower's. Ricardus makes very few errors in transcription and sometimes tries to make sense of the text he has to hand. Some of his emendations, expansions, and scribal habits may show French origin or perhaps French influence. Are the several forms of Ricardus's name—"Franciscus" or "Fraunceys"—another clue to his identity? Certainly, among the seventeen documents and manuscripts attributed to his hand (some of which are contested), we do have, rather unusually for a fifteenth-century scribe, four different forms of his signature and a very distinctive script.¹³ Was he a Frenchman fluent in English? Or was he an Englishman at the cutting edge of French fashion, employing *lettre bâtarde* from about the period it is first written? Given the murky boundaries between notions of Frenchness and Englishness during the Hundred Years War, it is difficult to tell. We can say for certain that as a scribe Ricardus is very good at his job. Being fluent in three major languages may have been for Ricardus, as it seems also to have been for John Gower, part of his job description.

Notes

1. I include a comprehensive list of fifteen manuscripts attributed to Ricardus in Driver, "Me fault faire" 432–33. This list was circulated before my lecture on the same subject at the French of England conference, University of York, 2007, and included the following: 1) San Marino, Huntington Library, MS HM 932, *The Statutes of the Archdeaconry of London*; 2) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 570, Christine de Pizan, *L'Épître d'Othéa*; 3) London, the Worshipful Company of Tallow Chandlers, Grant of Arms, dated 24 September 1456; 4) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 789, writing exercises (fols. 1–5); 5) London, British Library, MS Harley 2915, Book of Hours; 6) Oxford, University College, MS 85, Alain Chartier, *Quadriologue* (in English), *Secretum Secretorum*; 7) London, British Library, MS Harley 4775, Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend* (in English); 8) New York, Morgan MS M. 126, Gower, *Confessio Amantis*; 9) Philadelphia, Rosenbach Foundation, MS 439/16, Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*; 10) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 764, heraldic miscellany; 11) Cambridge, St. John's College, MS H. 5 (olim 208), *The Epistle of Othea*; 12) London, Hospital of St Bartholomew, Smithfield, Coks Cartulary (portions); 13) Nancy, Archives Départementales de Meurthe et Moselle, MS H 80, Statutes of the Order of the Garter; 14) Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, MS 5, 84 ML. 723, Sotheby Hours; 15) London, British Library, MS Harley 4012, Middle English religious miscellany. Catherine Nall has further identified Ricardus's hand in a copy of *Des quatre vertus cardinaux* (fols. 24r–67v), booklet 2 of 3, in Cambridge University Library, MS Additional 7870; see Nall 207–12. This manuscript has been corrected and signed by William Worcester, the secretary to Sir John Fastolf. James-Maddocks and Thorpe (245–75) make a good case for Ricardus's hand in Kew, The National Archives, C 49 / 30 / 19, a peti-

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tion of 1450 seeking exoneration of the late Duke Humphrey of Gloucester (d. 1447). For the possible ownership of Morgan M. 126 by Elizabeth Woodville, see Driver, "Women Readers" 67–83; and Driver "Printing" 280–81, n. 21; 282–83, n. 27, n. 28; 282–88.

2. Ricardus's collaboration with the Quadrilogue Master is documented in Scott, *Later Gothic* 318–20, item 118; 322–25, 323, item 120. For William Abell, see Alexander, "William Abell 'Lymnour'" 166; Christianson 59–60. For the work of the Abingdon Missal Master, see Scott, *Later Gothic* 263–66, item 94. The two editions of Christine's *Epistle to Othea* were copied within several years of one another—both have associations with Sir John Fastolf and his circle. Ricardus as the writer of the Rosenbach copy of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* is discussed in Krochalis 105–09; also in Scott, *Later Gothic II* 320–22, 320, item 199; and in Scott, "Fall of Princes" 208, item 72.

3. The script is quickly taken up by French printers as well and adapted to a font used in Lyons, Paris, and Rouen and employed most frequently by the publisher Antoine Vérard from the earliest printed Book of Hours to literary texts printed in English for the English market, some of which are directed to Henry VII. See Winn 138–54.

4. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, MS 5, 84 ML. 723 (Sotheby Hours), Book of Hours, Sarum Use, in Latin with English rubrics, c. 1430 to c. 1440, possibly made for John de Vere, Earl of Oxford (d. 1462), whose signature occurs on folio 35v. Illuminated by the Fastolf Master, this manuscript may have been copied by Ricardus, a judgment based on close comparison of the script (from photographs) with known examples. Sotheby's *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London, Monday, July 5, 1976, 51–53, item 80) describes the manuscript as copied in London by Ricardus between 1440 and 1450, and "certainly written in England" (51); Kraus 38, item 16, plate 16, gives a London provenance and dates Ricardus's copying of it to 1450. This item does not, however, appear on the list of twelve manuscripts copied by Ricardus in Jefferson, 22; *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*, 202, cautiously locates the manuscript in either England or France, without identification of the scribe.

5. San Marino, Huntington Library MS 932, Statutes of London, is noted in the earliest lists of works by Ricardus, including Scott, "Mid-Fifteenth Century" 170, n. 3; and Dutschke.

6. On Fastolf, see McFarlane, 205, who comments, "Fastolf, whatever his origins—and they were at worst courtly—had himself lived a servant in households where a taste for literature was keenly valued." See also Harriss.

7. Though she does query "whether we should understand 'ffranceys' and 'Franciscus' as being the name 'Francis' or the epithet 'French.'"

8. Macaulay, 1:clxvi–clxvii, comments, "Nine good miniatures cut out of a MS. of the *Conf. Amantis* are in the possession of Mr. A.H. Frere, who kindly allowed me to see them. . . . These miniatures are supposed to have belonged to Sir John Fenn, editor of the Paston Letters." See also the Curatorial Description of M. 126 (3) on Corsair, the Morgan's online catalogue (<http://corsair.morgan->

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library.org/msdescr/BBM0126a.pdf). All of the miniatures in Morgan M. 126 are catalogued in Driver and Orr 40–44, item 32, with notes about precisely where the miniatures have been restored in M. 126 (44).

9. Hamer, 70, correctly notices that “Ricardus always writes *th* for *þ*.” However, Hamer says further that, “he often copies *3*, but also frequently changes it to *y*, *g*, or *gh*, and he never introduces it,” which may not be entirely correct (or Ricardus is copying M. 126 from an exemplar that also uses *yogh* only at the start of words). Hamer continues, “He always expands ampersand, and generally expands abbreviations more than he introduces them.”

10. Macaulay notes that the lines in A also appear in S (the Stafford manuscript) and other copies of the first and second recensions.

11. Lisa Jefferson found this entry for the Moor Lane property, “De Willelmo Abelle, lymnour, pro uno gardino ibidem per annum - iii s,” cited in “Interview with Lisa Jefferson.”

12. Scott further identifies the artist of Oxford, University College MS 85, the copy of Alain Chartier, *Le quadrilogue invectif*, whom she calls the “Quadrilogue Master,” as one of the artists providing illustrations for the manuscript of John Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes* (Philadelphia, Rosenbach MS 439/16), both of which manuscripts were copied by Ricardus. The artist or artists of Morgan M. 126 have not been positively identified beyond the Anglo-Flemish attribution of the Morgan Library’s catalogue. Malcolm Parkes’s early assertion, cited in Eberle, 355, n. 51, that the pictures might have been painted by William Abell is clearly wrong, and the recent thesis by Sonia Drimmer does not shed light on their illuminator or illuminators either, though the thesis gives a good overview of the context in which the manuscript was made; see Drimmer. Drimmer seems not to know the thesis of Harris, who discusses Ricardus on pp. 188–189 and who transcribes the table of contents supplied for M. 126 by Ricardus along with the tables of contents found in other *Confessio* manuscripts. We know that Scrope, Fastolf’s stepson, was at work on the English translation of Christine’s *Epistle of Othea* as early as 1473 and probably earlier, as William Worcester says he “corrected” the copy in March of that year; McFarlane, 215.

13. A second manuscript ascribed to Ricardus that remains contested (in addition to the Getty’s Sotheby Hours) is a Sarum Hours, British Library Harley 2915, illuminated by the Fastolf Master, the hand of which was identified by Janet Backhouse in 1970; Alexander, “Lost Leaf,” 250, n. 9. In her thesis, Harris, “Ownership,” 118, n. 96, says that this attribution is “erroneous.” I examined this manuscript in 2007 and noticed in the hand a characteristic spikiness, banderoles wrapped around ascenders, the use of ornamental penwork, the extensive use of hairline strokes, and the hallmark distinctive “R,” along with the previously described elements of *lettre bâtarde* characteristic of Ricardus. The use of banderoles in this text complements the speech scrolls in the Fastolf Master’s illuminations. In addition to copying the Latin text, the scribe supplies French captions for the pictures. In some cases (e.g., fol. 21r), the decorative English border work is continued into the initial, which might suggest the manuscript was made in England. Ricardus is cited as the scribe in the British

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Library catalogue, and I tend to agree with Backhouse's initial assessment. See "Detailed Record for Harley 2915," in *The British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, available at <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8478&CollID=8&NStart=2915>.

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“Excerpting Gower: Exemplary Reading in New Haven, Takamiya MS 32”

Joseph Stadlnik

John Gower's three major works amount to more than 70,000 lines of verse, and together they comprise something of a monument to Gower's productivity and to his ambition as a poet of weight. The *Speculum Meditantis*, *Vox Clamantis*, and the *Confessio Amantis* famously appear stacked underneath the reposing head of Gower at rest in his sepulchral monument at Southwark Cathedral. It appears that Gower left the world with his poetic work all in order, with each of his long poems at rest in dedicated codices with their rhyming titles written on the spines. This monumental arrangement of Gower's major works, all three neatly bound on their own, corresponds to how we tend to find them in medieval books. His French *Mirour de l'Omme* survives as the sole work in a unique manuscript, Cambridge, CUL Additional 3035.¹ Of the ten witnesses to his Latin *Vox Clamantis*, eight survive in full. Two are the sole works in their own volumes, while the other complete copies of the *Vox* are accompanied by a familiar collection of Gower's shorter Latin works, and in two cases by his French *Traitié*.² As for the *Confessio Amantis*, forty-seven manuscripts survive with that poem in a more-or-less complete form.³ The overwhelming prevalence of complete copies of the *Confessio* has necessarily founded our critical understanding of how Gower intended this poem to be read and how its earliest readers tended to read it—whether for the poem's promised lust or promised lore. This paper, however, grounds a limited objection to this monumental picture of the *Confessio* and its reading practice by fixing upon a countervailing manuscript case. The excerpts from the *Confessio Amantis* in Takamiya MS 32, on deposit at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, witness to a practice of excerption that resituates a number of Gower's exemplary narratives outside of the monumental poem and its elaborate Latin apparatus, and supplies its own elaborations to condition readers' encounter with the excerpts. In their new material and editorial circumstances, the Takamiya excerpts remember Gower's poetry anomalously and instructively so for students of Gower's posthumous reception in fifteenth-century England.

Derek Pearsall describes the standard *Confessio* codex as a careful, professional production with a selection of Gower's short Latin poems or perhaps his French *Traitié* (“Manuscripts” 80). This standard *Confessio* manuscript dependably includes the poem's Latin appa-

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tus, a rigorous program of verse headings and prose commentaries that both summarizes and adorns its Middle English verse. The consistency of this Latin equipment attests to, as A.S.G. Edwards puts it, an “early and rapid consolidation of the form of the *Confessio* in the commercial London book trade”; one dimension of this early consolidation was the conventionalization of this Latin apparatus along with the English (“Selection” 258). Pearsall describes the English text of the *Confessio* as “‘cased’ in Latin . . . rather as wooden battleships became ironclads,” making the *Confessio* out to be a textual dreadnought (“Gower’s Latin” 20). On the whole, it is an apt description; the metaphor neatly captures the poem’s sturdiness and girth as it traveled in manuscript, chugging along in ship-shape and being generally intimidating.

While we may take the above description to be the general rule for the form and format of the *Confessio* in manuscript, Gower’s earliest readers did not always encounter Gower’s poetry in all its armored girth. Pearsall’s census lists eleven surviving manuscripts with extracts from the *Confessio*; eight from the fifteenth century, and three from the sixteenth. Jane Griffiths recently published notice of a tenth fifteenth-century compilation of *Confessio* extracts.⁴ Though Gower’s poetry is excerpted in manuscript less frequently than Chaucer’s or Lydgate’s, these exceptional surviving instances of selection and revision can not only broaden our understanding of how Gower’s early readers encountered the poem, but—extracted and outfitted for new contexts—these instances of excerption propose ways of reading Gower’s tales that are distinct from those abetted by that conventional Gower manuscript.

I am not the first to search for critical insight in this practice of manuscript excerption, wherein scribal or readerly purposes called for the selection and transcription of a portion or portions of the poem into books of a more miscellaneous character than typically come to mind when we think of Gower’s monumental books. Kate Harris investigates the networks of manuscript production and ownership of these excerpting manuscripts in her doctoral dissertation and a series of articles drawn from it. There, she draws the conclusion that excerpts of the *Confessio* were almost certainly trafficked in greater numbers than survive in manuscript today (“Ownership and Readership” 30).⁵ Edwards looks for discernible designs in the particular selections made from the *Confessio* across a number of manuscripts. Prudently, he offers only very tentative attempts to discover a thematic or generic rationale to explain which tales are selected for excerption in these manuscripts. Instead, Edwards concludes that the isolation of tales from the penitential framework itself is the most significant consequence of Gowerian excerption for the interpretation of the tales by manuscript readers (“Selection” 266). Excerption is a practice of textual subver-

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sion. Taken together the theses of Harris and Edwards suggest to us that, in the fifteenth century, the narratives of the *Confessio* could and did travel light, whether or not originally designed to do so. This capacity for levity in manuscript, when availed of, abets a different kind of reading than the big books of Gower, diligently framed and commented upon, surviving on library shelves.

Rather than recapitulating an account of those dozen or so surviving Gower excerpts already provided by Edwards in his 1998 article, though, this essay takes up a specific case and its particular textual subversions. The excerpts from the *Confessio* in Takamiya MS 32 appear there specially refitted for readers as extracts, and invite correspondingly refitted responses to the poem as narratives designed for pleasure and ethical profit (as claimed in Gower's prologue). In this mid-fifteenth century manuscript, four tales from the *Confessio Amantis* precede a short allegorical dialogue unique to the manuscript, the *Speculum Misericordie*.⁶ These are: the "Tale of Three Questions"; the "Tale of Procne, Philomela, and Tereus"; the "Tale of Nectabanabus"; the "Tale of Perseus and Demetrius"; and the "Tale of Adrian and Bardus." Following the *Speculum Misericordie* are Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Immediately following Chaucer's Retraction, the manuscript excerpts Gower once more, combining the story of "Nebuchadnezzar's Dream" from the Prologue (ll. 585–1087) with "Nebuchadnezzar's Punishments" from Book I (l. 2785–3042).⁷

The Gower excerpts of Takamiya 32 have lost their usual Latin accompaniment of interpolated verse, prose commentaries, and marginal speaker markers. The verse-heading of "Nebuchadnezzar's Dream" is the only Latin of the *Confessio Amantis* that has been preserved in Takamiya 32; it is also the only excerpt from Gower that is decorated as shown (figure).⁸ The Latin verses

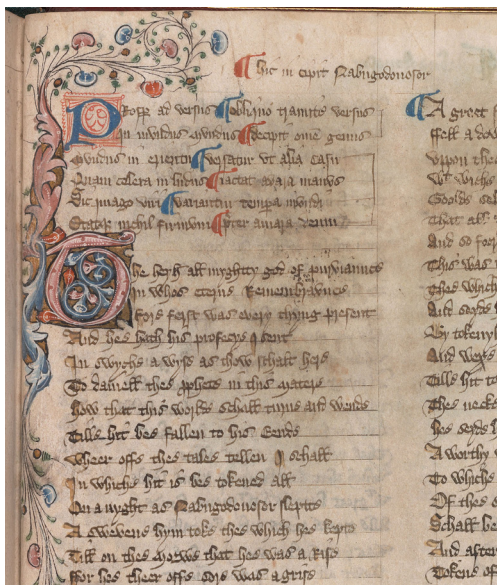


Fig. 1

of human prosperity on a grand temporal scale: Takamiya MS 32, f. 158r. By permission of the Beinecke Library.

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“Like an image of man do the ages of the world vary.”⁹ Though Takamiya includes some decoration here, in many of those standard manuscripts, an illustrated image of a man represents the ages of man on the page in miniature. A number of marginal Latin tags customarily accompany the Middle English of the Prologue, marking the progress of Gower’s description of the dreamed statue with indicators like “*De pectore argenteo*” [“Of the silver breast”] and “*De ventre eneo*” [“Of the copper belly”]. Prose commentaries summarize the English poetry. The commentary at the start of “Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream” usually reads, “Here consequently he writes how the kingdoms of this world, because of various mutations, just as they are figured in the said statue, are perceptibly diminished in accord with each distinction of historical times right up to the present.”¹⁰ Takamiya’s excerpt lacks this introductory prose commentary; only “Hic incipit Nabugodonosor” appears in the top margin.

The significance of this absence of glossing in Takamiya 32 for readers is worth considering in general. After all, the Takamiya excerpts lack Gower’s prose commentaries entirely, and so too do almost all other excerpts from the *Confessio*.¹¹ Derek Pearsall has argued that Gower attempts to “formalise the exemplary function of the stories” with these Latin glosses, so as to regulate interpretation according to “a specific code of reading” (“Latin” 22). Motivating this would-be codification is an authorial anxiety about containing “the potentially volatile nature of the English,” as its fictions “[push] the story away from the exemplary into the more purely mimetic.” Readers of the standard, glossed *Confessio*, then, encountered a text that staged a negotiation between the entertainments of English narrative and the methods of Latinate exemplary abstraction that were inimical to narrative for its own sake. Joyce Coleman, alternatively, sees these Latin glosses as less academizing and explicating and more straightforwardly moralizing and summarizing—that is, less scholarly than homiletic (220–21). In either view, though, the prose glosses point to the moral kernels of the narratives with directness, forcefully or no, while allowing readers a degree of freedom in understanding them as exemplary, for their ethical edification.

In conjunction with the Latin prose commentaries, Genius is himself a persistent spokesman for the exemplary function of the stories in his office of confessor, formalizing ethical readings of his tales in colloquy with Amans. And consistently, the Takamiya excerpts bear no traces of the framing conversation between Genius and Amans. The first of the tales excerpted from the *Confessio* in the manuscript, the “Tale of Three Questions,” appears without its immediately preceding verse-heading (in which Gower meditates on the humility of the Incarnation). In the *Confessio* Genius introduces this tale as “a cronique . . . if that it mai thee like, / So that thou myht humblesce suie / And ek the vice of Pride

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eschuie" (I.3059–62). The Latin prose commentary similarly describes the tale as an exemplum against pride, one "from recent times" [*nuper*] told "plainly" [*simpliciter*]. Takamiya 32 provides only a modest rhyming *incipit* ahead of the tale: "H[ere be]gynniht a worthy thyng / [Of iij] questionys of a king," a description that dispenses with the exemplary rhetoric of the original in favor of the flexibly vague "worthy thing" (f. 3r). This excerpted "Tale of Three Questions" ends after the revelation of the names of the king and the humble maid, Alphonse of Spain and one Peronelle. The manuscript does not include Genius's punctuating clarification to Amans on the moral message of this tale that follows in the standard *Confessio*, which usually reads:

Lo now, my sone, as thou myht hierē,
Of al this thing to my matiere
Bot on I take, and that is Pride,
To whom no grace mai betide. (I.3404–06)

Where the Confessor and the Latin gloss formalize the narrative's function as a tale that models an answer to pride, Takamiya's *incipit* sees only a fuzzily "worthy thing." In this, the manuscript departs even from the tendencies of other excerpted versions of the "Tale of Three Questions." The Findern manuscript also excerpts this tale, and includes twenty-three lines of Genius's thoughts on humility lacking in Takamiya that follow (I.3403–25). The Findern even retains the speech tag "Confessor" (f. 56v–57r).¹² Yet Takamiya is content to present this tale with none of the gestures towards a paramount moral meaning that complement it in the complete *Confessio* or in its elsewhere-excerpted form in the Findern manuscript. The excerpted of the "Tale of Adrian and Bardus" begins with a similarly makeshift English *incipit*: "Here bee gynniht of an vnkynde man / of Rome that hyghte Adrian" (f. 13r). The manuscript excerpts the "Tale of Nectanabus" (ff. 8v–11v) with no scribal or editorial attachments, and ends the story on a note of vague regret over Alexander's patricide: "His fader wiche hym mysbegatte / heo hym slowe a gret myshap was thatte" (f. 11v).

This apparent indifference to moral conclusion persists in the tale of Tereus, titled "Progne + Phelomena" in this manuscript, which follows the "Tale of Three Questions." In the typical *Confessio* manuscript, the tale ends:

And yit unto this dai men seith,
A lappewincke hath lore his feith
And is the brid falseste of alle.
Confessor Bewar, mi sone, er thee so falle. (V.6045–48)

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The natural end to the Ovidian narrative falls in the middle of the second quoted couplet, the last line of the tale proper rhyming with the first line of Genius's direct address to Amans. The elsewhere-excerpted "Tale of Tereus," in the Findern manuscript, keeps that last line unaltered; "mi sone" is passed off as a term of familiar address to the reader despite its specific reference to Amans in the *Confessio*. The excerpt in Takamiya, though, completes that rhyme quite differently:

Thee lapwynke hath lorn his feyht
And is thee bridde falssest of alle
I prey to god fayre mote vs by falle. (f. 8v)

This one-line revision, however bland, is hugely consequential for the tale's moral conclusion. Gower's original exemplary logic, quite strikingly, invites readers to inquire of themselves whether they might be capable of acts of malicious sexual violence akin to those narrated in the "Tale of Tereus." Genius continues:

Bewar, mi sone, er thee so falle.
For if thou be of such covine,
To gete of love be Ravine
Thi lust, it mai thee falle thus,
As it befell of Tereus. (V.6045-49)

Genius insists that Amans read the narrative as an example for lovers, to resist turning to the ugliest of means to accomplish their desire, as Tereus does. In this Genius affirms an exemplary reading already codified in the prose commentary: "Here he presents an instructive example against those who are rapists in the cause of love." Indeed, the excerpted version of the Findern ends with these five lines of warning from Genius, proving this lesson's potential portability outside of the confessional frame of the poem (f. 5r). The excerpted "Tale of Tereus" in Takamiya 32 closes quite differently, with a note of banal well-wishing: "I prey to god fayre mote vs by falle." As presented the narrative prompts no consideration of possible correspondences between lovers' arts that work craftily toward desired ends and the methods of a lovers' coven that seize possession of the desired without consent, by "getting of love be Ravine." It prompts no reflection upon the brutality motivated by desire. In that sense Takamiya 32 reproduces a de-moralized version of Gower's tale of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela that excuses readers from thinking through the poem's moral stakes for ethical actors capable of gross misdeeds. Instead this version of the "Tereus"

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narrative ultimately figures its readers as mere victims of mishap, ever bystanders to sexual violence rather than its perpetrators.

Of the Gower narratives in Takamiya 32, the “Tale of Demetrius and Perseus” undergoes the most substantial revisions when reframed for excerption. In the *Confessio*, the tale follows the “Tale of Constance” as a second tale of political intrigue meant to instruct readers against detraction and backbiting. Genius promises such a tale, and so too does the Latin commentary: “Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those detractors who, fashioning lies in vituperation of another, cause defamation to be made” [“Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra istos detractores, qui in alterius vituperium mendacia confingentes diffamacionem fieri procurant”]. Genius, in an economical three lines, introduces the tale as a “gret ensample” found in a “cronique.” There’s nothing keeping this from making a decent start to an excerpted “Demetrius and Perseus,” but Takamiya’s excerpt comes outfitted with a lengthier prologue to the tale:

Leve lordys and freendis dere
Lestenyht a while and yee schal here
ffor as hit is doon mee to wyte
In Rome hit is cronykelid and wrete
And entred there in oold storys 5
Evere for to been kepte in memorie
And for they bee bothe stedefast and trewe
They bee wreten in bokys fewe
But of oo thyng I woll yow tell
yif that yee wille a stownde dwell 10
I schal doone yow annone to wyte
As I in cronykels fynde hit i wrete
As yee schall wyte by vnderstandyng
Of phelip of macedoyne that was kyng . . .
(Takamiya MS 32, f. 11vb, ll. 1–14)

This prologue, for a start, regularly gives up on Gower’s octosyllabic verse, seeming to prefer slightly longer lines (like 2, 4, 6, 7). In that, the prologue doesn’t sound Gowerian. But more importantly, it is less interested in framing the “Tale of Demetrius and Perseus” as an instructive example against detraction than as a steadfast and true old story, a chestnut preserved from time barely memorial in “bokys fewe.” A generic feature of romance—the exhortatory invocation of an audience, with its call to listen—does some of the framing work of the penitential dialogue and Latin apparatus that customarily accompanies the narrative in the standard *Confessio*. This added injunction to

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“listen a while” and “hear” might be taken as tantalizing evidence for fifteenth-century oral recitation of Gower’s poetry, but such a conclusion must be a qualified one. Medieval romances often open with such gestures toward oral performance when, over their course, they make consistent reference to reading books of romance and *gestes*.¹³ The Takamiya excerpt of “Demetrius and Perseus” is recast by this added introduction as a story trafficked in both oral and written form, one told and heard as well as chronicled and written. Such a revision of the tale’s prologue accomplishes a clear generic affiliation with romance that obscures the Tale’s exemplary function, which is so emphasized in the longer *Confessio*. Gower’s original has its own romantic moments; one could cite the “Tale of Florent,” the “Tale of the False Bachelor,” and discussions of “gentillesse” in Book IV.¹⁴ But there, romance reading practice must contend with an insistently exemplary one practiced by Genius himself in the frame of the *Confessio*, and further formalized in the ironclad casing of its Latin.¹⁵ In Takamiya 32, the supplemented rhetoric of romance displaces a rhetoric of exemplarity found in the standard *Confessio*. In opening the tale with a convention of romance, the excerpt invites a romance reading that, generally, prizes lust over lore¹⁶; the implications of genre here signal the entertainment value to found in the tale to readers, rather than the declarative assertions of its apparatus that points to its moral purchase.

The excerpted “Demetrius and Perseus” ends with another addition to Gower’s text, with its own generic evocations. In the standard *Confessio*, Genius explains the tale’s “profit”:

Lo, what profit a man mai finde,
Which hindre wole another wiht.
Forthi with al thin hole miht,
Mi sone, eschuie thilke vice. (II.1862–65)

But Takamiya’s scribe begins to copy out a different ending, only to lose interest in it:

But loo what proffyte a man may fynde
That hyndre wole any maner wyght
Therefore I rede thee *with* all thyn hool myght
fforto cunsseyle every man to the beste gyse
And ellis dare I seye thow doost not as the wyse
Lord so full of grace sittyng in mageste
graunte us wit and space here to serve thee
And forto lyve (f. 13r)

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The last line is apparently unfinished; unfinished too is the couplet that the last line begins. This addition to the tale serves a very different purpose than the added prologue (though they share a disregard for Gower's octosyllabic line). It echoes the moral message of Genius to Amans—do not hinder others and profit—written in the authorial frame. But the purchase of the tale's lesson is expressed in pastoral, rather than personal, terms; the narrator enjoins the reader to counsel others toward good conduct ("to the beste gyse"), as the wise do. Its echo of Gower's moral has a homiletic ring to it; the reader is imagined as an intermediate counselor between the poem's pleasing narrative and those who ultimately profit from it. The added ending employs a logical formula familiar to readers of devotional works like the *Prick of Conscience*, when it proposes that the conduct of the wise amounts to right conduct. ("He nys not wise that to hit traysteth" says the *Conscience*-poet of the world; so it follows, "He may be calde witty and wyse / That this worlde con wel despise" [ll. 1359, 1402–03].¹⁷) This incomplete conclusion to the "Tale of Demetrius and Perseus" gestures at an exemplary reading, but in terms altogether distinct from that furnished by Gower's Genius. It recalibrates its address to a reader who is the counselor rather than the one counseled, and reframes its lesson with a generic formula of pastoral advice.

The conclusion to "Demetrius and Perseus" serves as a reminder that a total and programmatic de-moralizing is not the rule for the treatment of *Confessio* excerpts across manuscripts. The Findern manuscript selects for excerption not only narrative tales but the explicitly moral lesson taught by Genius against idleness (attached to the "Tale of Rosiphilee") and another lesson against somnolence. The compilation described by Jane Griffiths only includes one narrative of Gower's amongst its excerpts of the *Confessio*, the "Tale of Codrus" (Griffiths 247). To conclude that Takamiya 32 witnesses to a widespread practice of amorally reading Gower's tales, in excerpt or against the grain where it appears framed and glossed, would be to overreach. However, the traces of these narratives' adaptation to excerpted existence witness to the various possibilities of reading for morality or for recreation open to the earliest readers of the *Confessio*. Takamiya 32 records alternative medieval program to the typical manuscript's fastidious institution of a "code of reading" in the ways that it supplants this code with its own, however rudimentary and improvised we may find it in comparison to the poet's. Here we find texts that have dispensed with Gower's moralizing tactics in writing somewhat of lust and somewhat of lore, texts that resist the thoroughgoing appropriation of the "lusty" matter of the *Confessio* for exemplary purposes. Instead this manuscript witnesses to a practice of excerpting Gower that carefully dismantled his ironclad

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battleship of a text for new purposes, stripping it of Latinate armor and moral firepower that would only weigh down the pleasure cruise.

After all this disarmament, Takamiya's excerpting treatment equips Gower's narratives with nonauthorial fragments and passages to lead into and out of the tales—inventions of its scribe or inheritances from a copy-text.¹⁸ Some of these attachments are more perfunctory rhyming rubrication than poetry (as in "Here begynniht a worthy thyng / Of iij questionys of a king"). In the "Tale of Demetrius and Perseus," these additions pose as authorial and integral to the original composition. While most *Confessio* manuscripts suggest a regimented and inflexible scribal approach to the work at hand, Takamiya's unattributed Gower excerpts attest to how scribes felt able and free to rearrange the component parts of the *Confessio*, and even concoct bits and pieces of poetry that masquerade as Gower's verse. In this, the *Confessio* excerpts can look to a neighbor in manuscript for an analogous case. These textual accretions serve as Gower's spurious links, akin to those invented, nonauthorial passages that scribes scripted for the pilgrims of the *Canterbury Tales*.¹⁹ Takamiya 32 itself witnesses to a number of these links, which do not only fill and smoothen the gaps left by the poet between *Tales*, but at times displace those links that are truly Chaucerian. A spurious Clerk-Franklin link on f. 81v, for example, renders the authentic Squire-Franklin link on f. 55v a redundant appendage, lodged awkwardly between the *Squire's Tale* and the *Merchant's Tale*.²⁰

The spurious *Canterbury* links, however, are fabricated to frame each individual *Tale* within Chaucer's grander pilgrimage scheme. The revisions and supplements to the Gower excerpts do the opposite; these reframe the exemplary narratives of the *Confessio* for a freestanding existence. This seeming point of resemblance indexes distinct approaches to these poems and their author's original designs. While Gower's monumental English poem remains invisible with its traces scrubbed away, Chaucer's larger designs are reproduced with some well-intentioned—if clumsy—polishing. The manuscript is itself another site of interaction between Chaucer and Gower, and in time, between their poetic legacies. In life Gower and Chaucer kept company as Londoners, friends, and fellow poets (and they continue to do so as figments of critical imaginations).²¹ In Takamiya, their Middle English poetry keeps company in manuscript.²² Even the book's construction registers an early and still persistent imbalance of esteem weighted heavily in Chaucer's favor.²³ A rubric names Chaucer as the compiler of the *Canterbury Tales*, while this friend of Chaucer contributes his six excerpts anonymously.²⁴ A nearly complete collection of the *Tales* accounts for the bulk of the book.²⁵ The *Confessio Amantis*, meanwhile, never merits explicit mention as the original source of these excerpts.

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Subsequent to the manuscript's initial production, its readers and owners have only emphasized Chaucer's preeminence. Chaucer strikes a dignified pose in a nineteenth-century watercolor portrait bound into the manuscript as a first leaf. The manuscript, for all its miscellaneous contents, has been known by the alias "the Delamere Chaucer." While Chaucer looms large and in living color over the Delamere, this Chaucer manuscript nevertheless rewards closer attention to the textual maneuvers that facilitate excerption from the *Confessio Amantis* and present Gower, however anonymously, to fifteenth-century readers in a new form.

Notes

1. On the *Mirour de l'Omme* and the production of this manuscript, see R.F. Yeager, "Gower's French Audience."
2. The two dedicated volumes are Oxford, Digby 138, and Hatfield Hall. Exceptions to the *Vox* appearing in full are the defective BL Harley 6291, which lacks the Prologue and i.1–501, and BL Cotton Titus A.13, a sixteenth-century witness that breaks off at iii.116. Macauley provides complete entries for manuscripts of the *Vox* in his edition of *Complete Works*, vol. 4, lix–lxxi. *Vox* MSS with other Latin works are Oxford, All Souls College 98, Glasgow, Hunterian T2.17, Laud 719, Cotton Tiberius A.4, London, British Library Harley 6291, San Marino, Huntington MS 150 *olim* Ecton Hall, Lincoln Cath. A.72, Dublin, Dublin D.4.6. The *Traitié* accompanies the *Vox Clamantis* in Oxford, All Souls College 98, and Glasgow, Hunterian T2.17.
3. I include in this count *Confessio* MSS lacking leaves and the abridged versions found in Manchester, Chetham's Library MS A.7.38 and Princeton University, Firestone Library, Garrett MS 136. Left off of the list is the fragmentary BL Egerton 913 and Cambridge University Library, Dd.8.19, which omits part of book V and all of Book VIII. See Pearsall's list in "Manuscripts and Illustrations of Gower's Works," 74–9.
4. Jane Griffiths, "Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: A 'New' Manuscript."
5. Harris writes: "Deriving from a common ancestor, together the manuscripts [Takamiya 32 and Cambridge, CUL Ee II.15] evidence the circulation of heavily edited extracts from the *Confessio* in the middle of the fifteenth century (the date of Takamiya) and their continued availability a few decades later (the date of Ee)." Edwards's codicological account of the construction of Takamiya 32 in "Gower in the Delamere Manuscript," however, suggests that Takamiya's excerpts were culled directly from a complete *Confessio* exemplar. He explains the marginal notation of "quintus" on f. 7r as a reference to Book V of the *Confessio*, where the scribe could find his copy-text. I find this unlikely, given that the tale begins on f. 5v, and the extent of the alterations made to the *Confessio* excerpts in the manuscript. This would also be at odds with Harris's

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account of these excerpts' circulation. If indeed a reference to the Book V, I find it more likely that it was added after the text was copied out.

6. On this poem, see Rossell Hope Robbins, "The Speculum Misericordie."

7. J.M Manly and Edith Rickert suggest that the *Canterbury Tales* once began the manuscript; ff. 3–19 are supposed to have been attached later. See their description in *Texts of The Canterbury Tales*, vol. 1, 109–10. For an alternative view, see Edwards's explanation of the book's construction in his "Gower in the Delamere Chaucer Manuscript."

8. The decorated page of Gower is on f. 158r; the *Speculum Misericordie* is also decorated on f. 14v (the initial of this decoration has been cut out). The *Canterbury Tales* are decorated on ff. 108r, the start of the *Tale of Melibee*. The manuscript lacks its original leaf where the General Prologue would begin on f. 20r. It is assumed that this page was decorated as well, and much later torn out of the book; the decoration has left slight impressions in the margin of the facing page, f. 19v.

9. I benefit throughout from the translations of Andrew Galloway in Russell Peck's edition of the *Confessio Amantis*. All quotations from the *Confessio Amantis* also come from Peck's edition.

10. The Latin reads: "Hic consequenter scribit qualiter huius seculi regna variis mutacionibus, prout in dicta statua figurabatur, secundum temporum distinctiones sencibiliter hactenus diminuuntur."

11. The exception is the manuscript described by Griffiths, "A 'New' Manuscript."

12. Cambridge, Cambridge University Library Ff.1.6. I refer to the facsimile edition of Beadle and Owen, *The Findern Manuscript*.

13. See Ford, "In romance as we read and as we hear in geste."

14. Jeremy Dimmick, "'Redinge of Romance' in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*," in *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*, ed. Rosalind Field (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 125–37.

15. See William Robins, "Romance, Exemplum, and the Subject of the *Confessio Amantis*."

16. See Ford. In the same manuscript, we find the "Tale of Gamelyn" beginning, "Lythes and lestenyht & herkenyht a Ryght / And yee shall here of a dowghty knyght" (f. 45r).

17. For instances of such a formula in *The Prick of Conscience*, see l. 115 ff., l. 197 ff., l. 1090 ff., l. 1358 ff., and l. 3494 ff. I cite from Morey's edition.

18. While I am hesitant to speculate too much about the specifics of the manuscript's production, others have made it the subject of their research. For instance, Mosser plausibly attributes a manuscript of *Mandeville's Travels*, Cambridge Gg.1.34, to the scribe of Takamiya 32 in "The Scribe of Takamiya 32."

19. See Bowers, ed., *The Canterbury Tales: Fifteenth Century Continuations and Additions*.

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20. In addition to the Clerk-Franklin link, the manuscript in a spurious Canon-Physician link (f. 96r), Pardoner-Shipman link (f. 101r), and four spurious lines in the Thopas-Melibee link (107v). Bowers credits J.M. Manly with coining the term “spurious links,” but Furnivall describes these links as spurious in his report on the manuscripts contents. See his note, “Lord Delamere’s MS of the ‘Canterbury Tales.’”

21. The tenacity and inevitability of this lingering association make for first-page material in two great scholarly reassessments of Gower’s poetry: John Hurt Fisher’s *John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer* and R.F. Yeager’s *John Gower’s Poetic: The Search for a New Arion*. For a more freely imaginative scholarly rendering of Gower and Chaucer’s friendship, see Holsinger, *A Burnable Book*.

22. Gower’s poetry appears with Chaucer in a few further manuscripts: London, British Library Harley 7333; Cambridge, CUL MS Ee.2.15 and MS Ff.1.6 (the Findern Manuscript); and Gonville and Caius MS 176/97. Of these, only Takamiya 32 and Harley 7333 are collections of the *Canterbury Tales*.

23. One need only look so far as Gower’s epithets to understand how friendship with his more celebrated contemporary has come to define him. “Moral Gower” is Chaucer’s own term of affection; John Hurt Fisher puts “Friend of Chaucer” in the subtitle of his foundational 1964 biography cited in the note above.

24. The manuscript lacks the first page of the *General Prologue*, but Chaucer is named after the Retraction on f. 157v regardless.

25. The *Canterbury Tales* occupy ff. 20r–157v. This includes the spurious “Tale of Gamelyn” and excludes the *Wife of Bath’s Tale*, the *Friar’s Tale*, and the *Summoner’s Tale*.

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About the Author

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Outside of the dissertation, his work has employed traditional and digital methods to understand medieval manuscript culture as a Fellow at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and as a collaborator on the Digitally Enabled Scholarship of Medieval Manuscripts project (funded by the Mellon Foundation). Further afield, he has written on medievalism across the Americas, particularly in the nineteenth-century United States and in twentieth-century Argentina (culminating in contributions to the *Global Chaucers* project). Email: Joseph.Stadolnik@yale.edu.

Beginnings and Endings: Narrative Framing in *Confessio Amantis*

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In the fourteenth century in England, authors used framing devices to guide readers in interpreting their texts. This practice grows out of an academic tradition in which a lecture introducing an *auctor* (a respected and credible writer, usually ancient) would develop into a prologue introducing the commentary on that *auctor's* work (Minnis 1–3, 10). Later, authors begin to apply this academic practice to their own texts. As Alistair Minnis has shown, “The writers of *artes praedicandi* were especially fond of describing the *causae* of their works” (Minnis 161). However, the authors of these texts concerning the art of preaching were not alone. Authors such as Robert Mannyng, Geoffrey Chaucer, Thomas Usk, Thomas Hoccleve, and John Lydgate all appended various forms of prologues to their works, authorizing and explaining the purpose(s) of their texts.¹ Nor was John Gower an exception to his contemporaries; however, Gower’s frame extends beyond the prologue. Gower’s framing device in *Confessio Amantis* is a circular frame that does not come to fruition until the revelatory moment when Venus unmask Amans as John Gower. This circular frame is unusual in its delayed completion and it is also unusual in its effect. Furthermore, it responds to a larger historical shift in the locus of meaning that had begun in the twelfth century: whereas it once was the author’s domain, the creation of meaning had since become the reader’s. As Rita Copeland has shown, this shift “gives the reader the power of invention. It gives reading and interpretation—the traditional province of the grammarian—a new status, as textual power shifts from authorial intention to ‘affective stylistics,’ to what the reader can do with the text” (158). By modeling a way of reading, *Confessio Amantis* implicitly acknowledges that the reader may choose how to read and to interpret its text, and so this revisionary reading process modeled in the poem is all the more important because it demonstrates that meaning comes out of a retrospective perspective that is a constructive sum of interpretations. The revelatory moment of the poem, however, forces the reader to reconsider what she has read for wisdom rather than love; Gower uses this moment to promote a way of reading for such an empowered readership.

Framing structures and ways of reading *Confessio* are two major foci of critics. Much of the criticism in this vein focuses on the *Prologus*,

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which Derek Pearsall contends “provides the basic moral frame in which the picture of ‘love’ is to be held steady” (476). But while love is indeed held steady in this way, this steady frame to which Pearsall refers does not become clear until the end of the poem. Minnis notes the differences between the extrinsic *Prologus* and the body of the poem (180), which establishes an instability in the poem from its beginning.² Despite the various exegetical structures that Gower employs, this sense of instability remains until the revelatory moment at which time what has seemed to be problematic instability becomes constructive mutability.³ According to John H. Fisher, the process of this shift “becomes the controlling idea throughout the poem” (190). The revelatory moment in Book 8 evidences the circular frame’s modeling of a way of reading that responds to this controlling idea—an observation Northrop Frye passes over lightly despite its implications (52). Russell Peck gestures toward the necessity of the ending in interpreting the poem as a whole when he observes, “The problem [of interpretation] is largely the result of man’s limited perspective” (21).⁴ The revelatory moment remedies this limited perspective. The process of reading through the circular frame corresponds to what J. Allan Mitchell identifies in *Confessio* as a way of “reading for the moral” in “what medieval exegets called the ‘topological’ response” (14–15). These critics all consider the structures and/or methods Gower uses to set up his poem to be read either at the beginning or during the body of the poem, but the circular frame of the poem proposed here is the sum of all of these parts. That is, the circular frame encompasses the framing structures and models a way of reading, uniting both of these processes in order for the poem to succeed.

The Initial Frame

The beginning of the *Prologus* juxtaposes the theme of mutability and inconstancy in mortal life in order to demonstrate the lasting presence of books to the reader. Gower situates *Confessio* in a tradition of books:

Of hem that writen ous tofore
The bokes duelle, and we therfore
Ben tawht of that was write tho:
Forthi good is that we also
In oure tyme among ous hier
Do wryte of newe som matiere,
Essampled of these olde wyse,
So that it myhte in such a wyse,

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Whan we ben dede and elleswhere,
Beleve to the worldes eere
In tyme comende after this. (Prol. 1–11)

In just eleven lines, Gower shows the relationship of past, present, and future to his current enterprise. Having read the books from the past, Gower crafts something in his present that will exist into the future after his body has died. This opening salvo underscores Gower's determination to preserve some piece of his work in perpetuity in spite of mortality—his determination for a sort of remembrance. Immediately, then, Gower acknowledges the inevitability of change and decay while at the same time gesturing toward his hope that his own work may avoid this fate—that it may be left behind for the world to hear in times to come.

Change preoccupies the *Prologus* in both recensions, but the tone surrounding it becomes markedly darker in the Lancastrian. Gower originally writes in a joyful tone, one filled with hope for the promise of the young King Richard. England is “newe Troye, / Which took of Brut his ferste joye” (Prol. *37–*38). In the Lancastrian recension, Gower writes “A bok for Engelondes sake” and, what seems rather anxious, “What schal befall hierafterward / God wot” (Prol. 24, 26–27). Gower's concern with what will happen, though, gives way to hope:

Bot for men sein it is now lassed,
In worse plit that it was tho,
I thenke for to touche also
The world which neweth every dai,
So as I can, so as I mai. (Prol. 56–60)

These lines indicate, despite his concerns with the instability of the word, Gower remains optimistic and that renewal will come out of the current plight of the world. Instability is a concern for Gower, but he counters this concern with a determination to show that good will win out, or, at least, that wisdom will: “For this prologe is so assised / That it to wisdom al belongeth” (Prol. 66–67). The beginning of the *Prologus* demonstrates the tension between the instability of the world outside of the poem and the ways in which Gower's poem attempts to temper such instability by teaching wisdom to its reader. The reader acquires wisdom, then, through reading the poem. Such learning is a revisionary act; the reader must read all of Gower's poem before he will recognize this wisdom. Even in a world that has become more unstable, Gower maintains that wisdom will help to reorder it.

