(RE)CREATIONAL ACTIVITIES: PERFORMANCE, ANIMATION, AND SELVES IN

MEDIEVAL LITERATURE AND DRAMA

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Literature and Drama

Attempts to define *play* have highlighted its complexity, making it a difficult

concept to fully pin down, particularly in its relationship to *game*. However, the focus on

transformation and creation remain consistent within the body of scholarship. This

dissertation examines how medieval texts that seem to emphasize playing and

performance exemplify the "creative" aspect of play—what I call *(re)creation* to

highlight the focus on action and construction of another self. While the case studies are

from disparate genres (a romance, a drama, and a meditation), they share a similar focus

on the transformation of self within—and, arguably, without—the text. While the focus

on playing in medieval literature has been on texts with overt games that act as a frame

for the narrative space, this project sheds light on how to consider "playing" more

broadly within other genres and textual examples. Each case study in this project—the

Old French *Roman de Silence*, the allegorical play *Wisdom*, and the *Wohunge of Ure*

Lauerd—provides a glimpse into how play has a transformative function and how the

deployment of structural logics and framing create spaces for play.

While definitions of play vary, critics agree that *play* is closely connected to

performance and ritual in its transformative potential that can reach outside of Johan

Huizinga's "magic circle," as critics have refined his influential articulation of play's

function in society. The "transformation" occurs within a creation of a space, including rules, customs, and affordances, that construct the player while, at the same time, the player constructs a self out of these affordances. The logics that create these spaces, as well as invite participation within them, vary within each chapter while still finding areas of overlap. This project weaves in dynamics of performance including visuality, animation, and musicality to show how texts open up spaces of play, and how selves become actualized within these spaces. At the same time, I examine how these "spaces" have also invited participation from readers and critics to "play" with and within these texts up to the present day.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION: REORIENTING PLAY

"It was your will to endow us sufficiently with the level appropriate to our age. But we loved to play, and punishments were imposed on us by those who were engaged in adult games. For 'the amusement of adults is called business.'" –Augustine, *Confessions* 1.9.[1]

"Despite its intrinsic connection to games, play isn't limited to them. Play is everywhere, in anything we can operate—espresso machines, lawnmowers, shopping malls, anything. It is not an act of diversion, but a name for the feeling of making something work, of the results produced from interacting with its materials." –Ian Bogost, *Play Anything*, 93.[2]

In September 2015, Shigeru Miyamoto confirmed what fans long suspected about the 1990 game, *Super Mario Bros. 3*, the third installment of the Super Mario series released on the Nintendo Entertainment System. Miyamoto, game designer and developer for Nintendo, announced over Twitter that, in fact, the entire game is actually a play. While the second game was one prolonged dream sequence, the third game was a performance for audiences. The evidence for this statement is apparent from the opening sequence of the game. Upon loading the game—either on a working NES or through emulation software—the player is presented with a dropped red curtain which then raises to reveal a backdrop of shrubbery and the "players:" koopas, goombas, and Mario himself. The shadows that the shrubs project onto the background further suggests that this is a play, depicting two-dimensional props lit by an off-screen source from the upper left.

An image floating on the internet, reposted in a 2015 article from *Kotaku* reporting Miyamoto's Twitter confirmation, summarizes many of the clues that fans have

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[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 12.

[2] Ian Bogost, *Play Anything: The Pleasure of Limits, the Uses of Boredom, and the Secret of Games* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 93.

identified over the years.[3] The last two screenshots provide further evidence for the game-as-play theory, depicting a series of pulleys and platforms that appear to be elements of stagecraft. A declaration at the end of the image provides an interesting insight into at least one perspective of what a play is. As the statement describes, because *Super Mario Bros. 3* was a staged performance, it "never happened," as the player was "merely the audience."[4] For scholars in both play studies as well as performance studies, the assumption that productions are ephemeral, removable from everyday life is one that has been dispelled in recent years, to show the real and lasting political impacts that events have. As Diana Taylor contends in her primer on performance, "Performances may take place, but do they entirely disappear, or do their effects endure? Large or small, visible or invisible, performances create change."[5] In other words, they are literally *creative*, creating other possibilities, whether reimagining a world, a community, or a self.

The connections among play, game, and performance have been, and continue to be, charted by scholars interested in shared genealogies among these fields. Performance scholars such as Richard Schechner and Bruce McConachie have placed the concepts of *play*, *performance*, and *ritual* along a continuum that emphasizes how each concept's definition requires the participation of the others. For example, Schechner argues that "playing, like, ritual, is at the heart of performance," leading Schechner to provide an

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[3] Jason Schreier, "Miyamoto Confirms that *Super Mario Bros. 3* Was a Play," *Kotaku* (September 10, 2015): https://kotaku.com/miyamoto-confirms-that-super-mario-bros-3-was-a-play-1729805751#!.

[4] Interestingly, a remake of *Super Mario Bros. 3*, released for the SNES under the title *Super Mario All-Stars*, continues to feature the opening curtain scene, but has flattened the scenery in a way that makes it seem less prop-like.

[5] Diana Taylor, *Performance*, trans. Abigail Levin (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 10.

entire section on play in his survey of Performance Studies as an academic field and approach.[6] McConachie argues that these concepts can be traced along a family tree, showing the evolution of animal play to performance to ritual.[7] Play has been compared with ritual through many of its shared qualities: the creation of a subjunctive space in the form of "as if," the creation of communities and worlds, and the creation of a different self through action.[8] The comparison has ranged from claims that there is "no formal difference between play and ritual, so the 'consecrated spot' cannot be formally distinguished from the play-ground" (Huizinga) to both being involved in the transformation from meaning and concepts to action: "rites transform events into structures, play transforms structures into events" (Claude Levi-Strauss).[9] These shared dynamics between performance, ritual, and play provide a perfect example of what Ludwig Wittgenstein calls "family resemblances."[10]

　　While I find the connections here useful, I want to emphasize the "resemblances" without creating an evolutionary or historical trajectory, in order to bring together various

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[6] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 89.

[7] Bruce McConachie, "An Evolutionary Perspective on Play, Performance, and Ritual," TDR 55.4 (2011), 33-50.

[8] Adam B. Seligman, et al., *Ritual and its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 70-73.

[9] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); Roger Moseley, *Keys to Play: Music as a Ludic Medium from Apollo to Nintendo* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 17.

[10] Interestingly enough, Wittgenstein takes games as his primary example for the way "games form a family," recalling how "games" can form a community of people, but also, in the act of lining up various games, create a community of objects and practices that share in the same linguistic sign ("game"), while remaining distinct from each other: see, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: MacMillan, 1953), 67. Political theorists such as Georgio Agamben have also analyzed "play" within its difference from "ritual," with its relation to the State in creating and codifying meaning and habits, see: Kevin Attel, *Georgio Agamben: Beyond the Threshold of Deconstruction* (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2014), 255-62.

forms of self-performance as self-creation, or what I mark as (re)creation. (Re)creation

highlights the creative aspects of play—shared among rituals, performances, and other

play activities—in a cyclical view of creating selfhood and identity through a negotiation

between players and the play structures. In the chapters that follow, I do not make an

argument for how these concepts have evolved, but instead follow Seeta Chaganti's work

on dance performance as a call to emphasize the "interstices" of performance.[11] For

Chaganti, scholarship on performance can act as a "narrative reenactment" in the

mediation between the present positioning of a reader with the various mediations of

editors, scholars, and scribes (both modern and premodern) in depicting performance.

The power of reenactment reminds us, as scholars, of our own limitations due to a

combination the ephemerality of a performance, our own political/cultural perspectives,

as well as our always present lack of expertise. Recognizing these limits rather than

comfortably occupying the space of "the expert" may, in fact, be a more responsible, and

far less stressful, position to hold within our scholarly pursuits. As a result, we can

present our work as "possibilities," that bring to light connections, ideas, and formations

that would otherwise have never been "performed:"

> By asking my reader constantly to shift between modern and medieval
>
> experiences in the reenactment process, I keep the dilemma of experiential
>
> mediation in a place where--as one tries to do with a wasp in the room--we can
>
> see it. On the one hand, bringing my experiential account of contemporary dance
>
> into dialogue with a medieval scene simply underscores the limits of my own

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[11] Seeta Chaganti, *Strange Footing: Poetic Form and Dance in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 39.

perspective…On the other hand, my juxtaposition of medieval and modern experience brings to light possibilities in the medieval occurrence that would otherwise remain invisible."[12]

By embracing possibilities, as acts of experiential mediation, we can engage in play with the pieces we are presented with. Like games, there are rules and mechanics to present scholarship in a way that is responsible, credible, and thoughtful. I wish to honor these mechanics, without cheating, though perhaps "modding," along the way to reenact my own performance of texts that have engaged my own interest in the interstices between performance, play, and the self. This is akin to the kind of interpretative strategy that Laura Kendrick points to in her reading of Johan Huizinga's anthropological approach to play and games as cultural artifacts, as introduced in *Autumn of the Middle Ages* (initially translated as *The Waning of the Middle Ages*) and more fully mapped out in *Homo Ludens*.[13] For Kendrick, Huizinga's definition of play fits well with how medievalists, or any cultural critic, approach that which they are interpreting:

> Play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy, and the consciousness that it is 'different' from 'ordinary life.'[14]

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[12] Chaganti, *Strange Footing,* 39.

[13] Laura Kendrick, "Games Medievalists Play: How to Make Earnest of Game and Still Enjoy It," *New Literary History* 40.1 (2009), 43-61.

[14] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens,* 28.

As interpreters, we accept something is different, but that is not to say that it is completely cut-off from the "ordinary," indicating more of an orientation towards rather than a definitional break. Therefore, due to its "difference," engagement with the medieval can be one of fantasy that could go so far as to romanticize it, or to remain at a distance that may or may not be as stable as it may seem. For Kendrick, whether it's taking "in earnest" the work of the amateur (Carolyn Dinshaw) or the work of LARP-ers (live-action role-play) and the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA):

> The stability of a 'distanced' third-person narrative or commentary by no means prevents us from implicitly projecting ourselves into medieval roles. One might even argue that a consistent third-person perspective is less self-conscious than the pronominal peek-a-boo of Adams and Carlyle, whose constant switching called attention to the game of make-believe.[15]

Perhaps embracing the idea that the work we do is a performance, as an act of playing, closely aligns us with the cultural work of those who touch the medieval for exploration of self-(re)creation through gendered or queer experiences.[16] Instead of opposing the "professional scholar" with the figure of the "amateur," Dinshaw highlights the kind of passion that becomes stifled under the rubric of professionalism.[17] To create this reflexive mode, I work with modern media artifacts as starting points for each chapter to place them in conversation with medieval texts. In addition, I highlight the ways that

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[15] Kendrick, "Games Medievalists Play," 47.

[16] Or, as we have seen within and outside of academia, there is a prevalent use of the medieval in legitimizing racist and fascist political structures and regimes.

[17] Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now? Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 21; A.W. Strouse, "Getting Medieval on Graduate Education: Queering Academic Professionalism," *Pedagogy* 15.1 (2014), 119-138.

"readers" have played with each of these texts through performances, doodles, and interpretations.

While I draw upon scholarship that has documented the role of games in medieval literature—Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and the anonymous *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* being two of the clearest examples—I focus on texts that engage in play in ways that may not be obvious. I do this to accomplish two things. First, I wish to emphasize the tenuous definitions of play, performance, and game to create more opportunities to consider the centrality of play in acts of self-creation in medieval cultural artifacts, particularly those that could be left out by either creating too restrictive of definitions or focusing solely on "games." In addition, I work with medieval and modern texts in a way that creates a conversation between medieval and modern media, as well as representations of play. The texts that I work with are centered around the interstices of play and the (re)creation of self through forms of "animation," giving life to inanimate objects or past events. In the pages that follow, we will encounter virtual reality, CG animation, music, and even cyborgs that provide ways of playing with these medieval texts.

Ready, Player Two[18]

Johan Huizinga is a foundational figure in bringing play and games into focus as an object of study within cultural anthropology, emphasizing how play does cultural

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[18] I emphasize "Player Two" in that I am not alone in this. With me are the artifacts I have been drawn to, the scholars whose work has helped shape my own, and the many people who have supported me every step of the way. While I cover this in the "Acknowledgments," I felt the need to upgrade it into at least a footnote as that is usually where we put our "side quests" and fellow players.

work rather than being simply child's play. Huizinga is most known for the concept of the "magic circle," a type of framing that removes play from "ordinary life" which many critics have wrestled with since the publication of *Homo Ludens*. For Huizinga, play is defined as:

> a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious,' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.[19]

The framing of play as being outside "ordinary life," while at the same time being "utterly" absorbing, reveals the potential power that play can have on its participants. While Huizinga emphasizes that "no material interest" can be gained, play's ability to create communities of players shows how the "magic circle" is not fully excised from reality. Instead, it still has an impact on players who—through stressing their difference—create an ambivalent orientation towards reality as they both exist within it, yet mark themselves separate from it.

The critique of Huizinga's magic circle stems from what scholars claim to be too clear an excision of the play space out of the ordinary. Critics such as Edward Castronova in *Synthetic Worlds* see Huizinga's magic circle more as a porous membrane as "people are crossing it all the time in both directions, carrying their behavioral assumptions and

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[19] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 13.

attitudes with them," meaning that social structures appear on each side of the membrane.[20] Nick Yee makes a similar argument, dispelling the myth that virtual spaces are fully emancipatory or removed from "physical life" as users replicate sexism, heteronormativity, and racism in negotiation with frames and narratives that potentially invite or, at least, open a space.[21] As a result, both Castronova and Yee suggest that virtual spaces, as "magic circles," are constructed out of the "ordinary" and place social structures on display. The idea of the "virtual" here, a concept that is not only applicable to online, digital spaces, will come into play in the first chapter, but suffice to say, the "virtual" as a space of play is always imbricated in and defined by what is actualized (often called "reality").

Similarly, Jacques Ehrmann, in his critique of both Huizinga and Roger Caillois, highlights the many contradictions that exist within their analyses as a result of the dialectic set up between play and the ordinary. Huizinga and Caillois identify "culture" in a way that presents it as "a fixed, stable, pre-existent element."[22] As Tara Fickle explains, the "culture" or "civilization" that Huizinga and Caillois continually describe is that of a White, Eurocentric perspective, presenting anything "outside" ("the East" for instance) as "mystical, timeless, childlike, 'different.'"[23] Scholars of medievalism have noted the same tendency to cast the medieval in a similar alterity, posing the medieval as mystical

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[20] Edward Castronova, *Synthetic Worlds: The Business and Culture of Online Games* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 147.

[21] Nick Yee, *The Proteus Paradox: How Online Games and Virtual Worlds Change Us – and How They Don't* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 200-201.

[22] Jacques Ehrmann, "*Homo Ludens* Revisted," *Yale French Studies* 41 (1968), 55.

[23] Tara Fickle, *The Race Card: From Gaming Technologies to Model Minorities* (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 124.

(think high fantasy genre), as innocent, or as backwards.[24] Characteristic of deconstruction, Ehrmann suggests "to define play is *at the same time* and *in the same movement* to define reality and to define culture" in that Huzinga's and Caillois's attempts to define play ultimately also creates the very "culture" that they prop up as an empty referent.[25]

The issue that critics such as Fickle and Ehrmann emphasize is that play and games are not spaces that are outside of reality, physicality, work, or the ordinary in a type of binary system that keeps them separated. Such a view, for example, has been a rallying cry for video gamers (often white, male, and straight) who attempt to claim that games are not the place for politics whenever the experiences of women, LGBTQ, or people of color are represented in games.[26] Another deployment of this binary shows up in the disdain that critics such as MacKenzie Wark hold for the increasing "gamification" of work where points, rewards, or leaderboards are created to inspire competition and a feeling of impact in work to the point that "work becomes a gamespace, but no games are freely chosen any more."[27] Instead of defining play in contrast to work or reality, one approach is to question the readiness to create such binaries, what Fickle calls "playfully maintaining our skepticism."[28] We can consider what the stakes are in attempting to define play as completely separated from the mundane, a definition that props up and

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[25] Ehrmann, 55.

[26] Katherine Cross, "The Nightmare is Over," *Queer Games Studies*, ed. Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 180.

[27] MacKenzie Wark, *Gamer Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), par. 11-12.

[28] Fickle, 137.

then reifies a framing mechanism that keeps "what is at play" from rippling outside the "magic circle."

As a result, play and game critics have taken to task the many assumptions about play that allows it to (re)create the "ordinary." Bonnie Ruberg in *Video Games Have Always Been Queer* highlights that games don't need to be "fun," but rather can ignite affective responses such as pain, sadness, frustration, anxiety, and so forth, resisting the "hegemony of fun" that has dominated the way play is conceptualized.[29] "Fun" itself is always imbricated in "structures of power, privilege, and oppression," often mobilized to foreclose instances of performance and play.[30] Rather than only being a space engaging "fun" which silences voices and experiences, play constructs a space for a variety of affects and experiences that impact marginalized players. The attempt to declare play as "fun" hides the political and social stakes of play—one could consider the saying "it's all fun and games until someone gets hurt"—that keeps unquestioned or hidden the ideological framing of the play space and potential ways that the frames (re)create the player. This is akin to Gregory Bateson's often cited definition of "play" as a space of "playfulness" where the play frame is signaled as a form of metacommunication. Bateson uses the example of the dog's nip which "denotes the bite, but does not denote that which would be denoted by the bite."[31] As a result, the playspace is signaled by the potential that a "bite" could happen (a virtual "bite"), but the signal is interpreted in a way that the one playing with Bateson's dog knows that it will remain as only a "nip." However, as a

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[29] Bonnie Ruberg, *Video Games Have Always Been Queer* (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 166.

[30] Ruberg, 167.

[31] Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 182-3.

form of communication that requires interpretation, the virtual "bite" is always present that could materialize into an actual "bite." To put it another way, the key to performance and play is the "enactment of a double negative, the 'not…not,'" where the negation always includes within it the specter of actualization.[32]

Accordingly, common conceptions of play often attempt to keep it "pure" from the "ordinary" or critiques of the "ordinary," as a space of safety. The qualification of Huizinga's definition of play as not having a material interest has been questioned, particularly by Ehrmann who shows this as another place of contradiction within Huizinga's framework. The language of play may attempt to disown material gain in an attempt to keep it "pure," a conflict that also arises in language around the gift, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. However, the examples of competitive play that Huizinga describes, such as his reading of sociologist and gift theorist Marcel Mauss's interpretation of the *potlatch*, show the economic and political stakes of competitive play.[33] Game theorists have pivoted away from emphasizing, or even including, a clear demarcation between play and the ordinary with Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman promoting a definition of a type of artifice at work: "games maintain a boundary from so-called 'real life' in both time and space. Although games obviously occur within the real world, artificiality is one of their defining features."[34] Salen and Zimmerman's definition highlights the uncertainty around "real life" as something perceived, but not static,

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[32] Schechner, *Performance Studies*, 103.

[33] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 58-61.

[34] Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 80.

evident by their clarification of reality as "so-called" as well as couching it within

quotation marks.

Within the space of play which is both of, but also apart from, the ordinary,

theorists have considered what it means to be a player. For Ehrmann, Huizinga's and

Caillois's accounts of play focus perhaps too much on agency within play-space: "They

forgot that players may be played; that, as an object in the game, the player can be its

stakes (*enjeu*) and its toy (*jouet*)."[35] If play is framed by procedures, rules, and syntax,

then participants can be played by those rules, becoming shaped and played with by the

constraints.[36] Hans-Georg Gadamer emphasizes the play-space as a way to show the

objectivity of being in how the player is shaped by the frames of play as the act of

playing "becomes an experience changing the person who experiences it."[37] According to

Brian Sutton-Smith, "the game plays the player" as "once you begin playing, you are

taken over by the things that are serious within the game, regardless of how serious that

same game is estimated to be in the eyes of the nonplaying world."[38] Even while play

might be dismissed as not serious, it can actually potentially be "in earnest" as it creates a

particular experience that, through experience, (re)creates the player. From this, recent

interest in the phenomenology of objects has valuably revised theories of play, as

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[35] Ehrmann, *Homo Ludens* Revisited, 55.

[36] In his book *Bullshit Jobs*, David Graeber places work alongside make-believe and play to suggest that the oppressiveness of work, particularly ones that are "bullshit," arises from participating in somebody else's make-believe rather than negotiating your own. Graeber's example of the worker-as-player is similar to Ehrmann's player-as-played in that both figurations highlight the stakes of play as well as the potential to become a toy within someone else's play space, see: Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018), 153.

[37] Hans-Georg Gadamer, 92.

[38] Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 182.

exemplified by the epigraph from Ian Bogost in this introduction where play can be located within objects in that it shapes the way we play.

Specifically, the way a playspace can (re)create a player is through what Bogost defines as procedural rhetoric.[39] Bogost draws his framework from Janet Murray's influential *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, a cornerstone in work on interactive narratives. To write something procedurally, what Murray calls "procedural authorship," is to write the rules by which the texts appear as well as writing the texts themselves."[40] The "rules" are the programming scripts and coding that act as triggers for texts to appear on the screen. Commonly, this is used in branching scenario fiction such as the interactive fiction computer game *Zork* (1980) or interactive fiction created by the platform *Twine*, designed by Chris Klimas in 2009.[41] In essence, the "rules" are triggered by the user's participation—which is in turn constructed by these rules—as "the conditions under which things will happen in response to the participant's actions."[42] Another way to think of this is through the allusion to dance that Murray valuably provides:

> …the procedural author is like a choreographer who supplies the rhythms, the
>
> context, and the set of steps that will be performed. The interactor, whether as
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> navigator, protagonist, explorer, or builder, makes use of this repertoire of

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[39] Ian Bogost, *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 28-39.

[40] Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 152.

[41] The open-source and accessible nature of *Twine* has allowed for a proliferation of feminist and queer narratives as noted by anna anthropy, who also provides a number of wonderful tutorials on how to use the tool, see: anthropy, *Rise of the Videogame Zinesters: How Freaks, Normals, Amateurs, Artists, Dreamers, Drop-outs, Queers, Housewives, and People Like You are Taking Back an Art Form* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012).

[42] Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, 152.

possible steps and rhythms to improvise a particular dance among the many, many possible dances the author has enabled.[43]

The performance space, as play space, is negotiated through the *affordances* of the rules and objects provided and the participant who will "improvise a particular dance" out of the multiple potential dances and moves that could occur within this space. Affordances are properties of an object or space that suggest certain actions that can be taken, dependent on a user's capabilities, experiences, and perceptions. In other words, objects and mechanics within a playspace will afford certain ways that a player can interact with them. Due to these possibilities afforded within spaces, Chaganti emphasizes the virtuality of dance, particularly our meditation of medieval dance, as a defamiliarizing impulse in that it "presents elements that are apprehensible but not materially tangible in a conventional way."[44] The improvisation in Murray's example is significant to note as following rules does not necessarily form habits—an opening in performance that becomes key to Judith Butler's argument that gender performance is never fully scripted, highlighting its gaps and potential erosion.[45] Bogost emphasizes the rhetorics of procedurality to discuss specifically *how* media, particularly video games, construct premises and arguments that unfold through a player's participation.[46]

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[43] Ibid., 153.

[44] Chaganti, *Strange Footing*, 49.

[45] Tracy McMullen, "Improvisation Within a Scene of Constraint: An Interview with Judith Butler," *Negotiated Moments: Improvisation, Sound, and Subjectivity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 23.

[46] Bogost, *Persuasive Games,* 4.

From this nexus of approaches to performance and play, we can see the shaping of both the player as well as the space of play occurring in a way that can be potentially limiting, while at the same time, creative. The negotiation between affordances and the player create what Katherine Angel Cross calls a "laboratory of dreams," where players are able to mobilize affordances to enact self-construction."[47] Cross draws upon research on play in children, citing Barrie Throne's work on gender play where play is "an active engagement with the signifiers that suffuse childhood and constitute proactive self-construction in a way mediated but not obviated by power."[48] *Active* cannot be emphasized enough as "people *do* something with what is imposed upon them or given to them," meaning that we re-create with the affordances in front of us.[49] This is why roleplaying (whether video games, tabletop, or live-action role playing) often provides a safe space for queer players to explore subjectivities they may not usually be able to by drawing upon affordances and playing with them. In what has become a cornerstone article for performance studies, Clifford Geertz close reads the practice of cockfights in Bali as a playspace where the subjectivity of a spectator is revealed through repeated participation.[50] Alighning play with literature, still lifes, and other media forms, Geertz highlights the imbrication of subjectivity to spaces of play where they "generate and regenerate" subjectivity through its organization and performance.[51]

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[47] Katherine Angel Cross, "The New Laboratory of Dreams: Role-Playing Games as Resistance," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 40.3/4 (October 2012), 75.

[48] Cross, "The New Laboratory of Dreams," 75.

[49] Cross, 75.

[50] Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Daedalus* 134.4 (Fall 2005), 84.

[51] Geertz, "Deep Play," 85.

The ability to (re)create subjectivity is why so much attention is given to children and play, to the point that it becomes a social anxiety. Judith Halberstam argues that the anxiety around children is indicative of their very queerness as shown by the extent to which parents attempt to normalize a child, a point of focus in Chapter 2 when considering the position of the child in *Roman de Silence*.[52] Gender is a process and a performative practice, as Judith Butler has valuably argued, making gender a performance that materializes the affordances and terms it draws upon.[53] The possibility of constructively misappropriating affordances presents a space of role-play that (re)creates, through improvisation, potential embodied selves. Such a potential can be curtailed, clogging the membrane, as a correction ("stop playing with/like that") or cast as being safe because they are only "playing," a move similar to characterizing statements as "only a joke," drawing on Bateson's "nip" as a way to virtualize something that may have materialized. Both moves reveal the earnestness in play and attempt to keep play acts from rippling into daily life, particularly as a process of (re)creation. For Cross, her time playing the massive multiplayer online (MMO) game *World of Warcraft* (*WoW*) was an experiment in *becoming*: "Self and other dissolved, and I became aware of a process of *becoming* in my gendered life, a horizon that I might never reach but one worth pursuing."[54] This seems to be the particular efficacy of role-playing (as *WoW* is

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[52] Halberstam examines this queerness in the context of embracing failure, a framework that created clear connections to play and game studies as failure is often a cornerstone of games. Bonnie Ruberg plays to this connection in moderating a conversation between Halberstam and Jesper Juul, a game critic, who wrote *The Art of Failure*: see, Ruberg, "The Arts of Failure: Jack Halberstam in Conversation with Jesper Juul," *Queer Game Studies*, ed. Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

[53] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 28-32.

