Satire of Counsel, Counsel of Satire:

Representing Advisory Relations in Later Medieval Literature

by

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ABSTRACT

Satire and counsel recur together in the secular literature of the High and Late Middle Ages. I analyze their collocation in Latin, Old Occitan, and Middle English texts from the twelfth to the fifteenth century in works by Walter Map, Alan of Lille, John of Salisbury, Daniel of Beccles, John Gower, William of Poitiers, Thomas Hoccleve, and John Skelton. As types of discourse, satire and counsel resemble each other in the way they reproduce scenarios of social interaction. Authors combine satire and counsel to reproduce these scenarios according to the protocols of real-life social interaction. Informed by linguistic pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and cultural anthropology, I examine the relational rhetoric of these texts to uncover a sometimes complex and reflective ethical discourse on power which sometimes implicates itself in the practices it condemns. The dissertation draws throughout on sociolinguistic methods for examining verbal interaction between unequals, and assesses what this focus can contribute to recent scholarly debates on the interrelation of social and literary practices in the later Middle Ages.

In the first chapter I introduce the concepts and methodologies that inform this dissertation through a detailed consideration of Distinction One of Walter Map's *De nugis curialium* . While looking at how Walter Map combines discourses of satire and counsel to negotiate a new social role for the learned cleric at court, I advocate treating satire as a mode of expression more general than 'literary' genre and introduce the

theories and methods that inform my treatment of literary texts as social interaction, considering also how these approaches can complement new historicist interpretation.

Chapter two looks at how twelfth-century authors of didactic poetry appropriate relational discourses from school and household to claim the authoritative roles of teacher and father. In the third chapter, I focus on texts that depict relations between princes and courtiers, especially the Prologue of the *Confessio Amantis* which idealizes its author John Gower as an honest counselor and depicts King Richard II (in its first recension) as receptive to honest counsel. The fourth chapter turns to poets with the uncertain social identities of literate functionaries at court. Articulating their alienation and satirizing the ploys of courtiers—including even satire itself—Thomas Hoccleve in the *Regement of Princes* and John Skelton in *The Bowge of Court* undermine the satirist-counselor's claim to authenticity. In concluding, I consider how this study revises understanding of the genre of satire in the Middle Ages and what such an approach might contribute to the study of Jean de Meun and Geoffrey Chaucer.

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Abbreviations

CA	*Confessio Amantis*
DNC	*De nugis curialium*
DPN	*De planctu naturae*
EM	*Entheticus in dogmata philosophorum* (*Entheticus maior*)
Regement	*Regement of Princes*
VC	*Vox Clamantis*
UM	*Urbanus Magnus*

Introduction

We seldom find satire on its own in medieval literature as a single text with clear generic characteristics. It is usually mixed with allegory, beast fable, or some other genre—frequently, satire goes hand-in-hand with counsel. From Alan of Lille and John of Salisbury in the twelfth century to John Gower and Thomas Hoccleve in the Middle English period, authors decorated prudential advice about the governance of self, household, and state with colorful and vivid satire against those who undermine the public and private good.   As I investigated why these two kinds of discourse combine so often and so readily, I became interested more specifically in how they combine. I was struck by one common thread—the way these texts seem to reproduce the discourse of everyday, real-life social relations and effect a continuity between textual and social personae. I seek to understand these texts not as literary artifacts written by a remote author for a general public, but as acts of communication addressed by individuals to people they knew.

Thus, when the author of satire-counsel advises his reader, he does so as a teacher to his student, a courtier to his prince, or a father to son, to name some relational models treated at length in my dissertation. Each of these social relations is performed by a specific and appropriate mode of address, a social discourse that honors and reproduces the hierarchy and solidarity marking the relation between speaker and addressee. Texts of satire and counsel resemble each other not so much in the topics they treat as in the way they reproduce this relational rhetoric. In my dissertation, I trace the way authors use these discursive protocols through three centuries of medieval texts of satire and counsel.

As specific acts of communication, these texts were part of the shared social lifeworlds of their authors and readers; to look at their social discourse in historical context, I have developed a mode of reading that integrates a broad-strokes historicism with a fine-grained formalism. By adopting methods for analyzing the discourse of social interaction from sociology, anthropology, and applied linguistics, I hope to demonstrate how historical context—that is, the lived experience of authors and readers—and the verbal texture of words on the page illuminate one another. I hope also to demonstrate how these texts are not simply objects of aesthetic or literary contemplation, or the rehearsal of conventional formulas, but efforts to influence the thoughts and actions of their readers. By understanding medieval texts in this way, seemingly dull works like Daniel of Beccles's versified courtesy book, the Urbanus Magnus, come alive as vivid records of how power relations were reflected in the discourse of lived relations.

My goal is to understand how social practices inform these texts, but also to understand how individual authors adapted and altered these discursive practices to their individual purposes. "It is the insistence of a kind of behaviour which reveals its intention," writes Roland Barthes; I thus seek to illuminate the intentions of real writers and readers in their historical contexts by examining in detail insistent discursive features of texts combining satire with counsel.

> Less terrorized by the spectre of 'formalism', historical criticism might have been less sterile; it would have understood that the specific study of forms does not in any way contradict the necessary principles of totality and History. On the contrary: the more a system is specifically defined in its forms, the more amenable it is to historical criticism. To parody a well-known saying, I shall say that a little formalism turns one away from History, but that a lot brings one back to it. [1]

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[1] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), 112.

By analyzing the persistent formal features of represented interaction in medieval texts of satire-counsel, I am not devising an all-determining structure or system, but identifying habitual patterns of interaction, scripts to which people default when addressing each other. Yet social discourse changes with time and place, and, as I will demonstrate, responds to the operations and interventions of individual agents. The methods I employ to describe these are accordingly specfic, while still prizing nuance and flexibility.

In the first chapter, I will look at the intersection of satire and counsel and of literary and social conventions in the first distinction of Walter Map's *De nugis curialium*. Walter Map's Latin twelfth-century miscellany includes anecdotes about conversations with contemporaries, observations on the daily life at court, and ruminations on the ethical and practical challenges of being both a courtier and the head of a "court" as a householder. In this chapter I develop a full account of my understanding of medieval discourses of satire and counsel and their mutual interaction. I also provide an explanation of the theories and methods adapted to this study from discourse analysis, linguistic pragmatics, and interactionist sociology, and demonstrate how they are complementary with historicist critical interpretation.

The second chapter looks at authors who employ the traditional and ostensibly stable authoritative roles of teachers and fathers. Alan of Lille's Lady Nature looks like an allegorical goddess, but she talks like a schoolteacher upbraiding her student. By reproducing the schoolroom's terminology and concerns, her discourse also reproduces its power relations and assigns the reader the subordinate role of pupil. John of Salisbury also draws on the vocabulary and institutional prerogatives of the

schoolmaster in the *Entheticus in dogmata philosophorum*, a didactic poem addressed to Thomas Becket. This poem includes a satire on court-life that counsels Becket, then King Henry II's chancellor, to resist corruption by the court's worldly pleasures. Finally, I turn to the *Urbanus Magnus* by Daniel of Beccles, ostensibly a conduct manual addressed to minor householders in the twelfth century. I will argue, however, that this text is also prudential counsel for the chaplains retained in the service of such householders.

In chapter three, I look at two authors who address their readers with the social discourse of court. First, I look at John Gower's dedication to King Richard II in the first recension of the *Confessio Amantis*; Gower's representation of their relation through his account of their meeting on the Thames articulates a model of social harmony and mutual faith that contrasts with the public ills he enumerates in the estates satire that follows in the Prologue. I then turn from a courtier addressing a prince to a prince addressing his courtiers. Count Guilhem IX of Peitieus composed a series of three lyric poems in which he asks his vassals for counsel while satirizing his enemies, lashing the two discourse types together in a raft of bawdy puns and obscenities that align his political power with his sexual and poetic prowess.

In chapter four, I look at Thomas Hoccleve's efforts to fashion for himself an authoritative role within the social world of court based on his literary expertise. Although his poem is dedicated to Prince Henry, his dedicatory prologue is largely devoted to a dialogue between Hoccleve-the-narrator and an old beggar who harries him with unsolicited counsel; this dialogue burlesques Hoccleve's own status relative to the prince. In this way, I will argue, Hoccleve interrogates the conventions of

literary counsel found in Boethian dialogues and mirrors for princes and makes an

object of ethical contemplation out of the discourse that performs social relations

between unequals. But where Hoccleve sees the possibility of authentic and

productive communication between prince and counselor, Skelton, writing almost a

century later, describes in his *Bowge of Court* how power—how the desire for

power—makes every interaction at court an infinite regression of strategic

maneuvering and self-serving insincerity. In his allegory, the social discourse of

satire-counsel serves as an instrument for personified sins of discourse, including

Deceit, Dissimulation, and Flattery.

Though my explicit concern in this dissertation is with formal and functional

continuities and their correlation with real-life situations of interaction, one ethical

theme nevertheless continuously emerges—dissimulation, or deceptive self-

performance. By making social discourse the topic of ethical inquiry, satire-counsel

often explores the consequences of the fact that because social interaction happens in

language, it can assert false relations. Thus, while situational contexts vary among

these texts, certain targets of satire persist: the flatterer, the hypocrite, the slanderer,

the dishonest and double-dealing courtly rival. Through his impersonation and

description of these villains, the satirist distinguishes himself as an honest dealer.

But like the dissembler, the satirist also bases his authority as counselor on his

language. There is always, therefore, a tension or instability in the kind of authority

practiced by the satirist-counselor. Throughout this dissertation, I will explore the

complications this tension generates, and the way some writers attempt to conceal it

while others foreground it to make discourse itself the subject of ethical inquiry.

Chapter One

Walter Map and The Creatures of the Night:
Satire and Social Discourse in *De nugis curialium*

"Humor to me, heaven help me, takes in many things. There must be courage; there must be no awe."
–Dorothy Parker, Introduction to *The Most of J.S. Perelman*

1.1   Making an Abbot Blush

Walter Map peppers his late twelfth-century miscellany, *De nugis curialium*, with

anecdotes about his conversations with the famous and powerful. As King Henry II's

courtier, emissary, sometime itinerant justice, later canon of Lincoln and Archdeacon of

Oxford, he was sufficiently eminent himself to associate with kings, abbots, and bishops.[1]

In one anecdote, Walter reports a conversation about Bernard of Clairvaux taking place

among two Cistercian abbots, Bishop Gilbert Foliot of London, Walter himself, and some

others left unnamed:

> Duo similiter abbates albi de predicto uiro colloquebantur in presencia
> Gilleberti Foliot, Londoniensis episcopi, comendantes eum [Bernard of
> Clairvaux] ex uirtute miraculorum. Euolutis autem multis, ait alter: 'Cum
> uera sint que de Bernardo dicuntur, uidi tamen aliquando quod ipsi gracia
> miraculorum defuit. Vir quidam marchio Burgundie rogavit eum ut
> ueniret et sanaret filium eius. Venimus et inuenimus mortuum. Iussit
> igitur corpus deferri dompnus Barnardus in talamum secretum, et eiectis
> omnibus incubuit super puerum, et oratione facta surrexit; puer autem non
> surrexit, iacebat enim mortuus.' Tum ego: 'Monachorum infelicissimus
> hic fuit. Nunquam enim audiui quod aliquis monachus super puerum
> incubuisset, quin statim post ipsum surrexisset puer.' Erubuit abbas, et
> egressi sunt ut riderent plurimi.[2]

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[1] C.N.L. Brooke, "Map, Walter" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,
http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18015 (accessed February 25, 2008).
[2] "So also, two white abbots were conversing about Bernard in the presence of Gilbert Foliot, bishop of
London, and commending him on the strength of his miracles. After relating a number of them, one of the
abbots said: 'Though these stories of Bernard are true, I did myself see that on occasion the grace of
miracles failed him. There was a man living on the borders of Burgundy who asked him to come and heal
his son. We went, and found the son dead. Dom Bernard ordered his body to be carried into a private
room, turned everyone out, threw himself upon the boy, prayed, and got up again: but the boy did not get
up; he lay there dead.' 'Then he was the most unlucky of monks,' said I; 'I have heard before now of a
monk throwing himself upon a boy, but always, when the monk got up, the boy promptly got up too.' The

Reverently describing Bernard's attempt to raise a boy from the dead, this Cistercian

abbot uses biblical language to describe how Bernard, laying himself over the dead boy's

body, imitated the biblical deeds of Elijah, Elisha, and Paul. This boy, unlike those in the

Bible, stays dead.[3] When the abbot finishes his story, Walter suggests less worthy

motives monks have for lying on boys.

Walter's bawdy one-liner at the expense of a famous holy man typifies his

audacious wit. But more than in the joke itself, I am interested in the social situation in

which it is told and received. Walter describes it as an immediate success: "The abbot

went very red, and a lot of people left the room to have a good laugh." We can discern

the abbots' rank and social authority from the fact that "a lot of people" felt obliged to

leave the room to vent their laughter rather than laugh in the abbot's face. The white

abbot is visibly embarrassed and possibly angry, but as far as we can tell from Walter's

account, the riposte goes unanswered and unpunished. As Walter tells it, he has the

upper hand in the situation not because he outranks the abbots but because he outsmarts

him; nevertheless, his social position is such that he can bring his formidable wit into

play and mobilizes his social network against the Cistercians.

Walter remarks that the exchange occurred *in presencia Gilberti*; though this is

the anecdote's only mention of bishop Gilbert Foliot, the phrase casts the bishop as the

gathering's social focus. Gilbert is 'holding court,' so to speak. The appreciative

laughter which greets Walter's joke comes from Gilbert's usual retinue. Although Walter

abbot went very red, and a lot of people left the room to have a good laugh." Walter Map, *De nugis curialium / Courtier's Trifles*, ed. and trans. M.R. James, revised by Christopher N.L. Brooke and Roger A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), Distinction I, chapter 24, page 80. [Hereafter, citations from *De nugis* will be abbreviated as such: DNC I.24, 80; Translations in the notes are taken from the facing-page translation except where otherwise noted.]

[3] 2 Kings 4:34; Acts 20:10 (NIV).

does not mention Gilbert's reaction—perhaps a tactful credit to the bishop's politic

composure—he seems in any case unafraid of offending the bishop, and not on account

of recklessness, for Walter seems to presume Gilbert's tacit sympathy and anticipate

appreciation from others. This well-timed squib played on the distrust of extravagant

religiosity that Gilbert—King Henry II's courtier, confessor, and enlisted opponent of

Archbishop Thomas Becket—was likely to have shared with Walter.[4]

Walter belittles monks in front of his fellow royal courtiers and secular

churchmen; this presumes and reinforces his solidarity with them. The joke is not

politically innocent. He knows the secular clergy will laugh and the Cistercians will not,

reminding the secular clergy (and, perhaps, warning the Cistercians) that it is a distinct

group bound and bounded by common interests and attitudes. The traditional

ecclesiastical elite of Norman England was the secular clergy of London and Canterbury

in close association with a handful of Benedictine abbeys—Gilbert was himself a

Benedictine appointed to the bishopric of London by Henry II. The Cistercians brought

to England a rival claim to the spiritual authority of the church and their order spread

rapidly.[5] Walter's anti-Cistercian sentiment speaks to the contest between rival camps of

churchmen for influence over the courts of bishops, magnates, and king.

Along with some other accounts of Bernard's failed miracles, Walter's off-color

joke prefaces a long diatribe against the Cistercians.[6] These prefatory anecdotes establish

Walter as a member of a powerful social circle and imbue what he says with a measure of

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[4] Foliot was an adversary of Becket's during the crisis over young Prince Henry's coronation, one of several bishops excommunicated in the affair; C.N.L. Brooke, "Foliot, Gilbert," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9792 (accessed February 25, 2008).

[5] See Janet Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 63-85.

[6] On this diatribe, see Margaret Sinex, "Echoic Irony in Walter Map's Satire," *Comparative Literature* 54 (2002): 275-89.

social capital that makes his satire more than a solitary crank's harangue; at a time when

the Cistercian order was gaining power and property in England, Walter's text, like his

joke, articulates the group identity of a traditional ecclesiastical elite of secular clergyman

(epitomized by Gilbert's entourage) to consolidate it against the Cistercians, whom

Walter views as sanctimonious upstarts. The joke, finally, may have been a sally in

another internecine struggle; in the 1180s, Walter's patron Henry II was frequently at

open war with his son Richard, whose court was marked "by a particular attachment to

the Cistercians."[7]

My interpretation of this scene with respect to Walter Map's local political and

social context departs from the ahistorical approach to *De nugis curialium* more often

taken by literary scholars. In a recent article, Robert Edwards synthesizes the insight

produced by that approach: "unlike his contemporaries . . . , Map places authorship and

writing rather than moral correction at the center of his work."[8] Edwards summarizes

two critical approaches to Walter's treatment of narrative and authorship as such, the

anecdotalist and the *metacritical*, identifying the first approach with the observations of

De nugis curialium's editors and A.G. Rigg, for whom Walter is a "modernist," a

"narrative craftsman of the short story and the novel of manners and social comedy."[9]

The "metacritical approach" taken by scholars including Robert Levine and Siân Echard

"gives particular weight to Map's self-reflective comments about authorship" to find that

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[7] Martin Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire: 1154-1224*, trans. David Crouch (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007), 79.

[8] Robert R. Edwards, "Walter Map: Authorship and the Space of Writing," *New Literary History* 38 (2007): 273.

[9] Edwards, "Walter Map: Authorship and the Space of Writing," 274; C.N.L. Brooke and R.A.B. Mynors, introduction to *De nugis curialium (Courtier's Trifles) by Walter Map* (Clarendon Press, Oxford) 1983, xxxii-xlv; A.G. Rigg, *History of Anglo-Latin Literature: 1066-1422* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 88-89.

"self-conscious and ambivalent, Map is a post-modernist." "The metafictional

approach," Edwards rightly points out, "has a strong debt to the anecdotalist reading: the

writerly qualities and wit of Map the modernist are also the codes laid bare and disrupted

by the postmodern Map."[10] The elemental resemblance between the two approaches is

that both treat text and author as *literary*— the text is an object for aesthetic

contemplation unfettered by historical circumstance, and affects the literary canon rather

than the society to which Map belongs. The function of *De nugis curialium*, for Edwards

and the rest, is to "complicate the space of writing."[11]

  To those scholars who take the "metacritical" approach to Walter Map, I would

add Margaret Ann Sinex, whose 1993 dissertation for the University of Toronto examines

how Walter's irony simultaneously constructs and destabilizes his authority: "the strategy

of this text seems most likely to foster a kind of queasy self-doubt in the reader, rather

than his or her spiritual enlightenment," she writes, identifying the purpose of Map's

ironies as the "deliberate promotion of moral ambiguity."[12] Acknowledging the

instrumental role of the reader in Walter's text, her description presses toward a view of

the *De nugis curialium* as a historically situated interaction, but Sinex deliberately

withdraws from this possibility, stipulating that "the narrator is a fictional construct" and

that any evident similarities "should not tempt any reader of *De Nugis* to assume that

Map-the-narrator represents Walter Map the historical author."[13] She also rejects models

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[10] Edwards, "Walter Map: Authorship and the Space of Writing," 274.
[11] Edwards, "Walter Map: Authorship and the Space of Writing," 274.
[12] Margaret Ann Sinex, "Irony in Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium*" (PhD Diss, University of Toronto, 1993), 116, 104.
[13] Sinex, *Irony in Walter Map*, 28-31.

of irony that privilege the interpreter's awareness of "the historical author's beliefs and

values," since

> it is impossible . . . to identify . . . discursive communities in the medieval
> period which accepted the ironic meaning of these words as their primary
> ones, or to identify Map himself as member of such a community. [14]

Impossible, that is, unless we are willing to accept the community Walter identifies

through his anecdotes and overtures as authentic. I propose we discover what the text

reveals when we let ourselves get taken in by *De nugis curialium*'s "beguiling illusion of

immediacy" and suppose that 'Map-the-narrator' is as much Walter Map, canon of

Oxford, as I am myself when I write an e-mail to a friend.[15]

Looking beyond Edwards's ahistorical "space of writing," the writing of *De*

nugis curialium is the social act of a historical person. Walter certainly engaged in

literary experimentation, but it does not follow that his purpose in writing the texts that

became *De nugis curialium* were exclusively 'literary.' By depicting himself in

interaction with real people, Walter asks the reader to identify the textual narrator with

the actual author, the historical person, and to believe that his first-person stories are true.

By making a claim to sincerity which the reader must redeem, Walter enacts through the

text a social interaction between himself and his intended reader. Walter's sharing the

story is a bid for the reader to identify with Gilbert and his entourage rather than with the

blushing Cistercian abbot. This tactic warms up the reader to the anti-Cistercian diatribe

that follows, described by Sinex in detail, in which Walter's conversational tone and the

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[14] Sinex, *Irony in Walter Map,* 19-21; For example Wayne C. Booth's oppositional model of irony which
finds that while an ironic utterance may superficially contradict the author's known attitudes, it actually
expresses them, a reversal which medieval rhetoricians call *antiphrasis*; Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of
Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).
[15] Sinex, "Echoic Irony ," 276.

irony of his repeated contrast of "us" and "them" (the Cistercians) reinforce the reader's

solidarity with Walter.[16] But the social context for this solidarity is already established by

the prefatory anecdote. Expressing his exuberant dislike of Cistercians is only one of his

purposes; the other is to elicit his reader's recognition that they belong to the same

attractive circle as him. This recognition is crucial to the success of his attack.

     I described Walter's joke in terms of its interpersonal rhetoric, the "rhetoric of

social exchange" that is the analytical focus of this dissertation.[17] Edwards writes, "If

Map shares with [his contemporaries] a recourse to exemplarity, his interest lies more in

the textuality of narratives than in their application."[18] The approach I take sees

"textuality" and "application" as inseparable. Walter configures his text as an interaction

like the ones his anecdotes relate—his texts are mimetic enactments of practiced relations

with his readers. Walter builds these represented relations out of the relational discourses

of real-life social interaction. One of these relational discourses is satire; it invites

Walter's reader to a community that shares his values, and excludes the enemies he

attacks.

     Walter's satire creates a discursive region of familiarity, a community of trust

between himself and his reader in which he enjoys the license to give counsel. Walter

seeks to activate his readers' sympathies and hostilities in order that he might inform their

opinions, and implies as much. In chapter ten of the first distinction of *De nugis*

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[16] Sinex, "Echoic Irony," 275-289.

[17] Lynne Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Dialogue and Elizabethan Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

[18] Robert R. Edwards, "Walter Map: Authorship and the Space of Writing," *New Literary History* 38 (2007): 273.

curialium—about seventeen folios before the dirty joke about Bernard—Walter shares

his frustrations as the head of a household:

> Ego enim modici numeri moderator sum, et tamen illius modice familee
> mee frena tenere nequeo. Studium meum est quomodo possim omnibus
> prodesse, ne quid eis in cibo et potu uel ueste deficiat. Ipsorum autem est
> sollicitudo modis omnibus exculpere de mea substancia quod suam
> augeat; quicquid habeo 'nostrum' est, quod eorum quisque, 'suum'. Si
> quid aduersus aliquem uere dixero, negat, et habet complices. Si quis
> michi de familia testis est, adulatorem dicunt.[19]

Abused by wastrel nephews, larcenous servants, and ruinous houseguests who collude to

drive out honest and loyal servants, Walter impersonates their subterfuge in a comical

rant.[20] He portrays himself as kind-hearted, bumbling, exasperated, and ultimately

powerless: "Certe domus omnis unum habet seruum et plures dominos; quia qui preest

seruit omnibus, quibus seruitur domini uidentur."[21]

Like a borscht-belt comic playing the hen-pecked husband, Walter's spiel

supposes an audience of fellow householders; to such as these he offers the curious

pleasure of sharing his self-righteous embattlement, discounting their actual privilege.

But at the same time, Walter's exaggerated self-deprecation allows this implied reader to

distance himself from Walter's ineffectuality and thus to take pleasure in his superiority.

This is not Walter's only purpose, for he turns his private frustrations into a metaphor for

government:

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[19] "I myself am the ruler of but a small establishment, and yet I cannot hold the reins of my little team. I try to be good to them all so far as I can, that they may suffer no lack either in food, drink or raiment: *their* object, on the other hand, is to scrape together out of my substance by any and every means something to increase their own. All that I have they call 'ours', and all that they have, 'their own'. If I bring a just charge against any of them, he denies it, and finds others to back him. Should any member of the household bear witness on my side, he is called a flatterer." DNC I.10, 16.
[20] DNC I.10, 12-24.
[21] "The truth is, that every house has one servant and many masters. The head serves everyone; those by whom he is served are reckoned as masters." DNC I.10, 24.

> hec omnia pro rege nostro: quomodo compescet milia milium et ad pacem
> gubernabit, cum nos modici patres moderari paucos nequeamus?[22]

Following M.R. James's translation, we can easily read *pro rege* as "in defense of the king," yet it can also mean "on behalf of the king," implying that Walter intends his self-mockery to benefit the king as guidance or admonition.[23] This politic ambiguity lets the reader take or ignore his advice.

Either way, the phrase firmly situates Walter's discourse in the court and identifies Walter as a courtier. Although the provision of counsel had traditionally been the duty of lay vassals, Walter fuses the vassal's consiliar with the cleric's pastoral duty, deriving his license to give counsel from the learning and verbal dexterity he demonstrates by his satire. Conversely, the cultural legitimacy of counsel imbues his satire with a serious purpose. Combined, the two kinds of discourse justify one another, and through his deployment of this combined discourse, Walter fashions for himself a novel authoritative role distinct from the traditional roles of clerical and lay retainers alike.[24]

Satire and counsel share a number of features that make them susceptible to combination. Both enact a social relation among speaker and listener that presumes a degree of familiarity. Both risk offending the listener, since people are often threatened by advice no less than by insult. In medieval texts, satire and counsel complement and

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[22] "Well, all this has been urged in defense of our king. How is he to keep in order thousands and govern them peaceably, when we small fathers of households cannot control the few we have?" DNC I.10, 24.

[23] Elsewhere in *De nugis*, Map speaks of King Henry II in the past tense, e.g. DNC V.6, 482-488; In I.9, Walter refers to Hugh of Lincoln as bishop, dating that section to at least 1189, after Henry II had died. There is some uncertainty as to when the entire text was assembled. If I.10 was written after the death of King Henry II, *pro rege* may posthumously defend the late king while it would purport to advise the current king about the difficulties of managing a household.

[24] In the last section of this chapter, I will describe this role in greater detail within the fuller social and political context of Walter's career.

contradict each other, making for complex author–reader interactions; even the more

static and ceremonial encounters in which they sometimes issue are produced from

countervailing pressures of aggression, deference, affection, and contempt. I will analyze

how authors use satire and counsel to frame their texts as though they were face-to-face

interactions with their readers. Negotiating the shared and opposed desires of two

subjects in dialogue, these texts were part of the shared social lifeworlds of authors and

readers. Even if Walter's concerns were principally 'literary', their expression in *De*

nugis curialium is adumbrated nonetheless by a social world of speakers and listeners; in

relations of power to one another, their language games have political consequences. I

will argue that Walter Map attempts in *De nugis curialium* to negotiate a novel social role

in court for a learned cleric distinct from the scolding or preaching moralist; we have

glimpsed this role already in the anecdote I began with, and I will discuss this role more

fully at a later point in this chapter. In the meantime, I should explain my use of the

terms 'satire' and 'counsel.' I will also explicate some terms and concepts from

linguistics and the social sciences assisting my analysis of medieval satire and counsel as

"socially situated verbal interaction."[25]

1.2 Satire: A Working Definition

Satire resists precise definitions. Its formal qualities and preoccupations vary

between periods and places, and it often parodies other genres and discourse types. No

canonical grouping can provide a model adequate for defining and comparing the kinds

of satire practiced by different writers in different historical periods. Satire needs a

definition sufficient to encompass not only the canonical satires of Horace, Juvenal,

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[25] Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue*, 1.

Persius, Dryden, Swift, and Pope, but also those works treated in this dissertation which
are only satirical in places, including John of Salisbury's *Entheticus Maior,* John Gower's
Confessio Amantis, Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes,* and Walter Map's own *De nugis
curialium*.

To cut through the confusion generated by satire's protean expressions, I will
leave aside formal criteria and define it by function, that is, by the effects satirists seek to
bring about in their audience.[26] The fact that satire may more easily be understood as a
practice than as a literary form is suggested by the fluency with which we use the word as
a transitive verb. People satirize any number of things, but we do not readily speak of
'epicizing' or 'tragedizing.' Almost a century ago, F.N. Robinson excavated satire's
prehistoric origins as a practice in "the destructive spells and poems of slander and
abuse."[27] George Test follows Robinson's folkloristic trail, calling satire an "act of
judgment, aggression, play, and laughter" and identifying the satirist with the "archetypal
figure" of "the trickster," "the breaker of taboos, the buffoon, the anarchist, the fool, the
masochist, and the sensualist."[28] I like Test's description because it recognizes that satire
is "a phenomenon more extensive than its literary manifestations," and because it views
satire as a social practice with an attendant role for its practitioner.[29]

The role of satirist is often realized in more culturally and historically specific
social roles. I will look at authors in this dissertation who speak in their texts as fathers,

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[26] This approach to language has its roots in speech act theory laid out in philosophical works like J.L.
Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

[27] Fred Norris Robinson, "Satirists and Enchanters in Early Irish Literature," in *Satire: Modern Essays in
Criticism*, ed. Ronald Paulson (Prentice-Hall, Inc: Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971), 1-36. Originally published
in *Studies in the History of Religions Presented to Crawford Howell Toy*, ed. D.G. Lyon and G.F. Moore
(New York: Macmillan, 1912).

[28] George Austin Test, *Satire: Spirit and Art* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1991), 30-45.

[29] Test, *Spirit and Art,* 12.

teachers, princes, even goddesses; what is consistent is their combination of wit and

aggression. Northrop Frye put it thusly:

> . . . two things are essential to satire. One is wit or humour, the other an object of attack. Attack without humour, or pure denunciation, thus forms one of the boundaries of satire; humour without attack, the humour of pure gaiety or exuberance, is the other.[30]

This definition is almost sufficient, but only hints at the social context presumed by the

activities of humor and attack. The satirist's humor fosters communal bonds with the

reader; so does his invitation to join in the attack. The satirist thus conjures an 'in-group'

consisting of speaker and audience, and an 'out-group," the satire's victim.[31]

The satirist often licenses his aggression by claiming to speak on behalf of

common sense, which the reader would naturally share. Walter's anecdote, described in

the first section, models this dynamic. He presumes the agreement of Gilbert Foliot, who

stands in for the reader as a silent but sympathetic witness, implicitly ratifying Walter's

views about Cistercians. Since we cannot be certain whether Walter's own presumptive

reader shared these views, we might conclude with Margaret Sinex that such author–

reader community is a textual fiction.[32] But the fiction of the sympathetic reader is

deployed with the pragmatic aim of making itself real; that is to say, the author makes an

unstated request to the real reader to assume the attitudes and expectations of his

addressee. The discursive representation of the addressee is a literary device, to be sure,

but it is also a social act.

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[30] Northrop Frye, "The Nature of Satire," in *Satire: Theory and Practice*, ed. Charles A. Allen and George Stephens (Belmont CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1962), 16. Originally published in *University of Toronto Quarterly* 14 (1944-45): 75-89.
[31] Paul Simpson calls the sympathetic listener the "satiree."; Paul Simpson, *On the Discourse on the Satire*, Linguistic Approaches to Literature 2 (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2003), 7-11.
[32] See note 13.

Likewise, before satire is a literary genre, it is a social practice.[33] Its intellectual

and rhetorical methods are equally available for use in written and face-to-face

interaction. Satire can be combined with other kinds of discourse just as the role of

satirist can be combined with other social roles like that of counselor. Its social function

—the delimitation of community through humor and attack—can be found in the four

strains of medieval satire.[34] One strain—that which comes closest to Frye's "pure

denunciation"—is the kind of invective against vice found in sermons, treatises on virtues

and vices, allegories, and morality plays. This is serious stuff, but it uses the vivid

figures and concrete language of satire to lampoon the vicious and foolish.[35] A second

strain is estates satire, which arranges its invective into a synthetic evaluation of the

satirist's social and political world.[36] A third strain, which flourished in the twelfth

century, is the lively picaresque satire including Nigel of Canterbury's *Speculum*

Stultorum and the lyrics of the "Goliards." In these works, the satirist abases himself and

revels in his own moral flaws, often to mock hypocritical moralists as greater sinners

still.[37]

In this dissertation, I focus mainly on court (or curial) satire, a fourth strain, one

which Walter Map's *De nugis curialium* both epitomizes and undercuts.[38] The courtly

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[33] Following Bakhtin, we may view satire not just as a literary genre but as a *speech genre*; "The Problem of Speech Genres," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, transl. Vern W. McGee, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holmquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 60-102.

[34] Medieval satire has been more commonly grouped by its object of attack: anti-feminist, anti-venality, anti-clerical, and so forth. These four strains can each serve any or all of these purposes.

[35] A comprehensive study of this topic is G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (New York, Macmillan, 1933).

[36] See Jill Mann's authoritative survey of the genre in *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue of the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

[37] Jill Mann, "Satiric Subject and Satiric Object in Goliardic Literature," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 15 (1980): 63-86.

[38] For a survey of curial satire in England from the twelfth century to the sixteenth, see Claus Uhlig, *Hofkritik im England des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973).

satirist laments the difficulties of the court and the ill reception got there by an honest man, but seldom rebukes his prince; instead, he pillories flatterers, self-serving dissemblers, and other false and wicked courtiers who mislead the well-intentioned prince.[39] And often, while the courtly satirist addresses his prince directly, he also implies a readership of the prince's *other* honest, loyal, and capable servants. His satirical rhetoric distinguishes him and his plain-dealing comrades from their deceptive rivals.

These four strains of medieval satire are not so much discrete genres as a spectrum of tendencies often found in combination. I group them under the single rubric of *satire* because they share a rhetoric of persuasion that binds writer to audience by attacking a third party. This rhetoric often uses the instruments of irony—Northrop Frye called satire "militant irony"—and parody, with which it sometimes confused.[40] One main reason satire and parody are sometimes used interchangeably is that satire frequently appropriates the discourses of its targets to expose the discrepancies between their idealized self-conceptions and less-than-ideal practices. "The cowl might make the monk," writes Frye, "if it were not for satire."[41]

Discussing the use to which satire puts various kinds of discourse, Paul Simpson calls satire a "discursive practice"—a "higher-order" discourse type that does "things

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[39] Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 66.

[40] Northrop Frye*, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 223; Linda Hutcheon distinguishes parody and satire thusly: "[satire is] extramural (social, moral) in its ameliorative aim to hold up to ridicule the vices and follies of mankind," while parody is "intramural", i.e. its target is another text. "Yet the obvious reason for the confusion of parody and satire, despite the major difference between them, is the fact that the two genres are often used together. Satire frequently uses parodic art form for either expository or aggressive purposes when it desires textual differentiation as its vehicle. Both satire and parody imply critical distancing and therefore value judgments, but satire generally uses that distance to make a negative statement about that which is satirized . . .. In modern parody, however, we have found that no such negative judgment is necessarily suggested in the ironic contrasting of texts." Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985) 43-44.

[41] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 228.

with and *to* genres."[42] Satire does things not only with literary genres, but also with the

relational scripts that govern everyday interaction and frames subject positions for

speakers and listeners. Satire evokes a relation between them of implicit agreement;

speaker and addressee are 'ratified' by their exchange through the attack and exclusion of

a third subject position, the satirized.[43] The common elements of satire—humor, irony,

and parody—vary in degree and kind, but the invariable element of satire is the bond it

forms between speaker and listener: "to attack anything, writer and audience must agree

on its undesirability."[44] The satirist speaks as though this agreement has already been

won rather than acknowledge he is still attempting to win it. This presumptuousness is

central to the rhetoric of satire—making this presumption reality is satire's pragmatic

social purpose. To this end, irony is often the satirist's main strategy but never the only

one.[45] In this dissertation, I look at how the appropriation of everyday relational

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[42] Simpson, *Discourse of Satire*, 8; This approach to satire has the advantage of bracketing the genre-distinction that has encumbered the work of medievalists for decades, viz. John Peter's distinction between 'satire' and 'complaint:' " . . . while Complaint is usually conceptual, and often allegorical, Satire tends rather to work in the concrete particularity of real life. Secondly, Complaint is impersonal, Satire personal . . . Satire is 'personal' as it relates to the satirist, not to his victims, and it takes a characteristic tincture from his personality. . . .. In Complaint, the writing is tied to a system rather than a personality. . . . Satire tends to be scornful . . . whereas complaint is corrective. . .." Peter's capital letters for his designations would have these categories be absolutes even though he himself acknowledges "a series of gradations." Since medieval readers viewed as satiric those features attributed to 'complaint' by Peter, let us add Peter's distinction to the varieties of medieval satire. John Peter, *Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 9-11.

[43] Simpson, *Discourse of Satire*, 8: "As a discursive practice, satire is configured as a triad embodying three discursive subject positions which are subject to constant shift and (re)negotiation. These are the *satirist* (the producer of the text), the *satiree* (an addressee, whether reader, viewer or listener) and the *satirised* (the target attacked or critiqued in the satirical discourse). Two of these three participants, the satirist and the satiree, are *ratified* within the discursive event. The third entity, the target, is *ex-colluded* and is not normally an 'invited participant' in the discourse exchange, even though the target is what provides the initial impetus for satire." The idea of "ratified" participants in discourse is drawn from Erving Goffman, "Footing" in *Forms of Talk* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 133: "The ratified hearer in two-person talk is necessarily also the 'addressed' one, that is, the one to whom the speaker addresses his visual attention and to whom, incidentally, he expects to turn over the speaking role."

[44] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 224.

[45] Linda Hutcheon gives a pragmatic account of irony in which "discursive community" and irony are mutually constitutive. *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (New York: Routledge, 1994), esp. 89-101.

discourse communicates this presumption, and, in fact, creates a relational context that enables the reception of irony.

For a historicized reading, accounting for satire on the basis of its social function offers several advantages over traditional views of satire as a formal literary genre. First, it explains the social work satire did in the immediate context of its production and reception. Second, it is adaptable to each strain of medieval satire and brings into view the common ways they imply and depend on a complex web of social affiliations and enmities. Moreover, its consistency offers a nuanced and precise basis for comparative reading; knowing what satire is trying to do, we see better how satirists from different periods and places did it differently.

In accounting for medieval satire's function, we should also consider what medieval readers and writers thought about satire; my working definition has the advantage of accommodating definitions traded by medieval commentators.[46] An anonymous twelfth-century commentator wrote in a marginal gloss that "*satira est nemini parcens viciorum nuda reprehensio*"—'satire is the naked reprehension of vices that spares nobody.'[47] The medieval formulation overlaps, if it does not altogether coincide, with our definition, acknowledging satire's aggressive function in the word *reprehensio*. For medieval commentators, however, satire's other salient quality was not a humorous overture to a friendly reader, but *nakedness*. The satiric function of ratifying

[46] Udo Kindermann has extracted and compiled medieval definitions from commentaries and *accessus ad auctores*. *Satyra: Die Theorie der Satire im Mittellateinischen. Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte* (Nürnberg: Verlag Hans Carl, 1978), 4.

[47] The Latin definition comes from the anonymous *accessus* to Juvenal in Bradford Wilson, ed., *Guillaume de Conches Glosae in Iuvenalem* (Paris: Librairie Philosophiques de J. Vrin, 1980). For more comprehensive treatments of classical definitions of satire, see Emily Gowers, *The Loaded Table* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), and Michael Coffey, *Roman Satire*, 2nd ed. (London: Cromwell Press, Ltd.: 1989).

a community of opinion between author and reader was not explicitly acknowledged by medieval commentators on satire; nevertheless, the practice of medieval satire sought to effect this community, as I will demonstrate throughout this dissertation.[48]

But what was meant by nakedness? Paul Miller and Suzanne Reynolds offer two different explanations. Miller holds that 'naked' means 'unadorned,' written in a plain style, whereas Reynolds suggests that 'naked' means the text is literal rather than allegorical—unclothed by any 'veil' or integument of allegorical figures. In tracing the influence of medieval learned commentary about satire on John Gower's works, Paul Miller gleans the *scholiae*, a tradition of commentary on classical satire inherited from late antiquity, as well as the *accessus ad auctores*, introductory texts on classical authors for students, and finds in these a "critical consistency . . . until the Renaissance."[49] From this accumulated material, Miller reconstructs a medieval definition of satire as a literary genre:

> Satire is that type of ethical verse, ranging in tone between bitter indignation, mocking irony, and witty humour, which in forthright, unadorned terms censures and corrects vices in society and advocates virtues, eschewing slander of individuals but sparing no guilty party, not even the poet himself.[50]

Looking at these same medieval definitions, Suzanne Reynolds suggests that by 'naked,' medieval commentators did not mean 'unadorned', but *literal* rather than *allegorical*:

> Integumental or allegorical reading is generically opposed to the satiric mode of writing: the one treats the text as a covering for secrets, the other works by open and naked reprehension. Satire has no secrets, and

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[48] Paul Miller, "John Gower, Satiric Poet" in *Gower's Confessio Amantis: Responses and Reassessments*, ed. A.J. Minnis (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983)*,* 82.
[49] Miller, "John Gower, Satiric Poet," 78.
[50] Miller, "John Gower, Satiric Poet," 82.

> Horace's *Satires* should not be read as *allegoria in verbis*, as having an allegorical sense.[51]

I favor Reynold's understanding of satire's 'nakedness.' While Miller is correct in understanding 'naked' to mean 'forthright'—a sense which Reynolds's account unpacks—the language of medieval satire is usually richly figured, if often to burlesque effect. It little bears the label of "unadorned." More importantly, Reynolds draws attention to the fact that satire is a way of reading as well as writing; like allegory, it seeks the reader's intellectual and affective cooperation. When the reader misconstrues the text's purpose, or is hostile or resistant to its argument, satire misfires and fails in its social function of building author–reader solidarity.[52]

Courtly satirists often use satire's social function to win their reader's receptivity to counsel. Unlike satire, sometimes accompanied by apologia for its indecorousness, counsel was a kind of discourse whose cultural authority was openly acknowledged, and therefore offered writers a way to 'authorize' their satire and justify their aggression and play as something serious.

1.3   The Counselor's Roles

Walter hints that he intends his work as royal counsel by the two references to the king bookending chapter ten. As I argued above, Walter's coda to his mocking self-presentation as a householder ("haec omnia pro rege nostro") appeals to the reader to hear his self-mockery as counsel.[53] Walter explains that his self-disparagement is *pro rege*; this can mean both that that it is offered in defense of the king and as counsel for the

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[51] Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 146.
[52] On the cause and effects of satire misfiring, see Simpson, *Discourse of Satire*, 187-210.
[53] See note 22.

king.[54] For all its humor, the section is a serious ethical disquisition on the effects of

power on discourse, intended as counsel for the powerful. One case in point is his

description of the loss of a talented and loyal servant at court driven out by the threats

and slanders of his duplicitous rivals.[55] Obviously, the loss of willing and capable

servants, more than a laughing matter, was detrimental to the governance of household or

realm, for it left no honest counselors. Walter asks the remaining courtiers, all complicit

in expelling a capable *major domo*, who should replace him:

> Consilium ergo quesiui cui possem tradere curam et ministerium prioris,
> non ut eligerem quem uellent sed quem nollent; . . . Sciebam autem quod
> illi . . . consilium darent, id est, ad suam utilitatem, mea neclecta.[56]

Walter's own position of power deprives him of honest counsel. Claiming that his

situation is analogous to the king's, he humorously counsels a practical response to this

obstacle—to use the advice of false counselors by doing the opposite of what they advise.

Walter makes another appeal just prior to chapter ten in an anecdote concluding

Walter's famous riff comparing the court to hell which comprises chapters one to nine of

De nugis curialium. This anecdote illustrates the political and spiritual consequences of

satiric counsel intended seriously being taken for a joke; it also anticipates Walter's

account in chapter ten ("De germinibus noctis") of the moral and practical challenges

arising from day-to-day interaction among members of his household.[57]

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[54] See note 23.

[55] Walter presents several vivid accounts of such incidents in vivid impersonated dialogue, DNC I.10, 16-18, and reiterates the theme in a story about the contemporary king of Portugal, I.12, 30-34.

[56] DNC I.10, 20. "I proceed to ask their advice; to whom should I entrust the office and duties of him who had gone? my intention being to choose, not the man they wanted, but the man they didn't want; . . . Well, I knew that they would give counsel, that is, to their own profit and neglect mine." [Translation altered here to be more literal.]

[57] Unfortunately, much of the section dealing with foresters, I.9 ("De Caron") disappeared with a lost leaf of Bodleian 851.

This anecdote also concerns the famous and powerful, in this case, King Henry II

and Hugh of Lincoln, still Carthusian prior of Selwood during the events described.[58]

Foresters come to the king's chamber door, violent and predatory—"Nichil in his letum

nisi letiferum."[59] Hugh stands behind the door in the king's chamber:

> "Hos Hugo prior Selewude, iam electus Lincolnie, reperit repulsos ab
> hostio thalami regis, quos ut obiurgare uidit insolenter et indigne ferre,
> miratus ait: 'Qui uos?' Responderunt: 'Forestarii sumus.' Ait illis:
> 'Forestarii foris stent.' Quod rex interius audiens risit, et exiuit obuiam ei.
> Cui prior: "Vos tangit hec parabola quia, pauperibus quos hii torquent
> paradisum ingressis, cum forestariis foris stabitis.' Rex autem hoc uerbum
> serium habuit ridiculo . . .."[60]

The foresters try to enter; Hugh says, "Keep out, foresters," punning on *forestarii* and

foris stent. This wordplay prompts King Henry to take Hugh's directive as a joke.

Hugh's statement is satirical both in its humor and in the exclusionary function it literally

enacts. Hugh explicitly declares his seriousness, calling his joke a "parable" that

"pertains to you." Hugh's message, he explains, is that the king is spiritually culpable for

overlooking the foresters' mistreatment of the poor; king and foresters will therefore be

together outside the gates of heaven: 'cum forestariis foris stabitis.' The play on

'forestarius' and 'foris' is not just a *bon mot*; it is the moral satire of an authoritative

churchman enjoining his spiritual charge to identify with that ultimate 'in-group', God's

elect. But the king, oblivious or indifferent, takes Hugh's *serium* as *ridiculum*. While

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[58] Unlike the Cistercians, Walter has nothing bad to say about Carthusians: "Hii non insidiantur uicinis, non cauillant, non rapiunt; non ingreditur ad eos femina, non egrediuntur ad eas." ["These monks do not plot against their neighbours, nor gossip, nor defraud. No woman may approach them, nor may they go out to receive a woman."] DNC I.16, 50.

[59] "They get no nearer to mirth than murder" is James's worthy effort to translate Walter's pun on *letum* (CL *laetum*) and *letum* (CL *letum*) DNC, I.10, 10.

[60] "Once Hugh, Prior of Selwood, now elect of Lincoln, found these men repulsed from the door of the King's chamber; and hearing them give vent to loud abuse, and observing their rage, he was surprised, and said: 'Who are you?' 'We are the keepers' they replied. Said he to them: 'Keepers, keep out.' The King within heard the words, laughed, and came out to meet the prior, who said to him: 'The saying touches you nearly, for when the poor, whom these men oppress, are let into paradise, you will be keeping outside with the keepers.' However, the King took this word, spoken in earnest, for a jest. . .." DNC I.10, 10.

Hugh's statement entertains the king, it fails as effective counsel—though Henry laughs, he takes no action against the foresters. As a satirist-counselor, Hugh is a figure for Walter, who also speaks about important matters in a light tone.

To give counsel as satire carries the risk that its hearer may not take it seriously enough to heed it. The courtier had to weigh this moral risk against the more immediate risk of angering the powerful if they found his corrective advice disrespectful or insubordinate. The careless counselor could suffer lost opportunities for advancement, dismissal from court, exile, even violence, and likewise endanger his clients and associates. As a hedge against this risk, the counselor can go 'off-the-record,' so to speak, and deliver his counsel indirectly in the form of a joke or fable.[61] The listener may catch or miss such indirect advice; if caught, he can acknowledge it (receptively or otherwise), but may also disregard it. Since it is off-the-record—not explicitly framed as counsel in the interaction—ignoring it requires no explanation, apology, or retribution for *lese-majesté*. Counselor and counseled can both pretend it was just a joke.