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The Lancastrian recension of the *Prologus* hints toward the circular framing of *Confessio* by shifting the poem's stated focus from wisdom to love. Gower acknowledges that the subject matter of the *Prologus* is not going to be what the body of the poem focuses upon:

Whan the prologue is so despended,
This bok schal afterward ben ended
Of love, which doth many a wonder
And many a wys man hath put under. (Prol. 73-76)

If the *Prologus* is assigned to wisdom, as cited above, and if love can hoodwink a wise man, the point of this *Prologus* comes under question. Wisdom, though powerful, holds less power over man than does love, yet Gower begins his poem by discussing his attempt to leave lasting wisdom for men to hear. Something does not add up here, and the ending of the first part of the *Prologus* in both recensions signals the beginnings of a *why*. In the Ricardian recension, Gower notes that his *Prologus* will discuss the past, the present, and the lessons we can take from both:

And thus the prologe of my book
After the world that whilom took,
And eek somdel after the newe,
I wol begynne for to newe. (Prol. *89-*92)

Here, Gower motions toward continuity—a *translatio imperii* or *translatio studii* of the past coalescing with the present to make something greater, and yet this initial gesture contradicts what the poem becomes. Copeland succinctly explains: “even as Gower’s text invokes this ideal of continuity and undertakes the project of cultural recuperation, it embodies the very process of rupture and mutability it decries” (218). This move follows the hopefulness of Gower’s discussion with the young King Richard (Prol. *34-*53). However, in the Lancastrian recension there is a sense of weariness:

So woll I now this werk embrace
With hol trust and with hol believe.
God grante I mot it wel achieve. (Prol. 90-92)

Russell Peck glosses the last line as “that I have the power to finish” (in Gower 47), but this line could instead refer back to the act of embracing in the first, emphasizing wholeness and an embracing of that wholeness—both images of circularity. At this moment in the

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Prologus, Gower hints toward the circular frame he uses in *Confessio Amantis* that is not revealed until its end. He embraces his poem in two senses: first, he willingly accepts the task that lies before him, but second, and more importantly, he embraces his work as if in a protective hug. The structure he uses to embrace and, in so doing, to protect his text is the circular frame. If, as Pearsall has convincingly argued, Gower is obsessed with controlling the interpretation of his work, this moment speaks to that obsession. Gower's embrace of his text through the circular frame attempts to guide the reader to read the poem correctly, and his appeal to God, conventional as it may be, reinforces the stakes, to Gower's mind, of leading the reader to interpret his poem in the correct way. Achieving unity as the last line above indicates, however, does not mean arriving at a meaning. Instead, it implies that unity comes from practicing a type of reading that recognizes mutability and responds to it constructively.

The Revelatory Moment and the Circular Frame

The revelatory moment of *Confessio* occurs when Venus exposes Amans to be John Gower, the old lover, and through this act, Gower posits a retrospective reading model that results from the unity and order gained in reading the poem. Gower uses the revelatory moment to collapse the persona of his poem back into one person: the old John Gower. Amans makes his supplication to Venus and Cupid, removing the intermediary of the priest, Genius. In direct interaction with Venus, then, Amans reveals himself as John Gower and simultaneously undoes his separate persona:

So as I myhte, under a tre
To grounde I fell upon mi kne,
And preide hire for to do me grace:
Sche caste hire chiere upon mi face,
And as it were halving a game
Sche axeth me what is mi name.
“Ma dame,” I seide, “John Gower.” (8.2315–21; my italics)

Venus is described acting in jest or playing along with a childish fantasy which she has seen through since its inception. Even though Gower has been able to fool himself and his readers into believing Amans is a separate person, Venus, as the italicized lines above indicate, has known all along that it has been John Gower. She asks the question as if she were playing a game—teasing old John Gower that she did

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not know Amans's true identity. This revelatory moment outs Amans as old John Gower—he was old John Gower from the poem's beginning. This John Gower is not *the* John Gower—he remains a persona. Paul Strohm discusses the importance of Gower's persona, concluding, "our enjoyment of *Confessio Amantis* [is] sharpened by the interplay of Gower as Amans, Gower as Poet or *auctor* of the *presens libellus*, and the historical John Gower" (295). This shift presents the reader with a persona with a more specific identity, a man with a proper rather than allegorical name. He is *a* John Gower—specifically an old poet who desperately wishes to be a lover but who, as Venus will judge, no longer has the youthful body capable of love. The revelation here is multi-leveled: first, within the poem, the allegorical scheme of the confession is broken and old John Gower as Amans is forced to reoccupy his present self—the persona of the old poet. That is, Gower—the actual poet—can no longer limit the poem's perspective to the youthful lover now that Venus openly acknowledges (and reveals to the reader) that Amans is anything but. Second, the reader realizes that this confession has been a ruse all along—Amans's confession has actually been the old John Gower's confession. This second point does not undo the reader's interpretation of what she has read; rather, it points to the mutability of the poem that mirrors the mutability of life. The reader's experience reading *Confessio* shifts as the poem shifts: mutability, here, is constructive, creating layered meaning rather than collapsing it.

This revelation that Amans has been old John Gower, the poetic persona, begets a greater revelation for the reader: upon realizing that this confession has been a literary rather than literal enterprise, the reader must reassess her own interpretations because the frame through which she had read has been changed at its very end. This reassessment is the structural exemplum of *Confessio Amantis*. The revelatory moment places the deceived reader alongside the self-deceiving persona, old John Gower. Both perspectives have been limited throughout the poem, but this retrospective emendation invites the reader to reconsider what he has read and reflects the mutability of the poem. When Venus tells old John Gower that he is excused from her court, she forgives his transgression and promises to heal him of his "unsely jolif wo" that burns in his heart (8.2350–61). Venus concludes that he deserves no more than healing:

For in the plit which I thee finde,
So as mi court it hath awarded,
Thou schalt be duely rewarded;
And if thou woldest more crave,
It is no riht that thou it have. (8.2372–76)

John Gower will be rewarded for the complaint that he has brought to Venus and her court; apparently, the confession that he has put forward has not all been for naught. This reward doubles for the reader; lest he think all he has read through the initial frame is fruitless, Venus's lines here reassure that his efforts, too, have not been in vain. The revelatory moment completes the frame, and the rest of the poem plays out specifically for Gower the poet to work through this shift for the reader. It also displays openly the deception that Gower has employed in the framing of *Confessio* and has warned his reader against throughout the poem.⁵ The failing of the reader to recognize the deception of this frame despite being warned time and again in the prologue⁶ is akin to the failing of old John Gower to accept his age and to acknowledge that he cannot enter Love's court. Just as Venus greets Gower's failing with kindness, Gower treats the reader's failing with equal benevolence, and the revelatory moment imposes the retrospective reconsideration necessary.

The revelatory moment is intended to move the reader back to the beginning of the poem, but the remainder of the poem after this moment also plays a role in this movement. The process that old John Gower undergoes is, on some level, a model for the same process that the reader must undergo. A poem that began under the auspices of a young man's confession and education in love has become an old man's denied entry into the court of love.⁷ Venus chides Gower:

And thogh thou feigne a yong corage,
It scheweth wel be the visage
That olde grisel is no fole:
There ben ful manye yeeres stole
With thee and with suche other mo,
That outward feignen youthe so
And ben withinne of pore assay. (8.2405–11; emphasis mine)

Gower is an old man and he should not be attempting to act like a young man. The lines emphasized return to the theme of deception. Gower the poet is guilty twofold of deception: on one hand, he has attempted to deceive Venus in the poem through Amans. More importantly, he has deceived his reader into believing that he could educate him on love. Despite all of this deception in play, though, Venus points out that there has been much learned during this process:

Mi sone, if thou be wel bethought,
This toucheth thee; forget it noht:

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The thing is torned into was;
That which was whilom grene gras,
Is welked hey at time now.
Forthi mi conseil is that thou
Remembre wel hou thou art old. (8.2433–39)

She advises old John Gower to not forget the past; rather, he must remember the past because of its importance to the present. The final line here indicates that old John Gower remembers that he is old, but it specifically demands that he remember *how* he has become old. Aging is inevitable, but old John Gower is instructed to remember how he individually became old—to use the knowledge of a lived life. This directive implies wisdom is gained in this way. The experiences that old John Gower has had through his life merit reflection; in fact, that is what *Confessio* expresses to its reader through the revelatory moment—the need for reflection on the experience of reading the poem.

This need for reflection takes a literal turn in the poem when Venus holds a mirror before old John Gower and he sees that he has, indeed, become old. This curious move asks old John Gower to trust one of the senses that from the beginning of the poem has been most suspect: sight. Old John Gower's reaction to seeing himself in the mirror uses his physical rejection of his current outward appearance to motivate him into a reflection of his life:

Mi will was tho to se no more
Outwith, for ther was no pleasance;
And thane into my remembrance
I drowh myn olde daies passed,
And as reson it hath compassed,
I made a liknesse of miselve
Unto the sondri monthes twelve,
Wherof the yeer in his astat
Is mad, and stant upon debat,
That lich til other non acordeth. (8.2832–41)

Old John Gower decides to reflect on his life and to organize it into the seasons of the year. He projects an image of himself according to each season of his life. This process moves old John Gower out of the rule of love and into the rule of reason. Through reflection, Gower the poet enables reason to come to old John Gower and to cure him of his malady “So that of thilke fyri peine / I was mad aobre and hol ynowh” (8.2868–69). This episode enacts, in miniature, what the framing of

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the poem as a whole enacts upon its reader, providing a space for reflection that will lead to the action necessary to invite reason.

The penance that old John Gower receives from Venus (after he has reflected on his “sins”) symbolizes the penance for the reader who has been deceived throughout the poem. Old John Gower’s greatest sin, it would seem, is pretending to be something that he is not. Gower’s poem presents itself and disguises itself to its reader in a way that makes it about what it *is not*, necessitating the reflection that old John Gower models at the end of Book 8 and reinforcing the mutability of poetry itself. For example, the disparity between the *Prologus*’s focus on wisdom and then the rest of the poem’s focus on love dissolves with eventual reflection. Genius supposedly absolves old John Gower:

The prest anon was redy tho,
And seide, “Sone, as of thi schrifte
Thou hast ful pardoun and forgifte;
Forget it thou, and so wol I.” (8.2894–97)

Genius pardons old John Gower of his sins, but his last line is somewhat confusing. He essentially says, “If you forget it, I will, too.” This remark does not seem to connote absolution as much as it does a mutual agreement to forget. Old John Gower again asks mercy and goes to leave when Venus stops him:

Bot sche, that wolde make an ende,
As therto which I was most able,
A peire of bedes blak as sable
Sche tok and heng my necke aboute;
Upon the gaudes al withoute
Was write of gold, *Por reposer*.
“Lo,” thus sche seide, “John Gower,
Now thou art ate laste cast,
This have I for thin ese cast,
That thou no more of love sieche.
Bot my will is that thou besieche
And preie hierafter for the pes[.]” (8.2902–13)

The phrase “*Por reposer*” inscribed on the rosary is commonly translated meaning “for repose” or “for rest.” Read in this way, Venus directs old John Gower to cease his attempts at love in vain and to instead rest his old body. However, the directive that follows suggests that repose is not simply rest; rather, repose signifies a cessation of loving and an initiation of another action—contemplation. Rather than seek love,

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Venus instructs old John Gower to pray for peace in quiet contemplation, reflecting on the wisdom he has gained through the poem.

The contemplation that Venus suggests John Gower undertake models the act of interpretation that Gower puts forth for his reader to consider. As seen throughout the poem, confession requires recollection and contemplation. When Genius asks Amans whether he is guilty of a sin, Amans works through both of these mental processes. When old John Gower asks for absolution, Venus directs him to look back on his confession and to contemplate the process. Like Amans and John Gower, the reader of *Confessio* must recollect what he has read in the poem and then contemplate it in light of the revelatory moment in order to determine the best interpretation. Venus suggests as much to John Gower when she tells him to let reason—not love—be his guide lest “he may some himself misguide, / That seth noght the peril tofore” (8.2920–21). Venus’s lines suggest that if one lets love be his guide in interpretation, he will be deceived. Rather than invalidating the eight books of poetry delineating the sins of love, however, Venus advocates a shift in John Gower’s focus as he contemplates:

Mi sone, be wel war therfore,
And kep the sentence of my lore
And tarie thou mi court no more,
Bot go ther vertu moral duelleth,
Wher ben thi bokes, as men telleth,
Which of long time thou hast write. (8.2922–27)

Venus advises John Gower to remember the sentence—the lesson—of the stories that he (as Amans) has heard throughout *Confessio*. The exempla are not lost because they were told in a misleading manner; rather, the lessons remain even if they are not related to gaining entrance to the court of love—there is a universal applicability to them. Finally, the last line indicates that John Gower the poet has known the books from which such virtuous morals may be derived and that he has written about these books himself. These lines suggest that, for the reader, there are morals to be gleaned from all of Gower’s works, including *Confessio*, if he, the reader, reads using wisdom. The revelatory moment of the poem, then, not only reveals Amans as Gower, but it also moves the reader to contemplate what she has read in light of the revelation that it is wisdom for which she should read, not love.

Gower ends *Confessio* calling upon his reader to embrace a type of love, charity, which will lead to wisdom, and this shift links the mutability of the poem’s meaning with how it is read. C.S. Lewis calls this last section “a long and unsuccessful coda” without explaining why it is

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unsuccessful (221–22); however, the coda is crucial to the reading process Gower imposes through the circular frame. Gower's final farewell serves doubly as a way of drawing attention to his poetic accomplishment while at the same time feigning humility. Gower writes,

And now to speke as in final,
Touchende that y undirtok
In Engesch for to make a book
Which stant betwene ernest and game,
I have it maad as thilke same
Which axe for to ben excusid,
And that my bok be nought refused
Of lered men, whanne their it se,
For lak of curiosité[.] (8.3106–14)

He admits that his poem has been both serious and playful—he has been engaging in play on some level throughout the entire poem. Gauging what is “ernest” and what is game is the task of the reader, but, at the same time, Gower seems to acknowledge the possibility of both “ernest” and game in the way that he frames the poem. The circular frame, after all, is the most playful element of *Confessio*. The last two lines in the quoted section ask for tolerance for Gower's lack of “subtle learning” (Gower 226, n. 21), which is certainly meant to elicit a laugh from the careful reader. Gower's work is subtle (at least) if not downright sly in its execution. He leads his reader into the misreading of the poem by using a persona of himself to model such acts.

Despite his protestations otherwise, Gower has been able to touch on the wisdom that he earlier claimed to be out of his hand's reach, but only after he has led his reader through the revelatory process to expose Amans as the old John Gower. In this moment, Gower the poet allies himself with the aged lover, old John Gower, to reflect on the maturation that he, Gower the poet, has undergone in writing about love. That is, writing about love has led him to touch on wisdom in the end. He concludes that he will no longer write about love:

Which many an herte hath overtake,
And ovyrturnd as the blynde
Fro reson into lawe of kynde;
Wher as the wisdom goth aweie
And can nought se the rythe weie
How to governe his oghne estat,
Bot everyday stant in debat
Withinne himself, and can nought leve. (8.3144–51)

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These are the effects of love, and Gower has accomplished exactly what he said he was unable to do at the beginning of the poem. What we see, then, is that Gower has been dealing with wisdom all along. His poetic conceit that wisdom is too weighty and that love is more common has resulted in a dangerous, harmful way of reading that neglects both the body and society. With the revelatory moment, however, Gower remedies the effects of misguided reading by modeling the right way to read. The wisdom of *Confessio* lies in its imposition of a reading process through its circular framing. The mutable content of the poem from wisdom to love and back to wisdom leads the reader to a constructive reading process that acknowledges “*erdest*,” game, and the “*middel weie*” for which Gower aims (Prol. 17). Wisdom is found in what is read, yes, but wisdom, *Confessio Amantis* shows its reader, is more often found in *how* something is read.

Notes

1. See Wogan-Browne 3–105.
2. For other comments on the frame and other framing apparatuses of the poem, see Batchelor 2; Olsson 11.
3. Other critics focus on the role of the reader: some focus on the role of Amans as a reader (or center of interpretation) and others consider Amans as an everyman reader of sorts. See Butterfield 168–72; Simpson, especially chapter 7; Peck 21.
4. For a discussion of the depiction of Amans in relation to this idea, see Burrow “The Portrayal of Amans” 12.
5. See especially Gower’s discussion of the decline of the State from ages past:

Of mannes herte the corage
Was schewed thane in the visage;
The word was lich to the conceite
Withoute semblant of deceite. (Prol. 111–14)

6. Gower discusses deceit at length in the prologue as appearances that do not belie intentions: “Now stant the crop under the rote” (Prol. 118); “For if men loke in holy cherche, / Between the word and that thei werche / Ther is full gret difference” (Prol. 449–51); “Bot yet between *erdest* and game / Ful ofte it torneþ otherwise” (Prol. 462–63). Gower especially emphasizes the falsity of the world in discussing the Commons:

The world as of his propre kynde
Was evere untrewre, and as the blynde
Impropelich he demeth fame,
He blameth that is noght to blame
And preiseth that is noght to preise.

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Thus whan he schal the thinges peise,
Ther is deceipte in his balance,
And al is that the variance
Of ous, that schold ous betre advise. (Prol. 535-43)

Gower is adamant that his reader *not* believe things for how they seem and advocates a critical wariness. J. Alan Mitchell succinctly notes, concerning this theme, “Gower teaches practice by way of practice” (42).

7. There is more than some irony here that this confession has taken so long that even if the reader had been a young man at the start he would now be old.

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About the Author

Jeffery G. Stoyanoff is an assistant professor at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama where he serves as the English Department's medievalist. He currently is working on a book project that explores the roots of Middle English poetics outside of Chaucer and his Italian influences. This project focuses specifically on John Gower's engagement of Latin sources within the commentary tradition in his English work, *Confessio Amantis*. This project argues for a unique Middle English poetics established by Gower that responds directly to the commentary tradition rather than responding to Italian or French. In addition to this project, Dr. Stoyanoff is revising an essay on the relationship between grief and gender in the Brome *Sacrifice of Isaac* that will appear in a forthcoming collection. This essay argues that the Brome play privileges masculine grief as it attempts to eliminate what it qualifies as feminine grief. With this essay in mind, he is especially excited to be teaching a medieval drama course this fall that also focuses on grief and gender that he believes will challenge students' preconceived notions of the relationship between medieval and modern. When he's not teaching, researching, or writing, Dr. Stoyanoff enjoys spending time with his partner and their two cats. He remains an avid Pittsburgh sports fan despite recent relocation. Email: jstoyanoff@shc.edu.

Fellows in the Wilderness: Neighborly Ethics in “The Tale of the Jew and the Pagan”

Emily Houlik-Ritchey

quis horum trium videtur tibi proximus fuisse illi qui incidit in latrones

[Which of these three seem to you to have been neighbor to that man who fell among robbers?]

—*Luke 10.36*, Vulgate Bible

The parable of the Good Samaritan, as many scholars have remarked, performs a series of substitutions by which Christianity ethically distinguishes itself from Judaism.¹ By trading an observant Jew as ethical subject for a non-Jewish Samaritan,² and by transforming the original Levitic commandment (“love your neighbor as yourself”) into a question (“who is my neighbor?”), the parable exchanges a supposedly restricted Jewish ethical law for a supposedly new, universal Christian love. Medieval (and later) Christian exegetes routinely saw in this story evidence that Jewish ethical responsibility was limited only to fellow Jews, and that Jesus’s radical, world-changing act was to expand the scope of religious ethics by radically privileging *anyone* as the neighbor that Christians were charged to love. John Gower’s “Tale of the Jew and the Pagan” echoes this scriptural polemic and performs an analogous series of substitutions that take this process a step further, severing Christianity’s ethical indebtedness to Judaism by proposing an alternative ancestry in paganism. The literary tale replaces Leviticus 19:18’s “love thy neighbor” (the text Jesus cites in the parable of the Good Samaritan) with a righteous paganism’s “golden rule,” thereby asserting an alternate ethical foundation for Christianity. Yet I argue that the tale also accomplishes something more complex than it seems to want to admit: it positions the Jew and the Pagan in an ethical relationship—as neighbors. As the pagan is a stand-in for Christian ethics, the tale effectively reaffirms the troubled neighborly relationship between Christianity and Judaism—the very relationship that the tale seems designed to efface.

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The “Tale of the Jew and the Pagan” appears in Book VII of certain manuscripts of the *Confessio Amantis*.³ Book VII is the book of Justice: Aristotle’s education of Alexander. In the midst of this pagan scholasticism, Gower’s Genius tells a tale to illustrate how a king may earn the love of God and of his subjects. Whereas in the *Secretum Secretorum*, from whence the tale is taken, it is told as a warning against trusting those of another faith, Gower instead moralizes it as an illustration of Pity. The tale’s warning against neighboring faiths comes through strongly in Gower’s version as well, but his framing turn to Pity marks merciful love as the privileged site of ethics in the story we are about to hear. And this lesson is dependent upon the tale’s explicit rejection of Jewish religious ethics. In what follows I interrogate this condemnation of Judaism’s ethical law, its ironies, and its implications. In this tale, a Jew and a Pagan meet in the wilderness and become temporary traveling companions. The Jew is on foot, the Pagan mounted. Having ascertained each other’s religious creeds—the Jew has responsibility only to fellow Jews while the Pagan has responsibility to everyone—they proceed to live out the letter of their ethical laws. The Jew takes advantage of the Pagan’s universal ethics to steal his mount and is punished for this (with a bloody death) by the tale’s close. Thus the ethical virtues of a pagan come to trump the historical indebtedness Christianity has to Jewish law.

The association of Aristotle (as tale-teller) with the Pagan of his tale is important insofar as Aristotle is one of the righteous pagans that western European Christianity wished to recuperate.⁴ It is no accident, then, that the “Tale of the Jew and the Pagan” explicitly positions Aristotle as an authority on the Jew’s lack of pity at the tale’s close: “Aristotle it berth witnessse” (VII.3333*) Genius proclaims, and again, shortly afterward, “Remembre, as Aristotle it tolde” (VII.3355*). As Frank Grady has argued, Gower’s tale transforms “the issue of supersession . . . into a lineage-versus-patrimony conflict, in which Christian writers are drawn fictively to reject their Scriptural heritage in favor of a pagan ethics with an entirely different historical relation to their faith” (129). As such, this tale deploys the ethical law central to both Judaism and Christianity (love of the neighbor) but severs the link between them. This story denies Christianity’s ethical indebtedness to Judaism, assigning it instead to paganism. The great philosopher, Aristotle himself, attests to this alternate ethical kinship. And yet, I argue here that the tale’s dynamic landscape and multitudinous language obliquely recover the ethical-historical reality of a neighborly relation between Christianity and Judaism that resonates underneath this supersessionist logic.

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In the intermediary space between Cairo and Babylon, “wher that the wyldernesse was” (VII.3212,* 3216*), two men are brought close together, “As thei scholde entren in a pas” (VII.3215*). This encounter provokes an inquiry of identity, and one specifically couched in terms of religious faith: “That o man axeth of that other: / ‘What man art thou, mi lieve brother? / Which is thi creance and thi feith?” (VII.3219*-21*). This salutation, when the identities of both are unknown, positions the two men in a relationship of congeniality and assumed kinship. The first man calls the other “my dear brother” in the same breath with his inquiry, “What man are you?” They are both brothers *and* strangers by virtue of the wilderness that they both pass through. Unknown to each other, but alike in their solitude and their sojourn, they are the only two human creatures in this environment. At their moment of meeting, the interlocutor proposes a relationship between them that is both fraternal and strange—in other words, one of neighboring.

Neighbor theorist Kenneth Reinhard has emphasized the indeterminacy and transience of the neighbor relation. Chance encounters, a proximity unlooked-for and fleeting, whose parameters cannot be known for certain: these epitomize the encounter with the neighbor. Neither friend nor enemy, the neighbor makes proximate the uncertain boundary between the two. The category necessarily includes not only those to whom we are drawn, but those whose impulses and desires are alien, or uncertain. Slavoj Žižek argues that to recognize the neighbor is “to recognize you in the abyss of your very impenetrability and opacity” (138–39). This impenetrability frightens not because it is other but rather because it is intimate, and it surfaces with dynamic intensity in the Jewish and Christian commandment to love the neighbor as the self. The injunction to neighbor love “call[s] us to . . . come closer, become answerable to, an alterity that remains radically inassimilable” (Žižek, Santner, & Reinhard 7). We are surrounded by neighbor relationships whose defining characteristic is their uncertainty—we never feel truly secure when we are with our neighbors. They aggravate us, but not to the point of outright rejection, and though our interactions may be congenial, they are not comfortable. And there is danger here, as well, the potential for violence—such that we are often driven to try to disambiguate our neighbors. Like Ray Peterson (played by Tom Hanks) in Joe Dante’s 1989 film *The Burbs*, it sometimes feels imperative to know for sure whether our neighbors are actually mass murderers or whether we are just horribly crazy and paranoid for thinking that they might be.

In Gower’s tale, the Jew’s and the Pagan’s contingent and sudden physical proximity in a landscape that presses them close together marks them as neighbors. This neighboring, I argue, frames every-

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thing that follows, just as the physical environment (a mountain pass) frames and facilitates their encounter. As the specific nature of their creeds leads to conflict between them, we are reminded of the well of potential aggression that resides in neighbor relations and the indeterminacy that congeals around any assessment of the neighbor. We are meant, I submit, to understand this interaction between the Jew and the Pagan as neighboring, for the second man (who is the pagan) responds to the first man's inquiry by outlining the "golden rule," often taken to be synonymous with the injunction to love the neighbor:

I schal noght in mi feith refuse
To loven alle men aliche,
...
Whan thei ben glade I shal be glad,
And sori whan thei ben bested;
...
For riht as to miself I wolde,
Riht so toward alle othre I scholde
Be gracious and debonaire." (VII.3224*-33*)

The pagan identifies his creed through his ethical responsibility to love his neighbors as himself—not coincidentally, this is one of the two greatest commandments of Christianity. The pagan thus emerges in this tale, after his initial declaration, "I am paien," as strangely akin to a Christian. The injunction to neighbor-love, one of Christianity's founding laws, by which it claims to distinguish itself *from Judaism*, appears here as the sum and extent of paganism. The pagan expresses the radical love for others that Christianity attributes to itself.

The pagan's proto-Christian ethical law derives its significance from the revelation that the other man is a Jew with a restricted ethical code. The Jew counters the Pagan's speech with a similar declaration of ethical responsibility, but the Jew's law insists that:

I schal to noman be felawe
To kepe him trowth in word ne dede,
Bot if he be withoute drede
A verrai Jew riht as am I:
For elles I mai trewely
Bereve him bothe lif and good. (VII.3240*-45*)

The injunction *not* to behave as a "felawe" ("fellow") *except* to other Jews comes capped with the law's permissiveness to act precisely con-

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trary to the pagan's universal empathy: the Jew "mai . . . bereve" the Pagan both of his life and his property.

However, the term "felawe" poses some interesting semantic flexibility, which reinstates some of the ambiguity of the neighborliness that I have suggested frames this dialogue and tale. The Jew seems to use "felawe" in the sense of definition 2a in the *Middle English Dictionary*: an intimate companion, friend, comrade, or spiritual communicant. But "felawe" is quite rich in meaning. It can equally mean a pair of opponents in combat, a spouse, an accomplice in crime. "Felawe" refers alike to those of equal social status and those of lower social status; used in these contexts it can be a term of affection as well as insult. It implies both co-membership in an organized or institutional community (a knight of the Round Table or a member of a college) as well as accidental and informal associations (someone in whose society you happen to be at the moment, a traveling companion). Indeed, whatever the Jew may say, he and the Pagan are "felawes" merely by virtue of their new acquaintance, as they take this measure of the road together. In short, Middle English "felawe" encompasses a grand multiplicity of relationships strongly reminiscent of all that is indeterminate in the theoretical category of the neighbor. This suggests that the lines of ethical responsibility are not nearly so clear as the Jew in the tale would have us believe. There is, in fact, a productive ambiguity to the relationship of "felawe" that presses back against the reductionist ethical logic of this tale.

And this semantic ambiguity is echoed in scripture. The Biblical injunction to love one's neighbors appears first in Leviticus (19:18), followed in the Gospels by Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and in Paul's letter to the Romans (esp. 13:9).⁵ Jewish scripture is literally where Christianity derives the commandment, modified by Jesus from "love your neighbor" (in Leviticus) into "be a neighbor" (in Luke) and heralded by Paul as the fulfillment of the law (in Romans). As Reinhard cogently explains: "The injunction to 'love thy neighbor as thyself' is the hotly contested proof-text and overdetermined figure that Judaism and Christianity have struggled to possess, and around which they have divided into 'neighboring' religions, both intimately connected and mutually estranged" ("Freud, My Neighbor" 165). Rabbinical interpretation debated precisely the question of universality staged in the "Tale of the Jew and the Pagan." While some Rabbinical explications of the commandment in Leviticus to love one's neighbors limited its scope to fellow Jews, others insisted on a universal neighbor.⁶ Rabbinical interpretation varied in part due to the lexical and grammatical ambiguity of the original Hebrew formulation "love your neighbor as yourself." As Reinhard explains in detail, the interpretation of "love" (Hebrew *ahav*), "neighbor" (Hebrew *re'a*), and "as your-

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self” (Hebrew *kimokha*) are all either multitudinous or unclear in this passage, as are the particle and conjunction that link these terms together and connect the verse to the previous one.⁷ *Re’a* (“neighbor”) appears multiple times in the Torah, sometimes used exclusively for Jews and sometimes including non-Jews in its purview (Reinhard 707–08).⁸ Likewise *ahav* (“love”) “is used for all kinds of love, from erotic to spiritual, from the most illicit to the most hallowed” (Reinhard 708). The semantic and interpretive possibilities at play in the Leviticus commandment find an unlikely echo in Gower’s rewriting of the scriptural “love your neighbor as yourself” as the Jew’s “be a fellow.”

Gower, presumably unconscious of Hebrew semantics and Rabbinical interpretation on this matter, fictionalizes this debate within the context of Jewish/pagan difference. Christianity’s misrecognition of the Jewish commandment as one limited to similarity of creed allows Christianity to position itself as a radical and all-embracing extension of a restricted Jewish law. This is the implicit answer that Jesus’s parable of the Good Samaritan gives to the young lawyer in the Gospel of Luke. Accordingly, in Gower’s “The Tale of the Jew and the Pagan,” the pagan’s astonished reaction to the Jew’s speech figures, anachronistically, Christian judgment upon the limitations of Judaism *as it has construed them*: “The paen herde and understood, / And thoghte it was a wonder lawe” (VII.3246*–47*). And as the narrative continues, both men live out what they understand to be the letter of their law, with predictable consequences, as we have heard.

But when we investigate the Pagan’s proto-Christian ethics within the *wilderness* in which this tale and its articulation of neighbor-love is set, we find that again things are not so simple. Ironically, the Pagan’s proto-Christian law to universal empathy resonates with the Leviticus injunction to love strangers, a verse linked and structurally parallel to the Leviticus commandment to love the neighbor:

When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; *for you were strangers in the land of Egypt*: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:33–34, my emphasis)⁹

You must love the neighbor, the logic of this passage runs, because you too were a stranger in a strange land. Reinhard has argued that this passage “articulate[s] a principle of neighbor-love based on structural *difference*, invoking the recollection of one’s own strangeness I am ‘like’ the neighbor only insofar as we each are *not-like* someone else” (Reinhard, “Freud, My Neighbor” 172). Leviticus 19:33–34 (love of the

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stranger) constructs ethical responsibility on a shared foreignness, recognizing that the self is as inscrutable and “out-of-place” as the neighbor/stranger. In his creed, the pagan constructs his ethical responsibility for his neighbors on universal empathy: “Whan thei ben glade I schal be glad, / And sori whan thei ben bested” (VII.3227*–28*). This ethical logic might be described as “an imaginary expansion of the category of the self” (Reinhard, “Freud, My Neighbor,” 172). And yet, I am struck by the physical environment shaping this tale’s action. The Jew and the Pagan are sojourners, strangers traveling in a strange land—a wilderness, home to neither of them. Conjoining the terminology used by the Jew with the present discussion elucidates the two men as both strangers and “felawes”: traveling companions, sojourners in a foreign wilderness.

The Pagan loves the Jew because he is *there*, similarly alone, similarly trying to survive on this journey through the wilderness. In practice, their ethical responsibility to each other, I argue, has as much to do with *landscape* as it does with creed. Gower departs from his source to give us specific geographical, scriptural, and temporal landmarks within this wilderness.¹⁰ These two men meet between Cairo and Babylon, in a mountain pass. Cairo and Babylon are, of course, two places the Jews were in exile, and the Promised Land lies geographically between them.¹¹ But despite the specificity of its urban places that invokes a specific geographical and scriptural landscape, the simultaneous designation of this space as “wilderness” defers the promise in yet more endless Jewish diaspora. The Jew of this tale is perpetually in exile, wandering lost in spaces that this tale has catalogued as not belonging to him. And yet, by invoking, however obliquely, the Promised Land that lies between Cairo and Babylon, the tale enmeshes disparate geographies and temporalities—Christian incarnational time with Jewish covenantal time, Promised Land (a homeland) with wilderness (a land of passage, exile, interim).¹² And the effect is to gently trouble such clear distinctions. This is, literally, ethical terrain, a landscape both to settle *and* to cross, a place of dwelling *and* of passage: a land that, like the desolate road from Jerusalem to Jericho, makes neighbors of the men who traverse it.

Gower’s wilderness, at once overdetermined and indeterminate, conforms to the typical medieval notion of the wilderness as described by Gillian Rudd, and simultaneously exposes its construction as such. Rudd has, I think compellingly, analyzed the medieval wilderness as both a geographical and a conceptual space.¹³ At once “wild” (“uncultivated land”) and “contain[ing] wildness” (“the untamed and unknown”), the wilderness is a social construct that “forc[es] us to confront and reappraise” human values and codes of conduct (Rudd 92, 93). Gower’s wilderness is particularly efficacious in this enterprise:

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physical features of the environment collude to facilitate an ethical experiment. The wilderness is first a bottleneck: a mountain pass that forces the two men into proximity with each other. A forest's shade then harbors their initial congenial discussion of religious ethical law ("they wenten forth spekende / Under the large wodes ende" (VII.3217*-18*)). The action takes place "whan comen is the somer heete" (VII.3213*); this summer heat subsequently saps the strength of both men ("The dai was hoot, the soone brente" (VII.3250*)), creating the ethical opening for them to demonstrate their creeds in action.

Gower's wilderness at once opens such a space that requires humans to confront ethics, and yet simultaneously imagines that space as one that enforces a divine ethical code onto humans. Gower uses wilderness's traditionally conceived hostility to humans and to human civilized life to enforce ethics.¹⁴ As such, this wilderness at once cultivates and critiques civilized human life, if by "civilized" we read "ethical" in the context of this tale (or perhaps, taking a cue from the tale's own language: "pitous"). This wilderness nurtures a "pitous" man—the world itself becomes, by the tale's close, a visual ethical text wherein the moral rightness of actions may be astutely read:

What infortune that befall
In eny lond, lacke of pite
Is cause of thilke adversite;
And that aldai mai schewe at yhe,
Who that the world discretly syhe. (VII.3338*-42*)

The tale itself undoes the alleged division between wilderness and civilization (or wilderness and ethics), holding out instead a single indiscriminate "eny lond" (settled or unsettled). The ethical lesson of Pity, the tale insists, is legible anywhere and everywhere in the world to the discerning viewer. For instance, to the Pagan, the wilderness (the beating sun, the length of their road, their human solitude) is *conducive* to ethical behavior. The real danger in this wilderness, in other words, arises from the failure of human society itself, not nearly so securely "civilized" (in contrast to an "uncivilized" wilderness) as typical medieval constructions of wilderness might claim. Nor is the wilderness innately unethical: this wilderness in fact stalks the unethical man for the kill, as the lion that takes the Jew's life testifies. The Jew's "uncivilized" behavior toward the Pagan brings swift ecological punishment. These details conjoin to reinforce an implicit ecological corollary to Aristotle's stamp of approval on the Jew's demise ("As Aristotle it berth wisesse, . . . In eny lond, lacke of pite / Is cause of thilke adversite;" (VII.3333*-40*)). In a dark, reductive turn, Gower's wilderness lashes

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out solely against the Jew, condemning his alleged sectarianism while everywhere else insisting upon the primacy of a so-called “pagan” ethics in tune with the “natural” world.

Yet this very “pagan” ethics, as we have seen, in fact resonates profoundly with Levitical law on the neighbor/stranger. Gower denies and effaces Jewish ethics in this tale, yet the foundational Jewish texts of neighbor-relations (Leviticus 19:18 and 19:33–34) are everywhere present nonetheless, infused into the Pagan’s ecologically based empathy for a “felawe” stranger in a strange land. In an otherwise reductive plot, these elements open up a space in which we might interrogate the ethical logic of Christian supersession. Indeed, from this perspective such logic falls a bit flat. We can see its clear trajectory, but we can also see the hints of other paths the tale might have chosen to take. Scholars have noticed that throughout Book VII Gower prefers a pagan source for his ethics over a Semitic,¹⁵ but I ask that we press harder upon the complications troubling this narrative of exchange.

In sum, I argue that Gower’s “Tale of the Jew and the Pagan,” reimagining the origins of Christian ethics to efface its Jewish legacy, pinpoints a source of ambivalence regarding the ethical indebtedness of Christians to Jews that refuses to settle down. As I hope I have shown, the Jew and the Pagan are neighbors, and their ethical codes seem, in ways unforeseen and unintended by each, to share an ethical responsibility for those that chance, circumstance, and the physical world make proximate. Though neither man heeds his creed’s call to neighbor-love in quite these terms, those implications of their analogous responsibility to each other are legible to us. The tale, by way of paganism, thus brings into sharp focus Gower’s construction of a neighboring relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Gower’s Jew and Pagan take us, in the end, back to where we historically began: Christianity’s many debts to its Jewish neighbors.

Notes

1. For two lucid summaries of this process, see Reinhard, “Neighbor” and “Paul and the Political Theology of the Neighbor.”
2. Kenneth Reinhard specifies the identity of the Samaritan as follows: “an Abrahamic sect with heterodox beliefs and practices, hence similar to Christianity” (Reinhard, “Neighbor” 708).
3. Book VII, lines 3207*–3360.* The tale appears only in those manuscripts that Macaulay designated “second recension,” and is probably a later interpolation. Macaulay’s division of the *Confessio* manuscripts into three recensions has been convincingly challenged by subsequent work, yet the field continues to use his designations for convenience’s sake.

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4. Gower's adoption of Aristotelian thought in Book VII of the *Confessio Amantis* is itself a matter of ethics. Georgiana Donavin notes this ethical focus, particularly of Gower's use of Aristotelian rhetoric: "Gower takes up the subject of rhetoric in the most overtly political book of his most personal poem . . . in order to demonstrate the academic preparation for becoming an ethical citizen" (Donavin 157).
5. Luke's parable of the Good Samaritan and Paul's comments on the subject in Romans are only the most prominent of several New Testament allusions or quotations of the Levitical injunction to love the neighbor.
6. See Reinhard, "Freud, My Neighbor" 166-72.
7. See Reinhard, "Neighbor" 706-08, and "The Ethics of the Neighbor: Universalism, Particularism, Exceptionalism."
8. Hebrew *re'â* in its other appearances in the Old Testament is sometimes translated as "fellow" in early English Bibles. In, for example, the King James Bible, it is translated that way nine times. See <http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=fellow*+H7453&t=KJV#s=s_primary_o_1>.
9. "Stranger" in these two verses is a translation of the Hebrew *ger*.
10. The tale in the *Secretum Secretorum*, as Macaulay notes, lacks place names.
11. I am grateful to Rosemarie McGerr and the other members of the audience at the International Congress of the John Gower Society in Rochester, New York for their cogent and inspirational comments on this point.
12. The Promised Land itself invokes, in some ways, both wilderness and settlement. It is "the land of milk and honey": part of it comprises fertile land (the land of honey), and part of it consists in more arid land suitable for nomadic grazing (the land of milk). The road from Jerusalem to Jericho (the setting for the parable of the Good Samaritan) crosses this arid portion of the Promised Land.
13. Rudd's analysis of medieval wilderness builds upon ecocritical studies of wilderness more generally.
14. On medieval wilderness and its hostility to humans and human civilization, see Rudd, 91-93.
15. On this subject, see Grady, *Representing Righteous Heathens*, and Ames, "The Source and Significance of 'The Jew and the Pagan.'"

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Social Healing in Gower's *Visio Angliae*

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While we have many chronicle accounts of the Great Rising of 1381, Book I of John Gower's *Vox Clamantis* is the only major literary presentation of these events. Like the rest of this first book, the *Visio Angliae* has occasionally been received by scholars as an example of everything that is wrong with Gower's poetry.¹ Eve Salisbury aptly summarizes previous observations by scholars and editors of Gower's works: "Described as 'wearisome,' 'lachrymose,' 'pessimistic,' a paratactical political treatise of little or no literary value, the *Vox* has been relegated to the margins of literary study. Moreover, Gower's rigid elitist position, conservatism, and contentious condemnatory tone have rendered him an easy target for allegations of political inconsistency, ethical contradiction, cowardice, self-interest, and a notable lack of artistic integrity, originality, and skill" (125).²

Yet a fresh reexamination of the *Visio* demonstrates that its reforming goals are in keeping with those of Gower's later *Confessio Amantis*. I rely here on Russell Peck's definition of common profit, or "the mutual enhancement, each by each, of all parts of a community for the general welfare of that community taken as a whole. It applies to the community of faculties within an individual man as well as the state of England with its individuals and its three estates" (1). While *Vox Clamantis* is indeed conservative, its main concern is common profit—that is, social welfare and the restoration of order. I argue that Gower uses metaphorical images common from vernacular romance—particularly the image of the rudderless ship—to help himself and his readers process the upheaval of the Great Rising. As a healing narrative, the *Visio* is meant as a public, political text that can begin healing at both personal and communal levels. The *Visio* is reforming, but it is not radical. In Gower's worldview, social reform must begin with the highest levels of society and move downward.

Medieval readers understood that constructing narratives can potentially help readers (and/or writers) process the difficult events they experience. Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* and Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* both employ such models, wherein the process of constructing a metaphorical narrative allows a character to articulate the traumatic events they have experienced; this narrative construction is itself an act of processing that leads to healing. Laurence J. Kirmayer suggests that successful healing narratives function primarily through

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metaphor, which provides the sufferer with an image to visualize and thus work through trauma. He explains that “narration may heal by allowing symbolic closure” (595); and “it may build solidarity with others through shared accounts of suffering in socially understandable and valorized terms” (595). Through narrative, then, the sufferer might create closure in an attempt to recover from an event where such closure is denied. As Cecilia Bosticco and Theresa L. Thompson argue, “[t]hrough the use of storytelling, [bereaved individuals] begin . . . to take control of events formerly beyond their power of influence” (391). The *Visio* reimagines the recent past to construct a coherent narrative and create a consensus reality through which readers can make sense of their own experience of the Great Rising—an essential process indeed before the reforming estates satire of the rest of the *Vox* can begin. Thus, the text itself becomes an intermediate step in the process of healing: it provides a shared narrative of trauma for a community of readers, who may engage with it as individuals to process their own experiences of these events.

Two of the central metaphors at work used to describe the experience of trauma in the *Visio* are voicelessness and bodily fragmentation. These images simultaneously show both the physical suffering of the narrator and the larger social illness or injury. While the narrator’s voicelessness is closely linked to his fragmentation (as if he himself is representative of the whole social body),³ this voicelessness is the most crucial component of his injury, one represented frequently in the *Visio*. Judith Ferster suggests that “The oppositions between voice and clamor and between godliness and insanity define two important poles for Gower” (129); in Ferster’s view, the lack of voice—its replacement with noise—suggests discord and emphasizes the chaos and trauma of the Rising (129–30). The narrator writes that “Pes, manus, osque silet; oculus stupet et dolet auris; / Cor timet et rigide diriguere come. [Foot, hand, and mouth all stopped; eyes glazed, ears ached / I feared at heart; my hair grew stiff on end]” (16.1393–94).⁴ This description both limits the narrator’s motion and also emphasizes the voicelessness. This image of voicelessness, however, is one among a great many, particularly in Chapter 16 of the *Visio*, the same passage in which the narrator wanders through the wilderness. The narrator is isolated from recognizable social structures in this section—yet even when he seems to be accompanied, he is not capable of speaking with others.

Despite the narrator’s presence in the wilderness, a presumably isolated space, his moments of voicelessness provide clues that he is not alone; it would be a relief to speak to another, yet he cannot do so. He explains that “Non michi libertas cuiquam secreta loquendo / Tunc fuit, immo silens os sua verba tenet. [I wasn’t free to share my secret

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thoughts / With anyone: my silent mouth kept mum]” (16.1493–94). The narrator cannot convey meaning through speech, demonstrating not only the narrator’s personal breakdown, but the breakdown of social order. Yet the word “anyone” implies that there is someone present to whom the narrator could speak if his fear/injury did not prevent him; he writes that

Sepeque cum volui conatus verba proferre,
Torpuerat gelido lingua <retenta> metu.

. . .

Sepe meam mentem volui dixisse, set hosti
Prodere me timui, linguaque tardat ibi.

I often wished and tried to utter words,
But then my tongue grew stiff with freezing fear.

. . .

I often wanted to reveal my thoughts;
I feared betrayal, and my tongue stood still.
(16.1511–12, 16.1515–16)

The narrator’s physical body behaves directly at odds with his desire to speak, so that his body overrules his mind. Carlson and Rigg’s translation emphasizes this division between the narrator’s “I” and his body: in these lines, the body part—the tongue—is the subject of one phrase, and the “I” is the subject of the other, demonstrating the lack of connection between physical and psychological components of the narrator’s identity. The bodily fragmentation of the narrator emphasizes his injury and voicelessness; lips and tongue act independently of the narrator’s first-person identity. Yet these examples demonstrate not only the narrator’s personal breakdown, but the breakdown of social order, a breakdown made literal as the narrator recounts the transformation of various social classes from animals into hybrid monsters.⁵ In each case, the unnatural nature of this new state is emphasized.

After the narrator flees the city, his struggle to speak becomes yet more pronounced as trauma disrupts his access to language. When he wanders, frightened, through a wilderness, he writes that

Fine carent lacrimae, nisi cum stupor obstitit illis,
Aut similis morti pectora torpor habet.
Tunc partier lacrimas vocemque introrsus abortas,
Extasis exemplo comprimit ipse metus.
Brachia porrexi tendens ad lumina solis,
Et, quod lingua nequit promere, signa ferunt;

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Cumque ferus lacrimas animi siccauerat ardor,
Singultus reliquas clamat habere vices.