[54] Cross, 75.

from the role-playing game genre), which may or may not have particular objectives, being close to freeplay where the affordances and constraints (the mechanic, rules, and so forth) are only starting points that are built upon and through. Thinking back to my own interactions with games, role-playing games and simulations being of particular interest to my own gaming habits, I would consistently explore my own sexual identity and preferences as I played. Playing as same-sex couples in *The Sims* (2000) or installing community-created mods in *Baldur's Gate 2* (2000) that added romanceable same-sex non-playable characters were ways to begin materializing my own *becoming* queer within virtual, play spaces. These spaces mattered as engaging in same-sex relationships in games went past just representation, as it afforded me the opportunity to play as a different self, a persona through the game's avatar. I negotiated my own desires through the affordances of the game or added more affordances thanks to a community of queer creators that I came to support.

This *becoming* entails a "destructive-creative cycle," a dynamic that medievalist J. Allan Mitchell notes as the chaos of play.[55] To recreate, one dissolves the separations between referents, meanings, human relations, object relations, and realities in such a way that eventually one reforms matter. For Mitchell, "play is inceptive, creating and destroying little worlds, calling attention to the recessive and emergent qualities of everyday matters."[56] I will return to specific work on gender play in the following

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[55] J. Allen Mitchell*, Becoming Human: The Matter of the Medieval Child* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

[56] Mitchell, *Becoming Human*, 92.

chapter, but for now, it is safe to say that play enacts changes in the world, changes that *matter*.

The (Medieval) Ambiguity of Play

I have interchangeably used the terms "play" and "game" so far in this introduction. Medievalists have responded to the work of Huizinga and others to clarify the linguistic and semantic meanings and changes of these terms in the context of the medieval period, particularly because Huizinga commonly takes the medieval as evidence for his arguments. V.A. Kolve, Glending Olson, and Lawrence Clopper have identified the interchangeability of these terms, particularly within the context of medieval plays. Kolve argues that "*ludus*, with its English equivalents 'play' and 'game,' becomes the ubiquitous generic term for the vernacular drama."[57] This fact has made it difficult to identify what medieval writers were referring to when they use these terms. For example, Clopper warns against framing the *Tretis of Miraclis Pleying* as a purely "anti-theatrical" text, referring to other popular activities that included some form of performance.[58] As Kendrick points out, popular expressions such as "pleien a play" in Middle English "stress performance of one sort or another" within a variety of different genres.[59] In addition, within this period the term *gāmen* (as a verb) was used as a "complement" of *pleien* or even a synonym, and eventually would become more restricted in its meaning: "It would be more accurate to say that, by the end of the Middle

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[57] V.A. Kolve, *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 12.

[58] Lawrence Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 69.

[59] Kendrick, 50.

Ages, *pleie* had absorbed *gamen*'s original sense of the spontaneous bubbling up of joy, while the sense of *game* had become more formal, rule, and strategy oriented."[60] As a result, *game* could refer not only to activities, but as Kendrick shows in her reading of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, to schemes, plans of action, or intrigue.[61] Clopper provides another complexity in the way medieval drama appropriated "lay festive behavior" while emphasizing ideological and moral values.[62] Plays like the *Castle of Perseverance* provide a good example in its use of the term "game" several times throughout to refer to "sport," "scheme," or "wager."

The issue with this view, however, is the separation of play and seriousness that accounts often repeat. Clopper, Kendrick, and Alan Hindley all discuss playing and games as "intrusions" (Kendrick) or "injections" (Hindley) into drama. As Hindley argues in the context of medieval French drama, the "term *jeu* ('game,' 'play') can often also designate 'gaming,' where social activities such as board-games, dice, and cards came to be exploited not just as a means of injecting an element of realism into the action but also as an important source of symbolic and metaphorical significance."[63] For Kolve, the values of these dramas are communicated "under the pretense of play."[64] I am cautious about the dichotomies between what is "play" as a pretense and the ideologies or values posed as if not being imbricated in play. As we have seen through scholarship on

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[60] Ibid., 53.

[61] Ibid., 53.

[62] Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game*, 138.

[63] Alan Hindley, "Playing Games in the Early French Theatre (1350-1550)," *The Playful Middle Ages: Meanings of Play and Plays of Meaning*, edited by Paul Hardwich (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 23-44.

[64] Kolve, *A Play Called Corpus Christi*, 24.

play, it's not as if play is disinterested in or necessarily free of ideological structures. Nor is it necessarily always "fun," but can also be serious. Hans-Jürgen Diller in his study on laughter in Middle English drama complicates the view that "festive culture," as being outside education or "seriousness," was what would "evolve" or be folded into drama. His reading of *Mankind*, for instance, emphasizes how the linguistic humor is of a type that "would not have originated in the marketplace but in the students' hall," drawing out the use of playing in education and learning rather than being only in the context of "leisure."[65] The debate recalls the epigraph by Augustine that I began this introduction with —"the amusement of adults is called business—" as a denial of pleasure (not just "fun") that can be a part of or coming out of the act of (re)creating a self through what often becomes characterized as "didactic." In a similar stroke, the "lay festivities" are cast as being similar to child's play, with drama being cast as "mature," reifying the very evolutionary framework that is being critiqued.

The relationship between play and game is complex due to the slipperiness in how the terms as well as the restriveness of their definitions. Generally, the definition of "game" often is more restrictive and formalized than play, as shown by at least one route of both terms' linguistic evolution in English. Salen and Zimmerman note two different conceptions of the relationship between play and game. One way to conceive of the relation between game and play is to cast play as a way of interacting with games, giving games a wider definition that highlights the framework and mechanics of any activity. "Game" can be considered a subset of play in that it is a more formalized aspect of play,

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[65] Hans Jürgen-Diller, "Laughter in Medieval English Drama: A Critique of Modernizing and Historical Analyses," *Comparative Drama* 36.1/2 (Spring/Summer 2002), 15.

meaning the conditions, rules, and mechanics of the play space are more clearly defined.[66] This may be why games carry more symbolic or allegorical meanings due their formalized structures.

Chess is a common medieval example of a game that allegorized medieval political and social hierarchies and interactions. William Caxton's Middle English *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, first printed in 1474, is an adaptation of an earlier treatise by Jacobus de Cessolis entitled *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobelium ac popularium super ludo scachorum* (*The Book of the Morals of Men and the Duties of Nobles and Commoners, on the Game of Chess*), which uses chess as an allegory for an organized polity. As Jenny Adams argues, Caxton's added prologues emphasize the broader potential readership as the act of playing chess, or the act of playing the text as chess, can spur virtue across the community, doubled by the motivation to print the text.[67] Book One begins with a history of chess that presents the game as having directly derived out of a history of discordant rulership, beginning with the Babylonian king Evylmerodach chopping his father's body in three hundred pieces and giving it to vultures:

> Under this kyng, thenne, Evylmerodach, was this game and playe of the
>
> chesse founden. Trewe it is that somme men wene that this play was founden in

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[66] Salen and Zimmerman, *Rules of Play*, 83.

[67] William Caxton, *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, edited by Jenny Adams (Rochester, NY: TEAMS, 2009): par. 9. Adams emphasizes that Caxton's edition more closely aligns with the genre of *speculum corpora politica*, a mirror of a political body, as opposed to a *speculum regis*, mirror of rulers, in its emphasis on broader social relations and harmony to "correct" discord. Other adaptations of the *Liber* exist in French and German metrical versions as well as an anonymous French poem called *Les Echechs Amoureux* that seems draw heavily from the *Liber*, but recasts the game as that of two lovers—love and games of strategy being commonly linked.

the tyme of the bataylles and siege of Troye. But that is not so. For this playe cam

to the playes of the Caldees, as Diomedes the Greek saith and reherceth, that

amonge the philosophres was the most renomed playe amonge al other playes.

And after that cam this playe in the tyme of Alixander the Grete into Egypt, and

so unto alle the parties toward the south. And the cause wherfore this playe was so

renomed shal be sayd in the third chepitre.[68]

The passage as a whole shows the very slippage of the terms play and game within just a couple of lines. The first line refers to the "game and playe of the chesse," denoting chess as a game and then specifically the act of playing it. However, the references to chess afterwards only use the term "play" which seems to replace "game" from the first line. If "play" in this regard has a different meaning, it is unclear from the context in which Caxton uses it.

The origin of chess was in response to the actions of Evylmerodach as an opportunity to "corecte and repreve the king." For in the act of playing chess, Evylmerodach would become "vertuous." As Evylmerodach sees various members of his court play the game, he approaches a philosopher who teaches him chess:

Than the phylosopher began to teche hym and to shewe hym the maner of the

table of the chesse borde and the chesse meyne, and also the maners and the

condycions of a kyng, of the nobles, and of the comyn peple, and of theyr offyces,

and how they shold be touchyd and drawen, and how he shold amende hymself

and become vertuous.[69]

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[68] Caxton, *Game and Playe of the Chesse*, Bk. 1, ll. 14-21.

[69] Caxton, *Game and Playe of the Chesse,* Bk. 1, ll. 54-58.

The philosopher highlights the mechanics and rules of the game, specifying what each piece does and how they should be "touchyd and drawen" ("played and moved").[70] In the act of following these rules, the king would be able to "amende" (improve) and become a virtuous person. From this, the philosopher frames chess as an educational opportunity that (re)creates the king and prompts virtue. Paired with the woodcuts that were added in the text's second printing, chess is read as a process of reorganizing discord through the playing of its formalized mechanics. As Jenny Adams argues in her introduction, the woodcuts in particular "move from an image of a king's fragmented body to a picture of a king intact" showing the how a "kynge must be thus maad," enacting the cycle of "destruction-creation" that Mitchell highlights in the space of play—or what Adams calls "manufacturing."[71] This process of fragmenting and recreating within play is also a feature of allegory as I will show, making Caxton's *Game and Playe of the Chesse* a vivid example of how these two modes play off of each other.

Player's Guide

The shared concerns of performance, play, and game studies in (re)creation provide a valuable framework to consider how reading texts through the lens of play and game produces additional questions and concerns that a strict performance studies approach has yet to do. While respecting disciplinary approaches, I also move among them, reorienting them, as a way to push the complex, conceptual idea of "play" to its

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[70] Interestingly, the use of "touchyd" here recalls its use in Middle English in the playing of an instrument, as the closest definition provided in this case by the *MED*.

[71] Adams, ed., "Introduction," *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, par. 22.

limits (though there are, in fact, no limits). As a focus to this inquiry, I am particularly concerned with the question of orientation and how play asks us to engage in a reorientation, often following disorientation, to recreate selves. My goal is to show how that are not conventionally considered as "games" engage in play and game-like rhetorical strategies in attempts to produce selves within the world, highlighting the play aspects within productions that have been considered through performance and ritual approaches.

The first chapter folds together play, allegory, and self-creation with a reading of the Middle English play *Wisdom* in the context of the digital animated film, *Inside Out*.[72] Being a "play," *Wisdom* performs the very creation-destruction cycle that occurs in the act of playing as the drama pieces apart the soul into its faculties. In response to Jody Enders' "Allegory Plays," this chapter examines how allegory "allows us to reincorporate the patently ludic dimensions into allegory theater and theatrical allegory."[73] Drawing on Sara Ahmed's work of willfulness (through Augustine) and the rhetorical devices of the psychodrama, I show how playing-as-*becoming* animates, and thereby automatizes, a subject in an attempt to rein in willfulness.[74] However, the playspace is always open, as Anima can always potentially become pieced apart again as evidenced by the ability to split into its separate faculties throught the play. In this chapter, I highlight the places where audiences are invited into the performance as virtual participants as well as how at

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[72] All passages from *Wisdom* are derived from David N. Klausner's TEAMS edition of the play: Klausner, ed., *Two Moral Interludes:* The Pride of Life *and* Wisdom (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008). Translations from the Middle English into Modern English are my own. Latin translations into Modern English are the work of David Klausner; Pixar, *Inside Out* (2015).

[73] Jody Enders, "Allegory Plays," *SEL* 55.2 (Spring 2015), 449.

[74] Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

least one "reader" played with the extant manuscript. Introduced in this chapter is a focus on child development derived from *Inside Out* as well as the cast of children who are both invited to and are part of the performance.

Evident from Caxton's chess, *Inside Out*, and Anima's faculties, allegory engages in the performance of concepts that become embodied through personification. The second chapter examines how playing pervades the French "allegorical" romance, *Silence*. The centrality of a debate between Nature and Nurture in *Silence* creates this space of play, staged as a contest between the two as Silence plays within the debate. I analyze and weave together three instances of playing that occur throughout the text with gender and adolescence at the root. By focusing on Silence's characterization as an *enfans*, or adolescent, this chapter reconsiders the *Roman de Silence* as a playground of gender to highlight the stakes, constraints, and openness that the poem performs through the framing that play constructs. I focus primarily on the figure of the robot presented through the figure of the *Natura Artifex*, recalling the figure of the cyborg who resists binary identification through being both human and robot—rather than human or robot. Being able to resist and confound binaries presents a figure as semantically and physically unbounded as the stuff of Alan de Lille's (sexual and gendered) nightmares as language is unable to easily define and categorize non-binary body. Accordingly, the debates between Nature and Nurture and the musical playing of Silence build on this playspace, a space in which modern critics additionally participate. This chapter is a case study in play and (re)creation in its many forms, folding together medieval and modern anxieties of identity and performance that pervade child's play.

Through the context of virtual reality games and meditative apps, Chapter Three departs into a corpus of texts initially seeming to be the least playful of my project's textual objects: the meditations of the Middle English Wooing Group. This final chapter takes on "scripting" in the act of performance within the meditations of the Middle English Wooing Group. Sharing the interest in transformation and creation of the previous chapters, Chapter Three analyzes the prompts and scripted form of the *Wohunge off ure Lauerd* and the *Ureison* that create a cognitive space and mood for reflection to occur. This space is characterized by a series of constraints and openness through the use of negotiation and language of the gift. Both meditations, particularly the *Wohunge*, engage in a complex negotiation of the anchoritic reader's relation to Christ, often casting it as a quasi-*agonistic* ritual with Christ being the "winner." Connecting the shared sociological assumptions between play theory and the gift theories of Georges Bataille and Marcel Mauss, this chapter argues for the playfulness of desire in these meditations, particularly how play, game, and S/M (sado-masochism) intersect to create an anchoritic, devotional self. The role-play here in engaging masochism and potential failure are two strands of contemporary game studies that are useful to pursue as the speaker attempts to (re)create themselves cyclically in relation to Christ.

CHAPTER II:
THE EMBODIED ANIMA: PLAYING THE SOUL IN THE ALLEGORICAL PLAY
WISDOM[1]

"The demand for obedience is not simply a demand that the part obeys the whole but is willing to become part of a whole. Willfulness would be a diagnosis of *unbecoming parts*, and those parts may or may not be recognized as individuals." -Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*[2]

"And, therefore, they are called three persons or three substances, not that any diversity of essence is to be understood, but so that we may be able to answer by some one word when anyone asks three what or what three things." –Augustine, *De Trinitate*, VIII.4[3]

"The soule is on in substauns and haþ many maner worchinge þerby it nediþ to schewe diuers partinge of his myȝt and vertues." –John Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things*, III.6[4]

"ANIMA"TING THE SELF

In 2015, Pixar released the CG-animated film *Inside Out*, another entry in the studio's line of films that center on personifying and anthropomorphizing non-human entities including toys (*Toy Story*), fish (*Finding Nemo*), and insects (*A Bug's Life*). *Inside Out* is about the lives of five personified emotions (Joy, Sadness, Disgust, Fear, and Anger) that exist in the mind of an eleven-year-old girl named Riley (Figure 1). The film examines the role emotions play in the creation of memories, the processing of these memories into personality, and the ways in which the emotions work together to help a person through daily life. In its emphasis on the coordination of emotions, the film

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[1] I presented a version of this chapter at the Medieval Academy of America conference at the University of Toronto in 2017. My appreciation to the chair, my fellow panelists, as well as the audience for their valuable feedback and wonderful conversation. An additional thanks goes to David Klausner for prompting deeper questions on the role of children in *Wisdom* as well as some funny anecdotes.

[2] Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, 97-8.

[3] Augustine, *On the Trinity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[4] John Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things*, ed. M.C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 96.

examines what a "healthy mind" looks like, while the emotions-as-Riley-as emotions help her adjust to a new life in California.

Figure 1: The Personified Emotions in *Inside Out* (2015)

Over the course of the film, the "camera" shifts between Riley's exterior world and her interiorized emotions with which the film spends most of its time.[5] These shifts destabilize the binary of interiority and exteriority by showing how the embodied emotions are integral to and respond to actions, experiences, and sensations of the body. At the same time, however, the emphasis of the film is on the mind, zooming into the mind of Riley that is animated through metaphors of the mind as a playground and a computer, full of tubes, shelves, and computer panels. As such, the film visualizes how the mind *works* and identifies its parts, imagining how these parts have power in shaping the self.

By dramatizing the discord between emotions, *Inside Out* draws upon elements of a longer allegorical genre, the *psychomachia*, which sees its origins in Prudentius's fifth-

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[5] Several versions of *Inside Out* have appeared online (hosted on sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, for example) in which editors have removed all scenes that include the emotions, reducing the film to eleven minutes in length and making it considerably less exciting.

century Latin poem that depicts a battle between the personified Virtues and Vices. The *psychomachia* or a "battle in the soul" (for one definition) exhibits what Brenda Machosky describes as a battle that is *"for* the soul, and yet occurs *in* the soul," an allegory that is out of a particular time and place.[6] Adding another example of the "playfulness" of allegory that Jody Enders traces in the continuity *psychomachia* into modern media, *Inside Out* similarly depicts a battle *for* Riley's self, of a particular emotional orientation of the self in the case of the film.[7]

The focus on the emotions is key to animation as a form of movement. It is the emotions that animates Riley within *Inside Out* depicted as the drivers of Riley's actions and responses. As Sianne Ngai argues, "being 'animated' implies the most general of all affective conditions (that of being 'moved' in one way or another), but also a feeling that implies being 'moved' by a particular feeling, as when one is said to be animated by happiness or anger."[8] The act of "being moved" complicates the image of a unified subject as investigating the agents of movement engages in representation, giving life to the movers to the point that the movers (feelings) are the ones giving life to the subject. Causing movement in something, to create animation, requires isolated components and movements that act as the input for those movements. Take a video game, for example. To move a game's character, the player uses their thumbs (often) to press on the joysticks or pads on a controller which are mapped as inputs to the game. The buttons needed to cause certain actions are usually presented in a button mapping diagram as an example

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[6] Brenda Machosky, *Structures of Appearing: Allegory and the Work of Literature* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 66.

[7] Enders, "Allegory Plays," 453.

[8] Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 31.

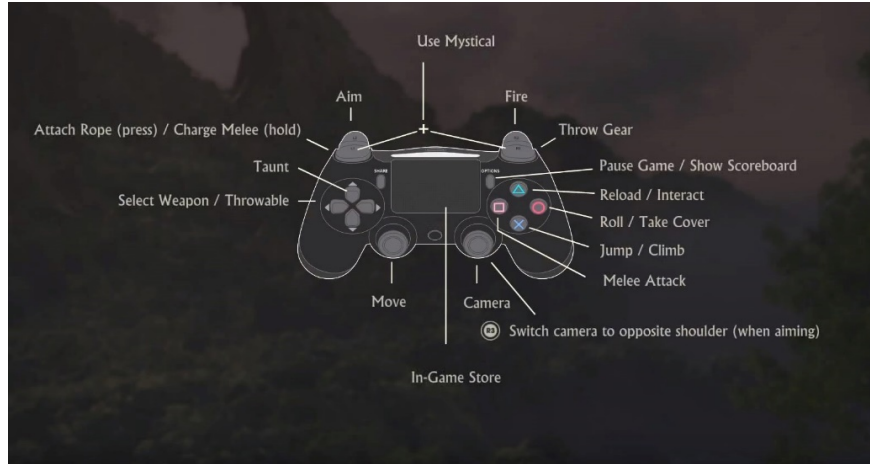from Naughty Dog's *Uncharted 4* shows (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Button Mapping screen for *Uncharted 4*.

Certain scenes may require the player to "button-mash," pressing down on a button

dictated by the game as fast as possible. These acts animate the player, or what Ngai calls

"automatizing," in calling on the player to move their thumbs and other fingers to cause

animation, or movement, in the game.[9]

The act of animating the mind weaves together the centrality of anatomical

visualization as well as the creation of memory images, highlighting José van Dijck's

argument that an artist is always at the center of the mediation of the anatomical body.

Throughout the history of anatomical diagramming and continuing with the arrival of

modern medical imaging software, "illustrators still function as important mediators

between anatomical insights and their visual representations" as visualization software

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[9] Ngai valuably performs a close reading of a scene of Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* as the narrator describes Tod Clifton as the puppeteer of a black puppet during a community show. The narrator's description highlights how the puppeteer is broken into functional parts as he moves the puppet, causing the mechanization of the puppeteer while the puppet becomes anthropomorphized. I take Ngai's reading as inspiration for the act of gaming, itself being a form of virtual puppetry; Ngai, 113.

mediate both what is represented as well as how.[10] The act of mediation and

representation involves piecing apart and reassembling that both reflects and recreates

cultural beliefs and practices, animating this unification through figuration. At the same

time, it presents these mediations as a "natural," "timeless," and "actual" unified entity.

Depicted in the film's central scene, as Joy, Sadness, and Riley's imaginary

friend, Bing-Bong enter into the imagination, *Inside Out* illustrates its own process of

animation in relation to cognition, or the process of abstraction and "representation"

through which the film itself is produced—creating a *trompe-l'oeil* of sorts. The

presentation of abstraction, personification, and animation draws attention to the

centrality of images to cognition, a process not lost on medieval theorists of memory and

cognition as the work of Mary Carruthers well attests, particularly in the context of an

increasing centrality of images in late medieval England.[11] The fight between Joy and

Sadness sends Riley's sense of self (her personality, memories) into chaos, allowing the

film to investigate—while also constructing—what a mind does, particularly what a

"healthy" mind ultimately needs. I bring this example up to tease out how some visual

and epistemological representative technologies continue today, especially those that

employ allegory in performance.

As such, Disney's *Inside Out* positions the animator and artist at the center of

visual mediations of embodied cognition, a significant technology of medical discourse—

in this case, neuropsychology. *Inside Out*'s allegorical performance emphasizes a specific

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[10] Jose van Dijck, *The Transparent Body: A Cultural Analysis of Medical Imaging* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 11.

[11] Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 116-170.

trajectory of self-realization and identity formation, particularly as it closely ties itself to

the centrality of family and obedience, that imagines the "healthy mind" as a figure of

unity. Like the *Psychomachia* that demonstrates a practice of virtue (suggesting a

universalized soul), *Inside Out* also insists on a certain configuration of the emotions, the

mind, and the self. In particular, the film advocates for the coordination of emotions that

eventually will lead to a singular, unified self, as the emotions take on the visual

signifiers of identity—clothing, hair styles, vocal style and tenor—that other characters of

the film reveal. Interestingly, Riley stands out as discordant through the individual

identities of each emotion showing both the possibility of discord even within the context

of an eventual potentiality of unity.

I start this chapter with *Inside* Out as an example within popular culture, cinema,

and animation of the crossings of images, visualization, memory, and allegory. These

modes of cognition and epistemology can be traced through a longer history of the

psychomachia, as Enders attempts to revise a common perception of the didactic as

"boring," with a call to revive the mode through playfulness.[12] When considering the

significance of visualization, unity, and costuming in the Middle English allegorical play

Wisdom, I draw attention to *Inside Out* as an opportunity to allow particular rhetorical

and performative devices in visualizing the self to vibrate amongst the medieval and the

modern. I will focus on the emphasis on the visuality of drama—dialogue, cues,

costuming, and a marginal manuscript "doodle"—to explicate how *Wisdom* provides an

intriguing example of the potential values as well as anxieties in performance-as-play,

particularly how the play of vision, bodies, and spectators are imagined through medieval

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[12] Enders, 447-464.

ideas of sensory experience and cognition. *Wisdom* ultimately provides a "theoretical object," a term Maaike Bleeker borrows from Hans-Thies Lehmann to denote works that think through and reimagine the particular impacts and affects of theater, becoming a "textual landscape" through which drama "draws attention to issues of representation itself, to representational forms, and of how they are perceived, or not."[13] In its attempt to construct a unified image of the self through community—or to put it in theater terms, transforming the individual spectator to an audience—*Wisdom* is centrally concerned with issues of representation and how these representations affect a series of spectators.

As such, I examine the visualization of the soul in the play of *Wisdom* to consider how the play pieces apart the soul to model particular ideas of unity and orientation towards community through the Mind and the Will. *Wisdom* provides a good example of how the *psychomachia* has been employed in different cultural contexts, as well as forms, but also allows for those moments that can feel both modern, and yet not. Through its dramatic, visual form, *Wisdom* visualizes what Sara Ahmed describes as the "diagnosis of *unbecoming parts*" of the willful subject as Anima attempts to "know itself," to become subject to unity, in the form of Christ and community.[14] Rather than rely on private reading of the texts that *Wisdom* adapts, the play provides a visual, diagrammatic, set of ideas and practices that the play's spectators can embody and practice.