Thus, Walter never explicitly claims his satire should be taken for counsel, but implies it; Hugh of Lincoln, the authoritative churchman and popular saint, a man known both as friend and critic of King Henry's, claims a serious purpose for his drolleries. Walter endorses this claim by repeating it, but without further comment, the endorsement remains implicit. The reader can ignore Walter's appeal to take his work seriously—and the implied rebuke to those rejecting his appeal—just as Henry laughs off Hugh's threat of damnation.

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[61] Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals of Language Use*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 68-69.

King Henry was known to indulge Hugh's critical witticisms, but their relationship may have been unique.[62] Walter could not presume as much from the king's capricious favor, but intimates an analogous role for himself. Humor, anecdote, and pun lower the stakes of interaction by attenuating the speaker's "sincerity claim."[63] Such discourse implies a shared sense of humor; it is the stuff of interactions between familiars whose bonds of affection and trust can weather criticism that is graceful and well-meant.

Walter Map fuses satire and counsel to manage the risks of interacting with his superiors; he shares this strategy with the other medieval authors I examine in this dissertation. But I must explain further how this fusion takes place, how counsel so easily takes on the properties of satire, and how the satirist so readily claims his satire is actually counsel. Whether expressed in spoken or written interaction, satire and counsel assign familiar and stable social roles to speakers and addressees: father and son, teacher and student, courtier and prince, or simply two friends.

Counsel is always realized in a social relationship more specific than "counselor and counseled." Its discourse, therefore, varies with its relational situation.   A recent essay collection gives a sense of counsel's situational range in the Middle Ages:

> Nella politica prima di tutto, dove il *consilium* è stato uno strumento per esercitare il potere e un modo per governare, a volte affidato a specifiche

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[62] Walter's choice of Hugh of Lincoln corroborates other sources on Hugh of Lincoln, particular with respect to Henry's relation to foresters: "Early in his episcopate [Hugh] excommunicated Geoffrey, the king's chief forester, for oppressing the tenants of the church of Lincoln, thus arousing Henry II's wrath in much the same way that Thomas Becket had done earlier. Unlike the humourless Becket, however, Hugh had the detachment and relaxation to seek out the king, make a highly effective joke to tease him out of his sullenness, and renew his peace with him." Henry Mayr-Harting, "Hugh of Lincoln," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* , http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14060 (accessed February 25, 2008).

[63] On "sincerity claims," see Jürgen Habermas, *On the Pragmatics of Social Interaction: Preliminary Studies in the Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Barbara Fultner (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 91-92.

> figure e organi istituzionali, il consigliere, l'assemblea; nella vita religiosa dove i consigli si danno e si seguono in vista della salvezza; in ambito professionale dove dare consigli diventa una prestazione fondata sulla competenza; nella famiglia dove consigliare è spesso un modo di educare e amare.[64]

I will treat authors who represent themselves as counselors in several of these domains—courtly, professional, and familial—sometimes simultaneously. Walter, offering his guidance on the king's behalf, plays the political counselor, the vassal or courtier who has the obligation "to make oneself available for consultation when required, to offer advice and guidance in political or administrative decisions"[65] Some satirist-counselors take on the responsibility and moral authority of religious counselor; like Hugh of Lincoln in Walter's anecdote, they advise a political course of action reconcilable to what they view as the will of God. Walter himself takes up this role with an authority, I will later argue, not altogether withered by irony. Satirist-counselors also adopt the roles of family members instructing their offspring in prudential morality.

Finally, some satirist-counselors base their authority as counselors on their learning, claiming a kind of professional license as men of letters analogous to that which doctors or lawyers claim for their own types of counsel. But literary acumen did not intrinsically confer consiliar authority on its possessor, so authors often adopt a role in their texts drawn from the relational practices of court and family. The Angevin court was surrounded by a remarkable stable of talent—John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, Gerald of Wales, Walter Map, Arnulf of Lisieux, Nigel of Longchamps, and Walter of Châtillon, to name a few—but rather than kept poets, these men were attached to the

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[64] Carla Casagrande, introduction to *Consilium: Teorie e pratiche del consigliare nella cultura medievale*, Micrologus Library 10, eds. Carla Casagrande, Chiara Crisciani, and Silvana Vecchio (Firenze: SISMEL, 2004), ix.

[65] David Burnley, *Courtliness and Literature in Medieval England* (London: Longman, 1998), 4.

court in some official institutional capacity.[66] Walter Map, for instance, worked for

Henry II as an itinerant justice. In *De nugis curialium*'s reported conversation and direct

addresses to the reader, Walter reproduces discourses practiced between these erudite

courtiers in interaction with each other and with the powerful. In the next section, I will

discuss my methods for analyzing the discourse of everyday life in literary texts.

1.4   Rhetorics of Social Interaction

I have dealt glancingly so far with the theories and methods that underscore this

study, but I will now elaborate them in sufficient detail to clarify what I mean by terms

like discourse type and social role. My foundational axiom is that social relations are

enacted in and constituted by discourse. This discourse is not constantly improvised, but

reproduced—patterned according to "relational scripts" that privilege and constrain

actors in each encounter with predictable consistency.[67] These social protocols are at

least consistent enough for authors to reproduce them in literary texts, just as we

reproduce social protocols when writing a personal or professional letter. By reproducing

the relational discourses of everyday life, the author constructs an implicit addressee with

a specific social role or 'subject position.' [68] The cooperative reader will assume this

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[66] R.F. Green describes an analogous situation in the English courts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980); Some of these men, like Nigel, were attached to Canterbury, but this archiepiscopal curia was usually, excepting Becket's tenure, an organ of Anglo-Norman kingship.

[67] Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue*, 1.

[68] On 'subject positions' in discourse, see Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (NY: Longman, 1989), 19; In 1950, Walker Gibson argued that a literary text's effectiveness depends on the reader's cooperation in assuming the 'second person' role offered by the text: ". . . there are two readers distinguishable in every literary experience. First, there is the 'real' individual upon whose crossed knee rests the open volume, and whose personality is as complex and ultimately inexpressible as any dead poet's. Second, there is the fictitious reader—I shall call him the 'mock reader'—whose masks and costume the individual takes on in order to experience the language. The mock reader is an artifact, controlled, simplified, abstracted out of the chaos of day-to-day sensation." Walker Gibson, "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers" in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 1-6. See also Gerald Prince, "Introduction to the Study of the Narratee" in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane P. Tomkins

position and its predetermined constraints and privileges; the author likewise assumes a

relational role that affords him liberties even as it subjects him to constraints.[69]

In describing and analyzing the relational discourses interwoven with discourses

of satire and counsel, this study selectively employs a cluster of related disciplines in

language study which have emerged in the last few decades, especially discourse

analysis, linguistic pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. This related set of disciplines

> . . . places its accent on dialogic interaction and on the situated use of
> language in its varied contexts and which chooses conversational
> discourse and other types of socially situated verbal exchange as its object
> of study in preference to decontextualized sentences from written texts.[70]

Literary scholarship often uses the term 'discourse' broadly to signify a "system of

meaning within the culture, pre-existing language."[71] Discourse analysis uses the term

more narrowly to mean language-in-use, especially conversation; instead of constituting

language as an abstract and self-sufficient structure available for objective study, it takes

everyday forms of verbal communication as its object of study.[72] Linguistic pragmatics

studies the effects of signs in context and how a speaker's anticipation of these effects

influences his or her choice of communicative strategies.[73] Anglo-American pragmatics

has usually restricted the effective context studied to the local level of a single text or

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(Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 7-25.

[69] Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 30.

[70] Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue*, 2.

[71] Roger Fowler, "On Critical Linguistics" in *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard and Malcolm Coulthard (New York: Routledge, 1996), 7.

[72] Suzanne Fleischman describes how discourse analysis departs from the influential approaches of Saussure and Chomsky: "Discourse analysis has endeavored to explicate grammar in terms of contexts larger than a single sentence, by showing either that sentence-level phenomena have some kind of grounding in discourse or that the sentence itself is suspect as a core unit." Suzanne Fleischman, "Philology, Linguistics, and the Discourse of the Medieval Text," *Speculum* 65, no. 1 (1990), 21.

[73] By using words like "choice" and "strategy," I do not wish to invoke the rational actor of game theory or rational choice theory. The 'choices' are seldom fully cognized, often proceed from a cultural disposition or *habitus*, yet agents still make them. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72-96.

verbal exchange; continental pragmatics more closely resembles the Anglo-American

discipline of sociolinguistics in studying the effects of social determinants on language

use.[74] "Critical" discourse analysis draws on all of these sub-disciplines but focuses on

the ideological and political underpinnings of public, political, and commercial

discourses.[75]

Abandoning the search for abstract, universal, and ahistorical structures in order

to explore the specific, socially determined, and politically fraught nature of individual

utterances, these fields of language study—I will hereafter follow the practice of other

literary scholars in grouping them under the rubric of 'discourse-pragmatics'—are

paralleled in literary studies by new historicism.[76] Stephen Greenblatt writes about early

modern England (and it holds true for the Middle Ages) that ". . . art does not pretend to

autonomy; the written word is self-consciously embedded in specific communities, life

situations, structures of power."[77] But if works of art are embedded in the world, the

world is embedded in works of art: "After all, language enters life through concrete

utterance (which manifest language) and life enters language through concrete utterances

as well."[78] This is what I mean when I say that texts represent themselves as social

interactions. The methods of discourse-pragmatics allow us to trace these reciprocal

[74] The seminal work in sociolinguistics studies code-switching habits in African-American communities. William Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1972).

[75] Fairclough, *Language and Power*, passim.

[76] In fact, critical discourse analysis and new historicism have a common genetic relation to British cultural materialism, revealed in their shared insistence that the interpreter cannot defer considerations of ideology and power relations from the analysis of discourse until formal data has been gathered, since the very process of formalizing schemes to filter and organize data is the site of ideological conflict. See Fairclough, *Language and Power,* 18; Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 3-39.

[77] Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 7.

[78] M.M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. by Vern W. McGee, Eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holmquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 63.

effects between, on the one hand, the concrete utterances that constitute "life situations,"

and on the other, the "structures of power" we glimpse in their textual representation.

Working in the field of early modern literature, the crucible of new historicism,

Lynn Magnusson uses discourse-pragmatics to take up Catherine Gallagher's enjoinder

for literary scholars to "maintain the productive tension between the textualist and

historicist dimensions of our work". [79] Magnusson makes a complaint and an argument:

> . . . the frequent references within historicist criticism to discourse and
> discursive practices have seemed at times to gesture towards a
> sophistication of linguistic concept that is not always carried over into
> practical analysis. . . . it is time to negotiate some common ground
> between close reading and cultural poetics. . ..[80]

To accomplish this sophisticated practical analysis, Magnusson looks to discourse-

pragmatics to find "taxonomies for verbal analysis that can address the place of collective

invention."[81] By collective invention, Magnusson refers to the way utterances in literary

works, rather than a heroic author's parthogenetic issue, are predicted by the social

relations modeled in the discourse of the text.

I introduced one such taxonomy—used by Magnusson to read Shakespeare—in

my opening discussion of Walter Map, namely, the model of politeness developed by the

anthropological linguists Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson. According to this

model, when speakers feel they must say something that they expect will annoy or offend

their listeners—requests, corrective advice, even unsolicited compliments—they employ

verbal strategies like apologies, hedges, or jokes to redress this threat. Underwriting

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[79] Catherine Gallagher, "Marxism and the New Historicism" in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeser (Routledge: London, 1989), 37-48.

[80] Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue*, 7.

[81] Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue*, 7; By collective invention, she refers to the interactional protocols—'collectively invented' insofar as they are cultural norms—that inform particular discourses such as the Shakespearean plays and epistolary handbooks she studies.

Brown and Levinson's model is Erving Goffman's concept of an affective sensibility

called *face*, "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line

others assume he has taken during the interaction."[82]   Social actors evaluate one another

according to their mutual impressions, and act in the expectation of such evaluation. This

trade in claims and assumptions is strategic, since each interactant works to accomplish

his or her individual purposes for interacting.[83] It also maintains "social equilibrium"

through a process of "reciprocal ratification," a process by which each speaker

naturalizes their social relation by acknowledging the other's role and its attendant

Presentation of Selfprivileges and constraints.[84]

That this equilibrium requires continuous attention and cooperation makes it easy

for a joker like Walter Map to disrupt it when doing so strikes him as productive or fun.

Walter's disregard for the Cistercian abbot's "face" disrupts the cordial social

equilibrium of the encounter, as evident from the way others try to repair the disruption

by leaving the room to laugh. The disrupter opens himself up to risk; the group may

repair the disruption by rebuking or excluding him, but this risk can be recuperated:

> In aggressive interchanges the winner not only succeeds in introducing
> information favorable to himself and unfavorable to others, but also
> demonstrates that as an interactant he can handle himself better than his
> adversaries.[85]

Walter attacks the Cistercians' moral and spiritual authority by his arguments about them;

he undermines their social authority through his self-possessed indifference to their

status, increasing his status among those 'certain others present.' Showing him at an

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[82] Goffman, "On Face-work" in *Interaction Ritual : Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 5.
[83] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), 249-50.
[84] Goffman, "On Face-work", 33-35; On "naturalized" discourse, see Simpson, *Discourse of Satire*, 84.
[85] Goffman, "On Face-work," 25.

advantage, this invites the reader to identify with the quick-witted Walter rather than the

tongue-tied abbot.

Using Brown and Levinson's model of politeness, we may view Walter's

anecdote as realizing a strategy of "positive politeness" in the encounter depicted by the

anecdote and in the encounter between author and reader represented by Walter's

retelling the anecdote in *De nugis curialium*.[86] There is risk in this too, for verbal

aggression can threaten or unsettle even those not directly targeted. Walter's anecdote

mitigates this threat by framing his attack as an interaction in a social group which has

already approved it. Walter beckons his reader to identify with this in-group and to

extend his sympathy for his views into the more forceful satire to follow. It is a tricky

maneuver, presuming the reader will reciprocate the familiarity Walter's aggression

presumes.

Walter's satiric description of his own household and his oblique suggestion that

this description is meant as counsel is another example of positive politeness. He

justifies his motives for giving counsel as his empathy and concern for the king.[87] This

empathy extends also to his fellow householders: "Certe domus omnis unum habet

seruum et plures dominos; quia qui preest seruit omnibus, quibus seruitur domini

uidentur."[88] Walter's tone in this statement has the impersonal quality of aphorism or

common sense, but not common sense for commoners, as it speaks to the weariness of

the powerful near enough to the king to identify with Walter's exclusive 'we': "Curia

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[86] Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 101-129.

[87] See note 22.

[88] "The truth is, that every house has one servant and many masters. The head serves everyone; those by whom he is served are to be reckoned as masters." DNC I.10, 24

tamen nostra pre ceteris in periculoso turbine uiuit fluctuans et uaga."[89] In Magnusson's
succinct formulation, "positive politeness is basically a rhetoric of identification."[90] As a
'social accelerator,' the discourse of positive politeness often assumes two aspects of
informality that mark Walter's style: cordial warmth and scurrilous obscenity.

Negative politeness, "a rhetoric of dissociation," includes conventional acts of
deference, indirectness, or self-subordination ("I'm terribly sorry, but if you wouldn't
mind...", "your humble servant requests..."). With negative politeness, a speaker
minimizes his or her imposition on the listener or acknowledges the listener's freedom to
ignore or refuse it.[91] Walter's statement that "every house has one servant and many
masters" is negative politeness; framing a potential rebuke as an aphorism impersonalizes
the speaker and hearer, making the statement a general truism rather than a personal
communication. It is rather less pointed than saying that the current royal court has one
servant (the king) and many masters (his courtiers).[92] We may also attribute to negative
politeness the rhetoric of self-abjection so common in medieval writing, 'the humility
topos' often dismissed as formality or convention.'[93] Walter's use of the humility topos
is negative politeness insomuch as it minimizes the 'imposition' represented by his
discourse—his declarations of modesty release his reader from the obligation to take him

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[89] "Our court, I take it, lives in a more perilous whirl than other households, fluctuating and variable." DNC
I.10, 24
[90] Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue*, 21.
[91] Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue*, 21.
[92] See note 72; Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 190
[93] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton:
Princeton University Press, 1983), 79. J.A. Burrow refers to the idea that the use of self-representation is
necessarily fictional as the "conventional fallacy;" see "Autobiographical Poetry in the Middle Ages: The
Case of Thomas Hoccleve," in *Middle English Literature: British Academy Golliancz Lectures*, ed. J.A.
Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7-9.

seriously— but politeness can be ironic.[94] In the following paragraph, Walter addresses a

reader by name:

> Et me, karissime Galfride, curialem (non dico facetum—puer sum et loqui
> nescio—sed dico) in hac sic uere descripta curia religatum et ad hanc
> relegatum hinc philosophari iubes, qui me Tantalum huius inferni fateor?
> Quomodo possum propinare qui sicio? Quiete mentis est et ad unum
> simul collecte poetari. Totam uolunt et tutam cum assiduitate residenciam
> poete, et non prodest optimus corporis et rerum status, si non fuerit interna
> pace tranquillus animus; unde non minus a me poscis miraculum, hinc
> scilicet hominem ydiotam et imperitum scribere, quam si ab alterius
> Nabugodonosor fornace nouos pueros cantare iubeas.[95]

Here, Walter disclaims his own ability to write anything of importance or even

pleasurable—he is too caught up in court for the leisure true poetry or philosophy

requires, and he is "ydiota et imperitum," dumb and inexperienced. Robert Levine

explores how Walter ironizes the humility topos in such a way that it actually bolsters his

authority, demonstrates his literary skill, and playfully alludes to the receptive wit of the

reader.[96] Thus, he deploys negative politeness in such a way that it actually functions as

positive politeness, asserting mutuality in ability, attitude, and interest between speaker

and hearer.

There is a third strategy of politeness. Instead of explicitly acknowledging the

face-threat as do strategies of negative and positive politeness, speakers may choose to go

"off the record," only hinting at their intention, as when Walter frames his directive to

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[94] On the humility topos in Walter Map, see especially Robert Levine, "How to Read Walter Map,"
Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch 23 (1988): 93-96.
[95] "And you, my dear Geoffrey, would have me be courtly (not to say witty: 'I am a child, I know not how
to speak.') Yet, I repeat, you bid me, me who am bound in and banished to this court which I have here
truly described, me who confess myself the Tantalus of this hell, to philosophize. How can I, who thirst,
give you to drink? Letters are the employment of a quiet and collected mind. What a poet needs is a
permanent, safe, continuous abode; and not the most prosperous state of body or circumstances will avail if
the mind be not tranquil within. You are asking an inexperienced and unskilled man to write, and to write
from the court: it is to demand no less a miracle than if you bade a fresh set of Hebrew children to sing out
of the burning fiery furnace of a fresh Nebuchadnezzar." DNC I.10, 24.
[96] See note 95.

take his satire seriously in the words of another (and more authoritative) person, Hugh of

Lincoln.[97] Walter's self-disparaging complaint to Geoffrey makes an indirect appeal for a

position that would offer him the "tranquillus animus" conducive to literary endeavor.

Elsewhere, Walter again disparages his competence to undertake the task which Geoffrey

has laid on him.[98] In contrast, he envies the happy conditions of three learned men of his

age: Gilbert Foliot of London, Bartholomew of Exeter, and Baldwin of Worcester:

> Hii temporis huius philosophi, quibus nichil deest, qui omni plenitudine
> refertam habent residenciam et pacem fori<s>, recte ceperunt, finemque
> bonum consequentur. Sed quo michi portus, qui uix uaco uiuere?[99]

There is a subtle implication that Walter's addressee, who can request a literary

performance from Walter, might also be able to provide a *portus*, a haven in which

Walter can cultivate philosophy and learning, perhaps in a position like the one Gilbert,

Bartholomew, and Baldwin enjoy. This is an off-the-record request, as Walter does not

come out and ask for a bishopric; he merely states his desire to share in their leisure,

allowing his addressee to infer what he will.

A possible irony here is that a bishop's responsibilities over an episcopal see

hardly make for philosophical retirement. Those particular names were perhaps

calculated to win a knowing smile from his interlocutor. Walter thoroughly situates his

discourse in the court, and represents himself as a courtier—not altogether lucky in his

career, but not without some pull—addressing another, more highly-ranked courtier,

whom he credits with the wit to get his subtle jokes. Despite his protestations, Walter is

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[97] See note 61.

[98] "In pluribus est timor meus: me macies accusabit sciencie, me lingue dampnabit infancia. . .." ("For myself, I have many fears: want of knowledge will accuse me, inaptness of speech will condemn me. . ..") DNC I.12, 36

[99] "These men are the philosophers of our day, who want for nothing, and have abodes filled with all manner of supplies, and tranquility outside: they have begun well and will make a good ending. but whither, I would ask, am I to look for harbor, who barely have leisure to live?" DNC I.13, 36.

nothing if not courtly. If Walter struck C.N.L Brooke as an "after-dinner speaker" and

A.G. Rigg as an anecdotalist in the vein of Wodehouse or Waugh, it is because Walter

gives a vivid sense not only of his own personality, but of the nature and temperament of

his listeners, flattering the reader to be admitted to their company.[100]

I have attempted to show how the complex relational scripts of a courtier's

everyday life inform the social discourse of *De nugis curialium*; this complexity can be

productively explained by analyzing it in terms of Brown and Levinson's positive and

negative politeness strategies.

> What is so exciting about the Brown and Levinson politeness model is its
> capacity to demonstrate how verbal exchange inscribes the complexities of
> social relations at many different levels of message construction . . ..[101]

We must, however, avoid a mechanistic application of Brown and Levinson's model as a

sociological algebra with comprehensive explanatory power. Richard Watts objects that

viewing politeness as a discrete inventory of selectable strategies does not "correspond to

native speakers' everyday conceptualizations of the term."[102] "A theory of politeness",

argue Watts, "should not attempt to 'create' a superordinate, universal term that can then

be applied universally to any sociocultural group at any point in time."[103] Watts appeals

to the everyday usage in which 'politeness' designates not an intellectualized scheme but

a practical lay knowledge. It is both an evaluative mode of reception as well as a

strategic mode of production. In this practical, everyday sense, it is a contested concept,

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[100] Brooke and Mynors, "Introduction," xliii-xliv; Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066-1422*, 88-89.
[101] Magnusson, Shakespeare *and Social Dialogue*, 2.
[102] Richard J. Watts, *Politeness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10.
[103] Watts, *Politeness*, 9.

"struggled over discursively by participants in social interaction . . . subject to change as the locus of the struggle itself changes."[104]

These provisos should not prompt us to abandon Brown and Levinson's analytical framework, which provides a way to compare medieval authors' moral evaluation with their strategic use of social discourse. In the Middle Ages, *curialitas*—courtliness—was a site of discursive struggle comparable to the status of 'politeness' in today's English-speaking world. It signified a complex of values about the relation between ideology and concrete social behaviors, a practical knowledge of self-performance as well as an ever-changing complex of positive and negative ideals about the conduct of social relations. In a passage cited above, Walter says to his addressee, "you would have me be courtly," and aligns the term 'curialis' with 'facetus,' denoting polish and wit in self-performance.[105] Near the beginning of the *De nugis curialium*, Walter points to the contested, mutable, and morally fraught nature of courtliness. The opening of the first distinction is a mock-scholastic comparison of the court to hell; after elaborating his theme at length, listing all the ways in which the court is not only like hell, but worse, Walter abruptly shifts his tone from the impersonal authority of a scholar to the delicate indirectness of a courtier:

> . . . per singula si per allegoriam aperire velim, in curialibus non desunt michi significaciones; sed longioris sunt temporis quam michi vacare videam: sed curie parcere curiale videtur.[106]

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[104] Watts, *Politeness*, 11.
[105] See note 95.
[106] "Were I to allegorize upon all these, it is true that correspondences are not wanting among the things of court, but they would take up more time than I have at my disposal. Besides, to spare the court seems only courteous." DNC I.10, 14.

"To spare the court seems courtly," says Walter, suggesting he wishes to live by a behavioral code he has just attacked as hellish. This presents a moral paradox, a juxtaposition of two contradictory modes of evaluation, courtly (*curie*) and anti-courtly.

With this obvious paradox, Walter makes explicit the same paradox in satirical works by other Angevin courtier-clerics like John of Salisbury and Peter of Blois, who simultaneously critique the court as inherently wicked even while they appeal to the values of the court to sway magnates and kings.[107] The two conflicting modes of evaluation make courtliness something more than a static complex of values; like politeness, courtliness in practice is a semi-cognized mode of discernment and performance, a *habitus* rather than a formal code. According to C. Stephen Jaeger, courtliness as a social ideal was a conscious ideological project by clerics to civilize the violent impulses of the aristocracy.[108]

By thematizing courtliness, Walter explores its problems through the enactment and evaluation of courtly language in interaction. Pierre Bourdieu writes that "native experience of the social world never apprehends the system of objective relations other than *in profiles*, i.e. in the form of relations which present themselves only one by one. . .."[109] Walter Map's anecdotes and satirical observation in *De nugis curialium* make up just such a series of profiles, an ethical and practical evaluation of social relations for readers belonging to the social lifeworld it represents. Walter implicates himself as part of this world.

[107] On learned satire in the court of Henry II, see Martin Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 60-66; Egbert Türk, *Nugae Curialium: Le règne d'Henri II Plantagenêt (1145-1189) et l'éthique politique* (Geneva: Droz, 1977).

[108] C. Stephen Jaeger, "Courtliness and Social Change," in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Thomas Bisson (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 287-309.

[109] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 18.

> "'In tempore sum et de tempore loquor,' ait Augustinus, et adiecit: 'nescio quid sit tempus.' Ego simili possum admiracione dicere quod in curia sum, et de curia loquor, et nescio, Deus scit, quid sit curia. Scio tamen quod curia non est tempus; temporalis quidem est, mutabilis et varia, localis et erratica, nunquam in eodem statu permanens."[110]

Walter makes plain his own stake in the contest of courtly life, ("in curia sum"), even his complicity in its vagaries, but poses at the same time as someone bewildered and alienated by it: "In recessu meo totam agnosci, in reditu nichil aut modicum invenio quod dereliquerim; extraneam video *factus alienus*."[111] This pose allows him to play a disinterested witness to the court's peculiarities, unlike those racked in the 'hell of court' by their own ambitions. But what distinguishes Walter's pose from that of more earnest court satirists like John of Salisbury or Peter of Blois is that his ironies, to say nothing of his anecdotes, undermine his 'outsider' status. Walter comments on his social world from within, recreating the interactions that constitute it.

He addresses this insider's commentary to those near at hand, fellow courtier-clerics and laymen with advanced literacy; it is a *discourse of familiarity* humorously dressed up as an *outsider-oriented discourse* drawn from the rich tradition of twelfth-century curial satire. Discourses of familiarity challenge the interpreter at a historical or cultural distance because they "[leave] unsaid all that goes without saying," such as the fact that the three men whose lives Walter envies are bishops, and as such, do not enjoy the leisured retirement Walter claims to desire.[112] Politeness theory offers us a way into these discourses of familiarity, a vantage from which to view the struggles and gambits

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[110] "'In time I exist, and of time I speak,' said Augustine: and added, 'What time is I know not.' In a like spirit of perplexity I may say that in the court I exist and of the court I speak, and what the court is, God knows, I know not. I do know however that the court is not time; but temporal it is, changeable and various, space-bound and wandering, never continuing in one state." DNC I.1, 2.

[111] "When I leave it, I know it perfectly: when I come back to it I find nothing or but little of what I left there: I am become a stranger to it, and it to me." DNC I.1, 2.

[112] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 18.

its polish conceals. It gives us a way to organize the consistent and repeatable features through which relations are enacted in discourse—the vows, jokes, promises, requests, and so forth. We can thus reconstruct the situational contexts in which the "silence, ellipses, and lacunae of the language of familiarity" have significance.[113]

And because *De nugis curialium* aims to reproduce convincingly the lived social relations that demarcate its production and reception, it is an *outsider-oriented discourse*, supplying the reader with the means—however inadequate at times—to fill in these gaps.[114] This is one purpose for Walter's anecdotes; they invite readers into his social world and illustrate the parts they are supposed to play there. His anecdotes also reveal the pragmatic effects of courtiers' discursive strategies, both those intended—as with the joke about Bernard of Clairvaux—and those that frustrate intentions, as when King Henry ignores Hugh and admits the foresters.

With a native guide like Walter, our paths into medieval discourses of familiarity are crooked and thorny. Nevertheless, a disciplined, reflective historicist pragmatics offers a means to achieve the much-touted goal of "hovering low" over what it describes.[115] The analytical categories of discourse-pragmatics are a palette for the "thick description" of social practices surrounding and informing literary texts.[116] We should

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[113] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 18.

[114] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 18; This process has also been discussed in the critical context of reception theory: " . . . the success of a linguistic action depends on the resolution of indeterminacies by means of conventions, procedures, and guarantees of sincerity. These form the frame of reference within which the speech act can be resolved into a context of action. Literary texts also require a resolution of indeterminacies but, by definition, for fiction there can be no such given frames of reference. On the contrary, the reader must first discover for himself the code underlying the text, and this is tantamount to bringing out the meaning." Wolfgang Iser cited in Robert Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1984), 86. At the same time, "the meaning of the text is seen as constituted by the reader under the guidance of the textual instructions." Holub, *Reception Theory*, 101.

[115] Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 25.

[116] Geertz, "Thick Description," 25.

not simply use these methods and categories to give our interpretations a patina of 'scientific' objectivity, because interpreters of medieval discourse inevitably draw analogies from their own experience. But by mediating our analogies through discourse-pragmatics, we make explicit how our interpretation relates experience, model, and text, while ascribing to none of them any privileged insight into reality. Discourse-pragmatics aids the imperfect act of cultural translation, provided we remember that reality is more complex than the model.

1.5 "The Swords of the Powerful": The Practice of Satire in the Angevin Court

In viewing *De nugis curialium* as the textual remainder of real interactions, contradictory impressions of our author emerge. In this chapter's final section, I examine the political implications of Walter's ambiguous persona, both moralistic outsider and sophisticated insider. He claims that he aspires to a simple life of literary pursuits, but is caught up willy-nilly in the vale of tears that is the court.

> Non dico quin multi viri timorati, boni et iusti nobiscum involuantur [sic] in curia, nec quin aliqui sint in hac valle miserie iudices misericordie, sed secundum maiorem et insaniorem loquor aciem.[117]

As I discussed earlier in this chapter, medieval satire's elementary rhetorical function is to distinguish the author and reader as good from certain others who are bad. Here, Walter's attack on bad men, "a larger and wilder band" of courtiers, distinguishes the reader as belonging with the author to a smaller and meeker group of good, just, and merciful judges.

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[117] "I do not mean to deny that there are many God-fearing, good and righteous men mixed up among us here at Court, nor that there are in this vale of misery some merciful judges. It is of the larger and wilder portion of the band that I speak." DNC I.9, 10.

We may see Walter, then, as a clerical moralist, a persona common to Anglo-Latin authors like John of Salisbury and Peter of Blois. This persona heaps contempt on the depravity of courtly life and rejects its worldly values.[118] Martin Aurell repeats their self-assessments as fact: "Ambition was not the chief motive of those intellectuals who, once at court, got nostalgiac for the spiritual life under the pressure of the harsh acquisitiveness of their new job."[119] Following the work of C. Stephen Jaeger and Joachim Bumke, Aurell holds that for these courtier-clerics, the "chief motive" was to Christianize the mores of the aristocracy by sublimating their violent impulses and regulating their behavior.[120] Their moralistic and severe self-performance was instrumental to this mission as it helped them win the confidence and cooperation of their lay charges. Their desire for the contemplative life bolstered their spiritual and moral authority, but also suggested their practical utility as counselors—unlike grasping flatterers, their lack of worldly ambition made their advice disinterested and therefore reliable. This disinterest was communicated also by their show of "freedom," their willingness to tell hard truths.[121] If this liberty invited persecution and slander from courtly rivals, this buttressed their authority all the more, reminding the audience that the source of their authority and the purpose of their activity lay outside the court.[122]

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[118] Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 95.

[119] Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire,* 95.

[120] C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 935-1210* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Joachim Bumke, *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (New York: The Overlook Press, 2000).

[121] "In the Middle Ages, the freedom of speech and content in the poetry of the court and official court history was perfectly compatible with working for a patron. It did not demand a slavish flattery towards the man who had commissioned his work." Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 69; Aurell again takes the self-assessment of courtly writers as factual.

[122] In chapter two, I will examine this rhetoric in much greater detail in works by John of Salisbury and Daniel of Beccles.

One persistent feature of Walter's literary persona is his playful mockery of this serious clerical role. This mockery is consistent with his argument that cheerfulness signifies true faith and joyless fervor, hypocrisy. Inverting the moralist's traditional complaint of persecution by the worldly, he describes how his joy earns mockery from his peers:

> Qui ridet, ridetur; qui sedet in tristicia, sapere uidetur. Vnde et iudices nostri gaudia puniunt retribuuntque mesticiam, cum ex bona conscientia boni iuste gaudeant, ex mala mali merito mesti sint; unde tristes ypocrite, leti semper deicole.[123]

According to Walter, the good and just rightly rejoice in their good conscience; sorrowful hypocrites punish joy and reward misery. This viewpoint underlies Walter's authorial digressions and overtures in which he parodies moralistic scolds. For example, Walter's address to 'Geoffrey' (discussed in the last section) expresses his desire for the kind of contemplative peace wealthy and powerful bishops enjoy; Walter's point here is to expose how spiritual pretensions conceal worldly ambitions.[124] This was a constant theme of the Goliardic satirists, so it is unsurprising that their works were frequently attributed to Walter.[125]

Like the Goliards, Walter distinguishes himself from high-minded peers by implicating himself in the faults of the social milieu he criticizes.[126] In *De nugis curialium*, he is entirely a creature of the court, wrangling for institutional advancement and breezily counseling the great in a way that discloses (or suggests) an easy familiarity.

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[123] "He that laughs is laughed at, he that sits in sadness is accounted wise. Nay, our judges set a penalty on joy and a premium on sorrow, whereas properly the good are happy in the consciousness of wrong, so that hypocrites should be always sad, and true worshippers of God cheerful." DNC I.1, 4

[124] See note 99.

[125] A.G. Rigg, "Golias and Other Pseudonyms," *Studi Medievali* 13, no. 1 (1977): 65-109.

[126] See, for example, the final stanzas of Walter of Châtillon's second lyric, in which he hints that he wishes for a benefice; Robert Levine, trans., "Satirical Poems of Walter of Châtillon," http://www.bu.edu/english/levine/walt821.htm (accessed February 27, 2008).

His self-performance as a crafty insider belies his claim to being a pure-hearted *ingénue*, bewildered and abused by other courtiers. Thus, his supposed bewilderment is part of a sophisticated pose that ironizes clerical moralizing. Siân Echard writes about how, in Walter's writing, "the charged language of denunciation is replaced by the banality of low discourse. The expected stern moralist has rather a self-deprecating and even comic voice."[127] With these abrupt shifts in tone, Walter marks his shows of moralism as not fully authentic, but his mastery over these different tones and poses indicates his courtly sophistication.

For Sinex, Walter's ironic subversion of clerical moralism induces "queasy self-doubt" and "deliberately promotes moral ambiguity."[128] It is one thing, however, to mock moralism, and something else to discard morality. Walter's ironies do not finally negate a moral perspective, but rather, offer morality without severity, reframing some elementary reformist platforms—civil peace and disgust with exploitative corruption—for a readership indifferent or inured to clerical decrials of worldliness.

Robert Edwards argues that Walter's ironic appropriation of the usual protocols of clerical authorship amounts to a "counter-authorship" practiced as a way "of defining and exercising subjectivity" in a social environment he regards with "radical ambivalence." This exercise of subjectivity, however, transpires not in solitude but in scenes of interaction with others; a raconteur requires an audience, and Walter places himself "at the mercy of the reader who can match his wit, irony, play, and insight." For Edwards, Map's awareness of his dependence on his reader entails a corresponding awareness ". . .

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[127] Siân Echard, "Map's Metafiction: Author, Narrator and Reader in *De Nugis Curialium*,"*Exemplaria* 8 (1996): 302.
[128] See note 12.

of the constraints that authorship and writing impose, of the paradox of imaginative

freedom as a means of refuge." Thus, Map's literary achievement

> reaches beyond the historical limits of medieval court culture, . . . [and]
> draws him back toward Ovid's self-inauguration as a counterimperial
> elegist and forward to the troubled meditations on art and poetry that we
> find in early modern figures like Marlowe and Shakespeare.[129]

By considering what Walter's text achieves *within* "the historical limits of medieval court

culture" rather than in a transcendent humanistic canon, I do not wish to contradict

Edward's praise, but to bring into view a central aspect of Walter's work which Edwards

and other scholars leave aside. Map believed he had readers who could "match his wit,

irony, play, and insight."[130] His radical ambivalence was not the exclusive domain of an

alienated subject, but the shared attitude of a clique, perhaps including the members of

Gilbert Foliot's entourage who laughed at Walter's anti-Cistercian jokes.

As in the anecdote that opened this chapter, Walter gives us an idea as to who

constituted this clique, a "community of highly educated but mostly secular cleric-

courtiers, some of noble origin, others not."[131] Walter and his clique stood at the

intersection of two elite societies, the lay nobility and the church hierarchy. His circle of

educated *curiales* effected the practical and cultural enmeshment of secular and

ecclesiastical elite formations, a circle that was produced by and assisted the demands of

developing royal power:

> The capacity and inclination of the Crown in the time of Henry II to play
> an interventionist part had much to do with the presence in the royal circle

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[129] Citations on this page are from Edwards, "Walter Map: Authorship and the Space of Writing," 284-289.
[130] See above.
[131] Monika Otter, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996), 125.

of men whose education equipped them to grasp ideas about royal jurisdiction and to formulate procedures.[132]

Such men, "who were not necessarily in full orders and not generally of high birth but almost always highly educated, acted as scribes, administrators, and treasurers more than priests."[133] The Gregorian reforms sought to prevent such clerical defections to the service of lay nobility, and thus, argues Monika Otter, these men found themselves caught halfway between two elite formations, the church hierarchy and the lay nobility, viewed suspiciously by each side as an untrustworthy "hybrid"—Otter argues that Walter's acute self-consciousness results from his being "alienated" by this experience.[134]

Yet Walter's persona, though self-conscious, also has an ease and confidence that does not suggest a dyspeptic grumbler feeling "encroached on all sides."[135] The self-consciousness evident in *De nugis curialium* arises from his efforts to create a positive social identity for hybrid creatures like himself, and Walter's rhetoric is therefore, in part, self-serving and local in its concern. This should not persuade us to view Walter's moral claims cynically; he does, in fact, advance a reformist agenda at court, not from the chiding perspective of a disapproving outsider, but from the sophisticated and pragmatic perspective of an experienced courtier. This agenda is not to advance the hegemonic claims of moral authority advanced by the church, but to remake civil authority according to the standards of legal and intellectual clarity cherished by men like Walter who were trained in the schools of Paris or Bologna; he is less concerned with what kind of authority appoints judges than that those appointed are just.

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[132] Robin Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles, 1100-1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 82.

[133] Otter, *Inventiones*, 125.

[134] "The division of 'outer' and 'inner', the conscious manipulation of one's persona, becomes a commonplace both in court criticism and in advice literature." Otter, *Inventiones*, 126.

[135] Otter, *Inventiones*, 127

In the "De germinibus noctibus," chapter ten of *De nugis curialium* in which

Walter describes his ill-managed household, Walter offers another anecdote. This one

describes a conversation between himself and Henry II's chief justiciar, Ranulf of

Glanville. Ranulf was a hybrid creature from the other side of the clergy–layman divide,

one of a group of "*milites litterati*"(literate knights) [whose] knowledge of Latin was a

step beyond what could be picked up from the parish church or the liturgy."[136] As

Ranulf's career attests, such literate knights served alongside clerics as royal officials.

Walter and Ranulf stood together not only in their medial position between clerical and

noble identity, but also in their medial social status at the court of Henry II between great

magnates and educated commoners.[137] Ranulf, from a lesser line of a provincial Anglo-

Norman clan, increased his modest holdings first by good marriage and then by judicial,

shrieval, military, and diplomatic service to King Henry II.[138] Walter, for his part, seems

to have come from provincial gentry, "probably Herefordshire landowners of the second

ranks," and like Ranulf, advanced to his elite circle through his ability.[139]

Walter certainly implies that his standing is above the peasantry when asked by

Ranulf why clerical officials are more oppressive than laymen; he responds with a

sentenciolam—translatable as either 'summary judgment' or 'a bit of advice'—that is

openly elitist.[140] Because free men neglect learning, peasants procure educations for their

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[136] Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 52; A treatise on governmental and judicial procedure, the *Tractatus de legibus et consuetudinibus regi Anglie qui Glanvilla vocatur*, was attributed to Ranulf, though the attribution is doubtful. John Hudson, "Glanville, Ranulf of," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10795 (accessed February 25, 2008).

[137] . . . the men who furthered the Plantagenets' interests belonged to a range of social backgrounds. Often they came from the upper levels of the old aristocracy, sometimes from the lesser, educated knightly families, but also from the urban bourgeoisies and even the free peasantry, who were exploiting their links of clientage with greater men to get an entry at court." Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 59

[138] Hudson, "Glanville, Ranulf of," *ODNB*.

[139] Brooke, "Map, Walter," *ODNB*.

[140] "In iusticiis autem dictis plerumque clerici laicis immiciores inueniuntur. Cuius ego rei racionem non intelligo, nisi quam uiro nobili Randulfo de G<l>anvilla respondi, querenti cur hoc:" DNC I.10, 12; DNC

children, "non ut exeant a viciis sed ut habundant diviciis, qui quanto fiunt periciores

tanto perniciores."[141] Walter's contempt for these "servi" is withering:

> Artes enim gladii sunt potentum, qui pro modis utencium variantur. Nam
> in manu benigni principis pacifici sunt, in manu tiranni mortiferi.
> Redimunt suos a dominis servi, cupiditas utrimque militat, et vincit cum
> libertas libertatis addicitur hosti. Quod singularis ille / versificator ait
> preclare manifestans, ubi dicit:
> > Alterius est humili cum surgit in altum
> Et cetera, et iuxta
> > > Nec belua tetrior ulla
> > > Quam servi rabies in libera terga furentis. [142]

Ranulf agrees: "Vir ille predictus hanc approbavit sentenciolam."[143] Here we see

illustrated the paired social functions of satire; in attacking rivals, Walter binds Ranulf to

himself in a community of opinion demarcating a real, if still-amorphous political and

social community. Walter's rant attacks not one group but two, not only the educated

peasantry, but the willfully ignorant nobility. Both groups lie outside the boundaries of

the new social territory Walter maps.

Walter's tirade about *arrivistes* perhaps betrays the status-anxiety of one whose

own career depended more on talent than birth; his listener, chief justiciar over nobles

whose birth greatly outranked his, may have been sympathetic to this anxiety. But

Walter's *sentenciolam* also contains the kernel of a moral argument apart from any

political jockeying. "The arts are the swords of the great," aphorizes Walter; the

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I.10, 14.

[141] Map, 12: ". . . not that they may shed vices, but that they may gather riches; and the more skill they attain, the more ill they do."

[142] "The arts are as the swords of mighty men: their force varies with the method of him who holds them: in the hand of a merciful prince they bring peace, in that of a tyrant, death. The villein redeems his son from the lord, and on each side covetousness fights, and wins when freedom is conferred on freedom's foe. The famous poet points this out clearly where he says:
> Nothing is harsher than the ennobled clown,
And what follows; and again:
> > Nor any fiercer beast
> > Than a slave's vengeance on a freeman's back."; DNC I.10, 12-14.

[143] "The great man I mentioned approved my little discourse." DNC I.10, 14.

discourse of administrative officials is an instrument backed by sovereign power. "Their [the arts'] force varies with the users' methods"—the morally neutral term *modus* would seem to denote only technical variation in use, but for Walter, these variations have an ethical dimension as well, since educated peasants, the 'lowly raised high' through clerical advancement, use the arts in a way that reflects their character—avaricious, spiteful, disloyal, and aligned with the deadly tyrant and foe of freedom.

Is this another dig at moralizing clerics? John of Salisbury himself was such an educated peasant, first taught by a parish priest. Walter's ironic appropriation of their discourse betokens a reflectiveness about how clergy and laity regard one another, and by self-consciously playing the cleric according to the more cynical expectations of a lay courtier, Walter ratifies the lay courtier as a participant in the reformist project of courtliness. This, finally, is why Ranulf of Glanville, *miles litteratus*, is Walter's interlocutor and the recipient of his counsel. Ranulf's ratification of Walter's opinion has a pragmatic social aim with a more far-reaching ethical goal; for Walter, the work of resisting ignorant nobles, rapacious foresters, deceptive courtiers, and hypocritical clerics is real and urgent, and requires collaboration with, rather than contempt for, the lay nobility.

In this anecdote, Walter has three satiric targets: illiterate nobles hostile to learning, self-made commoners, and finally, Walter's own peers, the courtier-clerics whose self-righteousness he mocks in order to say to a lettered lay reader like Ranulf, 'we are of a kind,' and so enlist him in the project of making government just, fair, and rational. It does two more things besides. First, it represents the community of *curiales* to which Walter Map belonged not as the "perpetual outsiders" described by Otter, but as

participants in the highest domains of power at court, even if Walter's care to distinguish himself from resentful pretenders advanced by learning suggests a lingering unease about his status.

In some ways, Walter's persona resembles the strident moralists he lampoons, never obsequious for personal gain, and always selflessly prepared to risk the ire of his peers to point out their deceptions and pretensions. His vituperations betoken an honesty that distinguishes him from flatterers and hypocrites. He may not be the most pleasant or reassuring of counselors—this is why he is useful. But he does, like any courtier, aim to please. He rewards his familiars, allies, and patrons with the sense of belonging to an exclusive group marked by sophistication and wit. This is Walter's all-pervasive strategy of positive politeness, establishing his authority and legitimacy as a counselor on the basis of the community of shared opinions and goals implied by his humor. To require savvy from the reader is an indirect compliment, an effective form of flattery that vindicates itself from the charge of flattery precisely because the reader does have to 'get the joke.' Such discourse confirms the reader in a positive self-evaluation precisely because it challenges him. And Walter would have those who embrace this challenge accept his ultimately reformist idea of courtliness.

Chapter Two

Teachers and Fathers: Authoritative Rhetorics
in Twelfth-Century Latin Literature

2.1   Discursive License

Father–son and teacher–student relations, like all human relations, are enacted

by spoken interaction. The discourse of this interaction is governed by culturally

specific protocols that privilege and constrain each speaker according to his relative

status. By reproducing the discourse between teachers and students and fathers and

sons, Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae,* John of Salisbury's *Entheticus in dogmata*

philosophorum, and Daniel of Beccles's *Urbanus magnus* represent author and reader

in terms of these hierarchical relations. In each of these cases, the author assumes for

himself the superordinate role of teacher and father. In this chapter, I will explore

what assuming these roles allows Alan, John, and Daniel to accomplish.