Tears fall unchecked except in stupor's grip
When death-like numbness takes and holds the heart.
Then fear itself, a kind of ecstasy,
Restrains the voice and tears that swell inside.
I stretched my arms towards the sun's bright light
And showed by signs what tongue cannot express;
When tears of mind were dried by burning heat,
Then sighing laid its claim to have next turn. (16.1467–74)

This moment of silencing, the physical inability to speak, presents the breakdown of language as a manifestation of psychological trauma. As social order breaks down, the narrator's ability to speak breaks down into signs, using the body to capture what he cannot express with words. He no longer has language to describe what he sees or to explain his plight. Elaine Scarry has remarked that "Pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned" (4). Though the author has had sufficient time and distance from these events to construct this narrative, the narrator in the moment of the Rising is limited to pre-linguistic noises, signs and wordless sighs—and both of these are seemingly disembodied, fragmented, as though the narrator's body is no more under his control than are his words. This non-linguistic response positions the narrator's experience outside the logical, ordered structures of language and marks the poet, too, as part of the "noise" of the Rising.

Yet even when the narrator does control his physical body, the breakdown of order still prevents communication. Though his noises are perhaps readable, words remain beyond him. The narrator writes,

Verbis planxissem, sed viscera plena dolore
Obsistunt, nec eo tempore verba sinunt.
Obice singultu vocis stetit impetus horrens
Aduentu lacrimae; lingua refrenat iter.

I would have mourned in words, but pain-filled guts
Resisted: not a word they'd let me say.
My voice's force was blocked by sighs, in fear
That tears would come; my tongue held back its course.
(16.1579–82)

Though the narrator here has no language, he is able to sigh; much like Peter Travis writes of Chaucer's *Nun's Priests Tale*, the "noise" of sighing here resists interpretation (204, 262).⁶ Yet in Gower's use, I suggest that the sighs, the noise, prevent the narrator from expressing himself in words at the moment—much as the animal noise earlier in the *Visio* operates to replace the actual complaints put forward by the rebels—yet the audience understands something of his meaning, reading the sighs as markers of sadness, mourning, and frustration. While there is no concrete explanation of his fears here, they have been articulated earlier in the narrative; compare, for example, the earlier instance when the rebels/oxen will not pull the plow, and the narrator articulately expresses his fear: "Prothdolor! O! (dixi) cessabit cultus agrorum, / Quo michi temporibus est metuenda fames. [Alas, I said, the tilling of the fields / Will cease, and famine must be feared henceforth]" (III.297–98). In this much earlier passage, the narrator has a specific concern in response to what he sees. In contrast, after the siege of the city when the narrator sighs, there is no explanation of his fears—simply noise in lieu of voice, leaving the audience to fill in the linguistic gap, perhaps with their own anxieties.

While these earlier portions of the *Visio* express the narrator's voicelessness, it is eventually resolved through a new metaphor: the image of the ship at sea which immediately follows this detailed imagery of silenced narrator. The ship metaphor fits into the larger motif of the rudderless ship, a motif that appears in many Middle English texts and is used here to respond to the narrator's voicelessness. Helen Cooper has defined such repeated motifs as memes, that is, "a unit within literature that proves so useful, so infectious, that it begins to take on a life of its own . . . an idea that behaves like a gene in its ability to replicate faithfully and abundantly, but also on occasion to adapt, mutate, and therefore survive in different forms and cultures" (3). While Cooper's focus is on romance, V.A. Kolve observes that the motif is by no means limited to the vernacular; rather, it is also present in William of Malmesbury's *De gestis regum Anglorum*, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, among the over one hundred versions of the life of St. Brendan, and other works (325, 333). Thus, the motif of the rudderless ship is both religious and historical, the genres yoked together in the *Visio* as a whole. The repetition of the meme, and this motif in particular, is particularly productive for the healing process because it simultaneously provides language to talk about a traumatic event and opens up adaptive possibilities to help the storyteller. Like the rebel animals and the destruction of New Troy earlier in the *Visio*, the ship too has an explicit analogue; the narrator writes: "O quam tunc similis

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huic naui Londoniarum / Turris erat, quod eam seua procella quatit. [How like that ship the Tower of London was, / Since savage storms assailed both tower and ship]" (ll. 1743–44). Andrew Galloway and others have identified the *Visio's* ship as the floundering ship of state (343).⁷ On one level, then, the ship in a storm is the Tower, surrounded by the noise and rage of the city outside it, the logical terminus of the *Visio's* metaphors given the prevalent storm imagery throughout. At another level, the ship of state is under attack as the structures of social order are overthrown. And, of course, the ship is a particularly apt metaphor for insular England—those traveling to or from England must always travel via boat.

The narrative of the ship at sea begins while the narrator is lost in the wilderness, frightened and silenced. He explains that "Haud procul aspexi nauem, properansque cucurri, / Sors mea si forte tucior esset ibi [Close by I saw a ship; I ran in haste / To see if there my luck would be more safe]" (1599–1600). At first, this choice to board the ship seems to be something of a critical error. The ship is decidedly not safer; it encounters a storm at sea so strong that no one can steer it. Yet the decision to board the ship suggests the narrator's emotional state. Cooper has observed that the rudderless boat in medieval narratives often suggests death for its occupant, since "The very danger of being adrift in a rudderless boat was so extreme as to make death likely, and survival therefore almost the only worthwhile narrative option" (107). The journey on the ship conveys the narrator's fear of death in the face of the Rising. Yet paradoxically, it also sets up for his survival because of the way the metaphor is used in other contemporary literature.

Passengers on a rudderless boat adrift at sea exist in a state of limbo; these figures are often considered to be guided by divine providence, as in the Constance narrative in Gower's own *Confessio Amantis*. Kolve observes that the rudderless ship is perhaps the most striking and memorable image from the *Man of Law's Tale* (302), and this is certainly true of Constance narratives more generally and of the later part of the *Visio Angliae*. Given how common this motif is, it functions as a very recognizable metaphor appropriate for social use; however, the boat does not always serve the same purpose or carry the same meaning. As Cooper writes, "The originality lies in an author's handling of his materials, his . . . ability to disrupt, to startle, to shock" (21). Memes simultaneously draw on tradition, on the collected fact of their frequent use, and productively depart from that tradition to shake audience expectations and construct a new narrative.

Gower's assumption as author is that the reader of *Vox Clamantis* would have a framework with which to interpret the boat adrift at sea; however, the predictability of the boat metaphor's resolution does not

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make it less powerful. As Cooper says, “Exposure at sea constitutes a *iudicium Dei*, a judgment made not by men but by God” (110). Indeed, these exposures long predate the medieval period, and the motif of setting a figure adrift has been “traced back as far as the ancient Greeks, who thought the sea an arbiter of sin and innocence” (Kolve 325).⁸ Kolve further observes that people were generally set adrift “when guilt could not be conclusively determined by human investigation, when men wished to combine severity with some possibility of mercy, or when . . . society wished to expel an unwanted person from its midst” (326). The narrator’s voyage holds all these possibilities as society itself is subject to the *iudicium Dei*; the narrator explains that while on the ship, lost in a storm,

Brachia cum palmis, oculos cum menteque tristi
In celum tendens, postulat omnis opem.
Non tenet hic lacrimas; stupet hic, vocat ille beatos,
Proque salute sua numina quisque vocat.
Rector cuncta deo commendans talia dixit,
“Celestis celestem det michi rector opem.”

Each stretched his hands and arms and, sad in mind,
His eyes to heaven he prayed for help.
None check their tears; one gapes, one calls on saints,
And each one begs salvation from the gods.
The captain puts his hope in God and cries,
“May heaven’s ruler grant me now swift aid.” (1733–38)

This moment when the ship’s crew stops steering and turns to prayer places the social upheaval of the Great Rising in religious terms, perhaps providing a sense of purpose for the trauma experienced by Londoners, who are directly invited to identify with the ship through its continual positioning as the Tower of London. The tower (or ship) is not the problem in Gower’s telling, but the storm is; circumstances make navigation impossible. The image of the ship on a stormy sea takes the agency for the suffering from the rebels and restores a familiar social order by placing everything back in God’s control. Kolve notes that the storm at sea often refers to sin and temptation, active on the sea of the world: “waves and tempests, as symbolic signs, can be readily internalized, to suggest storms of passion and concupiscent within” (336). The storm is thus an especially apt metaphor for the Rising, an event often described in terms of disorder and chaos. In his analysis of Walsingham’s account of the Rising, Stephen Justice writes that “[Walsingham’s] narrative happens in a swirl of noise that

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obscures agency and ignites violence as an impersonal force” (205). The meme thus suggests both internal and external disorder, drawing on both social and religious discourses.

Memes are thus particularly productive for narrative healing since, as Kirmayer observes, “systems of meaning, and specific meanings, have social origins and functions along with their significance for the individual” (162). Moreover, the use of this common metaphor may be especially helpful to healing via narrative. Kirmayer suggests that such a metaphor “may be apt when bodily-felt conviction or social concern brings it alive” (177). In the case of the *Visio*, the use of this motif makes the traumatic events of the Great Rising readable to its audience. Its frequency, and its varied metaphorical resonances, give the metaphor force.⁹ The process of retelling the narrative, and the use of the ship as healing metaphor, has begun to provide the narrator with the tools to regain his voice. Moreover, the narrator is not the only occupant of the rudderless ship; the society adrift with him, readers who see his experience as their own, are also given an account to describe what happened to them, while readers who did not experience the Rising first hand now have the metaphorical tools that Kirmayer describes. As Cooper observes, the use of this metaphor begins to make the narrator’s experience comprehensible to his audience.¹⁰

If the narrator is meant to be read as a stand-in for the reader, then, the rudderless ship sets up for the reader’s survival—and acknowledges that the land where the narrator arrives will not be the same as the one he left behind. When the narrator speaks to an old man on the shore, the man identifies the island: “Exulis hec dici nuper solet Insula Bruti [Its name is now ‘the Isle of Exiled Brut’]” (1963). Though the narrator returns to England, it simultaneously is and yet is not the same England as the one he has left. He has journeyed from New Troy to the island of Britain; and yet both of these places are England. Both old and new, this island is the “logical destination,” and the narrator’s arrival (and return) suggests that the island post-Rising is in a moment at which change is possible. This return at the end of the *Visio*, then, sets up the estates satire of the rest of the *Vox*.

The poet can reflect only after the traumatic events that transform him. The narrator’s account thus becomes a way of speaking his unspeakable experience. Because of the silencing chaos of the events, this written speech act must be retroactive; once the events have passed, the narrator gives voice to the experience and to his emotions that he could not express in the moment. When the narrator finally reaches a (somewhat) safe harbor at the end of the *Visio*, he declares that “Vt michi vox alias que vidi scribere iussit, / Amplius ex toto corde vacare volo. [The voice [from heaven] commanded me to write what I / Had

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seen: with all my heart I'll give my time to this]" (2147–48). The narrator's noisemaking is juxtaposed with the text itself as a very articulate response to his experience. To that effect, it is worth noting, that the *Visio* circulated within a larger text that the narrator names, at the start of Book II, *Vox Clamantis*.

The ship itself is, of course, a metaphor with considerable resonance elsewhere in Gower's work. (Kolve notes its presence in *Confessio* V.1871, the Prologue 234–35 and in *Vox* Book III, Chapter 14 (332)). Yet one particular reference to a ship, I suggest, most clearly demonstrates its power as a metaphor for social healing and order for Gower:

And every man for his partie
A kingdom hath to justefie,
That is to sein his oghne dom.
If he misreule that kingdom,
He lest himself, and that is more
Than if he loste schip and ore
And al the worldes good withal. (CA 8.2111–17)

The ship of the *Visio* is a metaphor both for and of the community, the representative of change at God's hand. Yet the ship is also the individual's way through the world. To lose both the ship and the rudder—to be without the vessel that offers some small protection as well as the means to guide it—is a problem of self-governance that spills over into the common good. If the ship elsewhere represents the community, the Ship of State, then each individual's self-governance becomes essential to common profit. The work of each enhances each: not only do social and political classes have a role to fulfill, as Gower outlines in the rest of the *Vox Clamantis*, but individuals are drawn into a relational network of equivalent systems. The ship of state is also the ship of common profit, requiring each of its members working together to stay afloat. The ship may list and lean, showing the trauma of the quelled Rising, but Gower observes that the ship's path cannot be set right, that society cannot heal, without its individual members working together to perform their jobs. As "the voice of one crying out," Gower the narrator turns the fact of trauma into reflection, distancing readers and allowing them the perspective they need to pull the ship up right.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Kristi J. Castleberry, Kyle Ann Huskin, Valerie B. Johnson, Russell Peck, Laura Whitebell, R.F. Yeager, and Pamela M. Yee for feedback on earlier versions of this argument.

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2. Salisbury draws here on editors Eric W. Stockton and G.C. Macaulay, as well as critics R.B. Dobson and David Aers; see especially p. 140, n. 3.
3. I expand here on the fragmentation and sacrificial discourses explained by Salisbury, "Violence and the Sacrificial Poet"; see also Kim Zarins, "From Head to Foot," who examines the fragmentation and reconstruction of the author's identity through the name puzzle in the Prologue (lines 19–24).
4. All translations are from Carlson and Rigg's 2011 edition and translation.
5. Compare, for example, *Visio* III.241–260; IV.299–318; and IV.321–342.
6. Travis suggests that "Chaucer focuses his critical attention on noise, not only as a signifier of social discord but also as a potential site of epistemological transformation, poetic pleasure, and the liberating opportunities of social change. Or, to put the matter much more carefully, Chaucer is fascinated by the resistance of noise to our understanding" (204). For Travis, Chaucer's reference to the Rising is deliberately slippery, and I would suggest that the same is true of Gower's allegory. Both the narrator and the rebels are often reduced to noise in the *Visio*, which suggests that a reexamination of the *Visio* with special attention to the problems of voice undercuts the clean binary between the poet's highly-literate audience and the rebels themselves that critics have long accepted.
7. See also Zarins, p. 144. Kolve also aligns the rudderless ship with the ship of the church: as he observes, the largest space in a church, the nave, takes its name from the Latin *navis*, ship. He suggests that these sea journeys rely on the simultaneous destructive and salvific power of water in Christianity (315–22). Thus, the rudderless ship journey represents a kind of death, much like baptism, which presumably leads to a changed existence.
8. In fact, there is a strong tradition of classical ships—after all, the language Gower employs in the *Visio* is often borrowed from Ovid. Cooper suggests that the rudderless ship is in some ways a "distinctively English tradition" given its presence in English texts as early as *Beowulf* (108). In some ways, however, this very claim undermines her view that these motifs are limited to romance and begin in twelfth-century France. These supposedly vernacular romance tropes appear across lines of both language (as in French romances and Latin works written in England) and genre (*Beowulf* is unquestionably not a Middle English romance). The meme's usefulness should not be limited to Middle English romance, especially not when considering an author such as Gower, who writes across these boundaries of both genre and language. The motif is especially active in religious and historical works, and Kolve insists that the motif "should not be thought a 'romance' motif in any sense that would restrict its seriousness or credibility to literature alone" (325).
9. Indeed, V.A. Kolve identifies four levels at which the metaphor functions in the *Man of Law's Tale* alone (301). The rudderless ship thus provides a variety of interpretive levels for the *Visio*'s readers.
10. The question of Gower's audience is, of course, governed in part by the *Visio*'s language, as well as by its bookishness. It has been well-established that

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much of the *Visio* draws heavily on classical sources, particularly Ovid; while it is impossible to know how many of these allusions and references Gower anticipated that his audience would know, both the language and the literariness of the text suggest that he imagined a highly literate, well-read audience for his work. As Siân Echard observes, “For Gower, language itself is a means by which he effects a mimesis of the political uncertainties of his age. It is also potentially, *but always uncertainly*, a means by which he might influence the political realm” (129–30). Echard and Ferster both observe that Gower’s social and political critique is often more direct in his Latin writings (Echard 129; Ferster 111–12). Thus, the *Visio* must employ “trickle-down healing,” as I have called it here, in part because of the audience that it imagines; at the same time, Gower’s choice of language allows for a more direct critique because Latin is, to some extent, a closed system. For further discussion of Gower’s Ovidian allusions, see Zarins; Bruce Harbert, “Lessons from the Great Clerk”; Maura Nolan, “The Poetics of Catastrophe”; Yoshiko Kobayashi, “The Voice of an Exile”; the introduction and notes to Stockton’s translation, available in *The Major Latin Works of John Gower*; and the notes to Carlson and Rigg’s *John Gower: On Contemporary Events*. On Gower’s use of *cento*, see Yeager, “Did Gower Write *Centos*?” and Salisbury, “Violence and the Sacrificial Poet.”

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“So schalt thou double hele finde”: Narrative Medicine in the “Tale of Constantine and Sylvester”

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Modern medicine faces a crisis. Since the 1960s, critics have accused medical practitioners of lacking compassion and care. The mass media adds to the problem by perpetuating a certain type of medical narrative. Television shows like *House M.D.* privilege the doctor's perspective, making him the protagonist, the disease the antagonist, and relegating the patient to a relatively silent role, a battleground over which a war of ownership is waged. In such narratives, the ill person very much fulfills the role as patient, a passive and vulnerable recipient, waiting for the physician to act upon him or her. As Arthur Frank insists, we need to open up the possibility of an alternate cultural narrative, one which recasts the patient as protagonist and doctor as mentor, recognizing the potential power of the ill person as having some modicum of agency in the struggle against disease.¹ Medical doctor and theorist Rita Charon agrees, proposing that we redefine a new kind of doctor-patient relationship, one in which doctors value and validate their patients' illness experiences²—their personal narratives—in the diagnostic process. Her model of medicine emphasizes the responsibility of the medical practitioner to attend to his patient's self-told stories in both diagnosis and treatment.

Although Charon coined the term “narrative medicine” in the early 2000s, her dialogic approach to treatment shares fundamental similarities with therapeutic theories of earlier periods, and parallels can be found at least as early as the Middle Ages. Physicians have long recognized the effects that fictional tales and storytelling can have on the emotional health of individuals. Glending Olson's proposed “hygienic justification” for imaginative literature asserts that late medieval physicians saw storytelling as an activity with the potential to yield health benefits. Their instructions to read or listen to stories in medical regimens and *consilia* suggest that “reading and hearing narratives appear as means of attaining the *gaudium temperatum* that normally stands as the desired mental attitude of a person in good health” (Olson 63). Indeed, fourteenth-century English surgeon John of Arderne, recommends storytelling to “make þe pacients to laugh . . . [and] induce a liȝt hert” (qtd. in Palmer, *Narratives of Healing* 20). I do not mean to imply,

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however, that Charon's use of narrative is identical to either Olson's or that of medieval practitioners. Her approach does not explicitly endorse the telling of fictional stories to alter one's mood. Rather, she casts both the patient and doctor as storytellers, working together to establish a coherent narrative of the patient's illness experience. Once this narrative is negotiated, it becomes the foundation upon which future action, including treatment, is based.

At this point, readers familiar with John Gower's work may recognize intersections between Charon's theory and the central doctor-patient arc in the *Confessio Amantis*, the Genius-Amans relationship. I would argue that the *Confessio*, although it is traditionally considered a series of moralizing exempla, also depicts a kind of narrative medicine similar to Charon's, in which the doctor-confessor Genius listens to the patient-penitent Amans's autobiographical complaints to diagnose his symptoms and then tells his own tales to help Amans pinpoint and treat them.³ Gower's narrative of diagnosis is, however, overlaid with the language of Christianity: storytelling becomes confession, disease is equated with sin, and medicine is rendered as virtue. As Gower's insistence on the benefits of both "lust" and "lore" suggests (Prol. 19), the literary pleasures derived from hearing tales do not necessarily preclude more moral benefits; they may help patients reconsider aspects of their holistic health, such as their personal relationships or their place within the social order. As Jessica Rosenfeld observes, "[n]arrative becomes a central place for thinking about the virtues, dangers, joys, and sorrows of identification [with others]" (99). Such healing narratives, I argue, are dramatized in Gower's most visible example of narrative medicine in the *Confessio Amantis*, the "Tale of Constantine and Sylvester."

Gower's tale, set at the end of the second book on Envy, is used by the narrator Genius to exemplify the virtue of Charity. When the emperor Constantine is suddenly afflicted with leprosy, his coterie of clerks prescribes the macabre cure of bathing in the blood of children no more than seven years old. The arrival of the sacrificial children with their distressed and loudly wailing mothers torments Constantine into feeling pity, and he subsequently refuses to kill them. As a reward for his mercy, God sends Peter and Paul in a dream-vision to tell him that he may be cured of his leprosy by listening to the advice of the Christian bishop Sylvester, who subsequently narrates the Passion and Resurrection of Christ to the emperor in such a heartrending manner that Constantine converts to Christianity. Afterwards, Constantine chooses to make his faith official, forcing his entire empire to convert, and establishing the Church as the highest earthly authority of spiritual power.

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Among the *Confessio*'s tales, this one has received relatively little attention. Extant scholarship, including work by Derek Pearsall, Hugh White, Russell Peck, and Kurt Olsson, mostly discusses Constantine's compassion for the crying mothers, his resulting speech about human equality, and the role of pity in Gower's conception of human nature. My argument draws more on James Simpson's concept of "imaginative sympathy," an individual's willingness to project outwards and experience the world from another's point of view.⁴ While this kind of sympathy enables Constantine to feel pity for the distressed mothers, it is more important for me that imaginative sympathy is also a core value in narrative medicine, and indeed makes such a practice possible. But because the aforementioned scholars have established compassion's inherent role in human nature (at least in Gower's worldview), I will focus more on the enactment of that compassion as it pertains to Constantine's healing process. Peter Nicholson, one of the few scholars to think about Constantine's healing as a multi-step process, argues that it develops in two stages: first, as Constantine discovers the need for pity and second, as he is instructed on Charity (174). I would like to complicate his second step to suggest that Constantine may not be merely a recipient *to* whom doctrine is taught. Rather, his doctors' actions might be interpreted as more collaborative and less purely didactic, working *with* him to progress towards a cure. I propose, then, that the "Tale of Constantine and Sylvester" may be read as a series of medical encounters—first with the court clerks, then with Peter, Paul, and Sylvester—in which the doctors' diagnostic skills are tested as much as the patient's endurance is. The success of their treatment hinges on several factors: their validation of the patient's illness experience, ability to identify and explain the cause of his disease, and composition of a treatment plan specifically tailored to his needs. To gauge their effectiveness, I will apply Charon's three-step model of attention, representation through spoken narrative, and affiliation to each doctor-patient dyad.

Attention, the first phase of narrative healing, is described by Charon as not simply an act of listening, but as a more active suspension of judgment, a lending of one's whole self in a nearly meditative state to absorbing the patient's narrative. One technique used to master such attentiveness is stereophonic listening, which Charon calls "the ability to hear the body and the person who inhabits it" (97). In other words, effective doctors pay attention not only to the readable bodily signs we call symptoms but listen equally to the patient's spoken narrative of his illness experience.

In their diagnosis of his leprosy, Constantine's clerks fail to enact this type of attention. In fact, they show no interest in hearing his

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side of the story, neglecting to ask for a firsthand account of his experienced affliction. By failing to practice proper attentiveness, they overlook important elements of Constantine's illness experience. For example, one debilitating result of his disease is not physiological but social: Constantine, ashamed of his unsightly leprous scabs, "hield him in his chambre clos," so that "he ne mihte ryden oute: / So lefte he bothe schield and spere" (2.3194-97).⁵ For a man without rank, this self-imposed quarantine would cause some inconvenience, but for a king the consequences of such seclusion are felt more widely. The disease prevents him from fulfilling his royal duties. That he is forced to abandon his weapons, for example, illustrates how his condition inhibits his ability to defend his kingdom. One imagines that Constantine's reluctance to be seen by his subjects might also hinder his execution of the law, preventing him from passing judgment on trials in public courts. When the king cannot fulfill his duties, he fails in his responsibilities to his people. Illness, then, interrupts not only the life of the afflicted individual but also triggers wider social disruption.⁶

To illustrate, Gower—in the estates satire section of his Prologue—identifies the king as the "heved" to which "[t]he membres buxom scholden bowe, / And he scholde ek her trowthe allowe, / With al his herte and make hem chiere . . ." (Prol. 152-55). As the proverbial head, the king should nourish and protect the "membres" of his body-state, but Constantine in his diseased state so loses sight of his responsibilities that he threatens his citizens (the mothers and children) with death, in the interest of enacting his imagined cure. In doing so, he disrupts the harmonious functioning of the body-state and turns the head against its own limbs, breeding division among the various parts—which Gower sees as the central problem in the post-lapsarian world.⁷

It is not only Constantine's kingly duties that are compromised by his illness but also his emotional health. His isolation prevents him from interacting with his people, from experiencing healthy human contact, and thus inflicts on him a degree of suffering to which his clerks remain blind, precisely because they fail to elicit and attend to his illness experience. Instead of practicing stereophonic listening, they observe only the most visible bodily symptoms and recommend a purely physiological cure, a medically informed but limited diagnosis based on his skin lesions and little else. Their etiology presumably stems from widespread beliefs of leprosy as a manifestation of sin or spiritual deformity. Bartholomaeus Anglicus follows this etiology, putting special emphasis on the role of blood: "And if blood is wel and temperat, he kepith hele and helthe. And if he is corrupt, it bredth corrupcion, as in *lepra* that is corrupt blood" (qtd. in Rawcliffe, 243-44). If

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leprosy is a manifestation of sin and itself manifests as corrupt blood, it makes sense that Constantine's clerks would prescribe the blood of infants—who are presumably innocent of sin—as a cure.⁸ By neglecting any personal account from Constantine, his clerks miss an opportunity to pinpoint the means by which their patient may have contracted the disease, including possible moral missteps.

Given this implicit rationale, it is deceptive of the clerks to make the following claim:

For, as thei sein, that scholde assuage
The leper and al the violence,
Which that thei knewe of accidence
And noght be weie of kinde is falle.
(2.3208–11)

Russell Peck glosses “of accidence” here as “by circumstance,” emphasizing the clerks’ interpretation of the disease as incidental in nature, rather than attributable to Constantine’s actions, or as a result of some flaw in his *kinde*. In other words, they interpret the leprosy as something that happens *to* Constantine, not *because* of anything he does. Whether their neglect of *kinde* is deliberate, based in medical practice, or political (perhaps a fear of criticizing their patron) is unclear, but Gower clearly sees this ignorance of Constantine’s *kinde* as central to their ineffectual treatment. I should note at this point that the clerks’ perplexity over the cause of Constantine’s leprosy is echoed by Genius, who describes its onset as an “infortune” (2.3190), an affliction which “cawhte” Constantine unawares (2.3292), making him the passive subject of fate and helpless to prevent his disease. Gower’s retelling removes the explicit cause for the leprosy present in his source tale, the version in the *Legenda Aurea*. In the Golden Legend’s “Saint Sylvester,” Jacobus de Voragine clearly attributes Constantine’s leprosy to his longstanding persecution of Christians, for which God punishes him (64). Gower, in deliberately omitting this detail at the beginning of his tale, makes the emperor’s sudden disease a puzzle to solve, rendering the situation as much a test of the physicians’ diagnostic competence as a crucible for Constantine’s character.

In contrast to the inattentive clerks, Sylvester comes closer to enacting the kind of self-emptying attention that Charon recommends. As an explicator of dreams, the bishop plays the role of interpreter that is essential to the act of diagnosis. Although Gower devotes only a handful of lines to Sylvester’s act of listening (2.3381–84), I argue that Sylvester has paid sufficient attention to the spoken narrative to enact imaginative sympathy. In fact, the emperor seems to trust Sylvester, more than

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his own clerks. Not only does he narrate his dream to Sylvester but he also speaks about “elles what he wolde” (2.3382). Admittedly this phrase may have been composed purely to complete the rhyming couplet, but it is possible to entertain the notion that Constantine—driven to sequestration by his leprous appearance—simply desires human contact. Perhaps because his clerks express little interest in his words, Constantine unloads his burdens on Sylvester, a more willing listener. His verbal outpouring as well as Sylvester’s “joiful” reaction to his words (2.3384), may suggest Constantine’s acute need for self-expression and human contact as well as Sylvester’s receptivity as a listener. Sylvester’s behavior enacts a central tenet of clinical attention—careful consideration and validation of a patient’s narrativized illness experience.

After carefully attending to the patient’s illness narratives, the next step in the narrative healing process is the doctor’s act of representing the patient’s lived experience in narrative form. Charon labels this representative stage “emplotment,”⁹ where “form is conferred onto raw experience. . . . bestow[ing] a shape, an order, and therefore a *meaning* onto that randomness” (138). I would add that a key aspect of this emplotted meaning is a sense of finite teleology. Translating a patient’s raw illness experience into a narrative gives a sense of a beginning, middle, and end, molding what is often a painful and baffling experience of disease into a form with a trajectory and definite destination, allowing the patient to envision an end to his suffering.¹⁰ Such narratives include both the suspected causes of the illness onset as well as a potential treatment plan. In the verbal exchanges between doctor and patient, it is crucial that the clinician explicitly conveys this entire narrative of healing to the patient.

If Constantine’s clerks failed to devote sufficient attention to his subjective experience, their failure is compounded here: they do not communicate the suspected etiology of leprosy clearly to their patient. Constantine, then, understands neither the causes of his leprosy nor the reasons why children’s blood might cure him. By withholding information from him, his clerks undermine his ability to make informed decisions regarding his health. His subsequent refusal to heed their advice, after realizing his own disgust at the thought of slaying innocent children, marks a crucial turning point for Constantine where he begins to exercise agency. His rejection of his clerks’ counsel results in Constantine seeking another source of wisdom to help him understand his illness. In comparison with his silent clerks, Constantine’s meetings with the dream-figures Peter and Paul, as well as with bishop Sylvester, contain more dialogue.¹¹ The trio of Peter, Paul, and Sylvester combines to create the narrative neglected by the royal clerks, namely, the emplotting of Constantine’s illness within a story aimed toward treatment.

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Peter and Paul, as divine mouthpieces, explain how Constantine's behavior fits into the larger Christian schema. They present his persecution of Roman Christians as a sin, not necessarily because he lacks faith in the Christian God, but rather because his behavior marks him as lacking in pity. It is not so much the identity of the victimized group that is important but the fact that Constantine victimizes his fellow man at all; in his persecution, he is apparently unable to recognize that his victims have as much a legitimate claim to life as he does. Medieval readers might view his inability to see the Christian minority as brothers as a flaw in his reasoning capabilities, the God-given part of his mind that makes him human. This irrationality, Peter and Paul imply, manifests on his body as disease. But his charitable actions towards the mothers and infants reverse this transactional divine justice:

“O Constantin, for thou hast served
Pité, thou hast pité deserved:
Forthi thou schalt such pité have
That God thurgh pité woll thee save.”
(2.3339-42)

Here, Peter and Paul effectively represent the etiology of Constantine's leprosy in narrative form, pinpointing its root cause as an ethical problem rather than a purely physiological one. His lack of pity, demonstrated in his oppression of Christians, brought on the leprosy, but a demonstration of pity (sparing the blood sacrifices) gives him access to a cure. This explanation fills in an *aporia*, a gap in meaning, which Constantine's clerks left unresolved. In explaining the causal logic behind the leprosy's origins, Peter and Paul reveal that Constantine is at least partially responsible for bringing the disease upon himself. But this is, of course, a two-way street. If his actions can cause him to fall ill, he also has the power to prevent sickness, by practicing *pité*. Such news must be encouraging to Constantine, since he has successfully enacted *pité* before and knows how to do it. His knowledge of this etiology empowers him, giving him a sense of agency over his illness.

That the pair characterize his treatment as “[a] double hele . . . / Ferst for thi bodiliche kinde, / And for thi wofull soule also” (2.3343-45) carries special significance. Unlike Constantine's clerks, Peter and Paul's prescriptions are not purely physiological, but instead stress that his treatment must begin with a re-education. The terms they use to describe Constantine's treatment include “enformacioun” (2.3363) and “leche” (2.3363), equating knowledge with medicine, as well as the verb “teche” (2.3364), the latter two of which form a rhyming couplet that accentuates parallels between doctors and instructors—both are

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meant to teach, passing on information, entertaining questions, inspiring critical thinking, and guiding their charges toward possible answers.¹² In modern medical terms, we might think of such a treatment as psychosomatic, where the bodily symptoms are caused by some dysfunction in the thought process and thus the physical symptoms are best treated by altering some aspect of the patient's thinking.

If Peter and Paul narrate the disease causation, Sylvester complements them with an ending that promises a cure. His recounting of Christ's decision to die for mankind's sins does not seem in any way related to Constantine's personal narrative. But Sylvester's storytelling highlights ways in which an attentive Constantine could extract beneficial lessons. He draws increasingly explicit parallels between Christ and Constantine, suggesting that the Son of God is meant to be an exemplary figure for his patient. For example, Sylvester makes it clear that Christ's decisions were not solely determined by coercion or predestination. His emphasis on Christ's choice and his repeated insistence on the importance of "stond[ing] upon [one's] oghne dedes" (2.3414, 3424) at Judgment Day draw attention to Constantine's own potential agency. Unlike the court clerks, Sylvester does not make narrow or unexplained prescriptions; rather, his speech is meant to inform Constantine's decision-making process, while leaving the ultimate choice of whether to accept or reject his advice up to his patient.

Sylvester's storytelling deliberately identifies and extends thematic threads extant in Peter and Paul's earlier explanation, creating continuity between their half of the narrative and his own. For example, his repeated assertions that Christ's resurrection occurs in both "fleissh and blod" echoes Peter and Paul's promise of a psychosomatic double healing, for both body and soul. Similarly, in explaining that God sacrificed his only Son "for mannes love" (2.3390), Sylvester evokes the theme of pity that Peter and Paul repeatedly stressed. The implication, of course, is that in sparing the lives of the innocent children, Constantine—like Christ—performed a selfless act out of compassion for his fellow man. By tying together topical threads extant in earlier narratives, Sylvester composes a coherent vision of forward movement for Constantine, reaffirming the correctness of his past behavior toward the mothers and children, recasting his compassion as a quality highly valued by the Christian ethos, and setting up Christ as an exemplar.

The implementation of attention and representation eventually culminate in contact. Charon describes the third and final step of narrative healing, affiliation, as reasserting contact between doctor and patient, which leads to the collaborative execution of a mutually consented-upon treatment plan (149–50). Affiliation reassures the patient that his

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doctor will remain a support system no matter which choices he makes and builds a sense of empathetic community.

In Gower's conversion tale, the healing act is equated with a sacramental one—conflating medicine with grace. James Palmer, in fact, notes the dual meaning of the word “grace.” In the frame tale, it is specified by Venus to signify medicine for the lovesick, while a more common understanding of the term indicates a means of Christian salvation. Palmer asserts, and I would agree, that “this intentional ambiguity begins the tying together of the medical and penitential traditions” (53–54). Constantine's baptism, in addition to proving his grace, is an act of ritualized contact between doctor and patient. The script they follow is meaningful to both parties, signifying personal transformation from a pagan into a Christian. The roles they assume—Constantine's sitting naked in the vessel³ and Sylvester's pouring of holy water over him—actuate that meaning by ritual performance. That the ritual ends with the leprous scabs miraculously falling away adds another layer of meaning, healing. This cements their affiliation and signifies a successful cure. The healing that Constantine experiences through Sylvester's hands is not only psychological and physical, but also social. Sylvester facilitates his patient's reintegration from the solitude of sickness back into his former society and, by initiating him into Christianity, allows him membership into a new community. Thus, Constantine and Sylvester's mutual work of healing has profound effects on the social order: it simultaneously reinforces the extant hierarchy by reconstituting Constantine as a king fully capable of fulfilling his duties and also subverts it by opening up a valid social space for Sylvester and his Christian followers.

However, the productive affiliation between Constantine and Sylvester ends there. Having successfully converted and cured his patient, Sylvester disappears from the tale. The last thirty lines of Gower's tale are devoted to Constantine's well-intentioned but misguided actions, using his authority as emperor to forcibly convert Rome to Christianity and transferring spiritual authority to the newly-established Pope Sylvester and his successors. Gower impugns the so-called Donation of Constantine for mixing the temporal with the spiritual (2.3491–92) and suggests that the founding of the Church gives rise to the clergy's abuse of power, based on their wrong-headed desire for worldly goods, rather than proper spiritual objects. Rosenfeld astutely points out, however, that misguided desire is not the root of the difficulty; rather the Donation of Constantine raises problems because the unequal distribution of worldly goods interferes with individuals' ability to accurately perceive their fellow man:

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[T]he sphere of worldly goods obscures likeness. Identification with others—the poor as well as the rich—is made much more difficult when the temporal is “meddled” with the spiritual. Powerful men like the preconversion Constantine find it all too easy to dismiss the “semblance” of others, until they come wailing beneath his window. . . . [Gower] suggest[s] that there are real problems posed by a social order that allows inequality to create both painful, envious identification with people more obviously like oneself, and also to obscure likeness and enable the dismissal of others. (98)

Rosenfeld’s insights ring true for Constantine and might also be read as somewhat accusatory, given his recent experience as a recipient of Sylvester’s empathy.

In an attempt to bring a healing force to what he sees as a morally ailing empire, Constantine plays at being a doctor, but—in doing so—he acts against the compassion he learned in the first place. By threatening all of his citizens on pain of death to convert, he fails to enact the imaginative sympathy that he practiced with the mothers and children, the empathy that made him worthy of God’s grace. Rather than attending to his citizens by placing himself in their mental space, he rashly assumes that what healed him will likewise benefit all of his people. Moreover, he does not respect his subjects’ agency in the narrative he constructs; by forcing his citizens to convert, rather than allowing them the freedom to decide for themselves, Constantine fails to represent an appropriate narrative of healing. For the Roman citizens, there is no chance of true affiliation with their emperor.¹⁴ He favors an authoritarian model of medicine over a dialogic or even didactic one. In coercing his empire into baptism, Constantine not only perpetuates his clerks’ mistakes but arguably worsens them; his decree allows the possibility that more innocent blood might be spilt than even his clerks had initially ordained. Thus, I see the fundamental problem as Constantine’s failure to honor the tenets of narrative medicine, such as enacting imaginative sympathy and allowing free will, despite having experienced them as a patient. Understanding the tale through this lens of narrative medicine gives new weight to Constantine’s gesture. If we understand the story as a standard conversion tale, Constantine does no wrong in his forceful wholesale conversion of the empire. But if we see him as having lived through, witnessed, and benefitted from the narrative healing process, we might expect him to have internalized and subsequently enacted these basic concepts; his failure to do so increases his culpability as both a would-be doctor and a king.

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The “Tale of Constantine and Sylvester” is especially important to the larger scheme of the *Confessio* because it represents in miniature the very type of narrative healing that Genius is attempting to enact with Amans. Genius, I argue, ultimately performs his role of confessor-doctor more effectively than either Constantine or Sylvester. The former has not yet mastered the art of imaginative sympathy and the latter fails to maintain the continued contact necessary to maintain a healthy regimen; Genius, on the other hand, is more invested in attending to his patient’s complaints and repeatedly representing narratives to allow Amans multiple opportunities to practice enacting imaginative sympathy. The patience Genius shows in revisiting countless iterations of a given sin and answering Amans’s questions reveals his interest in helping his patient understand the causes of his illness, and ultimately guiding—rather than prescribing—future action. At the end of the second book, however, Amans has not yet fully absorbed his lessons. Like the presumptive Constantine, he places more importance on action than on self-reflection. When Genius distills his lesson into a pithy maxim urging Amans to avoid Envy and practice Charity, Amans accepts it immediately and without question. He is more concerned with obtaining Genius’s indulgence than examining his own behavior or considering concrete ways he might enact virtue. Rather, he desires “that I have er this misdo / Gif me my penance er I go” (2.3513–14). The twice-repeated “er” in Amans’s speech indicates his haste; he still fears sin as something he will inevitably commit again if Genius does not shrive him immediately. It has become apparent through both Constantine’s and Amans’s examples that individuals must experience the dialogic tenets of narrative medicine multiple times before they can begin to internalize them,¹⁵ much less enact them. Thus, Genius’s continual delays, which allow him to discuss the remaining sins, encourage his patient to repeatedly listen, imagine, care, and learn in his quest to heal.

Notes

1. Arthur Frank, in outlining frameworks for an ideal patient-centered narrative, explores three kinds of medical narratives—the restitution narrative, the chaos narrative, and the quest narrative. He finds the last one, which is deeply informed by Joseph Campbell’s *Hero With a Thousand Faces*, the only productive option of the three. In a compelling chapter, he asserts that quest narratives elevate the patient into the role of hero, cast their struggles with disease as a journey, and witness a transformation of character through suffering. For more on the chaos narrative, see note 9 below.

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2. Arthur Kleinman gets at the problem I define through narrative roles by distinguishing between two terms, illness and disease. For Kleinman, illness refers to the individual patient's "innately human" (4) lived experience of being sick, and is influenced by the patient's idiosyncratic lay understandings of disease and the perceptions of his social circle. Disease, on the other hand, "is the problem from the practitioner's perspective. In the narrow biological terms of the biomedical model, this means that disease is reconfigured only as an alteration in biological structure or functioning. . . . In the practitioner's recasting illness as disease, something essential to the experience of chronic illness is lost; it is not legitimated as a subject for clinical concern, nor does it receive an intervention" (5–6). His use of these two terms informs mine.

3. Russell Peck discusses in more psychological terms the therapeutic value of poetry in the "Reading as Therapy" section of his *Confessio's* introduction (Vol. 1, 6–13). He considers the three-cell model of the brain represented in medieval brain diagrams, detailing their cognitive functions as interpreted by Boethius and Augustine, especially their importance in governing desire and overcoming division on both an individual and social level.

4. Simpson's reading of this episode is unique for its use of medieval psychology, specifically in his claim that all three faculties of the brain—imagination, reason, and memory—are implicated in generating Constantine's pity: "[I]t is Constantine's compassionate response to hearing and seeing the near victims of his power that provokes rational 'remembrance' of his place in the cosmos generally, and persuades him to renounce his own interests. The senses, imagination, reason and memory all conspire to provoke selfless pity" (265–66).

5. All references to the *Confessio Amantis* refer to Russell Peck's 2013 edition.

6. In light of this, it is worth noting that Gower uses the Middle English word *desese* relatively frequently. It appears in every book of the *Confessio*, although most of the time it does not signify a condition of ill health exclusively. My sense is that Gower uses it most frequently to indicate a state of distress, uneasiness, literal dis-ease, though the narrower modern sense is sometimes invoked. The *MED* reveals that the *Confessio* uses four of the five documented definitions of *desese* (senses 1b, 1c, 2a, 4, and 5).

7. See the section in the Prologue which Peck has titled "Division and Evil" (67–69). Gower accuses Division as "aboven alle / . . . the thing which makth the world to falle" (Prol. 971–72). This is also the only place in the *Confessio* where Gower explicitly links the idea of Division to *desese*: "For ther was proved what it [war] is, / And what *desese* there it wroghte; / For thilke werre tho forth broghte / The vice of alle dedly sinne, / Thurgh which *division* cam inne / Among the men in erthe hier" (Prol. 1006–11; emphasis mine). Gower's emphasis on internal division is consonant with contemporaneous conceptions of disease, where the human body—composed of the four humors—suffered disease as a result of humoral imbalances. Where health was achieved by maintaining the proper proportion of each humor, disease was caused by excesses or insufficiencies of one or more humor, causing each to work against the others

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to the detriment of the body. For the human body as an entity rent asunder by the humors, see Gower's Prologue, lines 974–90.

8. The logic of such a treatment is prevalent in medieval medicine and points out an implicit paradigm that medical historian Nicholas Everett calls the “alopathic theory of opposites” (48), where the cure for a given symptom requires physical contact with or ingestion of a therapeutic with an equal and opposite power. At the root of humoral theory, this theory of opposites explains the fourfold schema of the humors—each with its own combination of hotness, coldness, wetness, or dryness—and the need to balance them. Given the placement of this tale within the larger schema of the *Confessio*, I might suggest that the Galenic theory of opposites—when embodied within a diseased individual—encourages Gower's definition of Envy: the excessive desire for something one does not have, nor necessarily has a right to. To put it bluntly, Constantine desires a healthy body/psyche that he no longer has and his clerks encourage an envious disposition within their king by prescribing a cure dependent on the self-centered logic that he will value his own health over the lives of his subjects. I would assert, though, that Constantine's problem is never one of Envy. His difficulty, I argue, is not that he is excessively envious or lacking in charity. Rather, his highly affective reaction to the sacrificial children and their mothers demonstrates an innate propensity toward empathy. His problem is that he cannot always access his innate compassion and sometimes has trouble expressing it in appropriate ways.

9. Cheryl Mattingly, more than a decade before the publication of Charon's book, made this term central to her therapeutic theorizing. She defines emplotment as “making a configuration in time, creating a whole out of a succession of events. What we call a story is just this rendering and ordering of an event sequence into parts which belong to a larger temporal whole, one governed by a plot. . . . Particular actions then take their meaning by belonging to, and contributing to, the story. This ‘making a whole’ is also making meaning such that we can ask what the point or thought or moral of the story is” (812). In applying this framework to a case study, Mattingly “claim[s] that these healers actively struggle to shape therapeutic events into a coherent form organized by a plot. . . . [F]or occupational therapists . . . the language of narrative has been provocative as a vehicle for seeing practice in a new way” (811). Both Charon's and Mattingly's use of emplotment is deeply indebted to Paul Ricoeur's tripartite definition of mimesis, outlined in his book *Time and Narrative*. For Mattingly's discussion on Ricoeur, see her “Concept of Therapeutic ‘Emplotment’” 812; for Charon's, see *Narrative Medicine* 137–38.