In Pixar's *Inside Out*, the film with which this chapter opened, the discordance between Joy and Sadness is an issue of the Will or, at least, one of Willfulness. Riley's

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[13] I draw much from the work of Maaike Bleeker who provides a rich foundation for considerations on a psychoanalytic analysis of theater and (anti-)theatricality: see, *Visuality in the Theatre* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 8.

[14] Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, 98.

father thanks her for being his "happy girl," a deeply gendered expectation to continue smiling no matter what recalling the common imperative for women to "smile." As such, the family desires a child who is not disruptive, who easily transitions into the change as a way to underplay that change has happened, a continual of the same that is imposed on Riley as she processes the transition. What the film highlights is the cognitive and affective discordance that occurs through being impelled to be "joyful," to allow Joy to override all other emotional faculties. In the context of the expectation to allow Joy to be at the controls, willfulness, the ability to perform anything *but* joy, is shut down, leading to what seems to be a unified exterior at the expense of a shattering of the interiorized self.

As Sara Ahmed explains through an "archive of willfulness," the willful subject is disruptive, singling the self out from the same in its performance of protest, in its decision to divert from a determined, expected path.[15] Ahmed valuably draws upon Augustine's theories of the Will and the body politic, two potential openings into the medieval period and its further thinking on politics of the Will. The play of *Wisdom* offers a visual example of some of Ahmed's conclusions as it focuses prominently on the figure of the discordant Will.

It is useful to consider the discord in *Inside Out* as a problem of the will as Riley struggles with the request to be, while desiring to not be, a willful subject. The film suggests that the discord results from the expectation from the father, an expectation commonly demanded of women, to be his "happy girl," leading to Joy's attempts to prevent Sadness from taking the controls. Like the "hegemony of fun" that Ruberg has

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[15] Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, 42.

identified in many game communities, the direction to be "happy" is an attempt to suppress willfulness and engage in affective experiences that could disrupt ideological structures. As Ahmed describes, "the demand for obedience is not simply a demand that the part obeys the whole but is willing to become part of a whole," that particular emotions are performed to show unity.[16] Through the separation of Riley's emotions, as they each perform as individuals, willfulness becomes a "diagnosis of *unbecoming parts*," a dense semantic statement that weaves together division—linking parts to process of "becoming"—and an aesthetic judgement on moments when a subject seems to "come a-part."[17]

In particular, the internal faculty, Will, connects the internal soul with the external acts of the body, as a necessity to participate in the world. In effect, Will bridges the internal and the external, the soul and the body, through translating internal decisions into actions. As a result of Christ's emphasis on Charity, the theological virtue associated with the Will, in his concluding instructions to Anima, I argue that the Will becomes the primary interest in the play precisely because of the faculty's tie between the internal, soul and the external body.

Once Wisdom introduces the internal faculties to Anima, Will describes himself to Anima as both the origin and the location of human action:

WYLL*:* Wat soule wyll gret mede recure,

    He must grett wyll have in thought or dede,

    Vertuusly sett wyth consyens pure,

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[16] Ahmed, 97-8.

[17] Ibid., 98.

> For in wyll stondyt only mannys dede.
>
> Wyll for dede oft ys take;
>
> Therfor, Þe wyll must weell be dysposyde.[18]

The Will, therefore, is the central faculty for translating thought into action. A will that is well-"dysposyde" and "consyens pure" results in appropriate deeds that are crucial to presenting the internal disposition of the soul to the world. Deeds, such as charity that originate from the Will, become external signs of the soul's disposition. Therefore, the Will, acting as a part of Anima, shows a close interdependence between the body and the soul. The Will creates bodily actions, and needs these actions to show the disposition of the soul. As a result of the play's interest in how a soul is to live in the world, the Will performs the ideal union between body and soul, meant for the audience to inhabit, through its visualization, unifying the self with community.[19]

The emphasis on controlling the Will, rather than being a willful subject, is highlighted in another allegorical text, the Middle English *Sawles Warde*, an allegory on how to protect the soul through the rhetorical use of managing a household. Wit, or reason, is presented as the head of the household, whereas Will is the "unruly" wife who is unable to control her faculties:

> (1) Nu is Wil þet husewif al stille — þet er wes so willesful — al ituht efter Wittes wissunge, þet is husebonde. (2) Ant al þet hird halt him stille, þet wes iwunet to beon fulitohen ant don efter Wil, hare lefdi, ant nawt efter Wit.

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[18] *Wisdom,* ll. 217-220.

[19] For a discussion on Middle English definitions of "will" and its roots in the Augustinian tradition, see Masha Raskolnikov, *The Body against Soul: Gender and Sowlehele in Middle English Allegory* (Columbia: Ohio State University Press, 2009): 96-9.

[Now Will that housewife is entirely silent — who before was so willful — fully

guided according to the instruction of Wit, who is husband. (2) And all that

company holds itself still, that was accustomed to be foolish and follow Will,

their lady, and not after Wit.][20]

 Like *Wisdom*, in presenting willfulness, these allegories present an unstable, torn subject

rather than, as Masha Raskolnikov suggests, presenting a unified subject that faculty

psychology tends to do: "rather than offering a static self, a self in which all the functions

are clearly delineated and stable, *Sawles Warde* puts the parts of the self that it describes

into dialogue."[21]

Linked with the theological virtue of Charity—the virtue central to *Wisdom* as

exemplified in the play's conclusion—the Will has the ability to transform interiority to

exteriority as the origin and location of action as "for in Will stands only human's deeds."

Through action, a person's interior is able to be both visualized as well as

transformed/corrected, a dynamic that Julie Paulson claims is reflected through the

penitential system set by the 1215 Fourth Lateran Council.[22] Continuing to emphasize the

divided nature of Anima, the Will should be unified with the Mind in that one's actions

are meant to clearly match their intentions. Within the pageant of the transformed Mights,

each faculty has its own livery, showing their individual status from one another. In other

words, the faculties "self-mastery" dismantles the 3-in-1 Trinitarian logic underpinning

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[20] "Sawles Warde," *The Katherine Group MS Bodley* 34, ed. Emily Rebekah Huber and Elizabeth Robertson (Rochester, NY: TEAMS, 2016), 48.

[21] Masha Raskonikov, *Body against Soul*, 144.

[22] Julie Paulson, "A Theater of the Soul's Interior: Contemplative Literature and Penitential Education in the Morality Play *Wisdom*" *JMEMS* 38.2 (2008): 278.

the function of the mind-soul. The disconnect between Will and the Mind is emphasized by Understanding's transformation into Perjury, now having Doubleness, Falseness, and Deceit in his pageant. As the bridge between Mind and Will, concept and action, Understanding becomes the manipulation of interpretation, showing that one's actions do not match their intentions. As a result, Understanding's transformation into Perjury reveals questions about both misinterpretation and authenticity in that an image—whether as representation or action—can be misread.

This "doubleness" is gendered in Will's pageant as his pageant of "Fornycacyon" includes six women who arrive on stage: "in sut, thre dysgysyde as galontes and thre as matrones, wyth wondyrfull vysurs conregent [in costume, three [are] disguised as gallants and three as old wives, with wonderful matching masks.]"[23] Significant in the stage directions is that three of the women are dressed as gallants, sharing the attire of Lucifer and the faculties. Marlene Clark, Sharon Kraus, and Pamela Sheingorn have read this act of cross-dressing as a significant moment where "gendered characteristics seem to be in free play rather than bound to sexed bodies."[24] In this free play of gender, the text might be commenting upon contemporary practices of women dressing in masculine attire—and linking it to heightened sexuality. *Wisdom* reveals an anxiety over imagined gender authenticity, as well as any form of artifice, a comment that could be extended to the "matrones" or older, married women engaged in the dance as well. The play then reveals a number of femininities and masculinities occurring in the world, but comments upon

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[23] *Wisdom*, l. 752 s.d.

[24] Marlene Clark, Sharon Kraus, and Pamela Sheingorn, "'Se in what stat thou doyst indwell': The Shifting Constructions of Gender and Power Relations in *Wisdom*," *The Performance of Middle English Culture: ?Essays on Chaucer and the Drama in Honor of Martin Stevens*, ed. James J. Paxson, Lawrence M. Clopper, and Sylvia Tomasch (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1998), 54.

their inauthenticity when compared to the idealized gender positions of Christ and Anima. As Will describes in introducing his pageant, "*They wene sey soth wen that they lye* [they seem to say truth when they lie!]," emphasizing the delusion of truth, or "soth," within each member of his pageant.[25]

The performative potentials of devotional texts helps bridge the work on performance through cognitive studies that have focused primarily on the cycle plays—which have extant evidence of their performances. Jill Stevenson's approach to the efficacy of performance as something particularly bodily has a special resonance in the medieval period due to a strong connection between visuality, physicality, and community.[26] As both Stevenson and Claire Sponsler have explained in their readings of the infamous *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* (c. 1380-1425), the *Tretise* shows an awareness of the physicality of performance in its anxieties over how the spectator is drawn to their own body and, through this desire for the "image" of the body, what transformations may unfold as a result.[27] Thus, gestures and declarations that draw attention to the body are points through which to consider how self-reflection and desire could be activated and manipulated. These dynamics rearticulate anxieties about the relation of public and private devotional practices and consciousness, as well as the inability to clearly draw lines between them.

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[25] *Wisdom*, l. 749.

[26] Jill Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture*: *Sensual Piety in Late Medieval York* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 17. Claire Sponsler, *Drama and Resistance: Bodies, Goods, and Theatricality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 75-103.

[27] Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture*, 30.

The Visuality of Medieval Drama

Deeply rooted in an Augustinian contemplative tradition, *Wisdom* investigates the operations of the "know thyself" dictum, desirable for becoming *like* Christ in desiring Christ as spouse. To prepare herself to become Christ's bride, Anima asks how she can know of her spouse's godhood, being "incomprehensible."[28] Wisdom's response is to know herself, as "the more knowing of yowrselff passyble, / the more veriyly Ye xall God knowe." [29] This knowledge derives from the performed visualization of her various parts, requiring a public dissection of Anima's interworking faculties in order to show (and identify through showing) each. Unlike Christ, the soul can be diagrammed due to its own vulnerability, being only an "ymage" or imitation of the unified, masculine Christ. Thus, Anima phrases her question of *how* she can know through images of disassembly: "In a soule watt thynges be, / By whyche he hathe his very knowynge? [In a soul what are the things / by which he may gain this very knowledge?]"[30] As it is posed, the question suggests both that one can achieve knowledge *through* the faculties—the "thynges" in the soul—as well as by knowledge *of* the faculties.

This question posed by Anima introduces a series of close connections between visuality, epistemology, and authority, dynamics that theater scholars have discussed as central to the project of theater.[31] In particular, the play begins as an "exposition" of

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[28] *Wisdom*, l. 94.

[29] *Wisdom,* ll. 97-8.

[30] *Wisdom, ll.* 133-4.

[31] Significant work on the dynamics of vision in specifically medieval drama has been done through the use of either psychoanalysis or cognitive studies, see: Andrea Louise Young, *Vision and Audience in Medieval Drama: A Study of* The Castle of Perseverance (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015); Pamela King, "Seeing and Hearing; Looking and Listening" *Early Theater* 3 (2000), 155-65. In cognitive studies of performance, the Early Modern scholar Amy Cook richly draws upon the Mark Johnson and George

Anima by Wisdom, transforming Anima into an object that is subsequently disassembled into separate faculties that enacts an epistemological staging akin to later anatomical theaters—while different in significant ways. Like the epigraph above by John Trevisa, the soul "nediþ to schewe diuers partinge of his myȝt and vertues," an instruction that emphasizes the project of actively showing and dividing, enacting the process of visualizing for a spectator. While the dialogue already clarifies the play as one about knowledge, I argue that its form as play provides a significant dynamic that allows *Wisdom* to both demonstrate and reflect upon visuality, particularly historicized in medieval culture.

Deeply rooted in an Augustinian contemplative tradition, *Wisdom* investigates the operations of the "know thyself" dictum, desirable for becoming *like* Christ in desiring Christ as spouse. To prepare herself to become Christ's bride, Anima asks how she can know of her spouse's godhood, being "incomprehensible."[32] Wisdom's response is to know herself, as "the more knowing of yowrselff passyble, / the more veriyly Ye xall God knowe*"* (the greater knowledge of yourself suffering, / the more truly you shall know God).[33] This knowledge derives from the performed visualization of her various parts, requiring a public dissection of Anima's interworking faculties in order to show

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Lakoff's *conceptual blend*, revealing how the logics of the blend "to see is to know" (the link between vision and knowledge) is embedded in cognition, see: *Shakespearean Neuroplay: Reinvigorating the Study of Dramatic Texts and Performance through Cognitive Science* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 19, 44.

[32] *Wisdom*, l. 94. All passages from *Wisdom* are derived from David N. Klausner's TEAMS edition of the play: Klausner, ed., *Two Moral Interludes:* The Pride of Life *and* Wisdom (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008). Translations from the Middle English into Modern English are my own. Latin translations into Modern English are the work of David Klausner.

[33] *Wisdom,* ll. 97-8.

(and identify through showing) each part. Unlike God, the soul can be diagrammed due to its own vulnerability, being only an "ymage" or imitation of the unified, masculine Christ. Thus, Anima phrases her question of *how* she can know through images of disassembly: "In a soule watt thynges be, / By whyche he hathe his very knowynge?" (What things are in the soul, / through which he receives true knowledge?).[34] The question introduces dissection for the purposes of "knowynge," implicitly drawing upon the conceptual blend "TO SEE IS TO KNOW."[35] In this case, "to know" requires the appropriation of a feminine body, as both an image and a position that will be at once performed *through* and disassembled.[36]

I emphasize the language of dissection as a way to draw attention to the material practice and consequence of epistemology, particularly as the impetus of "know thyself" engages in a knowledge of not only one's self, but the dissemination, by means of performance, of that self to others. The anatomical model of the soul gestures towards the anatomical theaters of the Early Modern period, as interest in the politics of the anatomical body further became visual at its core, becoming a spectacle. This is not to say that the anatomical body was at any point *not* central to knowledge production and

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[34] *Wisdom,* ll. 33-4.

[35] The terminology of conceptual blend introduced by Mark Johnson and Geroge Lakoff in *Metaphors We Live By* has become central to considerations of the cognitive processes of visualization, particularly as the visualization that comes with the performance of theater. I am indebted to Amy Cook's insights of the conceptual blends at work underneath the metaphor of the mirror which she analyzes in the context of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, see: Cook, *Shakespearean Neuroplay,* 19, 44.

[36] The beginning of *Wisdom* draws upon the popular *sponsa Christi* tradition from Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons on the *Song of Songs*. Within Bernard's sermons, the speaker's positioning as a bride of Christ, in creating a feminine position, points to the appropriative nature of performance, particularly as a speaker appropriates and occupies a feminine position for himself. As Line Cecile Engh argues, the occupation of the feminine position offered in the *sponsa Christi* acts as a performance that universalizes devotion to Christ, while at the same time consuming a feminine position to do so. See: Engh, *Gendered Identities in Bernard of Clairvaux: Performing the Bride* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 5.

representation. As Bleeker describes, the anatomical theater was focused on the "authority of the anatomist," using the stage as an invitation for the audience "to take up the position of subject of vision as represented by the anatomist and to recognize what is shown as being the truth about the body and, therefore, about themselves as bodies."[37] In the case of *Wisdom*, the play is dissecting an embodied soul (Anima) not necessarily the body itself, creating different dynamics as the faculties also take up the position of expositors of the soul; although, this does ultimately lead to further division. The audience, as a result, is invited to embody the figure in its dissection, as it acts as an avatar for those who spectate, spurring particular actions as habits to performatively create a different self. We can see how the play operates to position Christ as the figure of authority, or perhaps game master, in the play who is ultimately the one who produces the exposition of Anima.

Immediately, *Wisdom* draws together the dynamics of visuality and visualization with epistemology drawing upon the language of mirroring and figuring that demonstrates several aspects of medieval theories of cognition. The centrality of visuality and images in medieval drama has been described by scholars working with either other allegorical plays like the *Castle of Perseverance* or the mystery play cycles. In this way, I rework Andrea Louise Young's analysis of *The Castle of Perseverance*, another allegorical drama that joins *Wisdom* in the Macro MS, by presenting a speculative argument on potential effects on and reactions from the play's audience in order to

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[37] Bleeker, *Visuality in the Theatre*, 148.

consider how the play creates community, particularly the creation of the self as a communal self within the structure of unity.[38]

The intense visual focus of *Wisdom* and other allegorical plays (*Mankind*, *Castle of Perseverance*, and *Everyman*) has been previously recognized by scholars, such as Clifford Davidson, in an attempt to address the dramatic form of these works. Through his explication of *Mankind*, *Perseverance*, and *Wisdom*, Davidson examines the iconography of these plays in the context of popular devotional and secular images in manuscript, murals, and other objects.[39] Explicating the iconography of *Wisdom*, Davidson states that the "play's spectacle is designed to impress itself upon an audience," a statement that can be taken literally within conception of the mind as a wax surface. The centrality of "impressing"—as a spectacle for an audience—articulates the work of mnemonics within theater in ways that explicitly attempts to create a particular medieval subject. This "impression" works though a recalling and reforming the image already present in the mind, at least presenting a created image as always already there, providing context to the play's emphatic use of language that recalls the action of shaping. As Mind introduces himself to the audience, he describes his similitude or "lyknes" to God, connecting the soul's faculties to the aspects of the Holy Trinity. Common to many works on medieval visionary culture is the dynamics of the intromissive gaze, where the object "comes forth to meet the subject" to be internalized by the receiver, and the extramissive gaze, through which the viewer sends out a "visual beam" to grasp and

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[38] Andrea Louise Young, *Vision and Audience*, 6.

[39] Clifford Davidson, *Visualizing the Moral Life: Medieval Iconography and the Macro Morality Plays* (New York: AMS Press, 1989).

subsume the object.[40] As Suzannah Biernoff emphasizes, medieval culture engaged with multiple systems of optics that imagined extramissive and intromissive gazes in various ways that negotiated complexly between externalizing sensory images and internalizing species, opening a possibility, according to Suzanne Akbari, to consider the ways subject positions of constructed in allegorical texts.[41] In an intromissive optical system imagines an object that emits species that "carry the object's likeness and essence that multiplies and reaches the eye of the person looking."[42] These species are then internalized by the gazer to enter into the mind to be negotiated among its faculties and already present mental images.

This negotiation among optical systems is significant to keep in mind when considering particularly how Anima will be able to "know" Christ through the process of being shown a diagram of the soul's functions. Developments in perspectivist optics demonstrated in David Lindberg's key text of the history of optics leads to changes over what exactly vision does by the late medieval period. As Jessica Barr and Akbari have both demonstrated in their works on visionary literature, these shifts lead to an increased distrust in vision that ultimately lead to the further work by the one processing and receiving images. For Akbari, these shifts develop into the idea that the creation of mental images is involved in "verisimilitude, creating an image that merely resembles its exemplar," which emphasizes only a *likeness* rather than a direct correspondence.[43]

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[40] Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 24.

[41] Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 3-4; Akbari, 23.

[42] Ibid., 16.

[43] Akbari, 23.

Dispelling the common attitude towards devotional texts that poses the visionary as simply "passive," Barr notes that knowledge gained through vision "does not always simply 'happen' through a flash of divine insight, but may instead require cognitive and volitional work on the part of the dreamer or visionary."[44] A negotiation must always take place between the visionary and the visions through processes of interpretation, recognition, and willing. This allows Barr to destabilize some of the common generic lines drawn by scholars by showing how various visionary texts complement each other, such as the ability for dream visions "to show visions that *fail* to communicate knowledge to their dreamers."[45] Being shown does not necessarily mean that the vision will be interpreted in a certain way, or possibly at all, emphasizing an anxiety on how the processing of images will take place as they enter the mind.

The (Virtual) Images of the Mind

As "entering" the mind, mental images are negotiated with images that are already present in memory. *Wisdom* brings out the personification of the Mind first to begin with the image already present that needs to be brought back to the mind's recognition. In this way, the image is "virtual" in that it is there, but needs to be materialized. As Mind introduces himself to the audience, he describes his similitude or "lyknes" to God, connecting the soul's faculties to the aspects of the Holy Trinity:

> MENDE I am Mynde, that in the soule ys
> The veray fygure of the Deyté.

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[44] Jessica Barr, *Willing to Know God: Dreamers and Visionaries in the Later Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 8.

[45] Barr, *Willing to Know God*, 8.

Wen in myselff I have mynde and se

The benefyttys of Gode and hys worthynes,

How holl I was mayde, how fayere, how fre,

How gloryus, how jentyll to hys lyknes,

Thys insyght bryngyt to my mynde

Wat grates I ough to God ageyn[46]

Mind's language reflects an interiority of looking in one's self for the image of God, realized "when, *in* myself, I have mind and see," revealing a dynamic of self-reflection. However, the image is something that needs to be recalled, brought again to the mind that is described as a re-interiorization. Emphasized in Mind's description of itself, looking inward to see a "holl" "lyknes" of Christ, an "insyght" is necessary to (re)create an orientation towards God as one of gratitude, "ageyn" as a reminder, a relighting of what the Mind already holds.

Mind's introduction highlights the centrality of mnemonics to the epistemological impetus of self-knowledge in *Wisdom*, as well as within its particular purpose of its dramatic form. As Jody Enders discusses in addressing the significance of violence within the medieval cycles plays, drama is imbricated in the medieval rhetorical process of *inventio*, *memoria,* and *actio* that is articulated as a cyclical process in attempting to establish Truth. For Enders, Truth is created through performativity, through a cyclical performance that attempts to create an image that is meant to seem timeless and stable.

The protodramatic imagery of the artificial memory *seems* stable, real, and true because the enactments of *actio* seem artificial, but afterward the artifice of delivery itself also seems true because it naturalizes or factualizes the memory

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[46] *Wisdom*, 183-189.

image that engenders it.[47]

Providing an apt analysis of Quintillian's *Institutio Oratoria* through post-structuralist criticism, Enders parses *invention* as the creation of "illusions of Truth," while *memoria* "rehearses those illusions giving them shape, character, and characterization" (the memory image), and *actio* at their performance "spectacularly."[48] The performance of *Wisdom* establishes the illusion of the soul through the "characterization" of its faculties and their relationships at the same time as it performs them for an audience, and instructs *how* to perform by its conclusion. Here, the Mind emphasizes a central concept of medieval cognition, particularly as it pertains to devotional culture—that the mind, being a faculty of a figure of God's likeness, already holds the image of God in mind. As a result, the play positions itself as a series of *potentialities*, that every soul, presented through Anima, already *potentially* will practice the narrative of the play, both shaping the process of recollection as well as naturalizing it through personified figures. This process complicates drama's "externalization of the inward, the concretizing or giving corporeal form to the images" that Theodore LeRud explicates from Thomas Aquinas's *Summa*.[49] Instead, *Wisdom* emphasizes the way that internal and external forces (re)produce each cyclically, highlighting Julie Paulson's analysis of *Wisdom* as a play that blurs the lines between interiority and exteriority.[50]

Considering Enders's process of performance as naturalization in another way,

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[47] Enders, 117.

[48] Ibid., 117.

[49] Theodore LeRud, *Memory, Images, and the English Corpus Christi Drama* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 43.

[50] Paulson, 253-83.

the staging of a soul that needs to once again know itself recalls the dynamics of self-help

guides, particularly when analyzed through a Foucauldian framework. A soul must be

forced through this dissection to face itself, and in this reflection of the self through its

parts, correction can be made to be more *like* God, in shifting from sensuality to reason.

This passage vibrates with Foucauldian theories of technologies of the self, particularly

during the centrality of anatomy that sought to classify and identify (creating subjectivity)

through the body within ritual actions. Rebecca Hazleden has usefully drawn upon

Foucault in her work in relationship self-help guides that, interestingly, follow an impulse

of facing one's self in order to correct and improve the self.[51] Arguing that self-help

guides commonly emphasize the "know thyself" dictum, Hazelden highlights an

appropriate example from Joyce Vedral's 1994 *Get Rid of Him*, a guide written for

women in unhappy relationships. Self-help guides take the position that the self no longer

knows itself, thus needing to prompt the reader to "take yourself apart, see what you are

made of, and then slowly and lovingly put yourself back together again."[52] In many

ways, Wisdom's response to Anima reads like a self-help guide, attempting to discover

(and correct through discovering) that "inner you," situating Christ as therapist/self-help

guru, as the image of the self that one should ultimately discover.[53] In other words, like

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[51] Rebecca Hazelden, "Love Yourself: The Relationship of the Self with Itself in Popular Self-Help Texts," *Journal of Sociology* 39.4 (2003), 413-28.

[52] Hazelden, "Love Yourself," 419 (qtd from Vedral, 298).

[53] As Sandra K. Dolby argues, the popularity of self-help guides arises at the conclusion of the Cold War to address the desires of a 1960s American population for direction in changing economic, political, and social structures. See: Dolby, *Self-Help: Why Americans Keep Reading Them* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

The ritual transformations that self-help guides offer reveals possibilities that support (through perfomative actions) normative ideologies of the self and its performance, through discourses of gender and sexuality for example. For a wonderful critique of the popular "self-help" guides that defend ideas of natural sexual difference located in the brain, see: Cordelia Fine, *Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and*

the self-help guide that actually creates the self that the reader should become, Christ is the similitude, the likeness, that the soul should strive as it identifies, and thereby, unifies itself.

Spectatory and Audience

As Christ introduces Anima's faculties, she quickly shifts into the spectatorial position, only to disappear for the majority of the play's action. However, the position as spectator is a significant one to consider, particularly how Anima ultimately shares this position with other spectators of the subsequent performance. I would suggest her dissolution into the background is not only due to the fact that she has been disassembled into her faculties on stage; rather, Anima conceptually becomes the figure of the spectator in the meta-performance space. In other words, Anima is the figure of the spectator who is to look inwards while looking at its exteriorization of the self, creating a first-person perspective.