In the last chapter, I investigated how Walter Map frames his *De nugis*

curialium through a set of interactions and encounters contiguous with the real life of

court. By joining satire with counsel, and by offering his readers subject positions

familiar from the every day life of courtiers, Walter both achieves mimetic depth in

depicting social interactions and aims to achieve familiarity and solidarity with his

readers. Alan of Lille, John of Salisbury, and Daniel of Beccles also combine satire

and counsel to frame their texts as live interaction, but while Walter's persona, I

argued, attempts a novel form of social and moral authority, these three authors claim

the privilege of commonplace authoritative roles—teachers and fathers— roles on

which the commonplace cultural institutions of school and family depend.[1]

Each of these three authors appropriates the authoritative rhetoric of teachers

or fathers, and each combines satire and counsel to effect this strategy, though to

differing extents and with differing outcomes. Alan's of Lille's didactic prosimetrum

De planctu naturae presents in a dream-vision a dialogue between the narrator and

the goddess Nature which follows a teacher–student relational script in a simple and

unequivocal form—Nature is teacher, and Dreamer her student. Since Roman satire,

regarded in the twelfth century as ethical doctrine, was an elementary part of the

schoolboy' curriculum, Nature's use of satire reinforces her teacherly role. The other

two authors sometimes ironize the authoritative rhetorics of teachers and fathers

through the contextual dislocations and juxtapositions of satire. Nevertheless, their

use of satire does not 'destabilize' or 'undermine' their authoritative positions; if

anything, it legitimates them by undermining the clout of rivals. In the *Entheticus in*

dogmata philosophorum, written within a decade of the *De planctu naturae,* John of

Salisbury reconciles the *magister*'s authoritative discourse to the courtier's more

deferential tone. Around the end of the twelfth century, Daniel of Beccles's versified

courtesy book, the *Urbanus Magnus*, deliberately confuses the homespun rhetoric of

a lay nobleman addressing his designated heir with the clerical teacher's learned

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[1] The pastoral relation also privileges the counseling party to interaction; however, this dissertation does not handle the spiritual *consilium* of the care of souls but the deliberative counsel of practical affairs, i.e., the counsel of *prudentia* rather than *sapientia.* Carla Casagrande discusses this medieval distinction in "Virtù della Prudenza e dono del consiglio", in *Consilium: teorie e pratiche del consigliare nella cultura medievale*, eds. Chiara Crisciani Carla Casagrande, Silvana Vecchio, (Firenze: Sismel - Edizioni del Galluzo, 2004), 1-14.

discourse. Between these distinct forms of discursive authority, Daniel negotiates an

authoritative role for the cleric-courtier in the bustle of a nobleman's household.

While these three authors differ in how they pitch their authority to their

readers, each declares himself—or in the case of Alan's mouthpiece Nature, herself—

a counselor with the express wish of intervening in social or political practice. That

these counselors sometimes speak ironically does not make them insincere, not even

when their ironies draw attention to the forms of discourse that express their paternal

or magisterial authority. Satire contributes to the substance of their moral counsel by

rebuking vice, and irony allows them to maneuver between deference and authority

when addressing those of higher rank and greater power.[2] For John of Salisbury and

Daniel of Beccles, irony occasions solidarity with the reader by its assumption of

shared values—and shared enemies.

Familiarity with superiors gives these authors a claim to social authority

before a secondary audience of peers and inferiors. One could conseqently suppose

that addressing a superior reader is simply a ruse: John only addresses Thomas

Becket, for example, as a handy way to advise and instruct his fellow clerics at

Canterbury because Thomas offers them an exemplary figure with whom to identify.

To the contrary, I argue that the situation is more complex. John of Salisbury and

Daniel of Beccles intended both primary and secondary audiences (Becket, clerical

peers, the *herus*) to use and appreciate their poems as moral and practical counsel.

They may have supposed each audience would value their work for different

reasons. For a reader to appreciate irony, he or she must share interests and values

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[2] For a comprehensive and insightful look at this phenomenon in classical Rome, see Ellen Oliensis, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

with the author, and such interests and values could vary between their primary and secondary audiences. By playing on these variations in their ironies, satirist-counselors could exclude each of their respective audiences in turn. As I discussed in the first chapter, the exclusion of an out-group is vital to the establishment of an in-group; John and Daniel establish with primary and secondary audiences two overlapping but distinct communities of opinion.

Building and separating communities is social action; hence satire and counsel are social actions. As such, the use of these discourses implicates their authors in the social milieu which they criticize, complicating their claim to moral authority and even inviting the reader's scrutiny. John and Daniel deliberately take up this challenge, and draw on the capacity of satire-counsel's social rhetoric to establish community and trust with primary and secondary audiences alike. Moreover, both authors, with social dexterity and verbal cleverness, offer their textual personae as exemplary profiles of the learned counselor. Their self-peformance, finally, is itself practical counsel about giving counsel.

2.2   Satire in the Schoolroom: Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae*

2.2.1   Nature as Schoolmaster

Alan of Lille (c. 1128-1202) enjoyed a long career as a theologian and poet. He was a master in Paris for decades, attended the Third Lateran Council in 1179, moved shortly thereafter to Montpellier to become a Cistercian, and retired in his last years to Cîteaux.[3] Influential as the author of penitential and preaching manuals, Alan was equally influential as a poet with his *De planctu naturae*, an allegory of

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[3] A dated but thorough biography is G. Raynaud de Lage, *Alain de Lille: Poète du xiie siècle*, (Montreal: Institut d'Études Médiévales, 1951).

mixed prose and verse, and with his *Anticlaudianus*, a long allegorical poem in hexameters.[4] *De planctu naturae*, written between 1160 and 1170, was very popular, surviving in at least 133 manuscripts.[5]

The *De planctu naturae* falls into three main parts. In the first, the narrator Dreamer encounters the allegorical goddess Lady Nature and describes her garment in an extended ekphrasis that incorporates an epitome of twelfth-century natural philosophy. The second section is a dialogue between Lady Nature and the Dreamer in which Nature complains about unnatural vices and tells an allegorical fable about how humanity fell when it was seduced by carnal desire. In the third section, personified virtues parade onto the scene one by one until Genius arrives to excommunicate those who sin against Nature either through sodomy "or other vices of intemperance."[6]

In the second section, Alan configures the dialogue betwen Lady Nature and Dreamer in terms of the magisterial relational model; Nature is the teacher and Dreamer is her student. Literary representations of dialogues between teachers and students do not begin or end in the twelfth century. They have their origins in classical antiquity and persist in present-day advice literature.[7] Plato's naturalistic dialogues between Socrates and his pupils gave way to allegorical dialogues in prosimetra like Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, but both kinds follow the

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[4] de Lage, *Alain de Lille*, 20; For a detailed history of mixed verse and prose, see Peter Dronke, *Verse with Prose from Petronius to Dante: The Art and Scope of the Mixed Form*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994) and Bernhard Pabst, *Prosimetrum: Tradition und Wandel einer Literatur form zwischen Spätantike und Spätmittelalter*, (Köln: Böhlau, 1994).

[5] Nikolaus M. Häring, introduction to *Alan of Lille, "De planctu naturae"* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1978), 797.

[6] Häring, introduction, 805.

[7] For example, a recent best-seller features inspirational conversations between a dying journalism professor and his former student. Mitch Albom, *Tuesdays with Morrie: an Old Man, a Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson*, (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

social script of a student submitting to a master's corrective counsel. At the

beginning of the twelfth century, the naturalistic philosophical dialogue re-emerged

as a genre in texts like Anselm of Canterbury's *Proslogion.*[8] The Menippean satire's

allegorical dialogue likewise returned in the twelfth century with Bernard Silvestris'

Cosmographia.

As I will demonstrate, Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae* blurs the line

between the naturalistic dialogue of Plato and the allegorical dialogue of Boethius, for

the discourse of Nature and Dreamer belongs to the social practices of twelfth-

century schools.[9] The *De planctu naturae* is an influential and straightforward

example of how the teacher-student relational model framed the literature of moral

counsel in terms of a familiar situation and of what satiric discourse contributed to

this structuration.

The *Consolation of Philosophy*'s encounter between Boethius and Lady

Philosophy presents itself as spoken exchange in the Socratic tradition, whereas the

text-centered medieval schoolroom sets the stage for the exchange between Dreamer

and Lady Nature. Lady Nature is depicted as a schoolmistress, and Dreamer is her

attentive and obedient pupil. Thus, Alan's allegorical scene was familiar to clerical

readers who shared the same kind of education. Alan, known as *doctor universalis*,

had a long and successful career as a teacher, and wrote *De planctu* in the early 1170s

when his career was on the rise. In this work, he imbues the discourse of Nature with

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[8] Eileen Sweeney, "Anselm und der Dialog. Distanz und Versöhnung" in *Gespräche lesen. Philosophische Dialoge im Mittelalter*, eds. Klaus Jacobi, Mischa von Perger (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1999), 101-124.

[9] Alanus de Insulis, *De Planctu Naturae*, ed. Nikolaus M. Häring (Spoleto, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1978). All citations give the divisions and line numbers from this edition. Hereafter, the *De planctu naturae* will be abbreviated in footnotes as DPN.

the authoritative trappings of his own career to secure the receptivity of readers, who

he likely imagined to be clerics like himself.

Rather than a Socratic dialogue, then, the encounter between Nature and the

Dreamer takes the form of a situation type familiar to readers, the teacher's exposition

of an authoritative text for his students.[10] Nature is both text and teacher. On her

robe Dreamer sees the natural world's animals, plants, minerals, and celestial bodies.

Their descriptions are glossed encyclopedically according to their visual arrangement

on the dress, and the relation between image and significance is described with

vocabulary drawn from contemporary scholastic reading practice: "Hec animalia

quamuis ibi quasi *allegorice* viverent, ibi tamen esse uidebantur *ad litteram*."[11]

Recounting a myth about Venus's adultery with Antigenius, Nature describes what

Jan Ziolkowski calls a "grammar school scene."[12] I will argue that this description

also applies to the frame in which Nature narrates this fable. In discussing the role

twelfth-century literary pedagogy plays in Alan's satires on divergent sexual practices,

Ziolkowski argues that ". . . the description of nature [in the poem's first part] and the

dialogue between Nature and the dreamer-poet [that follows it] . . . correspond to text

and exposition. . . ."[13] I would add that the reader, identifying with the obedient

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[10] John of Salisbury's celebrated description of Bernard of Chartres gives an idealized portrayal of this method. John of Salisbury, *Ioannis Saresberiensis Metalogicon*, ed. J.N. Hall, CCCM 98, (Turnholti: Brepols, 1991).

[11] "These living things, although they had there a kind of figurative existence, nevertheless seemed to live there in the literal sense." *DPN* II.193-5; Translations are from Alan of Lille, *The Plaint of Nature*, trans. James J. Sheridan, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980).

[12] Jan Ziolkowski, *Alan of Lille's Grammar of Sex: The Meaning of Grammar to a Twelfth-Century Intellectual* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1985), 34.   Detailing Alan's use of grammatical terms as metaphorical vehicles to convey ideas about poetry, moral philosophy, and theology, Ziolkowski also demonstrates the widespread familiarity of such metaphors to Alan's readership.

[13] Ziolkowski, *Grammar of Sex*, 34-5.

student Dreamer, proceeds from 'text' through 'exposition' under the instruction of
the schoolmistress Nature.

As teacher and student, the hierarchical distance between Nature and Dreamer
is great. Alan expresses the relation through a grammatical metaphor: man is positive,
nature comparative, and God superlative: "Et sic in quodam conparationis triclinio
tres potestatis gradus possumus inuenire, ut dei potentia superlatiua, Nature
comparatiua, hominis positiua dicatur."[14] In other words, humanity should not only
yield to Nature's instruction as Nature yields to God's, in doing so it should imitate
her submission to God. It is by virtue of this submission, she argues, that she has the
credentials to teach mankind: "Sed ne in hac mee potestatis prerogativa deo videar
quasi arrogans derogare, certissime Summi Magistri me humilem profiteor esse
discipulam."[15] As the teacher of humanity, Nature has a corresponding absolute
superiority over her pupil:

> Hec omnia sine omni scrupulo questionis de me tibi familiarem
> largiuntur noticiam. Et ut familiarius loquar, ego sum Natura que mee
> dignationis munere te mee presentie compotivi meoque sum dignata
> beare colloquio.[16]

She intends to impart her knowledge through interaction, *colloquium*, with a pupil
whom she has 'deigned to bless with conversation.'

The knowledge she would impart is, in fact, knowledge of herself as the
allegorical embodiment of physical reality, but her authoritative self-performance

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[14] "Thus on the table of comparison, so to speak, we can find three degress of power and they are
termed the *superlative* power of God, the *comparative* power of Nature and the *positive* power of
man." DPN, VI.163-5; Sheridan, 126.

[15] "But, lest by thus first canvassing my own power, I seem to be arrogantly detracting from the power
of God, I most definitely declare that I am but the humble disciple of the Master on High." DPN,
VI.128-129; Sheridan, 124

[16] "Without one ounce of questioning, all these things bestow on you an intimate knowledge of me. To
speak more intimately still, I am Nature who, by the gift of my condescension, have made you a sharer
in my presence here and deigned to bless you with my conversation." DPN, VI.166-9; Sheridan, 126.

depends less on this fact than on the schoolish discourse she uses. The dreamer

eagerly ratifies this authority in the same register:

> [Nature:] ". . . Si affectuoso mentis affectu colligeres et in pectoris
> armario thesaurizares que dicerem tue dubitationis laberinthum [sic]
> evolverem."Ad hec ego, sub castigato vocis moderamine, responsionis
> reddidi talionem: "Nichil", inquam, "O regina celestis, affectuosiori
> desiderio quam huius questionis enodationem esurio.[17]

Evolvere and *enodatio* belong to the twelfth-century schools' vocabulary of textual

exposition. Dreamer's request, with its fawning honorifics and a voice "chastized by

moderation," is delivered with the deference of an obedient pupil.

Teacher and student acknowledge each other's roles and assume their own

roles in an exchange that frames the whole middle portion of *De planctu* as a

schoolroom dialogue. Dreamer's self-abjecting deference is revealed by his hedges

and indirectness—formulas of negative politeness that exalt his teacher and express

his regret for the impositions his questions represent:

> Tunc ego: "O omnium rerum mediatrix, nisi vererer mearum
> questionum copiam tue benivolentie fastidium educare, alterius mee
> dubitationis tenebras luci tue discretionis exponerem."[18]

Before *De planctu naturae*'s final portion, the allegorical pageant of Virtues and

Genius, the 'colloquium' between Nature and Dreamer concludes with a re-

affirmation of their roles as teacher and student:

> Cum in hanc *specialis discipline* semitam oratio Nature procederet,
> ecce vir subitanee apparationis miraculo, sine omni nostre

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[17] "'If you would, with well-disposed inclination of mind, collect together and store in the treasure-chest of your heart what I would say, I would straighten out the labyrinth of your doubts.' Hereupon, with chastened and restrained voice, I answered in matching vein. 'O heavenly Queen, there is nothing for which I thirst with greater desire and longing than I do for an explanation of the subect of my inquiry." DPN, VIII.5-9; Sheridan, 130.

[18] "Then I said, 'O mediatrix in all things, did I not fear that my host of questions might raise disgust in your kind nature, I would expose the haze of another doubt of mine to the light of your discernment." DPN, VIII.108-110; Sheridan, 138.

> preconsiderationis vexillo, suam presentiam nostris conspectibus presentavit.[19]

Words like *doctrina*, *disciplina, discipuli, docere*, *magister* (and its derivatives)*, enodatio*, *questio* and *instruere* establish and maintain the dialogue's institutional situation and its participants' roles within it. Nature is text and teacher; her instruction is her self-exposition. She provides the topic, physical creation and human behavior, and the exegetical method appropriate to this topic, methods of reading and writing—the arts of the trivium—practiced in the twelfth-century schools.

2.2.2   The Function of Satire in Nature's Curriculum

Alan's twelfth-century readers would have found Nature's satirical discourse just as appropriate to the classroom setting as the schoolroom diction and the grammatical metaphors that euphemize her attacks on sexual perversion.[20] Indeed, while the first third of Nature's instruction to Dreamer comprises an attack on sexual vice couched in grammatical metaphors, the other two thirds treat vices such as gluttony and avarice through the more direct vehicle of satire. Nature justifies her use of metaphors to treat sexual matters by an appeal to social decorum:

> Ab alteriori etenim sumens inicium excellentiorique stilo mee volens seriem narrationis contexere, nolo ut prius plana verborum planicie explanare proposita uel prophanis uerborum prophanare nouitatibus prophana, uerum pudenda aureis pudicorum uerborum faleris inaurare variisque venustorum dictorum coloribus investire.[21]

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[19] "While Nature's speech was proceeding along this path of specialised instruction, behold, a man was there and presented himself to our view in a miraculously sudden appearance and without any standard ahead of him to claim our attention." DPN, XVI.1-3; Sheridan, 196.

[20] "Grammatical metaphors served Alan's pedagogical needs admirably. In the first place, they enhanced the suitability of the *De planctu Naturae* for classroom exposition. In addition, they brought home Alan's figurative meaning to even the dullest of students, since everyone with any pretension of being educated knew grammar sufficiently well to be able to decode the metaphors." Ziolkowski, *Grammar of Sex*, 46

[21] "As I am to begin from roots quite deep and wish to arrange the sequence of my narrative in a style above average, I first of all refuse to explain my theme on the plain of plain words or to vulgarize the vulgar with vulgar neologisms, but choose to guild things immodest with the golden trappings of

However, social decorum competes with textual decorum; the constraints of polite

speech militate against the goal that language should be suited to its topic, a goal

Nature expresses shortly after:

> Sed tamen aliquando, ut superius libauimus, quia *rebus de quibus*
> *loquimur cognatos oportet esse sermones*, rerum informitati locutionis
> debet deformitas conformari.[22]

Some sins, especially sexual perversion, must be covered by 'a mantle of fair

sounding words.'[23] Vices like gluttony or hypocrisy, on the other hand, can be

described openly without risking obscenity (or *locutionis cacephaton*, a term Alan

takes from Martianus Capella).[24]

According to Suzanne Reynolds, this treatment of vice accords with the

formal and functional understanding of satire current in twelfth-century schools:

"Satire is naked, nude or, to put it in the terms of the integumental metaphor,

unclothed. In hermeneutic terms, it is transparent; while the *fabula* must have its

truth uncovered, satire speaks on the surface."[25] By asking for a description of vice

free of allegorical concealment, then, Dreamer is asking for satire: "Quamvis enim

plerique auctores *sub integumentali involucro* enigmaticam eius naturam depinxerint,

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modest words and to clothe them with the varied colours of graceful diction." DPN, VIII.182-186;
Sheridan, 143. This sentence is a good example of how Nature uses euphuistic syntax and obscure
diction to evidence a linguistic mastery that bolsters her—and Alan's—authority as a learned master.
[22] "Nevertheless, as we experienced above, since the language of our discourse should show kinship
with the matters about which we speak, there should be at times an uncouthness of style to conform to
the ugliness of the subject-matter." DPN, VIII.190-2; Sheridan, 144. The italics in Häring's edition
indicate Alan's citation of Boethius, *De. cons. phil* 3 Prose 12.111 (cf. Sheridan, 144, n. 40).
[23] ". . . euphonia orationis . . . pallium." DPN, VIII.194-5; Sheridan, 144.
[24] Cf. Häring's note. DPN, VIII.193; "a poor quality of diction", Sheridan 144. I suspect it means
something more like the sense in which we say "bad language." See Quintillian's use of the term in his
advice to avoid following the word *cum* with a word beginning in 'n', as in "cum notis hominibus."
Institutiones 8.45.
[25] Suzanne Reynold, *Medieval Reading : Grammar, Rhetoric, and the Classical Text*, (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1996), 144-5.

tamen nulla certitudinis nobis reliquere vestigia."[26] Nature responds with 'brief items

of censure', *notulas reprehensionis*, a mode of discourse appropriate to the dreamer's

boyishness, understood in this schoolish context as "undeveloped literary ability;"

Reynolds argues that it was on account of its perceived accessibility that satire was an

elementary part of the clerical curriculum.[27]

> Predicta igitur theatralis oratio, ioculatoriis evagata lasciviis, tue
> puerilitati pro ferculo propinatur.[28]

Her comparison of the meter to a dish of jests, jokes, and crude morsels fit for

children also connects her discourse with satire and its elementary role in twelfth-

century literary training, echoing definitions of satire commonly found in twelfth-

century glosses and *accessus ad auctores*.[29]

The phrase *notulas reprehensionis* recalls the medieval definition of satire as

reprehensio vitii, and Nature's purpose in offering such *notulas* in a dish of jokes is

moral counsel. Describing the war between reason and the senses, Nature declares:

> De rationis enim consilio tale contradictionis duellum inter hos pugiles
> ordinavi, ut, si in hac disputatione ad redargutionem sensualitatem ratio poterit
> inclinare, antecedens victoria premii consequente non careat.[30]

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[26] "Although many authors have given an outline, concealed in symbols, of [desire's] enigmatic nature, yet they have left us nothing that we can follow with certainty." DPN, IV.252-4.

[27] DPN, X.3; "items of censure," Sheridan, 154; Reynolds, *Medieval Reading*, 146-149; John of Salisbury and the author of *Moralium dogma philosophorum* could recommend classical satire to young students "by virtue of its naked moral intention."

[28] "The foregoing theatrical speech, having strayed into the playfulness of jongleurs, is offered by way of a dish for your boyishness." DPN, X.17-18.

[29] The *lanx satura*, a ceremonial dish of mixed contents is mentioned in the standard *accessus* to Juvenal from the mid-twelfth century. See Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae in Iuvenalem*, ed. Bradford Wilson, (Textes Philosophique du Moyen Age. Paris, Librairie philosophique J. Vrin., 1980), 90; On ancient definitions of *satura,* see Emily Gowers, *The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); also, Michael Coffey, *Roman Satire*, (London: Methuen, 1976).

[30] "It was on reason's advice that I arranged such antagonism and war between these contestants, so that if reason could in this debate turn sensuousness into an object of ridicule, the first reward of victory would not be without subsequent ones." DPN, VI.66-68; Sheridan, 120.

Thus, satire helps effect the triumph of reason and the virtuous life by working toward the refutation of sensuality. Though Alan's satire is not especially pungent, even by contemporary standards, it fulfills generic requirements by treating vices one at a time in concrete detail, according to Dreamer's request:

> Quoniam in area generalitatis huius intellectus excursor oberrat, intelligentie vero prefinita specialitas amicatur, vellem ut vicia, que in quodam generalitatis implicas glomicello, specialissimarum specierum intersticiis discoloribus explicares.[31]

Nature obliges him:

> Quoniam tue postulationis rationem emeritam indecens est adimpletionis merito defraudari, tibi singula vicia equum est singillatim notulis singularibus annotari.[32] (Pr.VI.5-7)

She integrates her satire into the poem's allegorical framework through the allegorical personification of each vice; drunkenness, avarice, pride, and envy are personified as women. Bacchilatria and Nummilatria (drunkenness and avarice) represent the daughters of a personified Idolatry.[33]

However, unlike Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, Alan does not integrate the activities and relations of these allegorical figures into a coherent narrative; rather, he describes the vices through a series of profiles of their 'worshippers', which is to say, their real-world practitioners.[34] Moving from the personified vice to vicious persons

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[31] "Since rational observation tends to lose its way in this open ground of generalities and specialisation within defined limits is the friend of the intellect, I would wish you to unwind the vices which you wind in what I may call a small clew of generic statements and show the several shades of differentiation in each species." DPN, XII.1-4; Sheridan, 169.

[32] "Since it would not be fitting that your reasonable and deserving request should be robbed of the reward of fulfillment, it is right to mark for you each and every vice, one by one, with its individual marks." DPN, XII.5-7; Sheridan, 169.

[33] John Gower adapts and greatly expands this genealogy of vices in his *Mirrour d'Omme.*

[34] The limited use of *prosopopoeia* in satire has precedent in the classical tradition of classical satire, especially the works of Persius. See Charles Witke, *Latin Satire: The Structure of Persuasion*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), 100-101.

in contemporary society, Alan works his way down a hierarchy of vice from the

definition of a particular genus (such as arrogance)—

> Nunc intuendum qualiter insolentis arrogantie ampullosa ventositas humanas mentes erigat in tumorem, cuius infirmitatis contagione funesta uiciata hominum multitudo, dum se supra se insolenter extollit . . ..[35]

—to the description of species:

> Horum hominum aut verborum sollempnis pompositas aut suspicionis mater taciturnitas aut quedam actus specificatio aut insolens gestus exceptio aut nimia corporis comptio exterius interiorem mentis glosat superbiam.[36]

Pride is the genus; verbosity, aloofness, eccentricity, histrionic behaviour, and vanity

are species that define (*glosat*) the genus. Nature, acting as the teacher, furnishes

exempla, individual specimens of viciousness, to illustrate these glosses. These

worshippers of vice are indexed as specific individuals by a paratactic arrangement of

pronouns: *alii, hii, isti, quis*: "this one," "that one," "the other one."[37]

As we will find in almost every text of satire-counsel, satire is contrasted with

the linguistic vice of flattery, and Nature's colloquium with Dreamer culminates in a

satiric attack on flattery, sampled here:

> Quid igitur adulationis inunctio, nisi donorum emunctio? Quid conmendationis allusio, nisi prelatorum delusio? Quid laudis arrisio, nisi eorundem derisio? Nam cum loquela, fidelis intellectus interpres, verba, fideles animi picture, vultus, voluntatis signaculum, lingua mentis soleat esse propheta, adulatores a voluntate vultum, ab animo

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[35] "Now we must consider how the pompous conceit of haughty arrogance develops into a tumour in men's minds and from contact with this deadly disease very many are corrupted when they haughtily rise above themselves." DPN, XIV.2-5; Sheridan, 185.

[36] "The religiously maintained ostentation of these men's diction, or their taciturnity that begets suspicion, or some individualised actions, or the adoption of unusual gestures, or the excessive adornment of the body is an index to the pride of mind within." DPN, XIV.6-9; Sheridan, 185.

[37] DPN, XIV.10.

verbum, a mente linguam ab intellectu loquelam, amplo dissensionis intervallo diffibulant.[38]

For Alan, satire collapses flattery's separation of speech from thought, reveals the fraudulent incongruity between will and face, word and understanding; ideally, as Nature declares at the outset of the satiric portion of her colloquium with Dreamer, "the language of our discourse should show a kinship with the matters about which we speak."[39] Ziolkowski shows how the *De planctu naturae* figuratively aligns grammatical correctness with moral (especially sexual) rectitude. The latter part of her instruction aligns textual decorum and ethical decency. In grammar as in life, the word must accord with the thing.

For Alan and his twelfth-century readers, satire was an elementary part of the way literary training aided students' moral formation. Nature grieves at the need to use "profane novelties of words" to describe the world's degraded state, but its depravities must be named and identified to forearm the good with caution, as she states at the beginning of her satiric descriptions of non-sexual vices:

> Non igitur mireris si in has verborum prophanas exeo novitates, cum prophani homines prophanius audeant debachari. Talia enim indignanter eructuo, ut pudici homines pudoris caracterem vereantur, impudici vero ab inpudentie lupanaribus commerciis arceantur. Mali enim cognitio expediens est ad cautelam, que culpabiles nota verecundie cauteriatos puniat et cautele armatura inmunes premuniat.[40]

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[38] "What, then, is the ointment of flattery but cheating for gifts? What is the act of commendation but a deception of prelates? What is the smile of praise but a mockery of the same prelates? For since speech is wont to be the faithful interpreter of thought, words the faithful picture of thse soul, the countenance an indication of the will, the tongue the spokesman of the mind, flatterers separate, by a wide distance and divergence, the countenance from the will, the words from the soul, the tongue from the mind, the speech from the thought." DPN, XIV.129-134; Sheridan, 192.

[39] See note 22.

[40] "Do not be surprised, then, that I go beyond limits in my use of this strange and profane language when impious men dare to revel in wicked manner. In my indignation I belch forth such words so that men of restraint may revere the mark of modesty and that men without restraint may be kept away from trafficking in the brothels of immodesty. The knowledge of evil is advantageous as a preventive

Satire recuperates the potential of language to impart the knowledge of evil by fixing this knowledge in a discursive community of values; its elementary use in the schoolroom setting gives teaching grammar a moral function that validates the entire scholastic enterprise in terms of ethical formation. To this end, the hierarchical relational model of teacher and student is indispensable, for teachers give students both words and the conditions of their use, just as Alan's Nature gives Dreamer (who stands for mankind) both the flesh and instructions for its use.

The combination of the teacher-student relational model and the use of satire as an instrument of moral counsel occur in the same generation as the *De planctu naturae* in John of Salisbury's *Entheticus in dogmata philosophorum.* But John's practical concerns and detailed portrayal of real-world courts and schools are far removed from Alan's self-contained allegorical world, for John offers counsel not through the mouthpiece of an allegorical figure, but in the 'guise' of his own historical person, a person far less authoritatively situated than is Alan. Moreover, his addressee is not some everyman Dreamer, but Thomas Becket, then Henry II's chancellor. Thus, while John's textual rhetoric does not match Alan's exhaustive (and often exhausting) virtuoso display of the *colores rhetorici*, his interpersonal rhetoric is far more complicated, and reveals more about the effects of power on discourse in the twelfth-century. Through its extradiegetical references to real people and their practical affairs*,* the *Entheticus* takes greater risks, and the strategies of negotiating domains of power are consequently more visible.

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measure to punish the guilty, who are branded with the mark of shame, and to forearm the unaffected with the armour of precaution." DPN, VIII.94-100; Sheridan, 137.

2.3   John of Salisbury's Magisterial Authority

2.3.1   Self-Performance Between School and Court

The *Entheticus in dogmata philosophorum,* or *Entheticus maior*, was John of

Salisbury's first major written work. [41] This didactic poem of 1,852 lines in elegiac

couplets features a combination of satire and counsel that constructs a community of

opinion between author and reader both through the exposition of shared values and

through the exclusion of the satirized from this community. In this section, I describe

the imaginary community constructed by John of Salisbury's satire-counsel and

consider its relation to the actual communities John identified with as a one-time

student of the burgeoning schools of Paris, a cleric of Canterbury Cathedral, and an

English subject of King Henry II. I will focus especially on how John sustains the

device of *prosopopoeia*, personifying the text itself as his direct addressee, as a

stylistic means of linking satire and counsel in order to effect his moral-didactic and

political purposes.

Just as Alan of Lille's Nature is both text and expositor, the *Entheticus maior*,

as immanent object and John's addressee, is both text and reader. The discourse by

which John addresses his text throughout the poem constructs the hierarchical relation

of student and teacher. The poet instructs and counsels the poem itself as though it

were a living emissary from Canterbury to its intended reader, Thomas Becket, Henry

II's chancellor and former servant of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury.[42] The

textualized interaction between poet and poem not only offers Thomas Becket a

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[41] It is called the *Entheticus maior* in distinction from the *Entheticus minor* or the *Entheticus in Policraticum,* a three hundred-line verse preface to the *Policraticus*.

[42] Ovid offered a widely known example of this technique in the *Heroides*.

model to emulate as a cleric in a secular court, but offers those whom I call 'intended over-readers'—in this case, other clerics trained at Canterbury—a model of behavior for carrying out their own responsibilities in secular courts.

The *Entheticus maior* consists of four main sections, along with a short introduction (ll. 1-24) and conclusion (ll. 1835-1852) featuring prayers on behalf of Thomas Becket. The first section (ll. 25-450) treats the character of contemporary schools and their students. The second section (ll. 451-1274) examines the value for Christian philosophers of several schools of ancient philosophy. The latter two sections (ll. 1275-1752 and 1753-1834) offer practical advice on negotiating the moral and political perils of secular and ecclesiastic courts. They give counsel on running one's own household (*domus*), on appropriate conduct for traveling guests, and on the varieties of innkeepers travelers may encounter.[43]

John of Salisbury could claim some authority on all these topics. He was a student at Paris in the 1130s and 40s. From 1148 to the death of Archbishop Theobald in 1161, he served as a high-ranking functionary at Canterbury, and was therefore more or less familiar with the royal court, whose institutional ties with the metropolitan curia contributed to and complicated the developing conflict between king and bishopric. By 1156, a date several times proposed for the composition of sections three to five of the *Entheticus Maior*, John of Salisbury had already crossed the Alps several times as Theobald's emissary to Rome, and was thus acquainted with

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[43] These latter sections are maddeningly brief for those in search of a journalistic account of everyday life in the period.

the ways of the road.[44] In the meantime, King Henry had promoted Thomas Becket,

John of Salisbury's former colleague, to the exalted position of Chancellor.

In the *Entheticus maior*, John of Salisbury draws on his experiences to depict

the various types of individuals who inhabit school and court. He portrays a signal

few as exemplary, but satirizes most as wicked and foolish. The poem's first eleven

lines sketch its order and summarize its concerns. They also introduce the extended

use of *prosopopoeia* that, according to Nederman, provides a "unifying stylistic

thread", but also provides, as I will argue, a thematic thread.[45] The poet addresses his

own text as *libelle*:

> Dogmata discuties veterum fructumque laboris,
>   quem capit ex studiis Philosophia suis.
> Spiritus ille bonus linguam mentemque gubernet,
>   qui bona verba docet et pia vota facit;
> dirigat et gressus, operasque secundet et actus,
>   ut tibi sint comites gratia, vita, salus.
> Aula novis gaudet, veteres fastidit amicos,
>   sola voluptatis causa lucrique placent.
> Quis venias? quae causa viae? quo tendis? et unde?
>   forsitan inquiret. Pauca, libelle, refer.[46]

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[44] Jan Van Laarhoven, who edited the text of the *Entheticus Maior* used here, takes John of Salisbury's banishment from court in late 1156 as providing the author's impetus to write it. Jan Van Laarhoven, "Introduction", from John of Salisbury, *Entheticus maior and minor*, ed. and trans. Jan Van Laarhoven, (Amsterdam: E.J. Brill) 1987, xivl; Cary J. Nederman, whose recent biography of John of Salisbury synthesizes much of the available scholarship, sees the banishment as a *terminus ad quem,* specifically because King Stephen and not Henry II was the "central target of John's wrath", and suggests moreover that John composed large portions of the poem even before his acquaintance with Becket. Cary J. Nederman, *John of Salisbury* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies) 2005, 16-20. I will return at length to the question of dating and of the identity of John's target.

[45] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 44.

[46] "You will discuss the teachings of the ancients and the fruit of labor which Philosophy takes from her efforts. Let that Good Spirit govern your tongue and mind, who teaches good words and forms pious intentions; and may it direct your steps, and let it favor deeds and actions so that grace, life, and salvation might be your companions. The court rejoices in new, but disdains old friends; only matters of pleasure and money please it. 'Who are you that comes? What is the reason for your trip? Where are you going? And from where?' the court will ask, perhaps. Say little in response, little book." *Entheticus maior* lines 1-11. Translations are my own, though I have consulted Van Laarhoven's. Hereafter, I will abbreviate *Entheticus maior* to EM in footnotes.

Nederman suggests that "John's application of the *prosopopoeia* technique . . . is especially transparent," for it is "impossible to distinguish between the identities of the poem and the identities of the chancellor."[47] Notwithstanding, we can understand John's distinction as serving Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategy of impersonalization. What is more, addressing his counsel to the book itself rather than to its intended reader permits John greater frankness and simplicity of expression than considerations of rank might otherwise allow. Texts addressing a political superior, medieval or otherwise, seldom feature such concentrated and unhindered use of bald directives, including the future second-person indicative (*discuties*) and simple imperative (*refer*).[48] Certainly this ruse of impersonalization could not have been less transparent to John's contemporaries than to us, but as Brown and Levinson point out, even token acknowledgment of a face-threat may suffice to neutralize it.[49]

This holds especially true for interactants who share values and goals, and throughout the *Entheticus maior* John of Salisbury intimates a presumption of such solidarity between himself and his intended reader. The topic of the schools and "the teachings of the ancients" reduce the necessity for John to abase himself or exalt Becket more than a required minimum, for even if Becket had advanced to a higher position in the political sphere, John could nevertheless fairly claim scholarly pre-eminence over Becket, who may have even found John "culturally, if not intellectually intimidating."[50] At the same time John sees the "life of the mind and

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[47] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 45.
[48] For more on this topic, see Rodie Risselada, *Imperatives and other Directive Expressions in Latin: A Study in the Pragmatics of a Dead Language.* (Amsterdam: J.C Gieben, 1993).
[49] Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1987, 145.
[50] Nederman, *John of Salisbury,* 42, 16.

the active life" as "mutually reinforcing."[51] In these opening lines, John introduces a

claim central to the poem: erudite matters have bearings on the world of politics

because the 'fruit of labor that philosophy takes from her efforts' is the practical

morality that issues in good works, right conduct, just leadership, and hopefully, the

eternal reward of salvation.[52] Of course, good works are insufficient without grace,

and John of Salisbury prays that the Holy Spirit govern the poem's 'tongue and mind'

and direct its steps.[53] The prayer reinforces the poem's concern with instructing the

reader in the governance of tongue and mind, in both conduct and discernment at

court.

     To this end, the poem explores the political and ethical ramifications of

courtly self-presentation, for the poem itself, as an emissary to the court, is the

recipient of the poet's counsel on this matter. Largely overlooking the theme of self-

presentation, scholarship on the *Entheticus maior* has focused almost exclusively on

the poem's philosophical doctrines, the "dogmata veterum" and their relation to John

of Salisbury's scholastic background.[54] Section II provides the reader with a lengthy

propaedeutic, both a catalogue of versified epitomes of the doctrines of various

ancient philosophical schools and an exposition of their relative merits from a

Christian perspective. These didactic portions offer students of twelfth-century

intellectual history many items of interest, but for all that, they are ancillary to the

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[51] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 42.

[52] EM, 1-2.

[53] EM, 3-7.

[54] EM, 1; for the traditional approach here described, see Van Laarhoven, "Introduction," and especially Rodney M. Thompson, "What is the *Entheticus*," from *The World of John of Salisbury*, ed. Michael Wilks (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 287-301. Nederman's account is corrective; he rightly views the *Entheticus* in its courtly contexts, but as a historian and biographer interested chiefly in John of Salisbury as a figure in the history of political philosophy, he neglects John's literary technique.

principal concerns which John outlines in the introduction: self-governance and

practical morality.

For the rest, the poem sometimes resembles a courtier's handbook, but is

something more, for it is a moral exploration as well as practical manual of social

performance. Presuming that its intended reader shares its author's values, the

Entheticus maior directs its instructions on guarding one's behavior to those who

would be moral actors when mixed up in worldly affairs dominated by wicked

courtiers 'whom only pleasure and profit please.'[55] Among such enemies, governing

one's tongue often means holding it. In counseling his text to be brief ("*pauca,*

libelle, refer") in order to avoid misspeaking in court rather than because of the

reader's lack of leisure, John creatively reformulates the 'brevity' topos.[56] More than

a poetic conceit or rhetorical flourish, the extended *prosopopoeia* structures the text

as interaction between poet and poem in order to draw the reader's attention to the

quality of courtly interaction itself.

The stakes of this gambit are high, for the personified text is made to play the

mediator between the 'contemplative' John of Salisbury and the 'active' Thomas

Becket. The text therefore also mediates between the domains of schools and court,

the respective spheres of John and Becket's authority; through this mediator, I will

argue, John urges Becket to identify with the values of the school rather than of the

court, and thus to assume a counselor's role to King Henry II as a learned churchman

and representative of the ecclesiastical establishment at Canterbury. The trick is for

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[55] EM, 8; On John's Christian humanism as an ethical practice, see Klaus Guth, "Hochmittelalterlicher Humanismus als Lebensform: ein Beitrag zum Standesethos des westeuropäischen Weltklerus nach Johannes von Salisbury" from Wilks, 1984, 63-76

[56] See Ernst Robert Curtius, "Brevity as an Ideal of Style", in *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard. R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press) 1953, 487-494.

Becket to play this part without offending and alienating Henry and his entourage. In this way, Becket is urged to act as a proxy in developing Canterbury's role in governing the kingdom. The *Entheticus* is not merely an abstract treatise on philosophical schools, but an effort to carry out a political mission.

The learned features of the poem support this mission, as John of Salisbury bases his license to counsel Becket on John's superior education and scholarly achievement. This claim depends upon an argument that the court's worldly values are inferior to the school's transcendent philosophical values, and therefore the activities of courtiers are subject to evaluation by schoolmen. Satire, understood in the Middle Ages as the "reprehension of vice" and therefore a branch of ethics, provided John with an accessible discourse suited to evaluating the affairs of court. Particular crimes and sins reveal the vices and moral infirmities of their perpetrators. John's account of the schools and his philosophical expositions in sections I and II provide him with a transcendent ethical perspective to describe and rebuke the discourses and practices (or in a more medieval idiom, the words and deeds) of the secular court that he depicts in sections III and IV.

2.3.2   Good and Bad Dissimulation

When John describes the moral abuses of courtiers, he often discusses not only how courtiers act, but how they interpret the actions of others. This discussion reveals a sophisticated awareness of how courtiers speak and act in the expectation that their words and deeds can be interpreted. Gestures, words, and actions signify the social and moral qualities of those who perform them; therefore, such *acta* can be used purposefully to falsify and mislead. As scholars can feign learning, so can

courtiers feign affection and loyalty. In his treatment of school and court alike, John

moralizes on the correspondence between external behavior and internal disposition

as the relation between signifier and signified.

For this reason, it is perhaps with surprise that the readers encounter the

following words of praise about Thomas Becket:

> Tristior haec cernit iuris defensor, et artem,
>   qua ferat auxilium consiliumque, parat.
> Ut furor illorum mitescat, dissimulare
>   multa solet, simulat, quod sit et ipse furens;
> omnibus omnia fit; specietenus induit hostem,
>   ut paribus studiis discat amare Deum.
> Ille dolus bonus est, qui proficit utilitati,
>   quo procurantur gaudia, vita, salus.[57]

This *dolus bonus*, this good trick, is a pious fraud, an upside-down hypocrisy in

which worldly behavior conceals spiritual goals. For Nederman, this in turn presents

an incongruity in the *Entheticus maior* as a whole:

> . . .the pragmatism of this message, which adopts the reasoning one
> would expect from a seasoned courtier, contrasts strikingly with the
> tone of parts I and II, which display the innocence of someone largely
> unfamiliar with the conduct of public affairs.[58]

An examination of John's satiric treatment of dissimulation throughout the poem may

resolve this incongruity. John licenses Becket's dissimulation at court based on the

doctrinal values presented in sections I and II; his satire constructs a community of

opinion identifiable with an actual community—the church at Canterbury—and pulls

his reader toward this community in which doctrinal values have a moral claim.

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[57] "Quite sadly the defender of law detects this [the wicked courtiers' and their misdeeds], and he contrives an art by which he might bring support and counsel. In order that their madness should grow mild, he is wont to dissemble much, to pretend that he himself is a madman; he becomes all things to all people; in appearance, he dresses like the enemy, in order that the enemy might learn by equal efforts to love God. That trick is good which profits by its utility, by which joy, life, and salvation are obtained." EM, 1435-1442.

[58] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 49-50.

As I discussed previously, medieval commentators defined satire as a kind of writing whose purpose was *reprehensio vitii in aperto*, the naked reprehension of vice. Satire is naked because it depicts sin, vice, and corruption as manifested in the individual actions of everyday life rather than through mythological integument.[59] John speaks directly of contemporary practices, *usus*, and contemporary deeds, *opera*. Yet to fully understand the function of medieval satire, we have had throughout this study to supplement the medieval definition with an account of satiric discourse's interpersonal function described herein—its construction of a community of opinion linking author and reader, and its exclusion of the satirized target from this community. We will find that a moral social actor may legitimately deceive those who on the basis of misdeeds have been excluded from the satiric 'in-group' of author and reader. This function of satire is central to John of Salisbury's rhetorical ethos.

In section one, John of Salisbury criticizes students at the Parisian schools:

> Sic nisi complacito pueris sermone loquaris,
>   conspuet in faciem garrula turba tuam.[60]

The counterfactual address ("unless you speak") implies that the addressee would not normally be inclined to speak in such a way and so shares the author's learning and values. The addressee is capable of mature discourse instead of pandering to an immature *garrula turba*, a babbling crowd which, rejecting the author's and addressee's values, desires only the show of learning without its substance. John of Salisbury viciously caricatures their attitude through an impersonated speech of one such 'child':

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[59] See note 24.
[60] "Accordingly, unless you speak thus in a discourse pleasing to children, the babbling crowd will spit in your face." EM, 39-40.

> Pauca legas, ut multa scias. Tibi maximus auctor
>   quilibet occurrat, sic sit in ore tuo,
> ut quicquid dices, auctor dixisse putetur,
>   et mens illius spiritus esse tuus.
> Non modo credaris, quod scripsit, nosse, sed omne
>   quod voluit, iactes dogmatis esse tui;
> quod scripsit, seu quod tacuit, te posse docere
>   promittas; falsum dicere nemo vetat.
> Nam quaeruntur opes, et constat gloria falso;
>   veridicosque facit dicere pauca pudor.[61]

This is the kernel of John's charges against wicked and corrupt students and teachers.

They dissimulate an appearance of learning, desiring not knowledge, but the

credentialization necessary to obtain glory and riches.

Resuming his own voice, John roundly condemns this dissembling student

and his cohort, with a belittling deixis, as *haec schola*:

> Haec schola sic iuvenes voluit iuvenescere semper,
>   ut dedignentur nosse vel esse senes.
> Et quamvis tueatur eam numerus Garamantum,
>   quos audere monet fasque nefasque furor,
> quos gula, quos fastus captos servire coegit,
>   quos transire Venus in sua castra facit,
> tu tamen, armatus clypeo virtutis et ense,
>   ut rabiem perimas, obvius ibis eis.[62]

The disjunctive *tu tamen* at line 131 presumes the reader's agreement and enlists him

in an opposing camp, a school that rejects vice and fraud, for the root cause of the

wicked students' dissimulation is their love of vice. To truly live a philosophical life

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[61] "Read little so you may know much. Whichever great author happens upon you should thus be always on your lips, so that whatever you say, the author may be thought to have said it, and his mind to be your spirit. Not only should you be believed to know what he has written, but all that he wished to write you should boast to be part of your knowledge. You must promise that you can teach both what he wrote and what he remained silent about; nobody forbids you to speak falsely. For riches are sought, and falsehood is the price of glory, and shame makes truth-speakers say little." EM, 99-108.

[62] "So this school wished the young to always grow younger in order that they scorn both learning of elders and being old. And although it is guarded by a number of Garamants whom madness advises to dare right and wrong alike, whom gluttony and pride have forced to serve as captives, whom Venus makes defect into her camp, you, nevertheless, armed with the shield and sword of virtue, will go forth against them so that you may destroy this madness." EM, 125-132; The Garamants were a North African people never subdued by the Roman Empire.

would require their rejection of gluttony, pride, and lust, which "this school" plainly

has no wish to do. Their false fronts conceal their vice, and Fortune (like

dissimulation, a favored theme of satire-counsel) convinces them that their falsehoods

are true and their crimes are without consequence.   Fortune

> ostentat falsas species, et parva videri
>   magna, vel e contra grandia parva facit;
> adversas rebus facies inducit, et illis
>   ponit ad arbitrium nomina falsa suum;
> res falsas aliquid, et res veras nihil esse
>   fingit, ut obcludat sic rationis iter.
> Quamvis larvales inducat mille figuras,
>   non caret arbitrio Philosophia suo.[63]

Among the many medieval diatribes against fortune, this one notably emphasizes

"false appearances," the way that fortune distorts the correspondence between

signifiers and signifieds. John pauses from his moralizing about fortune to

distinguish the babbling crowd, this school that follows fortune, from the community

of speaker and addressee, who follow philosophy, and therefore can discern the

relationship between appearance and reality.

In this passage, he repeats two words—*arbitrium* and *inducere*, but alters their

meanings in the repetition. In post-classical Latin, *inducere* had the legal meaning of

leading a witness before a court. In the same register, *arbitrium* meant the decision of

a judge. While Fortune brings false witnesses and judges, as we would say,

"arbitrarily," according to whim, Philosophy frees judgment. By the language of

courtroom procedure, John expresses the forensic, practical significance of "the fruit

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[63] ". . . shows false appearances, and causes the small to seem large, and on the contrary the large to
seem small. She adduces appearances opposite to reality, and places false names on them according to
her whim. She feigns that falsity is substantive, and true things are nothing, in order that she may
obstruct the path of reason by these means. Although Fortune may adduce a thousand ghostly figures,
Philosophy does not lack her own judgment." EM, 257-264.

of philosophical labor." Excluding the babbling crowd as devotees of fortune, he

defines the community of opinion that includes himelf and his addressee, naturally, as

a school devoted to philosophy.

John outlines the benefits of belonging to this school:

> Gratia naturam reparans rationis acumen
>   purgat, et affectus temperat atque regit;
> liberat arbitrium, sed eorum, quos pia mater
>   consecrat ad cultum, Philosophia, tuum.
> Philosophia quid est nisi fons, via duxque salutis,
>   lux animae, vitae regula, grata quies?[64]

To be sure, *ratio* can be considered a self-sufficient activity of the mind, but other

attributes that Grace repairs for those who follow philosophy have practical value for

the courtier; *affectus* implies both emotion and its physical manifestation, and

arbitrium, as discussed above, describes the mind's judicial faculty. It discerns good

from bad and right from wrong. John describes philosophy as *comes* (298) and *dux*

for a courtly reader alive to the political and judicial meanings of these words to

illustrate the practical assistance that philosophy provides for courtiers.