10. Contrast this with Frank's idea of illness as interruption. He brings this idea to its extreme end in his theory of a chaos narrative, which describes the incoherent utterances of an ill person so steeped in the agonizing chaos of his illness that he cannot represent his experience in coherent narrative form: “To turn the chaos into a verbal story is to have some reflective grasp of it. . . . For a person to gain such a reflective grasp of her own life, distance is a prerequisite. In telling the events of one's life, events are mediated by the telling. But in the lived chaos there is no mediation, only immediacy. . . . Lived chaos makes

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reflection, and consequently storytelling, impossible. If narrative implies a sequence of events connected to each other through time, chaos stories are not narratives. When I refer . . . to the chaos narrative, I mean an *anti-narrative* of time without sequence, telling without mediation, and speaking about oneself without being fully able to reflect on oneself.” (98)

11. The number of lines given to each doctor-patient dyad is telling. The clerks are never directly quoted, and their prescription to Constantine is a paraphrased synopsis only ten lines long (2.3206–15). In contrast, the dialogue between Peter, Paul, and Constantine is directly quoted and comprises about thirty lines (2.3339–70). Constantine’s exchange with Sylvester doubles this figure, totaling nearly sixty lines (2.3385–444). His discussions with Peter, Paul, and Sylvester combined cover nearly a third of the entire tale, which spans about 300 lines.

12. James M. Palmer draws further parallels between the medieval notion that teaching/preaching and healing were inextricably intertwined. For the purposes of my argument, two of the most important similarities between confessor-priests and physicians are in their attempts to assess the penitent or student’s condition by asking detailed questions (54) and by their (sometimes implicit) promise to protect their charge’s privacy. Palmer quotes John of Arderne’s imperative to “Discover never the lech vnwarly the counselleꝛ of his pacienteꝛ, als wele of men as of wymmen” (55). This understanding between the two parties is designed to establish mutual trust and seems to anticipate modern doctor-patient confidentiality agreements.

13. It is doubly appropriate that the vessel Sylvester uses for the baptism is the same tub that the royal clerks had previously assigned to be filled with innocents’ blood. Thus, the vehicle through which Constantine might have blood-stained his body and condemned his soul becomes the vessel through which he is purified body and soul, and from whose womblike space he is born anew into a Christian life.

14. Admittedly, the third step of the narrative medicine model meets some resistance here, due to both the individual circumstances of this tale and more generally the patriarchal tendencies of medieval exemplar literature. Given Constantine’s social status as a king, it is difficult to imagine him condescending to interact with his subjects as an equal, or initiating the semi-egalitarian, dialogic relationship that Charon’s affiliation requires. It is equally difficult to imagine Gower, whose overt concern with proper kingly behavior permeates the *Confessio*, fully endorsing such conduct. Even in clinical encounters where there is less of a power differential between doctor and patient, social convention would probably dictate a more paternalistic script than what I describe above, one less attuned and sympathetic to notions of patient autonomy than modern bioethics.

15. One might conceive of this process as a series of forgettings and rememberings. The sheer number of tales told encourages Amans to recall again and again how to enact imaginative sympathy. By allowing him so many opportuni-

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ties to practice it, Genius attempts to instill a sort of mental muscle memory, making empathy more instinctive.

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Old Words Made New: Medea's Magic and Gower's Textual Healing

William Rogers

The boundary between medieval medicine and magic was a porous one. The use of arcane knowledge, incantations, and potions, characteristic of a popular view of magic, defines, in part, many Middle English medical texts, and these similarities are often visible in depictions of magic and medicine in ME literature, which makes separating the occult or superstitious from medical knowledge difficult. If constructing a strict boundary between medicinal cures and magical interventions seems difficult, then separating the language of medicine from what is strictly literary, too, appears almost impossible in late medieval texts, as the appearance of magic as medicine in ME literature likewise complicates separations between medical and literary texts. As a result, scholars have reinforced that the relationship between medical writing and literature in medieval England was characterized not by strict boundaries, but by generic similarities and slippages between and borrowings across medical and literary texts. Nowhere is this image clearer than in Irma Taatvitsainen's discussion of the preface to the ME version of Guy de Chauliac's *Cirurgie*, which, she argues, produces a "twofold didactic function" providing "easy access to authoritative passages and convenient ways of finding important opinions" and making "authorities available to readers not able to work their way through the originals." (42) While Taatvitsainen confines her discussion of compilations to medical materials, it is clear that her conclusions also apply to literary objects. This "twofold didactic function," in fact, describes one major aim of the *Confessio Amantis*, as it collects and conveys the wisdom from ancient exempla: to gather in one book stories and their morals and to guide king, country, and Amans, the reader within the text (Mahoney 26).

The *Confessio Amantis*, of course, has other connections to medieval medicine beyond its generic similarities with then contemporary or near contemporary medical compilations. It is, above all, a work deeply invested in healing, both personal—of the reader outside the text and Amans, inside it—and public, as the narrative of its genesis on the Thames suggests.¹ Amans, much later changed into John Gower in the text, undergoes surgery in Book VIII; the Confessor, whose dialogue with Amans provides a frame for the entire text, describes in detail elements of physical and natural science that also reflect then-

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current connections to medieval medicine. Finally, the concentration on depictions of old age—stylized though they are—reflects an old urge to understand and delay the effects of age through medical and pseudo-medical means. Amans's surgery becomes necessary as a result of his recognition that he is old and infected by love, which requires excision at the hands of Cupid. The revision of Amans as an old man in the final book of *Confessio*, in some ways, positions old age as yet another malady of the lover, but, instead of old age being "cured," it is love which can be removed. Yet, elsewhere in the *Confessio*, old age is cured, and, in an exemplum that demonstrates the incompatibility between love and perjury, Medea cures the aging and ailing Eson, Jason's father, in a dazzling show of magic and medicine. As a central element of the "most novelistic of Gower's narratives," he creates a portrait of the mythical sorceress that employs a full range of poetic language and imagery (Wetherbee 31). Medea's importance is more than skin deep. Medea's rejuvenating effects, in fact, are central to Gower's textual method, as her agency reflects not only the slippage between literary and medical sources but also how Gower's own use of old sources aligns closely to Medea's rejuvenating touch in this compendium of textual curatives. Conflating old age and old sources, Gower's narrative of Medea captures, in small, a major argument of the *Confessio*: that old sources remade might correct the folly of the present.²

I will contextualize Medea's portrait in Gower's *Confessio* using *On Tarrying the Accidents of Age*, a treatise on rejuvenation found in Trinity College MS R.14.52. *Tarrying*, like many of Gower's exempla, is also a translation from Latin and, like the *Confessio*, presents an expansive range of texts, striving toward an encyclopedic view of their subjects. The Trinity MS includes three different treatises on old age, longevity, and rejuvenation, connecting the manuscript and *Confessio* via a discourse on old age, as old age and rejuvenation figure centrally in not only Gower's narrative of Medea's magic but also in the recognition of Amans's age. While I do not argue for a direct correspondence of subjects between the manuscript and the *Confessio*, the range of materials in the Trinity manuscript blurs generic conventions as clearly as *Confessio* (Pahti 13–17). By reading how closely Medea's rejuvenation of Eson reflects similar language and imagery in a text detailing medical reversals of old age, I will first argue that the Medea episode highlights that Gower is thinking medically about the old body, the old book, and the renewal of both and then demonstrate how Medea's magic maps onto the end of Book VIII. At the end of Book VIII, Amans is frustrated in his quest for healing, love, and youth, as much as Jason or Eson. Mirroring Eson's journey back in time, who through the deaths of his grandsons, loses any reason for youth, Amans's rejuvenation is illusory.

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His aging is only delayed by the effect of texts, but the texts themselves are renewed throughout Gower's work, strengthening the coupling of old authorities and old books that the prologue of the *Confessio* introduces. At the same time, this blurring between body and text, medicine and the literary, produces a level of thinking about old bodies that I call a "poetics of rejuvenation."

A poetics of rejuvenation, as I term it, is one of the many strategies that tie together the discrete pieces of Gower's monumental poem, and, indeed, make visible ties among his texts in other languages. Gower's strategy of breathing life into old sources is apparent in the prologue to the *Confessio*, which begins with a recognition that those ancient authorities that pass away leave bits of themselves in books. In fact, this concentration on ancient corpora—human and textual—helps to bind the confessional work together. Beyond age, however, I will argue that rejuvenation is central to the *Confessio*. It is not novel, of course, to argue for the centrality of age and youth or the "Ages of Man" to Gower's work.³ If a constant exists in Gower's work, it might be his willingness to announce his old age, long before we might consider him an old man (Yeager 95). Rejuvenation, however, as reflected in the magic of Medea, can illuminate not only Gower's use of medieval medicine within his work, but also his deployment of ancient source texts.

In reworking Medea for the *Confessio*, Gower borrowed from a familiar story: Medea betrays her father so that her love Jason might win the Golden fleece after which she becomes his wife and follows him home. In some versions, her magic is stronger than in others, and, in Gower's retelling, Medea uses her control of otherworldly powers to give Eson, Jason's father, youth, and subsequently, more time to spend with his new descendants, her children with Jason, a detail elided by Chaucer. Indeed, from Chaucer and Gower to Caxton, the story of Medea is one that reverberates widely through the literature of the Middle Ages, a textual trajectory that has been examined most closely by Ruth Morse.⁴ These revisions of an older textual tradition posit Medea variously as wronged woman, villain, and, of course, as someone ambiguously situated between these roles. It seems that Gower's use of Medea represents her as a wronged woman, albeit one who has some responsibility in her fate as the text's sympathies seem to lie largely with Medea even as she slaughters her own children in front of her unfaithful husband. Indeed, according to Ruth Morse, Gower's Medea is made a sympathetic figure not only by the long length of the Medea-Jason narrative but also suggestively by its perspective (222). Echoing her view, Ellen Shaw Bakalian characterizes Gower's revision of Medea as one largely sympathetic to her:

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That Gower chooses to depict this particular literary figure as a loving wife in a mutually satisfying marriage is extraordinary, for Medea is known throughout antiquity and into the Middle Ages as an evil witch, a barbarian who dabbled in black magic. Gower's rendition of the Medea tale is notable for its shift towards Medea, his portrayal of her as a selfless woman, and his emphasis upon Jason as a perjurer" (85–86).

Like Bakalian, I am interested in the tale as "one of rewriting" and as a "story [that] has its origins in classical antiquity and in other styles of historical representation: medieval romance, historical texts, and in stories which draw and draw upon ideas and perceptions about women." (99)

Medea's role as embodied figuration of Gower's text method is central to Gower's use of "newe," a Middle English synonym for create, renew, and rejuvenate, all of which are related to revision and rewriting. Used as a noun and verb throughout the *Confessio*, "newe" appears at least five times according to *The Middle English Dictionary*, with examples found in the Prologue, Book I, Book V, and Book VIII. One of the first attestations of "newe" occurs toward the end of the prologue, when Gower writes that he has

herd seye
That who that wel his werk begynneth
The rather a good ende he wynneth;
And thus the prologe of my book
After the world that whilom took
And eek somdel after the newe,
I wol begynne for to newe (Prol. 86–92).

Reflecting a belief that good beginnings led to good ends, Gower's prologue situates his textual creation in language that is often used to describe the life cycle: from at least Cicero's *De Senectute*, a youth rightly lived was seen as central to living pleasantly in old age. It seems natural that a word encompassing creation, renewal, and rejuvenation should bookend the *Confessio*, anticipating that one aim of the *Confessio* appears to be the renewal of Amans through the rehearsal of old stories, from a time long past when books were treasured. Mirroring this use of "newe" as a verb signifying renewal and creation is its appearance early in *Tarrying* as the author describes the process—time worn—by which bodies avoid the signs and costs of aging.

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And so be withdrawing of the wombe vndirlith next to corrupcioun and bi regeneracioun of goode humyditie fer from corrupcioun, he shal be newed and of durabilitie long tyme shal abide and dwelle. And thus auncient men diden (180).

The avoidance of corruption, the regulation of heat, and the movement away from unhealthy phlegm can offer some measure of rejuvenation to the old body, as this quotation from Chapter Three of *Tarrying* makes clear. Following the general outline of various other treatises that purport to avoid the pains of age, efforts that result in the production of good moisture and heat appear central in this text. More importantly, this quotation clarifies how the boundary between what is considered medical and literary is furthered blurred by the citation of “auncient men,” as *Tarrying* will quote Ovid—as *Confessio* so frequently does—in the next few lines. The phrase “auncient men” is repeated over and over in *Tarrying*, as the author stresses the age of his method, and the hidden mysteries by which old authorities and their books maintain both secret knowledge and rigorous fidelity to the methods they advocate. Reflecting a similar relationship to textual borrowings from “auncient men” in *Confessio*, *Tarrying* valorizes old sources, even as it imagines old age as a period to be physically difficult, and, in doing so, these two texts maintain a conflicted attitude toward age. Old age, as Gower imagines it at the end of Book VIII, is a physically debilitating condition, one that necessarily allows Amans to concentrate on a healing of sorts, once he is reminded of his age through his reflection in Venus’s mirror. Until this moment of recognition in Book VIII, little awareness exists for Amans or the reader that he is old. As a tarrying of that knowledge, the *Confessio* works as a textual delay of Amans’s awareness of age. Like *Tarrying*, the *Confessio* really only aims to postpone the signs of age, at least until Amans appears ready to see his reflection.

But beyond this uneven view of old age—somehow both painful and necessary—the narrative of Medea provides further material that, like the *Tarrying* author’s, Gower’s textual borrowings resemble a sort of rejuvenation. Here, the text seems most to mirror the methods of Medea, as *Tarrying* describes in secretive language the medicinal processes by which old men might be revived and the aging process delayed, even stopped. As a reflection of Gower’s revisionary practices, Medea’s power to turn the old into the young is an activity that strikes at the heart of what Gower is doing with old age and old stories: revising his textual corpus, Gower demonstrates the connections of such an activity to the layers of meaning and correction that overlay the aged body, at least according to his own depiction of it. Linking the somatic

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and the textual, Medea's magic also highlights that Gower's *Confessio* is rejuvenating itself as a text, taking old stories and "ensamples" and breathing new life into them. Medea's own treatment of Eson, however, troubles that youth should automatically be viewed as an absolute positive over age: her frustration of Eson's and Jason's desires actually make hazy a distinction between youth and age, as Jason's betrayal and Medea's reaction ultimately render Eson's youth worthless.

After Medea and Jason produce children, seeing the two children that Jason and Medea have begotten, Eson

. . . gret joie made
To sen th'encress of his lignage;
For he was of so gret an Age,
That men awaiten every day.
Whan that he scholde gon way. (V.3940-44)

Eson has no apparent distress about his age. According to Gower's tale, he is filled only with joy that his "lignage" has increased, and that his son Jason has two heirs. As Gower's mention of "men" makes clear, however, the feelings of those around Eson seem more complicated, as they anticipate his end, "awaiten every day." Closer to home, Jason convinces Medea to make Eson young again, to produce more youth, as she did with the children she begat. Jason

. . . sih his fader old,
Upon Medea made him bold,
Of art magique, which sche couthe,
And preith hire that his fader youthe
Sche wolde make ageinward newe. (V.3945-49)

What should be a touching scene of filial piety is instead shorn of any tenderness, as "the request seems sheer will on Jason's part, born of the same fascination with the 'novellerie' of magic that leads Genius to provide a detailed account of Medea's sorcery" (Wetherbee 32). Jason is, it seems, obsessed with newness and youth, with novelty. But even this passing fancy with rejuvenation serves a purpose, and, in an occurrence again of "newe," the narrative makes clear that Medea's magic has the ability to stop the deleterious effects of age, a worthwhile goal for Gower's Amans and the intended audience of *Tarrying*. In fact, as with *Tarrying*, Medea's methods recall that Eson's rejuvenation requires equal measures of magic and medicine. To make that point clear, Genius later describes her subsequent efforts at medicine as she harvests herbs by which she might restore the old man's youth. And as

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with *Tarrying*, the central method of rejuvenation, even for Medea's magic, rests upon humoral balance and the re-ignition of a bodily fire long changed into ashes.

After she gathers herbs, magical ingredients, and snake skin, boiling them together, Medea approaches Eson as

. . . ther he lay,
And tok a swerd was of assay,
With which a wounde upon his side
Sche made, that therout mai slyde
The blod withinne, which was old
And sek and trouble and fieble and cold.
And tho sche tok unto his us
Of herbes al the beste jus,
And poured it into his wounde;
That made his veynes fulle and sounde.
And tho sche made his wounde clos,
And tok his hand, and up he ros,
And tho sche gaf him drinke a drauhte,
Of which his youthe agein he cauhte,
His hed, his herte, and his visage
Lich unto twenty wynter age.
Hise hore heres were away,
And lich unto the freisshe Maii,
Whan passed ben the colde schoures,
Riht so recovereth he his floures. (V. 4155-74)

Making good her promise to restore the inward youth of Eson, Medea regulates the balance of heat and age through herbal remedies, restoring heat and youth to Eson's blood. Drinking Medea's potion, Eson regains his youth, changing his appearance. Gone is his white hair, and his head, heart, and face all show the flower of his youth. The similarity between Eson's transformation and *Tarrying* are particularly strong here. Much of *Tarrying* concerns cosmetic efforts to turn back time, and chapters six and ten describe how one can reverse white hair and repair the rough and discolored nails that the text associates with elderly men. Chapter Six advocates hot oil treatments for hair, and Chapter Ten promotes tactics by which the temperature of blood might be raised, including specific herbs and good digestion.

Even as the text maintains Medea's power lies in herbs, medicine, and magic, the dimensions of her power produce narrative, and, consequently, the length of this exemplum is noteworthy. While not as long as the story of Apollonius of Tyre, the episode of Medea and Jason's

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broken vow takes many lines to narrate, many of which are devoted to the depiction of Medea's medicine. In fact, Genius's unfolding of that medicine seems directly related to the spectacular nature of her regenerative powers. For over two hundred lines, Gower's text narrates the exercise of rejuvenation, supplying expansive details of the ingredients Medea employs and the actions she performs in order to restore youth.

Bot what sche dede in that matiere
It is a wonder thing to hier.
Bot yit for the novellerie
I thenke tellen a partie. (V.3953-56)

And it is this very action of rejuvenation that creates its own narrative, worthy to be told, and strange in its hearing. Called a novelty, "novellerie," Medea's methods are characterized as new and noteworthy, justifying the length of the exemplum given over to their description. And this newness, too, reflects how texts are rejuvenated outside of their ancient origins, and, simultaneously, this exemplum is not simply about novel settings and themes. Indeed, according to Matthew W. Irvin, "In this digression, Medea is revealed in her full power and agency," and, as with the ME word "newe," this regenerative digression traffics in both creation of narrative and rejuvenation of old bodies (225). Given in terms of transformation, the verbal nature of this regenerative process demonstrates how revision of the text revises the author, as Medea herself changes in the process of granting new youth. Granted god-like power, Medea gains an almost mythical power that changes her speech and form, "hir jargoun strangeth" and "her forme changeth." And these wonders are at once beyond the imagination of man, and, yet, are to be found in books.

And riht so as hir jargoun strangeth,
In sondri wise hir forme changeth,
Sche semeth faie and no womman;
For with the craftes that sche can
Sche was, as who seith, a goddesse;
And what hir liste, more or lesse,
Sche dede, in bokes as we finde,
That passeth over manneskinde.
Bot who that wole of wondres hier,
What thing sche wroghte in this matiere,
To make an ende of that sche gan,
Such merveile herde nevere man. (V.4103-14)

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In narrating this recollection of Medea, Genius seemingly translates into words what cannot be expressed. In fact, the terms of how man might encounter Medea's magic appear impossible to hear or consume: how can her sounds be heard and her "matiere" understood, when changed so totally in form and appearance? Concentrating on the inexpressibility of the exemplum's end, however, misses the point of Medea's magic and her and Gower's revisions; as Genius makes clear, at least some version can be found in "bokes." Implicitly and, more importantly, Genius, and therefore Gower as well, claims that his new narrative is so novel and marvelous that the reader never will have encountered it before.

If the depiction of her magic is new, the gruesome end of Jason and Medea, which appears a logical end to Jason's perjury of his oaths, feels both horrific and routine, reflecting a common conclusion to an uncommon tale. Frustrating Eson's earlier joy at the increase of his lineage, Medea slays her two sons directly in Jason's view. Perfecting the total destruction upon the inheritance of Eson and Jason, Medea's removal of her own children undercuts the logic of Eson's rejuvenation, preparing Amans and the reader outside the text for the frustration of love, old age, and rejuvenation at the end of Book VIII. Consequently, the youth Eson was granted to enjoy the youth of his son and grandchildren can only become a burden, as he must spend it mourning the loss of his descendants. Like Venus in Book VIII, Medea offers an implicit criticism of the urge to turn back time. Remember, she might have said, you are old, and in the desire to become young, Eson has only gained more time to grieve.

While the narrative of Eson's age is largely silent on the physical details of his old age, the *Confessio* does supply an image of old age through Amans's reflection in Venus's mirror. At the end of Book VIII, Amans, caught between the quick and the dead, is relegated to the margins in this compendium of corrective love, as the narrative of his body vacillates from cautionary story of woe as he attempts to mimic the behavior of youth to tale of exemplary goodness as he embraces an supposed exit from love. Through Amans's "swoon" and his retirement from love, *Confessio* asserts this revision of attitude toward love, as the text manages to link the aged and youthful together through "routhe" and their common impulse to give Amans advice, as each exemplary lover and author passes by the injured old man. Venus instructs the old to remember their age, and in doing so, remember that love is a young man's game. The lover, upon hearing this advice (given in a speech by Venus) swoons and is incapacitated, hovering somewhere between life and death. It is no coincidence that after hearing Venus' exhortation that age and love have no common link, the lover then falls into a state

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that epitomizes indeed what old age signifies in this love game: in and out, but never a part of the main story. Venus reminds Amans of the salient fact that he seems to have forgotten, and Gower has forgotten to mention. Venus takes the Lover to a mirror

Wherinne anon my hertes yhe
I caste, and sih my colour fade,
Myn yhen dymme and al unglade,
Mi chiekes thinne, and al my face
With elde I myhte se deface,
So riveled and so wo besein,
That ther was nothing full ne plein,
I syh also myn heres hore. (VIII. 2824–2831)

The Lover looks at the mirror, but it is with the eye of his heart, and sees truly what he is: old. He sees all the changes wrought by age. His eyes are dull and lack joy (2826), his face is thin and wrinkled (lines 2827–29), and his hair has turned white (2831). The final aspect of age—the discoloration of his hair—is one that recalls a medieval discourse about age and time that ties the movement of season and the aging of man with the inexorable march toward winter. In fact in the lines that follow (2843–57), Gower makes the connection explicit between the changing of season and the accumulation of years, and it is this link that sparks the knowledge that the old have their place, and it is not at Love's court.

Following Amans's surgery at the hands of Cupid and Venus's soothing of his wounds, he is returned to a somewhat balanced state, which Dhira B. Mahoney asserts is made "less painful" by the "realization that the healing provides wholeness, and brings the lover-poet to the state where he is no longer divided against himself" (Mahoney 29). Perhaps no longer divided against himself, but Gower, as with the author of *Tarrying*, is not entirely optimistic about the experience of age, the results of this surgery, and the remaining power of the aged body. Indeed, Gower writes the lover "was mad sobre and hol ynowh." It is "ynowh" to see his age, and, while the Lover/John Gower has been healed, it is not complete. As a limiting construction, "ynowh" illustrates that the text maintains that old age is a stage of life where the body and mind are not completely whole. Matthew W. Irvin views this ending to the *Confessio* as a movement toward a view of Amans that is "comic" or "ironic," as he "is not cured, restored, or converted" but revised from the "tempting artifice of the lover, Amans" into the "old man John Gower, silly and pathetic" (283). Rehearsing Russell Peck's claim that the youthful lovers Amans meets in the end are the subject of tales of love and the old men

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the authors, Irvin contends Gower is “not a maker of some stable, distant authority, but an invested agent in the world” (285).

And this agent or *amans* in the world is haunted by the balance of pain and health that he is left with at the end of *Confessio*. The age of texts and authorities can be turned back, but, for the reader and Gower alike, the reader can see, in the word “ynowh,” what Gower and Medea have demonstrated: old age for the body cannot be revised away. Gower proves this old truth through the poetics of rejuvenation, as he shows how medical and literary cures for old age maintain only the vitality of certain moral truths, a point supported by Irvin’s reading of *Amans* as *persona*:

The temptation of an *Amans*, with its artificial promises of pleasure without responsibility and its inherent failure to satisfy, is not merely condemned by some old clerkish writer or ancient authority (which the amorous, as Jean de Meun and Gower both show, are excellent at undermining), but it is experienced by the reader in its affective, pitiable failure. This also explains Gower being old at the end of the poem. His experience (in the fiction) has come through long pain and suffering, but the art of the poem transfers that experience to the readers in the real world without aging them; they are *iuvenes* provided with *experientia*. The conclusion ages both “Gower” and his readers, one fictionally, one prudentially. (Irvin 286–87)⁵

If *Tarrying* promises a way to reverse the accidents of age, then the *Confessio* promises to rejuvenate ancient sources for the present reader, giving him or her the gifts of old wisdom without the visible signs of those years. The age of texts and authorities can be turned back, but, for the reader and Gower alike, aging is central and inevitable, even if fictive or vicarious. Reading Medea’s revision as part of a poetics of rejuvenation makes visible how old books, like the readers outside Gower’s text, can maintain both their wisdom and renew their novelty. Gower’s Medea proves that a return to old sources can be a sign of new health.

Notes

1. For two representative critical responses of this watery patronage, see Grady and Mahoney.
2. My thinking about Gower’s use of old books and old bodies in the *Confessio Amantis* is indebted to Malte Urban’s tracing of “the juxtaposition of old and new, past and present” (184) in his essay on the *Vox Clamantis*, where Urban

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explores “Gower’s strategy of using old books for political purposes of the present” (176). Central, as well, both to Urban’s conception of the past and my own has been Eve Salisbury’s description of Gower’s “splicing fragments from . . . texts of the past into his own verse” to form a “discourse we might call carnivalesque” (161).

3. See Burrow and Dove.

4. Ruth Morse has probed the appearance of Medea in medieval texts at length in her monograph, *The Medieval Medea*; her section on Gower’s construction occurs mainly on 220–24.

5. Georgina Donavin argues, however, that “the unification of Genius and Amans into the wiser, more contemplative narrator John Gower is the end result of the Aristotelian rhetoric that operates in the poem’s narratives.” (173)

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“The science of himself is trewe”:
Alchemy in John Gower’s *Confessio*
Amantis

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In Book IV of the *Confessio Amantis*, Genius introduces a 175-line, detailed, and unusually positive discussion of alchemy that has not been widely appreciated by traditional scholarship. Until relatively recently, this passage has often been dismissed as a banal digression irrelevant to the main subject. Stanton J. Linden, for example, is especially critical of Gower’s alchemical exposition, deeming it overly encyclopedic, lacking distinctive literary qualities, and completely devoid of entertainment—no comparison, in short, with the *Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale*, which Linden calls Chaucer’s artistic “glorious fiction” (54–58). Even Russell Peck remarks of this section that it appears “ironic that the discussion of Somnolence should follow so tedious a section of the poem” (36). This article, in contrast, will show that, rather than providing a soporific distraction to the cardinal subject matter in the *Confessio*, Genius’s alchemical exegesis, as R.F. Yeager notes, is at the “center of Gower’s poetic” (165). I will argue that this section reveals two key themes for Gower: the post-lapsarian deterioration of the world and the decline of language. Both topics can be found elsewhere in the poem but are particularly present in Book IV and the Prologue.

Crucial to a proper understanding of Gower’s alchemical disquisition is a recognition of its location. It occupies the center of his treatment of the origins of human labor, developed as the corrective to Sloth, the subject of Book IV, which itself is placed in the very middle of the eight-book poem. Too often overlooked, this multiple centrality nevertheless reveals the importance Gower afforded the alchemical section in his understanding of labor, as well as labor to the whole poem.¹ While it becomes evident that Gower views labor as an overwhelmingly post-lapsarian manifestation, therefore inevitable, ineluctable, and penitential, it also plays an integral part in reforming a deteriorating world that is “changed overall” (Prol. 119)² and characterized by both the decay of virtue and fallen nobility. Genius’s description of alchemy is situated almost at the pinnacle of his exemplification of historical virtuous labor. This position further discloses Genius’s view of alchemy as a morally instructive paradigm of both human labor and diligence. Alchemy, for Gower, then, comes to represent the correct, natural, desired order of

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man and the material world—moving from base to perfection, from ignoble to noble. Indeed, the primary objective of alchemy is the transmutation of inferior metals such as iron into superior ones such as gold through the expurgation of all vice and corrupt elements. This alchemical blueprint of extracting the vice and retaining the virtue thus additionally provides Gower with a conceptual model for the alchemy of self. This strategic reformative exemplar becomes clearer from an initial close reading of Gower's alchemical description followed by a detailed inspection of the two key themes, beginning with the post-lapsarian deterioration of the world and concluding with the decline of language.

Gower introduces his alchemical passage by neatly linking it to the preceding topic on the origins of metals. He invokes the name of Saturn, thus by association placing the founding of the metals and the beginnings of alchemy in the Saturnian Golden Age (IV.2439–50). Yet, Gower is quick to insist that it was the wise philosophers who first mined, tested, and refined the metals subsequently discovering the craft of alchemy (IV.2451–59) believed to be “wrought be weie of kinde” (IV.2508). This firmly grounds the art in the operations and under the influence of nature. Gower declares that there are seven “bodies” or planets and four “spirits.” These seven planets are each affiliated with a metal whose properties it shares. Thus, gold pertains to the sun; silver to the moon; iron to Mars; lead to Saturn; brass to Jupiter; copper to Venus; and quicksilver to Mercury (IV.2468–75). The terrestrial sphere of the metals, therefore, is intricately bound to the celestial sphere of the planets. The seven bodies and four spirits are almost identical to that enumerated by Chaucer in his *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*. The only aberration is that Gower uniquely equates brass with Jupiter whereas Chaucer lists tin, and this is considered by George G. Fox to be a significant error on Gower's part (121). Gower further states that gold and silver are the extremities that all inferior metals gravitate towards (IV.2488–97). The formula for transmutation, according to Gower, is man's ability to purge the impure metals of their corrupt elements, to excise the rust until they are perfectly purified and transformed in nature internally and externally into the ultimately anticipated states of gold and silver. Gower continues by identifying three philosopher's stones, of which the third stone, called “Minerall,” is by far the most important. It has the power to purify and transform metals into their desired state: gold and silver.

The thridde ston in special
Be name is cleped minerall,
Which the metallis of every mine
Attempreth, til that thei ben fyne,
And pureth hem be such a weie,

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That al the *vice* goth aweie
Of *rust*, of *stink*, and of hardnesse.
And whanne thei ben of such *clennesse*,
This mineral, so as I finde,
Transformeth al the ferste kynde
And makth hem able to conceive
Thurgh his *vertu*, and to receive
Both in substance and in figure
Of gold and selver the nature (IV.2551–64)³

Gower, again, stresses the importance of transformation and exploits the language of reformation to express the process of alchemical transmutation. The metals must be refined, purified, and purged of any vice until their nature is metamorphosed into that of gold and silver. The inclusion of the word *vice* here to describe the imperfection of the metal, according to the *Middle English Dictionary*, has a clear secondary Christian connotation of moral error or deficiency of virtue (“vice,” n. 2). This is particularly intensified when we find it placed in a poem that, structurally, is almost exclusively dedicated to the seven deadly vices. *Rust*, equally, has a secondary meaning of moral or spiritual corrosion (“rust,” n. (d)) and *stink* is frequently used figuratively to mean the stench of sin (“stink,” 2(b)). This is further amplified by the word *clennesse* to describe its opposite—a word well attested by medieval writers to mean both a substance free of adulterates or, alternatively, a moral purity or innocence (“clennesse,” n. 2). This is compounded by the fact that transformation is possible through the *vertu* of the stone. *Vertu*, here, means power or physical strength but again has the dual spiritual meaning of moral excellence or probity (“vertu,” n. 11). Similarly, Gower writes that the three stones were “maden thurgh clergie” (IV.2533) which cleverly plays on the double sense of the word *clergie* in the Middle Ages: as learned man and a cleric (“clergie,” n.3). All of these linguistic particulars, therefore, elevate this passage from an encyclopedic description of the mere process of alchemical transmutation to a more philosophical and moral dimension. Jonathan Hughes notes that “alchemical discourse is suffused with the language of Christianity” (66), yet the dominance of such language related to “vice” and “virtue” here makes it unlikely that this moral element has been introduced arbitrarily and is, in fact, fully intentional. Gower’s lexical choice is entirely commensurate with the *Confessio*’s overall *ordinatio* of the seven deadly vices, and this passage thus communicates the poet’s deep and persistent concerns in the *Confessio*, as we shall see, about the multiplication of vice and the decay of virtue in a deteriorating contemporary world.

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This moral focus is certainly not out of place in Book IV and, as previously noted, Gower's alchemical excursus occurs in the context of the provenance of human labor as a countering virtue to the vice of Sloth. Labor, in a medieval setting, is predominantly a post-lapsarian concept and thus Gower's introduction of it here is strikingly evocative of the fallen world, its manifestations, and consequential punishments.⁴ The Latin marginalia at line 1002 of the Prologue clearly points us towards this notion: "Qualiter Adam a statu innocencie diuisus a paradiso voluptatis in terram laboris peccator proiectus est" [How Adam, divided from a state of innocence as a sinner, was cast from a paradise of pleasure into a world of labour]. This link between labor and the post-lapsarian world is also iterated at the beginning of the *Mirour* with the poet's ample retelling of Adam and Eve's temptation and fall (*MO* 169–81). The *locus classicus*, for Gower, of course, is Genesis 3:17–19. Adam and Eve's transgression and subsequent expulsion from Paradise impels God to command Adam to toil the land for the rest of his life but crucially as further punishment curses the very earth on which Adam labors. Before the Fall the world was young, burgeoning, fecund, and efflorescent. The post-lapsarian world, on the other hand, is one of terrestrial decay and aging or *senectus mundi*. The *senectus mundi* theory was first propounded by the early Christian writer Cyprian in his *Ad Demetrianum*. St. Augustine, later, taught that there were six ages of man ("De catechizandis rudibu") and thereafter, used them to illustrate the ages of the world in *De Civitate Dei* (10:14, 16:43, 22:30). He further compared the aging process of man to that of the world, an analogy born from the hypothetical correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm ("Sermon XXXI"). According to James Dean, this *senectus mundi* theory was a governing trope of late-medieval literature influencing both Chaucer and Gower. It states that the physical earth had deteriorated over the course of time and humanity had thus become increasingly corrupt and evil. The defining element is that mankind's moral failings have both brought about and perpetuated the decline, the aging process (Dean 1). This original sin and cursed earth constituted the first stage in the world's degeneration and the world subsequently continues to decline thereafter.

With this in mind, we find, in the concluding verses of Gower's description of the alchemical process, a proclamation that contemporary practical alchemy is no longer possible: "But now it stant al otherwise" (*IV.2580*). This suggests that alchemy has undergone a fundamental vicissitude since its more innocent Saturnian conception. Dean writes that "as the world has grown old, the very building blocks of the universe—earth, water, air, and fire—have become old, corrupted, and polluted" (83). Furthermore, St. Augustine foretells, in *De Civitate Dei*

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20:16, of a universal conflagration where the corruptible elements will perish by a wonderful transmutation so that the world itself will be renewed. In addition, Zosimus, the late third- and early fourth-century Alexandrian alchemical writer, was of the opinion that the name “Adam” symbolized the four elements. Olympiodorus, a sixth-century Alexandrian neo-Platonic author, considered Adam the first man to have been the issue of the four elements and later in the thirteenth century, Vincent of Beauvais asserted that Adam was, in fact, the first teacher of alchemy (Patai 18–19). Hence, the further away from Adam and Paradise that society and individual man moves the more corrupt the alchemical process, knowledge, and elemental material becomes. This deterioration of the four elements in union with the loss of virtue is specifically expounded by Gower in the *Mirour* when he writes that God has created the four elements for man alone and through man’s transgression the elements will perish:

Qant il son dieu fait coroucer,
Par son pecché devient inmonde
La proprete du tout le monde,
C’est fieu et air et terre et mer,
Trestous le devont comparer;
Siqu’ils commencent adverser
Au beste q’ensi les confonde;
Dont m’est avis sanz plus parler
Q’a soul ce beste puiss noter
Les mals dont nostre siecle habonde (*MO* 268_{11–20})⁵

[When he angers his God, the quality of all the world is defiled through his sin. Fire, air, land, and sea all have to suffer, so that they begin to be hostile to the beast that thus brings them to ruin. So it seems to me, without further talk, that the evils in which our world abounds are to be charged to this beast alone.]⁶

Macrobius writes in his *Commentarius in Somnium Scipionis* that “borrowing the means from the number [four], the Creator of the Universe bound the elements together in an unbreakable chain, as was affirmed in Plato’s *Timaeus*” (Stahl 24). This fundamental chain of being that holds the elements together is transformed into a fair golden chain in *Le Roman de la Rose*. Here, Nature explains that “God has done me the honour of placing in my keeping the fair golden chain that links the four elements, all of which bow before my face” (Horgan 259–61). This decline of nature and in particular the elements is what accounts

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for contemporary alchemists' fruitless labor and inability to succeed. Gower writes "For allewey thei finde a lette" (IV.2587) because modern alchemists' natural ingredients are themselves corrupted and flawed. The inherent nature and delicate balance between the Aristotelian qualities of the four elements has been disturbed through the moral deterioration of mankind and his material surroundings. Gower makes this explicit in the Prologue:

Lo, ferst the hevenly figures,
The sonne and mone eclipsen bothe.
And ben with mannes senne wrothe;
The purest eir for senne alofte
Hath ben and is corrupt ful ofte
. . .
So may it proeven wel be this,
A mannes senne is for to hate,
Which makth the welkne to debate. (Prol. 918–28)

In the *Mirour* Gower, similarly, echoes this sentiment of mankind's inseparable moral correlation to nature and specifically the elements:

Pour ce si l'omme a dieu forsfait,
Par son peché trestout desfait
Et terre et eaue et mer et fieu ;
Car dieus se venge du mesfait,
Et leur nature ensi retrait
Q'ils pour le temps sont comme perdu:
Dont par resoun bien le vois tu,
Le siecle endroit de sa vertu
Du plus et meinz par l'omme vait,
Et si nul mal soit avenu,
Ja d'autre chose n'est venu
Fors soul du mal que l'omme fait. (MO 26953–64)

[Therefore if man transgresses against God, he undoes everything by his sin—earth, and water, and sea, and fire. And God avenges the misdeed and withdraws their nature so that they are for some time as if lost. So, by reason you can see well that the world in its virtue goes more or less according to man. And if any evil comes, it is only from the evil that man does.]

Through mankind's fall from virtue the very elements encapsulated in the "great golden chain of being" are at risk resulting in an upending,

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an overturning of the ordained hierarchy which constantly threatens to break apart the fabric of the world. This worldwide deterioration is equally paralleled in the Augustinian theoretical binary of microcosm/macrocosm utilized by Gower when he writes that:

The which, for his complexioun
Is mad upon division
Of cold, of hot, of moist, of drye,
He mot be verray kynde dye. (Prol. 975–78).

These components of man's constitution, like the four elements, are divided, corrupted, at variance with one another, and in a post-lapsarian world this manifests itself as sickness and ultimately death, foreshadowing the revelation of the aging, infirm lover in Book VIII.

Gower significantly draws on this theory of microcosm/macrocosm in the Prologue by emphasizing the integral relationship of man to his natural surroundings when he describes Nebuchadnezzar's dream-vision of the statue of man created from the diverse metals familiar from his alchemical passage. In the Latin heading to the dream Gower writes that "sicut ymago viri variantur tempora mundi" [like an image of man do the ages of the world vary]. For Gower, the specifically human image of the statue is fully symbolic of man's disordered, vice-ridden state mirrored in the macrocosm of the deteriorating, aging physical world. He writes,

This ymage is nyh overthrowe
Be which this world was signified
That whilom was so magnified
And now is old and fieble and vil,
Full of meschief and of peril. (Prol. 885–89)

Gower not only expands on the biblical story of Daniel 2:19–45 which singularly references political kingdoms but, here, in his fourteenth-century version of Daniel's exposition, Gower introduces a clear moral dimension explicated through metallurgic language:

And seide him that figure strange
Betokneth how the world schal change
And waxe lasse worth and lasse,
Til it noght al overpasse.
The necke and hed, that weren golde,
He seide how that betokne scholde
A worthi world, a noble, a riche,

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To which non after schal be liche.

. . .

Bot yet the werste of everydel

Is last, whan that of erthe and stiel

He syh the feet departed so,

For that betokneth mochel wo. (Prol. 627–43)

Gower's Daniel describes an entropic theory of history and thereby lists the stages of degeneration through various metals of declining value. He shows how each era will decline in nobility and worth by tracing it from the noblest and purest metal—gold, through silver, then brass, and then iron (stiel), the metal with the least worth in this scheme. It is alchemy in reverse. Whereas alchemy seeks to remove the vices and contaminants, here vices have been slowly added to each subsequent age. Each era is more adulterated than the last, from the head of gold to the feet of steel and clay which readily recalls Gower's earlier statement in the Prologue: "Tho was the vertu sett above / And vice was put under fote" (Prol. 116–17). Indeed, Gower may be deliberately pointing us towards his alchemical passage through his use of the metal "brass," which immediately calls to mind his unique Jupiter-dominant metal enumerated in his list of alchemical bodies in Book IV. The anonymous author of the thirteenth-century *Vulgate commentary to Ovid's Metamorphoses* uses a similar coalescence of metallurgic and moral language when he writes that:

Figurally, . . . the first age was golden because men of this age adhered to virtues, but from day to day they degenerated into vices, which is indicated by the latter ages. *Golden*. There are ten kinds of metals by which the Sybil wished to designate ten ages. The first age is figured as golden because, as gold is worth more than other metals, so the first age surpassed the others in goodness. The names of the metals are as follows: gold, silver, copper, amber, *brass*, bronze, tin, lead, inferior bronze, iron. (Coulson 85)⁷

Andrew Galloway has convincingly argued that Gower read and intellectually absorbed the *Vulgate commentary* ("Gower's Ovids") and, therefore, Gower's unique inclusion of the word "brass" in his alchemical section could well be influenced by this passage.

Gower conflates the biblical story of Daniel with both the Ovidian golden-age myth of *Metamorphoses* I and the loss of virtue in the biblical creation narrative. Like Gower's passage on alchemy, the composite statue of man represents not only the fall from Paradise but also

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the deterioration of the world as a whole with its subsequent political empires as well as the decay of language and cognition. After all, Nebuchadnezzar fails to interpret the truth of the signs and symbols in his own dream and is subsequently punished by God with a type of biblical version of *contrapasso* when he is transmuted into a grass-eating beast. The mention of Babylon and the Chaldeans (Prol. 665–66) equally conjures up its most infamous citizen Nimrod recalling the linguistic confusion and the decline of language with the subsequent creation of the Tower of Babel. So too, does Gower's further invocation of the name of 'Baltazaar' (Prol. 685), who quite literally in Daniel 5 cannot comprehend the word of God in the story of the writing on the wall.

Gower's lament, then, that modern alchemy is no longer possible is also a linguistic problem, as Yeager notes. The antique texts "Of Grek, of Arabe and of Caldee (IV.2627) exist, but can no longer be deciphered" due to a type of intellectual sloth (Yeager 167). The loss of Eden in the Genesis narrative, however, significantly also brought about the decline of language. Eric Jager writes that "before the Fall, according to Augustine, the humans (or at least Adam) had enjoyed a direct knowledge of God through an 'inner word'—an unmediated intellectual vision like that enjoyed by the angels themselves" (52). In the post-lapsarian world, Adam and his descendants no longer had this vision and were instead forced "to seek knowledge indirectly through material signs apprehended by bodily senses, signs being either things themselves, or images, or words" (Jager 52). The Tower of Babel as depicted in Genesis 11:1–9 further introduced substantial confusion, division, and multiplicity into speech. Of this division of tongues John Fyler remarks that "language has decomposed as part of a general decay, its original unity disintegrating into fungible particles" (43). "But now it stant al otherwise," Gower writes, "Thei speken faste of thilke ston, / Bot hou to mak it, nou wot non" (IV.2580–82). Gower's contemporaries actively converse about the "philosopher's stone" but none possess knowledge of the true nature or essence of the thing itself. The "signifier," therefore, and the "signified" have become estranged and the relationship has thus been contaminated. They know the name but true cognition of the object has perished with the decline of language and the world.

Upon this craft, fewe understonde;
Bot yit to put hem in assai
Ther ben full manye now aday,
That knowen litel what thei meene.
It is noght on to wite and weene;
The forme of wordes thei it tret,

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But yit they failen of begete
For of to moche or of to lyte
Ther is algate founde a wyte. (IV.2614–22)

Modern alchemists understand only the “forme of wordes” and not the vital “matiere.” “The chaf is take for the corn” (Prol. 844) and their interpretation thus merely remains on a superficial level. Chaucer’s *Boece* argues that words “moot be cosyntes to the thinges of whiche thei speken” (Metrum 11, Prosa 12, lines 206–7) and language here no longer is “lich to the conceite / Withoute semblant of deceite” (113–14) as Gower notes in the Prologue. Learning and *translatio studii* has additionally declined with the Fall and the world’s subsequent deterioration. It has become corrupted with its move from the east to the west, from Babylon, to Persia, to Greece, to Rome, France, and Germany as illustrated by Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the statue of man. Richard de Bury writes in his *Philobiblon* “that . . . [the moderni] are barely capable of discussing the discoveries of their forerunners, and acquiring those things as pupils which the ancients [antiqui] dug out by difficult efforts of discovery” (Maclagan, Thomas, 9, 99). The ancient texts of “Of Grek, of Arabe and of Caldee” (IV.2627) are indeed indecipherable and crucially Gower is pointing us to the consequences of the fall of man from virtue and the decline of the world and language as the true cause of the inaccessibility of successful alchemy.