In attempting to create community through the image of a unified image of the soul and its practice, the play imagines an audience in Alice Rayner's sense of the term, which "often appears to function as an image of unity created out of diversity, as a kind of *e pluribus unum*: an aggregate of individuals that together constitute a larger yet still singular individuality, as though 'the' audience has a collective consciousness that is analogous to a unified individual subject."[54] The personification of Anima and the

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Neurosexism Create Difference (New York: Norton, 2010). I have been inspired by the Foucauldian critiques posed against self-help guides more generally by Rebecca Hazleden, as well as Paul Morrison, see: Morrison, *The Explanation for Everything: Essays on Sexual Subjectivity* (New York: NYU Press, 2001), 113-139.

[54] Alice Rayner, "The Audience: Subjectivity, Community, and the Ethics of Listening" *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 7.2 (1993), 3.

existence of memory images constructs the virtual audience, the potential for every individual spectator to participate in a broader, unified community. However, as Rayner aptly clarifies, this is only a dream of unity, with the presence of the very anxiety that *Wisdom* attempts to address a possibility, or at least, the state from which the individual soul has to identify and transform from. Instead, the "audience" always already consists of multiple subject positions that they play with and through. For Rayner, this provides the context for the echoes and conversations in performance, as it negotiates between these various subjects engaged in each particular performance:

> The more complex relations between the 'we, I, you and it,' form the social dynamic in which the space of audience serves as a chamber for an echo that is also a conversation. The audience gives itself to the social game within the rules of improvisation, which is to say it intentionally submits to play with the known and unknown, in spaces of subjectivity and desire, with the productive differences between I, you, we and it.[55]

In other words, while the play insists on a vision of community (as unity), this is not to say that we should consider the practice of audience participation by default. What Rayner emphasizes is that each performance is a negotiation, or a "social game," that attempts to *produce* an audience, and does this work through particular visual and aural cues, or metacommunications that visualize a play space. As such, the performance relies upon the spectator to engage in the performance, and cooperate with its program, becoming engage players in the performance. This engages the political and ethical significance of listening, an aspect of sensory performance that Beth Williamson sees as

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[55] Rayner, 22.

under-analyzed in scholarship on medieval devotional culture.[56] Williamson has aptly

drawn attention to the binaries set up by the "visual turn" in medieval studies that tend to

not address the role and impact of aural elements within, for instance, devotional

culture.[57] As such, the particular directives in the form of speech is significant in order to

consider how the play draws the spectators' attention towards specific ways to produce

and internalize memory images, acting as a form of "scripting" for the audience to create

affective responses. With the intense visual focus of the play, the politics of speech and

listening are closely imbricated with these visual elements—remembering the close

relationship between sound and vision in medieval concepts of sensory experience.

In particular, the aural impacts of performance attempt to shape an affective

register for how the spectator should respond to particular actions and visual signs.

However, these are always only virtual in that it can only be regarded as a potentiality, as

Pamela King describes, in that audiences are "not scripted" and what may prompt

engagement practices of engaging with performance—such as what particular codes

might be most effective in spectatorial practice—are culturally dependent and difficult to

capture. Therefore, an analysis of a play's program can only describe what it *attempts* to

do and analyze the possibilities of how it tries to create and engage its audience.[58] What

is "immersive" for one audience, may not be for another, meaning that what acts as a

metacommunication for playing within is historically and culturally contingent. For

Wisdom, the spoken directives to those who look engages the affect of shame, a particular

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[56] Beth Williamson, "Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion: Sound and Vision, Invisibility and Silence" *Speculum* 88.1 (2013), 43.

[57] Williamson, "Sensory Experience," 43.

[58] As Pamela King describes, audiences are "not scripted," see: "Seeing and Hearing," 165.

force and orientation towards an aspect of self which one wishes to remain in alterity, as distanced from the self. Instead, the play directs its participants to *look* at the figure on stage.

The connection between vision and action provides an opening for connections among the experience of watching a play and playing a game, particularly as the play actively engages the spectator to embody the subjects on stage. As David Mason argues, "in character, as though game playing, the audience member interacts with the observed fictional world as though part of the world," through a change of perception.[59] The "virtuality" of the performance shifts between one of "distinction" to one of "inclusion" in exploiting the first-person perspective of the viewer. In particular, as *Wisdom* insists on embodiment, drawing the audience into a self-reflexive mode, the audience makes decisions on where to place their gaze, what to connect with, and how they will embody particular actions in the creation of another self. Even as a space of play is created, the "suspension of disbelief" is insisted through the imperative to watch and ensure their own willfulness is oriented towards the community.

Lucifer's Body and the Mixed Life

This direction to look at a figure is central to the presence of Lucifer as he introduces himself to the faculties in the guise of a gallant. The emphasis on spectacle in terms of clothing and revealing sets up one of the principle anxieties of the play, that of interpretation which has featured in analyses of the play by both Ruth Nisse and Paulson.

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[59] David Mason, "Video Games, Theater, and the Paradox of Fiction," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 47.6 (2014), 1118.

What has added to questions about the play's program is Lucifer's articulation of the

mixed life. As opposed to focusing particularly on the transformation possible in living a

contemplative life, the play attempts to describe and clarify what is involved in living the

mixed life—a melding, or as Walter Hilton in his *Epistle of the Mixed Life* defines it, a

"medeled" way between the active "boddli" life and the contemplative "goostli" life.[60]

Unlike many works that feature a personified soul, such as other allegorical dramas and

the debate poems between the Body and the Soul, *Wisdom* features a soul that is still

embodied, living in the world.

Discourses on the mixed life saw a rise in late Medieval England due to an

expanding lay readership of contemplative work, thereby changing contemporary

religious and devotional practices. The attraction of private devotion and contemplation

spread as Middle English adaptations and translations of these texts became accessible in

increased circulation exemplified by the sheer numbers of extant copies.[61] Reflecting

contemplative texts' new lay audience, particularly women, discourses on the mixed life

sought to explain a person's relationship to Christ outside the monastic or anchoritic

space. These texts shifted their focus to explain how one could reflect upon and know

God while living "in the world."

While scholars have described the play's source texts, emphasizing its roots in

contemplative literature like Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, the impact of Hilton's *Epistle*

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[60] Walter Hilton, "Epistle on the Mixed Life," *English Mystics of the Middle Ages*, ed. B.A. Windeatt (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 108-130.

[61] Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 19-20.

on the Mixed Life has not been fully taken into account.[62] Partly this is due to Lucifer's

promotion of his own misinterpretation of the mixed life towards Anima's faculties,

emphasizing the anxieties of such a life. In comparison to Hilton's account of the mixed

life as described in the *Epistle*, Lucifer's advice to Anima's disparate faculties prioritizes

an active life that is oriented towards the self, an egoist posturing for which Lucifer is

often recognized. For another theatric example, compare Lucifer's speeches in the York

and N-town play cycles' "The Fall of the Angels" where nearly each line from Lucifer's

speeches includes a first-person pronoun, emphasizing the repetition of "I." Approaching

the vulnerable Mights in the guise of a gallant, Lucifer identifies the faculties and the

embodied soul primarily in visual terms, drawing upon the same language that Wisdom

and the faculties use at the beginning of the play. As Lucifer explains his intentions, he

echoes, but reverses some of this language of the figure:

> Of Gode, man ys the fygure,
>
> Hys symylytude, hys pyctoure,
>
> Gloryosest of ony creature
>
> That ever was wrought.
>
> Wyche I wyll dysvygure
>
> Be my fals conjecture!
>
> Yff he tende my reporture,
>
> I shall brynge hym to nought!
>
> [Of God, human is the figure, / his likeness, his picture, / the most glorious of any
>
> createure / that was ever created. / I will disfigure it by my false conjectures! / If

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he is attentive to my declaration / I shall bring him to nothing!] [63]

Lucifer attempts to seduce each faculty away from contemplating God in order to "dysvygure" the "symylytude" and "pyctowre" of God. Taking the figure of God, Lucifer seeks to *dis*figure the faculties. If unified in their cooperation within Anima, the faculties are actualized as a reflection of God, a "symyltude" that Lucifer attempts to corrupt. Explaining to the Mights that the contemplative life Wisdom prescribed to Anima is not only difficult, but something Christ himself did not follow, Lucifer reorients the faculties' attention from God to the world, particularly his own figure: "Se how comly to man ys precyus wede; / Wat worschype yt ys to be manfull in dede. / That bryngyt in dominacyon!"[64] Extending the language of figure and similitude, Lucifer uses the visual cue of "se" as a way to reorient the attention of the Mights to his own decadently costumed body.

This focus on Lucifer's body would lead the audience to orient themselves to his figure, costumed as a gallant, with the knowledge that it is Lucifer underneath the clothing. Therefore, the spectators are imbricated with the faculties who participate in a game, either being "deceived" by Lucifer's presentation or "seeing through" it. Such a dynamic is visualized through an illustration in the Macro MS housed at the Folger Library that depicts a gallant figure in the center of the page with a dragon attached to his back, surrounded by floating, serpent-like heads (Figure 3).

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[63] *Wisdom,* ll. 349-56.

[64] *Wisdom,* ll. 454-6.

Figure 3: Lucifer as a Gallant (Folger Library Macro MS fol. 98v)

Gail McMurray Gibson has provided a thoughtful blog post for the Folger Library on this image, an image that has not received much attention by scholars discussing *Wisdom*, as well as other "doodles" in the play text.[65] As Gibson describes, the illustration here features Lucifer as a gallant, surrounded monster heads that could be masks, as indicated by the illustrations at the bottom of the page (Figure 4). The dragon, signaling Lucifer's "other side" is behind them, visualizing the disguise that his gallant-figure is displaying towards the viewers. The masks add to the emphasis on disguising, especially the "monster hat" that Gibson suggests is for the children who run out from under the corrupted Will's costume after line 912.

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[65] Gail McMurray Gibson, "Doodles and Dragon," *The Collation: Research and Exploration at the Folger* (November 12, 2015): https://collation.folger.edu/2015/11/doodles-and-dragons/.

Figure 4: Monster Hat and Mask (Folger Library Macro MS fol. 98v)

We can perhaps take this image as a speculation of the dynamics of vision in the play's "performance," highlighting the virtuality of its staging in the act of reading. The focus on the gallant's figure creates a conceptual blend for the audience, internalizing the posturing of the gallant as focusing on the self and its worldly maintenance with the pride of Lucifer. In addition, the illustration includes a person's head watching Lucifer (to the left of Lucifer), possibly indicating an imagined audience member's "reaction" as they gaze at Lucifer in the guise of a gallant. By turning attention to the exterior world such as Lucifer's own costume rather than interior contemplation, the faculties can delight in pleasure, honor, and self-mastery. This is Lucifer's self-serving interpretation of the *vita mixta*, or the mixed life.[66] This loose interpretation of Hilton's *Epistle* thus addresses the danger of contemplation within the world by creating a space of ambiguity that can lead to misinterpretation. This ambiguity creates a ludic space in the play, inviting the audience to recognize the potential problems with Lucifer's argument, and thereby needing to reflect upon their own self within it.

What Lucifer provides is a literal interpretation of the "mixed life" that relies

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[66] *Wisdom*, l. 428.

heavily on materiality and the body. As Hilton's *Epistle* describes, the mixed life or

"medeled life" is a third way of living that seeks to remain active in the world with acts

of charity in order to then contemplate the self and God. Due to the rising accessibility of

and interest in contemplative texts, additional ways of "proper" devotional practice had to

be formulated to account for a shift from the contemplative life posed against the worldly

to a life that could be worldly while remaining contemplative. In response to anxieties

about controlling devotional practice, a new emphasis on actions and deeds, as enabling a

person to be able to see themselves, was key to this concept of the "mixed life." For

Hilton, because a true awareness of self and God derives out of experience and action:

> it is siker and profitable to him that he be first wel assaied a longe tyme in this
>
> bodili worchynge, for thise bodili deedes aren a tokene and a schewynge of moral
>
> vertues, withouten whiche a soule is not able for to worche goostli
>
> [it is safer and profitable to him that he is first tested will for a long time in this
>
> bodily performance, for these bodily deeds are a *token* and a *showing* of moral
>
> virtues, without which a soul is not able to perform spiritually].[67]

As a result, bodily works and actions, in the form of acts of charity to fellow Christians,

are required both to *show* the virtue of the soul, as well as allow the soul to act. The

"mixed life" creates a space for contemplation within the maintenance of business and

marriage, actions that are necessary in order to both identify and cleanse the soul. Only

with age, after one has worked and acted should one "retire" to contemplation.

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[67] Walter Hilton, "Epistle on the Mixed Life," *English Mystics of the Middle Ages*, ed. Barry Windeatt (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 111.

Demonstrative Affects

The contemplative tradition describes the process of looking inward to see the

soul that is already marked by sin. However, here it is the faculties who have disfigured

Anima, who appears on stage "*in the most horrybul wyse, foulere than a fende* [in the

most horrible appearance, more foul than a fiend]."[68] Anima's foulness or "darkness"

provides a reverberation with the "merk ymage" of the soul in Hilton's *Scale of*

Perfection, a figure that is imbued with ideas of the body as an idol, as Stanbury has

wonderfully argued, suggesting that "the carnal human body is itself an idol," a

problematic visual image that is to be read.[69] By performing their own self-maintaining

actions, the faculties discover the foulness that they have invited into the soul, having

transformed it into a demon. In the *Scale*, Hilton identifies the foul image of the soul as

an idol, a figure "very foully disfigured and deformed with the wretchedness" of sin.[70]

This idol needs to be looked at, and felt, in order to be able to know ourselves that is

expressed in terms of experience: "By this wretchedness that I feel in myself—much

more than I know how to say—I am the more able to tell you of your own image."[71] As

Paulson has aptly described, *Wisdom* heavily connects knowledge with experience that

this passage by Hilton emphasizes.[72] In particular, "feeling" that Hilton may refer to,

particularly the excess beyond language, is the sight of "our own body, suddenly erupting

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[68] *Wisdom,* l. 901 s.d.

[69] Stanbury, *Visual Object of Desire*, 58.

[70] Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, trans. Janel M. Mueller (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 154.

[71] Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, 154.

[72] Julie Paulson, "A Theater of the Soul's Interior: Contemplative Literature and Penitential Education in the Morality Play *Wisdom*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38.2 (2008), 253.

with extra limbs and spliced for horror," connecting our body with the "merk ymage" of the soul.[73]

Following the transformation of the Mights into Vices, Wisdom comes back onto the stage as a sign of grace and tells Mind to look at what they have done to Anima:

Yit, Mynde, I sey, yow bethynke

 In what perell ye be now. Take hede.

 Se howe ye haue dyvygurde yowr Soule.

Beholde yowrself. Loke veryly in mynde

 [Yet, Mind, I say, reflect/ in what danger you are now. Take heed. / See how you

 have disfigured your soul. / Behold yourself. Look truly in the mind.][74]

This passage emphasizes the need to visualize the figure of the soul, to *see* Anima as a mirror of the Mind's own interiority through, I would argue, an act of shaming. While the Mind is a component of the Soul, here Wisdom inverts the Soul as also being within Mind, a strategy that works well to invite spectators to reflect upon their own interior souls. The imperative "beholde yowrself" presents a complex mirroring that connects the audience, the Mind, and the Soul within a splitting of vision in three directions. The spectator would look inward to their mind as the vision of the fouled Anima impresses upon the Mind, recognizing their own soul's "appearance" in the process.[75]

Evident in Wisdom's emphasis on beholding the self, focusing the gaze onto the foulness of the soul and interiorizing the image as a mirror of the self, the affect of

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[73] Stanbury, 55.

[74] *Wisdom*, ll. 899-902.

[75] In her reading of Alcuin and Augustine, Mary Carruthers notes that during this act of impression, the Mind creates its own image of the "event" to store into memory. See: *Craft of Thought*, 118-120.

shame, itself a bodily affect, works to enforce a particular teleology of the mixed life.

Revived by Eve Sedgwick as an influential concept of shame as affect, the affect system

of Silvan Tomkins situates shame-humiliation as an orientation of the eyes and face.[76]

Returning to a considerably material, embodied conception of psychology, Tomkins

describes that the response to shame "is literally an ambivalent turning of the eyes away

from the object toward the face, toward the self."[77] That act is ambivalent in that the

feeling of shame creates a bodily response to hide, while also desiring to continue

looking at the object—in this case, Anima—with "interest." If Wisdom's shaming of the

Mind is extended to the audience, then the audience is also caught within a tension

between beholding the image of the soul and their self, between the enjoyment and

interest of the performance and their own position as spectator of the play. At this

moment, the play engages in a process of "socialization," or correction of the

individualized self in connection to what a soul *is*, and how it should *act*, in idealizing the

mixed life. As Wisdom explains to the faculties of the soul, "conform you not to this

pompyus glory / But reforme in gostly felynge."[78]This is followed by a Latin paraphrase

of Ephesians 4:32-4: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, / And put on the new man,

created in God's likeness."[79] Thus, the play proceeds links the visual experience of

shame to the act of reforming, "putting on" the likeness of God, the new man after

repentance. Through the shaming of the Mights by Wisdom, performance and action are

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[76] Silvan Tomkins, "Shame-Humiliation and Contempt-Disgust," *Shame and its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, ed. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 137.

[77] Tomkins, "Shame-Humiliation," 137-8.

[78] *Wisdom,* ll. 1122-3.

[79] "*Renovamini spiritu mentis vestre / Et induite novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creates est*," 1128-9.

part and parcel with seeing, key to the creation of knowledge and transformation that Stevenson contends as being at the heart of theater.

As part of this transformation, six children run out from under Anima's mantle onto the stage, possibly wearing the monster hats from the Macro doodle. The stage directions instruct that: "Here rennyt out from undyr the horrybyll mantyll of the Soull six small boys in the lyknes of devyllys and so retorne ageys [Here, from under Soul's horrific mantle, six small boys run out disguised as devils and then return again.]"[80] As David Klausner notes, the six children as described in the stage directions may represent the seven deadly sins, with Anima representing one of the sins. The action of running out of the mantle would create an image of Anima "reproducing" devils (as sins) through action in their figure as children. However, having children on stage may also produce an anxiety that children will be particularly misled. Earlier, as Lucifer is talking through his interpretation of the "mixed life" to the faculties, he concludes by walking off stage with a boy: "Her he takyt a schrewede boy with hym and goth hys wey, cryenge [Here, he takes a mischievous boy with him and leaves, crying.]"[81] The child acts as a particular warning to the audience.[82]

The audience is further asked to insert themselves into the performance during Anima's confession as she performs penance to unify her faculties and refigure herself. Wisdom comes on stage to tell Anima to go to church to be reconciled through

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[80] *Wisdom*, l. 911 s.d.

[81] *Wisdom*, l. 549 s.d.

[82] Klausner notes that this child might either be a plant on stage, who was directed to act mischievously or a child who is "acting up" in the audience. I spoke to Klausner about this stage direction and he shared with me a funny anecdote of a child's particularly horrified reaction to Lucifer during a modern performance of *Wisdom*.

confession after offending God:

> Therfor Gode ye must aske mercy,
>
> By Holy Chyrch to be reconsylyde,
>
> Trustynge verily ye shall never be revlyde
>
> Yiff ye have your charter of pardon by confession.
>
> Now have ye forgeffnes that were fylyde.
>
> Go prey your modyr Cyrche of her proteccyon.
>
> [Therefore, you must ask mercy from God, / and by the Holy Church to be reconciled, / Trusting that you shall never be reviled / if you have your charter of pardon by means of confession. / Now you who were defiled, take your forgiveness, / Go pray to your mother Church for her protection.][83]

The impetus to be reconciled with Christ through confession is declared not only for Anima, but for the audience as well. Anima leaves the stage, only to come back later transformed in a new costume that Mind, Understanding, and Will all share as well, identifying them all together: "all in here first clothynge (all in her first clothing)." Through confession, the faculties are unified once again and are unified in Soul's own image, marked by their clothing. The movement of the confession of stage, rather than in front of the audience, creates an effect for each spectator to add in their own confession. Through its absence, the confession becomes a universal space created from removing the consistent impetus to *look* at the figures on stage.[84] If a confession were to take place

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[83] *Wisdom*, ll. 983-7.

[84] Paulson argues that the confession is moved off-stage to avoid the contention by Lollards against speech acts, see: Paulson, 256. My focus here is to consider what the audience effect may be in lacking a specific figure confessing to specific sins.

on stage, Anima would have to detail specific sins which would potentially remove the universalizing figure that Anima represents, creating a break in immersion for members of the audience to confess their sins, which remain unidentified.

In following Lucifer's advice, the Mights undergo a transformation into vices, thereby transforming the pure Anima into a foul demon. This transformation occurs not because they were performing worldly acts per se, but because they were performing actions that engaged in egoist, self-improvement. As a result, self-improvement in this context is regarded as particularly deceptive through the ability to use knowledge and interpretive abilities for one's personal gain. Scholars have noted the particularly civic critique occurring through the Mights' (mis)use of the judicial system and the law, further defending a reading of the play as a performance imagined for more of a lay, as opposed to a monastic, audience.[85]

By revising how a "mixed life" should be performed, the soul functions as an interface that should be re-internalized as a "normal" configuration of the self, composed of body, soul, and various faculties through embodied, gendered allegory. Being a staged performance, *Wisdom* accentuates the embodied actions necessary to show and work through recognition and reformation of the soul as a socially oriented activity rather than an egoistic, individualized one. As such, the "becoming" self, the self that unifies itself towards God, reveals the cooperation of the faculties as a unified collected self. The self presents as Augustine's description of the Trinity, as something that is only to be understood as one "essence" rather than individualized identities, with the suppression of the will, as willfulness. Thus, the play performs the formation of a unified self, that

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[85] Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game*, 261.

refigures, through a single figure, a soul whose faculties share in its own image as well as sharing in the image of, as similitude of, God.

To return to the visualization of the self in *Inside Out*, as a way to conclude, we see a similar impulse of the self that has its emotional faculties in check. In the film, Riley is the only character whose emotions are fully individualized, without reflecting the self-image of Riley. We have the chance to see inside the mind of Riley's mother whose emotions all share in the mother's hair style and vocal intonation, with similar images of the father's emotions sharing his mustache (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The Emotions of Riley's Mother from *Inside Out*

This coordination is also revealed in Riley's classmates—even in dogs and cats—presenting an opportunity to consider this film not necessarily about childhood development, but rather using the *figure* of the child to display a universalizing diagram of the mind. In other words, the emotions themselves are needing to suppress willfulness as an individuating factor, acting in unison as they take on the image of, as identity, the self they are within. By the end of the film, the fact that Riley's emotions still keep their own, particular identity (as appearance) shares in *Wisdom*'s strategy for audience

involvement: as Riley's emotions stay "individualized" they provide an opening for the audience to coopt and internalize the mechanisms of Riley's mind. As a result, the film portrays an ideal of a unified self, with emotions that cooperate into the formation of a particular image of the self to be performed, an impulse that we see within at least the logics of *Wisdom*'s own epistemology of the embodied soul.

Allegories such as the personification allegory of *Inside Out* and *Wisdom* engage in a dissection to both understand, but ultimately to *create* what a subject is, particularly a subject that is embodied, from various "affordances" or syntactical structures that participate with cultural and political values. In its weaving together of cultural material, Noah Guynn emphasizes the temporal play at work in allegory as it attempts to "signify the timelessness and universality of a set of moral, cultural, and political values aligned with a ruling ideology."[86] However, in its very visualization, the instability, incohesiveness, and unintelligibility of ideology is revealed at the same time.[87] In other words, ideology attempts to reproduce itself through making itself appear as a figure or image, but the need to do so sheds light on the possibility of its own artifice, something needing to be performed. Thus, allegory often appears during times of crisis, fragmentation, and change (or the need for change) occurring within social, economic, and political structures. Ultimately, both the film and the play reveal the virtual possibility of a discordant, shattered self through the very mode of allegory; however, what is *actualized* is a figure of unity, as the epistemological goal of the self's disassembly, however fragile that unity is revealed to be. This shift between discordant

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[86] Guynn, *Allegory and Sexual Ethics in the High Middle Ages*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 5.

[87] Ibid., 6.

and unified subjects is one of willfulness, as Ahmed has explained, where willfulness is regarded as "*unbecoming parts*" in its agitation, or animatedness, of unity.

CHAPTER III

SILENCING MATTERS: PERFORMING ALLEGORY, ARTIFICE, AND THE CHILD
IN THE OLD FRENCH *ROMAN DE SILENCE*

"Playing—whether divine beings or cosmic forces as in maya-lila, or in the preparatory phases of constructing a performance (the training-workshop-rehearsal phases), or in instances of dark play either privately acted out or publicly displayed—is unfinishable. The *structure* of play…shapes and interrupts the process of playing, imposing end points requiring further starting points. Playing left to itself would go on forever. Playing—the processual template—is a continuous bending, twisting, and looping of…that for which I can find no appropriate name, so 'action' will have to do." – Richard Schechner, *The Future of Ritual*, p. 39.[1]

"Name me and so shall you break me." – A riddle from *Baldur's Gate 2*[2]

In 1950, Alan Turing published the infamous essay "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," in which he describes the ability of computers to not only function by imitation, but also to learn.[3] The mathematician, and generally understood progenitor of artificial intelligence, sought to prove that a computer could potentially trick a human into thinking that it too was human. The "Turing Test," otherwise known as the Imitation Game, which the 2014 biopic of Turing takes as its title, involves a series of questions a human will ask of the computer. The inquirer would then decide whether the responder is human or a computer based on how it responds. Interestingly, to help readers understand the dynamics of his game, Turing turns to something that has commonly been at the center of imitative and deceptive narratives: gender.