Grace, John writes, tempers and rules *affectus* (273-274), a word that mingles

physical and mental features. The vicious, who are without grace, attempt in vain to

conceal their internal disposition, for the vices within mark the exterior:

> Bestia saeva rapit membrum de corpore laeso,
>   semper et insignit, quem docet esse suum:
> nunc pede, nunc oculo, nunc lingua, nunc humerorum
>   gestu, nunc vultus frumine quemque notat;
> interdum motu capitis, cultusque figura,
>   aut operum signis, castra ferina patent.[65]

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[64] "Grace, repairing nature, purges reason's acumen, and both rules and tempers affect; she liberates judgment, but only for those whom she, a pious mother, consecrates to your worship, Philosophy. For what is Philosophy if not the fount, way, and guide of salvation, the light of the soul, the rule of life, pleasant rest?" EM, 273-278.

Grace provides the gift of philosophy, because philosophy, "provides a citadel for the

sacred empire" of Holy Scripture.[66] Philosophy is defensive. It is forensic. It is a

way of making one's way through the world in spiritual safety and grants the

philosopher access to the "true light" by which he might discern the camp of the

savage beast and more:

> Vera Deus lux est et luminis illius auctor
>   quo solo sese quisve videre potest.
> Ut se quis videat, est summi luminis usus,
>   muneris est usus munus amare datum,
> muneris est usus discernere cuncta potenter,
>   muneris est usus cultus amorque boni,
> muneris est usus rerum cognoscere fructus,[67]

True philosophy is the gift of Grace, and issues in *usus*, not just use, but a practice of

discerning all things effectively. For this reason,

> Philosophum virtus clarum, non gloria vana
>   reddit; honor verus laudis amore perit.
> Philosophus satagit, ut mens respondeat ori,
>   ut proba sit verbis consona vita bonis.[68]

On the one hand, the author and the addressee belong together to philosophy's camp;

they seek a transcendent good, desire merit rather than praise, and can therefore

discern good from bad and truth from appearances, and their own words accord with

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[65] "The savage beast rips a limb from the wounded body, and always puts a mark on him whom it teaches to be its own. It brands each one: now by the foot, now by the eye, now by the tongue, now by a gesture of the shoulders, now by the voice and face; sometimes by a motion of the head and by form of habits, or in the signs of deeds, the beastly camp is revealed." EM, 283-288.

[66] "Practicus huic servit, servitque theoricus. Arcem / imperii sacri Philosophia dedit." (The practical serves her as does the theoretical. Philosophia has given the citadel of her sacred empire.) EM, 449-450.

[67] "God is the true light, and the author of that light, by which alone each can see himself. The use of the highest light is so that one may see himself; the use of the gift is to love what is given, the use of the gift is to discern all things effectively, the use of the gift is the cultivation and love of what is good, the use of the gift is to recognize the fruits of things . . .." EM, 641-647.

[68] "Virtue, not vainglory, renders the philosopher famous; true honor perishes in the love of praise; the philosopher is active that his mind should agree with his mouth, so that an upright life should be harmonious with good words." EM, 863-866. Van Laarhoven's edition has *philosophus* for *philosophum* in line one.

their deeds and hearts. This true philosopher contrasts sharply with the *nugifluus*, the trifle-spouter of the schools. The camp of philosophy, then, offers the reader a gratifying role with which to identify, and from which *poseurs* are excluded.

Up to this point, I have described how these schools comprise one of the communities by which John shapes the identity of his addressee in terms agreeable to and susceptible to his own values. The other institution that John associates with philosophy, and with which he identifies himself and his addressee, is Canterbury itself. Canterbury was already associated with philosophy through the figure of Anselm of Canterbury, and we find an echo of Anselm's well-known ontological argument in John's discussion of the relationship between faith and understanding:

> tunc amor est veri Philosophia Dei.
> At si mundanum *nihil illo maius amore*,
> et si divinus omnia vincit amor,
> collige, quod mundum transcendit Philosophia[69]

The addressee, the poem itself, is to go among the secular court as a true philosopher, a man of God. Part III of the *Entheticus Maior* concerns whom it will find there, what opposition it will face, and how it must handle himself.

In this task, John once again uses satire to attack vicious courtiers and exclude them from the sympathetic relation between himself and his addressee. He refers twice in section to this out-group as *turba*, recalling the *garrula turba* of the schools. The bad prince and the bad courtier resemble the bad student as devotees of fortune and worldly good:

> Princeps, non cupidus meriti sed laudis avarus,
> praecipuum sine re nomen honoris habet:
> non curat, quid honor, sed quid videatur honestum;

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[69] "Philosophy is love of the true God. And if nothing worldly is greater than that love, and if divine love conquers all, infer that Philosophy transcends the world." EM, 306-309.

> nec bona vera placent, sed iuvat umbra boni.
> Sic ratio sub praetextu caecatur honoris,
>   vanaque dum petitur gloria, vera fugit.
> Gloria virtutem sequitur, non laudis amorem,
>   et semper meritis est sociata bonis.
> Laude probus claret potius, quam laudis amator,
>   contra polluto nomine sordet iners:
> foetor enim sordes vitii comitatur, et horror,
>   et virtus grato replet odore bonos.[70]

Taking up once more the theme of the correspondence between behavior and character as signifier and signified, John of Salisbury reaffirms his conviction that the attempts of vice to conceal itself are futile. If the purpose of philosophy is to cultivate the *usus cernendi*, the practice of discernment, the court under such a prince is outright hostile to this purpose.

> Hostis censetur, quisquis sacra iura tuetur;
>   praevenit officiis iussa fidelis amor
> Perfidiae genus est, aliquid discernere iussum;
>   et scelus est, aliquod pertimuisse scelus.[71]

At the outset of section III John warns his addressee, presumed to be a defender of faith and sacred laws, that it will face ridicule and danger at court:

> Gratia multorum dabitur tibi vera sequenti
>   dogmata, quae praestant moribus atque fide.
> Non tamen haec illa produces tutus in aula,
>   in qua rara manet gratia, rara fides.[72]

Our attention here shifts from *schola* to *aula*, but similar dangers remain.

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[70] "The prince, not desirous of merit but greedy for praise, has an outstanding name of honor without its substance. He does not care what honor is, but what seems respectable; neither do true blessings please him, but the shadow of goodness gratifies. Under the pretext of honor reason is blinded, and while vain glory is sought, true glory flees away. Glory follows virtues, not the love of praise, and is always allied to good merits. The man of integrity shines with praise rather than the lover of praise, while to the contrary, the lazy man is filthy with a befouled name: stench is companion (*comitatur*) to the foulness of vice, and repugnance, and virtue fills the good with a pleasing odor." EM, 1397-1408.

[71] "Whoever defends sacred laws is numbered an enemy; a love that is faithful to duty forestalls what is commanded. To judge anything that has been ordered is a kind of treachery, and it is a crime to have feared any crime." EM, 1351-1354.

[72] "The thanks of many people will be given to you who follow true doctrines, which excel in morals and faith. Nevertheless, you will not bring these forth safely in that court in which gratitude and loyalty remain rare." EM, 1275-1279.

Not only the courtiers' vainglory and vice distinguish them from author and

addressee, but also their contempt for learning:

> Sed quia nemo potest stultis ratione placere,
>   sufficiat gravibus te placuisse viris.
> Vix indoctorum poterit quis ferre cachinnos,
>   si non sit forti pectore, mente gravi.
> Sannas et runcos geminat lasciva iuventus,
>   audit ab ignoto si nova verba libro.
> Non fugies runcos, linguasque, manusque procaces
>   vix fugies, nisi sit, quo duce tutus eas.[73]

This guide, this *dux,* referred to in the last line of the passage, is none other than

Thomas Becket, whom John of Salisbury associates with the community of opinion

between poet and poem, and thereby charges with representing Canterbury. By

representing Canterbury I mean both that he is to advocate Canterbury's cause and

embody its ideals. Through the mediation of the poem and its didactic content, these

ideals are framed in a discourse of solidarity between John of Salisbury and Thomas

Becket accentuated by the satire on vicious students and courtiers alike. Representing

the poem's actual addressee, Thomas Becket, as sharing his values already, John

seeks to enlist Becket to his cause by representing him as already having accepted this

enlistment.

In this maneuver is a graceful, even courtly, indirectness, which the following

passage elaborates:

> Qui iubet, ut scribas, solet idem scripta fovere,
>   quaeque semel recipit nomina, clara facit.
> Ille Theobaldus, qui Christi praesidet aulae,
>   quam fidei matrem Cantia nostra colit,

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[73] "Since nobody can please fools with reason, let it suffice for you to have pleased serious men. Hardly anybody will be able to bear the cackles of the unlearned if he be not of stout heart and serious mind. Wanton youth doubles its mocking smiles and snorting laughter, if it hears new words from unknown books. You will not escape the snorting, and scarcely will you escape the insolent tongues and hands unless there is one under whose guidance you may go protected." EM, 1283-1290.

> hunc successurum sibi sperat, et orat, ut idem
>   praesulis officium muniat atque locum.
> Hic est, carnificum qui ius cancellat iniquum,
>   quos habuit reges Anglia capta diu;[74]

The *aula Christi* of line 1293 certainly refers to Christ Church at Canterbury, but I suggest that John also intends it to refer more generally to the ecclesiastical rather than secular *curia.* Note also how all the presumption of community between John, poem, and Becket is succinctly expressed in line 1294's *Cantia nostra*, our Kent, where the geographical area stands metonymically for the metropolitan see.

We now can see how the *Entheticus Maior* mediates among participants in a number of parallel relationships: between John of Salisbury as its author and Thomas Becket as its intended reader, between Theobald the Archbishop and Becket the Chancellor, and probably between John the learned author and his learned circle of intimates at Canterbury, the poem's 'intended over-readers'. The *prosopopoeia* that figures the poem as an emissary has it embody the 'face', or collective institutional self-regard, of Canterbury. This face is distinguished by learning, virtue, ancient privilege, its concern for the common welfare of the kingdom and the Church's liberty against interference and plundering by corrupt secular rulers. Referring to Becket as the *dux* and *patronus*, guide and protector, of this emissary, John of Salisbury portrays Thomas Becket as the *Entheticus Maior's* model reader, an individual already sympathetic to its goals and values, learned in its doctrines, and, however experienced in dealing with the seamy side of court, uncorrupted

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[74] "The same one who orders you to write is wont to encourage writings, and whatever names he once receives he makes famous. That Theobald, who presides in the court of Christ which our Kent honors as the mother of the faith, hopes that this man is to succeed him and prays that the same may strengthen the office and position of Bishop. It is he who cancels the unjust law of the butchers whom captive England long had for kings. " EM, 1291-1298.

nevertheless. Thus, in the *Entheticus maior,* Becket himself embodies Canterbury's political and spiritual will at the royal court.

In section III, John satirizes the court, though prudently does so largely by reference to the anarchic reign of King Stephen, Henry II's hapless predecessor and rival of Henry's mother, Queen Matilda. By this tactic, John follows the example of Juvenal, who satirized Nero's court from the safe interval of several decades.[75] We come at length to the moral puzzle presented by section III's counsel of dissimulation, the *dolus bonus* spoken of earlier in this study.[76] By dissimulation, Becket brings help and counsel—*auxilium consiliumque*—the two obligations of vassals toward their lords. He makes himself resemble Canterbury's enemies in order that the enemy might learn gradually to love God. Despite the rationalizations deployed here, the sudden counsel of dissimulation, of trickery, must surprise the reader whom John of Salisbury has repeatedly instructed about the dangers of falsehood, hypocrisy, empty boasting, and other kinds of dissimulation.

We may easily read this, following Van Laarhoven and Nederman, as a barely concealed rebuke to Thomas Becket, an insinuation from Theobald's current servant to the chancellor, Theobald's one-time servant (and likely successor), that the latter is getting too cozy with the enemy camp. John's satire serves to remind Becket why the faction at Henry's court which he has fallen in with is the enemy of Canterbury, and therefore of God. But at the same time, John generously suggests that the archbishop

<div style="text-align:center">conciliare studet sibi conviventis amorem</div>

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[75] Kirk Freudenberg, *Satires of Rome: Threatening Poses from Lucilius to Juvenal*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 209.
[76] EM, 1435-1442; see note 57.

turbae, ne peragat ebria mortis iter.[77]

John's intepretation of the chancellor's activities maintains the face of Becket as

Canterbury's champion both to Becket himself and to the *Entheticus maior's* other

intended readers, the circle of clerics back at Christchurch who may have felt their

former colleague lost to worldly pleasures of the secular court.

I suggest, however, that even if this account gives the chancellor a warning

both moral and practical about the dangerous game he is playing, John actually does

attribute good intentions and good faith to the chancellor after all. In support of this

supposition, consider the *dolus bonus* in light of John's discussion of poetry in

Section I:

> Vera latent rerum variarum tecta figuris;
>   nam sacra vulgari publica iura vetant.
> Haec ideo veteres propriis texere figuris,
>   ut meritum possit conciliare fides.
> Abdita namque placent, vilescunt cognita vulgo,
>   qui quod scire potest, nullius esse putat.
> Rem veram tegat interdum fallacia verbi;
>   dum res vera subest, vera figura manet,
> falsa tamen verbi facie, sed mente fidelis,
>   dum facit arcanam rebus inesse fidem.[78]

"When truth lies beneath, the figure stays true." I propose, then, that in urging

dissimulation to a cleric mired in the worldly court, John synthesizes a pair of

influential ideas propagated by his two most famous teachers at Paris. These are

William of Conches's notion of the literary integument described in the passage just

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[77] ". . . strives to win over to himself the love of the feasting crowd, so that it should not drunkenly complete the journey of death." EM, 1461-1462.

[78] "Truths lie concealed, covered by figures of various things; for public laws forbid that sacred things be broadcast. Therefore the ancients veiled these things under appropriate figures, that faith might win esteem. For hidden things please; known things grow vile to the rabble who think that what they can know is of no worth. Sometimes, the deception of words may cover something true; when truth lies beneath, the figure stays true; it is false indeed with respect to the appearance of the word, but faithful in its mind, since it makes faith dwell hidden in things." EM, 187-196.

quoted, and Abelard's intentionalist ethic which he developed in his *Scito teipsum*

and taught at Paris late in his career at the approximate time (c. 1139-40) when the

young John of Salisbury claims to have been his student.[79] Just as the poem, the

Entheticus maior, functions in the fiction of the text as an interacting person at court,

so might the real person have the virtues and qualities of a poem which can conceal a

faithful mind beneath false words. This complex synthesis produces an idea of

dissimulation as a *dolus bonus,* an integumentary self-performance, a false exterior

that is not false for it conceals truth within. This trickery is not hypocrisy precisely

because it targets those excluded from a community of opinion instructed by

philosophy and by the Holy Spirit to protect those whose intentions are good rather

than wicked.

If the *Entheticus* was written upon John's banishment from court, he was

surely aware of the risks Becket would take there in acting the moralist or scold:

> Aut taceas prorsus, aut pauca loquaris in aula,
>   aut quaeras, in quo rure latere queas;
> nam si non parcis verbis, nemo tibi parcet,
>   praevenietque dies impia turba tuos.[80]

In the face of this threat, John offered Becket a way to make a virtue of necessity, to

combine the rival claims of holiness and courtliness, to maintain his sense of

affiliation to Canterbury in the face of competing and exclusive claims of an opposing

faction for Becket's loyalty. To meet this challenge, John offered Becket a way to

interpret his own behavior in terms of the learned discourse and values that John

associates with Canterbury, and in this way made Becket a model for clerics bound to

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[79] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 21.
[80] "Either be utterly silent, or say little in court, or find out in what retreat you may be able to hide; for if you are not sparing in your words, nobody will spare you, and the impious mob will cut short your days." EM, 1509-1512.

service in secular courts. Becket, of course, returned to Canterbury upon Theobald's

death, became the champion of its liberty that John had optimistically described, and

famously failed to maintain the politic discretion that John had counseled.

In his biography, Cary J. Nederman suggested that John composed sections I-

II in the 1140s during John's student days in and around Paris, and follows Jan van

Laarhoven's supposition that John composed at least parts III and IV after Becket's

appointment as Chancellor.[81] He bases this proposal on the contrast between the

idealistic character of the former sections and the worldlier, more "pragmatic"

sensibility of one who had experienced the court first-hand.[82] This may well be the

case—even so, I propose that the continuities in satiric method and thematic concerns

demonstrate that at the very least, John made a substantial effort to integrate the two

halves in his conviction that the *dogmata philosophorum* offer genuine help to the

well-intentioned courtier. Perhaps John of Salisbury himself, in the poem's

introduction, offers another reason for this contrast:

> Hae tibi principium, cursum, finemque loquendi
>   monstrent, et sermo quis quibus aptus erit.
> A trivio tibi dicendi sumetur origo;
>   ante tamen videas, quae quibus apta locis.[83]

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[81] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 19; Nederman, as I discuss earlier in this study of the *Entheticus maior*, further proposes that John of Salisbury's banishment from court early in the winter of 1156 provides a *terminus ad quem* on the grounds that since the *Entheticus Maior*'s description of the wicked king, Hircanus, (which we may loosely translate as goatboy) closely matches John's description of the anarchic reign of Stephen in the *Policraticus*, Hircanus must be Stephen rather than Henry II, which Nederman thinks would be unlikely if the passage was prompted by John of Salisbury's forced departure from Henry's court. Thus, the *terminus ad quem* for the second half is December 1156. The problem with the latter argument is that John might be invoking the figure of the old king to warn the new king of his possible destiny, in the same way that Gower and other Ricardian poets invoked the figure of Edward II as a negative exemplum.

[82] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 36.

[83] "May these [the holy rule and way of life] show you the beginning, the course, and the end of speaking, and what discourse will be suited to what occasions. From the trivium the origin of speaking will be taken; but first you must see what things are suited to what places." EM, 21-24.

The sense of decorum, of appropriateness, of strategic interaction expressed in the phrases "*sermo quis quibus aptus erit*" and "*quae quibus apta locis*" are at the very heart of courtliness, and the *Entheticus maior* represents an attempt to repurpose courtliness for a faithful and effective clergy. John's satire, with its exclusionary interpersonal function, depicts those from whom he would reclaim courtliness as a positive social ideal.

2.4 Fictions of Paternity: Daniel of Beccles' *Urbanus Magnus*

2.4.1 Overview: Courtesy and Literacy

While the *Entheticus maior* treats courtly self-performance indirectly and intermittently, Daniel of Beccles's *Urbanus Magnus* offers sustained and comprehensive advice about "details of personal behaviour" and "proper conduct in a dizzying range of situations."[84] In moving from the *Entheticus* to the *Urbanus*, a 'courtesy book' of 2839 hexameters, we quit the rarefied courts of kings and archbishops for those of minor nobility and gentry, for the court of the *herus*, a landlord "with a hall of his own but also with superiors upon whom he is in some sense dependent."[85] We exchange too the highbrow *dogmata philosophorum* for the *paterna doctrina* expressed in the idiom of common sense and proverbial wisdom. This is not to say that the *Urbanus Magnus* relinquishes the clerical authority championed by John of Salisbury. Rather, Daniel's discourses of satire and counsel synthesize (if uneasily) clerical and lay models of hierarchical authority.

Daniel adapts clerical authority to the exigencies of the lay court by excising scholastic values from its ideological claims, values to which the laity were, to

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[84] Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2000), 582.
[85] Bartlett, *Norman and Angevin Kings*, 582.

varying degrees, indifferent.[86] His advanced Latin literacy evidences clerical training,

and would be sufficient, perhaps, to amuse a clerical reader of modest achievement.

At the same time, he simulates a paternal authority that legitimates his counsel as

worldly wisdom gained through experience and oral transmission. In this way, he

appropriates a mode of authority from the warrior-class values of the lay nobility.

Playing the two overlapping superordinate roles of father and teacher, Daniel's self-

performance fashions a courtier's role for the cleric which, though less idealized than

the role fashioned by John of Salisbury, is more adapted to the courtly milieu insofar

as it adapts courtly values—adapts, but does not adopt wholesale. For Daniel, the

role of the courtier-cleric must maintain an authority distinguished from the laity's by

his sacred position and education.[87]

   We cannot ascertain the time and place of the *Urbanus Magnus*'s composition,

but those few scholars to give it their attention have described it as the first courtesy

book produced in England.[88] Based on an internal reference to 'Old King Henry'

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[86] It would be mistaken to suppose that higher learning had no cachet at the lower nobility's courts: ". . . among Henry II's commonest forms of relaxation were private reading and working with a group of *clerici* to unravel some knotty questions. . . . The example set by kings inevitably gave the baronage and gentry a motivation to learn some Latin, both to avoid looking foolish at court (where there was school everyday), and to have sufficient understanding of written demands, expressed in Latin, which began to pour from the royal Chancery and Exchequer." M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), 186.

[87] "Many Anglo-Latin writers were, for at least parts of their career, schoolteachers; one of the elementary tools of the pedagogue formed its own literary genre, the courtesy book." Rigg, *Anglo-Latin Literature,* 125. (see chap. 1, n. 9) Thus, the very use of the genre contributes to the construction of the author's magisterial role.

[88] A.G. Rigg describes it as "a combination of copybook morality and Emily Post table manners." *History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066¸*125; In an enlightening essay, John Gillingham has described how the *Urbanus Magnus*, by virtue of its combination of "prudential morality" (found in works like the *Dysticha Catonis*) and its prescriptions for elite social etiquette, suggests a continuity between medieval and early modern ideas of courtliness which disputes the historiographical characterization of medieval courtesy books (relative to early moderns examples) as merely practical, technical, or procedural instruction for rituals of lordship and service. In particular, Gillingham challenges the distortion by Early Modernists of Norbert Elias's 'civilizing process' into a teleological narrative in which the displacement of 'courtesy' by 'civility' "as the fashionable terms denoting approved conduct" marks an extension of court-internal emotional control and cooperation to the urban polity as

(Henry II) and on the dating of extant manuscripts, Robert Bartlett finds it "plausible that the work was produced at the Angevin court," and sees it as a procedural guide suited to the period's enthusiasm for "manuals and handbooks, such as Glanvill's treatise on the laws of England or Richard Fitz Neal's guide to the workings of the Exchequer."[89] We know little about Daniel himself except that he identifies himself as the author of the *Urbanus Magnus*, and that ". . . the Tudor bibliographer John Bale says he had seen 'a certain old chronicle' that reported that Daniel was in the household of Henry II 'for over 30 years'."[90] As we shall see, the rhetorical mannerisms of Daniel's style, including its sustained alliteration and end-rhymes, corroborate a twelfth-century date.

As to the intended readership of the *Urbanus*, Rigg, Bartlett, and Gillingham accept its claim to address the noble head of a household, and Bartlett adds further nuance to this view:

> . . . the imagined or intended audience was not a carefree aristocrat but someone who was both a lord and a dependant, fully aware of the complexity of relations in a hierarchical society. Hence the *Urbanus* is not a guide to self-assurance but a monument to anxiety.[91]

In the present discussion, I suggest expanding its circle of anxious readers to include not only lords, but their household clerics with sufficient latinity to comprehend

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a self-regarding whole, an extension that naturally anticipates the 'rise of the bourgeoisie'; John Gillingham, "From *Civilitas* to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), 267-89; 267.

[89] Bartlett, *Norman and Angevin Kings*, 583; Fitz Neal's guide resembles the *Urbanus Magnus* also in its claim to write in a commonplace style, as we shall see: "When Richard Fitz Neal's pupil urged him in c. 1179 not to write a prolix book but to explain the workings of the Exchequer in 'common words,' the ordinary language they both had in mind was Latin, not French or English; Fitz Neal describes the Latin Domesday Book as being written similarly in 'common words'. Thanks to the Latin renaissance of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, . . . Latin became capable of serving a variety of purposes." Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 169.

[90] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 169.

[91] Bartlett, *Norman and Angevin Kings*, 588.

Daniel's long didactic poem and mediate its 'civilizing' lessons to their employers.

Communicating to two degrees of readership, immediate and mediated, Daniel shifts

between the paternal and magisterial relational model to address the appropriate

recipient for particular pieces of counsel, and he uses the discourse of satire to

differentiate the two modes.

We cannot know how much mediation lay readers required. The question of

the work's audience is vexed by the uncertain status of lay latinity at the time of its

composition. While according to M.T. Clanchy the "association of clerics with

literacy and laity with illiteracy was axiomatic," his research reveals a more complex

situation:

> . . . sometimes by 1200 and invariably by 1300 a landlord, on however
> small a scale, needed sufficient *clergie*, in the sense of a personal
> knowledge of Latin, to assess, if not fully to understand, the written
> demands made upon him.[92]

Cases on the one hand in which the knight or nobleman had no Latin at all or cases on

the other hand in which he had sufficient Latin to earn a designation as *litteratus* or

clericus were both rare enough to merit comment by authors of the period such as

Gerald of Wales and Matthew Paris.[93] The lesser nobles and gentry addressed by the

Urbanus Magnus would likely have ". . . employed clerks to do their writing, and to

read letters to them," and would have understood "enough Latin to master the

business in hand and not be misled."[94] On account both of administrative demands

and of the example of the royal court, the employment of highly literate clerics as

administrators and tutors had spread well beyond the royal courts to the lower

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[92] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*; 175-182, 197.
[93] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 197.
[94] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record,* 187.

nobility and gentry. The *Urbanus Magnus* addresses both social positions overtly, the *herus* and the *clericus domini*; the latter would probably have read the book aloud to the former and provided explanation, if not from a disparity in their competence at Latin (though such was likely) then from customary procedure.[95]

To these different intended readers, Daniel offers differing messages. To the *herus*, he offers refinement of manners and ethical correction. The poem's concluding lines, which feature the reference to King Henry II mentioned above, describe its author in a medial position as a transmitter of the king's civilizing instruction (*documenta*) to the 'unrefined' (*illepidis*): "Rex uetus Henricus primo dedit hec documenta, / Illepidis, libro que subscribuntur in isto."[96] To this unrefined lesser nobility he offers "a regimen of manners" that emphasizes "the importance of bodily restraint and self-control."[97] Yet this instruction has ethical as well as social-procedural import; he urges emotional as much as physical restraint, the renunciation of internecine violence and revenge as much as good table manners. Ethics and etiquette mingle constantly, as we see vividly in a thirty-two line passage near the beginning of the poem on how to behave properly in church in which Daniel shifts abruptly between broad ethical mandates like *sperne rapinam* to specific procedural directives like *ecclesia dormire caue*.[98]

At the same time as Daniel addresses lay noble readers, he also addresses fellow courtier-clerics (if indeed he was a *curialis* at Henry II's court). They would

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[95] "Medieval writing was mediated to the non-literate by the persistence of the habit of reading aloud and by the preference, even among the educated, for listening to a statement rather than scrutinizing it in script." Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record,* 150.

[96] "Old King Henry first gave these teachings to the unrefined, which are written down in this here book." J. Gilbart Smyly, ed. *Urbanus Magnus Danielis Becclensiensis*, (Dublin: Hodges Figgis, and Co., 1939). Abbreviated hereafter as UM. Translations are my own.

[97] Bartlett, *Norman and Angevin Kings*, 585.

[98] "Spurn rapine;" "Beware sleeping in church"; UM, l 45; 155

likewise play a medial role in transmitting Henry's *documenta* to the 'unrefined.' To

these colleagues, Daniel gives practical advice on clerical conduct at court illustrated

by cautionary and condemnatory digressions; these in turn leaven his counsel with a

satirical portrayal of courtly practice. His prescriptions urge an idealized vision of a

civilized nobleman presiding over a well-ordered court and household, but the

descriptive ridicule available in both his digressions and his negative injunctions

frame a satiric tableau that comprehends every aspect of daily life at court. Daniel

offers this debased picture of reality as the initial reality which the clerical reader

must incrementally transform—from loutishness and blood-feud morality into a

reflection of the clergy's self-imagined behavioral and ethical refinement.

Like the penitential handbooks that became widespread within a generation of

Henry II's death, the *Urbanus Magnus* offers clerics an instrument for the moral

cultivation of lay charges through "an endless internalization accomplished against

continual resistance"; like these handbooks, the *Urbanus* is ". . . a closed, stable text,

whose very stability is nevertheless predicated on disorder and flux."[99] Daniel would

counter this disorder through the imposition of interactional protocols unfailingly

predicated on social hierarchy, for his foundational rule of social order is "semper

ubique minor maiori cedere debet."[100] Just as the penitential handbook ultimately

realizes its purpose through the hierarchical discourse between the confessor and the

penitent in the act of confession, the *Urbanus Magnus* fixes a passion for hierarchical

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[99] Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 13.

[100] "Always and everywhere the lesser is obliged to yield to the greater." UM, 183. The immediate context for this quote is an explication of protocol at church for who should enter first its doors, and who should go up to first to communion; line 183 is cited also by Bartlett, who remarks on the centrality of hierachy to the ideals expressed in the *Urbanus Magnus*. *Norman and Angevin Kings*, 583.

order, an opposition to moral chaos, on the stable platform of a hierarchical relation

between author and reader enacted in the process of reading.

2.4.2   Elite Male Authority: *Magister* and Father

In the *Urbanus Magnus*, the author assigns himself the authority of both

teacher and father. This double role juxtaposes two discourses of cultural authority—

from the outset, Daniel vacillates between the two in his self-representation. As a

father, Daniel's words are not merely private opinion but express a more general

paterna doctrina that demands attention and respect from the reader, who is

interpellated as *nate*, or son:

> Auribus intentis exaudi digna docentis
> Verbis tui patris, que te docet et tibi scribit,
> Nate; paterna tue doctrina sit insita menti.[101]

Equipped with this paternal doctrine, the noble reader may more gracefully and

effectively fulfill his role as head of his household. Daniel begins the poem thus:

> Moribus ornari, si uis lector uenerari,
> Nobilis inter heros urbanam ducere uitam,
> Prouidus inspector propriis disponere rebus,
> Sepius hos relegas uersus animoque perhennes,
> Quos ego uulgaris uerbi leuitate togatos
> Clericulis pueris indoctis scribere creui.[102]

The first several lines present the noble reader with his own values and priorities. Yet

the final two lines of this passage shift their emphasis to scholastic values. This

"father" describes his Latin as light and easy, appropriate for juvenile clerics-in-

training; thus, the paternal advice that would present itself as issuing from the "oral

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[101] "Listen with attentive ears to worthy material in the words of your teaching father which he teaches you and writes to you, son; let the paternal instruction be grafted in your mind." UM, 9-11.
[102] "If, reader, you wish as a prudent observer to be honored and adorned with manners, to conduct an urbane life among noble lords, to regulate your own affairs, you should reread quite often these verses and maintain them always in your mind, which I have resolved to write clad with the levity of vernacular words, Latinized (*togatos*) for unlearned boys, clerical striplings." UM, 1-6.

wisdom of . . . elders and remembrancers" takes a low position in terms of the literary

values of schools, since its insights are expressible in terms suitable for the *clericulis*

pueris indoctis.[103] In the likely situation that the cleric at court was more literate than

his lord, this description would furtively endow the cleric with greater self-regard by

recognizing his affiliation to an alternate institution, one which valued the cleric for

his literacy more highly than the unlearned reader for his title. Speaking of the grave,

Daniel writes, "Uermis ibi princeps, rex, dux, comes est titulatus/ Solus in ede sua

nullos sitiens famulatus."[104] He does not push his devaluation of secular values

beyond such moral commonplaces, but the disdain which these aphorisms express for

worldly glory suffices to remind the cleric of his ecclesiastical affiliations.

Like the loyalty of the cleric at court, the concept of paternal authority was

contested in the twelfth century between lay and ecclesiastic elites, as evident in the

Entheticus maior's satire on wicked courtiers:

> Mandrogero, qui se solum servare coronam
>   et legum regni iactitat esse patrem,
> qui, si falsidicis credendum, iura tuetur
>   integra, quo per eum regius exstet honor[105]

John sees Mandroger's arrogation of the church's paternal authority as inimical; it

generates a figure called 'anti-Father':

> Presbiteros tamquam patres populus veneratur,
>   et fidei pars est, iussa subire patris:
> iussa subire patris, praesertim recta iubentis,
>   pro quibus expletis vita beata datur.

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[103] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 3.
[104] "There, the worm is titled prince, king, duke, or count, and alone in his own house, he thirsts for no attendants." UM, 364-5.
[105] "to Mandroger, who boasts that he alone guards the crown / and is the father of kingdom's laws, who if liars should be believed, keeps the laws whole, so that the royal honor stands firm through him . . ." EM, 1363-6.

> At ferus Antipater hos persequitur velut hostes,
>   intentansque dolos undique bella movet.
> Hic illi nomen datur 'Antipater', quia patres
>   laedit, et infligit damna, necemque parat;[106]

For John, the church's claim to paternal authority (to which "the people" naturally accede) entirely supersedes any secular claim. The church must guard its exclusive claim to *paterna doctrina*, so the *Entheticus* summons it reader to oppose this threat, even if strategic interest requires it to be covert. The *Urbanus Magnus,* however, addresses the humbler cleric subject to the private household sovereignty of the individual lord; such an individual, lacking the institutional backing of a John of Salisbury or Thomas Becket, must circumspectly negotiate between these rival claimants. While he represents the church's authority within the lay noble's household, he is one servant among many, with little choice but to defer to the *paterfamilias*. Moreover, the likelihood existed that the cleric originated in the same social class, even the same family, which he was to serve as chaplain. The paternal authority of the lay nobleman resists the clerical ideal of remaking the aristocracy in its own image, but Daniel's *Urbanus Magnus* offers a way to handle this resistance. According to Clanchy,

> . . . a knight of advanced oral education was expected to contribute
> towards the knowledge and entertainment of his fellows, instead of
> being a passive and silent recipient of book learning. The *clerici*
> might claim to be the elect of God, but the knights or warrriors
> (*bellatores*) were as powerful and as venerable an elite.[107]

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[106] "The people venerate priests just as fathers, / And it is a part of faith to submit to a father's commands, / especially to the commands of a father who orders righteous deeds, / in exchange for their fulfillment is blessed life given. / But fierce Antipater persecutes them as enemies; / threatening tricks, he everywhere makes war. / Hence the name "Antipater" is given him since / he harms fathers, inflicts damage, and plans murder" EM, 1379-1386. Antipater was a general of Alexander's believed in some versions of the legend to have poisoned him.

[107] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 198-99.

For an attendant cleric to refute the values by which the lay court defines authority

would see him expelled.

Instead, Daniel integrates lay paternal authority into his self-representation,

acting both as lay and clerical *pater.* As a noble father counseling his presumed heir,

offering homespun practical advice on running a household, he asks the reader not to

reject this advice on account of its modest presentation:

> Que fructum parere solet, est doctrina probanda.
> Dicitur a doctis pars illi summa bonorum
> Est concessa uiro quem ditat gratia morum.
> Gratius in terris nil constat moribus aptis.
> Cum propria patria ueneratus nemo propheta
> Sit, non inde meis documentis deroget ullus
> Consors; sepe loco uili latitant pretiosa,
> Continet urceolus uetus escas deliciosas.[108]

In this passage, we can see how Daniel stitches together rival modes of authority.

Using the "lightness of the vernacular word" described above, he expresses indirect

discourse through a vernacularizing construction: "dicitur a doctis" governs what

looks like an independent clause with a nominative subject and an indicative verb

instead of the expected accusative infinitive.[109] By undermining his authoritative

pose as a learned teacher, this solecism buttresses his claim to lay authority, albeit

with a wink of erudition. The word 'urceolus' has a humble, everyday referent, a jug

or water-pitcher. This figure disclaims clerical polish; at the same time, its recondite

source in Juvenal or Martial evokes the schoolroom and maintains Daniel's

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[108] "Doctrine which is wont to yield fruit should be approved. It is said by the learned the highest part of goods / is given to the man whom grace of morals enriches. Nothing in earthly matters is more graceful than appropriate morals. Although noone is revered as a prophet in his own country, do not let any of your peers derogate my teachings; often precious things lie hidden in vile places, and an old little jug may contain delicious fare." UM, 12; In medieval Latin, the ambiguity in the word *mores* between the concept of morals and manners always challenges the translator, but here especially either choice is unsatisfactory because of the author's deliberate association of the two concepts.
[109] See note 108.

magisterial authority.[110] Moreover, given Reynolds' observation that twelfth-century

educators considered satire appropriate precisely for *clericulis pueris indoctis*, clerical

readers with even modest training may have caught the reference and been reminded

of the exclusive knowledge with which their clerical affiliation distinguished them. [111]

In securing this recognition, Daniel seeks to maintain magisterial authority within the

fiction of a lay paternal relation.

The magisterial easily dresses up as the paternal since both models operate

according to a simple patriarchal hierarchy that claims for the elder the superordinate

subject position. Daniel counsels, "Cum stes consilio permitte loqui seniores,/ Ipse

licet fueris lingue ratione rosatus."[112] The elder's unfettered discursive license arises

from an experiential knowledge more substantial than mere clerical training. Age

itself and the knowledge it presumably brings licenses the *Urbanus'*s bald directives

unencumbered by strategic politeness, including its present-tense second-person

subjunctives ("caueas") and simple imperatives ("permitte").[113]

Daniel not only combines clerical and lay authority by slipping hints of one

into declarations of the other; he also synthesizes both into a mode of authoritative

discourse equally available to both relational models based on experiential knowledge,

what we might call 'common sense'. Clifford Geertz glosses common sense as

'colloquial reason' and numbers it among the culturally specific discursive practices

that present themselves as universal:

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[110] Juv. 3.203; Mart 14.105.; There are more obvious echoes of classical satire, including line 656's
"greculus esuriens", taken from Juv. 3.678
[111] See note 24.
[112] "When you stand at counsel, let your elders speak, even if you yourself have been perfumed by the
arguments of the tongue." UM.119-120; for more on the topic of directives in Latin, see Rodie
Risselada, *Imperatives and other Directive Expressions in Latin: a Study in the Pragmatics of a Dead
Language*, (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1993).
[113] UM, 123, 119.

> Religion rests its case on revelation, science on method, ideology on moral passion; but common sense rests its on the assertion that it is not a case at all, just life in a nutshell. The world is its authority.[114]

Accord to Geertz, this "vernacular wisdom"is "shamelessly and unapologetically ad hoc," its "paradigmatic form," the "sententious saying."[115]

> Like the voice of piety, the voice of sanity sounds pretty much the same whatever it says; what simple wisdom has everywhere in common is the maddening air of simple wisdom with which it is uttered.[116]

Paradoxically, Daniel takes up this kind of authoritative voice to argue for the authority that clerical education confers:

> Dilige doctrinam, doctores dilige doctos;
> Dedoctus docti doctoris dogmata dampnat.[117]

This sententious maxim has the naturalizing, matter-of-fact tone of common sense, but is expressed with a pyrotechnic alliteration appropriate to school poetry.   This is characteristic of how Daniel synthesizes the authoritative discourses of common sense and erudition to speak as both teacher to student and father to son.[118]

2.4.3 Satire, Counsel, and 'Impression Management'

So far I have spoken about the higher position in these relational dyads, the role which the author knows as counselor. I turn now to his representation of his addressee; Daniel offers a number of different roles to the reader grouped under the subject position of 'son'. In the opening passage, he addresses his reader as *nate,* but

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[114] Clifford Geertz, "Common Sense as a Cultural System," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in the Interpretive Anthropology*, (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 78; 74-75.

[115] Geertz, "Common Sense," 90.

[116] Geertz, "Common Sense," 85.

[117] "Love learning, love learned lecturers. The dumb discredit doctrines of trained teachers." UM, 74-75.

[118] Combining these roles, the *Urbanus Magnus* resembles the poem that Peter Abelard actually wrote to his son; see *Peter Abelard: Carmen ad Astralabium, a Critical Edition*, ed. J.M.A. Rubing, (Groningen: phil. diss. Rjksuniversiteit 1987).

elsewhere uses the vocative *fili* frequently.[119] Addressing a reader as son fits a

pastoral and scholastic as easily as a familial register, and so this term of address

contributes to his self-representation as both actual father and clerical *magister.*

Unlike the *Entheticus maior*, Daniel addresses no historical reader in particular, and

he emphasizes provisionality and fictionality of this filial reader when he concludes

his poem with an address to different social roles he would advise: "Clerus precipue,

miles, matrona, puella, / Quilibet ingenuus hec seruet scripta nouella"[120] Intended

chiefly for clerics, Daniel's *scripta nouella* has in it something also for knights,

matrons, maids, and other nobles.

Reviewing a comprehensive catalogue of social offices from bishops to

rivermen, Daniel addresses each in a discrete module of counsel and satire; hence, the

Urbanus Magnus, contrasting the ideals of each role with its actual practices, is as

much an estates satire as a courtesy book. Daniel introduces many of his addressees

with the construction *si fueris*, "if you were . . ."; his catalogue is immethodical,

proceeding haphazardly through bailiffs, lawyers, knights, the red-headed, teachers,

students, the recently enobled, and priests, to name but a few.[121] To each of these, he

offers appropriate specific advice followed by a cautionary example consisting

usually of a satirical portrait of the wicked or ill-mannered.   He advises bailiffs, for

instance, not to abuse their authority lest they risk the vengeance of those they have

victimized should they lose their post. Typically for the *Urbanus Magnus*, this is

both moral and pragmatic counsel, reconciling self-interest to basic decency; to

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[119] "*nate*" UM 11; "Fili, consiliis non sis indutus ineptis . . . " UM, 792.

[120] "The cleric especially, the knight, the matron, the maid, whoever is noble-born should keep these novel writings . . . " UM, 2834-5

[121] See Nederman's remarks about John of Salisbury in note 56.

illustrate it, he impersonates the self-pitying speech of a wicked ex-bailiff who

patently neglected to follow it:

> Amissam recolens balliuam 'Ve mihi' dicet
> 'Ve mihi iam soli quem sola procella procellat.
> Eclipsim patior, homo dudum, nunc homo nullus.
> Garrula tunc flamma fueram nunc pene fauilla;
> Vincitur en mea vis; quos uici, uincor ab illis.'[122]

The overblown language of tragic reversal makes of this self-absorbed man a figure

of ridicule. I doubt that Daniel believed he would be read by bailiffs—he suggests

the possibility quite tentatively ("Si tibi balliua sit tradita prepositiua . . .")—chiefly

because of his unalloyed scorn for the bailiff he describes.[123]

When he discusses the duties and responsibilities of *curiales*, Daniel loses the

tentative conditionals by which he identifies addressees, "*si fueris*," in favor of an

indicative copular. I propose that this shift identifies Daniel's actual intended reader.

Late in the section on table manners, he counsels this reader not to get too caught up

in the social life of the court:

> Duplicis officii duplex non esto minister;
> Officium tibi signatum servare labores.
> Rodere, nate, caue festucas, stramina, cirps.
> Clericus es domini, satiato sessio parua
> Sit tibi, post cenam studeas seruare capellam;[124]

The *clericus* at the court of a lay *dominus* cannot help but be a *dupliciis officii* . . .

duplex minister, subject to the intersecting claims on his loyalty of two legitimate

authorities. Waves of reform in the eleventh and twelfth centuries sought to extricate

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[122] "Recalling his lost baileyship, he will say 'woe is me! Woe to me alone now whom the only storm lashes! I suffer eclipse, formerly a man, now no man at all. Then, I had been a talkative blaze; now practically ashes. Lo, my power is vanquished! Whom I conquered, I am by them conquered!'" UM, 1656-61

[123] "If a proposed bailieship should be given to you. . ." UM, 1638.

[124] "Do not be the double-minister of a double office; Work to keep the duty assigned to you. Son, beware of chewing the straw, the reed, the rush. You are the lord's cleric; once you are sated, your sitting should be brief. Try to keep chapel after dinner." UM, 1123-27.

the church from worldly entanglements, and to call clerics to identify the church's

good with their own, but this would have been even more difficult for a petty baron's

chaplain than for Henry II's chancellor Becket, upon whom Canterbury's scrutiny and

support were fixed.

But if the dilemma of this *clericus domini* resembles Becket's, the advice

Daniel offers resembles that of John of Salisbury: to beware flatterers and disparagers,

to dissimulate as necessary, to attempt what good is possible given the corrupt nature

of the domain, but most of all to exercise moral, physical, and emotional self-control.

Daniel gives concrete expression to the idea of 'face' as awareness of how one is

regarded:

> Si vario fuerit tua mens hamata dolore,
> Sit facies leta, mentiri gaudia discat.
> Est facies oculus mentis persepe secundus;
> Si titubat facies, animus titubare uidetur.[125]

Becoming *urbanus*, having as much to do with self-performance as table manners,

entails the cultivation of a strategic sensibility that constantly assesses the effect of

one's performance on others. Such a perspective would surely benefit the *clericus*

domini, marked in his courtly circle by training and ordination as something of an

outsider, as much it would benefit the nobleman's heir competing for and maintaining

his patrimony. If Bartlett describes the *Urbanus Magnus* as a "monument of anxiety",

it is because it represents a world in which any perceived weaknesses can be

exploited by rivals and enemies.

> Si tibi suspectus sit iners biuialis amicus,
> Qui te colloquiis absentem turpet amaris,
> Dissimules uerba que de te fatur amara.

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[125] "If your mind is barbed with different kinds of grief, let the face be happy, let it learn to feign joys. Very often, the face is a second eye of the mind; if it totters, the mind is seen to totter." UM, 857-864.

> Tutius est meliusque tibi quod pictus amicus,
> Et dubius pateat, quam notus pestifer hostis. [126]

Maintaining face and security requires discerning and controlling the perceptions of others: "Si parit inuidia socios tibi forte nociuos, / Audi, dissimula; uinces patienter iniquos."[127]

If, like John of Salisbury, Daniel advises dissembling when necessary, he also advises his reader to avoid having flatterers as counselors. The following passage treats the satirical commonplace of flattering counselors with two equally commonplace features favored by medieval satirists, the colorful invective-catalogue and internal-rhymed leonine hexameters.

> Prauus adulator tibi non sit consiliator;
> Nesciat archana tua; que sunt consule sana.
> Prauus adulator, mendax, lingua variator
> Regnat, laudatur, laudando magnificatur,
> Inter magnates magnus fertur fore uates.[128]

Daniel warns about the dangers of trusting in flatterers:

> Pestes letifere sunt ex hiis sepe secute
> Lenibus et blesis sermonibus atque politis.
> Ridenti facie simulata loquuntur iniqui.[129]

As in the *Entheticus maior,* we confront again the ethical dilemma of the text enjoining behavior of a similar kind to that which it condemns; in addition to the passage cited above suggesting the reader adopt a fake smile when necessary, and

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[126] "If a useless two-faced friend should be suspicious to you of being the sort who would shame you in your absence with caustic talk, conceal the bitter words which he says of you. It is a better and safer for a doubtful friend to be exposed than a known destructive enemy." UM, 820-824.

[127] "If envy happens to beget for you harmful allies, listen, dissemble; patiently you will defeat the wicked." UM, 398-399.

[128] "Let not the crooked sycophant be your counselor; Let him know not your secret; take for counsel what things are sensible. The crooked sycophant, the liar, changling tongue rules, is exalted by praise among magnates to be a great seer." UM, 594-598.

[129] "Deadly plagues have often spread out of these gentle and indistinct and even polished discourses. Enemies speak their words of pretence with a smile on their faces." UM, 749-758.

dissimulate ignorance before his enemies, Daniel also advises, "Uerba iocosa tua sint

queque, faceta, polita."[130] Unlike John of Salisbury, who applies William of

Conches's doctrine of literary integument to social self-performance, however, Daniel

sees no need to conjure up an elaborate rationalization to reconcile these discordant

teachings. Indeed, Daniel's gnomic style expresses a 'common-sense' world view

that vindicates him from the need to supply any such justification.