While Gower’s sentiment of an apparently inevitable deterioration of the natural world tends to lean on the apocalyptic side, he does in the *Mirour* offer hope of the reform of corrupted nature through the act of Christian, holy, and virtuous living. Gower writes: “Qe saint prodhomme ad de son droit / Les élementz a sa banere” [So it appears everywhere that a holy man has the elements under his control] (*MO* 27045–46). Here, the poet explains that the elements are, in fact, obedient to men of great virtue and offers examples from the sun in Gibeon being subject to Joshua to the sea calming for St. Peter (*MO* 27013–44). Just as man’s deteriorated internal nature negatively affects the world around him, virtuous living can have the opposite reformative effect on the physical nature of the world. Even Gower, through his own vices, considers himself individually to blame when he writes, “Le siecle ove tous les elemens / Ay corrupu vileinement” [I have basely corrupted the world together with all the elements] (*MO* 27317–18). Gower believes that all individuals, including himself, must do penance and expiate sin through labor thereby reforming their inner nature. Gower’s use of the word “vileinement,” with its strong connection with serfdom, goes beyond Burton Wilson’s literal translation of “baseness” and suggests a distinct lack of nobility. This connection between social status and

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vices and virtues is fully realized in Gower's section on *Gentillesse* in the *Confessio* (IV.2204–2363).

In this section, Amans complains that he does not comprehend what “gentillesse” is nor how it should be described. Genius explains that the world has considered it the “fortune of riches” (IV.2208), a vulnerable definition, subject to mutability as it “long time is falle in age” (IV.2209). By relating it only to how much wealth a person has it superficially constitutes only “the forme” (IV.2211) and not the “matiere” (IV.2212) of true gentility. In Paradise, in an allusion to the prelapsarian garden with Adam and Eve, Genius states that:

Al was aliche gentil tho;
So that of generacion
To make declaracion,
Ther mai no gentillesce be. (IV.2226–29)

But now “for lacke of *vertu* lacketh grace” (IV.2257), he says, and continues to describe “gentillesse” as “*vertu* set in the corage” (IV.2261).⁸ True nobility, then, is not dependent on the temporal issues of fullness of purse or number of possessions but rather on the presence of virtue internally in the heart. Genius continues to explain how this can be achieved:

For after the condicion
Of resonable entencion,
The which out of the soule growth
And the *vertu* fro *vice* knoweth,
Wherof a man the *vice* eschuieth,
Withoute Slowthe and *vertu* suieth,
That is a verrai gentil man. (IV.2269–75)⁹

Nobility, as we can see, comes from an upright heart and can be summarized as the ablation of vice and the pursuit of virtue. This language of “vice” and “virtue” is decidedly redolent of the process of alchemy which discards the vice and retains the virtue to move a metal from an inferior or ignoble state to a superior or noble one. Like alchemy's ability to reform nature, man too has the power to effect change in his own nature through the formula of embracing virtue and rejecting vices which in turn has both a societal and a physical natural effect. The rhyming pair of “*besinesse*” and “*gentillesse*” (IV.2289–90) accentuates the importance of activity to this transformation. True gentility, as Yeager writes, thus requires effort; achieving it becomes a kind of

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work (161) and therefore, like alchemy, it is inextricably allied to the concept of labor.

Gower's alchemical exposition proves to be an integral part of the *Confessio*. It contains two important themes found elsewhere in Gower's work. The post-lapsarian deterioration of the world and the decline of language, both present in his alchemical passage, can linguistically and thematically be traced throughout Book IV and the Prologue. Gower's alchemy, in the modern world, through its failure stands as a stark reminder of the deteriorating fallen world, an aging natural environment with its elemental impotence due to the decline of virtue in man. It further discloses Gower's understanding of man's delicate yet inextricable moral and physical connection with nature, the powerful elemental intertwining of mankind, earth, and the heavens. The alchemical purgation of vice and retention of virtue also offers Gower the formula for transmuting the microcosm of the self, somewhat reversing Adam's fall on an individual level at least, and thereby providing a pattern for reforming the macrocosm of the world.

Notes

1. Batkie interprets Gower's diversion as "an exemplum for virtuous textual labour" (167).
2. All *Confessio* quotations are taken from *Confessio Amantis*, ed. Russell A. Peck, 3 Vols, 2nd ed.
3. My emphasis.
4. Irvin, like Batkie, sees the importance of labor to this section but argues that "the Fall, pagan or Christian, is nowhere to be found" (198).
5. All *Mirour* Anglo-Norman text is from *The Complete Works of John Gower*, Ed. G.C. Macaulay, 4 Vols.
6. All *Mirour* translations are from *Mirour de l'Omme*, trans. William Burton Wilson.
7. My emphasis.
8. My emphasis.
9. My emphasis.

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About the Author

Clare Fletcher is currently a doctoral candidate in the School of English at Trinity College, University of Dublin, where she is pursuing a Ph.D on John Gower's major Middle English work *Confessio Amantis*. She holds a B.A. (honors) in English Literature and History and an M.Phil. in Medieval Language, Literature, and Culture, both from Trinity College. She was awarded a Trinity College Dublin Postgraduate Research Scholarship in 2015. Her research interests include all aspects of Middle English literature with a particular focus on the late fourteenth-century poets Chaucer, Gower, and the Pearl-poet, as well as the fifteenth-century poets Lydgate and Hoccleve. More widely, her interests lie in the fields of vernacular poetry, Anglo-Norman studies, gender studies, philology, the works of Dante and Ovid, philosophy, and theology. Fletcher has recently published a book chapter titled "The Wife of Bath in the Saddle: A Re-reading of 'Upon on amblere esily she sat'" in *Occupying Space in Medieval and Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Peter Lang, 2015). This article offers a new analysis of line 469 in the *General Prologue* of the *Canterbury Tales*: "Upon an amblere esily she sat." Rather than considering what the ambler itself might represent, traditional scholarship has rather narrowly focused on the physical detail that the Wife appears to ride her horse astride, instead of side-saddle as can apparently be seen in the Ellesmere manuscript. In contrast, this article links the word "amblere" to a thirteenth-century text called the *Lai du Trot* which morally distinguishes between two approaches to love through the gaits "amble" and "trot," which, in turn, allows for a more moral consideration of the Wife of Bath through the symbol of her horse. Email: cfletch@tcd.ie.

Common-Law and Penitential Intentionality in Gower's "Tale of Paris and Helen"

Candace Barrington

Intentio iudicat hominem [The intent judges the man].
—Langland, *Piers Plowman* A 10.90, citing a maxim of canon law¹

The thought of man shall not be tried, for the devil himself knoweth not the thought
of man.

—attributed to Thomas Brian, CJ, 1468

Our knowledge of late-medieval England's legal culture has significant gaps. Some gaps are the result of records destroyed by fire or neglect, others the result of records having never existed. With diligent efforts, those gaps have been narrowed by scholars extrapolating forward and backward from the better preserved legal records of earlier and later periods. We can further fill in those gaps with another resource: literary works written by men associated with the legal system. As recent scholarship has shown, this literature provides more than mimetic depictions of trials and other courtroom events; it also embeds a poetics of the law whereby legal assumptions and quandaries permeate and structure the verse. Beyond giving us an interpretative handle on the literature, it provides us with a way to speculate on those gaps in the legal record, and to locate the development of processes faintly detected in the records, thereby revealing to us what Richard Firth Green calls the "shadow history" of a legal precept or practice (Green 13).

This paper is concerned with two of those faintly recorded legal concepts: intentionality and, to a lesser degree, equity, a closely related concept. Equity, which was eventually associated with the courts of Chancery, is an old concept initially applied to interpreting a law according to the lawgiver's intention. Occasionally, it was applied to common-law cases before the sixteenth century, but then it was not about extending mercy but about applying the law justly (Baker 104–09). Intentionality, too, appears early; we know that the category of felony, distinguished by the presence of "malice aforethought," can be

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traced to before Magna Carta. Yet well into the modern period, the precondition of intentionality “had to compete with what seems an utterly contradictory principle, that a man was responsible for any effect which could be traced to him, however deviously, and whether or not it was intended” (Harding 63). When intention did enter the picture, how it was determined remains a process hidden to us, for it would have appeared at two points normally not included in the record: when the defendant’s story was told to the jury, and when the jury deliberated (Baker 403–05; Arnold xvii, xx). Despite its obscurity throughout the pre-modern period, intentionality becomes a factor in a handful of common-law criminal cases during the reign of Richard II and then is rejected until the modern period. The legal records do not explain either this brief appearance or its abrupt end. Literary depictions of criminal intentionality and judicial equity, however, suggest circumstances that both prompted the common-law’s brief consideration of intentionality—this paper’s primary concern—and also led criminal courts to abandon it as a legal justification.

John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* is a good place to look for these clues.² Not only have his works yielded many strong examples of the ways law and literature shaped and influenced one another in Ricardian England, but he repeatedly worries over the role of intentionality when determining either moral, legal, or artistic responsibility. Long before the distinction between murder (homicide committed with malice forethought) and manslaughter (homicide committed without forethought) appears in a 1506 legal treatise and about the same time that the distinction appears in a 1390 statute, Gower pairs the two terms together—“moerdre and manslawte”—in Genius’s explication of Homicide following a tale that itself explores intentionality.³ Elsewhere, his version of “The Tale of Carmidotirus” (7.2845–88) revolves around the issue of intentionality. When the Roman consul Carmidotirus absently-mindedly breaks his prohibition against weapons in the assembly hall, he slays himself rather than make himself the exception, despite the fact that he “thoghte no malice” (7.2874). As the tale illustrates, when the law judges a man not by his intentions but by only his actions, an apparent injustice can be the result (van Dijk 326–28). Gower’s “Tale of Saul and Agag” (7.3807–45), on the other hand, illustrates the dangers of according professed intentions any credence; Saul not only learns that he should have slain Agag despite promises of a great ransom but also that only the high God “knoweth al” (7.3836–37). By believing Agag’s stated intentions, Saul loses his rule and his life. Even the *Confessio*’s final lines return to Gower’s artistic intentions for undertaking “In Englesch for to make a book / Which stant betwene ernest and game” (8.3106–09).

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Gower comes to this concern about intentionality for good reason because England's two dominant legal systems, the ecclesiastical and the common-law, had opposite attitudes towards intentionality, as seen in this paper's two epigraphs. According to the Church, intention was all. According to the common-law courts, intention counted for nothing. There seems to be little common ground in these two opposing positions. Gower enters this fray by structuring the *Confessio* according to the architectonics of the Christian penitential manual and then infusing the poem with the performative discourse of England's multifaceted judicial system. The unprecedented conversation between of these two opposing attitudes regarding intention brings forward unexpected similarities, suggesting why intention was briefly allowed as part of a defense in the common-law courtroom during the final years of the fourteenth century, only to be snuffed out a few years later and made completely immaterial in 1468 by Chief Justice Brian.

Except for that brief efflorescence of intentionality in the Ricardian courts, intention remained a territory of great suspicion in late-medieval common-law courts. Not only could intention not be known, but to retreat to intention was to land in a world where accidents blurred guilt and chance eliminated redress. "I did not intend" could not substitute for the bare facts of the case. What someone intended could not be fully known, for intentions could be hidden or dissembled, so better to judge according to outward manifestations of what happened rather than inward purpose. Once an illegal act was committed, it had to be dealt with so that justice could be meted out. Sorting through intentions would only delay implementing justice. This distrust of intentionality reflects a judicial system that relied on logic and verifiable facts—either written documents or the sworn oaths of witnesses to the incident (Arnold xxxi). This distrust is further reflected in the forms of pleading available to a defendant whose crime was inadvertently committed.⁴ Unlike the modern defendant who can build a plea across a spectrum of culpability—accidental, negligent, reckless, knowing, and intentional—the medieval defendant had limited choices. The process of pleading—the part of the courtroom proceedings when the two attorneys under the guidance of the presiding judge would settle the issue, the "single, certain point" on which the trial would turn—did not account for the defendant's intentions (Arnold xi–xii). Generally, the defendant who intended no crime had to plead *non est culpabilis* (Not Guilty), but this issue had limited use by the end of the fourteenth century. Case law had restricted the issue's scope so that it must mean that the defendant did not commit the alleged act. The Not Guilty plea made no allowance for "Yes, I did it, but I didn't mean to"; according to the logic of the court, a defendant could not both justify and deny an act (Arnold xii). For most of the medieval

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period, there was no institutional means for ameliorating guilt when the defendant did not intend the crime.

Conversely, for the Church, the confessional and its attendant manuals were concerned with identifying intention, a process essential to assessing sin and correcting the soul. The process began with an assessment of the penitent's intention regarding the sacrament of confession. Without good motives, the grace of the sacrament could not be received (Kelly 263). Penitential doctrine next stressed the importance of intention in the assessment of sin, with some theologians arguing that pre-meditated or intentional misdeeds should be punished more severely than the same misdeeds done from a sudden impulse, out of ignorance, or without full information (249). Because confession functioned to discover (and perhaps prevent) sins, and because it provided formulae for understanding the self, locating and discovering intention becomes as important as confessing the deed itself. In the late-fourteenth century, both orthodox and Wycliffite doctrine emphasize that interior, hidden sins could be more damning than exterior, public sins (Little 46). Wycliffites, however, further complicated intentionality by turning from institutional categories as a source for defining sin and a guide for self-definition, placing instead such interpretive agency in the hands of each man and woman (12-15, 45-47). Set loose from the imposed penitential framework, the search for intention becomes more freewheeling. Identifying intention no longer had to be damning; it could be exculpatory, thereby challenging the Church's perceived intention behind accounting for the penitent's intention.

Both the Wycliffites' new modes of self-definition and the common-law courtroom's temporary acknowledgement of intentionality record the ways that accounting for intentionality was momentarily seen as ameliorative, a way to diminish rather than intensify guilt. Similarly, the nearly simultaneous repression of Lollardry and the disappearance of intentionality from the court records mark an institutional dissatisfaction with the resulting messiness when either the confessant's unregulated motives or the defendant's unverifiable reasons are allowed to shape the decisions of the priest, judge or jury. Clearly, both the appearance and disappearance of ameliorating intention record the cognitive dissonance created when the ecclesiastical and common-law attitudes toward intentionality intersect.

The *Confessio* provides a petri dish where this temporary intersection continues to exist. Whereas others might have taken it as a fact of life that intention would count for nothing in the common-law courts and for all in the confessional booth, Gower explores and grapples with the conflicts caused by jurisdictional pluralism. Bringing together the ecclesiastical and common-law in the *Confessio*, Gower reproduces the

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experience of anyone living in late-medieval England because those subject to annual auricular confession were also subject to the jurisdiction of the common-law courts (Helmholz 708). They would have known and simultaneously experienced the very different attitudes toward intentionality that Gower then translates into verse. He recreates the penitential attitude toward intentionality by structuring the confessional framework in line with recognizable Christian orthodoxy: besides organizing the shrift around the seven sins, mirroring penitential manuals such as Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*, Amans asks for "absolucion" (8.2892), and Genius grants him "pardoun" (8.2896) and a "peire of bedes blak as sable" (8.2904) as his penance (Little 104). Throughout, Genius adopts a position comparable to the one found in penitential manuals: intention is all. Amans, however, maintains the common-law position that only the deed counts. Only reluctantly does Amans admit the culpability of his intentions even when he is unable to bring those intentions to pass. All the while, Amans's common-law understanding of intentionality catches him in a trap of his own making. Genius positions Amans as a penitential confessant, but Amans positions himself as a defendant in a criminal case. In this paradoxical position, if his confessor finds him culpable, he receives absolution; if the common-law courts do so, he is convicted (Brooks 96).

The embedded exempla further complicate the juxtaposition. Resembling the narratives told in a common-law court, the exempla are presented by Genius as evidence proving the truth of his case. Like courtroom narratives reshaped to fit the plea—the single, arguable issue on which the case revolves—Genius manipulates tradition or received tales to fit the shrift's point. What previously had been the matter of the narrative gets set aside for a minor, but observable, point. Within the limits of these structures, Gower further explores intentionality, often spinning out tales where murky intentions provoke bad behaviors and regrettable results, where unintended consequences result from misconstrued efforts. In these ways, Gower's *Confessio Amantis* records both his concern with intentionality and the historical blip in which Lollardry and the courts experimented with intentionality and the somewhat free-wheeling, self-justifying self-definition that can result.

Questions of intentionality most insistently permeate the 600 lines of confessional framework exploring Sacrilege—the fifth facet of the poem's fifth vice, Avarice—and its encased exemplum, "Tale of Paris and Helen" (5.6961–7609). The tale itself is part of a series of tales in the *Confessio* dealing with Troy, a series that cumulatively tries to ferret out the origins of the ancient city's destruction; not surprisingly, after each tale the reader is left with a sense that at least one more anterior cause to the war and one more character's intentions are left to be

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uncovered.⁵ This particular segment of the larger Trojan drama is not only a complex tale of trespasses and retributions, legal and otherwise, but is also absorbed with the intersection and collision of multiple intentions. No single deed seems to us to merit being labeled the cause of the war, yet Paris's sacrilege—not the more obvious abduction of Helen—is judged and punished as the cause. Similarly, Genius and Amans's dialogue puzzles over the causes of culpability, whether guilt inhabits intention (even if that intention is never realized) or guilt resides in the deed (even if that deed was unintended).

Throughout the confession in these lines, Genius adopts a position comparable to the one found in penitential manuals: the soul is judged by its intentions. Genius further divorces intention from the deed by adding another element, chance; he claims that "chance," not the intention itself, determines whether the sinner's intentions turn into a deed. When describing Sacrilege, he describes the lover looking around the Church, his eyes landing on various women—each thinking she is his target—but his choice is determined by chance:

And otherwhile among he syketh;
Thenkth on of hem, "That was for me,"
And so ther thenken tuo or thre,
And yit he loveth non of alle,
Bot wher as evere his chance falle. (5.7080–84)

Although the lover's intentions are scattered and unfocused, and his success determined by chance, he is nonetheless guilty of the "Sacrilege of love" (7090), a judgment re-enforced when Genius provides an unequivocal yardstick that focuses on Amans's intentions and not his deeds for determining guilt: "Thi will, mi sone, is for to blame, / The remenant is bot a game" (7183–84).

Amans, in contrast, adopts the position associated with the law courts: the deed, intended or not, is all that counts. When Genius asks Amans if he ever committed sacrilege, the lover repeatedly admits to intending sacrilege but denies doing the deed and therefore sees himself as innocent. He begins his confession by declaring

"Mi fader, as of this matiere
I wole you tellen redely
What I have do; bot trewely
I mai excuse min entente,
That nevere I yit to cherche wente
In such manere as ye me schryve,
For no womman that is on lyve." (5.7096–7102)

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Amans attributes his failure to seduce his lady to his lack of expertise. If he did succeed at seducing her and thereby commit sacrilege, it would be the result of his reciting, by chance, his Paternoster or his Creed (7117–19). In the process of denying his guilt, Amans unwittingly admits to his guilt, for penitential doctrine (as defined by Genius) would classify much of the lover's behavior as sacrilege, despite his failure to effect his intentions and his accidental observance of proper worship.

Penitential culpability does not make sense to Amans because he thinks like a lawyer and tries to avoid blame by arguing as though he is in a courtroom. In making this move, Amans adheres to and relies on standard juridical principles that focus on deeds rather than intentions. He tries to squirm away from Genius's implications by claiming that he only *thought* about committing such acts. Amans would never dare to do them, and he falls back on his inability to woo properly in order to "excuse [his] entente" (7099). He has never had the chance, he claims, to realize his intentions. In making this claim, he relies on a legal casuistry, a form of traverse and avoidance, which would exonerate him of sacrilege because he presents himself as incapable of committing the sin without his lady's cooperation. He even says that he wants to be judged by his deeds and freely "excuses" (7099) his intent. Following the common-law principle, Amans insists that sacrilege cannot occur apart from the deed.

As I have thus far laid out my evidence, Gower seems to have marked a bright line between the penitential and the juridical vis-à-vis intention's complicity in determining guilt, with Genius taking one side and Amans taking the other. Note, however, that although Genius and Amans approach intention from opposite positions, they share one assumption about intention. In both situations—Genius's penitential and Amans's juridical—chance plays a significant role because it can prevent an intention from being realized. Chance rather than intention, it would seem, is the cause for the deed. For the confessor Genius, chance's intervention and prevention of the deed does not absolve the lover from the consequences of his intention. For the jurist Amans, chance's intervention *does* absolve him, allowing him to avoid the consequences of his unrealized desires.

The binary thinking evident in the framework further breaks down when we reach the tale itself. In keeping with Genius's priority of intention over deed, the tale initially focuses on assorted intentions. For two hundred lines, more than half the tale, we learn how Priam intends to retrieve his sister Esiona, Thelamon intends to keep her, Antenor intends to extract revenge, and Hector intends to maintain peace. Some of these intentions deserve punishment and contribute to the eventual

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destruction of Troy; thus, to explain the total destruction of the city, the confessor tends to associate the entire populace with those intentions. Three times he links an intention to “th’assent / Of al the hole parlement” (7217–18). All this worrying over intention is in keeping with Genius’s claims that the “will . . . is for to blame” (7183), and it helps explain the presence of extensive material that seems extraneous either to explicating *Sacrilege* or to narrating a tale of Paris and Helen. It is as though Genius is making an argument for the Trojans’ collective guilt.

The focus shifts slightly away from intention, however, once Paris is introduced and his intentions are presented explicitly in the form of a legal claim to a gift—Helen—promised him by Venus in a dream. Paris’s lawful claim to Helen, “[o]f al this earthe the faireste” (7427), provides a legal cover for his intentions. It would seem that Genius is now providing Paris with a legal justification for his claim. The realization of Paris’s claim, however, is entirely by chance, which, as we have seen, can save someone from the deed and thereby, in a legal context, from the guilt. Paris makes landfall by chance near Venus’s temple where Helen by chance is making religious offering, and chance provides the opportunity for him to make his legal claim. In retrospect, we realize that even Paris’s claim rests on happenstance: sleep catches him unaware (7408), an unexpected vision of Mercury comes to him promising him the gift (7410–11), and his own judgment “of the faireste of hem three” (7418) is based not upon their beauty but upon their promised gifts. Moreover, Paris’s quest just happens to coincide with Priam’s desire to retrieve *Esiona*. Without ever tying Paris’s purpose to their own purpose—to be “for to were or for to reste” (7330)—and then without ever resting their case on one cause, the Trojans decide to send Paris to Greece. *Chance*, not intention or his claim, seems to govern Paris and his theft of Helen. These complications of chance would have no consequence for the confessional, but if they prevent Paris from realizing his intentions, they would allow him to plead “Not Guilty” in a late-fourteenth-century criminal trial.

But then things get further complicated, and the tale ends by removing chance from the equation and tying culpability exclusively to both explicit intentions and deeds done. Once Paris spies Helen at the temple, all talk of chance disappears. She is there purposefully—“[f]or worschipe and for sacrifice” (7478)—and he rejiggers his plans to make it appear that a similar visit to the temple is also his purpose (7493–96). On seeing Helen, he makes a conscious intention to “don his *Sacrilege*” (7521)—rather than his sacrifices of “gret richesse” (7508). He carries out his purpose and takes her in his arms and back to his ship (7551–54). There is no mention of Helen’s consent, no indication of her resistance. Her intentions are ignored. Tellingly, in this

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version, the abduction of Helen is not the crime for which Paris and Troy are punished. Instead, by stealing Helen while she offers prayers and obedience at Venus's temple, he commits sacrilege, stealing from the church. The Trojans' collective involvement and Paris's intended deed—to abduct Helen—are set aside in preference to a legal model that limits the case to a single, provable deed: Paris's sacrilege. In this way, the tale entangles the penitential and the juridical, allowing Genius to rest his argument on a deed both intended and done.

"The Tale of Paris and Helen" and its encasing framework illustrate several features of Gower's tendency toward legal thinking, particularly his methods of shaping and interpreting narrative. The tale's series of disjointed narratives imitate a trial narrative. Composed of individual witness's stories, the cumulative story seems to have no discernable beginning, middle or end; instead, the stories create an incomplete mosaic without shape until the last piece is placed (Gewirtz 5–7). The tale also shares legal narrative's hermeneutics. Reminiscent of the requirement to limit a charge to one and only one offense, the tale's self-interpretation eventually ignores all other causes for the Trojan War in order to link it to sacrilege, which, the Latin glosses tell us, "furnished the kindling of revenge, leading not only to the death of King Priam himself and all his people, but also to the perpetual destruction of the city" (at 5.7201). Compared to many of the other possible causes, Paris's sacrilege is the most visible, most witnessed, and most prosecutable. The tale's two features of legal narrative help to explain some of the quirks in the tale: its rambling structure and its odd link to sacrilege, an offence to the gods rather than a link to rape, an offense to Menelaus. In short, when Gower's rewriting of Ovidian sexual violence displaces both the sex and the violence with an apparently non-related legality—sacrilege—it does so in order to make the narrative reflect the workings of common-law courts.

If we stop at this point, where we consider how legal thinking sheds light on literary texts, we might miss how the *Confessio* reveals what the legal records leave unrecorded. The "Tale of Paris and Helen" and its link to Sacrilege illustrates how tying a verdict to a single, tangible cause can pervert both our understanding of what happened and our sense of justice. To understand the destruction of Troy as the consequence of Paris's sacrilege is to misunderstand the complex network of purpose operating in the larger tale: Menelaus does not muster Greek forces to punish Paris's sacrilege; instead, the Greeks siege Troy in order to retrieve a stolen wife. When the tale concludes with Paris's sacrilege as the Trojans' primary fault rather than all the other deeds (both intended and committed) that better explain the ensuing war and destruction of Troy, the tale provides a barometer for the increas-

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ing difficulty of ignoring intention in the courtroom, indicating why Ricardian courts briefly made an allowance for intention because it invariably impinged on the proceedings and on the jurors' perceptions. Yet, the tale and framework also demonstrate why the courts found it the better part of wisdom to ignore the issue of intention. As long as criminal law was tied to a system of pleading that limited the case to a single issue, finding a prosecutable correlation between deed and intention adds complications that return us to the same problems caused by ignoring intention altogether.

By recording this stew of contradictions engulfing intentionality, Gower actively participates in "debates about how the common law might be remedied," giving us a glimpse at the development of one of those remedies, equity (van Dijk 315–17). Through the tale of sacrilege, Gower explores the need to account for intention in ways that do not subvert the court's ability to deliver justice. Without mentioning the term, this passage provides proof for why he eventually promotes "équité" (7.3130), a concept that Conrad van Dijk has shown to be both more ambivalent and less ameliorative than our usual post-medieval association of equity as a means to temper justice with mercy and pity. Equity, as Gower saw it, allows judgments to be meted out according to common-law principles, with "no one get[ting] preferential treatment, but . . . everyone receiv[ing] what he or she deserves" (van Dijk 324). Van Dijk's recalibration is important for understanding the evolutionary moment of the concept of equity in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* because the more merciful forms of equity depend upon a strong understanding of intentionality. That is, these later, ameliorating forms of equity depend upon privileging intentionality, both the intentions of the lawgiver and the law breaker. Ameliorating equity proscribes strict justice when such an interpretation of the law was not the lawmakers' intention, and it rethinks punishment when the law breaker's intentions were not to break the law. This softer form of equity is not what Gower advocates, and his explorations of intention provide one explanation for that: honest intentions are difficult to detect, and any intention often has a loose link to the deed. Nevertheless, Gower seems to indicate that equity involves finding ways to incorporate intention into legal concepts and procedures. The "Tale of Paris and Helen" does not show the way, but it does demonstrate the need.

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Notes

1. Alford 279.
2. Internal citations taken from John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, ed. Russell A. Peck, 3 vols.
3. “Tale of Alexander and the Pirate”: Alexander’s “entente” (3.2441) set him at odds with the good governance of reason (3.2438–46).
4. This distrust of a defendant’s intentions probably contributed to the disregard of its obverse—the victim’s nonconsent—when the Statute of Rapes defined “the victim’s consent irrelevant” to raptus, whether we define it as rape or we define it as abduction (Cannon 261).
5. 1.1077–209; 2.2451–58; 3.973–1083; 3.1757–856; 4.147–233; 4.731–886; 4.1693–705; 4.1815–900; 4.1900–34; 4.2135–82; 5.2961–3201; 5.6434–75; 5.7195–695; 5.7596–9602; 6.1391–788; 7.1557–63; and 8.2460–665, taken from (Simpson 221, fn 29).

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Candace Barrington is a Professor at Central Connecticut State University. Her research interests are twofold. The first examines the intersection of legal and literary discourse, especially in Gower's work. In 2002, she co-edited with Emily Steiner (University of Pennsylvania) *Letter of the Law: Legal Practice and Literary Production in Medieval England*, and since then, she has contributed articles to *Gower at 600* (2010), *Accessus* (2013), *The Chaucer Review* (2014), *Theorizing Legal Personhood in Late Medieval England* (2015), and *Encyclopedia of Medieval British Literature* (forthcoming). Currently, she is co-editing a companion to Medieval Law and Literature with Sebastian Sobceki (University of Groningen). Barrington's second research interest examines popular representations of Chaucer and his work. In this vein, she has written *American Chaucers* (2007) and contributed articles to *Sex and Sexuality in a Feminist World* (2009), *American Literary History* (2009), *European Journal of English Studies* (2011), *Dark Chaucer: An Assortment* (2012), *Medieval Afterlives in Popular Culture* (2012), *Digital Gaming Re-imagines the Middle Ages* (2013), *Educational Theory* (2014), *Screening Chaucer: Absence, Presence, and Adapting the Canterbury Tales* (forthcoming), and *Cambridge Companion to Medievalism* (forthcoming). In a broader context, she and Jonathan Hsy collaborate on *Global Chaucers* (www.globalchaucers.wordpress.com), a project focusing on post-1945 non-Anglophone adaptations and translations. With Hsy, she maintains an active blog and has written articles for *Medieval Afterlives in Contemporary Culture* (2015), *Accessus* (2015), and *postmedieval* (2015). Together they are co-editing an essay collection, *Chaucer's Global Pilgrimage: Reading The Canterbury Tales in Translation*. She is also exploring more fully the consequences of reading Chaucer in translation in her monograph, *Faithless Love: Re-reading Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales through Global Languages* (in process). Email: BarringtonC@ccsu.edu.

A New Arion: Lydgate on Saints, Kings, and “Good Acord”

Stephen R. Reimer

Several years ago Larry Scanlon and James Simpson published a compilation of essays which urged us to take Lydgate seriously as a “major poet,” as one who made significant and innovative contributions to the literature and culture of his time, not least its political culture.¹ As a contribution to such a project of recognizing in Lydgate something more than a Chaucerian imitator who missed the joke, I wish to suggest that Lydgate is perhaps better seen as being closely allied with Gower, not least in the particular terms with which the two poets pursue their political themes.

The significance of Lydgate’s political works have been explored by various scholars in recent years; more specifically, the political dimension of Lydgate’s hagiographical writings has been quite ably explored several times by scholars such as Karen Winstead, Fiona Somerset, Anthony Bale, Jennifer Sisk, and others, but the similarities between Lydgate’s and Gower’s politics have seemingly not hitherto drawn particular notice.

Like Gower, Lydgate is concerned with the well-ordered society, and he uses many of the same keywords and concepts that Gower uses, both of these poets drawing, of course, on a common tradition of Latin political theory, as well as positioning themselves as workers within a tradition of exemplary narrative (see Mitchell; also Scanlon, *Narrative*). Lydgate’s vision of the well-governed society, similar to Gower’s, is one in which the estates work cooperatively, each contributing to the common good, working together under the leadership of a king who is capable of governing the state well primarily because he has learned to govern himself well. This regal self-governance includes the recognition that the primary responsibilities of a king are to take good counsel, to promote peace while not neglecting the defense of the realm, to reward the good and to punish the ill, and, above all, to discover and to heal the causes of division and to bring the estates into “good acord.” As Anthony Bale states in his essay on Lydgate’s religious works in the *Companion to Fifteenth-Century Poetry*, though perhaps unexpectedly for a monk, “for Lydgate poetic composition was not a withdrawal from the world, but rather a direct engagement with statecraft, class and political expedience” (82).

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Gower's observation, in the Prologue to the *Confessio Amantis*, that Division is the daughter of sin (1002–1011) and the mother of confusion (851–52), is echoed with some frequency in Lydgate's works. "Division" is a keyword in Lydgate's contributions to political discourse, not least in his only known prose work, *The Serpent of Division*, which considers the role of social divisiveness in the time of Pompey's war with Julius Caesar, and the catastrophic consequences to the nation of princely ambition and bellicosity (cf. Nolan, ch. 1). The verse envoy at the conclusion of the work notes that Christ himself declared that a nation divided against itself cannot stand (Matt. 12:25–26, Mark 3:24–26, Luke 11:17–18), and therefore, says Lydgate, this story should be accounted a mirror for lords and princes: division destroys states. Lydgate would agree with Gower that "In hevene is pes and al acord, / Bot helle is ful of . . . descord" (CA Prol. 1045–46). *The Serpent of Division* is thought to have been written around 1422 and to be an indirect comment upon the divisions among the members of the regency council during the infancy of Henry VI (cf. MacCracken's Introd. to Lydgate, *Serpent*); and so we have here, along with Gower-like themes, a quite Gower-like use of ancient story to reflect broad political principles of very particular present application.

Among the problems that divided the council was the issue of France—whether to pursue aggressively Henry V's gains, or to seek peace. The difficulty of finding the right balance between Christian militarism and Christian pacifism is one that recurs with frequency in Lydgate's works, including in his *Lives of Ss. Edmund and Fremund*, to which we will turn in a moment. But one might consider, as a place to start, the stance taken by Hector in the *Troy Book*, Books 2 and 3—Hector is presented (apart from a fatal error of judgment that results in his death) as an "example and merour" for modern princes (*TB* 2.248), as an exemplary leader, not lead astray by passion, but consistently enacting the virtues of gentility and courtesy (2.243–51). In his speech to Priam's war council, a speech that Lydgate amplifies substantially over what he found in his source in Guido, Hector stands up to his father to challenge Priam's bellicosity: the desire to enter quickly into this war is rash. Hector urges prudence and caution, warning against entering hastily into a conflict, the outcome of which cannot prudentially be foreseen but that is certain to have devastating consequences for some (2.2183–2303).

The necessity for a good king to love peace and to be careful to engage in war only when it is prudent and necessary, when it can be justified by an appeal to the common good, is similarly reflected in the *Siege of Thebes*, which opens with a declaration against martial exploits, a declaration which leads to a conclusion that war is always and

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only destructive; peace and an end to conflict must be sought, and they are to be sought by words, not swords. The priority of words over swords, a theme that runs through the entire work, is foregrounded in the opening declaration that the harp of Mercury is of greater value and force than the sword of Mars, and, to confirm this principle, Lydgate points us to the tale of Amphion (*ST* 213–92, esp. 272–74). Like Gower's Arion, Amphion is a poet and a harper who brings order out of chaos principally by the harmony of song and the power of words to effect change. Here, Amphion creates civilization by building a city, bringing the walls into being by the harmony of sweet song (*ST* 201–204). Amphion appears again in the *Fall of Princes*, Book 6, where we learn further that eloquence and poetry are deterrents to destruction, that “fresh ditees” (*FP* 6.338) can overpower Fortune herself, that eloquent language reforms men and leads them to virtue, creating order and concord (6.330–99). The poet addresses Fortune herself, blaming her for mutability, discord, and “doubilnesse” (6.392–99), for “contekis & . . . stryues” (6.357), for “dyuersite” (6.352) and “dyuysiouns” (6.358). By contrast, the “swetnesse of langage” can bind men together “In goldene cheynys of pes and vnite” (6.381, 390–91).²

With these general notes upon Lydgate's political themes in mind—echoes of which in Gower will be easy to recognize—I want to turn now to Lydgate's two double hagiographies, his *Lives of Ss. Edmund and Fremund* and his *Lives of Ss. Alban and Amphibal*—the latter of which is a deliberate imitation of the former, since the abbot of St. Alban's commissioned the work, asking Lydgate to do for his abbey what the *Edmund and Fremund* had done for Bury Abbey. Both of these works, as has been observed and demonstrated by others, combine hagiography with mirrors and advice for princes, and the first book of each of these tripartite works has a particular focus on civic virtues and the good governance that results from their ideal practice. Where one might expect our monk to emphasize monastic, contemplative, and otherworldly perfections, Lydgate's saints are, instead, active in the world, exemplifying the virtues of kings and knights, and are rewarded with martyrdom, as if achieving kingly or knightly perfection, through service to the common good, was a direct path to sainthood, a bit of the “pes and al acord” of heaven here on earth.

Fiona Somerset argues that Lydgate's *Lives of Ss. Edmund and Fremund* offers to Henry VI what the *Troy Book* and *Siege of Thebes* offered to Henry V, the legitimization of a particular and appropriate ideal of kingship, here specifically the idea of a saintly king (261–62). Lydgate's text, written for Henry in the years just before he declared his majority in 1437, is, Somerset notes, the first of many texts that construct Henry as saint: no one who praised Henry, Somerset claims, ever

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praised him in terms of prowess in battle or wisdom in governance, but always and only in terms of his piety, charity, and chastity. As early as the 1430s, Somerset argues, it was clear at least to Lydgate that writing Henry VI into history could be done only in narratives of saintly kingship (263).

However, as Jennifer Sisk notes, the text does not offer a single model of kingship but a set of alternatives, with no clear prioritizing of the one over the other. Both Edmund and Fremund vacillate between militarism and pacifism. Edmund has a great victory against the Danish invaders, but then is so horrified by the quantities of blood shed that he becomes a confirmed pacifist, after which he is captured by the Danes without resistance and is martyred. Fremund ascends to his father's throne, but after a short period of good rule he retires to a hermitage with a group of companions; when the Danes invade his kingdom, however, he is persuaded to abandon the contemplative life and return to take up arms against the invaders, and with twenty-four companions he eradicates the Danish army, and thus, Lydgate says, enacts God's vengeance for the death of Edmund; thereafter, Fremund is himself killed, not by a Dane, but by a Judas in his own company. Thus, as Jennifer Sisk points out, neither Edmund nor Fremund is a stable model for Henry VI, but both exemplify multiple ideas of good kingship. Nevertheless, as Fiona Somerset had earlier argued, even if Henry chooses a pacifistic and contemplative life, this story offers him the assurance that God and God's saints will protect the kingdom, avenging it in the next generation if not protecting it in this. Moreover, as various readers of the story have pointed out, the pacifistic and non-resisting Edmund becomes a violent and vengeful saint in the stories of his posthumous miracles in the final portion of Lydgate's work, being especially vengeful against any who challenge the wealth or privileges of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds. Thus, as Somerset says at the end of her article, if Edmund is to be read as a model for Henry VI, if Lydgate's work is an attempt to compose the king,³ Henry is being told that he can look forward to an everlasting posthumous career of violence, with lots of time to get his own back on any who offend him, not least, of course, the three brothers of the House of York.

In Sisk's reading of the work, then, we have several exemplars for the king, and both Edmund and Fremund show us, initially, political virtues that create periods of ideal civic order, alternating with periods in which they focus on spiritual virtues which lead them to monasticism or martyrdom. These alternatives, she says, are in a dynamic and productive tension, in a "poetics of speculation over assertion"—or which Anthony Bale and A.S.G. Edwards refer to as a "loosely accretive form" (Introd. to their edn. 25)—offering the young king alternatives

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rather than argument (Sisk 375), since both Christian militarism and Christian pacifism are ideals that Lydgate is ready to promote to the young and impressionable king (374).

Here, though, I want to focus upon the opening gambits with which Lydgate's two double saints lives begin, since the first book of both the *Lives of Ss. Edmund and Fremund* and of the *Lives of Ss. Alban and Amphibal* represent to us ideals of good governance, in the case of St. Edmund by focusing first upon the civic virtues by which he is characterized and then secondly upon the well-ordered state that resulted from a well-ordered king, while in the story of St. Alban we begin with a lengthy depiction and explication of the ceremony of knighting, again with a substantial account of the virtues of the ideal knight—virtues that, we are assured at the start of Book 2, Alban achieved to perfection. So we have a representation of an ideal king in the one, an ideal knight in the other.

The first book of the *Lives of Ss. Edmund and Fremund* focuses upon Edmund's childhood and upon his early years as king, the period of his life and reign prior to the coming of the Danes to East Anglia. This first book is dominated by several long passages that describe Edmund's virtues and the good governance that resulted, and it is particularly to be noted (for our purposes) that the virtues that are described are not primarily spiritual but civic. As part of the account of Edmund's birth and his early years in Nuremburg, we are told that, because he embraced virtue in his youth, virtue endured into his maturity; he was young of years but old in discretion. In the course of some seventy lines (260–329), we are told that Edmund was sober, “void of al outrage” (263), demure, combining bounty with wisdom, beauty with prudence (287); in him “was ther neuer seyn vngentillesse,”⁴ but always “hih trouthe and iust perseuerance” (290, 292). He was goodly in his speech to high and low (305); he was humble and meek, chaste, devout, and did not disdain the poor but had regal compassion (308). He was discreet in counsel (319), “deuoid of surquedie and pride” (326), and he practiced the four cardinal virtues (320–22). The point about the four cardinal virtues is repeated two hundred lines later (589–96), and this emphasis upon the cardinal virtues and not the theological again suggests that it is social and civic, not spiritual, virtues upon which Lydgate wants to focus. And this substantial account of Edmund's virtues is summed up at the end of the descriptive passage with the declaration that, in short, there was nothing in his character that could be amended (328–29): he is the ideal.

Subsequently, at the end of the first book we have a second list of Edmund's virtues, which is coupled to a description of the well-ordered kingdom over which he ruled. The placement of these descriptions at

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the end of the first book is strategic, since it was, in part, Danish envy of Edmund's perfection and success that led to the invasion of East Anglia (though we are also told that Hyngwar and Ubbe are also motivated by a need to avenge the death of their father, Ragnar). In this second description of his virtues (897–1008), we are told that Edmund had beauty of person, benignity of estate, that he was provident of counsel, rightful in dooms, temperate of diet, generous in almsgiving, a protector of the religious and a mortal yard to heretics; in particular, we are told, Lollards found no refuge in his kingdom (934), clearly a reference having more to do with the fifteenth-century Lancastrian kings than with the historical ninth-century King Edmund. He had great prowess in battle but never fought in a wrongful quarrel. He exercised "ffredam and bounte" (960); he practiced hawking and hunting in order to avoid idleness (969). Perhaps most significantly, we are told that he ensured that no false oaths or dishonest speech were found in his court, and that he chastised all those who sowed discord (944).

The good governance that resulted from Edmund's good self-governance is described at some length (778–896), concluding with an image of the well-ordered Body Politic. Edmund established equitable laws; he used his sceptre to conserve the folk in peace, his sword to punish the reckless. With discretion, providence, and reason, he augmented the *Res Publica* in peace and defended it in war (806–12). Based on a desire to revere God, to cherish his princes, and to govern his knights, he pursued a "noble policie" of protecting but regulating the Church by disciplining hypocrites and simoniacs (827–30); he appointed good judges to his courts (834); he kept the knighthood in check, particularly by ensuring that justice was not overturned through maintenance (842, being another decidedly fifteenth-century reference), that truth was not "eclipsed be power nor puissance" (844). And even the marketplace was well-regulated: buyers were not beguiled or defrauded (848–849); laborers were paid their due in a timely fashion (853–54); all was set in good order (861).

To conclude this section on ideal government, Lydgate offers, as I mentioned, an image of the Body Politic (862–99); the prince is the head, looking through the eyes of prudence and reason, to search out and to quell quarrel and division; the knights are the body's arms, defending the body; the torso is the merchant class; the soul of the body is the class of "folk contempliff" (878); the legs and feet are the peasants, and Lydgate declares that as long as plowmen have their hands upon the plow, the land will prosper—implicit, of course, being the idea that if they remove their hands from the plow, they are all too likely to commit mischief and another Rising. In an ideal kingdom, such as Edmund's, all of the body's members are obedient to the head,

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and all work together co-operatively for the common good. And this image is offered, Lydgate says, as a mirror to Princes, who can look upon it and learn to avoid quarrel and division (865).

At the opening of Book 2, we have the coming of the Danes to East Anglia, introducing new issues concerning the defense of the realm and the defense of Christianity against “paynims,” so Books 2 and 3 of the work have a different sort of focus. But the first book is entirely centered upon the depiction of a well-regulated kingdom under a self-disciplined king prior to the emergence of external threats, and so the political themes of the first book have a certain clarity since the issue of foreign invasion and questions of just and unjust warfare have not yet been raised, and the choice between militarism and pacifism is still off in Edmund’s future.

Just as the first book of the *Edmund and Fremund* is about the virtues of an ideal king and the good governance that results, similarly the first book of Lydgate’s *Lives of Ss. Alban and Amphibal* focuses our attention on ideal knighthood. The story of St. Alban begins with the invasion of Britain by Julius Caesar, an invasion that was successful only because, Lydgate emphasizes, Britain in those days was suffering from internal division, specifically strife between one Cassiballan and Duke Androchee, a discord between two which brought all of Britain under subjection. In this context, Lydgate refers again, as he did at the end of *The Serpent of Division*, to Christ’s words in the Sermon on the Mount, that a nation divided against itself cannot stand (AA 136–40).

With Britain now subjected to the Roman Emperor, various new laws are imposed: we are told that the Romans brought “prudent pollicie” (181) and worked for common profit (164), and governors were appointed to watch against rebellion (184, 190–93) and quickly to amend outrages that might lead to discord (194–96). The new laws included a particular statute declaring that knighthood could be conferred upon Britons only at the Emperor’s own hands, a law which was intended to curb insurrection and local strife, such as that between the two dukes mentioned earlier. In the days of the Emperor Diocletian, then, some fifteen hundred eligible young Britons traveled together to Rome to seek knighthood from the Emperor, a group that included Alban and Amphibal. Amphibal in Rome is soon converted by the missionary efforts of the Pope, and he withdraws to dwell in a Christian community; Lydgate’s story will return to him in Books 2 and 3, but first we focus upon Alban in Book 1 as he undergoes the ritual of being dubbed a knight.