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[1] Richard Schechner, *The Future of Ritual*: *Writings on Culture and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 39.

[2] Bioware, *Baldur's Gate 2* (2000).

[3] Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy* 54.236 (1950), 433-460.

70

Feminist and queer critics have shed light on the use of gender in Turing's test that reveal the close imbrication of gender within computers and AI. As Turing begins his essay, instead of defining "machine" and "think," he replaces the "question by another, which is closely related to it and is expressed in relatively unambiguous words," taking the form of the imitation game that features a man, a woman, and an interrogator.[4] The player, who acts as the interrogator, is to "determine which of the other two is the man and which is the woman."[5] Like the "computer game," Turing's gendered imitation game involves a questioner and a responder who is figured as female, with an intermediary who acts as a screen between the two. At the heart of the game are verbal responses that lead the player to decide whether their fellow player is something or not. The point of the game is to deceive, so the figure who is attempting to deceive "wins" by showing that they are able to "imitate" the "other" through language. The game, therefore, could not be played in silence. Or, the "imitator" would always win if they remained silent, although, this would be changing the rules of the game as they would not technically be playing.

Turing emphasizes that most players of the imitation game would not be able to make a correct guess: "Will the interrogator decide wrongly as often when the game is played like this as he does when the game is played between a man and a woman?"[6] Interestingly, the presumption is that the game is a difficult one for the interrogator to successfully "win." According to Judith Halberstam, the "sexual guessing game" that Turing presents highlights the "obvious connection between gender and computer

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[4] Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," 433.

[5] Ibid., 433.

[6] Ibid., 434.

71

intelligence: both are in fact imitative systems, and the boundaries between female and male…are as unclear and as unstable as the boundary between human and machine intelligence."[7] In being imitative systems, which I would emphasize as games, both draw on and enact particular affordances (objects and referents) to recreate a self as a performance for another.

Homay King delves deeper into Turing's career to show the underlying roots of the indeterminacy at the heart of the imitation game. Turing's military service as a decoder highlights the linguistic uncertainty that is at play:

> But the capacities to think when confronted with indeterminacy, to abide the undecidable, and to relinquish the fiction of a fully transparent semiotic also played significant roles in the breaking of the Enigma cipher: the ability to think intuitively and to exist in a world in which not every switch is unquestionable in either an 'on' or an 'off' position. These abilities are also, I would like to suggest, queer, in the sense that they are nonbinary and thrive in spaces and times of communicative complexity.[8]

What King identifies in Turing's work on the Enigma cipher is the embracing of indeterminacy which leads to the act of creation or formation in real time (what King calls "intuition") as opposed to being able to logically process all options that undercut its complexity. Intuition, or the ability to imitate, is queer in that it's not a binary, an on/off or either/or. While the Turing test is presented as a game of "win/lose," it is a framework

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[7] Judith Halberstam, "Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine," *Feminist Studies* 17.3 (October 1991), 443.

[8] Homay King, *Virtual Memory: Time-Based Art and the Dream of Digitality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 41.

imposed upon a series of mechanics that are much more complex. There are spaces of uncertainty, of questioning, and of the point where one has "just enough" information to make a decision. The responder enters a space of both/and, a Schroedinger's cat style of existence that is only decided by the act of being measured, being declared as "x," whether male, female, computer, human, but before then, performing as all.

In particular, the use of the intermediary in Turing's example also highlights the limitations of voice, in that the machine would give itself away in voicing its own responses to the interviewer. Thus, the responses require a conduit that, in ways, neutralizes the response so that the interviewer will focus on "what is being said" as opposed to "how it is being said." The one being questioned, either computer or woman, are both vocally "silenced" through the use of a screen, in that it re-vocalizes, as an intermediary, the response of the other. What the questioner receives is a transcript, or a recording, that shares the referents to sort through to come to some sort of decision, an account of an improvised performance. The "game" here requires an interface that mediates, acting not as a door or window, but a series of visualizations that point towards, like allegory, toward something else. New Media scholar Wendy Hui Kyong Chun characterizes the Graphical User Interface (GUI) of software as "a functional analog to ideology" in that it visualizes concepts and systems through familiar images and metaphors.[9] As a result, the deceiver-player improvises *affordances* to name themselves as something else, which is then remediated to the questioning-player.

The very anxieties that could be seen within Turing's imitation game can be charted throughout the medieval imaginary. Automata often appeared in medieval

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[9] Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, *Programmed Visions: Software and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 66.

romances, theology, and in conjunction with the figure of the *Natura Artifex,* central to the thirteenth-century French *Roman de Silence*, the focus of this chapter. The *Roman de Silence* presents a young *enfant,* or child, as its main protagonist, raised as Silentius. Due to new inheritance laws preventing women from acquiring wealth and land, Silentia's parents decide to raise her as a boy, shifting the grammatical gender suffix of her name from –a to -us, signaling both the linguistic and gender play that frames the poem. As the count explains the strategy:

Mellor consel trover n'i puis.

Il iert només Scilenscius;

Et s'il avient par aventure

Al descovrir de sa nature

Nos muerons cest -us en -a,

S'avra a non Scilencia.

Se nos li tolons dont cest -us

Nos li donrons natural us,

Car cis -us est contre nature,

Mais l'altres seroit par nature.

[I can't think of a better plan. / He will be called Silentius. / And if by any chance / His real nature is discovered, / we shall change this -us to -a, / and she'll be called Silentia. / If we deprive her of this -us, / we'll be observing natural usage, / for this -us is contrary to nature, / but the other would be natural.].[10]

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[10] All quotations and translations are mostly derived from Sarah Roche-Mahdi's facing-page French and English edition: Heldris de Cornuälle, *Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance*, trans. Sarah Roche-Mahdi (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992), ll. 2073-82.

The linguistic play here, particularly as an act of naming, has been noted by several scholars.[11] In particular, the tactic here focuses only on the name rather than the child's appearance or activities, showing the ease with which an -a can shift to an -us and back again. As Erin Labbie argues, the flexibility here "renders the individual a being who is always in the process of becoming," revealing the lack of stability or unity, expressed through the role-playing of different identities that Silence, as a child, experiences. If Silentius's "nature" is discovered, then the suffix will simply change.[12] As Peter Allen notes, Silence's parents never call Silence by their Latinized name, instead, calling Silence by the French version which does not recall the gendered suffixes.[13] For Erika Hess, this naming articulates the incorporation of "*both* genders" as a form of negotiation (at least *all* genders) rather than negating gender.[14] The ease by which the parents shift the gender of the child sets up the debate between Nature and Nurture (or *Noreture* in Old French), as well as the anxieties within medieval views of childhood development framed within this complicated, and competitive, debate.

I started with Turing's test to set up the close network of gender, game, and deception that has woven itself through play in the experimental as well as the dramatic

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[11] Katherine Terrell, "Competing Gender Ideologies and the Limitations of Language in *Le Roman de Silence*," *Romance Quarterly* 55.1 (2008), 35-48; Erin F. Labbie, "The Specular Image of the Gender-Neutral Name: Naming Silence in *Le Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 7.2 (1997), 63-77; R. Howard Bloch, "Silence and Holes: The *Roman de Silence* and the Art of the *Trouvère*," *Yale French Studies* 70 (1986), 81-99.

[12] In this passage, *real* is an addition by the translator that misses the Old French use of "nature" to mean genitalia.

[13] Peter Allen, "The Ambiguity of Silence: Gender, Writing, and *Le Roman de* Silence," *Sign, Sentence, Discourse: Language in Medieval Thought and Literature*, ed. Julian N. Wasserman and Lois Roney (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1989), 105-6.

[14] Erika Hess, *Literary Hybrids: Indeterminacy in Medieval and Modern French Narrative* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 51.

sense of the term. I will focus on the particular activities, rather than the disguises, of Silence to emphasize the romance's attention to child development, constructing the child as a quasi-allegorical figure. Silence's status as a child turns her into a cyborg of sorts, ultimately engaged in *becoming* idealized forms and genders, while also participating in acts of "improvising" to negotiate these forms. As games can provide a place of experimentation, through mimicry by means of affordances, the romance genre invites such an interaction through what Geraldine Heng characterizes as its "negotiations with history."[15]

Taking Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Brittaniae* as an exemplar, Heng argues that "romance's preferred method is to arrange for an apparatus of the intimately familiar and pleasurable—figures of gender, sexuality, and varieties of adventure—to transact its negotiations with history, addressing what surfaces with difficulty, and exists under anxious pressure, through a loop of the familiar and the enjoyable."[16] For Heng, romance, in its own remediation, creates a space of play as a type of apparatus here that arranges and animates "figures" somewhat removed from, but at the same time informed by, its particular spatial and temporal space. This enacts an improvisation of sorts, or a dance (*spiel)*, to play out concepts through bodies in action. The space created invites both debate and role-play, using allegorical figures and the figure of the child to play out its own negotiations. As Roger Moseley notes, the roots of play in the word *Spiel* (dance) as emphasized by both Theodor Adorno and Gadamer

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[15] Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 2.

[16] Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 2.

emphasizes its "gestural qualities" that "reflect the social connections between playing, dancing, and miming," even within solo play that always responds to other bodies.[17] Moseley's concept of *ludomusicality* will play into the argument later, but for now, the romance genre itself creates a space of play where characters interact, as a dance, with objects, concepts, and bodies to visualize "new" potentialities, as moments of improvisation.

In particular, the game that Silence plays is akin to Schechner's concept of "dark play" where players who are essential to the game—in this case Silence for Nature and Nurture's debate—may not know that a game is being played.[18] Characteristic to "dark play" is a certain gratification that "involves everything from physical risk taking to inventing new selves to engaging one's inner self to communion" with alterity.[19] Silence engages in her own spaces of play as well through disguises and deceit as a way to engage some sense of self while navigating the debate staged by Nature and Nurture, or the laws and customs with the presentation of a particular self.

The allegorical mode that *Silence* creates through the figures of Nature and Nurture further presents the machinery of personifications, attempting to reproduce further machines. This can be seen in the attempts to push characters such as Silence to embody particular forms. According to E.R. Truitt, within chansons de geste or romances like *Floire and Blancheflor* and Lydgate's *Troy Book*, automata are figured as liminal objects as they "reveal their own in-betweenness: surpassingly lifelike copies of natural

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[17] Moseley, *Keys to Play*, 17.

[18] Schechner, *Performance Studies*, 120.

[19] Ibid., 121.

objects, or eternal bodies that hover between life and death."[20] The key here is the fact that the automata are "lifelike," revealing a tension between the "artificial" and the "natural."[21] Truitt provides a valuable history of the *Natura artifex*, an allegorical figure that focuses on Nature's role as "an intermediary between the world of ideal forms and world of matter."[22] As an intermediary, Nature is often imaged as working with molds and proofs (as the "ideal forms") and crafting materials such as clay (as the "world of matter") making Nature's creations as a combination of both natural and human artifice in an attempt to visualize forms. This close relationship spurs the anxiety of "mimetic creation," much like the story of Pygmalion, as it presents the "ability of humans to confuse the artificial with the natural, and the potential for artificial objects to become naturalized," particularly as humans start to desire the artifice.[23] Within the debate of Nature and Nurture is that between what is natural and what is artificial, at least the power of mimesis, or mimicry, that is enfolded in Silence's role-playing in the poem.

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[20] E.R. Truitt, *Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2015), 9.

[21] In an article for *The New Inquiry*, Rob Horning provides a wonderful analysis of how companies are currently promoting qualities and tasks that are supposedly natural to humans in order to mitigate any concerns that automata will take people's jobs. As Horning claims, "striving for 'authenticity' is a matter of formatting oneself into an exploitable resource." A company promotes their employees to embody specific qualities that they claim are "authentic" human qualities. In turn, the same company then declares that the performance of these human qualities makes their company culture unique. As a result, to prove oneself as human in the eyes of a company, one has to embody certain qualities, without which an employee is marked as "inauthentic" and aligned with the very qualities a robot has: see, Horning, "Do the Robot," *The New Inquiry* (August 12, 2015): https://thenewinquiry.com/blog/do-the-robot/.

Whenever I fail those authentication tests when I log-into an online platform—set up to ensure that you as a user are not a bot—the act of failing marks me as a robot in the eyes of the system. My "humanness" is proved by the clicking of a box that assures that "I am not a robot" or by correctly choosing each photo that includes a part of a traffic light.

[22] Truitt, *Medieval Robots*, 40.

[23] Ibid., 101.

This act of visualizing forms is similar to that of personifications, which not only makes the *Natura artifex* particularly poignant as allegory, but emphasizes how Silence is also signaled as a quasi-allegorical figure as well. As Angus Fletcher valuably characterizes allegorical figures: "the perfect allegorical agent is not a man possessed by a daemon, but a robot, a Talus."[24] In work that seems to engage in an allegorical register, characters may seem driven by "an unnatural Faustian energy" where they seem as humans possessed by daemons, a conflict that arises between form (ideals/concepts) and matter (as the material to visualize form).[25] Gordan Teskey revises Fletcher's image of allegory as a mirror to highlight its performative nature as an embodied habit: "allegories do not just reflect ideological structures: they engage us in the practice of ritual interpretation by which those structures are reproduced in bodies and reexpressed through the voice."[26] As Noah Guynn argues, the embodiment of personifications will be formed out of the "material, lived reality of social and political struggle," enacting the same creative process of shaping clay within a mold (as form).[27] Allegory presents a tension between "an overarching, formalized, and essentialist textual design and a more fluid, variable, or protean conception of textual meaning."[28] As figures of artifice, these personifications can be read and performed in a variety of ways, becoming open to a sort of improvisation that exists within symbolic registers. This is why personifications, as

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[24] Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode,* 53.

[25] Fletcher, *Allegory*, 53.

[26] Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 132.

[27] Guynn, *Allegory and Sexual Ethics,* 2.

[28] Ibid,, 3.

figurations, seem possessed or can come to be possessed. In analyzing the rise of visual technologies and their impact on the signification of the fetus, Donna Haraway explains: "Figurations are performative images that can be inhabited. Verbal or visual, figurations are condensed maps of whole worlds."[29] As a result, personifications like Nature will always be a work of artifice in themselves that establish a space for further interaction, as a form of inhabiting.

The Work of Silence

Silence's birth is depicted particularly as the *ouvre*, or work, of Nature who uses a mold set aside specifically for Silence out of her diverse forms:

Et nature en a une aërse.

Ainc mais user ne l'endura.

Nature quanque a fait jura

Qu'or a d'ovrer moult bon talent.

Prist cele forme, porta l'ent,

Va cele part a entençon

U doit ovrer, comence en son:

[But one mold she has kept aside. / She has never used it yet. / Nature swears by all she has made / that she really feels like getting to work now. / She takes that mold and carries it out / and goes to where she intends to work / and begins right at the top].[30]

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[29] Donna J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium.FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 179.

[30] *Silence*, ll. 1900-06.

Silence is already placed as an exemplar in form such that Silence's potential is conditional upon the matter that is shaped to it. The detail the narrator provides walks the reader through the process of Nature creating Silence out of parts that eventually come into a form of unity, piecing together the face, arms, hands, legs, and so forth. In describing Silence's body, the emphasis is on pieces even while they are to be combined into a wholeness, a form of unity that Nature desires.

However, in the act of forming, there is always a possibility that the form's potential will not be reached, instead presenting multiple potentialities. For Silence, Nature wishes to ensure that nothing goes wrong: "Jo m'en duel / Si riens i falt (I would be sorry / if anything were lacking)."[31] This emphasizes the possibility of a "mistake" being made in the creation of "refined clay" which takes several steps to produce:

> Mais se il avient que Nature
>
> Soit corocie, u que n'ait cure
>
> C'un poi del gros al dellé viegne
>
> Et al mollier avoec se tiegne
>
> Cil gros se trait al cuer en oire.
>
> [But if it happens that Nature / is in a bad mood and isn't careful, / so that a little of the coarse gets mixed in with the fine / and is retained in the mold, / this coarse matter attacks the heart right away.][32]

While initially figured as the act of baking with the material as flour ensuring that the white flour (*le fluer blance*) is separate from the coarse (*gros*), the metaphor switches to

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[31] *Silence* ll. 1921-22.

[32] *Silence* ll. 1835-39.

molds and clay. Both metaphors for Nature's creation emphasize the act of manufacturing, creating humans out of shaped pieces then finished with the application of heat. A common image of the *Natura artifex* is Nature standing at the forge, often surrounded by pieces such as dismembered babies, showing multiple creations at work (Figures 6 and 7). The potential for "mistakes" in the creation of the material gets attached to the heart, each mixture affecting the heart in some fashion. On the one hand, if some of "the coarse gets mixed in with the fine" then the heart can become a "*vil cuer et povre* (heart vile and poor)." Likewise, if some fine clay gets mixed with coarse, then "lofty character" (*halt corage*) is produced.

Figure 6 (*left*): Nature at the Forge, Assembling Babies (BL MS Harley 4425 fol. 140)

Figure 7 (*right*): Nature at the Forge, Creating Pieces (Yale University MS 418 fol. 282v)

The potentialities of the child emphasize the act of artifice in that the child is mixed, molded, and baked to produce an embodied person, pieced together and unified

into a single body. Couched in metaphors of crafting, the "distinction between Nature's work and humanity's work was sometimes difficult to make, as the metaphor *Natura artifex* both elevates human labor and diminishes Nature's creative work."[33] As a result, even while automata and machines are mimetic of Nature's creations, they are placed along a spectrum of artifice through the deployment of the allegory, making the human "machine shaped" and inversely the machine "human shaped."

Nature's reaction to the parents' attempt to re-gender Silence emphasizes the comparison between Nature's creations and that of humans. As the narrator describes, naming Silence as the masculine-inflected Silentius shows "how these people worked contrary to nature (com cis ouevrent contre Nature)," drawing upon the term *ouevrent* (work) that is consistently employed in describing Nature's creation.[34] Here, they are both "works," while the work of Nurture acts as a disguise that participates in a sort of mimetic play that hides Nature's efforts. Nature goes on to emphasize how the act of deception regards Nature's work as lesser than that of Nurture's:

"Il ont en mon desdaing cho fait

Quanses que moils valt Noreture

Que face m'uevre!"

["They have insulted me / by acting as if that of Nurture / were superior to my work!"].[35]

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[33] Truitt, 45.

[34] *Silence,* l. 2254.

[35] *Silence* ll. 2266-68.

The act of artifice that humans are engaged in is that of disguising, regarded as a type of shaping. Equating disguising with artifice, Silence becomes like that of the automata. Both actions are forms of artifice with Nature declaring herself the more master craftsperson, even while Nurture (or the mimetic) is always close by.

Even within this first step of creating Silence, the potential for various combinations of embodiment exists as perceptibly setting up a whole spectrum of mixtures. The emphasis on Nature's temperament as well as on possible accidents in creation and clay-mixtures highlights the variability of the fetus. While Nurture eventually adds an additional layer of potentiality, the child created by Nature already virtually exhibits a variety of potential bodies and personalities. However, the narration attempts to remove as many potentialities as possible by highlighting the absolute care that Nature put into Silence's form—at least when it comes to Silence's beauty: "Ainc n'ovra mais si bien Nature / A rien ki morir doive vivre (Nature will never work so well / on any mortal being again)."[36] The narration emphasizes Nature's shaping of Silence's body, but does not go into the actual mixture used. While assumably it is the finest, the emphasis on the mixture's effect on the heart—a vile heart in a "rich body" (*riche cors*) or a lofty character in people of "low station" (*bas parage*)—the absence of what mixture is used creates uncertainty in what Silence may become. Nature's close attention highlights the virtuality of the fetus particularly as it continues to be molded and imprinted by the outside, as figured by Nurture.

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[36] *Silence* ll. 1956-57.

Child (Re)creations

In lines 2657-72, the attempted instruction by the personified figures of Nature, Nurture, and Reason perform the potential changeability with which the *enfant* is generally ascribed, a changeability shared by both medieval and modern figurations of the child. Once Nature, Nurture, and Reason plead their cases to the young Silentius, the narrator explains the youth's considerably complex cognitive state, emphasizing the "memorie" that the narrative provides:

Si est li voirs, cho dist l'estorie

Ki de Silence fait memorie,

C'onques ne fu tels abstinence

Com poés oïr de Silence.

Jo ne di pas qu'il ne pe[n]sast

Diversement, et ne tensast/

Diverse cogitatiön

Com enfant de tel natiön,

Meësmement enfant si tendre.

Ki doit a tel usage entendre.

Et cuers s'est une creäture

Mervelles d'estrange nature:

Qu'il pense voir moult largement,

Torne et retorne trop sovent

Les larges pensers que requelt

Dont motes foie[e]s se due[l]t.

[If what the story that keeps alive / the memory of Silence tell us / is true, you never heard of such forbearance / as was to be found in Silence. / I'm not saying that he didn't think / differently, And did not hold, / diverse thought / As might be expected in a young person who came of such good stock, / But who was also a tender child / Who had to learn to live that way / And the human heart is a creature / that has a strange and peculiar nature: / it thinks a great deal, / turns the deep thoughts it harbors / over and over again, far too often, / and causes itself a great deal of grief].[37]

The *enfant* is expected to be conflicted, hesitant, and, significantly, changeable placed in the crossroads between Nature and Nurture. As the narrator clarifies, Silentius is of an age when "diverse cogitatiön," a type of changeability in mental processing, is expected from one who is of "tel nation," or such a parentage. The drama of Silentius's performance of identity comes from what he has had to learn ("entendre") that is in conflict with the figure of Nurture and Silentius's Nature. At this point, the narrator is not surprised, but rather, expects that a child Silentius's age will be undergoing the diverse cognition that is enfolded in the interaction between Nature and Nurture. In many ways, Silentius becomes an allegorical figure as well, embodying the educational process of a medieval, aristocratic child, who role-plays as part of this development.

The figure of *Silence* as a child provides the poem the body through which to stage the debate between Nature and Nurture, creating an *agôn*-istic game to explore the conflict between Nature and Nurture. As Roger Caillois explains in his taxonomy of play,

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[37] *Silence*, ll. 2657-72.

agôn is a classification of games where competition is the focus of the playspace.[38] In particular, each participant has at least an "artificially created" equal chance of winning as a way to clearly mark value to the participant who is victorious. The playspace created by the narrative through Nature and Nurture's debate includes play pieces, most notably Silence, as the play object through which the debate will play out. As Simon Gaunt describes, while Nature's triumph seems predetermined, the power of lineage and social status bolster Nurture's position as being nearly on par with Nature.[39]

Recent work by medieval scholars on childhood has described the increasing interest in and significance of the child represented within medieval cultural objects, particularly within the romance genre. Phyllis Gaffney working from the Old French literary corpus, Dan Kline for Middle English, and J. Allen Mitchell have considered how children have been represented and what cultural work these representations do. Significantly, scholarship on the medieval child have attempted to refute, or at least complicate, the work of Philippe Ariès, whose 1960 *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Regime* (translated to English in 1962 with the title *Centuries of Childhood)* traced adult's increasing sentimentality of the child up to the modern day.[40] Rather than being a distinct subject from the adult, Ariès argued that medieval culture considered the child as little adults without much differentiation between children and adults.

Valuably, Aries's thesis has been complicated in numerous ways, particularly tracing how the child was a figure of significance during the twelfth and thirteenth

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[38] Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Game,* 15.

[39] Simon Gaunt, "The Significance of *Silence*," *Paragraph* 13.2 (1990), 212.

[40] Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life,* trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Knopf, 1962).

centuries. According to Gaffney, this shift occurs from the convergence of both the rise

of the romance genre and the increasing production of works on learning and pedagogy.[41]

The romance genre tends to emphasize the development of its protagonist, as the scale of

the narrative becomes more internal and localized, which ends up transforming into a

psychological complexity that tends to not be found in the *chanson de geste*. The child

then becomes the figure through which concepts and ideologies are negotiated, as a

feature of the romance genre. Semantically equating the medieval French use of the term

enfans with our modern conception of the child is difficult as it has a wider age range

than how we tend to now categorize human development. However, even though the age-

range is fluid, Gaffney shows that there is still a marked difference between *enfans* and

adults as exemplified by the focus on development of youth within romances: "romance

narratives expose the dilemmas confronting youth: the enigma of parental origin, or the

intricacies of social behavior."[42] The staging of child development in romances produces

the child as a "creature of unrealized potential" who is engaged in the state of

becoming.[43] The "unrealized potential" here is, by extension, that of the romance's

temporal context as both allegory and romance negotiate through states of ambiguity and

conflict, as Heng identified. This state of *becoming* "adult" (as a matured, invulnerable,

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[41] Phyllis Gaffney, *Constructions of Childhood and Youth in Old French Narrative* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 157.

[42] Gaffney, 157.

[43] Ibid., 37.

88

and legible subject) is the very state that, at the same time, produces anxiety for the potential to be otherwise.[44]

J. Allen Mitchell draws a similar conclusion from his work on embryogenesis, tracing the way medieval scholars described the "enveloping causes" of the formation of fetus and child. As the fourteenth-century scholar Nicole Oresme frames reproduction, "a small difference in the cause makes a very great difference in the outcome," meaning that "nothing is securely performed" in the act of creation.[45] This is why fetuses start "intersex or polymorphous" engaged in a process of becoming as a series of actions by others and self which draw from, and put into practice, gendered affordances. The potential reveals the "creaturely vulnerabilities and vibrancies" of the human, and the potential to *not* fully realize its "potential" nature.[46] Hugh of St. Vincent draws upon the crafting of coins in parallel to *Natura artifex* to show how the mind is of a certain plasticity that "is transformed from an unshaped, plastic material into the human intellect" as it receives a series of archetypes as the mind of the child matures.[47] From this, the mind of an infant is one that is pliable but forcibly hammered into the adult intellect which is shaped by structures and archetypes.