In my discussion of the *Entheticus maior*, I attributed Becket's need to

manage carefully his self-presentation in discordant roles which his circumstances as

servant of both king and archbishop required of him. I suggested as well that John of

Salisbury offered this kind of performance as a compromise position to enable clerics

to work as functionaries in lay courts while still identifying with ecclesiastic ideology

in the wake of reformists' attempts to disentangle the two domains. In looking at the

Urbanus Magnus, I have suggested the possibility that the same ideological strategy

is at work in Daniel's counsel of dissimulation to his clerical reader. I would suggest

another, and in fact complementary explanation for the urgency with which Daniel

advises his reader to control the impressions others take of him and the ethical

contradiction entailed by his simultaneous denunciation of flattery; the *clericus*

domini had to be so mindful of his self-performance not only because of his affiliation

with rival authorities, but because of the discrepant roles he played within the

household itself.

He was, according to terms laid out by Goffman, a "service specialist", an

individual specialized in the "construction, repair, and maintenance of the show" his

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[130] "Let your words each be funny, clever, refined."UM, 664

lord put on before other people.[131] What is more, he was a "training specialist,"

entrusted with

> . . . the complicated task of teaching the performer how to build up a desirable impression while at the same time taking the part of the future audience and illustrating by punishments the consequences of improprieties. Parents and schoolteachers are perhaps the basic examples of this role in our society. . ..[132]

As we have seen, Daniel combines the role of parent and schoolteacher in his

authorial self-presentation, and by his satire, he carries out the corrective and punitive

tasks of these roles. Daniel offers this role for the *clericus domini* to use, but cautions

him regarding the care required by this role; training specialists make performers

"feel uneasy," since they "tend to evoke for the performer a vivid image of himself

that he had repressed, a self-image of someone engaged in the clumsy and

embarassing process of becoming."[133] Knowledge of this unformed state is

"destructive information" about aspects of the lord's performance to which the cleric

was privy as a professional literate, a "verbal specialist" responsible for shaping the

lord's "verbal front" to the outside world.[134] If his ecclesiastical affiliations made

suspect his loyalty to the household he served, this insider knowledge made his

position more delicate still. Counsel on the careful management of impressions

therefore served the cleric as much as his lord.

To borrow another label from Goffman, we might consider the represented

relation between Daniel and his clerical reader as one of "collegiality." As a

functionary of lower social standing but higher education than his employer, the

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[131] Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 153.
[132] Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 158.
[133] Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 158.
[134] Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 153-155.

cleric may well have been prone "to become overimpressed with the weakness of the show that his betters put on." While Daniel's satire may correct, it also appeals to the cleric's sense of superiority over his lord that he derives from his learning. Goffman defines colleagues as

> . . . persons who present the same routine to the same kind of audience but who do not participate together . . . at the same time and place before the same particular audience. . . . the front that is maintained before others need not be maintained among themselves.[135]

He goes on to cite another sociological study of interaction among colleagues that could characterize Daniel's comprehensive mockery:

> . . . one finds expressions of cynicism concerning their mission, their competence, and the foibles of their superiors, themselves, their clients, their subordinates, and the public at large.[136]

Satire, then, is not just a mode of attack, at least not to everybody. To the colleague, it betokens sympathy and solidarity. As one discursive constituent in a complex piece of communication like a courtesy book, satire has the interpersonal function of ratifying speakers and hearer in a community of opinion. In the case of the *Urbanus Magnus*, we may understand this community as a type of collegiality, formed not so much around shared values as shared tasks.

To characterize the *Urbanus Magnus* simply as a courtesy book misrepresents the overall tenor of the work. Rather, it is a miscellany of satire-counsel organized unmethodically into topical modules. Each module holds up a model of a well-ordered self that knows its place in the household and the social order at large. Together, these models do not comprise an allegorical or utopian ideal. Instead, they

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[135] Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 160.
[136] E.C. Hughes and Helen M. Hughes, *Where People Meet* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1952), 168-169; cited by Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 160.

provide an inventory of strategies and responses for defending the good against the attacks and encroachments of good society's varied enemies: feuding nobles, insolent servants who urinate in the hall or play dice in the bed-chamber, corrupt judges who take bribes, prevaricating lawyers, extortionate bailiffs, crude houseguests who belch, display their dirty feet at the dinner table, and gather spilled salt from soiled table cloths, adulterous women (a perennial theme of satire), and, that great disorderer of the world, money.[137]

As we move from *De planctu naturae* to the *Entheticus maior* to the *Urbanus maior*, we grow increasingly immersed in the real world, encountering fewer allegorical types, like Alan's *Bacchilatria*, and more of the particular misdeeds wicked individuals do in everyday life. Paralleling this movement, the perfect hierarchy of Nature–Dreamer as teacher–student (an explicit realization of how social constructs are 'naturalized' in discourse) fragments into multiple and sometimes contradictory relational models. In the *Entheticus Maior*, the teacher–student hierarchy is confused as John of Salisbury performs the doubled function of teacher-courtier. As teacher, he stands above his addressee, but as courtier, beneath; these contradictory roles require contradictory modes of address, the central dilemma of the learned courtier-cleric, and therefore the central topic of John's poem. This problem, I argue above, was shared by both John's principal addressee, Thomas Becket, and his secondary intended audience of secular clergy bound to courtly service at every level.

Despite the ruse of its father–son relational model, the *Urbanus Magnus* was likewise intended for secular clerics serving as literate functionaries in noble houses

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[137] UM 1047-8; 1085; 1525; 1533; 1541-2; 1558; 1593.

of various status—their conflicted responsibilities resemble Becket's, if on a smaller

scale with lower stakes. The *Urbanus Magnus* moves even farther than the

Entheticus out of an idealized sphere, depicting not one or two social relations, but a

dense relational network of peers and unequals. Daniel's injunctions are the effort of

a literate cleric to impose the order, clarity, and legibility he learned to value at school

on the tumult and confusion of actual life.

By playing a father addressing his son, Daniel sets against this household

chaos a relational hierarchy common to almost every domain of twelfth-century life,

religious or secular, noble or common. And the desire for clear-cut hierarchy is

everywhere in evidence.[138] In discussing the etiquette for turn-taking in proceeding

to communion at mass, Daniel's one-line aphorism sums up this desire: "Semper

ubique minor maiori cedere debet."[139]

In the poem's epilogue, Daniel at last identifies both his intended audience

and the source from which he derives paternal authority:

> Clerus precipue, miles, matrona, puella,
> Quilibet ingenuus hec seruet scripta nouella.
> Rex uetus Henricus primo dedit hec documenta,
> Illepidis, libro que subscribuntur in isto.[140]

The author presents himself as a court scribe recording the teachings of "old King

Henry," who, Solomon-like, dispenses proverbial wisdom. Considering Henry II's

own fraught relations with his rebellious sons, a mordant irony attends Daniel's

adducing "Old King Henry" as an exemplary paternal authority. This irony reflects

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[138] Bartlett, *Angevin Kings*, 583.

[139] "Lesser must everwhere yield to greater." UM, 183.

[140] "Let the cleric especially, and the knight, the matron, the girl / and whoever is freeborn keep these new writings / Old King Henry gave these teachings first /which unrefined are written in this book." UM, 2834-2837.

the failure of the *Urbanus Magnus* to impose its coveted hierarchies on the world it

describes, as its prohibitions accumulate to describe a world as disordered and

farcical as any *fabliau*.

2.5 Conclusion: 'Self-Fashioning' in the Twelfth Century

The authors looked at in this chapter speak both to and for authority. As

players in real-life power-games, their speech can endanger themselves and others,

friend or foe. Such an environment favors proficiency in verbal attack and self-

defense. Speaking of court writers in the sixteenth century, Greenblatt makes the

following observation:

> The power generated to attack the alien in the name of the authority is
> produced in excess and threatens the authority it sets out to defend.
> Hence self-fashioning always involves some experience of threat,
> some effacement or undermining, some loss of self.[141]

By redirecting the attack to a third party, satire is a way for the author to negotiate

this threat. Through satire, authors can take a hand in their loss of self, limiting their

effacement by assuming responsibility for it; they position themselves already at

power's periphery. Like John of Salisbury in the *Entheticus maior*, the threat of

banishment is already realized. When this gesture is carried out (unlike the case of

John) purely within the fictional confines of the text, it serves an apotropaic purpose.

When Daniel of Beccles parenthetically opines that "Cum propria patria ueneratus

nemo propheta/ Sit, non inde meis documentis deroget ullus/ Consors," he points to a

cultural myth of prophets speaking truth to power. This is not so much that he should

appear a wild, woolly outsider as it is a courtly show of disinterest. Elijah was

obviously little interested in coddling favor with Ahab; thus the satirist, by recusing

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[141] Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 9. See chapt. 1, note 78.

himself from the courtly contest for favor, preferment, or influence, is free to praise,

blame, and counsel without risk of being identified with the flatterers he condemns.

The discourse of the learned cleric assists this gambit by fashioning a self indifferent

to worldly goods, consumed instead by the desire for truth, the love of knowledge,

and fidelity to a sacred role. In subsequent chapters, we will see how these kinds of

strategic self-performance resurface in altered contexts, become conventions, and are

made the target of satire.

Chapter Three

Preferential Relations and Courtly Self-Performance
in John Gower and Guilhem de Peitieus

3.1   Overview: Preference and Performance

In the last chapter, I treated texts that construct the relationship between the

author and reader along the lines of magisterial or paternal relations. The authors of

those texts address readers as teachers address their students or fathers do their sons.

In this chapter, I will turn to texts that model the author–reader on the interaction

between princes and their preferred courtiers. In looking at relationships of vassalage,

we depart fully from the domains of school and household to focus wholly on the

court. As political institutions, medieval courts governed, and were governed, by

ritual interactions gradually supplemented and only eventually replaced by

documentary edict. Face-to-face interactions were instruments by which princes

made visible in discourse the network of preference through which they exercised

their power. The sovereign prince, unconstrained by law if not custom in his choice

of counselors and intimates, was surrounded by courtiers who competed for

preference.[1] Preferment was access to power, itself a kind of power; giving counsel

was the use and advertisement of this power.[2]

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[1] There were, however, customary restraints, at least in the eyes of the English magnates who opposed King Richard II's choices. See Christopher Given-Wilson, "Richard II and the Higher Nobility," in *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, eds. Anthony Goodman and James Gillespie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 120-5.

[2] We can likewise find preference and personal affective ties informing policy and personnel choices in even the most impersonal modern bureaucracies, but this enjoys no formal status; on the contrary, contemporary laws and moral customs view such 'patronage' as corruption. It was otherwise in the Middle Ages, for public and private spheres were not distinct. The prince's private household was an instrument of government, and titular household servants his ministers; For a concise but thorough treatment of the subject with respect to England in the later Middle Ages, see J.A. Tuck, "Richard II's System of Patronage," in *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honor of May Mckisack*, eds.F.R.N. DuBoulay and C.M. Barron, 1-20 (London: Athlone Press, 1971).

The discourse of courtly preference mixes a juridical with an affective register. The legal relation of vassalage was enacted through the protocols that governed, for example, terms of address, gestures, patterns of conversational turn-taking, and registers of linguistic formality. Preference could inflect this discourse with familiarity, affection, solidarity, even intimacy. The combination of both aspects authenticates the preferred counselor as trustworthy, as being motivated by fidelity, loyalty, and love.[3] And just as the language of friendship and allegiance authenticates counsel, counsel provides an occasion to enact such a relation and thereby claim an authority both social and moral.

The counselor directs this claim not only to his prince, but also to a secondary audience of fellow courtiers. A prince's solicitation of counsel from one courtier is an act of preference that excludes others.[4] When this dynamic is textualized, the excluded may still be present to the textual encounter, in an attenuated way, as a secondary readers—an intended over-reader. The excluded party is talked about but not ratified to contribute or respond as a participant.[5] Sometimes the author exhorts secondary readers to identify with the reader or himself. The author may also take a stance toward the secondary audience of rebuke or even threat, one distinct from that adopted toward the primary reader.

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[3] "As the prince was courted by men in need of his protection, favors, and powers, so the prince courted those whom he wished to bind to him by his largesse. The language used to express the frequently hardheaded relationships made between men who truly understood exigency may have been the language of love, but the end was somewhat more slippery of definition. Michael Clanchy has described the way in which terms like 'to make love,' 'love boon,' 'lover,' or 'friend' were used to describe purely feudal and political relationships in the legal documents of the early Plantagenets." Nigel Saul, "The Kingship of Richard II," in *Art of Kingship* (see note 1), 91; Saul is citing Michael Clanchy, "Law and Love in the Middle Ages," in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. John Bossy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 48.

[4] "Medieval government leaves the 'door ajar' so that those 'out' could see those 'in' enjoying the warmth and pleasures of royal favor." Tuck, "System of Patronage," 1.

[5] On the dynamics of ratification, inclusion, and exclusion in group interaction, see Erving Goffman, "Footing," Semiotica 25 (1979): 1-29.

The discourse of satire plays a crucial role in distinguishing the author's attitudes toward primary and secondary audiences. Satire ratifies speaker and addressee as an 'in-group' while it excludes an 'out-group' which includes both those it satirizes and those simply unequipped to understand its jokes and ironies. By the rhetorical gestures that intimate camaraderie with some and distance from others, the satirist selects his company with economy and subtlety. This is a useful trick for a courtier, and hardly less useful for a prince. In this chapter, I shall examine two vernacular poets representing both cases, beginning with the more familiar configuration of poet as courtier in the person of John Gower (1330-1408), who was attached to the courts of Richard II and Henry IV. I shall then turn to the rarer case of poet as prince with my discussion of the so-called 'first troubadour', Count Guilhem VII of Poitou, IX Duke of the Aquitaine (1071-1126).[6]

3.2   John Gower: Satiric Poet and Counselor

3.2.1   Overview

John Gower (1330–1408) was the author of three long moral-didactic poems, the Anglo-Norman *Mirrour d'Omme*, the Latin *Vox Clamantis*, and the Middle English *Confessio Amantis.* His works suggest acquaintance with many of the most influential and powerful figures of his day. A friend of Geoffrey Chaucer's and a courtier of three successive monarchs, John Gower's poetic and political career converge in his self-representation as royal counselor, first in the *Vox Clamantis*, written around the time of the 1381 uprising and revised in its wake, and later in the

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[6] Rather than arrange these two texts chronologically, I have chosen to move from the more familiar case of a poet addressing his patron, to the less familiar case of a patron playing the poet and addressing his clients.

Confessio Amantis, completed by 1390 and revised until no later than 1392.[7] In the

Vox Clamantis, Gower addresses moral counsel in the form of a Latin verse epistle to

Richard II in the magisterial tone treated in the last chapter.[8] In the first recension of

the *Confessio Amantis*, however, he addresses King Richard as a preferred courtier.[9]

     The magisterial relational model also informs Gower's exchange with the

allegorical figure Genius in the *Confessio*. Their dialogue frames an exchange of

stories treating the seven deadly sins, but is itself contained by the relation between

the poet John Gower and his sovereign reader, King Richard II—and this relation,

perhaps, continues to inflect the *Confessio*'s final reader in which the reader's ethical

self-sovereignty replaces the literal sovereign as its addressee. And the relation

between Gower and Richard is represented by the book itself —it is the mark and

continuation of a prior interaction—the king's invitation of Gower to board his boat

and his commission of a book in English.

     According to Lynn Staley, the *Confessio Amantis* is itself therefore the sign

and issue of the relation between king and poet; I take this as my starting point, but

what I hope to accomplish in the following discussion is to see how this relation is

represented by the discourse of this scene.[10] Moreover, if the *Confessio* is an act of

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[7] On the dating of the *Vox Clamantis*, see George B. Stow, "Richard II in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: Some Historical Perspectives," *Mediaevalia* 16 (1993): 5. On the dating of the *Confessio Amantis*, see Russell A. Peck, "Introduction," in *John Gower: Confessio Amantis*, vol. 1, ed. Russell A Peck, Latin Translation by Andrew Galloway, TEAMS Series, 1-63 (Medieval Institute Publications: Kalamazoo, MI, 2000), 59-62.

[8] In short, I discussed how in giving counsel poets adapt the relational role of father or teacher in order to gain unfettered authority to advise and rebuke.

[9] Here as throughout, unless otherwise specified, the *Confessio Amantis* is referred to in the form of its first recension. Below, I explain my reason for taking this recension into account in considering the commission scene's place in the design of the Prologue. See note 14 below; citations of the *Confessio Amantis* follow the edition of G. C. Macaulay, *The Complete Works of John Gower*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), vol. 2.

[10] "Gower here attempts to depict a scene that is 'true' both to life and to the metaphors of English public address. Thus, Gower is in a boat on the Thames, and the king is being carried on his royal

discourse performed within the poet–king relational context which it signifies, then

the interaction between king and poet has a broader significance to our interpretation

of the entire poem than as a simple gesture of deference, an obligatory status ritual or

due obeisance performed by a poet for his patron. The scene forms the centerpiece of

what Gérard Genette calls the "paratext:"

> a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also
> of transaction: a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy, of an
> influence on the public, an influence that ... is at the service of a better
> reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it.[11]

Offered as an act of counsel, the *Confessio Amantis* is the enactment of Gower's

social role as courtier; by depicting the commission of his work, he declares the

preferment he enjoys of the king. By enacting his preferment in the scene of

commission, Gower situates the *Confessio Amantis* in a relational context that

licenses his authority as a moral counselor and mitigates the risk of importunacy he

takes by counseling his superior. In courtly relations, hierarchy and social proximity

reinforce one another; this is the basic function of preferment. But the scene does

more than flatter the king and authorize Gower's counsel; its idealized representation

of king and subject constructs a social ideal that, in the wider context of prologue and

poem, elicits the reader's interpretive and ethical cooperation. To advance this

argument, I shall examine in detail how the scene of commission combines literary

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barge. However, the Thames is not merely a river, but the flowing source of London's life, and
London is not London, but New Troy founded by Brutus. Gower thus flatters Richard in terms of his
own actual magnificence and power but also suggests that the English river scene participates in the
mythic history of England itself. Richard, as Gower's 'liege lord,' bids him onto the barge, where he
then charges the poet to write some 'newe thing' for him to read. The poem that ensues is therefore
produced by the relationship between poet and king." Lynn Staley, "Gower, Richard II, Henry of
Derby, and the Business of Making Culture," *Speculum* 75, no. 1 (2000):70-71

[11] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.

rituals affirming the reader's status with the preferential discourse that enacts a relation of private familiarity between poet and king.

In recent years, scholars have focused on the political and ideological revelations of Gower's portrayal of the commission, searching it for clues about Gower and King Richard's relationship to one another and their respective views on kingship. Scholars have also debated whether the commission could have taken place as described. Frank Grady challenges the consensus about its factuality (to which Patricia Eberle appeals), arguing instead that it is a fiction intended as propaganda for Richard.[12] For Grady, the scene's depiction of a self-possessed king gainsays accounts of King Richard's impulsive and violent behavior glimpsed in contemporary chronicles (which Grady suggests may have echoed anecdotes circulating among Londoners increasingly hostile to Richard). Grady argues that incautious acceptance of the scene as factual reflects a humanistic critical desire to see Gower as guileless, moral, and politically engaged, a figure against whom we can draw an "amusedly detached and apolitical Chaucer, tactfully skirting and deflecting the urgent political issues of the day".[13] Yet Grady's reading, like Eberle's, presupposes Gower's affiliation to the king, going so far as to enlist Gower as King Richard's propagandist. My concern is not with the scene's factuality but with its pragmatic effect, and I suggest that critical presumption of the scene's factuality is at least as much a product of the scene's own discourse as it is of the political unconscious of modern and postmodern readers of Gower. I suggest also that if Gower's interpersonal rhetoric so

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[12] Patricia J. Eberle, "Richard II and the Literary Arts," in *The Art of Kingship*, 236 (see note 1); Frank Grady, "Gower's Boat, Richard's Barge, and the True Story of the *Confessio Amantis*: Text and Gloss," *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 44, no.1 (2002), 1-15.
[13] Grady, "Gower's Boat," 12-13.

vividly evokes a lived relation six centuries hence, it may well have done so for the

poet's contemporaries.

It remains that in arguing the encounter to be integral to the original design of

the *Confessio*, I face the problem that it was later excised. Anne Middleton suggests

the commission scene was a deviation from Gower's artistic design and moral

purpose; as Gower's sense of his audience developed from a royal circle to a wider

public, his excision of the scene corrected this deviation (which was compelled by

political exigencies) so that he addressed at last the 'public' for whom he claimed to

speak.[14] I would moderate this view and suggest that the textualized relation between

King and poet depicts a social ideal of good faith and integrity which stands as an

intermediate stage in Gower's shifting sense of his readership from private coterie to

public audience.[15] Thus, before addressing the scene of commission in the

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[14] Anne Middleton, "The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II." *Speculum* 53 (1978): 98; Gower's sense of his community of readers shifts from the clerical elite addressed in the *Vox Clamantis* to the King as the embodiment of the realm as whole, to the realm itself, even if, as Fisher hinted, for Gower 'Engelonde' is identifiable with the interests of the London citizenry. Middleton, like Gower himself, perhaps, conceals the situated interest of the London citizenry under the umbrella of the 'commons' as a whole; the poetic voice of "public poetry" is, for Anne Middleton, that of the townsman, "vernacular, practical, worldly, plain, public-spirited, and peace-loving—in a word, 'common,' rather than courtly or clerical, in its professed values and social allegiances." At the same time, she argues that this public voice "speaks 'as if' to the entire community—as a whole, and all at once rather than severally—rather than 'as if' to a coterie or patron. By its mode of address and diction it implies that the community is heterogeneous, diverse, made up of many having separate 'singular' interests." This overlooks the fact that, even speaking as a "London citizen" to others of his station, the "entire community" to and for whom Gower speaks is narrowly circumscribed and relatively privileged. As a collective, the city of London was a contestant and power broker in Richard's struggles with the Lords Appellant. See John H. Fisher, *John Gower, Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 116-127.

[15] Other scholars have also sought the reasons—political, moral, or personal—for Gower's removal of the commission scene in the 1392 recension and his rededication of the *Confessio* to Henry of Bolingbroke. John Fisher summarizes Macaulay's position: "Macaulay suggested (2.xxxvi) that the occasion for the change in dedication was the sending of a presentation copy of the *CA* to Henry, and that this would hardly amount to publication." Fisher suggests, alternatively, that Richard's dispute with the City of London in 1392 "would seem ample reason for Gower to have altered the conclusion to the *Confessio*. His sympathies would have lain entirely with his personal and business associates, the London citizens." John H Fisher, *John Gower, Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 123; George Stow gives as a possible date for the change as early as 1390, arguing Gower was disillusioned with Richard for not only failing to suppress the

Confessio's Prologue, I shall examine Gower's earlier self-representation as royal

counselor in the *Vox Clamantis* in order to clarify Gower's changing conception of

this role and its poetic and didactic function.

3.2.2   Containing Counsel: From Mentor to Vassal

Gower and King Richard's relation is depicted quite differently in the

Confessio's Prologue than in Book VI of the *Vox Clamantis.* In the earlier Latin work,

Gower assumes the magisterial role described in my last chapter, whereas in the later

work in English he plays the courtier who enjoys the preferment of his monarch, a

more delicate task requiring a complicated balance of deference and authority.

Gower devotes most of the *Vox Clamantis*'s Book VI to a verse epistle in which he

forthrightly advises the still-adolescent King Richard about the governance of himself

and his kingdom. In a preface to this epistle, Gower addresses a different readership,

referring to the king in third person. This preface sets the epistle's advice in the

context of a specific problem, a crowd of flatterers who surround the king and keep

away those like Gower who 'presume to speak truth':

> Agmen adulantum media procedit in aula,
> Quodque iubet fieri, curia cedit eis:
> Set qui vera loqui presumunt, curia tales
> Pellit, et ad regis non sinit esse latus.[16]

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liveried retainers of magnates who disrupted civil peace, but actively cultivating his own livery at the Smithfield tournament. George B. Stow, "Richard II in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: Some Historical Perspectives," *Mediaevalia* 16 (1993), 15; Lynn Staley proposes a more complex and diffuse historical explanation, "a textual 'campaign' waged, not necessarily *against* Richard, but *for* Henry of Derby at this early date, and by one of the most experienced political figures of the century, John of Gaunt", for whom Staley documents more evidence of literary patronage than for King Richard. Staley, "Gower, Richard II, Henry Derby," 82.

[16] VC 6.551-555: "A mob of flatterers proceeds to the middle of the royal court, and whatever it commands to be done the court grants them. But the court banishes those who dare to speak the truth, and does not allow such people to be at the king's side." Translations are my own, but I have consulted Eric Stockton, trans., *The Major Latin Works of John Gower* (University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1962). Citations of *Vox Clamantis* follow Macaulay, *Complete Works,* vol. 4. Hereafter, *Vox Clamantis* is abbreviated as VC.

Gower spares King Richard responsibility for this state of affairs, but this excuse

comes at the expense of the king's autonomy and diginity:

> Stat puer immunis culpe, set qui puerile
> Instruerunt regimen, non sine labe manent :
> Sic non rex set consilium sunt causa doloris,
> Quo quasi communi murmure plangit humus.[17]

A later revision of the preface attributes a greater share of responsibility to the king's

greater age.

> Rex, puer indoctus, morales neglegit actus,
> In quibus a puero crescere possit homo :
> Sic etenim puerum iuuenilis concio ducit,
> Quod nichil expediens, sit nisi velle, sapit. [18]

No longer *immunis culpe*, the King is nevertheless still a *puer*, whose boyish

affections lead him to choose youthful and rash counselors when he should know

better.[19] In both versions, the preface's unabashed disparagement of Richard's

authority sets the tone for Gower's magisterial self-representation in the epistle.

In both versions of the epistle's preface, Gower's chief concern is how the

king takes counsel and chooses counselors. The first version shows a king too young

and inexperienced to choose trustworthy advisors. In the revised version, the

kingdom flounders because its king surrounds himself not only with youthful

comrades who share his vanity and impulsiveness, but with "older men of greed who

in pursuing their gains tolerate many scandals for the boy's pleasure:"

> Sunt eciam veteres cupidi, qui lucra sequentes

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[17] VC 6.*555-*558. "The boy stands free from blame, but those who have instructed his boyish education may not last without a fall. So not the king but his council is the source of our pain, by which the soil mourns as if with a common murmur." Asterisks indicate first recension.

[18] VC 6.557-560. "The king, an untaught boy, neglects moral courses of conduct in which a man can grow out of a boy. In fact, his juvenile entourage so commands the boy that he understand nothing purposeful, unless it be his whim."

[19] Medieval writers treating the topic of youthful counselors misleading a king find a common source in I Kings 12:5-19, in which young men's counsel leads to the division of Israel and Judah.

Ad pueri placitum plura nephanda sinunt.[20]

Unlike wicked courtiers young and old, Gower hears the "voice of the people of today" and dares to speak the unflattering truth:

> Talia vox populi conclamat vbique moderni
> In dubio positi pre gravitate mali :
> Sic ego condoleo super hiis que tedia cerno,
> Quo Regi puero scripta sequenda fero.[21]

The poet speaks on behalf of the people; his grief echoes but surpasses theirs insofar as his relatively privileged social position allows him better to witness the court's corruption. This rhetorical maneuver allows Gower paradoxically to use his courtier's status to supplement his authority as spokesman for the people. He takes his place on the outer perimeter of the inner circle as the very truth-teller whom flatterers and false counselors would keep from the king, a position which resembles in its construction of his moral authority the one occupied by John of Salisbury and Daniel of Beccles.[22]

Equipped thus with the double authority of a popular mandate and his own privileged perspective, Gower addresses the *puer rex indoctus* in purely magisterial terms, using simple imperatives and other bald directives.[23] Line 580, ' . . . regi puero scripta sequenda fero,' plainly indicates the liberties Gower will take in this act of poetic counsel; he does not offer (*offero*) his counsel, but brings it (*fero*), in no way acknowledging the king's right of refusal. *Scripta sequenda*, the 'writings to follow',

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[20] VC 6.565-566. "There are also the avaricious old men, who in pursuit of gain permit many impieties for the boy's pleasure.

[21] VC 6.577-580: "Everywhere today, the voice of the people, put in doubt by the severity of the evil, cries out about such things. I grieve such things the more by those disgusting things I glimpse, because of which I bring the boy king the writings to follow."

[22] See Chapter 2 of this dissertation, pages 16-60.

[23] According to George Coffman, Gower defined himself in this role throughout his literary career. George R Coffman, "John Gower, Mentor for Royalty: Richard II," *PMLA* 69, no. 4 (1954): 953-64.

is a textual cue referring to the fact that the epistle will follow the present preface, but

can also be read as a claim that what these writings advise should be observed and

obeyed.

Some characteristic examples of these directives:

> Si rex esse velis, te rege, rex et eris.
> .   .   .
> O bone rex iuvenis, fac quod bonitate iuuentus
> Sit tua morigeris dedita rite modis.
> .   .   .
> Sordibus implicitos falsosque cauebis amicos . . .[24]

At the same time as Gower assumes this authoritative, almost paternal voice, his

laudatory portrait of Richard's father, the Black Prince, also signals, if not an

appropriation, than at least a deployment of paternal authority in exemplary form.[25]

> Inque suam laudem que tuam mea scripta reuoluo,
> Vt probitate memor sit tibi patris honor.
> .   .   .
> O rex, facta tui retine tibi patris, vt illa
> Laus, quam promeruit, sit tribuena tibi.[26]

Like Daniel of Beccles, Gower speaks his mind with the unhesitating authority of an

old man chiding a strayed youngster, holding up the aristocratic father as a model for

emulation.

The liberties Gower takes in this passage seem unthinkable in the *Confessio

Amantis.*   Perhaps this is because the Latin *Vox Clamantis* was addressed to an

audience of highly positioned clerics who would prove unsympathetic to Richard.[27]

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[24] VC 6.606: "If you wish to be king, rule yourself, and king you will be"; 627-8: "O good young king, act so that your youth be given rightly to ways compliant with goodness"; 643: "You will beware false who are mixed up in filthy things and false."

[25] Patricia Eberle, "Richard II and the Literary Arts," 234-5.

[26] VC 6.923-924: "I return my writings toward his praise and toward yours in order that worthily your father's honor be remembered to you.;" 967-968: "O king, preserve for yourself your father's deeds, so that the praise he thoroughly deserved may bestowed upon you."

[27] Fisher, *John Gower*, 105.

The young king serves as the epistle's implied reader rather than its real intended reader. He is the symbolic focus for Gower's views on kingship. Moreover, Gower's repeated mention of the king's juvenile status enables his own self-representation as an idealized magisterial counselor. The *Vox Clamantis* calls its clerical readers to identify with and emulate this role rather than the role of the counseled king. Not coincidentally, this same clerical community is the satiric target of much of the *Vox Clamantis*. As it is primarily clerics to whom Gower's Latin poem offers an ideal, he draws negative exempla from bad clerics. Despite the epistle's direct address to King Richard, he is not truly a ratified participant in the discursive community of the *Vox Clamantis*.[28] He is, in Walker Gibson's term, a 'mock reader.'[29]

The *Confessio Amantis* (in its first recension), on the other hand, evokes a much richer relationship between poet and king through Gower's more nuanced self-performance. Whereas Gower's epistle to the king in the *Vox Clamantis* is didactic and sermonizing, his English poem untangles the master-student relation from the courtier-prince preferential relation and depicts the historical selves of poet and king in terms of the latter. Their interaction in the later work is also more realistic insofar as it is fixed in time and place, on the Thames, on a certain afternoon.

For this passage to convince, the relationship with Richard depicted here had to approximate the expectations of Gower's readers about reality, not necessarily the reality of historical fact (i.e., whether they actually met on the river under the circumstances described), but the social reality that defines their respective subject

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[28] "The fact that the shortcomings of the clerics themselves receive such disproportionate attention in the *Vox* (two books, III and IV, vs. one, V, for knights, peasants, merchants, and artisans, and one, VI, for lawyers and the king) is merely another evidence of its clerical audience." Fisher, *John Gower*, 106.

[29] See chapter 1, note 68.

positions as courtier and king and constrains their interaction. Gower must pay due

obeisance in addressing his king and be strategic in his presentation of counsel. For

this reason, while preference shapes the interaction of poet and king (and therefore

author and reader), the *Confessio*'s direct advice is couched in the fictional dialogue

between Genius and Gower. In this dialogue, which frames most of the *Confessio*'s

stories, Gower assumes the subordinate role of student, or more accurately, penitent.

Genius plays the confessor, appropriating the clerical *pater*'s social, spiritual, and

intellectual authority:

> This worthi prest, this holy man
> To me spekende thus began,
>   And seide: "Benedicité,
> Mi sone; of the felicité
> Of love and ek of all the wo
> Thou shalt thee schrive of both tuo.[30]

Genius's interpellation of Gower as "mi sone" immediately subordinates the poet, as

does his doubling ("*thou* shalt *thee* schrive") of the status-marking *t*-pronoun.[31] The

hierarchy of this relation is further reinforced by the dialogue's adherence to the

penitential tradition promulgated after the Fourth Lateran Council in which the

penitent submits himself to the questioning and correction of the priest.[32]

> 'Thi schrifte to oppose and hiere,
> My sone, I am assigned hiere
> Be Venus the godesse above, . . .
> For that belongeth to thoffice
> Of Prest, whos ordre that I bere,[33]

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[30] CA I.203-208.

[31] The sociolinguistic study of terms of address commonly distinguishes two second-person pronouns in many European languages, the *t*-pronoun and the *v*-pronoun. The *t*-pronoun includes modern French *tu* or early Modern English *thou*; it indicates either social proximity or superior rank of the speaker. The v-pronoun, French *vous* or early Modern English *you*, indicates either social distance or the superior rank of the addressee. Roger Brown and Albert Gilman, "The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity" in *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas Seobok (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1960), 253-76.

[32] Fisher, *John Gower*, 137-8.

[33] CA, I.233-243.

Genius bases his license to counsel not on his individual character or moral worth but on his rank or office.

However, Gower's self-positioning subordinate to Genius is a rhetorical gesture of misdirection that conceals the author's status as the originator and speaker of counsel. Book Seven's combination of the teacher-student with the courtier-prince relations in the persons of Aristotle and Alexander is another such gesture. These culturally prestigious stand-ins for author and reader, familiar to and historically remote from Gower's contemporaries, valorize king and counselor. The tradition of mirrors for princes from which Gower draws these representative figures "defines Aristotle, history's most authoritative philosopher, as instructor of Alexander, its most powerful monarch."[34] At the same time, the situational context of 'long ago and far away' impersonalizes Gower's counsel, investing it with a relevance that is universal rather than merely addressed to King Richard's problems.

Gower distances the dyad of himself and King Richard from the dyads of Genius-Amans and Aristotle-Alexander. The identification is still there to be made, and is even attractive, but it is not forced on the reader. This impersonalization is a mark of a subordinate's caution in counseling his superior. Such caution is continually evident in Gower's affirmation of King Richard's superior status and avoidance of direct advice. It is also evident in how he casts even his fictionally mediated scene of counsel as the fulfillment of a vassal's obligation rather than as an elder's rebuke. Finally, it is evident in his self-presentation as the transmitter rather

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[34] Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 283.

than originator of counsel. These precautions are notably absent in royal counsel in Book VI of *Vox Clamantis*.

Gower's changing self-representation as royal counselor between the *Vox Clamantis* and the *Confessio Amantis* finds a possible explanation in Richard's changing political fortunes. Reaching majority in 1387, King Richard substantially rearranged his circle of advisors to exclude a number of prominent noblemen, a move that provoked a forceful counter-reaction stripping the King of many of his powers, including the freedom to appoint councilors as he saw fit.[35] By 1390 Richard II had resumed his full royal powers, and after being berated and constrained by elders, may have taken little pleasure in being addressed with the peremptory authority of a schoolmaster.[36] During this period, Gower completed the *Confessio Amantis*, and whatever the King's actual attitude, the poet may have found it prudent to be more careful than he was in the *Vox Clamantis*.

The change in tone speaks to a crucial change in the political situations with King's Richard's "growing appreciation of the role of the king's entourage as a forum for the display of his majesty," a development influenced by continental courts that were "larger, . . . more civilized and sophisticated," and marked by a "greater preoccupation with ceremony and ritual."[37] This public display of the King's authority did not admit his being lectured by a common clerk in public. This is why, as I will argue in the next section, Gower frames the *Confessio Amantis* as an act of

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[35] Anthony Goodman, "Richard II's Councils," in *Art of Kingship*, 70-73; see note 1.

[36] In May 1389, Richard II announced his majority and his removal of wicked counselors 'by whom the kingdom is oppressed.' Stow, "Richard II in Gower's *Confessio* Amantis," 14.

[37] Saul, "Kingship of Richard II," 39.

service by a courtier licensed by the king's preferment to give counsel in the less ceremonious context of private interaction.

Hence, Gower does not play the *Vox Clamantis*'s lecturing wise man in the *Confessio Amantis.* Rather, he is himself the one counseled by the allegorical figure Genius. A boundary divides their allegorical dialogue in Books I-VIII from the Prologue's dialogue between poet and king; in the former, Gower takes on the fictional persona of *Amans*, while in the latter he appears as his "concrete extraliterary self."[38] Gower makes the most salient feature of the depicted relation between himself and the king his own political subordination and personal loyalty. This distinction is more than a courtier's prudence before a temperamental monarch; this represented relation, as I will argue in the next section, exemplifies just hierarchy and mutual fidelity in specific contrast to the subsequent estates satire's descriptions of faithlessness and strife. At the same time, Gower discloses how the discourse by which he enacts his fidelity and authenticates his counsel resembles the discourse by which traitors, hypocrites, and false counselors dissemble.

3.2.3 The Encounter on the Thames: Preference and Privacy

In representing his relation with the king in the scene on the river, Gower mixes familiarity with deference, but keeps this deference somewhat shy of flattery. Like Walter Map and John of Salisbury, he fashions himself as the kind of courtier who does not strive after the prince's favor, and his humility, disinterestedness, and directness of speech are emblems of his trustworthiness. Satire facilitates the performance of directness; even if its aggression is not directed toward the king, the

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[38] This phrase is from Robert J. Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4. Meyer-Lee is talking about the poetics of authorial self-representation in Lydgate and Hoccleve, the latter of whom I will discuss in the next chapter.

very fact that it discusses problems in the kingdom excuses Gower from the charge of

flattery.

At the same time, his satiric attacks in the Prologue of the *Confessio* against

the wickedness and immorality of others show him by contrast in an idealized light.[39]

Gower distinguishes himself especially from flatterers, hypocrites, and dissemblers,

courtly satire's recurring villains. The trustworthy counselor differentiates himself

from them by his plain-spoken rebukes and his willingness to speak unflattering

truths. Conversely, the prince's receptivity to this honest figure reveals him to be

both morally discerning and secure in his station. The dissemblers catalogued in the

Prologue's estates satire contrast with the ideal of fidelity and honesty embodied by

the counselor's courage to speak openly and the king's magnanimity in hearing it,

ideals enacted in the river scene and fulfilled in the production of the *Confessio*

Amantis itself. In the Prologue, scene of commission and estates satire thus

complement each other.

The commission scene begins and ends with dedications, literary rituals that

affirm poet and king in their respective status. These public, ceremonial

performances set off the private, familiar interaction between them. The discourse of

the encounter has the features of interactions in a relation marked by both preference

and familiarity, but as I will argue, these features actually reinforce the relative status

of poet and king established in the dedication (and by political reality). Here is the

text of the commission scene:

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[39] ". . . it must be emphasized that medieval satirical theory formed the basis of a species of medieval poetry which is distinguished by the fact that its social doctrine is morally constructive, conservative, and earnest." Paul Miller, "John Gower, Satiric Poet," in *Gower's Confessio Amantis: Responses and Reassessments*, ed. A.J. Minnis,(Cambridge: Brewer, 1983), 90.

> I thenke and have it understonde,
> As it bifel upon a tyde,
> As thing which scholde tho bityde—
> Under the toun of newe Troye,
> Which took of Brut his ferste joye,
> In Temse whan it was flowende
> As I by bote cam rowende,
> So as Fortune hir tyme sette,
> My liege lord par chaunce I mette;
> And so bifel, as I cam neigh,
> Out of my bot, whan he me seigh,
> He bad me come into his barge.
> An whan I was with him at large,
> Amonges othre thinges seyde
> He hath this charge upon my leyde,
> And bad me doo my busynesse
> That to his hihe worthinesse
> Som newe thing I scholde booke,
> That he himself it mighte looke
> After the forme of my writyinge.
> And thus upon his comaundyng
> Myn hert is wel the more glad
> To write so as he me bad;[40]

The commission scene is atypical of dedications to mirrors for princes; "while complimentary, [it] comes nowhere near the flowery hyperbole that usually characterizes royal dedications."[41] Its informality seems out of step with what scholars have described as Richard's active cultivation of the ceremonial and sacred character of the royal office at that time.[42] I will account for this by showing how the scene's discourse marks a shift from a public to a private domain of interaction in which a greater degree of informality is permissible. Informality is a feature of

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[40] CA Prol. *34-*54. The asterisk (*) indicates lines from the first recension.

[41] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 253.

[42] See remarks by Nigel Saul, note 36; according to Staley, "That account of a king recognizing a poet and bidding him enter his barge one summer evening does not sound like the Richard of the 1390s, who sat stiffly in hall, looking straight ahead until he summoned a bow with an icy glance." Lynn Staley, "Gower, Richard II, Henry Derby," 74-5.

preferential discourse; it therefore both elevates Gower's status and evokes a situational context in which counsel is appropriate and expected.

Several features of this passage reinforce this preferential familiarity between poet and King. First, Gower evokes a familiar link between London and Troy, between Britain and 'Brut', and this identification references a foundational narrative of the Plantagenet dynasty.[43] The identification of King Richard with the Trojan legend gives a hint of ritual to the courtly interaction, and thus binds the specific interaction to foundational events in a way that avows the essential rightness of its participants' roles. However brief this mark, it affirms Gower's assent to Richard's self-conception and therefore his fidelity to the King. The legendary association suppresses the historical contingency of Richard's rule by transposing the encounter into a narrative temporality outside the flow of everyday events.[44]

Others hear in the reference to Troy a note of ambiguity, even warning.[45] Besides the ambiguous figure of Aeneas, the central fact destabilizing the legendary ideal of Troy is that it fell. In the rest of the Prologue, Gower repeatedly alludes to the working of chance and fortune in his insistence on the accidental, *casual* nature of the encounter: "As it bifel upon a tyde", "So as Fortune hir tyme sette", "par chaunce", "and so bifel."[46] Inseparable from the legend of Troy's glory is its fall

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[43] Bennett discusses the attention King Richard, eager to establish the sacral quality of his kingship, paid to such foundational narratives. Michael Bennett, "Richard II and the Wider Real," in *Arts of Kingship*, 201-202.

[44] Scanlon makes this point at greater length; *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 253.

[45] John Ganim summarizes an argument by Sylvia Federico: "the claim to a *translatio imperii* from ancient Troy . . . was fraught with contradictions. Troy itself stood in for a Rome which was an impossible imperial ideal. . . . These unstable associations often undercut the attempt to renew London as a 'New Troy.'" John M. Ganim, "Gower, Liminality, and the Politics of Space," *Exemplaria* 19 (2007): 7; Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages*, vol. 36, Medieval Cultures (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

[46] CA Prol.*35, *41, *42, *43.

from fortune, and this discordant subtext complicates the mythical allusion's function

as a status-affirming ritual, especially given the concern with falling empires

expressed, for example, in the universal history synopsized later in the Prologue in

Gower's account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.[47]

Notwithstanding these ambiguities, in the immediate context of the encounter

on the river, these references to fortune emphasize the accidental nature of Gower and

King Richard's meeting, and in this way excuse the poet from any accusation that he

was calculatedly lurking on the river, waiting to be spotted by the king, jostling for

royal attention like the typical ambitious courtier. In fact, the king first notices

Gower and 'bids him come into the royal barge' of his own accord.[48] The king's

initiation of the exchange illustrates his preference for Gower, his prerogative in

granting preference, and his final authority over the *Confessio Amantis* as its initial

cause.

After Gower sets the scene, poet and king slip into conversation with an

unceremonious ease suggesting prior acquaintance. Their encounter is casual not

only in the etymological sense of happenstance just described, but in its modern usage

of relaxed and informal:

> And whan I was with him at large,
> Amonges othre thinges seyde
> He hath this charge upon me leyde[49]

Russell Peck glosses "at large" as 'comfortably, without restraint'.[50] The word

relates to *largesse*, the aristocratic virtue of liberality. An aristocratic virtue is

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[47] CA Prol. 585-1087.
[48] CA Prol.*44-*45.
[49] CA Prol. *45-7.
[50] Peck, *Confessio Amantis,* 67.

practiced by superiors on behalf of subordinates; lords are treated with deference, and vassals with largesse. As the prerogative of the lord, the act of preferment that promotes a subordinate to familiarity is an act of generosity. But preference is by definition selective. It implies that while some are preferred, other are excluded from the familiar interaction licensed by preferment. We are thus excluded, like Gower's contemporaries and peers, from knowing what "othre thinges" were said between him and King Richard.

The "charge," the literary commission, emerges to public view from a concealed interaction in an ongoing real-life relation. The existence of this relation and its private, preferential attributes are disclosed to the reader in several ways. Frank Grady points out the curious fact that

> . . . the Thames, then as now, is a commercial waterway, but Gower gives no sense that it is crowded or noisy or smelly; indeed, the river seems quite oddly empty but for the royal barge and Gower's now-abandoned boat.[51]

The barge also, curiously, is empty of a royal entourage, as empty as the river itself. Perhaps this reinforces Scanlon's sense of the setting being "striking" since it "does not occur at court, the nerve center of a monarch's sovereignty."[52] As court was the location of public ceremony, the choice to represent the encounter away from court also evokes familiarity between poet and king. The paucity of circumstantial detail, the omission of any other participants or attendants to the king, Gower's reticence about the 'other things' said, all construct a private and familiar exchange.

Gower's use of indirect discourse to represent this encounter reinforces its preferential qualities, for it implies a greater selectivity than direct reported speech.

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[51] Grady, "Gower's Boat," 5.
[52] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 253.

Gower mentions that 'other things' are said, but not what they are. On the one hand,

the 'privacy' of the encounter illustrates King Richard's authority to bestow

preference as he chooses; on the other hand, it illustrates the poet's tact and discretion,

qualities that make him worthy of preferment. And if this portrayal of a tactful

Gower valorizes him as a courtier, it honors King Richard as having the discernment

to recognize Gower's worth. The represented relation idealizes both participants by

affirming the suitability of each to the role they play and the authenticity of their

regard for one another. Gower's discretion preserves King Richard's privacy and

maintains his public front; his tact, like the book itself, is an act of service and as

much a seal of loyalty as the dedications that bookend the scene.

In the dedication immediately preceding it, Gower declares he will make

> . . . A book for King Richardes sake
> To whom bilongeth my ligeance
> With al myn hertes obeissance
> In al that ever a liege man
> Unto his king may doon or can.[53]

The language of vassalage combines affective (*al myn hertes obeissance*) with

juridical discourse (*ligeance*, *liege man*).[54] Each justifies and naturalizes the other.

The "liege man" is bound by oath and compelled by his desire to do all he can for his

lord. Gower declares his obedience and subjection to the king with this prayer:

> So ferforth I me recomaunde
> To him which al me may comaunde,
> Prayend unto the hihe regne
> Which causeth every king to regne,

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[53] CA Prol.*24-*28.

[54] For a discussion of the centrality of "obeissance" and "ligeance" to King Richard's elaboration of his monarchy, see Nigel Saul, "Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship," *English Historical Review* 110, no. 438 (1995): 854-77.

That his corone longe stonde.[55]

The end-rhymed pair of "I me recomaunde"' with "me may comaunde" aligns the reciprocal rights and obligations of Gower and King Richard; Gower commits himself to the King's keeping and offers obedience in return. His self-recommendation affirms that his preferment is at the king's discretion, just as every king's fortune is at God's discretion. This comparison hallows the feudal relation as a reflection of the 'hihe regne' of God Himself.

After the commission scene's nineteen lines, Gower reaffirms his obligation of loyalty and obedience, and supplements it with an affective discourse that attributes his obedience as much to his warm feelings as to obligation:

> And thus upon his comaundyng
> Myn hert is wel the more glad
> To write so as he me bad;[56]

These dedications do more than perform due obeisance, however; Gower attributes his access to the king to royal preference, the merit of which he demonstrates by his show of loyalty and discretion. By attributing his familiarity with King Richard to the monarch's will, the poet also avoids seeming importunate; it is possible the scene was eventually omitted not because of any break with Richard, but because this measure of caution was insufficient to the monarch's developing self-regard in the early 1390s.