Book 1 of Lydgate’s *Alban and Amphibal*, then, is dominated by a lengthy description of the ceremony of knighting, including an explanation of its rituals and symbols, such as the preparatory shaving, bath-

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ing, and so forth. More particularly for our purposes, over two hundred lines (351–581) are given over to a description of the “charge” with which the Emperor charged the new knights, the particulars of the oath that they are to take, indicating the virtues that they are to practice, the obligations that come with knighthood. This charge is similar to, but far more elaborate than, the Pentecostal Oath taken by the Knights of the Round Table in Malory (*Morte d'Arthur* 3.15), and Lydgate provides in Book 1 of *Alban and Amphibal* a representation of ideal knighthood that matches and complements the representation of ideal kingship provided in Book 1 of *Edmund and Fremund*. Then, at the beginning of Book 2, we are given a description of Alban’s personal virtues and attributes, in essence declaring that he follows perfectly the charge imposed upon him by the Emperor—that he is the ideal knight. Again, it is Alban’s perfection in the civic virtues of knighthood that is offered to us as the basis for his later acquisition of Christian faith and, soon thereafter, martyrdom, specifically the privilege of being the promartyr of Albion’s Britain.

I summarize a few of the main points of the Emperor’s charge to the knights of Britain: to practice cleanness of body, the defense of the gods and their worship (though much of Books 2 and 3 will explore the conflict between Roman paganism and Christianity in this period of persecution), and the defense of widows, maidens, and the poor (370–75). There are several stanzas on humility and meekness as the basis of all virtue but particularly essential to knighthood because meek language moderates rigor (503) and peaceful words have conquered more than war ever has (497)—the theme of words and swords resurfaces here. Thus a knight should be a lion in battle but a “lomb in chaumbre” (515); one must play the lion, one must make use of violence, only when there is just occasion (518); and Lydgate states quite emphatically that it is apostasy to play the lion in the time of peace or as a means to oppress the poor (554–55). Most tellingly, the necessity of knights to work towards common profit is restated five times (364, 377, 386, 411, 529). And knights are also enjoined to “Make providence that no division / Fil vnwarly on hih or lowe estate” (393–94), because division has caused the dissolution of many realms, realms in which it has eclipsed the light of felicity (395–99). The need to beware of division is particularly necessary, Lydgate says, in order to reduce the risk of rebellion. The memory of the Rising of 1381, and the fear of a second such, remains keen in the early fifteenth century, perhaps not least in East Anglia (where minor rebellions, mostly involving the same rebels, continued for decades after 1381), and not least at Bury, since the abbey of Bury and its estates had suffered significantly as the men of Suffolk in 1381 marched, not to London, but to Bury.⁵ Lydgate, like Gower in the later books of

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the *Vox Clamantis*, would appear to be of the opinion that the first and second estates need to be careful not to provoke the third into rebellion,⁶ and the means to avoid such provocation is a common dedication to common profit. Lydgate, like Gower, considers that the Good Society is to be achieved through good governance, especially governance that avoids division and rebellion, and that practices meekness, humility, and the arts of peaceful co-existence and mutual dependence.

I offer one final point by way of conclusion. Lydgate declares that an “old experte poetical doctryne” (198) tells us that, when the weeds are taller than the corn, or when a wound has become corrupted, it is too late to seek a remedy (197–203). Therefore, he says, in kingdoms and in cities it is necessary to establish governors who can punish and who can reform in a timely fashion; governors who will “Cherish the trewe, robbours to repress” (212).⁷ But it is the fact that this is “experte poetical doctryne,” not political doctrine, that I want to emphasize at this point, both by way of making a final connection to Gower, and by way of justifying the title of my paper.

I mentioned earlier the role of Amphion in the *Siege of Thebes*, the founder of Thebes, the harpist-poet-king, who constructs the walls of the city by his song and his words, creating civilization through song, “swete langage,” and word rather than sword. Here in the *Alban and Amphibal*, we have this idea of the need for soft words, for humility and meekness, for peaceableness, as among the highest of knightly virtues—to be the lamb, not the lion, in the chamber; to recognize that peaceful words overcome more people than war can do. Lydgate, like Gower—though, of course, not only like Gower—is fashioning himself in the role of the one who remembers and reminds his readers, not least those of the military and gentle estate, of the need to pursue common profit and to promote “good acord.”

Lydgate, even in his hagiographical writing, is engaging with the politics of his time, with the Lancastrian monarchy, much as Gower engaged with Edward III and Richard II. Lydgate and Gower both are doing what politically-engaged poets of the time could do: they offer tales as mirrors for princes, illustrating the broad, ethical principles that should inform public policy, and promoting principles that should shape regal and noble self-discipline and good governance. And the terms within which Lydgate pursues such themes are remarkably similar to those used by Gower—not least, as I suggested earlier, because they are drawing upon a common Latin tradition of political and ethical theory. At the same time, though, Lydgate and Gower could be said to share a certain directness and earnestness that distinguish their approach from, say, Chaucer’s more indirect and more ironic exploration of similar themes.

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So Lydgate, I suggest, is as much a new “moral Gower” as he is a “fifteenth-century Chaucerian”; he is fashioning himself in a manner not unlike that which Gower uses in the Prologue to the *Confessio Amantis*, as a new Arion or a new Amphion, whose words can civilize, whose words can educate the king and the nobility towards good governance of the self and of the state. Gower’s Arionic vision, which has been explored at length by Russell Peck and R.F. Yeager in their studies of the *Confessio*—this vision of the new-found concord between predator and prey, of hounds and hares, of lords and shepherds—while coming directly from Ovid (*Fasti* 2), will have been recognized by his readers as a parallel to the description of the peaceable kingdom envisaged by Isaiah (11:1–10), in which the lion lies down with the lamb (cf. Peck’s note to Gower, *CA Prol.* 1053–54). Lydgate, while recognizing the need for domination and powers of state coercion, emphasizes that such violence must be circumscribed and limited by a dedication to the pursuit of common profit and peaceful concord. Peace has conquered more than war ever could. For Lydgate, as for Gower, the goal of good governance is the peaceable kingdom. In both the *Edmund and Fremund* and the *Alban and Amphibal*, external threats emerge in Book 2 that trouble the peace and good governance achieved in Book 1, but that is a topic for another occasion. The point that I wish to emphasize here is that Gower and Lydgate are occupying quite similar ethical and political universes, in which social divisiveness is of the foremost concern, and division is to be countered by good governance, a dedication to common profit, and the pursuit of the harmony represented by and in the poet’s song of civility and “good acord.”

Notes

1. This is a revision of a paper delivered to the Third International Congress of the John Gower Society at the University of Rochester, on 30 June 2014. I am particularly grateful to Professor Robert R. Edwards, who organized the session on Lydgate and Gower for which this paper was originally prepared.
2. There is a useful summary of some of the political themes of the *Troy Book* and *Siege of Thebes* in Lois Ebin, *John Lydgate*, esp. ch. 3.
3. My phrasing here is a deliberate echo of that of Kurt Olsson, whose article “Composing the King, 1390–1391” considers Gower’s “composing” of Richard II in the *Confessio Amantis*.
4. “Vngentillesse” is a rare and notable form, the only other instance of which listed in the *Middle English Dictionary* is found in Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*.
4. This suggests that another fruitful line of inquiry in seeking to establish connections between Gower and Lydgate might be to search out other instances of linguistic forms peculiar to the two of them.

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5. A useful summary of the evidence of repeated rebellions in East Anglia in the later decades of the fourteenth century is given by John Ridgard, "The Uprising of 1381" (Map 39 with notes) in *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk*, ed. Dymond and Martin, 90–91.

6. Lydgate's inclusion, for instance, of the tale of the Wolf and the Sheep in his collection of *Isopes Fabules*, warning against the abuse of the weak by the powerful, can be read as reflecting a memory of the Rising of 1381 and an anxiety about the possibility of a recurrence.

7. This reference to True Men and to Robbers who need to be repressed has a perhaps coincidental similarity to one of the letters attributed to John Ball and associated with the 1381 Rising: John Sheep calls on his followers to encourage Piers the Plowman in his work, to "chastise wel Hobbe the Robbere," and to include Johan Treweman in their company (in British Library, Royal MS 13.E.ix fol. 287r; printed in Dean, *Middle English Political Writings* 135).

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Lydgate and the Trace of Gower

Robert R. Edwards

My title borrows one of John Lydgate's characteristic tropes of literary authorship. The figure of a poetic trace variously designates the literary procedure (*modus agendi*) that Lydgate follows, the position he wants to claim for himself within late-medieval English literary culture, and the relation he imagines with the authors who ostensibly serve as his sources and models for writing. Following the trace of classical and vernacular authors proved a remarkably effective means for Lydgate both in composing work and preparing a reception for it. The Augustinian friar Osbern Bokenham, a writer with substantial connections to East Anglian patrons, seems to mark a moment in the mid-1440s when Lydgate joins his most prominent English sources to form a triumvirate of poets in a national tradition of high literary standing: "the fyrsh rethoryens / Gowere, Chauncere, and now Lytgate" ("Life of St. Anne" 3-4). In the early 1470s, George Ashby, clerk of the royal signet and Lancastrian loyalist, reckons "Maisters Gower, Chauucer & Lydgate, / Premier poetes of this nacion" (1-2). The warrant for Lydgate's place in these passages and in the testimony that accrues over the next century and a half lies clearly in the discipleship to Chaucer that he invents and refines over his career (the references are compiled by Spurgeon, supplemented by Boswell and Holton for early printed sources). The best scholarship in recent decades has emphasized the deep ambivalence of Lydgate's authorial position—notably, its play of deference and assertion, subordination and ambition (Spearing 88-110; Lerer 22-56; Patterson 73-77, Strohm 186-91; Carlson, "The Chronology" 248). Like Thomas Hoccleve, Lydgate positions Chaucer as a poetic father and master so that he can be his son and disciple, hence his poetic heir. Gower, the other founder and master recognized by Bokenham and Ashby, remains another issue altogether. He does not serve continually for Lydgate as a model, like Chaucer, to invoke and appropriate. He functions instead as what we might call a deep source for the reflections that emerge from Lydgate's connection of authorship, public poetry, and propaganda. Gower is the poetic interlocutor who shows how a writer of ethical conviction engages the profound contradictions that abide in the public sphere and the duties of official sponsorship.

Lydgate's figure of the poetic trace, we should recognize, appears across the full range of his religious, didactic, and secular poems,

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where it signifies various modes of composition. Lydgate invokes St. Giles to inspire his translation of the Latin source “the tracys tenlumyne” (“The Legend of Seynt Gyle,” line 4). In the *Life of Our Lady*, Chaucer will amend and correct “The wronge trace³, of my rude penn” (2.1649). In *Fall of Princes*, Laurent de Premierfait is Lydgate’s source, but Boccaccio is his *auctor*, and Lydgate performatively turns at several points to prepare his stylus and pen to “Folwen the tracis off Bochacius” (1.2410). Perhaps the most revealing use occurs in the Prologue to *Troy Book* where it plots a genealogy of poetic authority for epic. Vergil is said to follow the “tracys” (308) of Homer’s writing, Cornelius Nepos and Guido delle Colonne follow those of Dares and Dictys (322, 355), and Lydgate himself resolves to follow Guido “as ny³e as euer I may” (375). Middle English *trace* has the primary sense of “a mark or sign left by the passage or presence of something” (*MED* 2b), hence a track or trail. To “suwen the tracys,” as Lydgate proposes to do with his sources, means to follow the example or emulate (*MED* 1c), as in following a path or even trailing and tracking a source. It describes a strategy for writing that operates within the outline furnished by previous materials or ideas and thereby establishes a poetics of invention and imitation. Lydgate’s figure is so influential that it comes to describe his supersession. Benedict Burgh identifies his continuation of the translation begun by Lydgate in *Secrees of old Philosoffres* in Lydgate’s own terms: “Off Iohn lydgate how shulde I the sotyl trace / ffolwe in secrees Celestial and dyvyne” (lines 1503–04). Robert Meyer-Lee usefully adapts the figure in a chapter on “The trace of Lydgate,” which examines how Lydgate embodies the profound ambivalences of laureate poetics for later writers such as Stephen Hawes, Alexander Barclay, and John Skelton (174–219).

In one sense, Lydgate’s figure envisions a form of poetic stalking that merely confirms his status as a belated and secondary author, one who remains on the path, augmenting his received materials by compilation, rhetorical amplification, and moralization. This is the dominant view of him, even as current readers identify points where Lydgate resists, revises, and subverts his models (Pearsall, *John Lydgate*). There is distinguished precedent for this pose of subdued but belligerent deference, not just in Vergil’s acknowledgment of Homer but in Statius’s sending his *Thebaid* to honor and follow the *vestigia* of the *Aeneid* while deconstructing its imperial project. In another sense, Lydgate’s figure is potentially more radical and even disabused than its classical precedents. The *auctores* who ground the literary genealogy of *Troy Book*, for example—Dares, Dictys, and Chaucer’s Lollius—are counterfeits. The first two may have had Hellenistic Greek sources, but the enterprise they represent is an effort to produce the effect of literary

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authority by creating a fictitious basis for chronicle history, a pseudo-antique. Dares and Dictys, as their prologues make clear, are works transliterated, translated, and transmitted in a form of textual romance lost and found. Chaucer's Lollius, whether generated by a misreading of Horace or created to deceive, is a literary screen for Boccaccio. They all depict an antiquity for which they are not actually present. What Lydgate joins, then, as he follows the traces of Guido and reproduces his methods, is not a literary succession as such but a serial fiction of authorship renewed at each stage.

This fiction accords conveniently with Chaucer's own evasion of the terms "auctor" and "poet" and with the "maister Chaucer" whom Lydgate summons throughout his corpus for his own purposes. Gower presents a different approach to literary authorship. If any medieval English poet wanted to be an author and to be seen as one, it was certainly Gower. Gower seems to monopolize the vocabulary and honorifics that we have come to identify as positions of authorship (Minnis 168–90). In the *Mirour de l'omme* he is a compiler, prophet, and counselor; in *Vox Clamantis* he passes along what he has heard "ut auctor" (7.1445–46) and what he has written (7.1469). He is a *compositor* in the *Cronica Tripertita* (1.1 gloss). The marginal glosses to *Confessio Amantis* fashion him a compiler (Prol. 41*) and explain the intent of the *auctor* (1.8, 1.59) who is eventually revealed as John Gower. What traces might such a willing claimant to authorship leave for and on Lydgate's poetry? Equally important, what are the conditions under which he might set out a path to follow before Lydgate joins him among the "Premier poetes of this nacion"?

A preliminary answer comes from Lydgate's inclusion of Gower among the classical and vernacular authorities enumerated in *Fall of Princes*. Lydgate affects to disavow knowledge of the classical *auctores* as such and of Chaucer's "souereyn balladys," but he groups Gower with Ralph Strode and Richard Rolle, whom he regards as an authority "In parfyte lyvyng, which passith poysye" (9.3412) and the author of *Prik of Conscience*. The conjunction of Gower and Strode shows, of course, that Lydgate's frame of reference is the ending of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. Lydgate says, "In moral mateer ful notable was Goweer, / And so was Stroode in his philosophye" (9.3410–11). Gower is already contextualized for Lydgate in a poem on Troy that invokes a fictitious authority as its textual source, abandons "the forme of olde clerkes speche / In poetrye" (5.1854–55), and turns to philosophy and Christian redemption in the face of mutability. The addition of Rolle brings a further dimension to Lydgate's evocation of Gower. As Nicholas Watson points out, Rolle has a strong sense of himself as an author (257–72); and the triumvirate of Gower, Strode, and Rolle reflects practical and

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speculative interests in ways of living and being in the world. Gower is arguably part of a vernacular canon here that carries classical and vernacular fictions forward as objects of scrutiny and serious reflection.

This framing of Gower between classical literary authorities and vernacular knowledge is a significant feature of recent critical appraisals of his broad influence on Lydgate. J. Allan Mitchell proposes that “Lydgate may be seen as heir to the ‘Gowerian’ *vox clamantis*,” uniting rhetoric and concerns for the social order (569). Gower and Lydgate also share, Mitchell contends, an ambivalence toward rhetorical practice, especially its limited capacity to compel right action and its procedures for defining exemplary meaning. Both align themselves with the figure of Cicero as a model of eloquence and moral practice. The Ciceronian doctrine they share comes, however, by way of Brunetto Latini’s *Livres dou Tresor*, a work which, like his *Rettorica*, treats eloquence as foundational to the art of governing a city and negotiating the public and private demands of urban citizens: “Tuilles dist que la plus haute science de cité gouverner si est rectorique, c’est a dire la science du parler; car se parleure ne fust cités ne seroit, ne nus establissemens de justice ne de humaine compaignie” (“Cicero says that the greatest science for governing a city is rhetoric—that is to say, the science of speaking; for if there were no speaking, there would be no cities or institutions for justice and human association”; 3.1). Brunetto repeats the point: “Et sachiés que rectorique est desoz la science de cité gouverner” (“And know that rhetoric underlies the science of governing a city”; 3.1.2; cf. *La rettorica* 1.4). The danger, which emerges in Gower’s recombination of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic in Book 4 of *Confessio Amantis*, is that rhetoric can become “morally neutral” and “fundamentally independent of ethics” (Mitchell 573). Book 6 of *Fall of Princes* offers one parallel with this cautious view of rhetoric, morals, and truth, but the pervasive uneasiness with rhetorical surfaces and effects in Lydgate’s narratives of classical antiquity suggests a thoroughgoing wariness over the workings of language itself.

The repurposing of antiquity through intermediaries such as Brunetto reflects, as Andrew Galloway has noted, a late-medieval vernacular humanism in which Lydgate holds a conspicuous place. “Vernacular humanism,” says Galloway, “identifies a secondary effect, an indirect extension of the power of classical interests and their social prestige” (445). Its vision of the large forces shaping history is complex and inevitably contradictory, as it foregrounds virtues like prudence and justice against the workings of fate and fortune, which lend an explanatory and persuasive power. Its sphere of action is not doctrine or theory but politics and ambition in the secular world (471). The contradictions that lend resonance to the representation of antiquity in

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figures like Gower and Lydgate stem, Galloway proposes, from the application of classical learning to practical political ends.

Lydgate turns to Gower in works that speak about power and to power, the former in narratives borrowed without attribution and the latter in the form of royal patronage. Maura Nolan has identified Gower as the source for Lydgate's reflections on social and political division in the *Siege of Thebes* and *Serpent of Division*. Though the issue of dating has been reopened for the *Siege* (Simpson 15–16), both of Lydgate's works are tied to a crucial moment in 1422—the death of Henry V and the rise of conciliar government in the minority of Henry VI under the influence, among others, of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the likely patron of both works. Gower's analytical treatment of division in the Prologue to *Confessio Amantis* (Prol. 849–1088) follows on from the recounting of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and the glossing of the Monster of Time as a history of fallen empires. Division is simultaneously a pattern created and repeated by human choice and a fixed structure of moral and social experience, immanent in its historical manifestations and transcendent as a condition of mankind's fallen condition. Gower's exegesis, Nolan contends, is one that "Lydgate knew well but chose not to acknowledge" (*John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* 44). She goes on to propose, "The erasure of Gower from *Serpent of Division* is part of a more general trend in Lydgate's work of misattribution and deliberate forgetting of sources" (except for Chaucer) and especially of erasing intermediary French sources for the *Serpent* and the *Siege*. Lydgate's suppression of what he read and used is perhaps less negligent and devious than strategic. Erasure, like counterfeit, operates within the logic of the pseudo-antique. As sources of theory and narrative, the moderns are placeholders for the ancients, sites of transmission to be cancelled after they have concluded the rhetorical and explanatory work of delivering the contents of the past. The trace Gower leaves for Lydgate in this instance is a way of understanding the epicycles of Lancastrian crisis and settlement, for they are contained within a comprehensive history of empires, which situates the dynastic within world-historical patterns. Gower's representation of division allows Lydgate to identify a formal principle of civil and political collapse located within the Matter of Rome, which traditionally includes the Troy story and Brut's founding of England, the endpoint of *translatio imperii*. In this way, Roman political history is the precursor and monitory lesson of English dynastic history.

Gower returns as a narrative source in *Fall of Princes* under the same conditions of erasure. Lydgate adds a chapter on Constantine and his recovery from leprosy as "myn owne strange oppynyoun" (8.1171). It is ostensibly a free-hand amplification, celebrating princely conversion

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during the history of Christian persecution, and Lydgate's addition neatly juxtaposes the persecutions of Julian the Apostate recorded in Lydgate's sources. In Lydgate's story, reversals of Fortune build to a demonstration of grace. Constantine is moved by keening mothers to spare the innocents whose blood is required for a bath to heal his disease. Saints Peter and Paul appear to him to announce divine favor for sparing the innocents. Pope Sylvester baptizes him "Wher the Hooli Gost dide hym enlumyne" (8.1243). Apollo's temple is subsequently transformed to St. Peter's, and new imperial laws replace pagan custom. Constantine's law-giving ends with his performance of submission to papal authority. Lydgate gestures toward sources "Lik as the lyff of Siluester hath deuised" (8.1238; cf. 1421) and to "myn auctour" (8.1404). But the story does not appear in Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* or Laurent de Premierfait's *Des Cas des nobles hommes et femmes* (second version, 1409), both of whom Lydgate acknowledges at the beginning of his work.

As Larry Scanlon points out, Lydgate frames his discussion not as a compilation of sources but "as a dialogue with Gower" (335), whose narrative of Constantine appears at the end of Book 2 of *Confessio Amantis* (3187–496). There Gower's marginal gloss fashions it as a moral example of the power of charity against envy—"exemplum de virtute caritatis contra Inuidiam" ("an exemplum of the virtue of charity against the vice of envy")—and a spiritual parable of the healing power of baptism: Constantine is "ex vnda baptismatis renatus vtriusque materie, tam corporis quam anime" ("reborn from the water of baptism in each substance, of body as well as soul"). Gower foregrounds the transformative power of Constantine's natural pity into justice and equity and an ethic of care. Derek Pearsall notes the finely tuned moral discrimination of Constantine's soliloquy (*Gower and Lydgate* 17–18). Constantine puts himself "Al only into goddes cure; / And seith, 'Who that woll maister be, / He mot be servant to pite'" (2.3298–3300). Nigel Mortimer observes that Constantine's pity is linked to "a careful and theoretical consideration of the nature of imperial authority" in which the "disposition of temporal authority . . . is shown as illusory" (109); social distinctions break down only to be recomposed as ethics.

Lydgate replaces Gower's pity with "Roial compassioun" (8.1212). He amplifies Constantine's theocratic law-giving into the work of building the administration of a Christian society with its own monuments and "newe statutis of gret vertu / To be obseruid in name of Crist Iesu" (8.1280–81). In this process, Mortimer argues, Lydgate shows "the concomitant endowment of the Church with civil authority" (112). Lydgate suppresses direct mention of the Donation, which Gower calls a "venym" (2.3490) for mixing temporal and spiritual authority. Along

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these lines, Scanlon argues that Constantine's public submission to Sylvester is symbolic and decidedly performative: laying aside his imperial regalia, the emperor, he contends, effectively limits ecclesiastical power to spiritual authority. Mortimer argues, by contrast, that "Lydgate strengthens the focus on the voluntary secession of imperial authority" (113). What proves crucial in Lydgate's rewriting of Gower and his revising details from the *Legenda Aurea* is the final alignment of spiritual interests with temporal power that emerges from the story. Constantine is "holde the beste kniht / That owher was in any regioun, / Of Cristes feith thymperial champioun" (8.1438-40). He is "To alle Cristene protectour & diffence" (8.1442), a role that continues as his brass statue, armed and bearing a sword, menaces the Turks from Constantinople. The significance of the Christian prince, Lydgate insists, is national as well as universal: "Reiosshe ye folkis that born been in Breteyne, / Callid othirwise Brutis Albioun" (8.1450-51) for producing the "cheef monarche, prince & president" (8.1455) over all the world. Sarah Louise Pittaway shows that Lydgate's British Constantine can even be appropriated for later uses—in this case, an identification of Constantine with Edward IV and the Yorkist cause (150-53).

Lydgate's "strange oppynyoun" amounts to a distinctive revision of Gower, following the path of his narrative while resisting and resituating his critical energies; it is "one individual's plan," as *MED* defines the phrase citing this passage (*MED* "straunge," s.v., def. 2e), that seeks to put Christian history beyond the abiding tensions of spiritual and secular authority. Constantine both models and mirrors back to Lydgate's patron, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, a Christian prince working through the mechanisms of church and state power. Constantine's talent for mobilizing support through public displays of virtue and spiritual belief has a particular resonance for a dynasty that found its own allegiance to religious orthodoxy a potent mechanism for enforcing social control and ideological discipline.

The story of Canace and Machaire reveals the richly layered enterprise of writing within Gower's traces, where narrative repeatedly opens up the settled lessons it is presumed to illustrate. The fictional letter in Book 11 of Ovid's *Heroides* is Gower's source in *Confessio Amantis*, but the story comes to Lydgate already inflected by the Man of Law's remark in the *Canterbury Tales* that Chaucer has written nothing on "thilke wikke ensample of Canacee, / That loved hir owene brother synfully" (2.78-79). Omission and silence structure a good deal of Lydgate's poetic response as well. As Pearsall has noted (*John Lydgate* 239), Lydgate emphasizes the affective dimension of the story, by focusing on the complaint as a self-contained form and by suppressing Gower's alignment of incest with natural law and nature's

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power to blind the lovers' reason and "insight" (3.181). In Gower's treatment, the story is removed from myth and located within the patriarchal power of Eolus, father, householder, and king. Canace's offense, as recent commentators note, is as much against patriarchal control as against the incest taboo (Bullón-Fernández, Scanlon). J.A. Burrow remarks, "here the sin in question is the violent response of their father to the two siblings, not—emphatically not—their own incestuous passion" (220). R.F. Yeager points out that "Gower hedges in failing to judge them—but theirs is an unusual case" in Gower's balancing of the imperatives driving embodied creatures with the positive law that regulates their social behavior (*John Gower's Poetic* 258). These displacements of blame, Matthew Irvin argues, follow from Gower's "removal of the narrative from Canace's voice and the placing of it into the voice of Genius" (149), who seeks to balance pity and wrath. Ovid's affective image of Canace's authorship ("scribentis imago" line 7), in which she holds a pen in her right hand, a sword in her left, and unfolded paper in her lap, undergoes a decisive change when Gower substitutes her infant for the paper. If the effect is to heighten pathos—and it certainly is when the child later bathes in Canace's warm blood—the change complements Canace's insistence on remembrance (3.295) and on the memorial power of writing, for it places the visible cause of loss in the center of the composition.

Lydgate combines elements of Gower's revision to emphasize the rhetorical as well as textual dimensions of complaint. He also adds Fortune as a mechanism driving both desire and catastrophe (Mortimer 202–4). Canace undertakes to "compleyne & endite" as acts of poetic invention and to perform complaint as delivery "With pale face and a mortal cheere" (1.6878). Her salt tears, as in Gower, mix with ink to produce lines of writing compounded from the sorrow they represent. Genre or rather the politics of genre, as Nolan points out, is a key determinant here in Lydgate's working within Gower's exemplum and his expanding its range and resonance. The complaint is a stylized, virtuosic genre because it is situated in the post-history of narrative; it has no future because the predicament it addresses is beyond change or remedy. Nolan proposes that complaint is therefore "the quintessential genre of helplessness, a mode of discourse articulated by Fortune's victims that is useless as a way of imposing human will upon the world," though it offers important aesthetic resolutions (88).

In *Fall of Princes*, Lydgate suggests, however, that the use value of complaint lies not just in its expressive features but in generic contrast. He sets Canace's death in the context of Pyrrhus's slaughter of Polyxena, the most traumatic scene described in *Troy Book*. Eolus and Pyrrhus are the avenging spirits of patriarchy—a father who destroys

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and disperses the unregulated sexuality of his children and a son who murders and dismembers the woman who unwillingly makes his father abandon heroism for desire. Their rage, which goes far beyond vengeance, is the symptom that reveals their blind and desperate investment in a symbolic order constituted against itself. Though it differs in scale, complaint, as with Lydgate's *Canace*, is the elegaic challenge to epic; it is the vehicle for what W.R. Johnson has perceptively described in a widely influential essay as a counter-classical sensibility that makes visible the ideology and human cost of heroic enterprise.

Besides a theory of division for the *Serpent* and narrative sources for *Fall of Princes*, Gower furnishes Lydgate an important model of political address. This is not simply a case of speaking truth to power or adopting the common voice of public poetry that Anne Middleton so effectively described for the reign of Richard II. Rather, after the Lancastrian usurpation, Gower directly faces the occasion of speaking to triumph and conquest; these become, in turn, Lydgate's rhetorical context in the early 1420s and later a frame for poetic reflection and retrospect. In Book 3 of *Confessio Amantis* (3.2251-362), Gower ponders war as a cancellation of Christ's redemption and an exercise in sheer covetousness and possession. The legitimacy he grants to war is largely limited to defense of a kingdom (Yeager, *John Gower's Poetic* 241). His themes, as G.C. Macaulay notes (2.553-54), carry over to his other English poem, "In Praise of Peace," where the claims of law and justice give way to the greater virtues of charity, pity, and peace. Yeager proposes that Gower's choice of English for the poem is "transparently political" in furthering Lancastrian language policy and speaking to royalty in the language it has chosen to privilege in civic life ("Gower's French" 305). Gower addresses Henry IV in a mode of praise and justification that seeks to fashion kingship at its inception. Candace Barrington argues that Gower specifically positions himself as Henry's legal adviser and adapts the forms of legal writ and pleading to structure the poem.

Gower rehearses the standard Lancastrian claims (mustered in his *Chronica tripertita* 3.332-35) of legitimation by descent and election, but he substitutes divine justice for the problematic justification of conquest. With this change, he effectively makes conquest a means of justice. A king's right to war "To cleime and axe his rightful heritage / In alle places wher it is witholde" (59-60) both justifies Henry's usurpation of the English crown and tacitly lays the groundwork for claims to the French throne. As Frank Grady points out, however, "In Praise of Peace" raises questions about Henry's rule from the perspectives of literary propaganda and advice. David Carlson describes it as "a kind of coronation ode for the new king, a Lancastrian version of the Horatian

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Carmen saeculare" (111) whose topic is not peace but control of the state apparatus for enforcing order (207). Gower's poem repeatedly uncovers the contradictions between a monarch's lawful monopoly on violence and the presumed aims of violence: "Good is t'eschue werre, and natheles / A kyng may make werre upon his right, / For of bataile the final ende is pees" (64–66). For Lydgate, Gower's admonitions and advice, however constrained they may be by triumph and propaganda, offer a framework and language that will inform epic poems like *Troy Book* and the *Siege of Thebes*. The textual record, Gower goes on to say, shows "That dedly werre turneth into noght" ("In Praise of Peace," line 95) for both the conquered and the conqueror. For kings, war operates under the contingency of Fortune: "The werre hath no thing siker, thogh he winne" ("In Praise of Peace," line 119). Chivalric and royal identity—the *manhode* that Lydgate will celebrate in the Prince of Wales at the beginning of *Troy Book*—encompass both peace and heroism: "If pes be profred unto thi manhode, / Thin honour sauf, let it noght be forsake" ("In Praise of Peace," lines 157–58).

Lydgate speaks to Henry V at the end of *Troy Book* in terms carried forward from Gower's address to his father. Henry is "Of Normaundie þe my3ti conquerour" (5.3381): "He hath conquered his heritage ageyn / And by his my3ti prudent gouernaunce / Recured eke his trewe title of Fraunce" (5.3384–86). His claim, secured by arms, is "by lyneal discent" (5.3390) ratified by a "conuencioun" (5.3398) that functions as election. The dual monarchy presumably consolidated under Henry mirrors the political and dynastic accommodation of Ulysses's sons in the final narrative of *Troy Book*. It returns to "þe olde worlde called aureat" (5.3400) before the age of Mars—that is, in Gower's calculation, the condition of empire "Til that the world began diverse" (*Confessio Amantis*, Prol. 677). In this way, for Lydgate, England and France "May be al oon, with-oute variaunce" and without division under the grace of "þe souereyn lord and þe prince of pes" (5.3416). As Paul Strohm suggests, "The triumphant theme of the 'two crowns' will serve increasingly in Lydgate as a wished-for transcendence of whatever equivocal tarnish remains upon the domestic one" (188). The "Ballade to King Henry VI upon his Coronation," for example, traces a twin descent from Edward the Confessor and Saint Louis, buttressed by King Arthur and Charlemagne (lines 9–13). But as he praises the settlement at Troyes, made concrete by Henry V's marriage to Katherine of Valois, Lydgate like Gower is aware of its radical contingency and reads his own exemplary text through the lens of Fortune. Whoever wishes to see "variaunce" in the secular world, he says, "In þis boke he may ful wel beholde / Change of Fortune, in hir course mutable, / Selde or nat feithful ouþer stable" (5.3546–48). For princes, lords, and kings,

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the example of Troy teaches that neither princes, lords, or kings “in þis lif may haue ful surete” (5.3578). The modern instances added to the Troy story in “Of the Sodein Fal of Princes in oure Dayes” multiply the examples from Edward II onwards, following Gower’s principle that “man is cause of alle wo” (*Confessio Amantis*, Prolog. 965).

The contradictions that surface at the triumphal moment of Gower’s “In Praise of Peace” figure just as prominently, then, at the equivalent triumphal moment in *Troy Book*, where the foundational narrative of antiquity intersects with the political context of the poem’s composition under royal commission. The image of Henry in Lydgate’s Envoy expresses this convergence in the emblem of a king holding sword and scepter, the symbols of war and peaceful governance. Lydgate seeks, however, to move past the contradictions that Gower registers. In “A Praise of Peace,” Lydgate writes a coda to the ending of his earlier *Troy Book* and *Siege of Thebes* and thereby puts Henry’s achievement in final perspective (Pearsall, *John Lydgate* 163–64). Peace between England and France remains to be achieved: “God sende vs pees twen Ynglong and Fraunce” (line 172). Henry, “a good knyht / By his prowesse and noble chivalrye” (lines 177–78) rightfully pursued his claim to France and Normandy, says Lydgate, but “Deyed in his conquest, and we shall alle dye” (line 181). The “parfiht pees” (line 184) that Lydgate endorses lies in Christian redemption, which finally disavows Lancastrian ambitions and the epic retellings commissioned to advance them (Grossi 310–11). Gower, as “liege man” (line 374) and royal *orator* in “In Praise of Peace” comes to recognize the impossible demand of managing kingly virtue in a world of mutability intensified by the self-justifying distortions of propaganda and ideology (Carlson, *John Gower* 205, 226). Lydgate sees past these obstacles by finally abandoning the project in order “to come to evir-lasting pees” (192).

Gower marks a path for Lydgate into the substantive matter of writing in the public sphere. The contrast here with Chaucer is instructive. In Book 1 of *Fall of Princes*, Lydgate reproduces the works catalogued in the *Legend of Good Women* and the “Retraction,” but elsewhere and overwhelmingly he represents Chaucer as an example of eloquence and rhetorical achievement in the English vernacular. Gower shows him, however, ways for an author to negotiate the fraught issues involved in writing for dynasty and the state—political division, the shifting place of submission and aggression in the Christian prince, the violence of patriarchal order against its unregulated subjects, and the unsettled grounds of triumph and legitimate rule. Gower’s trace in the public sphere is by no means uncomplicated, nor does it move forward undisturbed even in the supposed laureate period in which his epideictic poems celebrate Henry IV’s ascension to power. His support of the

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Lancastrian cause, for example, seems to wane after Henry's execution of Richard Scrope, archbishop of York in the Percy rebellion of 1405—an act punished, at least in popular legend, by Henry's supposed leprosy and so a sign, like Constantine's affliction, for the monarch to reform the representation of his politics as well as his morals and princely conduct. In his authorial roles, Gower reflects, too, the structural conflict of affecting praise and deference while writing to instruct on right action. He does so while holding an uncertain position at the edge of any legitimating institution and the state apparatus. Lydgate operates from his own profession as "Monk of Bery" and from a specific religious institution eager to maintain royal support and useful in turn to royal ambitions and policies. His service as unofficial court poet and Lancastrian propagandist is thus conditioned by a set of institutional arrangements different from Gower's roles as prophet, secular moralist, and satirist. For all his associations with royal and civic occasions, Lydgate's foundational view remains ecclesiastical rather than secular. Gower's path takes him a long way toward speaking to temporal authority, but it can take him only part of the way. The prayer in his "Testament" is finally "To folowe the traces of spirituall doctryne" (450).

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“Recovering Medieval Memory in Shakespeare’s *Pericles*”

Jonathan Baldo

Recovered-Memory Therapy, the deployment of various techniques for helping patients recall memories that have lain buried owing to a traumatic event, has been one of the most controversial areas of therapeutic practice and the study of memory in recent years. Critics of such therapies stress that, more often than not, they produce false memories and result in false accusations of child sexual abuse.¹ Shakespeare and Wilkins’s² popular late romance *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1607–08), I would submit, amounts to a collective instance of Recovered-Memory Therapy, but with a skeptical edge: in addition to staging a restoration of England to its medieval self, it simultaneously reminds audiences of the wide gap between its past and its present, and of the remoteness of the medieval Gower, including his speech and his values, from post-Reformation England.

The play’s opening might be characterized as an old-fashioned revival meeting, at which what is revived is the old-fashioned itself: an old tale, a dead poet who was himself famous for revitalizing old tales, archaic diction, an archaic poetic line, the medieval device of the poet as Chorus (Felperin 145),³ a didacticism commonly associated with Gower’s verse, moribund practices of worship, and even a mixing of Latin with English reminiscent, as R.F. Yeager has noted, of Thomas Berthelette’s editions (1532 and 1554) of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* (1390) (222).⁴ Presiding over all this restoration is a poet who speaks in a distinctly medieval voice and a hero who, in Howard Felperin’s words, “behaves like the protagonist of a morality play” (149).⁵ Buried in the nearby Southwark Cathedral—or St. Mary Overy’s (“over the river”) as it was originally named, or St. Saviour’s Church, as it was renamed after the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, though many apparently persisted in referring to it by its old name—in the parish that housed most of the theatres in Shakespeare’s day, and commemorated with a life-sized effigy above his tomb, John Gower is resurrected to serve as Chorus to this enactment of the tale that he himself told in Book Eight of the *Confessio*. Mary Carruthers writes in her study of memory in medieval culture, “The commonest way for a medieval author to depict himself is as a reader of an old book or a listener to an old story, which he is recalling by retelling” (191). Shakespeare and Wilkins therefore

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revived not only a particular medieval poet but also a recognizably medieval idea of the poet.

Newly arisen from the ashes, the halting and somewhat awkward Gower, however, does not resemble a soaring phoenix so much as a man who has reawakened in a century in which he appears out of step (one foot short of the early modern norm in his tetrameters) and out of place, a medieval English Rip Van Winkle:

To sing a song that old was sung
From ashes ancient Gower is come,
Assuming man's infirmities
To glad your ear and please your eyes.
It hath been sung at festivals,
On ember eves and holy ales,
And lords and ladies in their lives
Have read it for restoratives.
The purchase is to make men glorious,
Et bonum quo antiquius eo melius. (1.0.1–10)⁶

A paradoxical presence, he marks the distance between medieval and early modern England as well as their proximity.⁷ Peddling a narrative that he promotes as a restorative, Gower, as much apothecary as poet, may be holding himself up as a walking advertisement for the play. If the story of Pericles can revive the dead, he seems to imply, imagine what it can do for you, the living. Having revived the ancient tale of Apollonius⁸ in the late fourteenth century in a period of political fractiousness and apparent decline,⁹ he is now himself restored to life across the transformative period known as the English Reformation, one that, as recent scholarship has emphasized, caused England to remain deeply divided along religious lines. Furthermore, Gower restores a tale that in printed form had already, he claims, served as a restorative to “lords and ladies.” With its conversion from print to living enactment, the theatrical version of the tale promises enhanced pharmacological powers, like an improved form of an old medicine.

Critics often speak of Shakespeare's late romances as retrospective in outlook: in Norman Rabkin's words, “consciously allusive to the author's earlier work, a virtual cadenza on the materials and themes of a lifetime's art” (135). One of the themes that Shakespeare looks back upon in *Pericles* is memory itself, whose value was in flux during Shakespeare's lifetime owing to at least three related developments: the rise of print, the Protestant Reformation, and the rise of nationalism.¹⁰ Confirming the connections among these trends, John Craig writes, “the combination of English prayers, English psalms and English

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translations of scripture combined to create a language of aggressive English nationalism” (174). While the old ecclesiastical calendar of worship and festivity was being revised to bolster nationalist aims,¹¹ and the lives and reputations of former heretics like Sir John Oldcastle were rewritten as those of early Protestant martyrs in Foxe’s *Actes and Monumentes*, historical memory bore the potential to deeply divide a people, a potential that is fully on display in Shakespeare’s Lancastrian tetralogy. *Pericles* recalls a world where memory’s value and sway were more stable than they were in post-Reformation England, and indeed in most of Shakespeare’s own plays. Awash in restorations of various kinds,¹² *Pericles* stages a recovery of not only a particular voice of the late Middle Ages,¹³ but also its culture of memory.

I. Fluid Intelligence

Set in and around various Greek islands in the Mediterranean, *Pericles* is a watery play. Liquid imagery, Adrian Poole has shown, has been associated with forgetfulness since antiquity (94), when the Greeks held that drinking of the river Lethe would produce complete forgetfulness. Nevertheless, as Fernand Braudel notes in his study *Memory and the Mediterranean* and as the play frequently reminds us, the Mediterranean functions as a kind of memory theater for more than two millennia of western civilization: “this is a sea that patiently recreates for us scenes from the past, breathing new life into them, locating them under a sky and in a landscape that we can see with our own eyes, a landscape and sky like those of long ago. A moment’s concentration or daydreaming, and that past comes back to life” (3). The sequence of locales in *Pericles*—Antioch, Tyre, Tarsus, Pentapolis, Ephesus, and Mytilene, with recursive visitations to Tyre, Tarsus, and Mytilene—tests the memory of spectator and reader alike, as surely as Pericles is tested in the opening scene of the play. The frequent repetition of place names—Linda McJannet notes that “*Pericles* mentions the six locales of the action . . . seventy-five times” (87)—serves as an aide-mémoire, but also as a challenge to the reader. In Shakespeare’s treatment, the Mediterranean becomes a paradoxical place: a memory palace of sorts, but one built on the element of forgetfulness. Its sequence of places is daunting enough to master, but in addition, those places bear the potential to unlock fragments of the history of the Mediterranean, “incompatible temporalities” that, as Thomas Roebuck and Laurie Maguire observe, are “deliberately tessellated: classical Greece, ancient Phoenicia, Gower’s medieval England—and the world of Biblical his-

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tory" (44). Like Pericles, we may easily become lost in time as well as space as we watch this play unfold.

Among the temporalities evoked by the play, Roebuck and Maguire persuasively demonstrate that *Pericles* intersects with "the emerging discourse of British nation-building, particularly the search for British historical origins" (25) through its echoes of John Twyne's argument, in his widely read history *De Rebus Albionis* (1590), "that Tyre, and the Phoenicians who sailed from there, were the point of origin of the British people" (42). The play echoes a growing antiquarian nostalgia in early seventeenth-century England, a desire to reestablish lost continuities with medieval, pre-Reformation and ancient Britain alike.¹⁴ It is important to remember, however, that the play's many-layered discourse of recovery is constructed on a scaffolding of forgetting. Even Twyne's startling argument that "Britain's original, primitive inhabitants were the offspring of Neptune" (Roebuck and Maguire 43) is given an ironic reading in this play, which suggests that if indeed Britain's origins are to be found in the watery element, then its foundations rest on the wavering element of forgetting.

The paradoxical nature of the Mediterranean as a palace of memory built on a shifting foundation of forgetting is evidenced by the episode of the fishermen. On the shores of Pentapolis, three fishermen retrieve Pericles's father's armor, material objects that represent his noble identity and paternal legacy: his "heritage, / Which my dead father did bequeath to me" (2.1.119–20). Out of Shakespeare and Wilkins's above-ground Lethe emerges a connection to Pericles's past that enables him to participate in the tournament and to secure his future by winning a royal bride. As Roebuck and Maguire argue, the father's armor, far from embodying a "simple narrative of recovery," instead "embodies historical contradictions," as first the fishermen themselves focus not on the past but on the present by urging that Pericles "should be thanking *them* for making this armour out of the sea itself," and subsequently by the lords at Simonides's court, who "associate the rust of Pericles's armour not with distinguished ancestry but with social inferiority" (38–39). Rust may also suggest a "spurious historicity," as it does in a passage of George Buchanan's *History of Scotland* directed against Humphrey Llwyd for leaning upon "the Authority of a certain old Paper-fragment, which Rust, Mouldiness, and length of Time (and nothing else) have almost made Sacred with him" (qtd. in Roebuck and Maguire 39). In the broadest sense, Pericles's father's armor represents the opportunity that the play presents to its audiences, the chance to fish its past out of the sea, even as it hints that the past may be no more than a fish tale: that the legacy so retrieved may appear sacred only by virtue of rust, moldiness, and length of time.¹⁵

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Poole's observation about the association of water with forgetting is consistent with humoral theory, according to which an excess of moisture and cold, held to be more common in women than in men, produces a lethargic temperament, something that Pericles displays on more than one occasion.¹⁶ Lethargy was attributed to an excess of phlegm, which, according to Gail Kern Paster, was held "responsible for the general inconstancy of women" (13).¹⁷ Water therefore links the play's setting with its title character and points toward the prominent role that forgetting plays in the narrative as a whole. Amidst all this water that is lethal to memory, Pericles practices forgetting as surely as Prince Hamlet practices, or endeavors to practice, remembrance. According to playwright and critic Attilio Favorini in his stimulating work on the staging of memory from the ancient Greek playwrights to the present, "Going backward like a crab," Pericles "embarks on an anti-*Odyssey* that brings him home at the beginning of the play and sets him adrift thereafter." Pericles is a Hamlet in reverse: "While Hamlet strives throughout the play to be Prince of Denmark," Favorini contends, "Pericles strives not to be Prince of Tyre. . . . Hamlet is drawn to action by remembrance and moves to a goal; Pericles has pledged that he will forget what he has seen in Antioch, and is driven away from action" (25).