According to Claudia Castañeda, this form of the child "is not a finite form of existence, but a kind of absence of form, 'an absolute void.'"[48] The "diverse cogitation"

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[44] As Gaffney argues, the form of the child in the epic, rather than romance, is seemingly static and is not engaged in the same process of development, making the *becoming* an adult a particular focus in the romance genre, 37.

[45] Mitchell, 15.

[46] Ibid., 15.

[47] Truitt, 45.

[48] Claudia Castañeda, *Figurations: Child, Bodies, Worlds* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2002), 145.

89

of Silence points towards the type of plasticity of the child in a way that lacks a form, in its inability to be finite. Due to the "voidness" that the child-figure holds, "the child becomes a time-space made available for the occupation by the (adult) subject," allowing for the act of naming, narrating, and speaking for to form the child, almost by means of possession. The irony of Silence's name is the naming of a "voidness," of silence as being void of sound. The anxiety of what Silence will become occurs from what Castañeda calls, on the one hand, the "agency of nature" and on the other, the "continually regenerating social world" where, through their interaction, the child's subjectivity "emerges out of and contributes" to this process.[49] In essence, the child is subject to "the agency of nature," which "exists beyond the domain of the human," and socialization, which can also be called Nurture.[50] This is not to say that Nature and Nurture are diametrically opposed in the way that they are presented in modern discussions of child development and particularly highlighted in discussions of sexuality surrounding the millennial turn. Whereas a modern conception tends to present an either/or relationship of Nature/Nature, medieval French texts suggest a relation of fulfillment. As Doris Desclais Berkvam argues, Nurture ("Norreture") is the environment through which a child develops the skills and traits that best highlight their Nature, rather than being fully disconnected from Nature.[51] The tenuous relationship between Nature

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[49] Castañeda, *Figurations*, 166.

[50] Ibid., 165.

[51] Doris Desclais Berkvam, "*Nature* and *Norreture*: A Notion of Medieval Childhood and Education," *Mediaevalia* 9 (1983), 165-80.

90

and Nurture is emphasized in this text as they are figured as separate personifications, something unique to this text as Simon Gaunt suggests.[52]

Silence as a type of void is one conception of silence that John Biguenet examines in his entry to the series *Object Lessons*. Connecting the Child figure with artifice, Biguenet speaks of this void through the impact of dolls "who silently regard us, their fixed expressions offering no hint of their judgments about what passes before their glass eyes," a type of silence that, as adults, we find unsettling and ominous: the doll's lack of acknowledgment prevents us from being unable to readily interpret them.[53] This is why "naming" as a performative, locutionary act, is an attempt at visualizing and embodying a concept, by attempting to make it familiar. Silence, even the act of silencing, is a void in which is often occupied, seen as a vacuum that needs to be filled:

> Yes, we may dissect the past as if it were a poem to be explicated, excavate the buried memory, interrogate the record, but it is not the past that answers our questions. In the face of silence, we impose what we take for answers. We are, at best, ventriloquists, and the past, our dummy. For no matter how articulately we phrase those questions we ask of what—of who—we once were, our past remains mute as the doll in a child's embrace.[54]

This "muteness" is instead a "speaking through" that animates the past, concepts, figures, and bodies—a possibility for the many references Biguenet points out that equivocates the doll with a corpse.

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[52] Gaunt, 204.

[53] John Biguenet, *Silence* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 82-3.

[54] Biguenet, *Silence*, 83.

Approaching the child from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Edelman argues that the figure of the Child (a produced state separate from a material child) that is psychically invested with the beliefs of the present culture. The Child, produced out of the Symbolic (discourse) and the Imaginary, is meant to reproduce (in all possible ways) the present into the future—this is why, for Edelman, Whitney Houston's "children are our future" provides a clear articulation of society's hyper-attention towards the child.[55] Due to this emphasis on the child as a vulnerable subject that requires education to realize its nature, representations of the child enact, as Dan T. Kline argues within the Middle English corpus, ideological work that reproduces "the ideological effects necessary to maintain the dominant cultural discourse of late medieval Britain."[56]

Silence's parents articulate the symbolic power of the child during their expression of grief after Silence leaves the court to travel as a minstrel. Jointly, both parents seemingly recite the same verse, lamenting the loss of their son (*fils*) who is held up as a reflection: "Ki mireöirs estoit del mont (He was the mirror of the world)."[57] This construction of Silence as mirror is repeated again by the narrator once the seneschal admits to the count that Silence went with the visiting minstrels (*jongleurs*): "Li cuens set que li jogleór / Ont pris del mont le mireór" (The count knew that jongleurs / had taken the mirror of the world)."[58] The emphasis on Silence as "a mirror of the world" highlights

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[55] Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 3.

[56] Dan T. Kline, "Female Childhoods," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, ed. Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 22.

[57] *Silence*, l. 3063.

[58] *Silence*, ll. 3115-6.

Silence, like the figure of the Child, simply as a reflection of other forms (even while

mirrors may not directly reflect, but can distort). The rhyming of *jogleór* and *mireór* here

implies the act of minstrelsy as an act of reflection, potentially posing the work of the text

as minstrelsy as itself being a "mirror of the world."

The focus on mirroring here recalls Nature's creation of Silence through molds

and material as a metaphor for the reflection of ideal forms. As Kathy Krause describes,

the mirror is a popular literary trope starting in the twelfth century, with the most

identifiable medieval literary mirror in Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose* in the

fountain of Narcissus.[59] Through a reading of Narcissus's mirror, the mirror can be seen

as projecting an artificial image that one starts to desire, posing another potential anxiety

to the allure of artifice.[60] However, as mobilized in genres such as the *speculum regis*, the

image of the mirror was often connected to educational purposes—particularly the

creation of virtue—as an image would be, in the words of Hugh, imprinted back on the

mind. In this sense, not only has Nature created Silence out of a mold, as an ideal form,

but that form becomes a mirror for others to look at and interiorize. Likewise, the mirror

acts as a "vision of the self in the other," the act of seeing onself and negotiating between

the two images.[61] As "a mirror of the world," Silence is configured as a reflection of

forms, concepts, and structures that others see in her, again posing Silence as the figural

Child who reflects back ideologies to those who look. At the same time, Silence is

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[59] Kathy Krause, "'Le Mireor du Monde:' Specularity in the *Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 12.1 (2002), 86.

[60] Krause, "'Le Mireor du Monde,'" 86.

[61] Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Sight Lines: The Mirror of the Mind in Medieval Poetics," *The Mirror in Medieval and Early Modern Culture: Specular Reflections*, ed. Nancy M. Frelick (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 119.

disguised as a minstrel, being absent during these declarations. As an example of artifice, the act of disguising prevents the reflection of ideal form, emphasized by Silence's absence being equated with the absence of a mirror.

Prompted by her heart (*ses cuers*) and guided by Reason, Silence leaves with the minstrels to perform as a *jongleur*, in order to learn a pastime that becomes a compromise between being a knight and spending time sewing, activities that are gendered affordances which the heart presents as options Silence can choose from:

> Se ne ses donc alcune rien
>
> Por tes conpagnons conforter,
>
> Ne te volront pas deporter.
>
> Car t'en vas vials en altre tierre
>
> Sens et savoir aprendre et quere.
>
> [If you don't know a single way / to entertain your companions, / they won't want to spend their time with you. / Why don't you at least go abroad / to gain some experience and acquire some expertise.]"[62]

The heart intervenes as a source of practicality that negotiates between the "mirror" that Silence is to become (as external) and an interiority that is guiding Silence towards diversion and the entertainment of others. Being persuaded by Nature that Silence is not Silentius, Silence will no longer play games that boys usually play:

> adunc quant jo m'afule
>
> Por moi de tel giu a retraire
>
> Com vallet suelent encore faire,

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[62] *Silence* ll. 2846-50.

Dont dient tuit mi compagnon:

'Cis avra moult le cuer felon

Se il vit longhes entressait.

[Now, when I get dressed, / and don't participate / in the kinds of games that boys

are used to / all my companions jeer, / 'This one will be a terrible coward, / if he

lives that long!'"].[63]

Instead, Silence's idea of "fun" is very different (*diversement*). At this juncture, the focus

on Silence's gender is articulated through games and diversions, acting both as a

gendering activity as well as an act of exploration that is foreclosed by communal

shaming. D.W. Winnicott, a play theorist and child psychologist, identifies the act of

playing as a form of meditation between the "inner world" of the child and the outer

world as engaging in creativity, or a creative act.[64] In John Trevisa's Middle English

translation of Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum* (1380s/1390s), playing is an act

of synchronization, bodily movements that express interiority, or the soul: "For it is

iknowe how children scholde have himself in pleyes, it is to wetyng how he schulde have

himself in beryng; and beryng here is icleped mevyng of members and of lymes by the

whiche mevyng discposicion of the soule may be know."[65] The "moving of members and

of limbs" both mimics as well as reveals the soul, particularly when they aligned.

According to Mitchell, such actions reveal, in the act of practicing, *virtu*, a power that is

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[63] *Silence*, ll. 2564-66.

[64] D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (New York: Routledge, 1971), 54.

[65] Mitchell, *Becoming Human*, 67. Mitchell is quoting from: Giles of Rome, *The Governance of Kings and Princes: John Trevisa's Middle English Translation of the* De Regimine Principum *of Aegidius Romanus*, ed. David Fowler, Charles Briggs, and Paul Remley (London: Routledge, 1997), 234.

inherent in the soul's disposition, but is revealed (or materialized) through embodied practice.[66] Thus, this disposition always has a potentiality that is actualized through play, using objects and movement, as a *spiel* (play-dance), in its expression.

Exemplifying the anxiety of how children play as a form of (a)synchronicity that may go against Nature, Silence exhibits potentialities that are attempted to be foreclosed by Nature as well as Nurture. Both Nature and Nurture are presented as external forces to ensure that Silence performs, through playing as (re)creation, a particular self. Therefore, Silence will renounce the "bow and quiver" (*mon coivre, et mon arçon*) to align his activities more with women's.[67] In the "expressive coherence that is required in performance," as Erving Goffman describes, the act performance "points out a crucial discrepancy between our all-too-human selves and our socialized selves," attempting to establish a habit that materializes a particular self.[68] However, in a passage quoted from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, "a game is still being played" by engaging in artifice even if the performance attempts to conform to expected modes of behavior, dress, and conduct.[69] As a result, the performance of an image, which is not a presentation of self, is an attempt to "seem to herself to be stabilized, justified in her splendor."[70] The game being played is one of socialization as well as an attempt at stability, highlighting the divided heart (*cuer diviers*) that Silence struggles with:

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[66] Ibid., 67.

[67] *Silence,* l. 2562.

[68] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), 56.

[69] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 57. Goffman is quoting from: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H.M. Parshley (New York: Knopf, 1953), 533.

[70] Goffman, 57.

Et cuers s'est une creäture

Mervelles d'estrange nature:

Qu'il pense voir moult largement,

Torne et retorne trop sovent

Les larges pensers que requelt

Dont motes foie[e]s se due[l]t.

Et por cho di jo de Scilence

Qu'i ert de moult grant abstinence,

Que ses pensers le tormentoit

Et il le sentoit et sofroit.

Et tols jors ert pres a contraire.

A cho que ses cuers voloit faire

Et quit oeuvre contre voloir

Soventes fois l'estuet doloir.

Silences ot le cuer diviers.

[And that is why I say that Silence / showed such great forbearance, / for his
thoughts tormented him, / and he felt this and suffered from it. / He was always
ready to go against / what his heart wanted him to do, / and whoever works
against his will / finds himself often in a state of unhappiness. / Silence's heart
was divided against itself.] [71]

The potentialities of what Silence could become are expressed as a division of the heart.

Once again drawing on *oeuvre* as "work," the shaping of a self against the will causes

[71] *Silence*, l. 2667-81

pain through its division. This division results from a negotiation among various selves, in turn shaped by the affordances of Nature and Nurture. In eventually materializing a self through performative actions, Silence dons a performance to mediate a "persona" that can function within society, focusing on both keeping the self occupied as well as a form of building community through entertaining others. With this psychological development comes the anxiety for "wholeness," a divided wholeness that is able to align various potentialities into *becoming* one. While Nature has provided a negation in that he is not Silentius, an *alternative* is never provided, leaving the visiting *jongluers* to be what Silence's heart aligns with. Orienting the self towards minstrelsy, Silence participates in an activity that focuses on artifice and performance. As Erika Hess suggests, the move to become a *jongleur* mirrors "the artificial or deceitful aspect of Silence's gender performance" as it stages and, as I would emphasize, creates alternative realities which lie "at the heart of minstrelsy, storytelling, and theatrical performance."[72]

The emphasis on activities, as much as clothing, highlights the performative nature of Silence's *becoming*. At the conclusion of *Silence,* both the king and Silence display the effects of actions as revealing, while creating, one's qualities. The king tells Silence that she will be granted safety, as opposed to Eufeme, due to loyal actions: "Silences, ses qu'as recovré / Por cho que tu as si ovré? / Amer te voel et manaidier (Silence, know that you have saved yourself / by your loyal actions. / I give you my friendship and protection.)"[73] Marked as *ovré*, the actions that Silence performs become aligned with the act of creation or *ouvré* in their lexical similarity. Likewise, Silence's

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[72] Hess, 65.

[73] *Silence,* ll. 6637-9.

response to the king emphasizes the significance of action: "*Et al fait pert que est li sire*" (It is by his acts that one knows who is truly king)."[74] Actions, as performative act, materialize what is *virtual*, connected with the bringing out of *virtu*.

The virtuality of Silence's potential is materialized through activities that act as a ritual in actualizing a virtual image through the liminal space of play, as the child transforms into an adult, like a rite of passage.[75] As Rob Shields argues, virtuality presents a liminal zone "that provides the potential for assuming new identities" emphasizing experimentation.[76] The potentialities presented within the debate of Nature and Nurture emphasizes how these could all be paths for Silence: "The virtual is always real, even if it is a memory or a past event, but it is not actualized in the present except via specific human interventions, such as rituals, which make these memories or other 'virtualities' tangible, concrete."[77] The ability for Silence to play with boys, play as a *jongleur*, play as a knight are all "real" potentialities that become actualized throughout the poem. This is partly why critics have played so much with the ambiguity of *Silence*, as I will discuss further.

Playing with Silence

The aspects of play and performance in *Silence* have been widely discussed as the poem has become a cornerstone of both feminist theory and French literary theory over

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[74] *Silence*, l. 6646

[75] Rob Shields, *The Virtual* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 36.

[76] Shields, 14.

[77] Ibid., 39.

the past two decades. The medieval journal *Arthuriana*, published by Scriptorium Press at

Purdue University, dedicated two entire volumes towards scholarship on *Silence* both

edited by Regina Psaki in 1997 and 2002. In her introduction to the 1997 collection of

essays, Psaki poses the character of scholarship on *Silence* up to that point, and arguably

continues to be to this day: "its staging of gender issues is riveting and our criticism

unrelentingly returns to the same tangled passages and the same impossible question, a

suitable place to close: Is this romance ultimately misogynist or philogynous?"[78] The

"tangled passages" that present both uncertainty and a debate that, in itself, reflects the

debates of Nature and Nurture, and the playfulness that the text creates have richly

opened itself up to a type of scholarly participation that I would characterize as engaging

in play. I suggest that *Roman de Silence* has become a textual playground that invites

both performance, exemplified by the performance of *Silence* that Psaki discusses in her

introduction to the 2002 volume of *Silence*, and play through its puns, gender games, and

open questions that the text endorses through debate.

  Both Psaki and Zaerr highlight how the performance of *Silence* as a form of

remediation creates a different experience with the text, one that its written form cannot.

As medieval scholars have noted, modern "readers" should consider how all written texts

had a potential to be performed, aligned with other activities that participated in "the

pervasive theatricality of medieval culture."[79] Psaki describes the performance of *Silence*

by John Fleagle and Shira Kammen as an anchoring in the context of its musicality

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[78] Regina Psaki, "Introduction," *Arthuriana* 7.2 (1993), 6.

[79] Linda Marie Zaerr, "When Silence Plays Vielle: The Metaperformance Scenes of *Le Roman de Silence* in Performance," *Mosaic* 42.1 (March 2009), 101.

through using medieval instrumentation and performance style.[80] Zaerr's work

emphasizes how performing *Silence* highlights the "disjunctions between what is said and

what is shown, and the explicit contradictions in *Le Roman de Silence* achieve a

meaningful complexity in their interaction in performance."[81] Through this act of

"revealing" in performance, Zaerr concludes that a "minstrel's performance brings the

clearest perspective to *Le Roman de Silence*."[82] The focus on minstrelsy in *Silence*

emphasizes a form of meditation that the written text can't access, leaving modern

"readers" attempting to (re)create an experience that is always only virtually there.

      In taking on the performance of a minstrel, Silence also seemingly embodies

another ideal form, being able to perform so well as to become both the center of

attention at court and the only one audiences wish to hear:

> Por cho qu'ert bials, et si vallans,
>
> En son mestier sit res vallans,
>
> Ert il a cort tols jors li sire
>
> (Because he was handsome, gracious, / and such an accomplished musician / he
>
> was the center of attention wherever he went].[83]

As a result, Silence is able to embody a performance that presents the self as minstrel,

perfectly so that they become a better *jongleur* than that of the other minstrels who taught

them. Silence role-playing as Malduit, a name that Silence takes as the disguise as well as

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[80] Psaki, "Introduction," *Arthuriana* 12.1 (2002), 4.

[81] Zaerr, "When Silence Plays Vielle," 115.

[82] Ibid., 115.

[83] *Silence*, ll. 3185-7.

a notice to how, as Nature has convinced them, they were badly taught (*mal duit*) and poorly advised (*mal apris*).[84] *Duit* as either taught or led, emphasizes the role of education in Silence's development. Becoming a *jongleur* is a middle ground between acting as a knight and sewing, seen as a compromise to be able to entertain and maintain relationships with others, as well as a "bridge between the worlds of men and women."[85] In "compromising" with the emphasis on taking the name Malduit, Silence seems to take on a form of improvisation within the text, driven by the divided heart, at a time that Nature and Nurture seem absent. In this episode, we see Silence moving away from the "ideal forms" to something that escapes it. Thinking of Silence's transitional status here, Moseley's concept of *ludomusicality* makes Silence's choice to become a *jongleur* particularly fitting:

> Correspondingly, music is not merely the outcome of a certain type of play, but constitutes a set of cognitive, technological, and social resources for playing in and with the world through the medium of sound, its mechanisms, and its representations. Play, in turn, becomes the means by which such musical behavior is made audible. In these multiple senses, play activates music via patterns of actions that can be identified as *ludomusical*. Within (and against) the constraints that regulate it, ludomusical play fluctuates between the preordained and the unforeseeable, emerging in relation both to the performance of familiar cultural scripts and to the imperative to improvise."[86]

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[84] *Silence*, ll. 3178-9.

[85] Zaerr, 109.

[86] Moseley, *Keys to Play*, 16.

As improvisation within music, the performances engages a space between the

"preordained and the unforeseeable," drawing on "cultural scripts" while also going

beyond them. Zaerr's performance of the minstrel episodes highlights a performer's

inability to play as Silence because the specific details of what is being played focus on

the other two *jongleurs,* whereas we do not know what Silence is playing: "I cannot make

my vielle sing the melody of Silence while I am saying the words of the minstrels."[87] For

example, even while Silence is considered the best performer and the only one the court

wants to hear, the focus remains on the other minstrels. The only reference to what

Silence might be playing is in a scene where he plays the vielle as he walks to the court:

"L'endemain l'enmena al conte / Tolt vielant amont le rue [The next day, the youth was

taken to the count, / playing the vielle as he went up the street.]"[88] While we are told

Silence is playing the vielle, we still don't have access to what he is playing. This is a

moment of perhaps Silence's consistent improvisation that, while not silence, is

something that cannot be remediated or reproduced. We only know about Silence's

playing through the narrator talking about Silence's actions as well as the reactions of the

court, much to the other *jongleurs*' frustration. As Zaerr states, "we do not participate in

their experience of Silence" in that Silence can only be assumed to be playing in the

background. This "absence" highlights Labbie's view of Silence becoming a "performing

object" in that the constant performance expresses a "complex self unrestricted by

cultural regulations."[89] While Zaerr emphasizes the lack of action in music and

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[87] Zaerr, 110.

[88] *Silence*, ll. 3540-41.

[89] Labbie, "Naming Silence," 70.

103

storytelling, I wish to focus on the inability to capture a moment of improvisation within this space of musical play. The space of non-restriction here, at least for a time, allows Silence to piece together, in her own act of artifice, a self-as-*jongleur*. While another potentiality for Silence, it is foreclosed by the plotting of the *jongleurs* in their jealousy as Silence ultimately excels in improvisation, in this doubly liminal space, existing between worlds.

Katarina Livljanic and Benjamin Bagby articulate this virtuality of performance as a type of "cruel silence" that can only be broken by "bringing our scholarly work into the resounding spaces of the vocal laboratory itself."[90] As such, this silence acts as a void that modern mediators then occupy: "It is indeed 'impossible to know' many things about a silent voice described with words, and whose notational traces are at best a compromise, but in giving our own voices to medieval singers we might once again inhabit their mysterious and eloquent silence."[91] Like the figure of the child that is a void space, the potentiality for the performance of medieval texts, in this case *Silence*, creates a playspace to inhabit, a space that is both "mysterious and eloquent" in its silence. I wish to emphasize the articulation of a "vocal laboratory" here as exemplifying a form of experimentation that takes place in not having "access" to something that would be called, and would never actually exist as, "authentic." Angela Mariani emphasizes that, based on the limited musical notations, "some degree of improvisation, fluid composition, or any other manifestation of *inventio* is necessary to create and deliver a

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[90] Katarina Livljanic and Benjamin Bagby, "The Silence of Medieval Singers," *The Cambridge History to Medieval Music*, ed. Mark Everist and Thomas Forrest Kelly (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 233.

[91] Livljanic and Bagby, "The Silence of Medieval Singers," 233.

performance, including performances intended to reflect historical practices and processes."[92] Thus, each performance, which includes the act of interpretation as another form of remediation, is improvised and fluid, in its inability to fully be reproduced. As with the performance of *Roman de Silence* by Fleagle and Kammen, it is gone, "leaving only its lasting effect on those audiences who experienced it," much like Silence's own minstrelsy performance.[93]

Rather than attempting to solve the text, treating the debate between Nature and Nurture as a sort of puzzle, the debate acts as a "vocal laboratory" that characters, scribes, and readers all participate within. Roberta Krueger begins her article with such an image, arguing that the corpus of "twelfth- and thirteenth-century francophone courts can be read as a vast textual laboratory in which the gender roles of elite culture were articulated, examined, and put to the test."[94] As Katherine Terrell posits, through *Silence*'s presentation of competing gender ideologies, "the relationships between masculine and feminine, nature and culture, the signifier and the signifier are all called into question in ways that provoke debate without providing any definitive answers."[95] As a result, the "questioning" here is "more consequential and revealing" than the potential of providing the answer to the question posed at the end of Psaki's 1997 introduction.[96] What Terrell

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[92] Angela Mariani, *Improvisation and Inventio in the Performance of Medieval Music: A Practical Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 7.

[93] Psaki, 4.

[94] Roberta L. Krueger, "Beyond Debate: Gender in Play in Old French Courtly Fiction," *Gender in Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed, Thelma Fenster and Claire Lees (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 79.

[95] Terrell, 46.

[96] Ibid., 46.

points to here as more "revealing" is the destructive-creative cycle in the presentation of unstable identities and ideologies. Through "questioning," an openness is presented that draws us, as scholars, into further cycles of piecing apart and putting together words, meanings, contexts, theories, temporalities, and so forth. In this cycling, readers can participate with the text as an act of (re)creation, particularly through the ambiguities and silences that occur: "To remove ambiguity from this text means to tear it falsify it, to lose its essence. Yet we can read the poem and enjoy it if we permit it, at the same time, to read *us*—to question the assumptions with which we teachers, students, readers, and editors approach medieval literature."[97] As players, we are also played by the text, to recall Agamben's dynamics of play, shaped by both the affordances and the silences of the play-space. Here, Bogost's characterization of "play" is relevant:

> Play is not an act of diversion, but the work of working a system, of interacting with the bits of logic within it. Fun is not the effect of enjoyment released by a system, but a nickname for the feeling of operating it, particularly of operating it in a new way, in a way that lets us discover something within it, or to rediscover something we've found before.[98]

With the packed, complex logics of *Silence* centered on the performance of gender ideologies that seem to already be "interacting with the bits of logic," scholars have rich material to play with as we discover, or rediscover, ways of thinking that cross cultural and temporal spaces in the act of textual work/performance. Much like Biguenet's silent dolls, or the figure of the Child, we are invited to occupy the space as a space of play,

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[97] Allen, 110.

[98] Bogost, *Play Anything*, 114.

through which we can potentially give voice to, or at the same time silence, experiences and selves that are always potentials which are either materialized or remain virtual. This, of course, can happen with care, as Caroline Walker Bynum notes in thinking of history as a "comic mode:" "After all, it will probably always be true that one person's buzz word is another person's discovery; one person's 'over-theorizing' is another person's methodological self-scrutiny; one person's 'under-theorizing' is another's archival research."[99]

It's Time to Be An "Adult"

Near the conclusion of the poem, Silence's "nature" is revealed through Merlin, particularly his laughter that has garnered attention for how disruptive it is, both for the reader as well as the characters who witness Merlin's laughs.[100] Merlin, ultimately, is the one who ends the games, as his laughter signals a series of disconnects that each "episode" involves. In many ways, Merlin becomes somewhat of a "spoilsport" who disrupts and begins to dissolve the game space in his act of revealing the series of disguising and role-playing occurring up to this point. Drawing from Huizinga, Bogost points out that the "spoil sport" breaks up the "play-world" in a refusal to play the game.[101]

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[99] Caroline Walker Bynum, "Perspectives, Connections, and Objects: What's Happening in History Now?" *Daedalus* 138.1 (2009), 85-6.