For Grady, the impression that Gower and Richard are alone on the river suggests that the commission scene "is a literary device, a scene that is not so much

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[55] CA Prol.*29-*33.
[56] CA, Prol.*54-*56.

recollected as staged."[57] Yet real-life interactions often possess a staged quality,

especially in a domain like the court where the stakes are so high. I propose that the

scene textualizes the way preferential relations were staged in real-life. Grady argues

that the scene offers a flattering portrait of "a monarch in control of both his kingdom

and himself." [58] It also flatters the poet. In both its informality and exclusion of other

participants, the commission scene represents a relation of private access, intimacy,

affection, familiarity, and trust. By a discourse that evokes these qualities, it

performs a private interaction for a public audience.

Such performances are a part of the fabric of social reality. Erving Goffman,

describing the way members of in-groups represent their affiliation to one another and

their respective roles, refers to interactants who cooperate in the performance of their

mutual roles as 'teammates,' and their cooperative relation he calls a 'performance

team.'

> Among teammates, the privilege of familiarity—which may constitute
> a kind of intimacy without warmth—need not be something of an
> organic kind, slowly developing with the passage of time spent
> together, but rather a formal relationship that is automatically extended
> and received as soon as an individual takes a place on the team.[59]

Representing King Richard and himself as a two-man performance team, Gower

claims for himself the privilege of access to the king even as he maintains the king's

exclusive authority to grant this privilege. This performance is directed to the

secondary audience over-reading this work of counsel.

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[57] Grady, "Gower's Boat," 5.
[58] Grady, "Gower's Boat," 9.
[59] Erving Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 83; Goffman's idea of a performance team resembles the concept of relational model which I have used throughout this dissertation: ". . . an emergent team impression . . . can conveniently be trusted as a fact in its own right, as a third level of fact located between the individual performance on one hand and the total interaction of participants on the other." Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 80.

The care evident in Gower's staging of their interaction reflects the conscious attention which King Richard himself paid to the appearance and effect of his interaction with others. Simon Walker writes:

> The changes in court ceremonial in the final years of Richard's reign embodied, at a practical level . . . an increasing distinction between the king's public and private persons which simultaneously conferred upon him a greater degree of discretion in his courses of action. While his public person became increasingly sacralized, to the extent that courtiers were required to drop to their knees whenever the royal glance lighted upon them, the privilege of familiar access to the king was increasingly personalised, with the king's own will regarded as sufficient . . . to dissolve the barriers of social and ceremonial hierarchy.[60]

In the commission scene, we see precisely this dissolution.

However, I argue that the depicted interaction speaks to more than Gower's immediate political context. Rather than simply accommodating the monumental self-regard of a preening monarch, Gower puts the exigencies of his political situation to the service of his moral-didactic purpose and fashions his representation of the 'performance team' of poet and king into the embodiment of social ideals such as fidelity, discretion, honesty, loyalty, and love. Underscoring the importance of these ideals are the condemnations of deception, dissimulation, and disloyalty which crowd the estates satire to follow.

3.2.4   Credibility and 'Trowthe'

In the Prologue, the king solicits a book from the courtier-poet who obliges with a work of counsel. For Gower, the giving and receiving of counsel binds the body politic to its head:

> For alle resoun wolde this,

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[60] Simon Walker, "Richard II's Views on Kingship," in *Political Culture in Later Medieval England*, ed. Michael J. Braddick (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 145.

> That unto him which the heved is
> The membres buxom scholden bowe,
> And he scholde ek her trowthe allowe,
> With al his herte and make hem chiere,
> For good consail is good to hiere.[61]

The good king accepts "good consail" in good cheer as the subject's expression of his "trowthe". The word "trowthe" encapsulates an ethical ideal of courtly social relations shared by Gower and his contemporaries. In the Middle Ages, the primary meaning of 'trowthe' was relational fidelity and mutual trust (compare 'betrothed'), although R.F. Green has recently argued that in Gower's period this relational definition was "challenged by the intellectual notion of truth as correspondence to reality."[62] If Gower was aware of this challenge, he reconciled the intellectual and relational notions of truth in the person of the truth-telling counselor. True words correspond to the things they name just as the words of true people reflect their intentions.

Gower founds his authority on a consequent tautology; his loyalty to King Richard and the reliability of his counsel confirm one another. 'Good consail' is identical with 'trowthe'. The warmth and affection that pervade preferential discourse ("With al his herte and make hem chiere") are both cause and result of "trowthe". Since counsel gives discursive form to "trowthe", it is girded by the affective language of preference. Sanctioned by the relational values entailed by

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[61] CA Prol.151-156.

[62] R.F. Green, *A Crisis of Truth. Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 2-4. The phrase summing up Green's central tenet is from David Gary Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 24.

"trowthe", good counsel and genuine affection legitimate preference as the ordering

principle of courtly society.[63]

However, the same relational context which authorizes counsel as 'trowthe'

also allows for distrust, feigned affection, and deceit. If "trowthe" is manifest in

discourse, it can be represented in signs, and therefore can be falsified. The function

of the estates satire in the *Confessio Amantis* is to draw out this risk of dissimulation

and by representing it, to explore but ultimately suppress it. For this reason, Gower

shares the preoccupation seen in other works of satire-counsel with flattery and

hypocrisy. His self-representation as a true counselor requires the definition and

identification of false counselors. As David Gary Shaw describes late medieval

English society, "fidelity worked to define the good person, the well-tended

relationship, but most often showed up in the negative discriminations of morality."[64]

"Negative discriminations" show up in Gower's estates satire not only on account of

the "perceived success [of vice, corruption, etc.] . . . in daily affairs" but because the

speaker who makes such discriminations exempts himself and the sympathetic

reader.[65]

If counsel, as a feudal obligation, confirms author and reader in their social

standing, satire confirms them in their moral standing by excluding the targets of its

rebuke from interaction. The following lines may be seen as a challenge to the reader,

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[63] It is perhaps Gower's deftness in representing himself as party to preferential relations, as a
perpetual insider, that rendered him suspicious to a later age that had come to see the operation of
preference and personal affective ties in government as a source of corruption. On Gower's reputation
as a political operator from the eighteenth well into the twentieth century, see chapter one of Fisher,
John Gower, 1-37.

[64] Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions*, 25.

[65] Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions*, 200.

but if a relational context of trust is already present, it actually defuses the threat of

rebuke:

> Bot what as eny man accuse,
> This mai reson of trowthe excuse;
> The vice of hem that ben ungoode,
> Is no reproef unto the goode.[66]

Gower's claim to moral authority, as Scanlon points out, "depends on the wicked, or

negative example."[67] But this dependence operates not only in the narrative exempla

of true and false counselors found in Book VII, but also in the Prologue's estates

satire.[68] This estates satire furnishes Gower with contrastive examples near at hand,

present in his day; in comparison to these he proves himself trustworthy.[69]

The *Confessio Amantis*'s estates satire aids Gower's construction of his moral

authority. It also contributes to the poem's moral-didactic purpose by instructing the

reader about the political and moral threat of dissimulation. These two goals are

closely related. The possibility of dissimulated authority is a consequence of the fact

that "authority . . . is discursively constructed."[70] In his use of satire to distinguish

himself as a true counselor from false ones, Gower reveals himself to be self-

conscious about the discursive construction of authority. Rival claimants to the same

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[66] CA Prol.487-490.

[67] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 247-8.

[68] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 261; On the problem presented by counsel in Book VII, see also Judith Ferster, *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

[69] We are accustomed to expect from satire some ironic or humorous blunting of the resultant aggression, but this was, if anything, incidental to medieval views of satire; "[Medieval] satire is that type of ethical verse, ranging in tone between bitter indignation, mocking irony, and witty humour, which in forthright, unadorned terms censures and corrects vices in society and advocates virtues, eschewing slander of individuals but sparing no guilty party, not even the poet himself." Paul Miller, "John Gower, Satiric Poet," 82; see chap. 1, n. 49.

[70] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 247-8.

authority challenge the performability of 'trowthe', as the Western Schism beginning

in 1378 made evident to Gower and his contemporaries:

> In holy cherche of such a slitte
> Is for to rewe unto ous alle;
> God grante it mote wel befalle
> Towardes him whiche hath the trowthe.[71]

This prayer is at the same time a declaration of skepticism, acknowledging the

undecidability of the question based on external signifiers, but suggests Gower's

persistent faith that, although two rival popes perform one unique office, one must

necessarily be dissembling and one must be true. Gower's condemnations of

predatory knights, prideful clerics, false counselors, and other villains below papal

status treat the political and moral dangers of dissimulation in each estate.

Those acting in these roles have compromised the authority inherent to them;

Gower grounds his authority as counselor in his relation with the king, at once the

actual intended reader and a model of ethical self-sovereignty with whom other

readers are called to identify. The text's authority, its "trowthe", rests in the active

cooperation of its reader to whom it offers the enticing subject position of sovereign.

In accepting this subject position, readers both ratify and share in the author's moral

authority

The fidelity, affection, and reciprocal obligation of the author–reader relation

constructed by the commission scene stands in contrast to the *debat* which scars

society at large.[72] In court, rivals seek to discredit one another. This immediate

context motivates Gower's anxiety about his words being distorted by deceitful and

envious rivals:

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[71] CA Prol.338-341.
[72] The word "debat" and its variants occur eight times in the Prologue.

> And eek my fere is wel the lasse
> That non envye schal compasse
> Without a reasonable wite
> To feyne and blame that I write.[73]

This fear of distortion appears already in the Latin verses that open *Confessio Amantis*:

> *Ossibus ergo carens que conterit ossa loquelis*
> *Absit, et interpres stet procul oro malus.*[74]

Gower preemptively discredits dissembling rivals who, 'lacking bones,' are dangerous because they offer no stable self-performance, no reliable correspondence between their words and thoughts, but can still discredit Gower, 'break his bones' with their speech and falsely claim the authority he deserves. The reader's cooperation is required because of the interpretive crisis generated by the symmetry between Gower and his imagined rival, the *malus interpres*, each discrediting the other and seeking to occupy the same authoritative position.

Hence, the commission scene's enactment of a private domain of interaction that excludes third parties is motivated not only by Gower's desire to appear discreet, as I argued in the last section, but is justified by the lurking threat of the *malus interpres*, the wicked interpreter. It is specifically this figure, in all his forms, that the text excludes, for he cannot twist words he does not hear. Of course, given the very public nature of the *Confessio Amantis*, this putative privacy is no more than a literary effect and strategic gesture. Gower conceived his poem in explicitly monumental terms with a readership continuing into posterity:

> Of hem that writen ous tofore

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[73] CA Prol.*57-*60; See chapter two's discussion of John of Salisbury's *Entheticus maior*.
[74] "Therefore make absent the one who, lacking bones, breaks bones with speech, and let the wicked interpreter stand far off." [trans. mine]

> The bokes duelle, and we therfore
> Ben tawht of that was write tho:
> Forthi good is that we also
> In oure tyme among ous hiere
> Do wryte of newe some matiere,
> Essampled of these olde wyse,
> So that it myhte in such a wyse,
> Whan we ben dede and elleswhere,
> Beleve to the worldes eere
> In tyme comende after this.[75]

In combining public and private discourse, Gower necessarily risks his words'
exposure to the distortions of the *malus interpres*. In the prayer concluding the scene
of commission, Gower recapitulates the hope expressed in the Latin verse at the
Prologue's opening that his words will not be distorted, and once more distinguishes a
good, cooperative reader from a malicious one:

> A gentil herte his tunge stilleth
> That is malice noon distilleth,
> But preyseth that is to be preised;
> But he that hath his word unpeysed
> And handeleth onwrong every thing,
> I pray unto the heven king
> Fro suche tunges He me schilde.[76]

The malicious rivals whose words are *unpeysed*, "unleashed," perhaps, from the
restraints of truth, conscience, or reason, threaten to disrupt the relational context on
which Gower rests his authority. [77]

> And natheles the world is wilde
> Of such jangling, and what bifalle,
> My kinges heste schal nought falle,
> That I, in hope to deserve
> His thonk, ne schal his wil observe.[78]

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[75] CA Prol.1-11.
[76] CA Prol.*61-*67.
[77] "unpeysed" suggests also an imbalance in the scales, a frequent sympbol of corruption and fraud in medieval satire. See CA Prol.541 ("There is deceit in his balance")
[78] CA Prol. *68-*72.

The *jangling* of his rivals declares that whatever happens, Gower will not fulfill his

obligation and by true obedience merit the king's gratitude.[79] In other words, rivals

accuse Gower of dissimulation.

Who are these rivals? Who is the *malus interpres*? The estates satire

following the commission scene exposes dissimulators to rebuke in each estate—

nobility, clergy, and commons. Each estate's version of the *malus interpres* twists

language and sows discord for personal gain. According to the Latin verse at the

beginning of the section satirizing the nobility, the *tempus presens* is a time when

"hidden hatred presents a painted face of love, and clothes under false peace an age at

arms."[80] Deceit corrupts the pristine condition of the lay nobility, when word and

deed were one:

> Of mannes herte the corage
> Was schewed thanne in the visage;
> The word was lich to the conceite
> Withoute semblant of deceite.[81]

Visage and *corage*, face and feeling, no longer accord.   Dissimulation conceals a

venality that compromises the lay government's sacred purpose of administering

justice and protecting the weak, as does the duplicity of practitioners of the law:

> And lawe hath take hire double face,
> So that justice out of the weie
> With ryhtwisnesse is gon aweie.[82]

If Gower finds fault with society's secular leadership, he dwells at greater

length on the corruption of the clergy, whose falseness and venality threaten not only

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[79] The word *jangling*, with its association with the coarser verse of lower-class poets, sets up once again a symmetry between Gower and his rival that puts the latter to advantage. cf. *Piers. Plowman.* B.x.31 "Iaperes and iogeloures and iangelers of gestes." OED.
[80] "*Nuncque latens odium vultum depingit amoris, Paceque sub ficta tempus ad arma tegit.*" trans. Andrew Galloway, in Peck, *Confessio Amantis*, Vol. 1.
[81] CA Prol., 111-114.
[82] CA Prol.130-132.

the material but the spiritual welfare of those in their charge. Though pastors speak

and teach well, heresy creeps among the laity because pastors neglect to protect them:

> Lo, how thei feignen chalk for chese,
> For though thei speke and teche wel,
> Thei don hemself therof no del.
> For if the wolf com in the weie,
> Her gostly staf is thanne aweie,
> Wherof thei scholde her flock defende;[83]

Although they speak and teach well, these churchmen do not do well. Gower blames

their failing on "coveitise and worldes Pride," on account of which their actions as

churchmen contradict their sacred message. Like the nobility, their *visage* and *corage*

are divided:

> Ther ben also somme, as men seie,
> That folwen Simon at hieles,
> Whos carte goth upon the whieles
> Of coveitise and worldes Pride,
> And holy cherche goth beside,
> Which scheweth outward a visage
> Of that is noght in the corage.
> For if men loke in holy cherche,
> Betwen the word and that their werche
> Ther is a full gret difference.[84]

Because of the 'gret difference' between outward appearance and intention, the clergy,

like the nobility, measures up poorly against its forebears:

> To thenke upon the daies olde,
> The lif of clerkes to beholde,
> Men sein how that thei were tho
> Ensample and reule of alle tho
> Which of wisdom the vertu soughten.[85]

In bygone days, the clergy did not mix themselves up in the world's affairs, "the court

of worldly regalie," because "it thoghte hem thanne noght honeste."[86] Having now

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[83] CA Prol.416-420.
[84] CA Prol.442-451.
[85] CA Prol.193-197.

fallen from their pristine virtue, they no longer fulfill their role as "ensample and

reule of alle."[87] Rampant pride and hypocrisy have driven the church to schism;

Gower takes no side on this controversy but prays that "God grante it mote wel

befalle / Towardes him whiche hath the trowthe."[88]

Broadsides against clerical hypocrisy are medieval satire's most frequent topic,

but in the Prologue of the *Confessio Amantis* they serve the special purpose of

insulating the author from the charge of hypocrisy. The disorder of the clergy is

emblematic of a more general social strife: "The world stand evere upon debat, / So

may be seker non astat."[89] Against this division stands the idealized preferential dyad

grounded in 'trowthe' embodied by poet and King. This pair, at least, proves that

deceit, though widespread, is not universal, a fact which allows for the possibility of

the poet's own credibility. Gower notes that

> The vice of hem that ben ungoode,
> Is no reproef unto the goode.
> For every man hise oghne werkes
> Schal bere, and thus as of the clerkes
> The goode men ben to comende,
> And alle these othre God amende.[90]

I discussed above how this passage excuses the reader from blame; read in the context

of the estates satire, we see that it also excuses the author. "Reson of trowthe"

excuses the good man, while the bad may yet enjoy God's amendment; the

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[86] CA Prol.219, 216.
[87] CA Prol.196.
[88] CA Prol.340-1.
[89] CA Prol.567-8.
[90] CA Prol.489-494.

juxtaposition of the commission scene with the estates satire depicts an emblematic

community of the good encroached on all sides by the wicked.[91]

It is especially crucial that Gower distinguish himself from the false

counselors and hypocrites for two reasons. First, claims to honesty, humility, and

loyalty may as easily be made by false rivals. Second, he is, like them, a provider of

moral counsel. How does one tell the true pope from the false? The true counselor

from the false? Gower presents both dilemmas in the belief that one of the two must

be true, but the symmetry between Gower and his dissembling rival nevertheless

provokes an ethical and interpretive crisis for the reader because of the distorted

judgment of the "world."

> The world as of his propre kynde
> Was evere untrewe, and as the blynde
> Improprelich he demeth fame,
> He blameth that is noght to blame
> And preiseth that is noght to preise.
> Thus when he schall the thinges peise,
> Ther is deceipte in his balance
> And al is that the variance
> Of ouse, that schold ous betre avise.[92]

Gower responds to this crisis by aligning himself and the reader in a community of

shared judgment and mutual regard. Addressing his lay audience with the use of the

first person plural "ous", Gower groups himself with the victims of corrupt clerics.

Echoing the first line of the poem ("Of hem that writen ous tofore . . ."), Gower

represents himself as a fellow reader in need of discernment and counsel.[93] This is a

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[91] CA Prol.488.

[92] CA Prol.535-543.

[93] This parallels his subordinate position in the dialogue with Genius, who in Book One attacks dissemblers with magisterial directness and certitude (CA I.594-599)::
> Mi sone, an ypocrite is this:
> A man which feigneth conscience,
> As thogh it were all innocence

gesture of humility, and if clerical corruption is caused by pride, Gower's profession

of humility is a claim to moral authority, both here and in the humility topos of the

Prologue's opening Latin verses: *scola parva labor minimusque / Causant quo*

minimus ipse minora canam. He claims that his humility distinguishes him from his

prideful enemies. In the first recension of the Prologue, it is by appeal to his

relational context that he endeavors to validate this claim.

    For Gower, the world's ability to *peise* (weigh) words and deeds rightly is

distorted by the malicious tongue of a clergy corrupted by pride. Therefore, Gower's

humility betokens honesty, clarity, reliable judgment, and trustworthy counsel. In the

commission scene, Gower's humble subordination of his poetic authority to the

king's sovereign authority is a gesture of humility that pays appropriate deference to

his intended reader and creates a relational context of "trowthe" in distinction to the

venality and deception of Gower's rivals.

    But the symmetry between Gower and the false counselors and preachers

remains; in declaring his purpose of providing moral counsel, he makes the symmetry

explicit and invites comparison. Of false preachers he writes:

> Who that here wordes understode,
> It thenkth thei wolden do the same;
> Bot yet betwen ernest and game
> Ful ofte it torneth otherwise.
> With holy tales thei devise
> How meritoire is thilke dede. . .[94]

> Withoute, and is noght so withinne;
> And doth so for he wolde winne
> Of his desire the vein astat.

[94] CA Prol.460-465.

"Betwen ernest and game" recalls Gower's "middel weie . . . Somwhat of lust,

somewhat of lore."[95] The false preachers telling "holy tales" superficially resemble

the counselor figure of Genius:

> And natheless good is to hiere
> Such thing wherof a man may lere
> That vertu is acordant,
> > . . .
> I rede ensample amonges alle,
> Wherof to kepe wel an ere
> It oghte pute a man in fere.[96]

As a teller of moral exempla (even if through the mouthpiece of Genius), Gower risks

resembling hypocritical clerics who tell "holy tales."

3.2.5   Exemplarity, Authority, and Courtly Self-Performance

The similarity between Gower as an author of moral tales and the false clerics

who tell holy tales provokes a crisis of trust. As William Robins puts it, "the

narrating voice of the Prologue takes upon itself the office of instruction vacated by

the contemporary clergy."[97] In taking their office for himself, Gower invites the

scrutiny that his satire visits on false clerics. He distinguishes himself from them, I

argue above, by performing his humility and good faith, especially in his self-

representation in the commission scene. Even in the revised Prologue, Gower's self-

description as a 'burel clerk' inflects his authority as counselor with a gesture of

supplication; 'burel', which Peck glosses as 'lay', literally means course and plain,

yet by calling himself a clerk he lays claim to the cleric's authority.

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[95] CA Prol.17-19.
[96] CA I.453-462.
[97] William Robins, "Romance, Exemplum, and the Subject of the *Confessio Amantis*." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 19 (1997):175-6.

In revealing the qualities that distinguish him from false rivals, Gower also calls attention to similarities. Gower, involved throughout his life in the domain of court where the stakes of self-performance were so high, was made crucially aware of the split between *visage* and *corage* in both others and in himself. This self-consciousness manifests itself at the beginning of Book One in a striking incongruity between text and gloss. Declaring his intention to give counsel as one who has suffered on account of love, Gower offers himself and his experiences as an example for others:

> For in good feith this wolde I rede,
> That every man ensample take
> Of wisdom which him is betake,
> And that he wot of good aprise
> To teche it forth, for such emprise
> Is for to preise;[98]

Nearby on the page, Gower glosses, "*Hic quasi in persona aliorum, quos amor alligat, fingens se auctor esse Amantem, varias eorum passiones variis huius libri distinccionibus per singula scribere proponit.*"[99] "*Se fingens*," which Peck translates as 'fashions himself', equally means 'pretends to be;' the latter possibility is reinforced by *quasi in persona aliorum*, 'as if in the persona of others.' The gloss assures us that this fakery is moral, for Gower is only pretending to be one whom *amor* binds in order to describe the effects of passions.

Gower exposes rather than conceals his dissimulation, creating instability in his performance of authority. If we believe the gloss, we accept that Gower's textual self-performance and his actual persona are divided, a possibility that contaminates

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[98] CA I.78-83.

[99] Latin marginalia, ll. 59 . "Here the author, fashioning himself to be the Lover as if in the role of those others whom love binds, proposes to write about their various passions one by one in the various sections of this book." trans. Andrew Galloway, in Peck, *Confessio Amantis*, vol. 1.

the clerical authority he constructs in the Prologue. Discussing the contradictions

between the *Confessio*'s narrative exempla and their interpretations in the frame's

dialogue, Robins observes that

> Aware that the reader's internal disposition will determine the
> interpretation of his poem, Gower's rhetorical strategy (and his ethical
> gambit) is to prompt his readers to consider the logic and built-in
> limits of the patterns by which they conceive experience. . ..[100]

These patterns include modes of self-performance and relational models as well as the

narratives studied by Scanlon and Robins, and which are equally available to a

literary representation that effects the "contradictory enactment of various kinds of

discursive authority."[101] Gower's ethical gambit extends to his authorial self-

representation; rather than concealing the contradictory ways in which his authority is

enacted, he exposes its discursive foundations by inviting the comparison of his

position to that of society's numerous dissemblers who likewise spin their authority

out of words. The "problematic obstacle . . . of his poem" is, in the Prologue,

Gower's resemblance to those from whom he would distinguish himself, and Gower

develops his authorial persona's contradictory resemblance to dissimulators in order

to engage "the will and reflection of a listener, even while asserting that listener's

self-responsibility."[102]

In the Prologue, this authorial persona is marked by a number of complexities

and incongruities, including Gower's dual roles as author and courtier, individual

poet and popular voice, satirist and counselor. In the first recension, the commission

scene negotiates these incongruities by framing his text as an interaction taking place

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[100] Robins, "Subject of the *Confessio Amantis*,"177.
[101] Robins, "Subject of the *Confessio Amantis*," 179.
[102] Robins, "Subject of the *Confessio Amantis*," 165.

both in public and private, fixed in time and tied to a mythic history, in the King's

presence but not in court. The court is a social environment where the pretence of

self-fashioning (*se fingens*) is an elementary condition of interaction. The court is

only a good moral, social, and political authority when *trowthe* makes the performed

self correspond to the inner self, when *visage* reflects *corage*. Authority may be

constructed by discourse, but discourse, finally, is grounded in lived relations. True

authority is based in relational *trowthe*. Gower situates his own 'trowthe' in the

context of his relation with King Richard, but renders this context relative to the

absolute context of God's covenantal relationship with humanity. He concludes his

Prologue with a prayer in which he looks to God's court, where there is no privacy,

dissimulation, hidden counsel, or debate.

> But thilke Lord which al may kepe,
> To whom no consail may ben hid,
> Upon the world which is betid,
> Amende that whereof men pleigne
> With trewe hertes and with pleine,
> And reconcile love ageyn,
> As he which is king sovereign
> Of al the worldes governaunce.[103]

This prayer looks toward judgment day as the reconciliation of appearance to reality.

Against the distorted judgment of the world, to which the royal court finally belongs,

God's judgment admits no defect.

3.3   Preference, Prerogative, and Prowess in the Lyrics of Guilhem de Peitieus

3.3.1   Overview

John Gower (1330-1408) and Guilhem of Peitieus (1076-1124) differ in

character as much as circumstance.[104] The wealth, population and social complexity

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[103] CA Prol.180-187.

of Gower's late fourteenth-century England vastly exceeded Guilhem's early twelfth-

century Aquitaine. Gower, the London citizen whose talent elevated him from

genteel commoner to royal courtier, was a sophisticated moralist, prudent and earnest.

It is unlikely he would have said much good about Guilhem, a voluptuary warlord

whose scorn for the church's moral authority was chronicled by contemporaries.[105]

Born to an ancient martial aristocracy that changed as slowly as the agrarian world it

ruled, Guilhem locked horns throughout his life with the church. What the reformers

of Guilhem's generation saw as the restoration of the primitive church's dignity, he

saw as a novel encroachment on his authority.

Yet for all their differences, both Guilhem and John Gower sought to effect a

political reality by the management of their authorial personae. Guilhem's verse, like

Gower's, witnesses and engages the ideological contests of its day. Both poets write

about the court for a courtly audience. Both bring into play the ways in which "forms

of political and institutional authority both enable and are defined by the performative

power of language."[106] Each depicts himself and his intended reader in a preferential

relation by using the social rhetoric proper to such relations in court. In this way,

each not only performs but enlarges the mode of discursive authority appropriate to

his station.

As I discussed above, Anne Middleton argues that Gower's writing

contributes to the movement of literature's social context from a private courtly

audience to a 'public' readership. In contrast, we may be sure that courtly poetry at

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[104] Scholarship inconsistently refers to Guilhem (pr. GIL-yem) by the various cognates of his name: William, Guillaume, Wilhelm, Guglielmo, etc.. I follow Robert Taylor in using the Occitan name attested in the manuscripts.

[105] See note 115 below.

[106] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 257.

the beginning of the twelfth-century "was still completely imbedded in socially

ranked communication forms . . . that shaped, from case to case, those texts that have

come down to us."[107] I will now look at some of these 'socially ranked forms' in

Guilhem's "Companho" verses, three lyrics begun with the ringing address to his

readers as "companho," or feudal retainers.[108] This one word evokes a specific and

recognizable relation between Guilhem and his reader that provides the basis for his

subsequent construction of an authoritative political and poetic persona.   However

much Guilhem and Gower differ in social context, literary style, moral sensibility, or

in the relative social ranks they ascribe to self and reader, both authors textualize the

rhetoric of social interaction by means of similar elements: status-affirming verbal

rituals, variation between public and private modes of interaction, and the lurking

figure of the dissembling rival, and both incorporate these elements in the

combination of satire and counsel.

3.3.2   Poetic and Political Authority

Guilhem de Peitieus's modern critical reception reveals a continuous interest

in the connections between the poetic corpus and the life of the so-called 'first

troubadour'. Considerably more evidence survives about Guilhem than other

troubadours, especially those of the first two generations (ca. 1100-1150), probably

because of his exalted social status. Guilhem was the seventh count of Poitiers and

ninth duke of the Aquitaine, a powerful magnate, vassal only to the King of France,

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[107] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "Pathologies in the System of Literature," in *Making Sense in Life and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 250.
[108] For those unfamiliar with Old Occitan, the nominative case of most nouns is counter-intuitive: the singular has an "s" at the end (*companhos*), but the plural does not (*comphanho*).

Louis the Fat, whose power in the early twelfth-century was still largely restricted to the Ile-de-France and whose territory was actually exceeded by Guilhem's.

Though Guilhem once acknowledges that he is vassal to the king of France, this is only to say that he is subordinate *only* to the king.[109] Guilhem never himself plays the role of courtier. In the *companho* lyrics especially, his footing is that of a ruler holding court in private chamber or camp, amusing himself and an exclusive, high-born male entourage with ribald humor that ridicules his enemies and intimidates his friends. His ease with his companions portrays him as confident of his station and secure in his power—generous, funny, and personable to those elected to familiarity. Their discussions of horses, forestry, and other practical concerns of the lay nobility provide an occasion for spoof or parody, the verbal irony of sexual puns. Irony and humor result from the incongruity between the low-stakes private domain of eros and the high-stakes public domain of politics and warfare.

But the joking and the 'dirty talk' do not level the hierarchy between author and reader. Shifting from courtly ceremony to private relaxation, the performance of Guilhem's authority is altered but never relinquished. Guilhem's *companho* lyrics mingle political and erotic discourses, and the addressee, as Guilhem's companion, is called to accept the continuity of Guilhem's power through both domains. Just as importantly, the addressee is summoned to defer to Guilhem's authority to define exactly what type of interaction is in play.

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[109] 1.14; "E·l reis de cui ieu tenc m'onor," ("The king from whom I hold my fief."); Enumeration of lyrics and line numbers follows the edition of Gerald Bond, *The Poetry of William VII, Count of Poitiers, IX Duke of Aquitaine*, ed. Gerald Bond, Vol. 4, Garland Library of Medieval Literature (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1982).

What political factors motivated the performance of this vivid persona? Despite Guilhem's great power and rank, he perhaps experienced a foundational insecurity about his position. His life was embroiled in dynastic and ecclesiastic power politics from its beginning, as the marriage of his parents was only legitimized by the church four years after his birth. His career as ruler from adolescence to death in his sixth decade was marked by conflict with the church, territorial struggle, and participation in a disastrous crusading sortie in 1101.[110] For decades, he pressed a claim to sovereignty over Toulouse through his wife, Phillipa of Toulouse, which was unsuccessful in the end.[111] For all these reasons, Guilhem "made surprisingly little impact on his age" and his influence outlived his lifespan chiefly in his lyrics.[112] Guilhem, grandfather of Eleanor of Aquitaine, was on the losing side at the beginning of a century-long struggle between the declining world of the Occitan-speaking nobility and the ascending powers of English and French monarchies and a re-invigorated church, and he foreshadowed the doomed nobility of Provence and Gascoigne in championing local custom and his personal lay authority over the claims of those centralizing authorities.

To the monastic chronicler William of Malmsbury, Guilhem was a hissing villain. He describes Guilhem drawing a sword and threatening the Bishop of Poitiers when threatened with excommunication. When the bishop offers himself to martyrdom, Guilhem pronounces him unworthy of his hatred and sheathes his sword,

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[110] Robert A. Taylor, "Guilhem De Peitieus: An Assessment of What We Know and Don't Know About the 'First Troubadour'," in *«Contez Me Tout»: mélanges de langue et de littérature médiévales offerts à Herman Braet*, eds. Pascale Dumont Catherine Bel and Frank Willaert (Louvain: Éditions Peeters, 2006), 875-893.

[111] Ruth Harvey, "The Wives of the 'First Troubadour', Duke William IX of Aquitaine," *Journal of Medieval History* 19 (1993): 307-25.

[112] Taylor, "Guilhem de Peitieus," 882.

refusing to 'send him to paradise.'[113] William also recounts how Guilhem established

an "abbey of whores", possibly in mockery of the convent Robert of Arbrissel

established for noblewomen (and in which Guilhem's estranged wife Phillipa

eventually took refuge).[114] Amid the monk William's chiding, he shares an anecdote

about the cause of Guilhem's first excommunication that presents the sharp-witted

figure recognizable in the poems:

> Also, when he had driven away his legal wife, he carried off the wife
> of a certain viscount of his, whom he lusted after so much that he
> inserted the likeness of the little hussy on his shield, repeating that he
> wished to bear her in battle just as she carried him on the dining
> couch.[115]

 Orderic Vitalis presents a more measured, almost admiring description. Whereas for

William of Malmsbury Guilhem was *fatuus* and *lubricus*, Orderic describes him as

iocundus and *lepidus*, and describes how he regaled kings and magnates "*rithmicis*

versibus cum facetis modulationibus", "using rhythmic verses with skillful

modulations."[116]

Scholars have recently questioned the veracity of monastic chroniclers openly

hostile to Guilhem. According to Robert Taylor,

> It has been recognized more and more clearly that the figure of the
> historical Guilhem (found in charters and other official documents and
> letters) is to be distinguished from the legendary personage created by

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[113] Gerald Bond, ed. *The Poetry of William VII, Count of Poitiers, IX Duke of Aquitaine* (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1982), 129-30. Gerald Bond includes in his edition and translation of Guilhem's poems an appendix of primary historical sources related to Guilhem.

[114] Bond, *Poetry of William*, 120; On the connection to Robert of Arbrissel first pointed out by Bezzola in 1940, see Laura Kendrick, *The Game of Love: Troubadour Wordplay* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 135; Reto R. Bezzola, "Guillaume IX et les origines de l'amour courtois," *Romania* 66 (1940), 145-237; On Guilhem's stormy relationship with Phillipa of Toulouse, see Harvey, "The Wives of the 'First Troubadour'", 307-25.

[115] "Legitima quoque uxore depulsa, vicecomitis cujusdam conjugem surripuit, quam adeo ardebat ut clypeo suo simulacrum mulierculae insereret; perinde dictitans se illam velle ferre in praelio, sicut illa portabat eum in triclinio." Bond, *Poetry of William VII*, 128-129; Text is Bond's, translation is my own.

[116] Bond, *Poetry of William VII*, 120.

> the Latin historiographers for their own purposes, and again from the poetic icon called *lo coms de Peitieus* created in the thirteenth century by the makers of the chansonniers and the *vida*, and all three of these from the multiple poetic personae that we would like to analyze and explain in modern scholarship.[117]

Guilhem himself cultivated his poetic persona, authored the mythology that surrounded him, and, especially in the *companho* poems, he did so as a projection of his political persona. He played the "legendary personage" sketched by the chroniclers in his poetry as he is reported to have done in face-to-face interaction. Guilhem himself evokes the continuity between prince and poet, life and work. No common *jongleur,* he surely knew that his status inflected his audience's reception of his work. He exploited their awareness to effect a poetic persona which he could wield in the political sphere. As Bond puts it,

> Poet and Count occupied the same politico-cultural center and shared the same signs of power and prestige that surrounded him wherever he held court. To 'publish' songs was an unavoidably political act for Count Guilhem. His poetry was a kind of mediation between his self and his world, half public, half private . . .[118]

Guilhem was unlikely to have been the first to compose verses in Occitan; Bond suggests that his lyrics survive on account of his "easy access to the agents and tools of writing in his own chancellery."[119] It is on account of this chancellery, of course, that we can discern continuities between the poet and the count. Moreover, Guilhem's lyrics may represent a new attitude toward literacy among secular magnates.

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[117] Taylor, "Guilhem De Peitieus, 884.

[118] Bond, "introduction," xviii; Greenblatt's description of a sixteenth century in which "art does not pretend to autonomy; the written word is self-consciously embedded in specific communities, life situations, structures of power" holds at least as true for the Middle Ages. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 7.

[119] Bond, "Introduction," lvii.

Other scholars have discussed the transforming and transformative role of writing among the lay nobility of the period. Laura Kendrick describes how "some secular lords imitated ecclesiastics and began to use the new technology" in order that they might compete with the church's use of writing to expand its holdings and influence.[120] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht sees Guilhem's inscription of profane and vernacular songs on ink and parchment as an "act of transgression," "ostentatiously [arrogating]" that "which the clerics had protected as their privilege" for the purpose of decidedly non-clerical messages, such as boasts about adultery.[121]

But Guilhem's verses, in being written down, claim power for their author in more ways than their challenge to the clerical monopoly on writing. For Guilhem, writing was not simply a way to appropriate or subvert a clerical mode of discursive authority, but a medium into which he could extend the kind of authoritative performance in which he was already practiced in spoken interactions with inferiors. Like the charters that issued from his chancellery, the *companho* poems textualize relational discourses that enact "lines of power, family, lordship, and fidelity." [122] In the next section I will look closely at how and to what end this power is used.

3.3.3 The *Companho* Lyrics

Eleven lyrics of Guilhem de Peitieus survive. The fourth lyric is his famous nonsense poem, *Farai un vers de dreit nien* ("I will make a poem about exactly

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[120] Laura Kendrick, *The Game of Love: Troubadour Wordplay* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 13.

[121] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "The Transgression(s) of the First Troubadour," *Stanford French Review* 14 (1990), 119; and "Pathologies in the System of Literature," in *Making Sense in Life and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 253.

[122] Gerald A. Bond "Introduction", in *The Poetry of William VII, Count of Poitiers, Ix Duke of Aquitaine*, ed. Geral Bond, Vol. 4, Garland Library of Medieval Literature (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1982), xxi. Cf. Brian Stock's discussion of the textualization of feudal relations at Guilhem IX's time in the first chapter of *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

nothing"), the fifth is a dirty story, and lyrics six through ten are early examples of the kind of love lyric Gaston Paris would characterize with the term *amour courtois*. In these poems, Guilhem addresses not male companions, but an unspecified woman. In the eleventh lyric, the poet assumes a mature and reflective persona, repenting his sins, renounces worldly pleasures, and voicing a moving concern for the welfare of his son. My discussion of Guilhem, however, will focus on three lyrics which most explicitly connect Guilhem's poetic persona with his political role. These poems begin with a feudal term of address, *companho*, or 'companion.' Number one is *Companho, farai un vers tot covinen* ("Companions, I shall make a song that's very well made"), number two is *Compaigno, non pus mudar qu'eu no m'effrei* ("Companions, I cannot help being upset"), and number three, *Companho, tant ai agutz d'avols conres* ("Companions, I have had so much bad equipment").[123]

In his influential edition, Alfred Jeanroy saw these poems as an autobiographical sequence that reflected developments in the poet's life.[124] Scholars have followed Jeanroy in seeing the *companho* lyrics, with their sexual boasting and evocation of playful male camraderie, as the product of Guilhem's youth. Laura Kendrick alternatively suggests that Guilhem, called in charters *Guillelmus iunior* into his forties, cultivated a youthful persona in his poetry as in real life, and by this persona, "claimed the license of youth to engage in prankish and outrageous actions and works that contested authority on all levels."[125]

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[123] On citation of the lyrics, see note 107. Translations mostly follow Bond's, with one notable exception; Bond translates the word "companho" as "comrades", for reasons I will discuss below, this term is too egalitarian in its connotations to accurately describe the relation of vassalage it implies.
[124] Alfred Jeanroy, ed., *Les chansons de Guillaume IX, Duc D'aquitaine (1071-1127)* (Paris: Champion, 1913, Reprint, 1964).
[125] Kendrick, *Troubadour Wordplay*, 121.

Yet in his lyrics Guilhem only contests the authority of others; his own he

constantly seeks to secure and advance. For Gerald Bond, the *companho* lyrics

reflect the young count's political struggle to secure a patrimony inherited as an

adolescent and contested by rivals and aggressors.[126] As such, the persona cultivated

in these three lyrics is proud, aggressive, suffused in a masculine heroic ethos. This

persona, a sharp-witted, dirty-minded *raconteur*, combines an authority that is at once

poetic, political, and sexual. Its performance demands and presumes its ratification

by an immediate audience of companions: "Non i a negu de vos ja·m desautrei"

("There is not one among you who would ever deny to me").[127] The word *desautrei*,

which Bond translates as 'denies,' suggests an etymological cognate of 'disauthorize',

to witness against, to act as a counter-authority. By ratifying the poet's authority, the

companions becomes "co-performers," but those who refuse to do so become the

targets of his satiric ridicule.[128]

In addressing his reader as companion, in declaring the fact of his preference

for this particular addressee, Guilhem declares his superior rank by subordinating the

cooperative reader. In Old French, "companho", like "ami", held a concomitant

juridical and affective sense.[129] The term therefore effects the preferential relation of

lord and vassal. [130] We must understand the address *companho* according to a feudal

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[126] Bond, "Introduction", xix.

[127] 2.19.

[128] Gumbrecht, "Transgression(s) of the First Troubadour," 122.

[129] Huguette Legros shows the development of these words from the context of the early *chansons du geste* to much later romances and tracks the eventual effacement of the juridical by the affective meaning. "Le vocabulaire de l'amitié, son évolution sémantique au cours du XIIe siècle," in *Cahiers de civilisations médievale Xe-XIIe siècles* 3, no. 2 (1980): 130.

[130] According to Rita Lejeune, the juridical vocabulary of feudalism derived from formulas employed in his everyday life fournished Guillaume with his literary language: "Le vocabulaire juridique, une grande familiarité avec des habitudes du droit contemporain, ont fourni à Guillaume un appoint appréciable pour la constitution de sa langue littéraire. Le grand féodal, nourri de formules qui font

ideology of friendship that implies solidarity and social proximity, but not equality.

Huguette Legros observes that 'friend,' 'companion,' and equivalent terms in

Guilhem's period were used by lords to address vassals, but never by a vassal to

address his lord.[131] Thus, in addressing the reader as *companho*, Guilhem assigns his

reader a specific role as martial companion and subordinate.[132] These poems invert

the more typical pre-modern literary arrangement of the addressed reader being more

highly ranked than the author; they nevertheless invite readers to assume the

privileged role as one among the Count Guilhem's preferential circle.

In the three *companho* poems, Guilhem mixes the rhetoric of courtly

preferment encapsulated in the term *companho* with discourses of satire and counsel

that evoke real situations, thus naturalizing the hierarchical relation of vassalage and

affirming addressees in the privilege they enjoy by dint of the poet's preference.

Confirming both hierarchy and privilege, Guilhem requests counsel from his

companions in the final two stanzas of the first lyric, where he addresses them finally

as knights:

> Cavalier, datz mi conseill d'un pensamen;
> Anc mais no fui eisarratz de cauzimen
> E no sai ab cal me tenha,
>   de n'Ancnes ho de n'Arsen.
>
> De Gimel ai lo castel e.l mandamen,
> E per Niol fauc erguieill a tota gen;
> C'ambedui me son jurat

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partie de sa vie quotidienne, transparait chez le poète." Rita Lejeune, "Formules féodales et styles amoureux chez Guillaume IX d'Aquitaine," in *Littérature et societé occitane au Moyen Age* (Liège: Marche Romane, 1979), 119. Lejeune goes on to find the source of courtly 'love-service' in the rituals of vassalage; see Bond, "Introduction," lxiv.

[131] Legros, "Le vocabulaire de l'amitié," 132.

[132] Laura Kendrick's attractive claim that Guilhem's companions are a "group of troubadours" parodying the "religious school situation of textual interpretation" regrettably lacks corroboration. Kendrick, *Troubadour Wordplay*, 16.

E plevit per sagramen.[133]

[Knights, give me advice about a problem ;
Never was I more uncertain about a choice
And I don't know with which I should remain,
  Lady Agnes or Lady Arsen.

I own the castle of Gimel and its command
And because of Niol I act proud toward everyone ;
For both are sworn
  And pledged to me by sacred oath.]

As Judith Davis remarks of the transition between the last two stanzas of the poem,

"the poet who asks counsel of his vassals in parody of feudal service is also the

seigneur who boasts of the problems that arise from the wealth of his feudal

holdings."[134]

But Guilhem's request for counsel is more than a "parody of feudal service";

while its referential content, an erotic dilemma, dispenses with the ceremonial gravity

of more serious deliberations and elevates the reader to intimacy with the count, it

affirms no less the unequal status of author and reader. In fact, the very intimacy it

evokes re-inscribes the feudal hierarchy in terms appropriate to the domain of

interaction reproduced by the *companho* lyrics.

A masculine discourse about horses, property, and sexual conquests situates

this familiarity in the context of "a traditional male, military aristocracy" whose

discourse enshrines "the warrior and his acquisition of fame", "prowess and loyal

service", and "the defense and praise of male sexuality" in a "crude" and "humorous"

form.[135] Up to this point, Guilhem expresses the erotic dilemma through a sustained

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[133] 1.21-27.
[134] Judith Davis, "A Fuller Reading of Guillaume IX's '*Comphanho, Faray un vers tot covinen*," *Romance Notes* 16 (1974): 445-449.
[135] Bond, "Introduction," lviii.

conceit in which two ladies ("Agnes" and "Arsen") are compared to horses, symbol

par excellence of a martial aristocracy's values:

> Dos cavals ai a ma seilla ben e gen;
> Bon son ez ardit per armas e valen,
> Mas no·ls puesc tener amdos
> > que l'uns l'autre no consen.[136]
>
> [I own two horses for my saddle in a good and noble manner
> They are good and brave in battle and worthy
> But I cannot keep them both,
> Because the one does not tolerate the other.]

Guilhem's banter substantiates the shared values that unite him with his companions,

while his self-representation as the paramount exemplar of these values naturalizes

his superordinate status in the aristocratic order.

This status is corroborated by the menace which Guilhem intimates through

the very jokes and in-group discourse that also gesture toward solidarity with his

companions. He spells out the terms by which he has loaned a 'horse' to one subject:

> Qu'ie·l donei a son senhor poilli paisen;
> Pero sim retinc ieu tant de covenen.
> Que s'il lo teni'un an,
> > qu'ieu lo tengues mais de sen.[137]
>
> [For I gave it to its master while still a grazing foal;
> But still I retained something for myself
> > through an agreement
> That, if he kept it for a year,
> > I would keep it for more than a hundred.]

The *covenen* (agreement) with the "foal's" master asserts the political authority that

accompanies Guilhem's verbal mastery, echoing his description of his lyric as *tot*

covinen, entirely well-made. The author's mastery of lyrical craft complements his

mastery over his political affairs, as the pun petween *covinen* and *covenen* aligns his

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[136] 1.7-9.
[137] 1:19-21.

legal with his poetic power. Every kind of writing that issues from him, contract or

verse, advances his power. Whatever Guilhem may share with his subjects—horses,

women, or his preferment—he retains his portion through his authority as guarantor

of those goods.

Moreover, the sexual banter implies homosocial familiarity with his

addressees. Laura Kendrick points out the numerous obscene puns on *con*, 'cunt', in

the compounds Guilhem uses throughout the poem.[138] For example, "companho" can

be analyzed into *con+panho* (cunt-feeder, or cunt stealer); this pun contrasts the

companion's dependence with Guilhem's autonomy, for Guilhem's sexual mastery is

implied by *conseill*, sometimes spelled *conselh*, which may be read as *con+selhar*, to

saddle a cunt. In asking his 'cavalier', who 'feed' or 'steel' at his discretion, for their

"conseill", Guilhem configures this sexual economy in terms of a feudal reciprocity.

Finally, *covinen* may be read as *con+vit+en* (cunt, prick, in). The pun discussed

above between *covinen* ("well-made") and *covenen* ("agreement" or "covenant") not

only aligns the poet's political and poetic authority but his supremacy in this sexual

economy as well.