Pericles, however, occasionally suffers as well as seeks forgetting: for example, through the tossing of Thaisa's coffin overboard in the middle of the play, which results in one of the most vivid associations of water with forgetfulness. Persuaded by the ship's Master that the body of his queen must be given up to the sea in order to avoid disaster to the ship, a resigned Pericles laments,

Th' unfriendly elements
Forget thee utterly, nor have I time
To give thee hallowed to thy grave, but straight
Must cast thee, scarcely coffined, in the ooze,
Where, for a monument upon thy bones
And aye-remaining lamps, the belching whale
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse,
Lying with simple shells. (3.1.57-64)

Thaisa's watery grave, without monument, inscription, or consecrated space, represents an extreme form of the threat of oblivion that hovered over all the dead in post-Reformation England. It may very well have reminded many in Shakespeare's audience of the erosion of the "cult of the dead" and its pervasive "language of memory" that was transpiring over the course of the Reformation, a process that

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has been vividly described by Eamon Duffy in his revisionist account *The Stripping of the Altars* (327). Duffy writes, “For medieval people, as for us, to die meant to enter a great silence, and the fear of being forgotten in that silence was as real to them as to any of the generations that followed. But for them that silence was not absolute and could be breached. To find ways of means of doing so was one of their central religious preoccupations” (328). The Reformation, Duffy maintains, eliminated many of the means that early modern people had at their disposal for breaching that silent world, thereby opening a gulf between the living and the dead. The rejection of purgatory and the dismantling of “the institutions such as the chantries that supported the penitential regimes founded upon the belief in purgatory,” for instance, meant that the living could no longer intercede directly in the afterlives of their ancestors (Craig 173–74). Revisions to the prayer-book in 1549 and especially 1552, the elimination of the practice of weekly reciting of the bede-roll at parish Masses, and the discouragement by English Protestants of the practice of praying for the dead removed the dead from the human community that formerly embraced them: “In the world of the 1552 book the dead were no longer with us. They could neither be spoken to nor even about, in any way that affected their well-being. The dead had gone beyond the reach of human contact, even of human prayer” (Duffy 475). Pericles’s anguish over Thaisa’s watery grave may very well represent an unusually vivid and acute example of an apparently frequent experience of early modern English people: anxiety over a growing gulf between the living and the dead brought on by the long Reformation. The people of post-Reformation England might very well have experienced all burials as akin to Thaisa’s immersion in the element of forgetfulness.

After Pericles’s long voyage away from memory, the play ends with a profusion of recollections and recapitulations that fulfills Gower’s promise of “restoratives” in the opening Chorus. These are narratives of recovery, and they produce what might be characterized as a recovery of narrative: that is, a recovery of the “restorative” aspect of narrative, including the larger narrative of Apollonius by Gower. It is not just particular narratives that are recovered: it is in some sense the all-purpose restorative, memory itself, or at least the revered place it held in medieval culture, that is temporarily restored to *Pericles*’s early modern audiences.

Gower emerges as memory teacher in the Epilogue.¹⁸ He presides over a recap that to a “modern ear,” Favorini remarks, may make him seem a “remarker of the obvious” (30). The repetitions at the end of the play, however, serve several important functions. They round out a play based on a narrative source, as the play reverts back to a narrative form

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like the one from which it was first framed. They join the choric Gower to the chorus of narratives produced or promised by each member of the restored family: Pericles, Thaisa, and Marina. Finally, the iterations have the effect of both strengthening memory and controlling the interpretation of the retold tale: ensuring not only *that* it would be remembered but also *how* it would be remembered, in an appropriately medieval way that stresses its moral function.

A strong memory was a sign of moral virtue for medieval people. Carruthers writes, "prodigious memory is almost a trope of saints' lives" (12). For Gower and his contemporaries, public memory itself, including the kind being peddled by *The King's Men* at Blackfriars and the Globe, was held to be a strong and necessary guide to an individual's ethical behavior. According to Carruthers, "One sometimes gets the impression that a medieval person . . . could do nothing (especially in duress) without rehearsing a whole series of exemplary stories, the material of their experience built up board by board in memory, and . . . transformed into their very selves, so that even in moments of stress the counsel of experience will constrain a turbulent and willful mind" (180). In the play's second scene, the willful and turbulent mind of Pericles tries to summon a story that will rescue him from the tyrant Antiochus, but he signally fails to recall any exemplary story that will serve as "counsel" and "stop this tempest ere it came" (1.2.96), placing his only hope in forgetfulness: that is, the hope that Antiochus will be overtaken by forgetfulness: "Till that his rage and anger be forgot," in Pericles's deputy Helicanus's words (1.2.105).

Memory in *Pericles* wears far different robes than it does in Shakespeare's histories of late medieval England. Conflicts over how to construe the past divide king and rebels in *Henry IV, Part I* so that history itself becomes a battleground for internecine strife. In *Henry IV, Part 2*, interest in the past is repeatedly mocked as a nostalgia that distorts the past as surely as the figure of Rumour, who supplies the Induction, contorts the present. In that play historical memory is as loosely governed as the kingdom, as public memory largely gives way to dispersed, fragmentary, and private ones. In *Henry V*, recollection frequently becomes inadvisable, dangerous, and injudicious for public use and display for both a monarch and his enemies, as a king struggles to maintain an always provisional control over the contested field of memory. The battle for memory becomes the King's second Agincourt. In his Crispin's Day speech, he improbably takes the reigns of the national memory, after reminding audiences on the eve of battle how the past, dominated by the figure of Richard II, remains as dangerous to his power as the looming French army. In the tragedies, memory frequently acquires a purgatorial aspect: "Heaven

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and earth, / Must I remember?" Hamlet asks in anguish (1.2.142–43) shortly before his ghostly father enjoins him to "Remember me," a command like a tolling bell announcing the son's own premature burial by the past, by a suffocating surplus of memory that stands in stark contrast to Denmark's mnemonic deficit. Even in a late romance like *The Tempest*, memory acts as a source of conflict as well as restoration, as Prospero, like an exiled Henry V, strives to silence the counter-memories of his servants Caliban and Ariel, both of whom exemplify the rebellious uses of remembrance. *The Tempest* is a virtual compendium of the uses that memory has, the many masks that it wears, over the course of the Shakespearean canon, from fuel for insurgency and revenge, as in the two-part *Henry IV*; to sustenance of one's identity, even during a fifteen-year exile; to the agency of a miraculous resurrection, as Prospero marvels at Miranda's rescue of her earliest memories ("How is it that this still lives"); and finally, to a vehicle for forgiveness. Like memory, forgetting plays equivocal roles in many of Shakespeare's plays. As memory in post-Reformation England bore the risk of fomenting political and religious division and strife, forgetting became a potential source of unity and reconciliation, as it was in King James's first address to his English Parliament in March, 1604 and as it is, I have argued elsewhere, in Shakespeare's *Henry V*.¹⁹

In *Pericles*, by contrast, there is an apparent consistency and transparency to the treatment of memory that matches the character of Marina herself. Memory has the less equivocal function of promoting recovery, virtue, and eventually redemption, and in this respect Shakespeare appears to be following the lead of Gower himself, who in the *Confessio* casts memory as a virtue and forgetting as a source of manifold evils; memory as a source of psychological and political unity, and forgetting as a source of distraction and division. Memory is central to Amans's "self-recovery after a severe case of self-forgetfulness," Russell Peck writes in the course of his fine reading of Gower's text (10). In *Pericles* as in the *Confessio*, tales have a restorative effect owing to their association with memory. Pericles describes his daughter's restoration to him, "her fortunes brought the maid aboard us, / Where by her own most clear remembrance she / Made known herself my daughter" (5.3.11–13). Born at sea, like an apotheosis of memory amidst the element perpetually associated with forgetfulness, Marina appears to possess a memory—"her own most clear remembrance," as Pericles calls it—that is as transparent as her character. There are no counter-memories to darken Marina's memory, no skeptical voices to cloud the accounts of her birth in Act 4 and of her family in Act 5, which are clearly based upon stories that she has heard from her nurse Lychorida—"My father, as nurse says," her story to Leonine begins

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(4.1.51)—rather than living recollection. Marina's secondhand "memories" are never challenged on the grounds that they are based solely on report. The play's failure to even acknowledge any such distinction between living memory and narrative report confirms its medievalism and the high respect and even reverence it accords memory. Memory does not beguile, flatter, mislead, or play one false in *Pericles*. Indeed, the only false memory in *Pericles* is a projected one. Pericles fears that Antiochus, in order to justify an invasion of Tyre, will "make pretence of wrong that I have done him" (1.2.89). Never appearing after the opening scene, this figure of false memory flickers out of the play, his death by "a fire from heaven" reported in Act 2 in so cursory a manner that it is soon forgotten (2.4.9).

Although it does not represent conflict or strife among characters' recollections of the past, *Pericles* does contain at least two triggers for mnemonic contention and division within audiences. These dwell in the margins of the play, in the Prologue. Gower refers to church ales under the uncommon name of "holy ales," putting a medieval spin on occasions that were arguably as secular as they were religious. The reference would doubtless have reminded many in Shakespeare's audience of the assault upon traditional festivity that has been discussed by François Laroque and Ronald Hutton, among others. Hutton in particular has exhaustively examined surviving records of church ales and found, "Of the eighteen parishes which were regularly holding church ales in the early 1540s and which have also left good accounts for the reign of Edward, sixteen gave them up in the period 1547-9" (87).²⁰ In the seventeenth century, church ales became extinct (Hutton 243).

The other half of Gower's line, "ember eves," refers to four sets of three days, linked to the cycle of seasons, set aside for fasting and prayer, and considered especially apt for the ordination of clergy. Like "holy ales," this reference operates as a kind of shorthand for the seasonal calendar of festivity and worship of a rural, agrarian society, a calendar that was subject to reform and that became increasingly civic and national during the reigns of Elizabeth and James. Specifically, Ember eves might recall the Catholic practice of fasting. Even though Ember days, like other fast days, remained official days of fasting under both Elizabeth and James, the actual practice of fasting took quite a different course amongst Protestants. According to Alec Ryrie, "Catholic Christians were expected to keep to this regimen [of abstinence] during Lent, on Ember days, on the eves of numerous saints' days and on virtually every Friday throughout the year. Protestants of every kind rejected this practice as works-righteousness, legalism and superstition, using the language of Christian liberty" (89). In the last decade of the reign of Henry VIII, encouraged by official statements

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like the book of ceremonies of 1539, fast-breaking became especially common: “The Ember days (the fast days at the start of the four seasons of the year), in particular the set in Rogation week, were flouted particularly often: an evangelical urban myth held that they had been instituted in honour of a papal concubine” (Ryrie 92). One of the changes in the practice of fasting brought about by the Reformation was that it became largely private, “something that pious individuals did on their own initiative when they felt the need” (90). But fasting also became far less common: something, Ryrie observes, that some Protestants acknowledged to their shame. Archbishop Edmund Grindal made the pained observation “that in no one thing the adversary hath more advantage against us, than in the matter of fast, which we utterly neglect” (96). Innocently sowing mnemonic strife, Gower’s Prologue also grants us license to imagine the restorative quality that Gower attributes to the tale of Pericles on the broadest possible scale. As Pericles recovers his wife and daughter, English audiences may imagine that they are recovering something of their medieval legacy, even as they are reminded by the oddness of Gower and the quaintness of his speech of their separation from their own medieval past.

II. Calling for a Recount

It is appropriate that a play based on a narrative source should call so much attention to the act of storytelling. Narration is key to the parallel recoveries of the past by characters and audiences alike. Acts of storytelling dominate the play’s final scenes. At the beginning of Act 5, the governor of Mytilene, Lysimachus, asks Helicanus to tell “the cause / Of your king’s sorrow” (5.1.54–55). Helicanus immediately agrees: “Sit, sir, I will recount it to you” (5.1.56). He is “prevented” or forestalled by the appearance of Marina, described by Lysimachus as “a goodly presence” (5.1.59). Here the past tense of narration competes with the bodied “presence” that is an essential part of theater, as if they cannot comfortably share the same stage. Marina’s presence forestalls Helicanus’s narrative. But as everything and everyone in *Pericles* exists so as to feed the demands of narrative, to find its niche in the architecture of the past tense, this “presence” will soon be enjoined to conjure up her past by telling her own story. Before he fully recognizes Marina as his daughter, Pericles asks, “Tell thy story. . . . What were thy friends? / How lost thou them? Thy name, my most kind virgin? / Recount, I do beseech thee” (5.1.125, 130–32).

Next it is Pericles’s duty to tell his tale. Recounting one’s story bears a penitential aspect for Pericles, as it does for another seafarer,

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Coleridge's ancient mariner. In the final act, the goddess Diana comes to Pericles in a dream. Under the enchantment of "heavenly music" (5.1.220), she directs him to

Reveal how thou at sea didst lose thy wife.
To mourn thy crosses with thy daughter's, call
And give them repetition to the life.
Perform my bidding, or thou liv'st in woe;
Do it, and happy, by my silver bow.
Awake and tell thy dream. (5.1.231–36)

Diana's directive reminds us that, as Robert Fossier observes of memory in the Middle Ages, "*Memoria* is the bridge between God and his creature, the foundation on which society rises, the reservoir in which examples, models, and programs for life are kept. All that is to come is in the past": the last line a fitting motto for the ending of *Pericles*, where nearly everything that transpires falls under the heading of recovery (293).

Arden editor Suzanne Gossett glosses Diana's line, "give them repetition to the life," as "give them a faithful report" (393), but the line also bears a connection with the play's theme of restorations, like those of the people of Tarsus, Marina, Thaisa, and Gower himself. The twinned words "repetition" and "life" in Diana's command link the themes of revival (the revival of a tale, a teller, an ethos, a wife) and recounting, as if the latter possessed a magical power akin to Cerimon's to restore the dead to life. Diana's phrase "repetition to the life" may also bear specific reference to the stage. Repeated rehearsals and performances of a lively theatrical version of the tale may ultimately succeed in restoring Gower's distant narrative to life. Characters who lived only in print are now made flesh and blood, bodied forth by living actors. Whereas bodily "presence" forestalled narrative at the beginning of Act 5 with the entrance of Marina, a flurry of storytelling finally becomes the cause of the ultimate reconciliation in the play: of the past tense with bodied presence. Among other restorations, the past tense of narration is restored to the lively present of theatrical enactment, and in a particularly intimate way. Narratives are not merely retrospective in *Pericles*; they bear considerable agency as well, enabling the past tense to enter into the present and help shape the future. Both Marina and Thaisa are restored to Pericles through the potent agency of story.²¹

It is now Thaisa's turn to have her story told, completing a trinity, a veritable *sacra familia* of tales: Marina's, Pericles's, and Thaisa's. This time, rather than wearing penitential robes, as it did for Pericles, storytelling bears the mark of childbirth for Thaisa, though the labor is performed by another, a narrative midwife, as it were: "Will you deliv-

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er,” Pericles asks the godlike Cerimon, “How this dead queen relives?” (5.3.64–65). Gossett notes that although the primary meaning of “deliver” is “to relate,” it bears the unmistakable connotation of the delivery of a child (402). Previously marked as a penitential act, narration now bears a kinship to natal delivery as well as spiritual deliverance: in other words, narrative itself is restored to life, as it restores Pericles, and also Marina and Thaisa to him. The nearly anagrammatic relation of Pericles’s words “relives” and “deliver” reinforces the relation already established by Diana between narrative and rebirth in the phrase “repetition to the life.”

Although the play ends with a virtual riot of narrative, it begins with an impairment of narrative that the play links to incest. Musing on the terrifying truth he has uncovered while back in the safety of his court in the second scene, Pericles experiences a quite different relation between past, present, and future than the partnership wrought by narrative that I have described: “being here / Bethought me what was past, what might succeed. / I knew him tyrannous, and tyrants’ fears / Decrease not, but grow faster than the years” (1.2.80–83). Rightly fearing the tyrant’s suspicions that he has learned his incestuous secret, Pericles imagines Antiochus making war against his land on a false pretext: “pretence of wrong that I have done him” (1.2.89), a perversion of storytelling that echoes the tyrant’s perversion of nature and of parental love and responsibility. Unable to imagine or to conjure a narrative whereby he “might stop this tempest ere it came” (1.2.96), Pericles ends up “grieving for” the possible outcomes that have entered his mind, his grieving for the future instead of the past curiously repeating the perverse inversion of temporal succession entailed by Antiochus’s crime. Pericles faces a future that tyrannizes him, denying him liberty, since any narrative path he takes will lead to the same end: certain destruction if he reveals the secret, and equally certain destruction if he does not. Since he is unable to imagine a future that will untie the narrative knot of the dilemma he faces, the only solution is travel and its companion, the beckoning promise of amnesia. Helicanus counsels, “Therefore, my lord, go travel for a while, / Till that his rage and anger be forgot” (1.2.104–05). Hoping that Antiochus will eventually forget his anger, Pericles curiously mirrors his enemy by seeking forgetfulness for himself.

Like its protagonist, the play seems on the verge of stalling shortly after its launch. Upon solving the riddle, Pericles finds himself at a narrative impasse. It is appropriate that knowledge of incest places him at such an impasse, insofar as intergenerational incest represents a disturbance of sequence or succession.²² The incestuous relation between Antiochus and his daughter disrupts the sequence of past, pres-

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ent, and future by effectively conflating all three in a cruel and tyrannous act, thereby undoing the differentiating work of the individual mind, the only place, according to St Augustine, “in which the slippery concepts of past, present, and future can begin to be isolated and observed as independent elements” (Nowlin 222).²³ As Pericles muses on Antiochus’s antithetical identity: “now you’re both a father and a son / By your untimely clasplings with your child” (1.1.128–29). Pericles knows that it will be his death to publicly solve the riddle that Antiochus has set forth. Since the incestuous act itself violates proper sequence and succession, it is appropriate that it resist telling (since telling it will result in Pericles’s certain death), as if it were the very emblem of the obstruction of narrative. In the final act, the abundance of narrative, both actual and promised, symbolically counters the unnatural effects of incest, reinstating difference—the related differences between one generation and the next and between past, present, and future—and *différance*, the deferral on which narrative depends.

It is fitting that incest should hide behind a riddle, for a riddle reverses the ordinary sequence of question and answer. The answer to a riddle, unlike that of an ordinary question, is known in advance. Its inversions echo the disruption of the sequence of generations in the incestuous coupling of Antiochus and his nameless daughter: nameless, presumably, because her father has denied her an identity and a future separate from his own. Furthermore, the answer to a riddle is usually arrived at not by logical, sequential reasoning, but rather all at once, in a sudden flash of illumination. Formal and logical aspects of riddles therefore reflect this particular riddle’s incestuous content: both are inimical to narrative deferral and sequential order.

Although they do not discuss the particular instance of *Pericles* in their study of prologues in early modern drama, Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann usefully characterize prologues as liminal figures, “providing a ritualized transition” or threshold between the worlds of the playhouse and of the play (viii). In *Pericles*, Gower not only bridges these worlds but also bestrides the gulf between pre- and post-Reformation England, thereby helping audiences to recollect the very different status that recollection itself held in the period in which he lived and wrote. A bodied memory of late medieval England and a poet of memory who in his own time sought to shake a people out of their mnemonic slumber by teaching them how to recollect the past and thereby achieve psychological and political wholeness, Gower fittingly presides over a public, ceremonial restoration to life of the recently broken and buried culture of memory that not a few of Shakespeare’s contemporaries apparently wished to exhume, if only for the two hours’ traffic of the stage.

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It is both curious and appropriate that *Pericles* was to be the first Shakespearean revival during the period known as the Restoration. Producer and manager John Rhodes staged *Pericles* in the Cockpit Theatre in 1660 with a twenty-two-year-old Thomas Betterton making his stage debut in the title role (Dobson and Wells 344).²⁴ Fifty-two years after its probable first performance, across another historical divide, and upon the heels of the Restoration of the monarchy, it seems that this play about revivals and restorations of various kinds was called upon to perform the same restorative function. With its ersatz medievalism, it expressed one of the faraway fantasies at the heart of romance, that of recovered identity—in this case, the fantasy that a whole people might be restored to itself—even as it reminded audiences of the wide gap that separated them from the stranger on stage, perhaps Shakespeare's ultimate stranger: neither a Jewish moneylender nor an African general, but rather England's own remote former self.

Notes

1. These controversial practices have been disputed by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, which coined the term “false memory syndrome” in 1992–93 to defend individuals who had been accused of committing sexual abuse on children, memories of which were rapidly becoming uncovered by Recovered-Memory Therapy.
2. The editors of the Arden and Oxford editions of the play contend that much of the play was written by a mediocre collaborator, and they agree that George Wilkins was that man. DelVecchio and Hammond, however, the editors of the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition of the play, hold that the entire play was written by Shakespeare, and that those portions of the play usually ascribed to a collaborator (roughly, the first eight scenes) are deliberately archaic in style. Many editors and critics assign the first two acts to Wilkins and the last three to Shakespeare. Wilkins's prose narrative *The Painfull Adventures of Pericles, Prince of Tyre* appeared in 1608 and appears to be a novelization of the play.
3. Felperin notes that “the convention of poet as Chorus originates in the medieval religious drama, specifically in the saint's play” such as *Conversion of St. Paul* (145).
4. Yeager maintains that a copy of one of Berthelette's two editions of Gower “was almost certainly what Shakespeare read” (216).
5. Felperin further observes that the play, like earlier medieval drama, divides “its cast right down the middle into sheep and goats, the good and the wicked,” and “like that drama sets up elaborate moral patterns of contrast and similarity between them” (150–51). Of Gower he maintains that “in his constant moralizing over the action he presents, Shakespeare deliberately preserves his identity as a child of the Middle Ages” (146). R.F. Yeager contends, “Arguably,

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then, when Shakespeare encountered Gower and his *Confessio Amantis* in Berthelette's edition, he was confronted, both overtly and subliminally, with an ancestral figure whose language(s), poetic expectations, and moral ethos were of the Middle Ages" (217).

6. All citations from the play refer to the Arden Third Series edition, ed. Suzanne Gossett.

7. For an excellent summary of continuities between medieval and early modern England, see Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World*, 16–22. She also covers the ways in which the medieval was remembered in early modern England (12–16). Bart van Es usefully shows how the "Middle Ages" was a period concept constructed in the period just before *Pericles*, 1605–07, partly under the influence of the immense popularity of Cervantes's satirical treatment of knighthood, *Don Quixote*, in "Late Shakespeare and the Middle Ages" (37–51).

8. In fact the story of Apollonius of Tyre had a long, virtually uninterrupted history of circulating throughout medieval and Renaissance Europe. For an account of the tale's history that includes an English translation of the ancient text *Historia Apolloni Regis Tyri*, see Elizabeth Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre: Medieval Themes and Variations*.

9. See the excellent commentary by Russell Peck in *John Gower: Confessio Amantis*, v.1, 1–36.

10. See my *Memory in Shakespeare's Histories: Stages of Forgetting in Early Modern England* for an analysis of the Lancastrian tetralogy and *King John* based upon this premise.

11. See David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England*.

12. Felperin identifies the "chief motives of the play" as "resurrection and restoration" (146).

13. Yeager asserts that Shakespeare and his contemporaries would have seen Gower as a representative of the "poetic expectations" and "moral ethos" of the Middle Ages (217).

14. On the antiquarian movement in England, see Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians in the Seventeenth Century*. On the centrality of the dissolution of the monasteries to the antiquarian imagination, see James Simpson, "The Melancholy of John Leland and the Beginnings of English Literary History," 7–33.

15. On fishing as a metaphor in the play, see the stimulating reading by Steve Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean*, 65–83.

16. Favorini makes this point in the course of a very fine comparison of *Hamlet* with *Pericles* (23).

17. Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*, 13. Lethargy was particularly associated with virgins and the so-called

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“virgins’ disease,” greensickness or anemia: “many of the symptoms of virgins’ disease suggest inactivity and lethargy” (Paster 95).

18. Favorini writes of Gower’s final comments that they connect “each episode to exemplars of ‘monstrous lust’ or ‘Virtue preserv’d’ or ‘learned charity’”: a technique for remembering the play’s lessons—like emblem books or the [Memory] *Seals* of [Giordano] Bruno—sharp, detailed, and complex images enriched with affect to fix knowledge worth remembering” (30).

19. See Baldo, “Wars of Memory in *Henry V*.”

20. See also François Laroque, *Shakespeare’s Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage*.

21. Kelly Jones writes, “Gower himself was writing in a culture where perhaps the literary and performative modes of storytelling were not so entirely disparate entities. . . . [H]e emerges from a poetic culture wherein literary and oral narrative forms were not always clearly autonomous vehicles of mediation. The story itself was not confined to a single and static text but was an amalgamation of oral and textual sources” (207). On the stage, where all is somatic performance, the distinction between narrated and enacted events provides a homologous opportunity for the inter-animation of literary and performative modes of storytelling that Jones rightly associates with the Middle Ages.

22. For a reading of incest in the play in relation to James’s project for uniting the kingdoms of England and Scotland, see Dana Lloyd Spradley, “*Pericles* and the Jacobean Family Romance of Union,” 87–118.

23. Nowlin refers to Book 11, section 26 of St. Augustine’s *Confessions*.

24. A series of Shakespearean revivals, including *I Henry IV*, *Othello*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* took place in 1659, shortly before the Restoration.

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South by Southwest: Katherine Anne Porter and the Burden of Texas History. By Janis P. Stout. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2013. xix + 242 pp. \$44.95 (hardcover).

In her discussion of Jane Austen's "textual lives" Kathryn Sutherland lists as her "second law of biography" the certitude that "they will be fat" (57). There are, of course, many reasons that biographies tend toward obesity, not the least of which is the fact that writers by their nature tend to lead complicated, corpulent lives, and the subject of Janis P. Stout's *South by Southwest: Katherine Anne Porter and the Burden of Texas History* is in many ways the epitome of that tendency. Thus the charm of studies like Stout's that very consciously limit themselves to a particularly defined corner of a writer's life: here one finds focus and relative brevity, and can, of course, go elsewhere if exhaustive abundance is the goal.

Scholars of Texas Literature have sometimes argued that Katherine Anne Porter is the only Texas writer of real national merit (Larry McMurtry is on the record as disagreeing with that assessment, as have some critics)', which is perhaps surprising given both Porter's relatively modest place in the larger American canon and her comparatively limited oeuvre (three short story collections—not including two "collecteds"—three novellas, and one novel). Her singularity of place among Texans of letters, though, does likely explain the number of book-length biography-based works devoted to her, currently at six, inclusive of Stout's. Stout has chosen a less comprehensive approach, focusing as she does on Porter's complicated relationship to her home state and to its mixed history of chivalric idealism and predilections to violence and parochialism.

This is not an entirely new approach to Porter and her work; several articles and two books, James Tanner's *The Texas Legacy of Katherine Anne Porter* (University of North Texas Press, 1990) and editors Clinton Machann and William Bedford Clark's essay collection *Katherine Anne Porter and Texas: an Uneasy Relationship* (Texas A&M UP, 1990), have taken a similar focus. It is, however, by far the most thorough and comprehensive exploration of Porter's curious personal and literary ties to her origins, and it makes for fascinating reading for anyone intrigued by Porter's fiction or by the complications that come with growing up poor, precocious, and inordinately talented in the former Lone Star Republic.

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Stout's book takes its title from the often-noted disparity between Porter's personal history as she most often related it, both directly in conversation and interviews, and indirectly in her prose, and the realities of her down-on-the-heels central Texas childhood. Porter, it is generally agreed, tended toward prevarication when it came to her origins. As Stout notes, the two major biographies of Porter take widely different stances on Porter's personal mythmaking, Joan Givner aggressively debunking Porter and Darlene Unrue taking a great deal that is problematic on faith. Stout finds an appropriate middle ground by closely exploring the writer's roots in the context of both her creative work and the milieu from which it emerged and so comes off as sympathetically exacting rather than judgmental or exculpatory. In the process, she relates with fair gentleness how in fact Porter disseminated not only about her childhood but about virtually everything in her life, from her true age to her attitudes toward race, and how these untruths led directly to the "fatal ambivalence" towards Texas that biographer Joan Givner sees as expressed in her work.

In the first chapters of the book, Stout sketches Porter's early years and her growing need to escape, then moves out into Porter's forays into Mexico and the world beyond. She then carefully delineates how the fiction itself grew from and reflects Porter's Texas roots and her recurring escapes from and returns to them. The balance of the book dwells on various aspects of Texan culture and how Porter experienced them and then expressed them in her work, including the influences of geography, endemic violence, racial and gender coding, and the effects of her relatively parochial upbringing on her vacillating opinions on gender politics and "women's liberation."

One especially perceptive and persuasive exploration the author makes is into race and racial violence, which is an obvious direction to take with a "southern" author but perhaps less so one for a Texas writer pretending plantation roots. One or two of the connections that Stout attempts to make seem a touch tenuous—for instance, her argument that the murder of a Swedish hired man in the story "Noon Wine" is an evocation of the rash of lynchings in the Texas of Porter's youth—but otherwise she is very persuasive about the effect of racial violence on Porter, especially in the unpublished manuscript entitled "The Man in the Tree."

Nevertheless, somewhat counter-intuitively, the best moments in the book are perhaps the ones in which Stout deftly and clearly draws unexpected connections to Texas from the stories that on the surface have little to do with either the state or the states of mind traditionally associated with it. The chapter entitled "War's Alarms: Three Texans, Two Wars" is an excellent example of this, especially in its thoroughgo-

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ing discussion of Porter's post WWI story "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" as a narrative which, despite its paucity of direct references to Texas, is nonetheless deeply connected to Porter's sense of herself as a Texan. In this same chapter, though, as in a few other places in the study, there are moments where the discussion seems to strain to make connections, as in, for instance, the considerable weight that the author gives to the fact that certain of the characters in Porter's novel *Ship of Fools* and the story "The Leaning Tower" are identified as Texans, though she gives little sense of how the characters' Texan-ness reflects on Porter's own origins beyond suggestions that one Texan is a (typical?) whore-mongering bigot and another shares Porter's own tendency to melancholy. These are details that seem on the face of it to have little specifically to do with the state of Texas, and Stout doesn't really give much reason to think Porter meant them to be particularly Texan.

Also slightly problematic are Stout's arguments that the fact that Texas borders Mexico is responsible in part for Porter's "bordered, or divided conception of Texas as the South and yet not the South" (xii). There's just not enough in her argument that is persuasive that one geographical/cultural proximity equates with or is the source of Porter's sense of the Other. Mexican society is indeed often problematically traditional, but that's scant parallel for a claim that Porter's divided perspective of southern/western culture comes from her experience of the Mexican/Anglo division.

Still, this is a very good book, and Stout writes persuasively and in a very engaging style; it's clear when you read her discussions of Porter's life and books that she finds both the writer and the work deeply fascinating, and her enthusiasm comes through clearly in her lively prose and sense of story. The account she offers of the intertwining dependencies of Porter's sense of self and her sense of Texas as both a burden and an integral component to that self is an important one, and should be of great interest to both Porter scholars and those more casually interested in how the first great writer from Texas is, despite her own best efforts at escape and camouflage, an undeniably *Texan* writer.

Notes

1. As noted by James Tanner in his *The Texas Legacy of Katherine Anne Porter*, Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1990, p. 8.

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Eudora Welty and Surrealism. By Stephen M. Fuller. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013. x + 267 pp. \$55.00 (hardcover).

In *Eudora Welty and Surrealism*, Stephen M. Fuller plucks Eudora Welty out of the context of “region,” defining her as a modernist tied closely to the cosmopolitan intellectual and cultural trends of her time. Close readers of Welty’s works have long noted the writer’s connections to New York, San Francisco, and Europe, but many scholars persist in characterizing Welty alternatively as the comic writer of “Why I Live at the P.O.” or as a chronicler of the Depression South in her writing and photographs. Fuller argues instead that Welty’s early years in New York, her extensive travel and far-flung friendships, and her lifelong interest in the visual arts led her to write her works from a transnational perspective. His book focuses on the influence of surrealism across much of Welty’s career, from the 1930s to the 1950s.

One of the most useful sections of the book comes in the first chapter as Fuller explores surrealism as a culturally pervasive artistic movement, emerging in Paris in the 1920s and then moving to New York in the 1930s. He then documents Welty’s year in New York and her frequent travels to the city after she moved back to Jackson. From

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1930–1931, Welty took business courses at Columbia and, more importantly, spent time at museums and in art galleries, theaters, and clubs. Although she was forced to return home in 1931 due to her father's illness, Welty returned to New York frequently throughout the rest of her life. She also formed close friendships with Diarmuid Russell, John Woodburn, Mary Louise Aswell, and transplanted Jacksonians Dolly Wells and Frank Lyell. This diverse group of artistic friends kept her connected to a larger intellectual world. And, certainly, surrealism was beginning to influence the culture and art of the city. Julien Levy's gallery was next door to Lugene's, the gallery where Welty held her first photography exhibit in 1936. Levy was Salvador Dalí's American agent, and his gallery, Fuller declares, was "the fulcrum on which surrealism in America turned" (10). Fuller posits that at the same time that surrealism was becoming an integral part of the city's artistic and cultural milieu, Welty was integrating herself into the intellectual life of the city. It was a period that strongly influenced her artistic vision and her sense of herself as an artist. Due to family obligations, despite her attraction to New York, Welty had to settle for living in Jackson with frequent visits to the city. Fuller concludes, "There she wrote her fiction, blending largely southern settings, themes, and characters with a style, sensibility, and spirit centered in New York" (28–29).

Fuller's examination of Welty's New York connections and the city's influence on her work is a useful contribution to Welty scholarship, adding to recent works such as Suzanne Marrs's book of correspondence with William Maxwell, the *New Yorker* editor, entitled *What There is to Say We Have Said: the Correspondence of Eudora Welty and William Maxwell*. Perhaps more noteworthy is Fuller's interdisciplinary analysis of Welty's own early attempts at visual art collected in Patti Carr Black's book *Early Escapades: sketches and photographs* that suggest Welty's keen awareness of popular culture and artistic trends.

While Fuller makes a strong case for the impact of surrealism on American art and culture during this time, the dilemma at the center of his book, one that he acknowledges, is that Welty never mentions surrealism as an influence on her work (223). Nor does she document visiting art galleries exhibiting surrealist works or mention meeting surrealist artists. Fuller's argument finally rests on the claim that, given Welty's participation in the intellectual and cultural life of her time, and given the pervasive influence of Salvador Dalí and surrealism in film, fashion, photography, writing, and other arts, Welty's view of the world and, thus, her writing was bound to be influenced by surrealism.

Fuller moves systematically through each of Welty's major works, beginning with *A Curtain of Green* (1941) and continuing through *The Bride of the Innisfallen and Other Stories* (1955). He points to Welty's

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well-known story "A Memory" as the best example of surrealism in *Curtain*, likening it to Dalí's work "The Persistence of Memory" (47). In "A Memory," Welty describes the narrator making frames with her fingers "to look out at everything" (*Stories* 92), and Fuller compares this image to Welty's discussion of writing in her essays "Writing and Analyzing a Story" and "Place in Fiction." In both of these essays, he explains, Welty creates realistic worlds but also emphasizes dreams and the unconscious in the lives of her characters (Fuller 45). The influence of surrealism in *A Curtain of Green* often seems less pronounced than in this example, but Fuller presents some new perspectives on these stories, discussing photographic texts along with the written texts.

One of the strengths of Fuller's book is his discussion of Welty's changing narrative technique throughout her writing career. In "A Still Moment," for example, part of *The Wide Net and Other Stories* (1943), Fuller discusses how the artist uses his or her raw materials (74) and notes Welty's movement toward perception and away from plot (80). Beginning with *The Wide Net* collection and continuing through his discussion of Welty's *Delta Wedding* (1946), *The Golden Apples* (1949), and *The Bride of the Innisfallen and Other Stories*, Fuller also introduces gender as a focus, claiming that in *Delta Wedding*, for example, the realistic language of the novel reflects Shellmound's patriarchal order, while more surrealistic sections subvert that order, setting up alternative dreamscapes where women find inspiration and agency. Fuller sees *The Golden Apples* similarly as a collection of stories exploring female subversion of male heroic texts, pointing to the many cultural allusions in this text as an instance of the capacity of Welty's writing "to assimilate the media of film, painting, photography, fashion, and sculpture" (196).

After *Bride*, Fuller notes, the influence of surrealism diminished in Welty's work. *The Robber Bridegroom* (1942) fits more easily into the category of fantasy, and *The Ponder Heart* (1954) and *Losing Battles* (1970) demonstrate Welty's growing preoccupation with the spoken text, possibly reflecting her interest in theater. At the same time, the influence of surrealism began to fade somewhat in the public consciousness.

Fuller ends his last chapter, "Among Artistic Leaders," with some speculation on Welty's "artistic stock" (226). He ends with praise for "the body of work itself, clear-eyed, courageous, profound, and ultimately durable" (226). Fuller's praise for Welty emphasizes the strength of his own book. By reading Welty in the context of parallel developments in the visual arts, he demonstrates the amazing complexity of Welty's artistic vision. While his march through the body of work proved enlightening as a whole, at times the focus on surrealism seemed limit-

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ing. But Fuller has opened the door to future interdisciplinary readings of Welty that extend our view of her far beyond categorizations as a “regional” writer.

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Apples & Ashes: Literature, Nationalism, and the Confederate States of America. By Coleman Hutchison. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012. xiv + 277 pp. cloth \$69.95, paper \$24.95.

The recovery, and sometimes rehabilitation, of forgotten texts and authors is some of the most important work of literary scholarship. Coleman Hutchison's *Apples & Ashes: Literature, Nationalism, and the Confederate States of America* is unique in that while it addresses a body of work that mostly has been ignored by critics of American literature, its objective is not exactly to recover and certainly not to rehabilitate. “Let me be clear,” Hutchison writes early in his introduction, “This book is by no means an apology for the Confederacy or Confederate nationalism. I find almost nothing that is admirable in the politics or culture of the Civil War South” (3). On the other hand, what readers will find in Hutchison's pioneering study is a deft and convincing argument for why scholars of American and Southern literature should consider the creative and critical literary output of the Confederate States of America. The argument central to *Apples & Ashes* is that Confederate literature reveals much about the function and development of a national literature. Studying Confederate literary nationalism can not only be useful “for thinking about the role of literature in imagining political communities” (4), Hutchison argues, but Confederate literary culture's competition with an emerging American literary nationalism can also enrich how we understand “American literary nationalism and the relationship between literature and nationalism more broadly” (3). Even as we abhor the politics and values of the Civil War South, he reasons, we can learn about the bonds between literature and politics by observing how they functioned in the CSA. Through literary history and close reading, Hutchison provides a representative cross-section

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of the work the failed nation had to offer: a cross-section because he hopes the work “will be the first of many literary historical engagements with Confederate literature” (15).

The book begins with an introduction before exploring Confederate literature in five chapters organized by genre. Beyond laying out the principal argument of the book, the introduction provides some dominant features of Confederate literature demonstrated through the close reading of “Ethnogenesis,” a poem by the South Carolina author, Henry Timrod. Some of these features are unsurprising: Confederate literature imagined southerners as a “fictive ethnicity” (8) and revealed them as slaveholders; it made strong “agro-literary appeals” (9); it frequently “defined itself against northern/American literature” (11). Yet there are other features not as readily guessed, and these are the ones more valuable to the book’s project. Detectable in the speed that it was written and published, Confederate literature was belated and overdue in distinguishing the South, yet “written for a vanishing present” (7). After all, the CSA was over nearly as soon as it purportedly began. It aspired and looked forward to fully realizing its literary culture, yet the works themselves defer that possibility to the future. Confederate literature was also “global in its purview and imperial in its ambitions” (12)—a significant point given its ready association with U.S. southern regionalism—and also a literature that exhibited an “uneasy fit between polite and popular forms” (13). Hutchison’s subsequent chapters explore these features and compellingly frame them within a larger conversation of nineteenth century literary nationalism.

Surveying the reviews and editorials in the *Southern Literary Messenger* (published in Richmond, Virginia from 1834 to 1864), the first chapter proper claims the magazine lays groundwork for Confederate nationalism. Hutchison describes the *Messenger’s* aesthetic as one bringing together literary sectionalism and nationalism and providing the seedbed for a Confederate national literary project. Hutchison pays careful attention to the incendiary reviews written by the most recognizable literary figure in the book, Edgar Allan Poe, who edited the *Messenger* from 1835 to 1837. Special attention is given to vociferously negative reviews of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), which betray southern anxieties about challenges to its mores of gender and race. The reviews attack Stowe’s status as a true “lady” and her legalistic understanding of slavery, while at the same time praising its literariness when due. Hutchison argues that these reviews “transformed a proud literary regionalism into a steadfast literary separatism” (45).

The second chapter considers Confederate fiction, specifically Augusta Jane Evans’s *Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice* (1864), which is presented as a significant representative work because it “returns read-

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ers to an unsettled moment in which the outcome of the American Civil War was far from determined" (65). Beyond its importance as an artifact of that moment, the novel demonstrates how one woman writer of the Confederacy participates in the war effort. Evans's domestic fiction disseminates Confederate propaganda: her female characters—who wish they could literally join the battle—articulately voice the Confederate platform (much to the unease of her male reviewers), comfort readers by presenting the realities of war casualties, and predict Confederate victory. Poetry was the most prolific genre of the Confederacy, and the third chapter surveys the media in which verse appeared: single volumes, broadsides, newspapers, and anthologies. Critics have been the most dismissive of Confederate poetry, and Hutchison argues that its occasional and popular mode makes it easy for subsequent readers to do so. However, its tones could be elegiac and triumphantly patriotic; its subjects varied from epic retellings of battles to vicious attacks on Abraham Lincoln to appeals to the more localized identities of states. The chapter shows the entire scope of Confederate poetry while featuring some of the most provocative archival texts examined by the book.

Of interest to the broadest group of readers because of its highly familiar subject text, the fourth chapter explores the contribution of song to Confederate national literature by examining the complicated history of "Dixie." Hutchison argues that the CSA's de facto anthem "was not only an extraordinarily effective vehicle for Confederate literary nationalism but also the subject and site of intense conflict" (145). "Dixie" was written by a northerner, published in New York, and subjected to myriad revision and variations. The song, Hutchison contends, is at once the greatest success of Confederate literary nationalism and an artifact that served other "local, regional, and nation agendas" (145) due to its popularity, indeterminacies, and multiple functions. Readers may be surprised to learn that it served both as a battle hymn for the Confederate Army and song of celebration requested by Lincoln to commemorate the surrender at Appomattox (143). The final chapter considers the post-Civil War memoir and particularly, Loreta Janeta Velazquez's *The Woman in Battle* (1876), arguing that it continues the work of Confederate literary nationalism by portraying the "global system of immigration, foreign intervention, transnational capital, transatlantic slavery, and competing nationalism" in which the CSA participated. Hutchison argues that this (likely embellished) memoir differs from more canonical memoirs of the Civil War: Velazquez's refusal to sentimentalize her portrayal and innovations in genre, and the novel's emphasis on the international aspects of the Civil War provide "an uncommon opportunity to remap the American Civil War along new axes" (200).

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Apples & Ashes provides a highly readable introduction to the literary culture of the Civil War South that should interest Americanists and southernists alike—especially the latter, as conversations in southern studies begin to devote more energy on literatures produced prior to the twentieth century. And true to Hutchison's disclaimer, the book does not celebrate the Confederacy. Neither is the book a simple rationalization for studying its literature. Rather, the book successfully argues for the value of understanding how the CSA's brief quest for nationhood provides a short, intense laboratory for observing the processes of literary nationalism. Its topics may still make some readers uneasy, but the succession of sesquicentennial celebrations of Civil War events through 2015, many of which will romanticize the war and even echo the Lost Cause, makes the objective work of *Apples & Ashes* important and timely.

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A Prayer Journal. By Flannery O'Connor. Edited and introduced by W.A. Sessions. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013. xiii + 96 pp. \$18.00 (hardcover).

From early in 1946 until late in 1947, Flannery O'Connor, starting when she was twenty years old, wrote out in longhand a series of her own prayers in an academic notebook. Published now as *A Prayer Journal*, this notebook is reproduced photographically (covering forty-eight pages) accompanied by a slightly corrected transcription. When she started this journal, O'Connor had just finished her first few months at the University of Iowa and had entered the famous Writers' Workshop; by the time she stopped writing in this journal, she had completed the stories for her MFA thesis and had drafted enough of her first novel, *Wise Blood*, to win the Rinehart-Iowa Fiction Award. Reading *A Prayer Journal*, we see O'Connor figuring out how best to approach God as well as how to achieve what she considered an almost opposite goal: becoming a great writer.

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Like most graduate students, O'Connor was a mix of insecurities and ambitions. "I will always be staggering between Despair and Presumption," she observes with touching self-doubt (22/70). Even after some early success, she could write, "Please help me dear God to be a good writer and to get something else accepted" (10/54). This is the same person who would soon be fighting the publishing house that offered her the book contract that accompanied the Rinehart-Iowa Award. Graduate student O'Connor was hardly the well-read and sophisticated theological thinker she would become, but her desire to improve on traditional prayers, along with her determination to create a way of communicating with the divine in a manner that would be her very own, will make *A Prayer Journal* a valuable piece of spiritual guidance for many.

One might wish of course for something else, and certainly for something more, to be published out of the store of materials recently sold to Emory University by O'Connor's estate, and these additional publications will surely come. Farrar, Straus and Giroux and editor W.A. Sessions have done a fine job of presenting this fascinating appetizer. There is nobody better than Sessions, Professor Emeritus of English at Georgia State University, to introduce this volume, for he worked with all of O'Connor's papers for years as he composed his forthcoming authorized biography of O'Connor, *Stalking Joy*.

While Farrar, Straus and Giroux is marketing the book under the category of "Religion/Biography," most teachers will wonder what value *A Prayer Journal* has for the study of O'Connor's literature. O'Connor provides interesting hints here about the importance of her reading of such authors as Bernanos, Bloy, Proust, and Kafka. The volume also shows that O'Connor was always quick to be self-critical, justifying the common critical claim that her satirical stance toward her characters implies a satirical stance toward her own flaws as well. It is almost amusing at times to see O'Connor puncture her own intellectual presumptions in mid-prayer. She prays frequently about the need for grace (no surprise), but part of the reason she asks for grace is so that she will be able to feel love. The determined emphasis on feeling here may be surprising, since O'Connor is often considered to be quite coolly intellectual in her dissection of her characters.