[100] Lorraine Kochanske Stock, "Civilization and Its Discontents: Cultural Primitivism and Merlin as a Wild Man in the *Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 12.1 (2002), 26.

[101] Bogost, *Play Anything*, 178.

The game is concluded with Silence's marriage, which ends the childhood frame
and the "diverse cogitation" that is connected with being an adolescent.[102] As a result,
Silence moves out of the space of play, ultimately being "refinished" by Nature into a
new subjectivity. As part of this transition, Nature "cleans up" Silence in a way that once
again draws attention to Silence being portrayed as artifice:

D'illuec al tierc jor que Nature

Ot recovree sa droiture

Si prist Nature a repolir

Par tolt le cors et a tolir

Tolt quanque ot sor le cors de malle.

Ainc n'i lassa nes point de halle:

Remariä lués en son vis

Assisement le roze al lis.

[After Nature / had recovered her rights, / she spent the next three days refinishing

/ Silence's entire body, removing every trace / of anything that being a man had

left there. / She removed all traces of sunburn: / rose and lily were once again /

joined in conjugal harmony on her face.][103]

Nature's "repolishing" or "refinishing" (*repolir*) recalls Silence as part of Nature's work,
or *ouvre*, extending the metaphor of Nature at her forge. The consistency of the metaphor
here at the conclusion is intriguing as it insists upon Silence's artifice once again. The

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[102] Gaffney notes that the variability in childhood ages, particularly between boys and girls, is due to
marriage expectations. Similarly, Dan Kline, through a survey of late medieval conduct literature, explains
the focus on female children's "marriageability," which poses marriage as a form of end point to
adolescence, see: Kline, 17.

[103] *Silence,* ll. 6669-76.

time for improvisation, for a certain potentiality to be realized is signaled by being "joined in matrimony" which Nature polishes on Silence's face. While matrimony has been created here, as a form of unification, the potential is always that Silence will keep playing, as she continues to be shaped and formed by Nature and Nurture in "a kind of creation, a kind of craftsmanship" through "adopting, inventing, constructing, and reconfiguring the material and conceptual limits."[104] But the "magic circle" from Nature and Nurture's debate has concluded, Nature declaring herself the "winner" of this round.

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[104] Bogost, 223.

CHAPTER IV
SCRIPTING THE PASSION: PRODUCTIONS OF DESIRE, VIRTUALITY, AND
TRANSFORMATION IN ANCHORITIC MEDITATIONS

"Rituals are often driven by liturgy, or scripts, describing how the ritual is meant to unfold. Similarly, many video games are also scripted via the computer programming and story-writing behind the scenes. Both, however, require human interaction and performance for the 'script' to become something more than just the potential for experience. And both, one could argue, shape the performer through his or her movement *through* the scripted experience." –Rachel Wagner, *Godwired*, p. 19.[105]

In 2015, *Wired* featured an article titled "Is Virtual Reality the Ultimate Empathy Machine?" highlighting the performance art collective, BeAnotherLab.[106] The use of Virtual Reality (VR) to construct empathy centers around their project entitled The Machine to Be Another (TMBA). The TMBA is claimed to be an "embodied virtual reality system that allows individuals to experience the world through the eyes and body of another," by allowing a user to see themselves in a different body and feel "realistic tactile feedback" as they navigate the space.[107] One of their featured projects is *Gender Swap* that claims to promote "respect, understanding, and mutual agreement." The performance occurs through the negotiation of touch between two participants as they have to agree on each of their movements. Each person is equipped with a VR headset that displays the first-person point-of-view (POV) of the other participant. In doing so, each person is "visually immersed" while engaging in the tactile feedback that mirrors the movement of the other (Figure 8).

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[105] Rachel Wagner, *Godwired* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 19.

[106] Jennifer Alsever, "Is Virtual Reality the Ultimate Empathy Machine," *Wired* (November 2015), https://www.wired.com/brandlab/2015/11/is-virtual-reality-the-ultimate-empathy-machine/.

[107] BeAnotherLab, "The Machine to Be Another," http://beanotherlab.org/home/work/ tmtba/.

Figure 8: Screen capture of video preview for *Gender Swap* by BeAnotherLab

The idea is that through the visual and tactile immersion of the experiment, a participant will open one up to the perspective of another, engaging "empathy" as a being able to fully understand what it is like to live in certain gendered, racialized, or (dis)abled embodiments. In particular, it is the act of negotiation, the "constant agreement" of consent that drives the affective response.

VR and games have taken up the ability to function as "empathy machines" to legitimize the technology against the tendency to see "play" as distractive or not constructive.[108] Instead, "empathy" is highlighted as both a way to show that game creators are "good (i.e. normatively acceptable) citizens in the system of contemporary media," in that designers are creating ethically agreeable media, as well as being able to

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[108] Ruberg, *Video Games Have Always Been Queer*, 179-180.

sell games that promise "immersion" for players who are interested in acting as a tourist in another's experience.[109]

The problem of "empathy" has been valuably critiqued by feminist and queer scholars is in its tendency to cover up the lack of knowing someone's circumstance from a full phenomenological, daily experience. As Bonnie Ruberg argues, media that allows one to "walk in someone's shoes" is often "repurposed as a tool through which straight, cisgender players actualize their self-congratulatory belief about what good LGBTQ 'allies' are supposed to feel."[110] This functions as a form of cognitive bias as the participant is looking into some confirmation about their status as "ally," while projecting their own understanding onto somebody else's experience. The player can exit at any time, removing themselves from the experience, which in itself establishes a distance, a space between both subjects. Rather than "sympathy," queer games designers have responded with the call to problematize empathy, calling for what Donna Haraway promotes as a "becoming with" that maintains a distance, focusing on a particular orientation towards one another where "two subjects can stand together, see each other, and value one another without attempting to possess one another or become one."[111] Instead, the subjects can participate in a form of compassion, or co-feeling, which in the act of playing maintains a virtual, not actualized, space of affect. The focus should not be on simply relying on "visual immersion," a fallacy of media participation that assumes much about how a player interacts with a media object; instead, more attention should be

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[109] Ruberg, *Video Games Have Always Been Queer*, 180.

[110] Ibid., 180.

[111] Ibid., 181.

spent on how a media objects specifically constructs the affective drives that moves a player close to or away from another's experience.

As Rachel Wagner illustrates in the epigraph to this chapter, rituals, much like programming "shape the performer through his or her movement *through* the scripted experience." The impact of being able to "visit" the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem within virtual spaces prompts questions about the very virtuality of "prayer" and sacred spaces as users can email prayers to be printed out and inserted in the wall, or meditate at a virtual wall in *Second Life* with potentially the same impact or efficacy.[112] So how does prayer and meditation participate in virtuality? What particular language or affordances are scripted and then activated to shape not only the performer, but the spaces and temporalities through which the performer acts? If, as Ayoush Lakizani argues, remembering Christ in anchoritic practice is " a deeply active process that attempts to make him almost present," then in what way do these "scripts" create and maintain the "almost" presence of Christ?[113] With these questions, I turn to a group of medieval meditations that provide a richly complex example of how meditations can engage in virtual reality.

To Speak These Words: Triggering a Protocol

At the conclusion of the Middle English *Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* (ca. 1250), the text calls upon its reader to speak the words of the preceding prayer:

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[112] Wagner, *Godwired*, 26.

[113] Ayoush Lakizani, "Remembrance and Time in the *Wooing Group*," *Reconsidering Gender, Time, and Memory in Medieval Culture,* ed. Elizabeth Cox, Liz Herbert McAvoy, and Roberta Magnani (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015), 82.

Prei for me mi leue suster.

Þis haue i writen þe for þi þat words ofte quemen þe heorte to þenken on ure

 lauerd.

And for þi when þu art on eise carpe to war ihesu ant seie þise words,

and þenc as tah he heng biside þe blodi up o rode,

and he þurh his grace open þin heorte to his luue,

and to reowđe of his pine.

[Pray for me, my dear sister. / I have written this for you, because words often

inspire the heart to think on our Lord. / And therefore, when you are at leisure,

speak to Jesus, and say these words, / and imagine that he hangs beside you,

bloody on the cross, / and through his grace he will open your heart to his love, /

and to pity for his pain.][114]

The writer of the text, highlighting how the text was written for a "dear sister," places

emphasis on the ability for words to trigger a particular mode for thought to occur.

Crucially, the speaking of these words while "*on eise carpe,*" or "in bodily ease,"

performatively creates presence, the presence of Christ in terms in both aural and visual

modes in that he listens as well as the ability to "þenc as tah he heng biside þe," to further

think that the very scene of the Passion is unfolding in front of the speaker. The

preceding prayer which complexly and carefully negotiates the speaker's relation to

Christ is meant to "*quemen,*" an affective charge to think and, ultimately, open the heart

to Christ's love with the assistance of grace. As a result, the prayer is marked as

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[114] All passages and translations of the *Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* are from Catherine Innes-Parker's edition of the Wooing Group prayers: Innes-Parker, ed., *The Wooing of Our Lord and the Wooing Group Prayers* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2015), 110-11.

performative, producing the speaker's position within an interconnected matrix of time, space, and intimacy as they speak, thereby thinking, "*þise words"* on the page. But why "these words?" As "words often inspire the heart," the performance of these words trigger a VR space that attempts to actualize Christ, particularly the speaker's orientation to Christ.

Further comparing virtual reality and religion, Wagner suggests that both "invite scripted engagement with stories and experiences, drawing on vast wells of myth and ritual. Both encourage self-reflection on who we are, and on what we could be."[115] The act of meditation engages (re)creation in the process of *becoming*, a potential that is deferred in that it could go on "bending, twisting, and looping." Building upon the wealth of scholarship that have aptly connected devotional texts such as the *Wohunge* to medieval practices of images, my interest is to analyze the language of the *Wohunge* "script" that is to be performed, particularly as the act of speaking pieces apart the speaker's position, only to attempt to resituate it again (and again, and again). Sarah McNamer has noted the uniqueness of *Wohunge* in having elements that are typical to the genre of anchoritic texts, but also diverge from other devotional texts.[116] In particular, the "imaginative performance," while often employed to engage affective response, places the "reader as eyewitness to the events of the Passion as they unfold in relentless narrative sequence."[117] As such, I will consider the epistemological impetus behind

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[115] Wagner, *Godwired*, 16,

[116] Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: U Penn P, 2011), 29.

[117] McNamer, 29.

visualization in anchoritic meditations; in other words, how such texts attempt to "open the heart" by piecing apart and decentering the speaker.

As a result, to repeat some of the goals of Jamie McKninstry in her work on memory in medieval romance,[118] my focus here is not to only consider what images are inspired and its effects, but *how* the texts of the Wooing Group produce an anchoritic subject by considering how desire is both articulated and visualized through the piecing apart of what it means to think upon Christ. Lakizani has charted the significance of memory in the Wooing Group texts[119]--but, bring to light the poetics of memory, thinking through the particular language, metaphors, and scripts that create particular relationships between the self and others, and the past, present, and future. Lakizani aptly describes the instances where the anchoress is asked to "re-member" in act of "re-presenting" the past, particularly noting the distance of the anchoress. I am interested into *how* and *why* this distance is maintained, particularly as these meditations weave together devices of memory in its deployment of various media (speech, text, image) that speak to the inability to easily delimit strong boundaries among each. As such, my focus pays attention to the particularities of each text, while drawing on the rich fields of gift and play studies. In particular, I am interested in the specific ways texts of the Wooing Group construct an anchoritic subjectivity; namely, the deferment of desire within a complicated matrix of visuality.

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[118] Jamie McKinstry, *Middle English Romance and the Craft of Memory* (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2015), 5.

[119] Ayoush Lakizani, "Remembrance and Time in the *Wooing Group*," 82.

Key to this creation is the centrality of the Christ as lover-knight motif, a construction that valuably folds in the game of risk-reward which the language of gift exchange upholds throughout the meditation. The language of gifting creates the feeling of uncertainty that not only drives repeated meditation, but maintains the spatial and temporal distance between the speaker and Christ. Through language of gift and exchange, we can see the (re)creation of the speaker in their own (re)creation of the Passion through elements of play. As I will show, the theories of gift and play have had multiple points of contacts within their histories, in particular the contacts between Johan Huizinga and Marcel Maus's work on the gift.

The performative effect of reading "these words" is the very activation of a script, or what Stephen Yeager describes as a protocol, the creation of a cultivating space, where the anchroress negotiates her subjectivity through a series of gifts that are given freely while balanced with concepts of purchase to negotiate choice with obligation. The framework of the protocol, which Yeager points out as one way to bridge medieval chivalry and modern video games, is one that is meant to be internalized, or seen as innate, through becoming a *habitus* rather than something being imposed upon someone.[120] Anne Savage articulates the way a reader would ruminate and linger on the words in their complexity as an internalization to create "a distillation of affect, drop by drop, to be collected in the soul over a lifetime."[121] Another way to think of it is as a

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[120] Stephen M. Yeager, "Protocol, or the 'Chivalry of the Object,'" *Critical Inquiry* 45.3 (2019), 747-61.

[121] Anne Savage, "The Wooing Group: Pain, Pleasure, and the Anchoritic Body," *The Milieu and Context of the Wooing Group*, ed. Susannah Chewning (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), 166.

mantra where the speaker would become lost in the text, ultimately creating a "mystical experience" through its memorization.[122]

Yeager defines protocol as "sets of rules that organize networks by limiting the set of possible actions that their actors may choose but that make no effort to determine the results of actions."[123] The limits, or affordances, provides structure without knowing definitively what the outcome of the choices will be. This provides a valuable framework for considering meditative practice not as regulation or discipline, but rather cultivation: "in essence, regulation is a transcendent law that gives an actor freedom but threatens to discipline it, while protocol is an immanent law that cultivates an actor's virtue and thereby eliminates the need for discipline."[124] The key here is the cultivating of virtue by presenting a limited set of choices while ensuring that uncertainty remains. As a result, "freedom" here is constructed out of a limited set of choice, an illusion of choice that often is pointed out as a mechanism of play.

The speaker embraces the uncertainty of the "end result" that is at the core of continued worship, and with its appropriation of chivalric structures into the text, the uncertainty of relations. As a result, the nexus of gifts, chivalry, and meditative practice are deeply imbricated into protocol. For the performance of *Wooing*, the cultivation comes from the act of speaking, the ritualistic engagement with a text that activates a transformation of the self and the space in which the "speaker" inhabits. The *virtue* that is cultivated is virtual, both a potential (but not guaranteed result), but *virtual reality* in the

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[122] Jennifer Brown, "Subject, Object, and Mantra in *þe Wohunge of ure Lauerd," The Milieu and Context of the Wooing Group*, ed. Susannah Chewning (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), 66-7.

[123] Yeager, "Protocol," 750.

[124] Ibid., 750.

digital sense as the activation of speech forms (from performing) a space that becomes

layered with various temporal events through visualization of the passion of Christ.

Passion(ate) Play

Being a lover who is most *luuewurði* (worthy of love), Christ is the epitome of all

qualities that one would look for in a lover. In the *Wooing*, an anchoress meditates upon

Christ as a "lover-knight," a figuration of Christ common to medieval devotional

literature through which many of the elements of medieval romance are adapted into a

meditative context.[125] In considering their complete orientation to Christ in terms of

giving love, the anchoress or anchorite reflects on the conditions under which they would

give their love, and how Christ out-knights all other knights. Following an explication of

each quality of Christ and why that particular quality is deserving of love, the anchoress

addresses Christ directly to explain to him why she will give him her devotion:

> Þenne þu wið þi fairnesse,
>
> þu wið richesce, þu wið largesce,
>
> þu wið wit ant wisdom,
>
> þu wið maht ant strengðe,
>
> þu wið noblesce ant hendeleic,
>
> þu wið meknesse ant mildeschipe ant mikel debonairte,
>
> þu wið sibnesse,
>
> þu wið alle þe þinges þat man mai luue wið bugge

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[125] Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia, 1995), 138-9.

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haues my luue chepet.

[Then you with your beauty, / you with riches, / you with generosity, / you with wit and wisdom, / you with power and strength, / you with nobility and courtesy, you with meekness, and mildness, and much graciousness, / you with kinship, / you with all the things that one may buy love have purchased my love.][126]

As the most generous, the most courteous, and the most gentle, Christ has "*chepet*" (purchased) her love "wið alle þe þinges þat man mai luue wið bugge (with all of the things that one may buy love)". Rather than drawing upon a language of giving, language that appears through Christ's noble disposition of "largesce" (generosity), the anchoress draws upon the language of purchase in considering why she should love Christ. In essence, having all the qualities of an ideal lover, Christ has exchanged his whole self for the love of the anchoress, an offer that motivates her to consent to give her love in exchange. Privileging a language of purchase over a language of giving, the anchoress articulates a sense of obedience to another who displays qualities that inspire love, negotiating with Christ in the second person—as the emphatic repetition of "you" in the above passage exemplifies. In speaking these words, the anchoress complicates her own relation to Christ, giving her love, not freely, but only to those who are most "worthy" of it. Through her relation to Christ, the solitary anchoress constructs herself as an anchorite *within* obedience, and more specifically, out of her orientation solely towards Christ as opposed to an orientation towards the world.

The act of discipline is closely tied to desire in a way that has valuably created a nexus of scholarship on how we are to understand the political agency of women within

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[126] *Wohunge*, ll. 173-82.

monastic or anchoritic practice during this period. As Aranye Fradenburg describes, "we do more devotional exercises, buy more self-help books. Discipline does not teach us the identity of pleasure with the good; rather, it drags desire out into the open, pours gasoline on it, and sets it on fire, which is why it so easily becomes desire's object as well as its means."[127] Mash Raskolnikov clarifies this sense of discipline in that it is more precise and more stringent during this particular time of increased female readers and devotional practitioners, complicating the image of empowerment: "discipline becomes a means to the end of female self-making, balancing what we might understand as empowerment."[128] This balancing is not one of dichotomies, discipline versus empowerment. It is not so much discipline as it is cultivation that ultimately does not require discipline, a type of cultivation that can be empowering as well. While focused on the Anglo-Saxon period, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe reevaluates the concept of agency, arguing that the giving obedience as an act of choice is not a passive one, showing an active engagement in the creation of identity, something that O'Brien O'Keeffe calls "agent action."[129] Recent work has also located the power of discipline, as in role-playing, in power and identity formation that has deep theological roots as exemplified by Karmen MacKendrick's close reading of Augustine.[130] For MacKendrick, being

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[127] Aranye Fradenbury, *Sacrifice Your Love*, 7.

[128] Masha Raskolnikov, *Body against Soul*, 147.

[129] Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe reevaluates the concept of agency in the introduction to her book, *Stealing Obedience*. In considering religious practice and devotion, scholars should not frame agency as complete freedom, a move that misses the necessity for choices within religious practice, and the power in affirming one's devotion to God in opposition to other expectations (particularly those of the world). See: *Stealing Obedience: Narratives of Agency and Identity in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 3-54.

[130] One figuration of role-play is SM or sado-masochism that engages in a series of power relations that play out fantasies within a "safe space," often for expressions of power and identity for each participant. As part of his analysis of SM dynamics in *Le Chevalier au lion* and *Erec et Enide*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen

"obedient" to God is not one of passivity, but an active decision to orient one's self to God. The decision, as active, emphasizes the power of speaking/working through one's orientation to God, particularly as "full obedience" is never able to occur.[131] As will become clear, the inability to be fully aligned with God or Christ is carefully articulated in the language of gifting, that itself sparks a virtual experience of the Passion.

As a result, the texts of the Wooing group can and should be regarded as *performative* texts, both in the aspect that they are *performances* in the speaking of a meditative script, but also in that the act of speaking produces (and reproduces as she repeats the text) a series of images and relations between the anchoress and Christ in a series of blurred distances in time, space, and subject/object relations. This chapter on the dynamics of performance, play, and image examines particularly how central the performance of these meditations is the particular language and rhetoric deployed to direct and maintain *desire*, which, as psychoanalytic theory has presented as central to the formation of subjectivity.

In drawing upon discourses of exchange, I argue that the anchoress who performs the text of the *Wooing* articulates an "economy of love" that produces the anchroress' selfhood as articulated through her position within space, temporality, and kinship relations. Having transitioned into a space where all relationships have been overridden to focus on her devotion to Christ, the selfhood of the anchoress is solely produced out of her relation to Christ. The language of exchange thus impacts the anchoress' self as it

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defines the potential for identity creation as such: "Sadism is an authoritarian performance that never ponders consent or contracts, while masochism belongs to a willing victim whose identity is bound and dispersed by both." Key here is that it's a performance of power and that the identity of the one who fulfills the role of masochist is subject to how contracts are renegotiated: Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 89.

[131] Karmen MacKendrick, *Seducing Augustine: Bodies, Desires, Confessions* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2010), 74.

complicates the anchoress's relation to the past/present, the proximity of Christ's body, and her obligation to Christ. While emphasizing precisely how the language of the text works to produce the anchoress' orientation to Christ, I build off of Sarah Salih's analysis of medieval virginity in anchoritic devotional text as a productive sexuality "redirected" towards Christ, as opposed to having a "muted" desire.[132] As the *Wooing* concludes with a meditation on the events of the Passion, visualized as if it were occurring in the anchoress's present moment, the anchoress must grapple with what to do with the "gift" that Christ gave, a sacrificial gift of Christ's own body for the salvation of humankind.

In analyzing the ways that the anchoress draws upon the language of the gift and exchange to meditate on Christ, love, and desire, I examine the dynamics at work in negotiating with an object of desire that is always deferred, remaining open, thereby promoting anchoritic devotion as a productive, masochistic sexuality of pain, suffering, and sacrifice. Central to her meditation is in considering what has made Christ *luuewurđi*, or worthy of love, a Middle English term unique to the *Wooing* that conceptualizes love as something exchangeable for one's inherent qualities and actions.[133] Enacting a process of exchange that connects "love" to "worth," the *Wooing* becomes a meditative performance that tackles the relation between freedom and obligation in devotional practice expressed through "buying," "selling," and "giving" love.

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[132] Sarah Salih, "Queering *Sponsalia Christi*: Virginity, Gender, and Desire in the Early Middle English Anchoritic Texts," in *New Medieval Literatures 5,* ed. Rita Copeland, David Lawton, and Wendy Scase (New York, 2002), 163.

[133] An examination of the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*) has revealed that no other texts have been recorded as using this particular compound phrase (with full knowledge that the *MED* is not entirely comprehensive).

While I emphasize the series of deferments in this textual archive as functions of desire, I draw upon the work of gift theorists to think through the language these texts use in describing the relationship to Christ, language that act as the affordances to create a self in the space of this performance. The *Wooing* employ terms of giving and exchanging that valuably bring together gift theory and subjectivity. Common to theories of the gift is the gift's power to produce bonds between persons by effecting a process of reciprocation; thus, the gift carries implications for how love and desire occur and what they produce. Figuring love as something that can be exchanged, the *Wooing* dramatizes these connections, inviting a queer reading of the Middle English meditative text that thinks through the performance of mystical experiences in language. In particular, because a relationship with Christ has self-sacrifice at its core, I weave together the gift's sacrificial and obligatory qualities and theories of masochism, a productive "intersubjective sexuality," to think through the anchoress' performance of self through love and sacrifice.[134]

The construction of an anchoritic self is central to devotional texts such as the *Wooing* due to the anchoress' transformation from a self engaged in and produced out of social relations to a solitary self, living alone, enclosed from the world as she is confined to an anchorhold. Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson note that this transition was often dramatized as a "living death," including rites that created, through performance of the

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[134] Most notably, Sarah Salih and Jeffrey J. Cohen have both examined the productive quality of masochism in medieval texts. Cohen reads masochism within Chrétien de Troyes's *Le Chevalier de la Charette* and the "courtly love" tradition, while Salih employs theories of masochism in three examples of late medieval marriages. See: Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis, 2003), 78-115; Sarah Salih, "Unpleasures of the Flesh: Medieval Marriage, Masochism, and the History of Heterosexuality," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 33 (2011): 125-47.

rite, the disconnect from the social world as a form of death.[135] Removed from the world, the anchoress was to entirely dedicate her attention and her desire towards Christ who overrides all other worldly relations. The Wooing Group is named after what is regarded as the "most sophisticated" of a group of prayers that are all addressed from a first-person perspective and often recall the Passion.[136] As a whole, they provide a strong example for the rise of lay spirituality in the vernacular throughout the thirteenth century onwards.[137] As the *Wooing* describes, Christ should be the one towards whom the anchoress orients herself because Christ embodies and exceeds all kinship relations. In reflecting on the natural love a person should have for kin, the anchoress explains how Christ is "mare þen fader, mare þen moder, Broðer, suster, oðre frend" (more than father, more than mother, brother, sister, or friend).[138] In exchanging love, Christ becomes everything to anchoress, negotiating her self out of and through Christ.

As evidenced by the literature for anchoresses, many of which comprise what is known as the Katherine Group, thirteenth-century England witnessed a transformation in devotional practice. Scholars have placed the texts of the Katherine Group, especially the *Ancrene Wisse,* a primer on anchoritic practice, as the starting point of affective devotion that emphasized the body of Christ, the suffering and sacrifice of his body during the Passion, as well as the discourse of *sponsa Christi* (bride of Christ) that imagined Christ and the devotee as married. As Barbara Newman explains in her analysis of female

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[135] Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson, ed., *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works* (New York, 1991), 16.

[136] Innes-Parker, "Introduction," 13.

[137] Ibid., 36.