Guilhem's *pensamen* is not a true dilemma, "but a chance to engage in

riddling word games" that conflate the political and sexual.[139] In a psychoanalytical

reading of Guilhem's lyrics, Rouben Cholakian claims that the

> . . . deliberate use of graphic imagery must be understood as part of the
> same need for domination and control. Language, through inclusion
> and exclusion, is a vehicle of power. Guillaume communicates about
> the desired woman to men, who can participate vicariously in his

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[138] Kendrick, *Troubadour Wordplay*, 123.
[139] Kendrick, *Troubadour Wordplay*, 123.

> amorous enterprise. The male is included and the female is incorporated but excluded.[140]

Yet I suggest that Guilhem's need to dominate and control is not exclusively, nor even primarily, erotic. The lyric's political force subordinates its erotic theme. He boasts of sexual dominance over both women and the vassals with whom he shares them 'by contract;' these boasts first and foremost assert his political authority.

Guilhem concludes the first lyric's conceit of women as horses, its 'private' banter of sexual joking, with the two public and ceremonial status-rituals cited above; first, he requests counsel, the customary service of vassalage: "Cavalier, datz mi conseill."[141] Then he names the castles he owns at the disputed limits of his territory, which are pledged to him "by sacred oath."[142] Judith Davis is surely not the first to find humor in this juxtaposition of bawdy talk with courtly ceremony:

> . . . if the twelfth-century Count of Poitiers, Duke of Aquitaine, could forget his dignity long enough to make a joke, surely we can forget ours long enough to laugh at it.[143]

But making his readers forget their dignity is precisely Guilhem's method of dominating discourse. If the count relinquishes his dignity, he obliges the reader who cooperatively accepts the role of companion to do so as well. Guilhem controls the terms of interaction.

By making his companions party to his private concerns, his *pensamen*, Guilhem's bawdy humor signals a preferential intimacy that excludes not only

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[140] Cholakian, Rouben C. *The Troubadour Lyric: A Psychocritical Reading* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 18.
[141] 1.21. See note 133.
[142] 1.27. See note 133.
[143] Judith Davis, "A Fuller Reading," 448.

women, but the uncooperative or uncomprehending male reader characterized in the

second stanza as a *vilan*:

> E tenhatz lo per vilan qui no l'enten
> O qu'ins en son cor voluntiers non l'apren:[144]
>
> [And hold him for a rustic who does not understand it
> Or who does not willingly take it to heart.]

Guilhem reminds his companions with a smiling aggression that he prefers only those

who accept his values as their own. Within his own domain, his obscenity is not

transgressive, but marks his power to set the boundaries of acceptable discourse as he

sees fit.

The other two *companho* lyrics also use sexual obscenity to communicate

Guilhem's political authority. In second lyric, *Compaigno, non pus mudar qu'eu no

m'effrei* ("Companions, I cannot help being upset"), he laments that a woman too

closely guarded by a jealous husband will take up an inappropriate lover, that is, a

partner in adultery who is beneath her station:

> Si non pot aver caval
>   ela compra palafrei.[145]
>
> [If she cannot have a charger,
>   she will buy a palfrey.]

Sexual morality is determined by the social hierarchy of the lay aristocracy rather

than scriptural ideals about fidelity in marriage preached by the church. Combining

the erotic with the equestrian once again, Guilhem offers a naturalistic rather than an

idealized or spiritual love. He does not sublimate eros as later troubadours would, but

neither does he make it a matter for discussion in its own right.

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[144] 1.4-5.
[145] 2.17-18

Obscene banter belongs to an informal 'back-region' of masculine homosociality—locker room talk, so to speak. Yet Guilhem's *companho* lyrics are not locker room talk; they are verses he saw fit to circulate in written form and perform. They are aggressive claims of personal authority by a sovereign prince over the sexual lives of the women and men he rules. They may also bring about homosocial solidarity between author and reader if the reader happens to be one of the *companho* who Guilhem addresses. Even if the men beneath Guilhem compete for dominance over one other in the political, martial, or economic realms, they can still find solidarity in their shared dominance over the bodies of women. Guilhem's right to distribute this shared 'good' secures his hegemony over this sexual economy—his sexual dominance is ultimately metonymical for his dominance in every other sphere.

In the third lyric, *Companho, tant ai agutz d'avols conres* ["Companions, I have had so much bad equipment"], Guilhem once again weaves together erotic and political discourses, "knowingly conflates libidinal and financial mastery."[146] In this poem, Guilhem suggests that the contest for women need not be a zero-sum game, for while power and wealth may be limited, female sexual capability is unlimited. He equates the sexual availability of women with the availability of wood to be chopped on one's land, "lo bosc en un deveis."[147] :

> E quan lo bocx es taillatz, nais plus espes
> E·l senher no·n pert son comte ni sos ses;
> A revers planh hom la tala,
>   si·l dampn[atges no·i es ges].[148]

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[146] Cholakian, *The Troubadour Lyric*, 20.
[147] 3.14.
[148] 3.15-18.

> [And when the wood is cut down, it grows back
> > even thicker
> And the lord does not lose his revenue or
> > his income from it;
> The devastation is lamented wrongly
> > if there is no damage at all.]

According to Kendrick, *la tala* literally means 'cutting', but more technically, an imposed taxation.[149] This economic metaphor euphemizes the obscene proposition that the lord who 'wrongly laments' *la tala* should make his wife available to Guilhem's pleasure, but the vehicle of the metaphor proclaims the ruler's financial prowess as much as the tenor does his sexual prowess, as well as his right to financial as much as sexual expropriation from subordinates.

Even when they assert Guilhem's supremacy, the sexual metaphors in the *companho* lyrics do, as I have shown, evoke solidarity with his readers cemented in their shared dominance over women and expressed in an exclusively male mode of interaction. Women are not ratified participants; described as horses or timber, they are hardly persons. The aural repetition of *con* reduces women to their genital identity, making them, like timber, a fungible commodity, "and it is the male . . . who makes the laws which govern gender relations."[150] It is in fact one male, Count Guilhem—his laws exclude and belittle both women and the *vilan* who fails to comprehend his order or refuses to ratify it. Scanlon argues of a later period that aristocratic hierarchy is founded upon a patriarchy in which gender and class domination go hand and hand.[151] The same combination is here found near the beginning of the twelfth century.

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[149] Kendrick, *Troubadour Wordplay*, 125.
[150] Cholakian, *The Troubadour Lyric¸* 21.
[151] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 40-41.

In the second lyric, Guilhem describes the guardians appointed by a jealous

husband over a lady with this complaint:

> Et aquill fan entre lor aital agrei:
> L'us es compains gens a foc, manduc'arrei,[152]
>
> [And between them they act with such affrontery:
> One of them is a noble companion at the fire,
>   (eats in turn (?))]

Compains (singular of plural *companho*) refers here to a third party who makes a

show of companionship "at the fire", in informal male interaction, but in fact rejects

the homosocial pact founded upon Guilhem's naturalistic and patriarchal conception

of eros. This pact affirms Guilhem's status as both principal beneficiary and provider

of the sexual pleasure available from women; by rejecting it, the *compains gens*

proves himself a traitor. The adjective *gens*, "noble," is used ironically, for this so-

called companion is no better than the *vilan*. The true *companho* submits to

Guilhem's authority in all matters as the condition of his acceptance in Guilhem's

preferential circle. With respect to the values articulated by these lyrics, the false-

fronted "compains gens" plays an equivalent role to the hypocrites who populate

clerical satires.

In the third lyric, Guilhem does not euphemize obscene chatter with

metaphors but is openly and directly obscene in his discussion of the "con gardatz,"

the "guarded cunt." In some domains, obscenity threatens the idealized fronts of

social actors. In others, it is a mark of interaction among familiars. Guilhem's use of

obscenity in the *companho* lyrics evokes a preferential circle of companions, and in

textualizing the interaction of this domain in verse, he publicizes to those excluded

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[152] 2.7-8; the significance of 'manduc'arrei' is obscure.

the fact of their exclusion. The excluded comprise those offended by his obscenity and sexual morality, those who refuse or are ignorant of the informal codes, discursive rights and obligations, and inside jokes and *doubles-entendres* that govern his entourage, and those like the "compains gens a foc" who only pretend to accept Guilhem's values and authority. In excluding them from his preferential circle, he excludes them from political life; he is the ruler of Poitou and the Aquitaine.

Guilhem is not just goofing around; the dirty jokes may seem to lower the stakes of interaction and put it outside the realm of consequential talk, but the political, economic, and military metaphors that couch the obscene jokes maintain an ambiguity about just how serious he is. Like Tony Soprano, he keeps an ambiguity between seriousness and play that sometimes puts his companions at ease and sometimes knocks them off balance; his humorous aggression cajoles and bullies them into complete acceptance of his verbal, sexual, and political dominance. Of course, they have no alternative but the dispossession of their status and goods, and what they gain is attractive: membership in an exclusive elite with its attendant share of material power and wealth.

Nevertheless, the familiarity implied by the term *companho* and reinforced by obscene banter implies no leveling between poet and reader. Though Guilhem may choose to suspend the more ceremonious ways in which he performs his authority, the informal, 'back-region' discourse of the *companho* poems reproduces another set of ways in which it is performed.[153] Among Guilhem's chosen elite, even when he 'forgets his dignity' he maintains his supremacy by a constant subtext of threat. This

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[153] On Goffman's notion of "region behavior," see Erving Goffman, "Regions and Region Behavior," in *Presentation of Self*, 106-140 (see note 59).

threat is clearest in his satire on the "compains gens," for addressing both his preferred intimate and treacherous enemy as 'companion' undermines the reader's security of position. Guilhem has the final authority to decide who's who, and he may always decide that he has misplaced his preference.

As with Gower, the figure of the dissembling rival is necessary for Guilhem to secure his authority in his own discursive domain, to set the boundaries of the community of opinion constructed around the author–reader dyad. Of course, where Gower encompasses the ambiguity between truth and dissimulation in his textual self-representation, Guilhem projects it onto the reader. That difference epitomizes the contrasting ethos of both poets. Nevertheless, for both, falseness must be shown in order to define what is true. For both poets, the discourses that enact lived relations and practice social values can be used faithlessly, can be dissimulated.

This is the problem at the heart of the discursive construction of authority—representation entails the possibility of falsification. According to linguists, one of the characteristics of a natural language is that it can be used to lie. In the context of social relations, the very act of expressing faith, preference, and agreement evokes the possibility of secret hostility, false affection, and misplaced trust. Gower and Guilhem use satire to show false relations alongside true ones in order to distinguish the possibility of authentic fidelity. In the next chapter, I will look at two poets, Thomas Hoccleve and John Skelton, who come up against the limits of this strategy. Less certain of their status and the forms of their authority, occupying ill-defined and novel roles at the periphery of the late-medieval court, these poets wrench courtly interaction out of its real-life context and travesty its poses.

Chapter Four

Satire, Strategy, and the Limits of Sincerity in Thomas Hoccleve's
Regement of Princes* and John Skelton's *The Bowge of Court

4.1   The Uncertain Authority of Marginal Courtly Poets

In chapter one, I explored Walter Map's negotiation in *De nugis curialium* of

a new social role for an emergent species of courtier, the learned and worldly clerical

functionary. In contrast, chapters two and three feature medieval authors who use

familiar and stable relational models to represent themselves in privileged relations

with their readers. As teachers, fathers, preferred courtiers, or princes addressing

readers with equally specific roles, their discourse is governed by clearly defined and

explicit protocols; these protocols annex literary texts to social lifeworlds by

conjuring familiar roles for author and reader.

Like Walter Map, Thomas Hoccleve and John Skelton must bring authority to

a social role not yet fully acknowledged and accommodated. They, like Walter Map,

belonged to an emergent class of administrators, but the Lancastrian and Tudor courts

which they served were larger, more complex, and more stratified than Walter's

Angevin court. Moreover, Hoccleve and Skelton occupied social positions farther to

the court's periphery than Map; archival records support their authorial self-

descriptions in this. While Map shows off a jokey familiarity with his betters,

Hoccleve and Skelton cast themselves as socially isolated and hence vulnerable to the

machinations and whims of their betters and peers. I register in Map's complaints

about the danger of duplicitous rivals little of the same dread we find in Hoccleve or

Skelton's anxious circumspection; one does not sense poverty and obscurity gnawing

at Map's daydreams.

Walter Map provisionally assumes the king's subject position when he

describes himself as the head of a household.[1] He does so both to invite the goodwill

of the king and other readers on the basis of shared experiences and values and to

comment on the governance of the royal household. Hoccleve makes an analogous

move in his Prologue to the *Regement of Princes*; an old beggar stands for Hoccleve

as a figure of instruction, while Hoccleve figures the prince as the one instructed. But

the interactional discourse between Hoccleve and the Old Man never settles into a

single relational pattern; satire disrupts their Boethian dialogue of instruction and

consolation, and they start mixing and swapping authoritative social roles. Out of this

mixture of literary and speech genres emerges a critical inquiry into prevailing social

ethics that finally tries, fitfully, to affirm the possibility of reciprocal trust.

John Skelton's *The Bowge of Court* reveals a more cynical perspective.

Personified vices of speech—fraud, dissimulation, and so forth—undermine mutual

trust and finally cow the hapless narrator into leaping from the deck of the poem's

eponymous ship, an allegorical image of the court. Conspicuously absent from this

court's center is its ruler, Fortune. The narrator, "Dread," finds only her double-

dealing courtiers who use for fraud and treachery all the attacks against dissimulation

and appeals to solidarity developed in the tradition of satire-counsel. Hoccleve

grounds his appeal to his reader's trust in his real-life social position, but to make this

appeal is to allow for the possibility of trust. Skelton makes no such allowance. For

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[1] See chap. 1, note 20.

him, speech is inevitably self-serving—strategic discourse never gives way to communication.[2]

4.2   Hoccleve: Life and Works

The *Regement of Princes* (1411)*,* Hoccleve's longest poem, consists of two parts. The first, its prologue, encompasses almost a third of the entire poem. It contains a dedication and financial petition to Prince Henry, but mainly features a lengthy dialogue between Hoccleve and an old beadsman which is the subject of the present study. The *Regement*'s latter two thirds is a mirror for princes. Judging by the forty-three manuscripts of this text copied in Hoccleve's lifetime and shortly after, ". . . it was far and away [his] most successful and widely read poem."[3] As so much of Hoccleve's verse is concerned with his career as a royal servant and as a poet, I will first account for the place of the Dialogue with the Old Man in Hoccleve's *oeuvre* and its relation to the poet's own place in the social and political world of the Lancastrian court.

His poems written before the *Regement* include translations of popular contemporary French works and *La Male Regle,* (c. 1405) or "Unruly Life," a mock confession of youthful profligacy, which also appeals for money to Lord Furnivall, Henry IV's wartime chancellor of the exchequer.[4]   Whatever the outcome of this bid, Hoccleve was in any case undiscouraged since he lodged a similar petition in the

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[2] For the distinction between strategic and communicative discourse, I am indebted to Jürgen Habermas; "Strategic action can be considered as a limiting case of communicative action; it occurs when ordinary language communications between interlocutors breaks down as a means of maintaining consensus, and each assumes an objectifying attitude toward the other." Habermas, *On the Pragmatics of Social Interaction*, 12-13. See chap. 1, note 63. Habermas elaborates the distinction in the two volumes of his *Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

[3] J.A. Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve* (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1994), 18.

[4] The poem is dated by its address to Furnivall as King Henry IV's exchequer as well as by its reference to the suspension of annuity payments in that year. Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve*, 14-15.

Regement of Princes. His several occasional poems written in the years after the

Regement indicate that this later petition may have earned its author repeat

performances.[5]

Later in life, Hoccleve wrote a sequence of poems including the poetic

diptych of the *Complaint* and *Dialogue* collected in 1927 by Elaine Hammond under

the name "*A Series*."[6] These two confessional poems describe Hoccleve's social

alienation after a period of mental illness between 1414 and 1419.[7] Revealing the

poet's preoccupation with his impression on others, these poems evince a literate and

reflective self-consciousness which Charles Blyth describes as "early modern

subjectivity."[8] But the *Male Regle* and the *Regement of Princes*, written before

Hoccleve's illness, already manifest an acute self-consciousness about the impression

he leaves on others; his mental infirmities were likely fed and conditioned by the

social fishbowl of courtly life and his vulnerable position there.

Hoccleve lived at once near the top of common London society and near the

bottom of court society. By his time, the court was continuous with a developing

administrative body grown increasingly unmoored from its origins in the royal

household. As a clerk in the office of the Privy Seal responsible for the reproduction

of petitions and charters, Hoccleve belonged to an organ of this inchoate

bureaucracy.[9] Unlike the professional ecclesiastics of prior generations, the court's

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[5] Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve,* 20-22.

[6] Lee Patterson, "'What is Me?'": Self and Society in the Poetry of Thomas Hoccleve," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 23 (2001): 442-443.

[7] Burrows, *Thomas Hoccleve*, 25-28.

[8] Charles Blyth, "Introduction" in Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles Blyth (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), 4.

[9] Ethan Knapp argues that the continued understanding of England's monarchy as a private household despite its increasing size and complexity created a sense of alienation among those like Hoccleve, who, while technically part of the King's household, were physically external to it and their functions

literate functionaries no longer did double duty as pastors or spiritual authorities.

Although Hoccleve had taken minor orders, he was married and lived like laity. His

authority as a "cleric" comes not from religious affiliations but from his learning and

expertise. Burrow argues that members of this new class of lay literate functionaries,

however limited their acquaintance with the king and the great magnates, could be

described as courtiers.[10] Hoccleve belonged to "the second circle of . . . the king's

affinity: 'those who were bound to the king by ties of service, and by the fact that he

paid them a regular wage (or other full-time remuneration) and expected them to

serve him on a regular basis.'"[11] As a commoner serving in an "emergent

administrative class" of literate laymen, Hoccleve was near the bottom rung of court,

but his wage, sufficient to purchase him the deference of "innkeepers and cooks," put

him atop the humbler domain of the city's working poor.[12]

But Hoccleve's wage was less regular than he would have liked. The office of

the Privy Seal was not part of a modern professional civil service, nor were there

mechanisms to rationalize and extend public debt indefinitely, so kings sometimes

suspended annuities and pension when war depleted their treasure. Such episodes

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not even nominally domestic; Ethan Knapp, *The Bureaucratic Muse: Thomas Hoccleve and the Literature of Late Medieval England* (University Park, Pennsylvania University Press, 201). Andrew James Johnston argues even more explicitly for a clerical/bureaucratic identity common to some prominent late medieval English writers and its ambiguous relationship to the social structures of court: "Caxton . . . Hoccleve, ... Lydgate, . . . Usk, all had courtly connections and produced courtly literature, yet they hardly share the Royal court as a social matrix, but rather as a kind of common goal or common influence." Andrew James Johnston, *Clerks and Courtiers: Chaucer, Later Middle English Literature and the State Formation Process* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter: 2001), 17.

[10] John Burrow, "Hoccleve and the 'Court'" in *Nation, Court, and Culture*, ed. Helen Cooney, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 71-80;

[11] John Burrow, "Hoccleve and the 'Court'", 71; He is citing Christopher Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics, and Finance in England 1360-1413* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 203.

[12] The attention workmen and servants pay Hoccleve in the *Male Regle* travesties the flatteries of a magnate's well-heeled entourage. See J.A. Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry in the Middle Ages: The Case of Thomas Hoccleve," in *Middle English Literature: British Academy Gollancz Lectures*, ed. J.A. Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7.

occasioned the financial petitions in the *Male Regle* and the *Regiment of Princes*.

Lacking his annuity, Hoccleve's precarious social position left him with few

resources to fall back on except the acquaintance of his betters and his literary talent,

so he turned his poetic métier to obtaining patronage. In his first effort of this kind,

the *Male Regle*, he adopts the guise of an aging, poor, and sickly man (anticipating

his alter ego in the *Regiment*'s prologue) to confess his debauched and profligate

youth. He concludes his confession with a petition for relief to Lord Furnivall, Henry

IV's chancellor of the exchequer, whom he deifies as 'Wealth,' a real-life counterpart

to the allegorical god 'Health' to whom the rest of the poem is addressed.[13] In this

way, Hoccleve turns a mock confession into a clever but sincere plea for financial

assistance.

The *Regement of Princes*'s financial petition comes at the end of the long

'autobiographical' prologue often called the 'Dialogue with the Old Man.'[14] The

prologue begins with an anxious Hoccleve wandering into an open field near London

after a sleepless night in an "unresty bed" at Chester Inn. There, an old beadsman

approaches Hoccleve and corrals the reluctant poet into a Boethian dialogue of

consolation. The Old Man counsels the embrace of poverty as a gift, but when

Hoccleve persists in his fear of poverty, the Old Man jettisons late-medieval Christian

stoicism for more practical advice—that Hoccleve write a poem for the Prince.[15]

> "Compleyne vnto his excellent noblesse,

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[13] Eva M. Thornley, "The Middle English Penitential Lyric and Hoccleve's Autobiographical Poetry," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 68 (1967): 295-321.

[14] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 300. The Old Man has also been referred to variously by scholars as "beggar," "beadsman," "almsman," and "vagrant." See chap. 2, note 99.

[15] On Hoccleve's subversion of Boethian convention, see James Simpson, "Nobody's Man: Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*," in *London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, eds. Julian Boffey and Pamela King (London: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1995), 149-180.

> As I haue herd þe vn-to me compleyne;
>
> . . .
>
> Endite in frensch or latyn þi greef cleere,
> And, for to write it wel, do thi poweer.
>
> . . .
>
> Sharpë thi penne, and write on lustily;
> Lat se, my sonë, make it fresh and gay,
> Outë thyn art if þou canst craftily;
> His hyë prudence hath insighte verray
>   To iuge if it be wel y-made or nay;[16]

In this way, writes Larry Scanlon, "the Prologue will enable [Hoccleve] to stage the

fürstenspiegel to follow as a begging poem."[17] That mirror for princes organizes its

exempla according to such virtues of a good leader as "observing the laws," "not

putting happiness in riches," "receiving counsel well," and, of special important to

Hoccleve, "liberality."[18]

   The *Regement of Princes* thus negotiates the prince's 'public' desire to govern

virtuously and effectively and the poet's desire to get paid. Some critics have argued

that Hoccleve's petition sought at least as much to idealize the petitioned prince as to

gain its author his annuity. And scholars differ on Hoccleve's attitude toward royal

authority; some view Hoccleve as Prince Henry's willing propagandist, others as

resistant to the prince's ideological program. Both camps hinge their arguments on

the prologue to the *Regement of Princes* and its representation of the relation between

Hoccleve and the Old Man.

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[16] *Regement*, 149-50, 1854-55, 1905-1909.

[17] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 300.

[18] Hoccleve draws these exempla mostly from three sources, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*, Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, and Jacobus de Cessolis's *De ludo scacchorum* Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve*, 19; At least one of these, *De regimine principum*, was already familiar to Prince Henry, "especially its third book, on military tactics and siege warfare." Given Henry V's militaristic character and bibliophilia, he was probably favorably disposed toward the subject matter on offer. On Henry's acquisition of books, see Derek Pearsall, "Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*: The Poetics of Royal Self-Representation," Speculum 69 (1994), 392-5.

Larry Scanlon belongs to the 'propagandist' camp, recuperating the seeming importunacy of Hoccleve's petition to the Lancastrian regime's "anxious" efforts to secure its "ideological legitimacy" through its support of clerical orthodoxy and "patronage of the new vernacular tradition. . .."[19] Derek Pearsall's Hoccleve is likewise entrapped; the dialogue with the Old Man "is not merely the opportunity for autobiographical self-indulgence on Hoccleve's part but an essential part of the strategy of the poem for representing the prince as a wise ruler, receptive to the counsel of brave, simple souls such as Hoccleve. . .."[20] R.F. Yeager contextualizes this 'propagandistic' view of the *Regement* in the factional struggle between Prince Henry and his father, King Henry IV, but is less totalizing in his attribution of agency to the patron; he discerns an agenda of Hoccleve's own, ". . . to bulwark his vernacular literary endeavors . . . against the threat . . . of condemnations as heretical", and "to establish a working vocabulary, in English, for his peculiar brand of sociopolitical critique."[21]

Another camp finds that Hoccleve's relentless self-exposure and self-abjection paradoxically asserts his agency within or against the prince's. Nicholas Perkins objects to viewing the *Regement* as a product of a "royal hermeneutics entirely at the whim of royal desire"—rather, it is cooperative interaction between poet and prince, "Hoccleve's attempt to steer Prince Henry away from the tyrannical willful habits of reading that Richard II represents in the political and literary tradition."[22] James

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[19] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 298; 82-84.
[20] Pearsall, "Poetics of Royal Self-Representation," 408.
[21] R.F. Yeager, "Death Is A Lady: *The Regement of Princes* as Gendered Political Commentary," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 26 (2004): 166.
[22] Nicholas Perkins, *Hoccleve's Regiment of Princes: Counsel and Constraint* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 50, 69-70.

Simpson accepts Hoccleve's claim to be "nobody's man" with no "patron to speak for

him"—"In this marginal position he must create a space for himself within very

limited discursive possibilities." Simpson hears the "'crackle' or interference of

Hoccleve's own voice through the impersonal statements of moral prescription for a

king."[23] Robert Meyer-Lee articulates this perspective more clearly still:

> . . . the beggar pose signals both the poet's recognition of his role as an
> instrument of power and an individualized resistance that is in part
> conscious and in part the inevitable resurfacing of his actual,
> ambivalent relationship with his patron.[24]

I believe the lack of consensus about Hoccleve's aims and affiliations owes

something to the shifting subject positions and relational roles he assumes in the

Regement's prologue. First of all, Hoccleve is both poet and clerk, and as such, plays

two different roles with much different levels of prestige and cultural authority. The

poet, whether viewed favorably as a cultivator of virtue or negatively as a corrupting

fabulist, was regarded as a consequential social and moral agent, while the clerk

reproducing formal documents was simply the instrument of another's will. Hoccleve

draws a vivid contrast between the cramped silence of the clerical copyist—

> Who so schale wrytë, may nat holde a tale
> With hym and hym, ne syngë this ne that;
> But al his wittës hoolë, grete and smale,
> Ther must appere, and halden hem ther-at,
> But bothë two he nedës moot forbere,

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[23] Simpson, "Nobody's Man," 170; The idea that this disruption amounts to a threat of blackmail is provocatively suggested by Sarah Tolmie, "The Prive Silence of Thomas Hoccleve," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 26 (2004), 281-309; Lee Patterson argues against reading Hoccleve chiefly in terms of royal politics, and asserts that the poems explore his own subjectivity; this exploration has political origins in Hoccleve's existential resistance to Lancastrian demands for conformity, but his achievement is finally apolitical: "By insisting upon the highly specific conditions of his social and financial life, Hoccleve draws attention to *his* individuality, to a selfhood that can be accommodated neither to the blande clichés of advisory literature not to the homogeneity of deferential loyalty." Patterson, "What is Me?: Self and Society in the Poetry of Thomas Hoccleve," 465.

[24] Robert J Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

> Hir labour to hym is þe alengere.[25]

—and the generative speech of the poet:

> . . . maistir Chaucer, flour of eloquence,
> Mirour of fructuous entendëment,
> O, vniu*er*sal fadir in science![26]

Accordingly, the Old Man urges Hoccleve to take his grievance as an unpaid clerk to Prince Henry in the form of a poem and in the role of moral counselor. In doing so, Hoccleve exploits a stark discrepancy between the levels of prestige and authority enjoyed by clerk and poet. While indexing his real-life role as a humble clerk when playing the petitioner, he also claims the poet's cultural authority by identifying himself with the emblematic figure of Geoffrey Chaucer.[27]

But Hoccleve never sustains the poet's vatic role with sufficient clarity or assiduity to attain the transcendent vantage from which Gower produces the legible social order of estates satire in the Prologue to the *Confessio Amantis*.[28] Unlike Walter Map, Hoccleve never fixes on the stable identity of a householder to describe

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[25] Thomas Hoccleve, *Regement of Princes*, in *Hoccleve's Works III. The Regement of Princes*, Frederick J. Furnivall, ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1897), 988-994. This stanza belongs to a longer complaint about his tedious and thankless work in the Privy Seal. All citations are from Furnivall's edition, made from Hoccleve's own autograph, which remains the standard. I have also consulted the 1999 edition for TEAMS by Charles R. Blyth, *The Regiment of Princes* (Kalamazoo, MI.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999).   Subsequent citations will be abbreviated as *Regement.*

[26] *Regement*, 1962-1964; The passage about Chaucer from which this citation is taken (1958-1986) has attracted considerable attention. Jerome Mitchell suggested that Hoccleve never knew Chaucer. Jerome Mitchell, "Hoccleve's Supposed Friendship with Chaucer," *English Language Notes* 4 (1966): 9-12. More recently, R.F. Yeager argues that Hoccleve constructs Chaucer as a paternal, masculine poetic authority to fashion a role for himself in the aggressively martial and masculinist Lancastrian court. "Death Is A Lady", 183-187. On Hoccleve's reasons for making Chaucer into an advisory figure (despite Chaucer's never personally claiming this role), see Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 1994, 311-314; The revisionary view of Chaucer as a clerk-poet which his successors take of him is the topic of Andrew James Johnston's *Clerks and Courtiers*.

[27] R.F. Green discusses how poets assumed the role of counselor or moral advisor. *Poets and Princepleasers*, 161-2. (see chap. 1, note 66); Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*.

[28] In the last chapter, I showed how estates satire's function of clarifying social roles and relations is exemplified by Gower's Prologue to the *Confessio Amantis*. Even in Chaucer's vocalization of his Canterbury pilgrims, a clear social order is legible, if complicated and challenged in a way thoroughly described by Jill Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire*, 1973. See chapt. 1, note 36.

the social world around him from an imagined center. Correspondingly, Hoccleve

cannot keep his own persona distinct from the "fragmented, disembodied voices" that

fill the Prologue.[29] Below, I will examine how the plurivocality of his and the Old

Man's discourse constantly reformulates the relational context. Just as Walter Map's

De nugis curialium works both within and against the tradition of curial satire by

positioning its speaker inside the court, Hoccleve exposes the morally authoritative

persona of the estates satirist as situated, strategic, and self-serving.

4.2.1   Discernment and Trust: The Dialogue With the Old Man

The dialogue with the Old Man is a text of counsel; it puts Hoccleve in the

role of counseled and puts the Old Man in the role of counselor. The first part of this

dialogue consists of the Old Man's efforts to win Hoccleve's receptivity to his

counsel.   In the process, the Old Man challenges Hoccleve's trustworthiness and tests

his discernment. These provocations serve two functions. The first is to validate

Hoccleve's worth as a counselor despite his modest status and appearance; in this

way, it would overcome the reader's indifference or hostility to counsel. The second

function follows from the first—to model the reader's active engagement and moral

self-scrutiny and ward off indifference or hostility. As this second function presumes

to manipulate the intended reader, Prince Henry, it risks offending his "negative

face," his inviolable preserve of the self.

Of course, Hoccleve risks annoying Henry merely by reaching so far above

his station as a Privy Seal clerk to petition the prince. Hoccleve manages these risks

principally by self-deprecation—he deflates the importance or weight of his

impingment upon Prince Henry by parodying it in his depicted encounter with "a

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[29] Tolmie, "The Prive Silence of Thomas Hoccleve," 290.

poore olde horë man" in the Prologue.[30] The Old Man burlesques the importunate,

plain-spoken counselor; older and more sententious, he is also entirely outside the

powerful social network at the periphery of which Hoccleve places himself. In the

second part of the dialogue, the Old Man and Hoccleve have established their

solidarity and community, which an exchange of satiric discourse ratifies and

signifies.

At the beginning of their dialogue, the Old Man abruptly rouses Hoccleve,

who, wandering into a field on the edge of town after a sleepless night, has fallen into

a melancholy reverie. In traditional dream-visions like *De planctu naturae* or *The

Pearl*, a disconsolate dreamer falls asleep to be instructed by an idealized person like

Lady Nature or the Pearl-Maiden. The *Regement* tweaks this formula; Hoccleve is

rudely awoken by a ragged and grotesque old man:

> He sterte vp to me, & seyde, "Scleepys þou, man?
> Awake!" & gan me shakë wonder faste,
> And with a sigh I answerde attë laste.[31]

Asked to identify himself, the Old Man says only, "I am here!"—he makes no claim

to status or authority:

> "A, who is þer?" "I," quod þis oldë greye,
> "Am heer," & he me toldë the manere
> How he spak to me, as ye herde me seye;
> "O man," quoþ I, "for cristës lovë dere,
> If þat þow wolt aght done at my preyere,
> As go þi way, talkë to me no more;
> Thy wordës al annoyen me ful sore;[32]

Hoccleve responds to the Old Man with an equal lack of ceremony; his use of "thou,"

reinforced by oaths and insults, veers from familiarity to contempt.

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[30] *Regement*, 122.
[31] *Regement,* 131-133.
[32] *Regement*, 134-140.

Hoccleve's resistance to the Old Man changes to gratitude only after much badgering. His rejection of the Old Man anticipates and rehearses Henry's potential rejection of him.[33] At first, these rejections only increase in the face of the Old Man's persistence:

> Go forth þi way, I þe preye, or be stylle;
> Þow dost me more annoy þan þat þow wenest.
> Þow art as ful of clap as is a mylle;[34]

Hoccleve speaks as the Old Man's social superior; his persistent use of the familar pronoun (*thou* and its variants) emphasizes his unalloyed contempt for the Old Man and for the efficacy of counsel itself. The Old Man offers to cure Hoccleve of his worries, to which the poet replies:

> "Curë, good man? ya, þow arte a fayre leeche!
> Curë þi self, þat tremblest as þou gost,
> ffor [sic] al þin art wile enden in þi speche;"[35]

Hoccleve's reaction preempts two kinds of readerly resistance. The first kind rejects the value of speech itself—the counselor's 'art will end in his speech' and thus accomplish nothing more. The second kind of resistance is to judge the worth of counsel from the appearance and status of the counselor. The dialogue with the Old Man serves in large part to direct this argument to Prince Henry, while never implying that Henry is actually in need of such instruction.

Hoccleve at first rejects the Old Man's unsolicited counsel, but in the course of the exchange, is prevailed upon by degrees to abandon his morose self-

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[33] It may also grant the prince occasion to appear the more generous and composed in comparison to the blaspheming and insulting Hoccleve.

[34] *Regement*, 169-171.

[35] *Regement,* 162-164.

involvement for an active and respectful participation. Hoccleve repents his initial

rejection of the Old Man, and acknowledges the good of his counsel:

> "Graunt mercy, derë fadir, of youre speche;
> Ye han ryght wel me comforted & esyd;
> And hertily I pray yowe, and byseche,
> What I first to you spake be nat displesyd."[36]

At this point, Hoccleve's abusive talk gives way to reverential terms of address like

"derë fadir," the formal second-person pronoun (youre, ye, yowe), and polite

formulas: "graunt mercy", "hertily I pray... and byseche." Concurrent with this shift,

Hoccleve's acknowledges the power of the Old Man's speech to work internal

change; with contrition comes a kind of conversion—or at least conversation and

consolation: "Your confort deepe into myn herte synkith."[37]

Yet the Old Man continues to challenge Hoccleve, impersonating the poet's

misguided reaction at their first encounter:

> "I wote wel, sone, of me þus would þou þinke :--
> þis oldë dotyd Grisel holte him wyse,
> He weneþ maken in myn heed to synke
> His lewed clap, of which set I no pryse;
> He is a nobil prechour at deuyse;
> 　　Gret noyse haþ þorgh hys chynnëd lippës drye
> 　　Þis day out past, þe deuel in his eye."[38]

Hoccleve tells us what the Old Man thinks Hoccleve thinks of him. This layered,

self-conscious contemplation of one's own interiority through the eyes of another

collapses the distance between subject positions. This process facilitates a hospitality

to the other that militates against judging a counselor's worth from his appearance.

This self-consciousness likely comes from Hoccleve's self-consciousness about his

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[36]*Regement*, 750-754.

[37] *Regement*, 777.

[38] *Regement*, 400-406.

ill-defined social position in the larger milieu of the court, but issues, paradoxically,

in an argument for open communication between ranks.

The Old Man focuses on his shabbiness in order to interrogate Hoccleve's

response to appearances:

> "But þogh I old & hore be, sonë myin,
> And porë be my clethyng & aray,
> And not so wyde a gown haue, as is þin,
> So smal I-pynchid, ne so fresche and gay,
> Mi redde, in happë, ȝit the perfet may;
> And likly, þat þou demest for folye,
> Is gretter wysdom þan þou canst espye."[39]

The Old Man's purpose is to impart the ability to "espye wysdom" and judge "folye."

His shabby appearance is thus the first of several trials of Hoccleve's moral

discernment. Discernment is the master virtue of prudential morality, and the

constant concern of medieval satire-counsel.[40]

The Old Man eventually links discernment with clerical expertise; after

initially spurning the Old Man on every count, he finally responds cooperatively

when the Old Man appeals to their common literacy:

> "If þat þe likë to ben esyd wel,
> As suffre me with þe to talke a whyle.
> Art þou aght lettred?" "ya,"quod I, "some dele."
> "Blissed be god! Þan hope I, by seint Gyle,
> þat god to þe þi wit schal reconsyle,"[41]

The Old Man, like the magisterial counselors discussed in chapter two, establishes

solidarity between counselor and counseled on the basis of shared literacy and

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[39] *Regement*, 407-413.
[40] Hoccleve describes Alexander as "a man of excellent discrecioun", a word which meant something closer to modern English discernment; *Regement*, 2308.
[41] *Regement*, 148-152.

education.[42] At the same time he evokes the humanistic idea that learning in 'letters'

cultivates ethical discernment, telling Hoccleve:

> "Lettered folk han gretter discrecioun,
> And bet conceyuë konne a mannes sawe,
> And raþer wole applië to resoun,
> And from folyë soner hem with-draw,
> Þan he þat noþer reson can, ne law,
> Ne lerned hath no maner of letterure."[43]

Hoccleve's discernment, his new-found ability to "read" the Old Man, allows him to

recognize the value of his counsel.

The Old Man has more grim lessons about suspending judgment—a series of

religious questions. After a long disquisition on the danger of heretics who deny the

sacrament, the Old Man accusingly asks Hoccleve if his excessively thoughtful

appearance is due to heretical leanings, but by phrasing the question in the negative,

stops shy of an outright accusation of heresy:

> "Sone, if god wolë, þou art non of þo
> þat wrapped ben in þis dampnacïon,?"
> "I? Criste forbede it, sire!"seyde I þo;[44]

This is doubtless an occasion for Hoccleve to affirm his faith in official doctrine on

"þe sacrament / of the auter," a prudent maneuver for vernacular writers in the years

immediately following Arundel's constitutions.[45] In the context of the dialogue itself,

however, heresy presents the problem posed to discernment by dissimulation in its

most spiritually hazardous form.

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[42] For more on the rhetoric of appealing to shared learning in John of Salisbury's *Entheticus maiorum*, see chap. 2, note 52.

[43] *Regement*, 155-160; In Hoccleve's period, the English word 'discretion' was far closer to its Latin root, meaning 'discernment.' From this original meaning its modern sense of tact or decorum developed.

[44] *Regement*, 372-374.

[45] *Regement*, 380-381; For a careful account of the historical context, see Pearsall, "Poetics of Royal Self-Representation," 403-406.

Dissimulation and discernment are diametrically opposed, for each seeks to foil the other. Because heretics are persecuted they must conceal themselves; because they must conceal themselves, religious authorities must find ways of sniffing them out. In this social climate, the danger of misapprehending appearances can be fatal. By illustrating this danger to Hoccleve, the Old Man's near-accusation of heresy is an instructive rebuke. He describes a recent real-world event, the burning of the Lollard John Badby.[46] Prince Henry apparently offered amnesty, even a pension, if Badby would recant his denial of transubstantiation;

> "But al for noght, it woldë not bytyde;
> He heeld forþ his oppynyoun dampnable,
> And cast oure holy cristen feiþ a-syde,
> As he þat was to þe fende acceptable.
> By any outward tokyn resonable,
>   If he inward hadde any repentaunce,
>   Þat wrote he, þat of no þing haþ doutaunce."[47]

The Old Man's concluding couplet points suggests that the face only reveals the interior self through a conscious sign, a 'tokyn resonable.'[48] The threat heretics pose is that 'discrecioun,' discernment, can function reliably only within a community of faith, but faith is ultimately interior and unknowable by external signs—signs which can be falsified:

> "But woldë god, tho cristes foos echon,
>   Þat as he heeldë were I-seruëd soo,
>   ffor I am seur þat þer ben many moo."[49]

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[46] "John Badby was the first layman executed as a consequence of anti-Lollard legislation." Badby denied the doctrine of transubstantiation repeatedly at a time when Henry V was determined to make a show of orthodoxy against Lollard elements in Parliament. Peter McNivel, "John Badby," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1012 (accessed April 1st, 2008).

[47] *Regement*, 316-322.

[48] It may also indirectly refers back to Hoccleve's own financial petition, as if to say, 'You offered this heretic money while your faithful servant remains unpaid.'

[49] *Regement*, 327-329.

The presence of secret heretics threatens not only orthodox belief but social solidarity. The belief that secret heretics abound ("I am sure that there are many more") makes social intercourse dangerous because of the risk of guilt by association.

The dialogue's treatment of heresy is therefore more than a politically expedient digression; it poses the problem of dissimulation and discernment in its starkest form. But when the Old Man asks Hoccleve at its conclusion whether he is a heretic, Hoccleve's denial succeeds in opening up the possibility of communication— of discursive community—between the two speakers. They enter into this community as an act of faith, and from this act, Hoccleve begins to emerge from his misery. On the basis of their community, established on the grounds of shared literacy and orthodoxy, the Old Man introduces a satiric discourse which will ratify the social connection between him and Hoccleve. However, Hoccleve's burlesque of the figure of the satirist-counselor also destabilizes any familiar social configuration into which the relation between poet and Old Man might develop.

The function of the figurative substitution of the Old Man and Hoccleve for Hoccleve and Prince Henry seems clear enough to critics who prioritize the *Regement's* political import—the counselor's humility and plain speech vouches for his sincerity and his prince's prudent discernment in choosing such a counselor.[50] The dialogue with the Old Man rehearses the development of this relationship in order to shape Henry's own reception of the text.[51]

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[50] "By accepting the *Fürstenspiegel* Hoccleve offers, the Prince will demonstrate that he is a ruler who prefers the truth to flattery—a virtue with which, of course, the beggar had already endowed him." Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 307.

[51] Tolmie, "The Prive Silence of Thomas Hoccleve," 293.

On the one hand, the Prologue is a pragmatic effort to secure Prince Henry's

goodwill, a strategy of face-redress that puts Hoccleve's "official advice, social

criticism, and petition" 'off-record' by excluding threatening topics from his direct

address to Prince Henry (beginning, finally, at line 2017) and relegating them to a

low-stakes environment, out in a field with an old beggar, far from the court or Privy

Seal.[52] "Henry . . . has overheard the dialogue between Hoccleve and the [Old Man]

through a curtain, as it were."[53]   This gesture of indirectness excuses Henry from the

imposition, because he can pretend he is not the intended addressee. In this way,

Hoccleve may communicate his petition without begging, and may grieve private and

public sufferings without directly rebuking his intended reader.

There is one major problem with reading the relational model of the Old Man

and Hoccleve as a stand-in for Hoccleve and Prince Henry. If the Old Man's efforts

to get Hoccleve to both identify with and respect him are an indirect means for

Hoccleve's effort to get the prince to identify with and respect *him*, this maneuver is

an act of importunacy that surpasses any petition for money. But neither Hoccleve

nor the Old Man maintain a single relational role through the entire dialogue. Sarah

Tolmie finds the Old Man freighted by an unmanageable number of conventions:

> . . . his discursive position could be occupied by a variety of voices:
> the didactic paternal advisor, the confessor, the voice of age, the
> speaker of penitential lyric, the Boethian counselor, the fool . . .[54]

This confusion of subject positions calls attention to the relational models that

structure the giving and receiving of counsel.

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[52] Perkins, *Counsel and Constraint*, 39; Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 66.
[53] Simpson, "Nobody's Man," 172-173. Simpson discusses how the dialogue with the Old Man is a 'safe place' to air his grievances.
[54] Tolmie, "The Prive Silence of Thomas Hoccleve," 293.

It also reveals an awareness of these models as conventions that permits the poet to re-purpose them to his own ends. Though Hoccleve is the Old Man's social superior, the Old Man employs a magisterial discourse:

> "Now, sone, & if þer no þing be but þis,
> Do as I schal þe seye, and þin estat
> Amende I schal but þou be obstinat,
>
> "And wilfully rebelle & dissobeye,
> And list nat to my lorë the conforme;[55]

His language of commandment and rebellion suggests the subject position of a lord addressing a subject; hence, the dyad which the Old Man and Hoccleve would first seem to model is reversed. This transposition of subject positions continues; the Old Man first addresses Hoccleve as an importunate poet-counselor, but Hoccleve eventually addresses the Old Man as an apologetic poet to an incensed patron:

> But nathëless, truste I, your pacïence
> Receyuë wole in gree my wordës all;
> And what mys-seyd I haue, of negligence,
> Ye wole it lete aside slippe and fall.[56]

These confusions of subject position arise in part from the incongruity which Judith Ferster sees as arising from the contradictory subject positions of petitioner and counselor.[57]

But this confusion goes farther still—the *Regement*'s Prologue consistently challenges the clarity and legibility of discursive subject positions, principally because of what Tolmie describes as

> Hoccleve's occasionally jarring method of partially resolved generic impersonation, the creation of fleeting demi-characters from many genres whose voices are temporarily coextensive with the author.[58]

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[55] *Regement*, 187-191.
[56] *Regement*, 1037-40; Simpson, "Nobody's Man," 165-166.
[57] Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 139.

Tolmie, like Knapp, sees this as the result of Hoccleve's everyday job of textualizing

the desires of others as a Privy Seal clerk.   This may be so, but this multivocal

performance also characterizes satire from Horace through the medieval Latin

tradition. In the next section, I will examine how Hoccleve confuses the estates

satire's discrete and well-ordered subject positions in order to reveal the distortions in

this particular mode of social representation. He arranges its remnants into a dialogue

that articulates an idiosyncratic moral vision, aware of it own situated, implicated,

and therefore compromised position within an imperfect social order.

4.2.2   Confused Social Roles and the Fragmentation of Estates Satire

Hoccleve integrates the topics and themes of estates satire into his dialogue

with the Old Man, but with its plurivocality and its acknowledgment of its author's

own interested position, his text differs from its estates-satire forebears and their

transcendent, unified view of the social order. Hoccleve uses satire's traditional

methods to describe social and political ills such as overspending on fancy clothes or

flattery at court, but also articulates the hardships he suffers individually as a

consequence of them—his jeremiads reproduce his social self with his view of

society.[59]   Thus Hoccleve writes both within and against the tradition of estates

satire, disrupting its transcendent social perspective with a Goliardic personal

confession. These incongruities and disruptions in the *Regement*'s Prologue produce

the force of its ethical argument. I will examine these incongruities in the scattered

threads of estates satire, anti-sumptuary satire, and the account of Hoccleve's work at

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[58] Tolmie, "The Prive Silence of Thomas Hoccleve," 290
[59] Patterson takes this view to its limit, arguing that Hoccleve's satirical passages create an "instability" that derails the mode of public address and returns him to his principal concern, the relentless description of his "inner life." "What is Me?," 454-5, 463.

the Privy Seal; in all of these, we will find the usual broadsides against flattery turned

finally to reveal the author's own compromise and complicity in these practices.