Specific connections to works of fiction regularly discussed in the classroom can also be found. Certainly the O'Connor of *A Prayer Journal* sounds like a grown-up version of the protagonist of "A Temple of the Holy Ghost," the unnamed child who cannot keep her mind on traditional prayers but who fantasizes as she tries to defeat her essential meanness. The struggle to be a writer in "The Crop"—about a Miss Willerton who seems unable to commit to writing like Carson

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McCullers or Erskine Caldwell—is close to the young O'Connor's struggles. The contemplation of cancer toward the end of *A Prayer Journal* may link up with Ruby Hill's thoughts about her feelings of sickness in "A Stroke of Good Fortune," a story that began as part of *Wise Blood*.

The aspect of *A Prayer Journal* that is most interesting to this reviewer is O'Connor's work to understand the levels of the psyche. O'Connor generally said that she rejected the claims of psychoanalysts, but she certainly considered it worthwhile to talk to God about the levels of the mind that are not conscious: ". . . at some insipid moment when I may possibly be thinking of floor wax or pigeon eggs, the opening of a beautiful prayer may come up from my subconscious and lead me to write something exalted" (7/51). The subconscious mind and the unconscious mind need to be investigated for O'Connor to feel a connection to God. The task is not easy: "My mind is in a little box, dear God, down inside other boxes inside other boxes and on and on" (17/64). What is discovered underneath the consciousness may even be dangerous, but the search is necessary: "Certainly hell is located in the unconscious even as the desire for God is" (31/81). O'Connor would go so far as to come up with such a phrase as "the unconscious superconsciousness" (31/82) in this endeavor. Those of us inclined to find psychological complexity in O'Connor's works will find encouragement in *A Prayer Journal*.

Nevertheless, O'Connor sounds most like the writer we admire when she tires of intellectualizing. Ultimately she wanted to become like O.E. Parker in the late story "Parker's Back," filled with the right impulses despite the foolishness of the conscious mind. O'Connor sensed that if she were tempted, like Old Mason Tarwater in *The Violent Bear It Away*, to issue orders to God, she would be disappointed. Just as God resists Old Tarwater's call for signs endorsing him as a prophet, God would undercut her own claims, O'Connor expected, however self-deprecatingly she may have phrased them:

I want to be a *fine* writer. Any success will tend to swell my head—unconsciously even. If I ever do get to be a fine writer, it will not be because I am a fine writer but because God has given me credit for a few of the things He kindly wrote for me. Right at present this does not seem to be His policy. I can't write a thing. (23/71)

Marshall Bruce Gentry

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Primitive Minds: Evolution and Spiritual Experience in the Victorian Novel. By Anna Neill. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2013. x + 246 pp. \$59.95 (cloth).

The other night I dreamt that I spent ages wandering about a maze-like building where my office should have been. At last I got into an elevator that opened onto a small windowless room featuring only a futuristic couch-like affair. I knew I was destined to lie down in it and wait for something. When I began waking up from that dream, “reality,” the literal and figurative light of day, at first seemed no less strange than the dream. Anna Neill’s *Primitive Minds* attends to what she sometimes calls “dreamy states,” some of which we’ve all experienced in actual dreams as well as in other withdrawals from what we think of as reality, and it makes an interesting presentation of an understudied subject in showing how Victorian fiction responds to such experiences.

The full title, *Primitive Minds: Evolution and Spiritual Experience in the Victorian Novel*, is somewhat misleading regarding the several subjects it incorporates. Of the three topics related to Victorian novels, the “spiritual experience” of the subtitle is the most fundamental; “evolution” and “primitive minds” take on importance as causative agents and constitutive aspects of “spiritual experience.” But that phrase itself inadequately describes the book’s focus in that for many people spirituality connotes religion—and, in Victorian context, perhaps spiritualism as well—whereas Neill concentrates on the nineteenth-century scientific, scholarly, and literary handling of “strange states of consciousness”—conditions in which religious experience plays a relatively minor role. *Primitive Minds* deals with an almost bewildering array of “dreamy states”: waking dreams, prophesying, clairvoyance, somnambulism, prevision, conversion experience, mesmerism, trances, reveries, lucid vision, mystical states, raptures, second sight, ghostly sightings, cataleptic seizures, déjà vu, double-consciousness, “magical ideation,” radical depersonalization, and certain manifestations of hypochondria.

Such matters individually or collectively might well sound “dreamy” in the pejorative sense of fuzzy or nebulous. But *Primitive Minds* sorts them out, as much as possible, by drawing on a wide array of nineteenth-century psychologists, neurologists, biologists, and anthropologists—some of them well known but most largely forgotten—who in their publications tried to describe and, largely on physiological bases, account for alterations of normal consciousness. Many of their conclusions no doubt were wrong, but few, judging from the book’s many quotations and summaries, seem far-fetched. Although Neill does not prove that the novelists she focuses on were much acquainted with sci-

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entific and quasi-scientific books and articles about mental functioning, she establishes that its well-read authors probably were aware of such matters living as they did in a culture seemingly awash in writings about the mind and its obscure operations.

Neill's purpose is to show how varieties of altered consciousness, as shaped by nineteenth-century understandings, inform certain Victorian novels in literarily significant ways, influencing plotlines and characters' experiences and even forms of narrative discourse. The novels in question are Charlottle Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*; Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* and *Our Mutual Friend*; George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* and *Silas Marner*; Willkie Collins's *The Moonstone*; Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, particularly *The Hound of the Baskervilles*; and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *The Return of the Native*. *Primitive Minds* shows the ways in which these texts evidence varieties of altered consciousness, and in individual chapters it sets off pairs of narratives against one another in terms of similarities and variations in how they present strange mental phenomena. Probably many readers are aware that some such experiences occur in these novels, a few of which, like instances of *Jane Eyre*'s clairvoyance or Angel Clare's sleepwalking, particularly stand out, but Neill's approach—a reminder that a valid and innovative critical lens exposes as significant what had seemed marginal or obscure—establishes that mental swerves from conventional reality not only frequently recur in these texts but often do so in narratively significant ways.

Primitive Minds concentrates on realist novels, in part because their inclusion of non-normative mental experiences within insistently commonsensical or everyday contexts causes them to stand out in ways they do not in more fantastic genres such as Victorian Gothic or sensation novels. More importantly, their representations of altered consciousness treat them as not essentially fantastic. While mentally strange conditions and behaviors associated with them might emerge, like apparitions from a strange or dark past, into everyday worlds of supposed rationality and commonplace occurrences, the novels under investigation generally do not insist upon supernatural or occult causations for mental phenomena. One goal of *Primitive Minds* is to show, following the lead of George Levine and others who critique literary realism in order to reveal its unexpected depth and range, that realism necessarily includes "dreamy mind" experiences as a significant aspect of human reality. Neill uses illustrative texts to argue that such episodes reflect, however spookily they are presented, many of the findings and presumptions of nineteenth-century physiological and medical thinking.

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Thus elements associated with Gothic fiction and Romanticism find a home in the foregrounded realist novels—foregrounded, naturally enough, because they amply demonstrate what Neill is attempting to show. Novels by, say, Anthony Trollope, who goes unmentioned, perhaps would not work as well. But it is enough to show that a number of prominent novelists stretched the bounds of realism in the ways Neill describes. *Primitive Minds* not only treats characters' aberrant mental states as part of realistic human experience but investigates "what happens when the world-organizing narrative mind within the realist text malfunctions even slightly" (3). Neill identifies instances of such aberrations in narrative voices, which, unlike the mental "malfunctions" of characters, might seem—Neill does not say so—to transcend rather than merely stretch realism because they eliminate any stable epistemological grounding.

The title *Primitive Minds* points to Neill's featured insight about forms of altered consciousness. As handled in nineteenth-century medical, psychological, and anthropological writings, and in novels, they arise from "primitive" states of mind reflecting the evolutionary past. She argues that in fiction such conditions often express either devolution to lower mental states or the surfacing of atavistic traits—she makes a helpful distinction between the two processes—rather than evolutionary progress toward higher ones. In that regard *Primitive Minds* claims, in contrast to most accounts of the impact of evolutionary thinking on late Victorian fiction, that the primary form of evolution at work is Lamarckism rather than Darwinism with its theory of natural selection, which was generally rejected or overlooked at the time. I'm doubtful that Lamarckism, rather than a response to Darwinism, mostly accounts for "the idea that an organism's interactions with its environment generate ever-increasing complexity [that] was enormously compelling" to novelists. Although in private writings Darwin warned himself to avoid discourse about "higher" and "lower" organisms and species, his work often suggests evolutionary progression as a matter of increased complexity. Nevertheless, *Primitive Minds* makes its case that, although representations of characters and narrators display "evolutionarily lower states of mind," they also, through unusual states of consciousness, serve to endorse the "primitive mind for its reach into the otherwise imperceptible regions of the objective world" (183). Neill identifies this potential as a sometimes helpful or creative force in protagonists' lives.

Primitive Minds informatively investigates nineteenth-century understandings of altered consciousness, connects it to evolution and primitivism, and, in light of this complex of ideas, interprets novels in innovative ways. The book should appeal to those interested in Victorian

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culture and literature, and, as I suggest at the beginning of this review, it is relevant to everyone since we all have experienced mysterious and interesting detours from the normal paths of consciousness.

John Glendening

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Romantic Intimacy. By Nancy Yousef. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2013. x + 182 pp. \$55.00 (hardcover).

“Who knows what we are, what we feel? Who knows even at the moment of intimacy, This is knowledge?” Lily Briscoe’s reflection upon the “extreme obscurity of human relationships” in Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* (171) might be seen, in light of a new book by Nancy Yousef on the topic of *Romantic Intimacy*, as a record of romanticism’s bequest to high modernism. In five engaging chapters spanning literature and philosophy from Rousseau to Wordsworth, Austen and the practice of psychoanalysis, Yousef argues that a distinctively romantic experience of intersubjectivity, which she terms “romantic intimacy,” results from a transformative synthesis of 18th century epistemology and sentimentalism. Whereas, for figures like Hume and Hutcheson, shared sentiment provides ethics with a bulwark against the corrosive waters of epistemological skepticism, romantic authors breach the fragile floodgates protecting this “confidence of sentimentalism” from the “anxiety of empiricism” (7). What survives the skeptical deluge romanticism unleashes upon the project of shared sentiment are the records of an “intimacy” that no longer expresses the solid ethical ground of a reciprocally engendered, teleologically oriented social existence, but bears witness to subjects’ “asymmetrical,” “nonreciprocal” (3), and nevertheless constitutive relations to others. Through literary explorations of the experience of “being-alone-together,” which dismantles the opposition of “solitary inwardness and interpersonal exposure,” romanticism relinquishes the epistemology sympathy presupposes without thereby abandoning the social altogether, attending, instead, to the ways in which subjects are progressively constituted and reconstituted out of an infinitely refracted intersubjective “realm of encounter”

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(2) with no pre-given identity, essence, or aim. Rather than the narcissistic indifference to others with which romanticism is often charged, romantic inwardness, in Yousef's account, expresses the "humble" (115) recognition of a debt immemorially incurred to an unknown multiplicity of others, because of which the romantic subject finds that it is already other to itself.

Romantic Intimacy's first chapter shows how 18th Century philosophies of moral sentiment, including works by such authors as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Joseph Butler, Hume, and Adam Smith, contain "assumptions about intersubjective knowledge that run counter to the prevailing empiricist epistemologies with which they are contemporary," and thus establish a tension between a "realm of certainty (affective, moral)" and a realm of "(epistemic) doubt" from which fellow feeling is protected (28, 31). Chapter Two interprets Rousseau's "utopian writings" (50), including the *Letter to d'Alambert*, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, *Emile*, and the *Social Contract*, as ill-fated attempts to overcome the tension between ethics and epistemology by "emptying out" subjective interiority and blocking the "cultivation of privacy," thus closing the gap between "being and appearance" (63) so that "sympathetic recognition might rest on solid epistemic grounds" (73). Chapter Three argues that Hume's move, in his *Treatise on Human Nature*, to "sever the immediacy of encounter from the occasion of ethical response," paves the way for the "distinctively romantic configuration . . . of sentimental aspirations" reflected in Wordsworth's poetry, which "suspends" (73) the tension between epistemology and ethics left over from Eighteenth Century sentimentalism by dismantling the opposition between literary appearance and disappearance, "encounter" and "passing away," such that poetic "letting live and letting die" become "effectively indistinguishable" (98). Yousef's penultimate chapter traces the "romantic affiliation of gratitude and respect" (104) in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, suggesting that Elizabeth's seeming submission in fact models a mode of "willing that does not arise spontaneously within the subject (as a self-determined inclination or choice) but as an implication of appreciation for an other" (112). Chapter Five and a concluding Coda together consider how psychoanalytic practice extends the romantic project of "lyrical mediation" (137) by reproducing the experience of "being alone together" in therapy. Like romantic literary practice, therapy retains the social in a state of suspension and, in so doing, exposes a fundamentally non-reciprocal dimension of intimacy. Throughout, Yousef matches sensitivity to the specificity of the texts she reads with an unwavering commitment to the development of her larger argument, resulting in a book that is as compelling as a whole as it is in its individual parts.

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Two questions may arise for scholars familiar with the area in which Yousef works, pertaining to her book's relationship to extant scholarship and theoretical framework, respectively. Yousef motivates a turn away from "sympathy" and toward "intimacy" in part by claiming that sympathy is discursively bound to identification and thus provides an insufficient lens through which to interpret the forms of asymmetrical, non-reciprocal, and pre-subjective exposure to others that interest romantic writers. Though it is at first somewhat unclear whether this turn is to be understood discursively or historically, as one proceeds it becomes evident that Yousef intends *both*; what is needed is a shift in the term *we use* to discuss eighteenth-century literature that *reflects* a transition from philosophies of moral sentiment (sympathy) to romantic literature (intimacy) *within* eighteenth-century letters. Recent scholarship has, however, worked to unsettle the sharp division Yousef constructs on both counts, and her contribution could only be strengthened by an engagement with such efforts.¹

Given that the transition from sympathy to intimacy is also, in Yousef's account, a shift from philosophy to literature (whatever debt the latter may have to the former), her decision to approach intimacy in the terms of ethics, to the relative exclusion of aesthetics, is somewhat surprising, especially when one considers the importance of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment to romantic literary experimentation. Yousef refers to Kant at pivotal moments throughout her work, but restricts herself to his ethics, and accordingly identifies "respect" as the key concept against which to measure romantic intimacy (11, 16–21, 24, 103–06, 109–13, 128). Given her focus on theories of moral sentiment, the attention given to Kant's ethics, and to the concept of respect in particular, seems entirely appropriate. Still, if Yousef's interest lies, as she says it does, in turning the axis of inquiry away from terms that "presuppose and anticipate precisely what is in question: an end or aim—be it perceptual, affective, or moral" and toward forms of intimacy that suspend the demand to "fully know . . . or heed . . ." the other so as to generate space for "indeterminate and undetermined modes of attention and appreciation" (2, 24), then it is Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment to which she might turn. Doing so might put *Romantic Intimacy* in close conversation with recent work on the intersection of the practical and the aesthetic, inspired in part by Jacques Rancière's exploration of the political implications of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment,² and thus grant still broader access to this important work in a major field, which will be of interest to scholars of European literature and philosophy of the long eighteenth century, in particular those working at the intersection of literature and ethics.

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Notes

1. See for example Sean Gaston. "The Impossibility of Sympathy." *The Eighteenth Century* 51.1-2 (Spring/Summer 2010): 129-52. Print. and Rae Greiner. "Sympathy Time: Adam Smith, George Eliot, and the Realist Novel" *Narrative* 17.3 (October 2009): 291-311. Print.
2. See for example Jacques Rancière. "The Aesthetic Dimension: Aesthetics, Politics, Knowledge." *Critical Inquiry* 36. 1 (Autumn 2009): 1-19. Print.

Walter A. Johnston

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Moses, Jesus, and the Trickster in the Evangelical South. By Paul Harvey. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012. 172 pp. \$28.95 (cloth).

This monograph explores the evolution of "cultural expressions of religious faith" across the southern United States emphasizing four specific archetypes: Moses, Jesus, the Trickster, and Absalom (2). Harvey argues that through an exploration of said archetypes one can discover the multifaceted response of southerners to questions about the soul of man. Harvey traces the development of a decidedly southern religious consciousness fueled not only by the transmission of Biblical tales, but also propagated by historical religious persona, literary depictions by the likes of William Faulkner and Toni Morrison, as well as belief demonstrated in popular religious expressions in film, music, and visual art. Admittedly limited to the religious history of a region "dominated by people of English/Scots Irish origin and people of African descent," the author engages a southern identity that is exclusive of Catholicism and Native American spirituality. Harvey organizes the material into three chapters and an introduction.

In the introduction, Harvey cites the lyrics of Blind Willie Johnson's blues recording "What is the Soul of Man?" around which he formulates the basis of his scholarly endeavor: "How did southern Protestants, black and white, from the eighteenth century to the civil rights era, grapple with the intractable religious and philosophical questions through religious expression and belief?" (2). Using the blues—even

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the gospel blues—to position such a religiously grounded inquiry surely complicates the notion of Evangelical expressions. The blues are grounded in folk dynamics and ways of knowing that extend well past the limits of Protestantism proper. African Americans in the south traversed many ecclesiastical boundaries (Vodou, hoodoo, and Holiness Churches, for example) without contradiction. While I can appreciate the inclusion of non-conventional narratives of faith, Harvey appears to situate his study around a cultural expression that moves far beyond the scope of his study. He fails to account for how the syncretic nature of African American spirituality informs any interpretation of the blues and African American religion at large, which, given his focus on black and white southern Protestants, is perhaps too myopic. Chapter One undertakes the task of analyzing “the ways southern Protestants have employed” the four archetypes Harvey identifies in his introduction (13). Harvey demonstrates how the biblical narratives surrounding Moses and Jesus were used to varying degrees to populate the spiritual and religious identities of white and black communities in the South. While Moses, Jesus, and the Trickster figure are introduced in the chapter, Absalom takes center stage contrary to what the title suggests. Looking to William Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom* and, later, Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* and Edward Jones’s *The Known World*, Harvey states that “some of the deepest and most conflicted parts of southern history may be understood through the story of Absalom, David’s rebellious son killed in battle against his father” (13).

The discussion of Faulkner’s use of the Absalom archetype is fully teased out and persuasively in-depth. The scant literary analysis and subsequent comparison of the archetype in the fiction of Morrison and Jones, however, left something to be desired. Arguing that Morrison is “re-gendering” Faulkner’s tale while not necessarily taking “direct inspiration” from the Absalom story, Harvey reveals a disciplinary deficiency where literary criticism is concerned (46). He provides little more than synopses of the Morrison and Jones texts, barely pushing past the surface of two multi-faceted, complex narratives. For this reader, he fails to drive home the connection between Faulkner, Morrison, and Jones—which is a seminal point of his chapter. The analysis was flat and uninspiring.

The initial chapter also raises the visibility of the Trickster figure in Harvey’s thinking. The prolonged attention granted to Absalom and narratives of the south somewhat eclipsed the focus on the Trickster found both in the title of the monograph and chapter title. The limitation of Harvey’s Evangelical focus also comes to bear on the way he situates the Trickster in his scholarship. In positioning the Trickster as part of the “African American religious imaginary,” Harvey provides an

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over-generalized sketch of the Trickster, failing to name, specifically, the Yoruba deity Eshu in his discussion (32). His subsequent argument about the image of the “devil” in Blues music and tales of black folk heroes suffers from the under-developed articulation of how Eshu operates in a New World context. His position could have been strengthened with even a footnote about the West African trickster god—a point of scholarly depth that Harvey foregoes.

“Because I was a Master: Religion, Race, and Southern Ideas of Freedom,” the second chapter, is more firmly steeped in Harvey’s primary discipline. It is an abrupt shift from the previous chapter in that it too heavily focuses on the religious history of the South without offering any new ideas or arguments about the complicated place of religion for whites and blacks living below the Mason Dixon line. Harvey continues to refer to a “trickster Jesus” as he did in chapter one without fully elaborating on how this thrust of his thesis informed the social history of the South (64). He does not explicitly connect his historiography to the theme of the trickster Jesus until the end of a forty-page chapter, which made the reading quite daunting at times. What remains understated in Harvey’s history of religious thoughts on freedom is how the enslaved population manipulated Protestantism to work in their favor. Harvey refers to “the black counterliterature biblically refuting white supremacist thought” and re-tells the history of slave insurrections led by Gabriel Prosser, Demark Vesey, and Nat Turner within a narrative that seeks to make the trickster Jesus the primary source and inspiration for revolutionary action among the enslaved (57). This particular way of viewing history and religion does not grant enough credence to black folk for converting Jesus and Christianity to an African episteme. Harvey gives much of the credit for active resistance to the “subversive savior” eliding the enslaved community’s transformative agency in availing themselves of racial oppression by enacting a trickster ideology in which Jesus was one of many tools (94).

The final chapter offers a strong historiography of Jesus as a type of sliding character in southern socio-religious belief. It serves as a great point of reference for scholars or students seeking to define how certain historical narratives of faith took shape. The focus on the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King, Jr. is unremarkable and reiterates a very familiar history. This chapter loses sight of the emphasis of the trickster archetype of the previous chapters. The conclusion did not bring the monograph full circle in terms of cogently weaving the overarching theme of Biblical archetypes together into a singular, well-developed argument. As a reader, I am left still pondering the strength of the connections Harvey is making between the archetypes named in the title. I am not convinced, at the book’s end, that Jesus serves as

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a trickster figure for the Evangelical South—which seems problematic since this is a central theme throughout the work. The argument is underdeveloped and thus leaves Harvey’s reading of the paradigm inadequate. Lastly, Harvey acknowledges that he does not provide the type of endnotes befitting a scholarly monograph but instead asks his readers to “assume that the arguments made in the book come from years of reading and thinking about the subject” (xi). Part of the difficulty in digesting his thesis is the lack of scholarly research to support his claims. As an academic publication *Moses, Jesus, and the Trickster in the Evangelical South* promises scholarly diligence and that includes access to the sources that influenced the author’s thinking. Perhaps by disclosing that his scholarly process deviates from accepted research and publication practice, Harvey invites readers to simply engage the book simply as his own reader response reflections.

Kameelah L. Martin

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In the Hollow of the Wave: Virginia Woolf and Modernist Uses of Nature. By Bonnie Kime Scott. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012. xv + 268 pp. \$39.50 (cloth).

Perhaps best known for *Gender and Modernism* (Routledge 2008), Bonnie Kime Scott draws on her grounding in gender studies to offer this predominantly eco-feminist reading of Virginia Woolf. Scott’s discussion privileges the novels, but she also engages some of the less prominent nonfiction, situating her discussion within a biographical context.

The goal of the book is to “discover a new, post-humanist pattern that escapes androcentrism and the nature/culture binary, and fosters richly varied, contextual, and relational thinking, holding in high regard all living beings” (2). According to Scott, this need is especially evident in the context of modernity, which has typically seemed to ignore nature in favor of the numerous advances in the industrial world to which most modernist writers responded and on which most scholars of modernism have focused their attention.

To establish a context, Scott explores the use of nature in other modernists’ works, suggesting that many perceive art as rising above

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nature. She offers brief discussions of such modernist writers as T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, H.D., D.H. Lawrence, and Katherine Mansfield. Her discussion draws on specific references to nature in each author's works, but these references sometimes become mere catalogs of images rather than helpful, in-depth analysis of how each uses nature.

Scott is on much stronger footing when she focuses her attention on Virginia Woolf. In the second chapter, Scott emphasizes Woolf as an amateur natural historian, drawing the reader into the biographical aspects of Woolf's interactions with nature as a child including her exposure to "naturalistic spaces" by her father, Leslie Stephen. Doing so, she sheds light on Woolf's connections to nature but doesn't always develop the implications that these encounters have on her literary work. Of particular interest is Scott's discussion of the naturalist, Eleanor Anne Ormerod, whom Scott argues inspired Woolf's depiction of women naturalists such as Mary Kingsley in *Three Guineas* and Aunt Helena in *Mrs. Dalloway*. As Scott points out, botany was an acceptable pursuit for women of the leisured class, and thus a means for women to find an outlet for scientific interests by exploring the natural world.

Chapter three identifies and discusses specific public and private gardens which Woolf frequented in her youth. While Scott again slips into the more biographical territory, discussing Woolf's exposure to certain gardens and how Woolf describes them in some of her nonfiction and diaries, she does eventually draw some connections between what is recorded in these texts and some of Woolf's later fiction, showing how Woolf writes "in terms of merger and transformation rather than control" (81) in the garden setting, "blurring the boundaries of nature and art" (86). However, she also demonstrates how Woolf uses gardens as arenas for control and confinement often tainted with dominant cultural values. Here, Scott provides much more analysis, particularly of the instances of interruption in the garden settings of *Mrs. Dalloway*, revealing the "painfully limiting walls" that can be found in gardens (102).

In her chapter on landscapes, Scott begins by discussing the shift Woolf made toward more "marginal geographical locations that stimulated her creativity and supported a sense of freedom" (112), emphasizing hollows and moors, landscapes that could be read from gendered and postcolonial perspectives. Scott spends time retracing Woolf's walks in the countryside, bringing them to life with her own vivid description complemented by Woolf's own words in her diaries, etc. And, it should be noted, these discussions are complemented by the author's own photographs taken on location. Scott then notes the ways

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these early experiences in nature are connected with and included in her later works.

Besides focusing on actual experiences in nature, Scott also brings in the influence painted landscapes had on Woolf. In particular, Scott is interested in how landscapes and the art theory of some of the Bloomsbury landscapists helped Woolf define her characters beyond the limited perspective of nature enthusiasts. Scott uses this context to provide a useful analysis of the painting that Lily works on in *To the Lighthouse*. According to Scott, Lily's painting draws on the styles of the era to enable Woolf to balance "memories, and persons, and shapes, within the larger picture" (130). She follows this with a discussion of the differing terms under which women travelled relative to men.

In the chapter entitled "Crossing the Species Barrier," Scott turns her attention to animals and their significance in Woolf's life and work. She notes that many of her characters are described as birds or animals, suggesting that such a reading provides an opportunity to defy the binary of unequal power. She provides examples from some of the nonfiction—particularly *A Room of One's Own*—arguing that Woolf draws on associations between animals and gender to break down the hierarchies that exist in the cultural context, much in the same way that she does with her discussion of landscapes.

Scott then explores the use of various domestic animals that appear in Woolf's work, including horses, chickens, and cows as well as birds and insects, exposing the gender inequalities evident in how these living creatures are used. However, a key focus of this chapter is dogs, including a discussion of Woolf's early essay, "On a Faithful Friend" which eulogizes her dog, Shag, and of her biography of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's dog, Flush, who becomes emblematic of women's conditions under patriarchy.

In her final chapter, Scott explores how Woolf orders nature and what the implications of such orderings might be, finding ties between Woolf and the holism of the Gaia principle. Drawing on Woolf's view that life had a rhythm derived from physical principals, Scott turns to a discussion of characters such as Sara in *The Years*, Cam in *To the Lighthouse*, Rhoda of *The Waves*, and Isa of *Between the Acts*, characters who find holism through ritual gestures that allow them to sustain themselves through a creative merger with nature (202–03). This connection by extension instills purpose and hope, a more positive reaction to the disruption proposed by modernity.

Readers of Scott's book will not find a strong theoretical framework for reading nature in Virginia Woolf, nor will they find an in-depth reading of the natural images in Woolf's fiction—though there is some very insightful analysis. Scott instead provides mostly biographical ac-

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counts of Woolf's encounters with nature through her diaries and journals, but she does trace some of these encounters with nature in her novels. Still, the book is balanced and nuanced so that in the end one must admit that the discussions and conclusions are valid. Scott draws attention to natural details in Woolf that are often overlooked, and for that reason alone the book cannot be ignored, for after reading Scott's book, one will not be able to read Woolf without a heightened awareness of her natural details.

Todd Martin

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Witches, Goddesses and Angry Sprits: The Politics of Spiritual Liberation in African Diaspora Women's Fiction. By Maha Marouan. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2013. ii +180 pp. \$45.16 (hardcover).

This slim but important volume takes as its starting point the narrative inscription of African diasporic religious practices. It examines exemplary texts of three diasporic women writers of the New World—the Haitian-American Edwidge Danticat, the African-American Toni Morrison, and the Guadeloupean Maryse Condé—as it posits the principle of Africana women's spiritual transformation as a practice of empowerment. Through a series of carefully nuanced readings, it demonstrates the ways in which the various manifestations of the “witch” in these texts discursively transform this figure into a positive symbol. In these revisionary narratives, creolizations of religious practices join with African and Western symbology to engender a liberatory space for African diasporic womanhood.

Marouan's book is distinguished by the clarity of its analytical framework, established early on by the methodological listing of its four major themes: “(1) the preservation of African diaspora consciousness (2), the celebration of black female spirituality (3), historical recovery and revision (4), intertextuality, creolization, and transnational identities” (3). On the face of it, doing justice to such a plethora of thematic concerns would appear to be a tall order, but Marouan's read-

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ings rise to the occasion. Her historical contextualization of the ways in which slavery, Christianity, and their concomitant criminalization of African religious beliefs shaped the survival and development of the practices under consideration here demonstrates clearly how these acts are bound up with issues of resistance and identity. More specifically, Marouan appropriates creolization here as “a diasporic concept that encapsulates the . . . processes of cultural and linguistic fusion . . . that characterize African diaspora histories” (19). By putting this concept into play to embody “the complex social, political, and economic conditions of people of the African Americas” (19–20), Marouan highlights its “power to subvert cultural codes” (20). Even given the limited scope of this reading, however, Marouan manages to elicit important rewritings and modifications of the “parent” texts that Danticat, Morrison and Condé engage in order to “disrupt existing authorities and formulate new meanings” (21). One early and effective such rereading reveals Danticat’s revision of a tale from the biblical book of Mark, and Morrison’s black-centered appropriation of the Exodus story as a way of exposing its earlier appropriation by white American settlers.

In Chapter 2, Marouan reads the inscription of cultural and gender codes in Edwidge Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory* as a series of tropes examining “female transformation [and] women’s struggle for liberation and the high price they have to pay to achieve it” (38). Tracing the story of Sophie Caco and her mother, Martine, whom Sophie joins in the United States, Marouan shows effectively how Danticat draws on religiosity and female religious figures to mediate these characters’ struggle for liberation. Specifically, Marouan shows how Danticat inscribes the presence of Erzulie, the *Vodou* “*loa*” of love, at various points in the novel to highlight both “the tragedies of Haitian women where rape has been systematically used by successive governments to exercise control over the female body” (39), and its establishment of “an alternative space where black womanhood can be examined challenging a patriarchal discourse that has suppressed the complexity of Haitian womanhood” (41). Chapter 3 posits Toni Morrison’s *Paradise* as an iconic text that critically rereads American history in order to critique and revise a critical set of religious narratives and traditions. More specifically, the long-held Judeo-Christian notion that reads paradise as an exclusionary and exclusively male preserve, where woman is seen as the interloper, is interrogated through a rereading of colonial America and its white founding fathers. By re-covering such critical cultural touchstones as slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, Marouan reads Morrison’s inscription of Brazilian Candomblé and Egyptian Gnosticism as “alternative spaces, offering a liberating model of spirituality for women” (72).

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In Chapter 4, Condé's novel *I, Tituba* provides the springboard for an interrogation of the interaction of religious beliefs with discourses of race and gender. Drawing on Rey Chow's concept of the ethnic self as a form of production, Marouan posits "the complexity and problematics of cross-ethnic representation" to reread the black slave Tituba's autobiographical confession during the Salem witch trials in Massachusetts (107). Reading witchcraft as critical to the construction of women's racial identities, Marouan demonstrates that blackness within the Puritanical framework emerges as closely associated with evil, and in fact "Tituba's confessions from the Salem trial records, which Condé integrates into her text, also illustrate how the devil in colonial America was color coded as black" (111). The novel ties the Puritan clergy's persecution of women to its perception of this racialized threat, even as Tituba's healing arts link her to the natural world. Marouan shows how Tituba's eventual reinscription in the afterlife as a revolutionary spirit nurturing dreams of freedom and liberty resists convention and preserves her identity. In an intriguing coda, Marouan charts the various marketing strategies—including a remarkable series of front cover designs—used to present the book to different audiences in both the francophone and Anglophone worlds.

The book concludes with a brief assessment of the ways in which its readings "articulate an Africanist vision toward life and death" (156). *Witches, Goddesses and Angry Spirits* is well argued, deservedly authoritative in tone, and impressively detailed in its representation of the material realities of slavery, resistance, and religious praxis. It is a wide-ranging text, meticulous in its research and ambitious in its scope. It deserves a place on every academic and library bookshelf dealing with the complexities of diaspora religious practices in the New World.

H. Adlai Murdoch

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Las ideas geográficas y la imagen del mundo en la literatura española medieval. By Aníbal A. Biglieri. Madrid: *Iberoamericana*; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2012. 411 pp. \$64.00 (paper).

Professor Anibal Biglieri did not simply write a book—he wrote a very extensive catalog of medieval literature that is able to present a great resource to anyone studying these texts. His book is very dense and has a lot of great references and it can be truly an indispensable resource to a researcher.

A quick glance into the Index page (409) reviews the basic structure of the book: prologue, introduction, six chapters, final words and bibliography. However, the book does not seem to offer a very easy way to jump around into the chapters. They seem to build upon each other and it does make sense to read it in order, even though it does provide for a dense reading and one that will challenge the reader, as the author himself acknowledges.

One of the most challenging parts of the book is the great number of footnotes. In the prologue, Biglieri warns that there will be more than eight hundred and that they can frustrate the reader (7). Indeed, they can be at times frustrating, especially when we realize that he does not offer translations for them. They are in their original languages, be it Latin, Italian, English, Spanish, or Catalán—and the list goes on. However, they are an undeniably important reference since the material that is presented may not be readily available to the reader. It does help, though, that the numbering on them restarts at every chapter. But the warning from the author to the reader is really a good one since there are less than ten pages in the entire book without a footnote. On the other hand, it is good that they are footnotes and not endnotes, otherwise we would probably have two books and even more frustrated readers. As for the translations (or the lack thereof), he does present the medieval translation to some Latin texts and that is somewhat helpful.

In the prologue, we are also informed that the time period for the works presented will encompass the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, the more precise time references for the works or kingdoms mentioned is missing in a lot of instances and some only show up on later references, which may cause a reader who is unfamiliar with Middle Ages to be lost for a while. The prologue is really helpful in presenting the advice that the reader must heed in order to benefit from the book.

The introduction is well-organized and sets the foundation for the rest of the chapters, especially the debt that the Middle Ages has with Antiquity, an idea that will be present in other chapters as well. In the

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medieval understanding, contrary to popular belief (even today), the Earth is spherical, even though a lot of the world vision would change in the fifteenth century. However, even though the book declares the goal of presenting geographic ideas, the author recognizes that geography as a science was not present at the time.

The first chapter deals with the form and division of the Earth and even though it is not one of the main objectives of the book, it lists some important facts on the astronomy of the time and how they are presented in maps and the connections between religious beliefs and scientific ones. In the second chapter, Biglieri presents the texts (and quotes) that deal with the Ocean.

The third chapter starts the analysis of the division of the Earth that was introduced in the first chapter with the investigation of the Occident and points once again to the interference of mythology in the texts of the time, when it shows, for example, that some of the descriptions of this area of the globe are related to Hercules and his feats.

In the fourth chapter, the next part of the Earth, the Septentrion, is analyzed. The idea of North is considered to be the most problematic (123) probably because it was the least known area of the medieval authors and their basic idea was of the cold and short days.

Following that, the middle part (Mediodía) is studied. Along with the following chapter on the Orient, it makes the largest part of the book (and the most fascinating one). It deals once again with the problem of defining the area according to the medieval texts since they usually agreed on characteristics but not area delimitation.

The final chapter is dedicated to the Orient. And as in the chapter before, Biglieri is able to discuss a variety of texts that he can categorize in sections like fauna and flora, for example. In this chapter, the idea of wonders is also explored—miraculous and magical in the medieval worldview.

The book is indeed a great resource for the study of medieval literature since it brings in it quotes and references of all texts that refer to the geography as understood at the time with texts from Alfonso X to Marco Polo (in the Spanish translations), even bringing back Latin texts from Antiquity. He also mentions a great number of other researchers that have worked with medieval texts before and comments on their analyses, agreeing or not and showing the difference. The bibliography is extensive and his knowledge undisputed. However, the reader must know that the book is not only primarily in Spanish but would also require previous knowledge in other languages (including ancient ones) or at least, patience, to be able to grasp all that the book has to offer.

Paula Rodrigues Pontes

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A Cuban in Mayberry: Looking Back at America's Hometown. By Gustavo Pérez Firmat. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014. 181 pp. \$20.07 (hardcover).

In *A Cuban in Mayberry: Looking Back at America's Hometown*, Gustavo Pérez Firmat writes movingly about the TV series *The Andy Griffith Show* from the point of view of an exile who understands the nostalgic desire to return to a lost home. Pérez Firmat focuses on the self-contained nature of the town, based on Griffith's hometown of Mt. Airy, North Carolina, whose residents have little concept of or need for the world beyond. The importance of the town's interpersonal relationships outside a traditional family unit and the general socioeconomic equality of the population as well as their acceptance of each other as individuals, he argues, sets *The Andy Griffith Show* apart from other shows of its era. *A Cuban in Mayberry* is divided into an Introduction (To the Fishing Hole) plus two major sections, "Part One (The Place)" and "Part Two (The People)," each followed by autobiographical reflections tying the readings of the show back to Pérez Firmat's personal experience.

Part One describes the structure of the town which is so central to the series itself. The first chapter examines the static nature of Mayberry, arguing that the town is itself the central character of the show. Pérez Firmat suggests that the town's social institutions and structures, the police in particular (Andy is, of course, the sheriff), protect the insiders from the outside world, except on the rare occasions that an outsider, like Andy's girlfriend Helen, is accepted as one of them. At the same time, this insular indifference to outsiders facilitates a good-natured tolerance of each other's idiosyncrasies among the town's residents.

Chapters Two through Four demonstrate how this combination of insularity and tolerance plays out in the show's plots. Pérez Firmat divides episodes into those that treat the resolution of an internal problem between town members and those that result from the introduction of an outside influence. Both plots typically share the basic message that "it's better to stay put, Mayberrians who stray typically come to regret it" (37). But Mayberry was traveling—it was being

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broadcast into the homes of television audiences far removed from Western North Carolina. Pérez Firmat is excellent in identifying the various techniques used by the show's writers and production team to maintain viewers' sense of being on the outside looking in while also identifying with the town and its people.

Chapter Five: From R.F.D. To R.I.P. deals with the transition from the original show's character and formatting to the sequel once Andy leaves the show. *Mayberry RFD* is less about a sleepy southern town and more about middle-class America in a town that could be anywhere. Few original characters remain and the show makes a switch from the inactivity of Andy's Mayberry to a portrayal of a place that is moving forward. The change in atmosphere is communicated even in the show's opening sequence which no longer shows a father and son going fishing (a sedentary, relaxing activity) but rather underlines action with Sam and his son playing catch: inactivity to activity. There is more looking outward, more acknowledgement of an external world and its effects on the town. In *Mayberry RFD*, small-town American life has come to a close. Viewers are introduced to situations dealing with social class, urbanization, immigration, and changing jobs.

"Interlude: the Road to Mayberry" ends Part One by beginning to tie Pérez Firmat's life as an exile to the Mayberry experience. He recognizes the real effect that *The Andy Griffith Show* and *I Love Lucy* had on him once he had left Little Havana in Miami. He explains that, indeed, once he had left Duke University and North Carolina for New York and Columbia University, his nostalgia was not for Miami and Cuba but rather for North Carolina, specifically for the area around Chapel Hill and Durham. *The Andy Griffith Show* showed him what it meant to truly have a place, and he draws interesting correlations between Mayberry and Little Havana, which are more alike in his telling than one would have thought.

Part Two: The People is composed of twelve chapters, each one dedicated to several characters featured throughout the show's run or who are critical in their own way to the overall atmosphere of Mayberry. "Chapter One: Sheriff without a Gun" is dedicated to Andy, the protagonist whose relationship with the other characters is central to each episode's success. Despite Andy's centrality, Pérez Firmat does not find much evidence for an inner life in his character. The equanimity that enables Andy's easy interaction with the other townsfolk seems to preclude that kind of depth.

Part Two ends with the chapter entitled "Epilogue: A Cuban in Mayberry" in which Pérez Firmat brings together his identification with Mayberry with his feeling of Otherhood. He does so by writing the story line for an imaginary *Andy Griffith Show* episode in which a

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little Cuban boy arrives in Mayberry having travelled alone by bus all the way from Cuba to meet his Tía Maria who is not at the bus stop when he gets off. Opie and Andy befriend him and help him reunite with his aunt. The script provides opportunity to point out stereotypes (a Mexican song although the boy is Cuban, etc.) as well as to highlight the existence of the Latin presence in North Carolina for many decades, refuting the myth that the Latino population just showed up in the last twenty years. Pérez Firmat is thus both deeply at home and somehow out of place in Mayberry. For him, we might say, Mayberry is a home away from home.

As always, Gustavo Pérez Firmat's engaging prose and well researched, detailed analysis of the series and its meaning for him is a pleasure to read. For those of us who, like the author, grew up watching the show, the book brings back fond memories while letting us see Mayberry in a new way. Those who did not grow up watching the show may well be inspired to find it on reruns and enter into Mayberry's timelessness where home feels, almost, like a place we can go back to.

Michele Shaul

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Conjuring Moments in African American Literature: Women, Spirit Work, and Other Such Hoodoo. By Kameelah L. Martin. Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 189 pp. \$95.00 (hardcover).

Though it begins on a well-travelled path of looking at folk traditions and oral culture for spiritual and cultural inventions in the lives of black people in the Americas, *Conjuring Moments in African American Literature* offers enough new insights to garner a read. Martin begins the study asserting that she will “interrogate the underinvestigated representation of the conjure woman, tracing her presence and function in African American material culture through the historical record of slavery, oral histories, blues music, and African American folklore” (3). While some critics may disagree with Martin's premise that the conjure woman has been under-analyzed since the fiction she examines, as well other culture depicting the figure, serves as a site of

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creative analysis of the figure and its representations, there is no doubt that Martin's positioning of the figure as a feminist subject deconstructing and challenging the subordinated female position in other spiritual traditions is spot on. Additionally, African American communities have not yet reached a point in this twenty-first century, so contestedly categorized as post-black, that we can move on and away from attempts to mine and cultivate Pan-Africanist cultural and spiritual traditions that decolonize the spirit. Hence, the utility of Martin's text comes in its highlighting of conjuring as a less patriarchal spiritual tradition and as an alternative site of knowledge production about gendered liberation. Even as Christianity and Islam continue to be seen as the dominant religions for black people in the Americas, M. Jacqui Alexander's *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* has demonstrated why marginalized traditions are useful to formerly enslaved and colonized communities. Conjuring has consistently been understood as an important part of African American literary and critical traditions. Fiction writers such as Charles Chestnut, Zora Neale Hurston, Gloria Naylor, and Toni Cade Bambara have depicted both conjuring and conjurers in their fiction, while critics such as Trudier Harris, Valerie Lee, Marjorie Pryse and Hortense Spillers, Georgene Montgomery, and Elizabeth West have provided historical and critical analysis of the figures in history and literature. Martin positions her book in conversation with these scholars, but she also engages the work of conjure in religious studies as well. She thoroughly articulates a womanist trajectory for conjuring in the culture and literature of African Americans. If there is one failure in the arguing of such a trajectory, it is Martin's lack of attention to more recent interdisciplinary scholarship in black feminist studies, queer of color critiques, and black sexuality studies. Martin's text certainly heeded black feminist foundations, but there are times in Martin's monograph when arguments about the conjure woman as an agent of self-determination and resistance would have been better constructed had they minimally engaged recent interventions. Nonetheless, Martin's study itself should provide those students and scholars interested in lesser-studied texts depicting hoodoo and culture with useful ideas about how to evolve this area of interest.

For example, Martin examines Ann Petry's *Tituba of Salem Village* and Maryse Conde's *I, Tituba Black Witch* in chapter one. Chapter one is one of the strongest chapters in the book for the way that Martin parses out questions of iconicity, agency, and Western spiritual biases with *Tituba* and Marie Laveau. It also helps that Martin provides close readings of the two women who are written as Marie Laveau and Ann Petry's lesser-studied work. Chapter two discusses the assimilative

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readings of conjuring, traditions of the obeah, and hoodoo in works by early African Americans such as Frederick Douglass, Nat Turner, and Martin Delany in comparison with that in later novels by African American writers such as Charles Chestnut, Toni Cade Bambara, and Rainelle Burton. Martin also exposes how these later representations might have shifted and been influenced by political issues. For example, in dissecting the works of writers Ntozake Shange, Alice Walker, and Gloria Naylor as both similar and different than Chestnut, Martin theorizes how issues such as *Roe v. Wade* impact African American women writers' efforts to excavate and depict research about conjure, healing, and reproductive rights. Chapter three details the intertwined genealogy of conjuring with Christianity as a result of double-consciousness, and the resulting conflicts therein, in the novels of Tina McElroy Ansa, Ishmael Reed, Jewell Rhodes, and Octavia Butler. The final chapter traces the relationship between conjure and the blues through an analysis of blues lyrics. Turning to references of gopher dust, black cat bones, mojo hands, charms, and magical roots in blues lyrics, Martin not only argues that the blues becomes a way to keep alive and disseminate conjure and hoodoo knowledge, but that "conjure and blues share a more reciprocal relationship . . . one function conjure serves for the blues is that of a curative for the blues condition" (133). In the final coda, Martin concludes her threaded emphasis on hoodoo and healing and its evolution in African American literature. *Conjuring Moments in African American Literature* will be of use to students and teachers of black folklore and black literary traditions.

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