[138] *Wohunge,* 248-50.

devotional texts on the Continent, the Beguines appropriated discourses of *fin amor* "courtly love" and the bridal mysticism of Bernard of Clairvaux. The crossing of discourses of *braumystik* and *fin amor* produce nuanced views of "the lover, the beloved, the emotional and ethical praxis of love, and not least, the community in which the love-drama unfolds," revising how the female mystic relates herself to Christ in a way that is not quite a contract between married couples.[139] This crossing of discourses is evident in anchoritic devotional texts, with the *Wooing* as a special case that downplays the *sponsa Christi* (spouse of Christ), while privileging the language of *fin amor* that figures Christ as a lover.[140]

In articulating a language of love as gift in this way, the *Wohunge* initially seems to problematize ideals of a gift (as love) due to its implication in "economic" language. Theories of the gift idealize its separation from economic forces, being a pre-capitalist form of exchange whose residual traces remain in practice in postindustrial societies. Thus, many theorists of the gift struggle to explain how the gift is regarded as something that is "disinterested," different from its opposite, a commodity. C.A. Gregory marks this binary most clearly in his book *Gifts and Commodities*, the title itself bearing the two modes of exchange that produce considerably different relationships in exchanging goods among people.[141] Unlike the commodity, the "free gift" is idealized as an unconditional

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[139] Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, 138.

[140] McNamer sees the crossing of these discourses in the formation of affective devotion in medieval England, using the *Wohunge* as a starting point. However, McNamer emphasizes the *sponsa Christi* in order to prove that meditation had a "legally performative function" for women. However, I do not agree with McNamer's assessment that we should read the *Wohunge* only in terms of marriage as it undermines the negotiated and open aspects that the *Wohunge* includes in drawing upon a language of exchange: *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia, 2009), 28.

[141] C.A Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities* (London, 1982).

act of giving, lacking calculation, interest, or recognition that what is given is a gift. For Jacques Derrida, then, the free gift is *the impossible*, not that it *is* impossible, but rather that the Idea of a gift—crucial to the logic of exchange—is so abstracted that it can never be pinned down in practice.[142] The free gift—or for Alain Caillé in his critique of Derrida and Pierre Bourdieu, the pure gift—has a logic that must be separated from any calculation, measurement, expectation, or interest. As Caillé's defense of the gift exemplifies, the values of the pure gift is supposed to be protected from being subsumed as just another exchange.[143]

However, positioning the gift against the commodity runs the danger of missing how qualities of the gift exist in exchanges that are not explicitly marked as a gift exchange. Exemplified by the passage above, the *Wooing* invites the qualities of the gift even as it poses love as something that can be bought or sold. In considering love as purchasable, the *Wooing* draws on an economic language before the commodity of market capitalism. Thus, even in drawing in a language of purchase, characteristics of the gift remain in effect, most importantly its productive qualities in creating bonds between people. In figuring love as something that can be "sold," the *Wooing* is not claiming that love is a commodity. Rather, the gift is not as far removed from a sellable good in this economy of love. In articulating love as something that can be bought and sold, rather

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[142] To figure the Gift within the Neoplatonic discourses that Derrida himself draws upon, the Gift becomes a whole whose parts are not commensurate with it. In essence, the Idea of the gift as an abstraction gives itself to its parts as events in practice that cannot fully reciprocate their full meaning. Thus, the Idea of the Gift seems to enact the very dynamics of the gift itself. For Derrida, this is why the language of giving and the gift has crucial implications to language itself: *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Camuf (Chicago, 1994),

[143] Alain Caillé, "The Double Inconceivability of the Pure Gift," *Angelaki* 6.2 (2001): 23-39.

than given, I suggest that this language is employed to wrestle with the obligation created

in the giving of a gift.

Beginning with Marcel Mauss's *Essai sur le don* (1923-4), theorists of the "gift"

have emphasized its productive, symbolic value in creating and maintaining relationships

between people, particularly in connection with competitive games, as emphasized by

Huizinga in *Homo Ludens*. In comparing the gift to the commodity, Gregory remarks that

the exchange of gifts "establishes a relation between transactors, while commodity-

exchange establishes a relation between the objects transacted." [144] In other words, the

gift relates persons, while the commodity relates things. In a commodity exchange,

attention is placed on the comparable inherent value of the objects being traded,

uninterested in the person who is trading the object. For the Marxist anthropologist,

Maurice Godelier, this makes the commodity a thing both alienable and alienated.[145] The

commodity object is entirely removed from its own origins (creator and seller), thereby

taking on the condition of having an inherent value as it is exchanged to another person.

The gift on the other hand is "inalienable, but alienated," not able to be disconnected

from the person who is giving even as it is actually being given.[146] In other words, a

gift's characteristics and "value" are directly tied to the person giving the gift and its own

history and origins, thus carrying with it a sense of the person who is giving the gift. The

gift's inalienable qualities is its "spirit," a value-added quality of the gift that has been

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[144] C.A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities*, 42.

[145] Maurice Godelier, "Some Things You Give, Some Things You Sell, but Some Things You Must Keep for Yourselves: What Mauss Did Not Say about Sacred Objects," in *The Enigma of Gift and Sacrifice,* ed. Edith Wyschogrod, Jean-Joseph Goux, and Eric Boynton (New York, 2002), 24

[146] Godelier, "Some Things You Can Give," 34.

seen as the gift's unique character since Mauss's articulation of the *hau*. It is the productive power of the gift that has interested anthropological theorists of the gift, who see the exchange of gifts as producing new kinship relations, formed out of the gift's social orientation.

Although often idealized and experienced as a "free gift," an unconditional act, the act of giving triggers a dynamic of obligation between the giver and the receiver.[147] Thus, while exchange produces a relationship between people, the relationship remains open. In other words, the feeling of obligation to return a gift leads to a "deep-lying incommensurability" in the logic of the gift.[148] As Georg Simmel argues, the gratitude one feels in receiving a gift is not the need to return a gift, but rather "the consciousness that it cannot be returned, that there is something which places the receiver into a certain permanent position with respect to the giver."[149] Due to the gift being imbued with the qualities of the giver, the character of who is giving the object and their relation to the object being given is presented, while blurring the distinction between the person giving the object and the person receiving it. In particular, the primary act of giving, being freely chosen, becomes a gift that the receiver can never fully return because the return gift will not be free. As a result, the act of giving is neither a transaction or a cancellation of debts because of an "eternal debt." For Pierre Bourdieu, this gratitude of receiving becomes "inscribed in the body itself in the form of passion, love, submission, respect," thereby

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[147] Pierre Bourdieu, "Marginalia," in "Marginalia," in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. Alan D. Schrift (New York, 1997), 237.

[148] Georg Simmel, "Faithfulness and Gratitude," in *The Gift: An Interdisciplinary Perspective,* ed. Aafke E. Komter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 47.

[149] Simmel, "Faithfulness and Gratitude," 47.

creating desire within the gap between giver and receiver.[150] In the end, the exchange of

gifts is implicated in an economy of desire, implicated in feelings of submission and

obligation.

Refining previous discourses on love in twelfth-century France through literary

works such as Andreas Capellanus's *De Amore,* theorists of *fin amor* ("courtly love")

seem to idealize love as having many qualities of the "gift." This parallel makes for an

interesting case in the *Wohunge* as the text explicitly conceptualizes love that is given to

the point of literalizing it in terms of buying, selling, and worth. As C. Stephen Jaeger

argues in his anthropological analysis of the changing discourse of love in eleventh- and

twelfth-century Europe, love is regarded as a force that both reveals and increases the

noble qualities of a person in that it participates in a display of representation.[151] Thus,

the "ennobling love" that Jaeger describes is at the foundation of Simmel's conception of

the gift, in that the gift too reveals the social orientation of the person giving the gift.

Love-Worthy

Exemplified by Capellanus's *De Amore*, a twelfth-century treatise produced out

of the court of the Countess of Champagne, love is something that must be freely given,

articulated in an economy of honor that, like the gift, reveals and increases one's nobility

through action. In Book One of *De Amore*, a noblewoman and a count write a letter to the

Countess of Champagne to inquire into whether love can exist between married persons,

hoping for a judgment that will determine whether the count's failed attempts at wooing a

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[150] Bourdieu, "Marginalia," 237.

[151] C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of
Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 6.

married woman is justified. The Countess rules on their question in a way that explicates what love is meant to produce in being given:

> Dicimus enim et stabilito tenore firmamus amorem non posse suas inter duos iugales extendere vires. Nam amantes sibi invicem gratis omnia largiuntur nullius necessitatis ratione cogente. Iugales vero mutuis tenentur ex debito voluntatibus obedire et in nullo se ipsos sibi invicem denegare. Praeterea quid iugalis crescit honori, si sui coniugalis amantium more fruatur amplexu, quum neutrius inde possit probitas augmentari, et nihil amplius [augmento] videantur habere nisi quod primitus iure suo tenebant?
>
> [We state and affirm unambiguously that love cannot extend its sway over a married couple. Lovers bestow all they have on each other freely, and without the compulsion of any consideration of necessity, whereas married partners are forced to comply with each other's desires as an obligation, and under no circumstances to refuse their persons to each other. Then again, how is the distinction of a husband advanced if he enjoys the embraces of his wife as if they were lovers, when neither of them can in that way increase their moral stature, and seemingly they have nothing more than they initially possessed as of right?].[152]

As the conclusion by the Countess of Champagne shows, love is to be given freely as it cannot empower conjugal couples. The question at issue for the Countess is not that it is unable to do so, but rather that there is no productive value in love among couples. Love, in that it is ennobling, being freely given, is to increase honor (*crescit honori*) and moral stature (*more amplexu*). In rethinking divine love through *fin amor,* the *Wohunge*

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[152] Andreas Capellanus, *On Love*, trans. and ed. P.G. Walsh. (London: Duckworth Press, 1982), 156-7.

similarly emphasizes love's productive qualities when given, linking honor, worth, and love closely together in its language of exchange.

Linking worth and love together, the *Wohunge* reflects upon the qualities that one would look for in a lover, emphasizing that within Christ "ane arn alle Þe Þinges igedered Þat eauer muhen maken ani mon luuewurđi to ođer" (alone are all the things assembled that would ever make any man worthy of love to another).[153] *Luuewurđi* becomes a significant compound term in the *Wohunge,* appearing three times through the text when the anchoress shifts to a new section of the meditation. As a result, the relation between the speaker and Christ is one of exchange as a form of proof that Christ's qualities "purchased" love, but it was the act of sacrifice that made him worthy for her. Thus, while there is a sense of obligation, Christ still had to "prove" worthiness, bringing up a sense of competition as Christ, through his actions, has proven himself to be the most worthy of the speaker's love. As a result, what seems to be "obligation" is countered with a sense of choice, that the speaker "chose" Christ as a result of this proof. Christ had to fight for the love of the speaker.

In considering why she should devote herself to Christ, the anchoress is to conceptualize love as "invested" in someone after proof is given that he is "worthy" of it. Connecting "worth" with the "menske" (honor) that Christ holds, love operates in an economy similar to, being derived from, an economy of honor. Thus, in being "worthy" of love, love takes on qualities of "symbolic capital," qualities that can be collected and mobilized to produce certain effects. According to Bourdieu, the gift economy is "organized with a view to the accumulation of symbolic capital (a capital of recognition,

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[153] *Wohunge*, l. 12.

honor, nobility, etc.)," an orientation that is "adjusted to the logic of 'disinterestedness'" that is expressed through self-sacrifice.[154]

On top of all his qualities, the sacrifice entailed in the Passion has made Christ *luuewurđi* of the anchoress's love. While the first half of the *Wohunge* considers Christ's qualities that make him worthy of the anchoress's love, acting as a type of "honor" through being the epitome of a courtly lover, the second half turns towards the Passion, an act of sacrifice that bestowed the most honor upon Christ through his pain and suffering. Following a summary of the qualities of Christ that have "bought" her love, the anchoress is then to emphasize Christ's sacrifice, a gift given for the anchoress:

> Ah ouer alle ođre þinges makes te luuewurđi to me þa harde atele hurtes,
>
> þa schomeliche wohes þat tu þoledes for me,
>
> þi bittre pine ant passiun
>
> [But over all other things those hard, bitter hurts make you worth of my love, the
>
> shameful pains you suffered for me, your bitter torment and passion.][155]

Exemplifying the development of affective devotional practice that McNamer sees as beginning with texts such as the *Wohunge*, the anchoress emphasizes not the act of sacrifice itself, but the intense affects that invests Christ's sacrifice with greater power (as honor/worth). In effect, the anchoress reorients herself towards the qualities of Christ in action, an act of *largesse* (generosity) that makes him *luuewurđi* in its display.

Marking a shift in the text from meditating on Christ's qualities to the Passion, the act that epitomizes those qualities, the anchoress visualizes the Passion as if it was

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[154] Bordieu, "Marginalia," 235.

[155] *Wohunge*, ll. 183-5.

occurring within the space of the anchorhold. While the first half emphasizes why she should give her love, the second half of the *Wohunge* considers *how* she is to give her love as an act of reciprocation. By considering Christ's sacrifice as the gift that acts as the primary gift, the gift that truly sparked the relationship between Christ and the anchoress, the anchoress negotiates her relation to Christ in terms of her obligation of giving back and how this obligation will never fully match Christ's gift.

In sacrificing himself, Christ gives his self to the anchoress in order to redeem humanity after the Fall. Sacrifice is often regarded as the most pure gift, an act of giving that is disinterested with no reciprocation, leading theorists of sacrifice such as Georges Bataille to privilege sacrifices as acts that should be considered, like the free gift, only *in itself*.[156] The *Wohunge* performs the very act that Bataille sees as often undervaluing sacrifice by drawing Christ's sacrifice into an economy that includes an intended purpose and outcome. Privileging the representation of a completely individualized "*me*," the ego that is untethered from social, political, and economic forces, Bataille struggles with the way that sacrifice is coopted into the world of the "not *me*," subjected "to the applied (moral) imperative of God," giving the "*me* as existence for *others*, for God, and morally alone as existence *for itself*."[157] The judgment that Bataille makes is derived from a position that privileges the individual subject that attempts to escape from ideological forces that are regarded as oppressive, impeding in the representation of an individualized self. Like the gift, sacrifice (as gift) is not disempowered or made "unpure" when

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156 Georges Bataille, "Sacrifices," *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939,* trans. Allan Stoeckl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 133.

157 Bataille, "Sacrifices," 133.

considered as being given in the interest for something else. Rather, for medieval texts such as the *Wohunge*, a sacrifice (especially Christ's sacrifice) reveals the social orientation of the "giver" who gives themselves, an act that reveals and increases the honor of the giver. In other words, there is no "not me" in a medieval consideration of sacrifice.

Thus, the *Wohunge* brings Christ's sacrifice into an "economy of love" that remains a gift of love, idealized as an act done in interest for something and initiating a cycle of reciprocation. As the anchoress explains, as a display of his generosity, Christ sacrifices himself in the interest of releasing the anchoress from the pains of Hell: "Ah lest ine al forlesede þu ȝef þeseluen for me to lese me fra pine" (So that I should not lose everything, you gave yourself for me to release from pain).[158] As an act of grace (as generosity), Christ's sacrifice grants a gift to the anchoress who undid the gift of creation that God gave. Thus, the gift of Christ's sacrifice initiates a relationship with the anchoress in which she desires to reciprocate the gift. The visions of the Passion, emphasizing Christ's "bitter hurts" and torments, is performed in the present tense, as if Christ's sacrifice was being enacted in front of the anchoress. Reciprocating the gift takes on the form of desiring to sacrifice her self in kind, performing an *imitatio Christi* (imitation of Christ) that can only ever be an imitation. As the original gift expresses, according to Simmel, the greatest amount of freedom, reciprocated gifts carry a "taste of bondage" in that the reciprocation can never fully return the gift.[159] The inability to fully reciprocate the sacrifice, and the anchoress' frustration in being unable to do so,

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[158] *Wohunge*, 87-9

[159] Simmel, 47.

emphasizes the anchoress' sense of self in relation to Christ. Through the language of exchange, the *Wohunge* emphasizes Salih's claim that brides of Christ meditate upon "their difference from Christ, thereby becoming like him, and continually oscillate between Christlikeness and humanity."[160] Taking on the form of a negotiation, the *Wohunge* performs the instability of the anchoress' self, in that her desire for Christ, to be like Christ, will always be deferred through the condensation of past, present, and future.

The anchoress returns to the language of purchase in considering how Christ's sacrifice deserves her love, thus obligating her to devote herself to Christ. In sacrificing himself for the anchoress, Christ highly values her love in being able to only purchase her love with his entire self:

> bote ne þuhte þe neauer mi liues luue þat tu mihtes fulliche mi frendschipe
>
> > buggen hwilf þe lif þe lasted.
>
> A,
>
> deore cheap hefdes tu on me,
>
> ne was neauer unwurði þing chepet swa doere
>
> [But it never seemed to you, my life's love, that you might fully buy my
>
> friendship while your own life lasted. / Ah, / you had a costly purchase in me; /
>
> never was such an unworthy thing purchased at such cost!].[161]

The Passion purchases love (expressed as friendship in this passage) that acted as an "costly purchase," thereby revealing and increasing Christ's honor through his generosity. Although expressed as buying love, the *Wohunge* emphasizes the excess of

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[160] Salih, "Queering *Sponsalia Christi*," 168.

[161] *Wohunge*, ll. 442-7.

value in sacrificing for the anchoress' love, combining the language of the gift and the language of purchase.

It is precisely this excess value with which the anchoress struggles to consider how to return Christ's gift. In privileging the torments of the Passion, the anchoress wonders how she can repay (ȝelde) all that Christ gave her in terms of suffering (þole), returning the gift and becoming like Christ.[162] The anchoress' desire for Christ, to be like Christ, extends to a desire to reenact the suffering of the Passion with Christ. To give her love to Christ is to suffer, emphasizing the fraught qualities of both gifts and Love. Given that the anchoress' virginity is still a productive sexuality through her desire for Christ then the *Wohunge* imagines this sexuality as being engaged in pain, suffering, and sacrifice, while remaining "swete" (sweet), further articulating a queer sexuality in imagining a masochistic desire. In examining cases of medieval marriage, Salih argues for a reevaluation of intimacy, concluding that "there must surely been a kind of pleasure in submission, in the awareness of one's conformity to an experience that was not in itself pleasant."[163] Being at the core of the relationship between the anchoress and Christ, the sacrifice is crucial to the anchoress' sense of self in that speaking her desire allows her to play with her positioning within time and space. In visualizing the Passion, the anchoress imagines the Passion in the present as an event in progress rather than in the past. The performance of the Passion allows her to attempt to understand the pains within Christ's

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[162] *Wohunge*, ll.583-5. "ȝelde" is a complicated term to translate into Modern English, especially within a text such as the *Wohunge* that emphasizes language of exchange. According to the *MED*, "ȝelde" can refer to an act of entrusting oneself to Christ (like the modern "yielding to") or paying back an obligation or paying a compensation. I am translating "ȝelde" as "repay," while emphasizing that both meanings are occurring at once in this passage.

[163] Salih, "Unpleasures of the Flesh," 132.

sacrifice so that she may attempt to reciprocate. Now that Christ's body is in the present, in the space of the anchorhold, the anchoress reaffirms her gift of love as a reenactment of the Passion by hanging her own body on the cross:

> mi bodi henge wið þi bodi neiled o rode,
>
> sperred querfaste wið inne fowr wahes
>
> and hange i wile wið þe
>
> and neauer mare of mi rode cume til þat i deie
>
> [my body hangs with your body nailed on the cross, fastened, fixed within four walls and I will hang with you and will never come from my cross until I die].[164]

The anchoress imagines the four walls of her cell as a cross that she will remain "fastened" to until she dies. It is this act of suffering that is her gift of love in reciprocation, giving her body for Christ's "seruise" (service).[165] Drawing from Henri Lefebvre, Liz Herbert McAvoy describes the anchoritic space and the anchoritic body as being interrelations between "what is perceived, what is conceived, and what is lived within human culture."[166] The interrelations of rhetoric in anchoritic literature produce a "representational space" that the anchorite could use in re(creating) a self.[167] This gains particular power in the verbalizing of words.

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[164] *Wohunge*, ll. 398-401.

[165] *Wohunge,* l. 397.

[166] Liz Herbert McAvoy, "Introduction: Place, Space, and the Body within Anchoritic Rhetoric," *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold: Space, Place, and Body within the Discourses of Enclosure*, ed. Liz Herbert McAvoy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 8.

[167] McAvoy, "Introduction," 9.

Here, we begin with to see the transformation of the time and space of the chamber in which the speaker would engage in meditation. The vision taking place, both there but not there. The closeness and sharing in the Passion is one of active participation, rather than a dynamic of an inactive spectator as can be seen in another meditation of the "Wooing group," *On wel swuđe god ureisun of God almihti*. In this meditation, the speaker wonders why they have not internalized the image of Christ on the cross, with Mary and St. John on either side. Address to Mary, the speaker reflects on the image of Christ on the cross as the honoring of Mary's will in a way that positions her in parallel to Mary: "for to scheawen us þis" (To show us this).[168] However, the image quickly shifts back to the speaker reflecting on the image of the passion:

> Hwi leafdi hwi;
>
> nabe ich euer bi foren mine heorte eihen,
>
> þeo ilke þreo strondunges?
>
> Þi sune was ituht on rode.
>
> Þurh driuen fet ant honden,
>
> wiđ dulte neiles.
>
> blodi his side.
>
> and þi stondunge leafdi,
>
> ant sein iohanes evangelists weopinde otwo hald wiđ sofhgule sikes?
>
> hwi ne bi hold ich þis euer in mine heorte.
>
> ant þenche đet hit was for me"

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[168] "On wel swuđe god ureisun of God almihti," *The Wooing of Our Lord and the Wooing Group Prayers*, Catherine Innes-Parker (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2015), l. 240.

[Why lady why / Have I never before my heart's eyes / [seen] those same three standing together? / Your son was stretched out and fastened on the cross, / Feet and hands driven through / With blunt nails, / his side bloody; / and you standing there, lady; / and Saint John the Evangelist on the other side, weeping with sorrowful sighs? / Why do I not always gaze upon this in my heart, / and think that it was for me.][169]

Here, rather than participating in it, the speaker is an outside observer, desiring to internalize the image and reflect upon it. This passage emphasizes the visuality of the Passion, with the desire to internalize it to "sikerliche ontenden so sođ luue in me (surely kindle such true love in me), providing the kindling for a spark or fire. The imagery, as with most depictions of the Passion, strive to create an affective response in the speaker, particularly as they are performing the script in the same way the speaker of the *Wohunge* is invited to do. I draw out this example to show the participatory differences that the language of gifting brings in *Wohunge*. In *Wohunge*, on the other hand, the Passion becomes participatory, moving from a position of spectator to an actor as their body hangs upon the cross as well. The consistent exchange of gifting and sacrifice breaks down the present condition of the speaker as they engage in what is virtual reality, more than just seeing, but the feeling of participating as if they were really there.

However, like in VR, they are not "really" there, being presented with a distance that still troubles, but maintains the temporal and spatial boundaries of their self and their cell. The anchoress maintains a distance from Christ in recognizing how her gift does not quite match the symbolic value of the sacrifice. Bringing the self into an economy of

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[169] *On wel swuđe god ureisun of God almihti* , ll. 259-260.

exchange, the anchoress considers that while Christ has proved himself *luuewurđi* for her love, her gift of love, while desired by Christ, pales in comparison. Her self cannot fully reciprocate the act of Christ giving himself even as she attempts to imitate Christ on the cross:

> Bote swete iesu hwat mai mi bodi aȝaines tin.
>
> For ȝif och mihte a þusand fald ȝive þe me seluen nere hit nowt onont te þat ȝe
>> seluen for me.
>
> [But sweet Jesus how can my body be set against yours? For if I could give you myself a thousandfold, it would still be nothing compared with you, who gave yourself for me].[170]

Desiring to give her self "a thousandfold," the anchoress gives her love in the form of continually reenacting the suffering of the Passion, as a gift of her self to Christ. In being unable to fully reciprocate Christ's gift, the anchoress articulates a self that is always *becoming* like Christ, through her desire for Christ that is always deferred. As such, the image of her body being "set against" Christ's is negated and a temporal, spatial, and subjectival distance is recreated that troubles the initial "intimacy" created by this virtual image. The speaker's relation to Christ remains "open" within obedience as a constant reaffirmation of her love that is not enough in this act of negotiation.

The language of exchange here allows the anchoress to negotiate her choices within obedience, the terms of obedience, and how obedience as a sexuality in desiring Christ and to be Christlike creates an anchoritic self that is never fully formed. In weaving together the gift and love, the *Wohunge* reflects on how the anchoress can

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[170] *Wohunge*, ll. 409-10.

meditate on her relation to Christ in a way that balances agency within obedience, as a giving of the self that can only occur between lovers rather than spouses. In this way, the *Wohunge* draws on themes of bridal mysticism, but does not fully figure the anchoress as a spouse in order to leave the relationship between the anchoress and Christ open. This "openness" allows the anchoress to give her love, even in the act of reciprocating the gift of Christ's sacrifice, creating further meditation on Christ's qualities that make him *luuewurði*. Therefore, love remains a gift even if in the interest of something else, considered as an act of buying and selling, and openly expecting reciprocation. In being unable to fully reciprocate Christ's gift, the anchoress orients her self and her desire always on Christ, making a calculated choice in giving her self, thus consistently striving to become Christlike through suffering as the expression of her own gift of love.

It is through the language of giving and the gift that the *Wohunge* presents the "playing" that is "the continuous bending, twisting, and looping of" action in the maintenance of the speaker's orientation towards Christ, but never able to engage in the same space. The "co-feeling" with Christ presents a mirroring, yet still distant, identification with Christ through the specular image of the Passion, created by recalling sacrifice and reciprocation. In speaking "these words," the anchoress reorients the heart in a way that allows for an affective creation of what recalls Wagner's "virtual sacred," drawing on contemporary legal and romance syntax and constructs to present an experience that becomes the here and now, while still remaining the there and then.

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