By Hoccleve's day, condemning flatterers to distinguish oneself as honest was

an old convention.[60] Hoccleve deploys it to connect personal concerns with public

affairs. Anti-sumptuary satire connects his own destitution with expenditures on

clothing; attacks on flattery relate his feelings of fear and vulnerability to the political

problems of the entire kingdom. Hoccleve is not simply the "good citizen . . . [who]

like John Gower . . . took upon himself the role of upholding standards by giving

moral counsel to the great and deploring the abuses of modern times."[61] The

flatterer's dissimulation poses a private danger to Hoccleve even as it poses a public

danger to kingdom and church. In a much-studied passage, Hoccleve describes how

clerks of the Privy Seal are defrauded:

> "But if a wyght hauë any cause to sue
> To us, some lordës man schal undertake
> To sue it out; & þat þat is vs due
> ffor oure labour, hym deyneþ vs not take;
> He seiþ, his lord to þanke vs wole he make;
>   It touchiþ hym, it is a man of his;
>   Where þe reuers of þat, god wot, sooþ is.
>
> His letter he takiþ, and forþ goþ his way,
> And byddeþ vs to dowten vs no-thyng
> His lord schal þanken vs an oþer day;
> And if we han to suë to þe kyng,
> His lord may þerë haue al his askyng;
>   We schal be sped, as fer as þat oure bille
>   Wole specifie þe effecte of our wylle."[62]

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[60] See, for example my discussion of John of Salisbury and Daniel of Beccles in chapter one of this dissertation. Pearsall observes how Hoccleve "develops his role as simple truth teller by systematically contrasting himself with those who flatter." Pearsall, "The Poetics of Royal Self-Representation," 409.

[61] Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry," 237; Burrow sees this as the most "boring" element of Hoccleve's literary persona.

[62] *Regement*, 1499-1512.

As a clerk of a Privy Seal, Hoccleve is a pawn in the strategic transactions of others who pretend friendship and uprightness; the last couplet uses the official petitionary language of Hoccleve's profession to express his consciousness of his vulnerability without a patron. Patronage is an institution by which the strong protect the weak in exchange for their loyalty; without it, Hoccleve lacks the means to redress his exploitation, even though, ironically, as a Privy Seal clerk his trade is to reproduce instruments of legal redress.

> þe lord not wot of al þis sotilte;
> Ne we nat dar lete him of it to know,
> Lest oure compleynte oure seluen ouerthrowe.[63]

This scenario does more than depict Hoccleve's private troubles; it also reveals the corruption and depredation in everyday life of the weak by the strong.

'Public' topics, however seemingly displaced by Hoccleve's obsession with his private problems, return in new iterations. Just as Hoccleve draws a continuity between himself, Prince Henry, and Old Man, he also draws continuities between heretics, the "lord's man" who defrauds him of his dues, stingy aristocrats, and flattering courtiers. An essential component of this continuity is Hoccleve's integration of estates satire, a highly conventional literary discourse type, into a more naturalistic mode of discourse, conversation. The beginning of the Prologue includes an expression of woe that typifies the "complaint" mode of medieval satire:

> Me fel to mynde how that, not long ago,
>   ffortunës strok doun threst estaat royal
> Into myscheef; and I took heed also
>   Of many anothir lord that had a fall;
> In mene estaat eek sikernesse at all
>   Ne saw I noon;[64]

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[63] *Regement*, 1524-1526.
[64] *Regement*, 22-27.; On the relationship between 'complaint' and satire, see chap. 1, note 42.

Critics interpret the "estaat royal" as a reference to Richard II (and also, possibly,

Henry IV), meant either to remind Prince Henry of the potential consequences of

misgoverning or to express sympathy for Henry for his uncle's deposition and

untimely death.[65] Leaving aside this immediate context, the royal estate serves to

epitomize the uncertainty which all estates face except for 'poverty', which Hoccleve

is concerned to avoid.

The topics and rhetoric of estates satires are not obvious features of the

dialogue with the Old Man because they are interwoven with so many other kinds of

discourse, including the personal complaints that accompany Hoccleve's personal

petition. Hoccleve links his financial problems to the inadequacy of society's

persistent self-understanding in estates discourse. A worry about his own fate—

> Seruyse, I wot wel, is non heritage;
> Whan I am out of court an oþer day,
> . . .
> Vn-to my porë cote, it is no may,
> I mote me drawe, & my fortune abyde,
> And suffre storm after þe mery tyde.[66]

—turns to a rebuke of the nobility, when he considers the neglect of wounded old

veterans—

> "O fekil world! allas, þi variaunce !
> How many a gentilman may men now se,
> Þat whilom in þe werrës olde of fraunce,
> Honured were, & holde in grete cheerte
> ffor hire prowesse in armës, & plente
> Of frendës hadde in youþe, & now, for schame,
> Allas ! hir frendeschipe is crokéd & lame.
>
> Now age vnourne a-wey puttéþ fauoúr,
> Þat floury youþe in his seson conquerde;

---

[65] Perkins and Tolmie argue the former position, Pearsall and Yeager the latter.
[66] *Regement*, 841-847.

> Now al forgete is þe manly labour
> Þorgh whiche ful oftë þey hire foos afferde;
> Now be þo worþi men bet with þe yerde
> Of nede, allas ! & non haþ of hem routhe;
> Pyte, I trow, is beried, by my trouþe.[67]

The image of neglected veterans reproaches the noblemen they served; it also reflects the payless Hoccleve's own abandonment by those he serves: "This worthi men to me þe mirour shewe / Of sliper frenchipe, and un-to what fyn I drawë shal with-in a yeerës fewe."[68] Articulating his own experience of exclusion and privation, he recognizes others' suffering and exhorts his readers to this empathy. Hoccleve's private condition illustrates public ills.

For Hoccleve, the nobility's failure of their veterans is a kind of dissimulation—those who lack "pyte" are not truly noble:

> If sche be deed, god haue hire soule, I preye;
> And so schal mo hereafter preye, I trow.
> He þat pretendiþ him of most nobley,
> If he hire lakkë, schal wel wyte and knowe
> Þat crueltee, hire foo, may but a throw
> Hym suffre for to lyue in any welþe;
> Hertë petous, to body & soule is helþe.[69]

To have power without mercy is to feign nobility, deluding not only others, but one's self by trusting the security of one's position against the vagaries of fortune. With the general voice of the estates satirist, Hoccleve calls on the nobility to identify with the suffering veteran and act—"Ye men of armës oghten specialy / Helpe hem : allas! han ye no pitous blood / That may yow stirë for to do hem good?"—but in identifying with their misfortune, makes a private appeal for assistance. The querulous voice of the petitioner sounds a counterpoint to the moralist's stentorian admonition on behalf

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[67] *Regement*, 869-882
[68] *Regement*, 926-928.
[69] *Regement*, 883-889

of the general weal—"Knyghthode, awakë! þou slepist to longe ; / Thy brothir, se, ny dyeth for myschief; / A – wake, and rewe vp-on his peynës stronge!70 Combining the subject positions of satirist and petitioner, Hoccleve appeals for the abandoned and dispossessed—especially himself.

Even as Hoccleve satirizes the nobility, the Old Man satirizes the clergy. Assigning the treatment of this estate to a fictional mouthpiece may have been a prudent measure in the wake of Arundel's constitutions. As with Hoccleve's own attack on the failings of the nobility, the Old Man's attack on the failings of churchmen also takes into account Hoccleve's situation, if only as another accusation and rebuke of the poet:

> "Of holy chirche, my sonë, I conceyve
> As ȝit ne hast þow non avancëment:
> Ye courteours, ful often ye deceyue
> Youre soulës for þe désirous talént
> Ye han to good ; and for þat þow art brent
> With couetysë now, par aventure
> Only for muk þow ȝernest soulës cure.
>
> fful many men knowe I, þat gane and gape
> After som fat & richë benefice ;
> Chirche or prouendre vnneþe hem may eschape
> But þei as blyue it henten vp and trice :
> God graunté þei accepte hem for þe office,
> And noght for þe profet þat by hem hongeþ,
> ffor þat conceytë nat to prestehode longeþ."71

The addressee changes from Hoccleve to an entire class,"Ye courteours," as the Old Man slips into the discursive mode of estates satire. Gower's false churchmen do not practice what they preach, but Hoccleve's are worse—they cannot be bothered to preach at all:

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70 *Regement*, 897-899.
71 *Regement*, 1394-1414.

"The oynëment of holy sermonynge
Hym loþ is vp-on hem for to despende;
Som person is so threde-bare of konnynge
Þat he can noght, þogh he hym wys pretende,
And he þat can, may not his hertë bende
Þer-to, but from his cure he hym absentith,
And what þer-of comeþ, gredylich he hentith.[72]

False churchmen, the Old Man laments, cannot even be bothered to dissimulate

holiness any more:

"But wel I wot, as nycë, fressh, and gay
Som of hem ben, as borel folkës be,
And þat vnsittynge is to hire degree ;
Hem hoghtë to be mirours of sadnesse,
And wayuë iolitee and wantonnesse."[73]

Here, the appearance of false churchmen in "fresh and gay" apparel (in contrast to

their "threadbare cunning") explicitly contrasts the Old Man's self-description—"So

smal I-pynchid, ne so fresche and gay," and the comparison implicitly suggests the

Old Man's role as parallel to that of the priest-confessor.

The Old Man employs the venerable strategy of offering his modest

appearance as proof of his honesty. "The wearing of a plain cloak identifies the

speaker as a loyal, straightforward truthteller, in contrast to the finely dressed and

linguistically devious courtiers who people the Dialogue of the *Regement*."[74]

However, the Old Man presents a more complex and ambiguous figure; Derek

Pearsall suggests that he is actually a Carmelite Friar; at the very least, some of his

features are closely associated with the Carmelite order, which conspicuously

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[72] *Regement*, 1429-1435.
[73] *Regement*, 1438-1-442
[74] Perkins, *Counsel and Constraint,* 46.

opposed the Lollard heresy and was favored by the king.[75] For Pearsall, this

association works to buttress the Old Man's authority and legitimate Hoccleve's

vernacular poem as staunchly orthodox.

Yet in the *Regement of Prince*'s literary context, a mendicant counselor

presents a less trustworthy figure; from the mid-thirteenth century, mendicants,

especially Franciscans, were a ready personification of hypocrisy. Inspired by the

first outpouring of anti-mendicant literature in the wake of the University of Paris

controversies of the 1250s, Jean de Meun's *Faux-Semblant* was hypocrisy personified

in the habit of a friar, and this association had a long afterlife in Middle English

literature, including *Piers Plowman*.[76] The faint association of a Carmelite friar with

a polemical discourse directed largely against Franciscan friars is strengthened by the

Old Man's explicitly Franciscan discourse on poverty.[77]

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[75] "Some of the new king's zeal may have come from Stephen Patrington, a Carmelite friar, provincial of the order in England from 1399 to 1414, whom he appointed as his confessor when he succeeded to the throne. Carmelites were particularly fierce in their attacks on Lollardy, and Patrington was one of the most famous of the early anti-Lollard polemicists. Thomas Netter, provincial of the order from 1414 until his death in 1430, was equally zealous: he was with the prince at Badby's burning, and he, too, later became the king's confessor. In this connection I find it suggestive that the Old Man of the *Regement,* after declining Hoccleve's invitation to dinner, says that, if Hoccleve wants to meet him, he can always be found at the 7 A.M. mass "at þe Carmes" (2007). He does not say he is a Carmelite figure, but whether he is or not the deliberate association of the father confessor figure of the poem with the strictest upholders of anti-Lollard orthodoxy is striking. The picture of a man in a white garment with a hood and skull cap at the beginning of the mid-fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Regement* in the Coventry City Record office is most likely to be identified as an academic doctor, Aristotle or Aegidius Romanus, the authorities cited for the *Regement,* but I would not wish to lose sight of the possibility that the artist may have intended to portray the Old Man of the poem as a Carmelite friar." Pearsall, "The Poetics of Royal Self-Representation," 407.

[76] For a broad overview of the topic, see Penn R. Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Wendy Scase, *Piers Plowman and the New Anti-clericalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[77] Says the Old Man in *Regement* 690-4:

> "Now is pouert þe glas and þe merour
> In which I se my god, my sauyour.
> Or pouert cam, wiste I nat what god was;
> But now I knowe, & se hym in þis glas."

This echoes a lessons of Saint Francis to a companion in The Assisi Compilation, 114: "And he [Francis] said: "Whenever you see a poor person you ought to consider Him in whose name he comes, that is, Christ, who came to take on our poverty and weakness. This man's poverty and weakness is a

Hoccleve's Old Man is obviously not a conventional figure of hypocrisy; he is never explicitly identified as a Carmelite friar or other religious. Countervailing signals argue for his trustworthiness—his authentic poverty, magisterial tone, professions of orthodoxy, clear signs of erudition, and confessions of worldly experience. The reader cannot regard him as the stock villain, the friar who preaches poverty to enrich himself, but the faint association is perhaps bolstered by the contextual cue of estates satire itself.[78] By compelling us to trust an individual associated with an untrustworthy class of people tainted by stereotypes of hypocrisy, deceit, and avarice, Hoccleve enjoins the reader of the *Regement* to exercise a discernment that looks past conventional significations.

Hoccleve disorders estates satire by undoing the hierarchical order in which it critiques clergy, nobility, and commons, and integrating these criticisms into the dialogue between Hoccleve and the Old Man. The moral failings of each are explored in concrete detail in terms of the reciprocal effects between individual experience and the large-scale social order. The impersonal, condemnatory voice of medieval satire shifts back and forth between the Old Man—a failed courtier, beggar, friar, teacher, and preacher—and Hoccleve—an aspiring churchman denied a

mirror for us in which we should see and consider lovingly the poverty and weakness of our Lord Jesus Christ which He endured in His body for the salvation of the human race." Different versions of this lesson appear in Thomas Celano's recollections and in the *Mirror of Perfection*. *Frances of Assisi: Early Documents*, eds. Regis J. Armstrong, J. Wayne Hellman, and William J. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999-2002) vol. 2, 221. I am grateful to my colleague Jonathan Robinson at the University of Toronto for pointing me to the Franciscan sources.

[78] This is a characteristic instance of satire's capacity to convey different meaning to different readers; while Prince Henry may have taken up the positive association with the Carmelites while missing the hints of anti-mendicant satire, Hoccleve's other readership, his peers and fellow clerks (among whom Plowman literature was disseminated and read) would certainly have picked up the association of hyprocrisy with friars. On the London readership of Plowman literature, see Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Derek Pearsall, "Professional Readers of Langland at Home and Abroad: New Directions in the Political and Bureaucratic Codicology of *Piers Plowman*," in *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies: Essays from the 1998 Harvard Conference* (Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press, 2001), 103-29.

benefice and a retainer abandoned by his liege. Together, the failed-courtier-turned-religious and the failed-religious-turned-courtier illustrate the fluidity of estates and the social roles they fail to delimit.

These two figures stand in place of any general consideration of the "commons," (the briefest part of Gower's estates satire in the *Confessio Amantis*'s prologue). Their confessions, complaints, and accusations articulate a social experience inexpressible within the confines of estates satire. The familiar and stable relational models of satire-counsel described in the previous chapters cannot be sustained amid this confusion of social performances. Gower's estates satire is grounded in the context of a preferential relation between himself and a sympathetic reader emblematized by King Richard II; Gower occupies a stable—even exalted—center from which to make the disorder within each estate appear legible. In Hoccleve's treatment of the same estates material, the implied relational context is implicated in the same moral confusion it describes, a "world . . . full of false exchanges and unprofitable dealings."[79] At the margins of the court, Hoccleve cannot rise above the fray to get a synthetic view of society, but from this perspective, he can see his social betters in the same quagmire.

From this place, Hoccleve insinuates the possibility of a new social ethic. Truth and authority are not guaranteed by social roles and positions, but are produced by communication. The challenges of discernment and dissimulation are therefore crucial to Hoccleve; pat affirmations of loyalty do not suffice for an outsider like Hoccleve to claim authority before Prince Henry. His authority is constituted in communication, narrative, dialogue, a continuous process of self-critique.

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[79] Perkins, *Counsel and Constraint*, 42.

Communication itself creates the possibility of deception, but it also makes possible

the formation of trust between Hoccleve and the Old Man; Hoccleve's depiction of

this formation is his exordium to the reader for trust.

4.2.3   Clothing and Communication: Hoccleve's Social Ethics

The complex ethical concerns of the *Regement of Princes*—social self-

performance, dissimulation, discernment, the efficacy of counsel—are encapsulated

in the anti-sumptuary satire in lines 421–533 of the Prologue. After the Old Man

rebukes Hoccleve for judging him by his appearance, he begins to lambast

contemporary dress, an attack which some critics view as concealing strategic

motivations in a mantle of conventional moralizing.[80] Thus, Hoccleve's attack on

courtly dissimulation in this part of the Prologue renders himself liable to the

accusation that he is doing the very thing he criticizes. But it is precisely in opening

up this problem that the dialogue with the Old Man achieves a distinct moral

sophistication.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued for the commutability of text and

social performance, and clothing is a tangible manifestation of this commutability;

like written texts, it is a material performance of identity that both conveys and

conceals intentionality.[81] The Old Man rebukes elaborate and costly dress for its

waste, focusing particularly on the vogue for long sleeves:

"But þis me þinkiþ an abusioun,

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[80] Tolmie and Yeager see this section as a ruse to provide an occasion to work in a compliment (ll. 512-525) to John of Gaunt, Prince Henry's grandfather, who is held up as a model of masculine austerity. Tolmie, "The Prive Silence of Thomas Hoccleve," 296. Lee Patterson finds that "the oddly extravagant attack upon extravagant dress reveals a world not merely of excess but of social fraudulence . . .." Patterson, "What is Me?," 461.

[81] On the role of clothing in social self-performance in Hoccleve's era, see Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity during the Hundred Years' War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

> To se on walke in gownës of scarlet,
> xjj ȝerdes wyde, with pendant sleves downe
> On þe ground, and the furrour þer-in set,
> Amountyng vnto twenty pound or bet ;
> And if he for it payde haue, he no good
> Haþ lefte him wher-wit for to bye an hood."[82]

For the Old Man, the crime of conspicuous consumption is compounded when it

conceals its wearer's poverty:

> "ffor þogh he iettë forth a-mong þe prees,
> And ouer lokë euerey porë wight,
> His cofre and eke his purs ben penylees,
> He haþ no morë þan he goþ in ryght."[83]

This ostentation bankrupts individuals; but its real danger is that it distorts the social

order:

> Nay sothely, sone, it is al a-mys me þinkyþ ;
> So pore a wight his lord to couterfete
> In his arrray, in my coneyit it stynkith.[84]

The Old Man's opinion reflects a belief that the splendor of one's appearance should

be a reliable index of social rank.

The Old Man blames the breakdown of this cultural system on lords whose

misplaced liberality allows such display among their social inferiors.

> "Certes to blamë ben þe lordës grete,
> If þat I durstë seyn, þat hir men lete
> Vsurpë swich a lordly apparaille,
> Is not worþ, my childe, with-outen fayle.
>
> Som tyme, afer men myghten lordës knowe
> By there array from oþer folke ; but now
> A man shal stody and musen a long throwe
> Whiche is whiche."[85]

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[82] *Regement*, 421-327.
[83] *Regement*, 428-431.
[84] *Regement*, 435-437.
[85] *Regement*, 438-445.

With the direct apostrophe of complaint, the Old Man calls on lords to end these practices.

> "o lordes, it sit to yow
> Amendë þis, for it is for your prowe.
> If twixt yow and youre men no difference
> Be in array, lesse is youre reuerence."[86]

This visual dissembling frustates the old man's efforts to discern greater from lesser in society; it undermines traditional practies that make social hierarchy legible in everyday life. For Scanlon, this passage has a positive ideological function: the observation that "dressing above one's station is obviously an attempt to appropriate the social privileges of lordship" establishes "the parameters of social order."[87] Correspondingly, the Old Man's humble "aray" not only betokens humility or holy poverty but maintains traditional hierarchies.

Describing the wastefulness of fancy dress with incisive comic exaggeration, Hoccleve again connects public ills with his private concerns. A lord's retainers' sleeves are so "encombrous" that they may not draw their weapons to protect their lord.[88] The shops of tailors and skinners are too narrow—they must "shape in þe feeld."[89] The Old Man's diatribe evokes an image worthy of Mel Brooks:

> "Now hath þis lord but litil neede of broomes
> To swepe a-way þe filthe out of þe street,
> Syn sydë sleuës of penylees gromes
> Wile it up likkë, be it drye or weet."[90]

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[86] *Regement*, 445-448.
[87] Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 304.
[88] *Regement*, 463-469. Yeager discusses how these sartorial innovations "blur legitimate gender and class distinctions, and so emasculate men." Yeager, "Death is a Lady," 173.
[89] *Regement*, 470-483.
[90] *Regement*, 533-536.

While making this costly clothing appear ridiculous, he points out serious

consequences to its expense:

> "Now wold[ë] god þe waast of cloth & pryde
> Y-put were in exyl perpetuel,
> ffor þe good and profet vniuersel."
>   . . .
> "Than myghtë siluer walkë morë thikke
> Among þe peple þan þat it doþ now ;"[91]

The depletion of currency to finance excessive display impoverishes not only the

realm as a whole but individuals within it:

> "But sonë, for þat swichë men as thow
> That with þe world wrastlen, myght han plente
> Of coyn, where as ye han now scarsetee."[92]

The Old Man's allusion to Hoccleve's poverty anticipates the poet's still-undelivered

petition to Prince Henry. Hoccleve, who beheld courtly ostentation even while

denied his annuity, blames this waste (in the Old Man's voice) on the culture of court

and its need for courtiers to make an impression:

> "If a wight vertuous, but narwe clothid,
> To lordës curtës now of dayës go,
> His compaignye is vn-to folkës lothid;
> Men passen by hym bothë to and fro,
> And scorne hym, for he is arrayed so;
> To hir conceit is no wight vertuous
> But he þat of array is outrageous."[93]

The relationship between courtly display and political economy was a controversial

issue about which the commons had several times petitioned King Henry IV.[94]

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[91] *Regement*, 522-527.
[92] *Regement*, 530-532.
[93] *Regement*, 540-546.
[94] See Jenni Nuttall, "Household Narratives and Lancastrian Poetics in Hoccleve's Envoys and Other Early-Fifteenth-Century Middle English Poems," in *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe c. 850-c.1550: Managing Power, Wealth, and the Body*, eds. Cordelia Beattie, Anna Maslakovic, and Sarah Rees-Jones (Turnout: Brepols, 2003), 100-101.

This moment of high audacity, touching so directly on current political controversies, challenges the view that Hoccleve was simply a Lancastrian propagandist. Hoccleve joined in this controversy as an interested party, for the very financial crises that motivated parliament to condemn excessive displays were also occasions on which Hoccleve's annuity was suspended. As so often with Hoccleve, private experiences and public issues each frame each other—the personal is political. Like Walter Map in *De nugis curialium*, Hoccleve discloses how the satirist's transcendent moralizing can conceal the maneuvering of a self-interested actor.

But like Map, Hoccleve is a satirist who wrings a more profound inquiry out of his compromised position and turns private and public concerns towards ethical problems of universal import. The Old Man observes that false and ornate speech acccomplishes much the same at court as fancy clothes:

> "But he that flater can, or be a baude,
> And by tho tweynë, fressch array him gete,
> It holden is to him honur and laude.
> Trouthe and clennessë musten men for-gete
> In lordës courtës, for they hertës frete;
> They hyndren folk : fy vpon tongës trewe!
> They displesaunce in lordës courtës breewe."[95]

In fact, it is through the flatterer's dissimulation that he wins his lord's favor and obtains thereby his "fressch array." Like other authors of satire-counsel, Hoccleve defines the honest counselor negatively against the dishonesty of flatterers; their beautified speech and clothing is, in fact, the very mark of their falseness.

In contrast to gaudy flattering courtiers, the Old Man is distinguished by his tattered raiment and ugly appearance. He concludes his rebuke of excessive clothing

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[95] *Regement*, 547-553.

and language by returning the focus of the exchange to the discursive community he

is trying to build with Hoccleve:

> "Now, goodë sone, haue of me no desdeyn,
> Thogh I be old and myn array vntheende"[96]

Perkins points out that Hoccleve's alignment of false speech with expensive clothing

implies that his "plain cloak" is a mark of his honesty.[97] Hoccleve, however, is not so

morally simplistic as to leave his reader with an easy and obvious way of telling true

from false or good from bad. If the world values the ornate over the simple, the rich

over the cheap, a simple reversal of these evaluative terms would rely on the same

external signifiers that no longer serve reliably in Hoccleve's world.

For this reason, Hoccleve undermines the construction of moral authority

symbolized by the Old Man as a plain-spoken, coarsely-dressed outsider. The

alignment of speech and clothing, the confusion of subject positions, and the focus on

discernment and dissimulation set up a contradiction in the Prologue's three uses of

the adjective phrase "fressh and gay." Its first occurrence is at line 410, when the Old

Man describes his appearance as poorer than Hoccleve's, "and not so wyde a gowne

haue, as is þin / So smal I-pynchid, ne so fresche and gay." This contrast anticipates

the anti-sumptuary satire in urging Hoccleve nevertheless to discern correctly his

counsel's worth. "Fresh and gay" suggests deceit in its second use at 1438, when it

describes the inappropriate self-display of a corrupt and worldly clergymen: "But wel

I wot, as nycë, fressh, and gay / Som of hem ben, as borel folkës be, / And þat

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[96] *Regement*, 555-556; The use of the word 'untheende' to describe his cloak emphasizes the continuity between clothing and discourse; In Hoccleve's period, "heende" or "hende" meant 'expert,' 'skillful,' 'clever,' or 'courtly.' (The form 'thende' or 'theende' is unattested; the -*t*- between the prefix –*un* and the root must be epenthetic.) *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Hende," "Unhende."
[97] See note 75.

vnsittynge is to hire degree."[98] The third and final use of "fresh and gay" is at line

1906, when the Old Man advises Hoccleve to write a poem for Prince Henry. I return

to a quotation cited at the outset:

> Sharpë thi penne, and write on lustily;
>   Lat se, my sonë, make it fresh and gay,
> Outë thyn art if þou canst craftily;
>   His hyë prudence hath insighte verray
>   To iuge if it be wel y-made or nay;[99]

"Make it fresh and gay," advises the Old Man—imbue it with characteristics, that is,

which have already been marked in the same text as the signs of dissimulation. Given

this intertext, the attribution to the prince of "prudence," a virtue dependent on

discernment, seems almost a challenge to the prince's discernment that parallels the

Old Man's challenges to Hoccleve.

Then the Old Man warns Hoccleve to avoid flattery: "But of a thyng be wel

waar in al wise, / On flaterië þat þou þe nat founde."[100] He continues in this vein for

five stanzas, trotting out the familiar proverbs of advice literature. But while

Hoccleve indirectly disclaims flattery through the Old Man's advice-literature tropes,

his "fresh and gay" words point out his susceptibility to the charge. As I discussed

with Gower, the resemblance between the false and the true forces a crisis of

interpretation which finally requires the interpreter to base his trust of words on his

experience of lived relations.

In his discussion of the *Regement of Princes*, Perkins points out some of the

Prologue's major moral arguments: "following one's reason, interpreting the intention

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[98] *Regement*, 1438-1440.
[99] *Regement*, 1905-1909.
[100] *Regement*, 1912-1913.

of the speaker, avoiding flattery, listening to those on the margins of the text."[101] All

true, but the particular deftness in the *Regement*'s prologue lies in how it gradually

and subtly insinuates these positions until they can be presented as a matter of fact.

The author himself, in his dialogue with the Old Man, enacts and guides a process by

which the reader's hostility and resistance is transmuted into enthusiastic acceptance

of these communicative ideals.

Patterson argues against a reading of Hoccleve that sees his self-presentation

as strategic.

> Other critics . . . have avoided claiming that Hoccleve's
> autobiographical protagonist is simply an everyman adopted to prove a
> moral point. But they have continued to read his various accounts of
> himself as essentially strategic, poses adopted depending on the needs
> of the communicative situation.[102]

But the "tactlessness" described by Patterson can itself be a strategy. The pose of the

modest, plain-spoken truthteller is at least several centuries old by Hoccleve's time.

Such tactlessness cannot be used innocently, and can be a ruse to silence more

important messages. The fact that Hoccleve gives his truth-telling Old Man the

attributes of a friar, a role synonymous with dissimulation in his vernacular tradition,

draws attention to the fact that this tactlessness, like any other self-performance, can

be strategic and self-serving. And Hoccleve's revelation of the artfulness and the

conventionality of this pose can also be regarded as a strategem, a final self-

consuming gesture of sincerity.

Patterson's thesis is a provocative challenge to the critical consensus that

regards the *Regement* as a political poem, but his reading still depends on a separation

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[101] Perkins, *Counsel and Constraint*, 82.
[102] Patterson, "'What is me?'," 440.

of the personal and political that is not necessarily an operative distinction for

Hoccleve. The attention to the self in its particularity that Patterson describes as

pertaining especially to the *Series* develops precisely in the matrix of strategic self-

performance described by critics of Hoccleve since Burrow. Hoccleve's subject is

precisely the *ethical* self at work in the world. The social environment of court

divides the interior from the self-performance; the tradition of satire-counsel

recognizes and articulates this division, especially in its treatments of dissimulation.

Authenticity creates the possibility of deception, but dissimulation produces the

possibility of that persistent reflexivity, that constant striving to reconcile the exterior

with the interior, that we think of today as moral sophistication. In the next section I

will turn to John Skelton, whose poem *The Bowge of Court* brings the threat of

dissimulation to a fatal extreme, refusing even the final appeal for trust that Hoccleve

makes by revealing his tricks.

4.3   John Skelton: Fraudulent Relations and the Failure to Communicate

John Skelton was born in 1460 and entered royal service in 1488. According

to A.R. Heiserman, "he indicated his feeling that his career really began with his

enlistment at court by marking 1488 'year I' in his private calendar."[103] Around

1497, he entered the household of Henry VII as tutor to the seven-year old Prince

Henry (not yet the Crown Prince), and in 1498, took holy orders and became a

priest.[104] Sometime during these two years, he wrote the *Bowge of Court*.[105] This

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[103] A.R. Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 56.

[104] A.W. Barnes, "Constructing the Sexual Subject of John Skelton," *English Literary History* 71, no. 1 (2004): 29-30. Barnes offers an up-to-date synopsis of Skelton's biography, and a review of the major modern efforts at Skelton biography. On Skelton's career as a royal tutor, see R.F. Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, 79.

poem is informed not solely by prior literary treatments, but by his own experience of

court. He was himself a courtier as a royal tutor, assuming the poet's traditional role

as a moral and practical educator, writing the Latin *Speculum principis* for the future

Henry VIII.[106] *The Bowge of Court*'s chilling dramatic vision renews their moral

pungency by recontextualizing this tradition's commonplace maxims about flattery

and counsel.

The Bowge of Court, 539 lines in rime royal stanzas, is a concise dream vision

in three parts: a Prologue (lines 1–126), the Dream (127–525), and the brief

conclusions of the final two stanzas in which the dreamer, Drede, wakes up (526–

539). In the Prologue, the narrator declares his wish to follow the example of "the

great auctoryte / of poets old," who

> Under as coverte termes as coude be,
> Can touche a troughte and cloke it subtylly
> With fresshe utteraunce full sentencyously;
> Dyverse in style, some spared not vyce to wrythe,
> Some of moralyte nobly did endyte;[107]

His efforts meet with frustration, for in what is a fresh treatment of the humility

topos, a personified Ignorance discourages the narrator:

> For to illumyne, she sayde, I was to dulle,
> Avysying me my penne away to pulle.[108]

[105] Barnes, "Constructing the Sexual Subject of John Skelton," 30. For an account of the controversies over the dating of *The Bowge of Court*, see Jane Griffiths, *John Skelton and Poetic Authority: Defining the Liberty to Speak* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 56 n.3.

[106] Skelton's *Speculum principis* was edited by F.M Salter, Speculum 9, no. 1 (1934): 25-37; It was more recently edited alongside Skelton's other Latin works in David R. Carlson, *The Latin Writings of John Skelton*, Studies in Philology: Texts and Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). For a discussion of Skelton's *Speculum principis* in the tradition of late medieval and early modern English literature about counsel, see Hellen Barr and Kate Ward-Perkins, "'Spekying for One's Sustenance': The Rhetoric of Counsel in *Mum and the Sothsegger*, Skelton's *Bowge of Court*, and Elyot's *Pasquil the Playne*," in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, eds. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 264-265.

[107] John Skelton, *The Bowge of Court*, in *The Complete English Poems*, ed. V.J. Scattergood (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1983), pp. 46-61; ll. 8-14. Hereafter cited as *Bowge of Court* with line numbers.

The difficulty facing the poet whose reach exceeeds his grasp is described in terms

that evoke the dangers facing the courtly social climber:

> But of reproche surely he maye not mys
> That clymmeth hyer than he may fotynge have;
> What and he slyde downe, who shall hym save?[109]

For Skelton, as for predecessors like Hoccleve, poetry was a means of courtly

advancement, and the risks of error were as real as the rewards of success.

This last question ("Who shall hym save?") highlights one constant theme of

The Bowge of Court, the courtier's solitude inside the crowd, exacerbated rather than

palliated by social intercourse with other courtiers. The poem's prologue reveals

Drede's isolation. Its body, which resembles a morality play, reinforces the sense of

isolation by interlacing a narrative monologue into his interactions with others that

reveal his interior reactions. The division between his private feelings and his overt

behaviors reflects the duplicity of those who victimize him.   The poem makes plain

the distance a strategic view of interaction interposes between people.

In texts like *Confessio Amantis* and *Regement of Princes*, the unreliability of

language is offset by authorial appeals to a relational context that authenticates

communication between author and reader as genuine. But in Hoccleve's poem, even

this appeal has become too recognizable to function effectively as a discursive

strategy. *The Bowge of Court* illustrates the destructive and alienating consequences

of this recognition—no discourse is sufficient to verify itself, so when social relations

are assimilable to speech acts, nothing guarantees trust against the corrosive effects of

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[108]*Bowge of Court*, 20-21.
[109] *Bowge of Court*, 26-28.

fear and ambition. This condition is reflected in the disorientating succession of interactions between Drede and his rival courtiers.

Unlike other works treated in this dissertation, the narrator of John Skelton's *The Bowge of Court* does not identify himself extensively with the actual historical author, nor does he address a specific reader. The poem depicts courtly social interactions outside of any historically 'real' specific contexts or relationships which, in other works, justify or ironize the strategic gambits of courtly interaction. Set aboard an allegorical ship called the Bowge of Court, its interactions take place among figures that stand for discursive vices of fraud and deceit. These figures enact the vices they represent in their dealings with each other and the narrator, who takes the allegorical guise of Drede (Dread).[110]

Interactions between such figures as "Favel" (Flattery) and "Suspect" (Suspicion) are tenuous, adversarial, and tend inevitably toward betrayal, for their discourse is strategic rather than communicative; it serves their desire for power and wealth rather than truth, mutual understanding, and common welfare. The poem gives a view of humans as being what certain economists might charitably describe as 'self-interested rational actors.' For Skelton, the perversion of language for gain is the height of irrationality; his narrative, as some critics point out, has a nightmarish quality.[111] I argue that the basis of this nightmarishness is the way it systematically empties traditional signifiers of trust and social faith. Those who serve the debased goals of gaining or defending social position adapt the tropes of satire-counsel that

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[110] I will use the two terms "narrator" and "Drede" interchangeably.
[111] For a review of scholarly discussions on *The Bowge of Court*'s nightmarishness, including its relation to the medieval category of *insomnium*, see Arthur F. Kinney, *John Skelton: Poet as Priest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 4-5.

critique flattery, deceit, and dissimulation; these tropes become the tools of flatterers, liars, and dissemblers.

As far back as the twelfth century, authors of satire-counsel seek to manage and contain the destabilizing similarity between themselves and the dissemblers they criticize. This similarity arises from the fact that, like works of literature, "the intrigues, the follies, the miseries, the fragile and unaccountable successes and failures of courtiers are based on and work through nothing more substantial than words."[112] Skelton's poem reveals how an author's appeal to a reader's good faith is unsustainable; counsel cannot instruct because communication is untrustworthy. The most satire can do is reveal the impossibility of counsel. At its worst, it is an instrument of slander.

Some of the most prominent studies of John Skelton's poetry have examined his debt to the tradition of medieval satire. In his monograph *Skelton and Satire*, A.R. Heiserman argues that Skelton's work belongs to a tradition of court satire including Walter Map and John of Salisbury.[113] Heiserman is reluctant to see Skelton's use of these conventions as a specific address to lived experience, an activity whose effects extend outside the literary sphere.[114] Notwithstanding this commission of Burrow's 'conventional fallacy,' Heiserman recognizes Skelton's "constant refashioning of

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[112] Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 22.

[113] See my typology of medieval satire in chapter one, note 35.. ". . . *The Bowge of Court* attacks a conventional object—certain follies of minor courtiers. . .. [It] is Skelton's most sophisticated handling of such conventions, which had been employed since the twelfth century." Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 15.

[114] " . . . we must not imagine that such conventions [of attacking courtiers] exist apart from their use in individual literary works." "On the contrary, its is the constant refashioning of conventions which concerns us . . ." Happily, there is nevertheless in Heiserman's reading of the *Bowge of Court* a latent historicism in its contention that Skelton "is better able to discover and organize his materials, his techniques, and even his experiences, through his reactions to monuments of literature than to the occasions of his 'real life'." Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 3.

conventions," his "constant attempt to surprise the reader's expectations and thus freshen his response."[115] But according to Heiserman, Skelton's goal is entirely conventional—the reprehension of the wicked courtiers who corrupt the body politic.

Stanley Fish finds in Skelton a motivation that differentiates him from his satiric predecessors. According to Fish, Skelton does not claim the moral and social certainty on which an epistolary satirist like John of Salisbury depends; the author's moral complicity in a duplicitous world is *The Bowge of Court*'s central problem.[116] For Fish, Skelton abandons satire's basic moral premises and goals: "Skelton's major poems are usually read as satires; but if, as I believe, their locus is essentially interior, that classification must be either abandoned or qualified."[117] While Fish's revisionary reading of Skelton's poetry is lucid and informative, I think he finds satire an inadequate term for *The Bowge of Court* because he uses a narrow and classicizing generic definition that takes as its distinctive feature "the authoritative and somewhat detached first-person voice lashing folly from the comfort of a study."[118] According to Fish, Skelton's interest in *The Bowge of Court* (and other poems) is the psychological turmoil he experiences as a reponse to worldly mutability—social morality is tangential.[119] This overlooks the way in which Skelton intermingles the psychological and social, private contemplation and public performance, as complementary objects of ethical attention. The conventions of courtly satire, with

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[115] Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 13; on the conventional fallacy, see chap. one, note 93.

[116] "In the anticourt satires Dread would imitate, the satiric voice castigates vice and folly with the sureness that attends a comfortable distance a firm moral base. Here the positions are reversed: Dread's real doubts leave him defenseless before the artificial and baseless sureness of the enemy." Staney Fish, *John Skelton's Poetry*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 67; I think Fish overstates the moral certainty of some of Skelton's predecessors.

[117] Fish, *Skelton's Poetry*, 54.

[118] Fish, *Skelton's Poetry*, 76; This underestimates the degree to which satirists like John of Salisbury and Walter Map implicate themselves in the world they condemn.

[119] Fish, *Skelton's Poetry*, 74-5.

their already well-established focus on counsel and dissimulation, intention and performance, are precisely what afford Skelton the means of realizing "Drede" so fully. But this depiction of a tormented mind is not an end in itself; it serves to rebuke the milieu that produced it. Social morality is in fact central to *The Bowge of Court*.

Notwithstanding his idiosyncratic reading of the poem, Fish's study rehabilitated 'merry' Skelton for serious exegetical critics. They also view *The Bowge of Court* as an interior psychomachia, but while Fish situates Skelton in a canonical literary tradition including Chaucer, Jean de Meun, Spenser, and Milton, these critics find analogues to Skelton's exploration of moral will and representation in Jerome, Augustine, and medieval clerical works on virtues and vices. According to Stanley J. Kozikowski, the court-satire idiom of Drede's ordeal is an allegorical veil that conceals an interior conflict between *timor Domini*, the 'fear of the Lord,' and temptation by the Seven Deadly Sins.[120] Arthur Kinney likewise sees positive moral instruction in *The Bowge of Court*, carefully grounded in traditional accounts of fortune and vice drawn from a wealth of patristic and medieval authorities.[121] Yet these two studies characterize *The Bowge of Court* as a procession of static, if densely significative, images, overlooking the narrative of interaction between allegorical persons and significance of these interactions to Skelton's moral design. The learned interpretations of Kozikowski and Kinney are persuasive in their attribution of deep learning, moral seriousness, and religious orthodoxy to Skelton, but they undervalue, I think, the moral force of the allegory's literal narrative level.

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[120] Stanley J. Kozikowski, "Allegorical Meanings in Skelton's *The Bowge of Court*," *Philological Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (1982): 306.
[121] Kinney, *John Skelton: Poet as Priest*, passim, esp. 8-9.

None of these readings touch on my concern with the way texts evoke relationships between author and reader. The exegetical critics assume a reader as learned as Skelton (or themselves), equipped to recognize references to Church Fathers. Fish does not situate his responding reader in a particular historical situation at all; his imagined reader seems to be himself. This is no doubt due in part to the fact that we cannot so easily read *The Bowge of Court* in light of its immediate context because the poem deliberately disjoins the poet-narrator of the framing Prologue from the dream's narrator, Drede. David Lawton distinguishes between the former and latter as "open" and "closed personae:"

> . . . [an] 'open' persona looks outwards in order to challenge an audience's responses, rather than a 'closed' persona, which turns inwards, heremetically seals the artifact, and requires independent solution.[122]

The poet-narrator is, to some extent, an 'open persona' insofar as he situates himself (like Hoccleve, Gower, and others) in real space and time, at a house called Powers Key at a time fixed by astrological detail.[123] But unlike works by those other poets, for whom "the imaginary and the real audience are conceived as one and the same," in *The Bowge of Court* "we cannot deduce the relationship of *persona* to audience."[124] The interpersonal rhetoric between author and reader is kept to a minimum, the better to focus the reader's attention on the way the tactics of courtly interaction are used between characters in the narrative.

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[122] David Lawton, "Skelton's Use of Persona," *Essays in Criticism: A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism* 30 (1980): 11.

[123] Melvin J. Tucker makes a dogged effort to pinpoint the time and place suggested by the astrological discourse at the beginning of the poem and the name of Skelton's host's house, Power's Key; "Setting in Skelton's *Bowge of Courte:* A Speculation," *English Language Notes* 8 (1970): 168-75.

[124] Lawton, "Skelton's Use of Persona," 12; Leigh Winser, "*The Bowge of Court*: Drama Doubling as Dream," *English Literary Renaissance* 6, no. 1 (1976): 3-39.

Nevertheless, *The Bowge of Court* offers enough points of similarity between its narrator and Skelton to allow his proximate reader to identify the narrator with the poet himself. A recent interpreter finds that the poem's persona is "one not easily distinguished from Skelton: a man of learning, a scholar, somewhat marginal to the court, neither lord nor administrator, neither soldier nor prelate."[125] Moreover, recognizing Drede as Skelton's self-representation in *The Bowge of Court* has allowed for some productive readings of the poem in the last decade.[126] Placing *The Bowge of Court* in a tradition of works on counsel like *Mum and the Sothsegger*, Helen Barr and Kate Ward-Perkins formulate an intriguing solution to the problem of the author-reader relation.[127]

> . . . Drede, as both consciousness and object of the vices of courtiers, represents a conflation of the two personae of earlier epistolary court satire, the author as literary man employed in, but alienated from, the court, and his correspondent whom he seeks to persuade to eschew it. In *Bowge*, Drede is both writer and addressee.[128]

Like Hoccleve's self-representation in the *Regement of Princes*, Drede is both speaker and addressee, and can therefore show the fluctuating situations that motivate the production and reception of courtiers' discursive strategies.

As in Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*, we may discern in *The Bowge of Court* the didactic method and purpose of satire-counsel since the twelfth century: ". .

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[125] Bernard Sharratt, "John Skelton: Finding a Voice-- Notes after Bakhtin," in *Medieval Literature: Criticism, Ideology, and History*, ed. David Aers (Brighton, UK: The Harvester Press, 1986), 197.

[126] "While it may be true that court intrigue became newly intense and vicious in the Tudor era, and that such intrigue occasioned Skelton's attack, we discover that the courtiers satirized by Skelton in the reign of Henry VII differ but little from the courtiers satirized by poets during the reign of Henry I, and that their follies are exposed by similar means." In the present discussion, I mean to explore this 'little difference.' Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 18.

[127] "One might view [Drede] as representing the anxiety of the lack of influence of the man of learning whose constructive importance in government Skelton was so keen to stress in his *Speculum principis*." Barr and Ward-Perkins, "The Rhetoric of Counsel," 266.

[128] Barr and Ward-Perkins, "The Rhetoric of Counsel," 266.

. in the *The Bowge of Court . . .* instruction is shown to rest in the challenge to the reader: to be wary, to read, to interpret, and to take nothing, least of all the commonplace, on trust."[129] The commonplaces which Skelton puts to this task are those we have examined throughout this dissertation: the discursive strategies of counsel, the self-performance of the counselor, and the corollary problem of dissimulation. Because there was already such an extensive tradition of conventions and commonplaces for treating these concerns through literature that combined satire and counsel, Skelton's poem could tangle itself up in their limitations and contradictions, exposing them to the reader's moral scrutiny. But unlike the other poets I have discussed, Skelton offers no way beyond the impasse of dissimulation with the discourse which authors had previously used. In the next section, I will show how *The Bowge of Court* implicates this discourse in the very abuses it condemns.

4.3.1 A Pageant of Discursive Immorality

In the Prologue, the narrator confesses that by following "Desyre" and committing his welfare to Fortune's guidance, he puts himself in peril. After voicing the poetic frustration described above, he falls asleep, worn out by worry, and in a dream beholds the eponymous ship, the "Bowge of Court," coming into port, "her takelynge riche and of hye apparayle."[130] The narrator does not stand apart from this crowd, but is drawn to the ship's alluring riches, like the "marchauntes" who board her to find "royal marchaundyse."[131]

> But than I thoughte I wolde not dwell behynde;

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[129] Griffiths, *John Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 12.
[130] *Bowge of Court*, 38.
[131] *Bowge of Court*, 40-42.

> Among all others I put myselfe in prece.
> Than there coude I no aquentaunce fynde; [132]

In this crowd, the narrator finds himself isolated and friendless, without

"aquentaunce." This isolation sets the tone for his subsequent encounters. Even when

he is interacting with such figures as Favel and Riot, he is never communicating with

them.

But Drede does not haplessly suffer these interactions as a passive victim; he

delivers himself into the ship's moral universe on account of his own worldly

desire.[133] His desire is for preference, "favore-to-stonde-in-Her-good-grace," the

animating force of court life.[134] The 'Her' refers to the ship's owner, Fortune, who

sits veiled and silent on her throne. Her 'gentlewomen', "Daunger" and "Desyre,"

speak for her. Daunger asks Drede why he has come. He responds, "to bye some of

your ware."[135] With that, Daunger summons Desyre, who straightway counsels

Drede:

> Desyre her name was, and so she me tolde,
> Sayenge to me, 'Broder, be of good chere,
> Abasshe you not, but hardely be bolde,
> Avaunce your selfe to aproche and come nere.
> What though our chaffer be never so dere,
> Yet I avyse you to speke, for ony drede:
> Who spareth to speke, in fayth, he spareth to spede.'[136]

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[132] *Bowge of Court*, 43-44.
[133] Jane Griffiths likewise points out Drede's complicity in his own fate: "It is easy to read Drede as the conventional protagonist of court satires: the innocent who cannot survive at court, whose very failure is proof of his virtue, serving to expose the corruption of those around him. Yet the courtiers of *The Bowge* are not solely responsible for Drede's failure. Rather, they exploit weaknesses that stem from his own misunderstanding of the nature of the poet's task." Griffiths, *John Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 58.
[134] *Bowge of Court*, 55.
[135] *Bowge of Court*, 78-79.
[136] *Bowge of Court*, 85-91.

"Abasshe you not, but hardely be bolde," she says, concisely articulating the line

courtiers must strike between excessive deference and presumption.

To whom should Drede speak? Like Hoccleve in the prologue to the

Regement of Princes, he presents himself as one without patron or protector:

> 'Maystres,' quod I, 'I have none aquentaunce
> That wyll for me be medyatoure and mene;
> And this an other, I have but smale substaunce.'[137]

As when he first boards the ship, Drede is again isolated without 'aquentaunce,' and

finds himself standing before Fortune's throne "myselfe allone."[138]   This is when

Daunger finds him, a circumstance that allegorizes the vulnerability of one lacking a

network of friends and protectors.[139]   Desyre lends, but does not give, the narrator the

means to amend this plight, "a precyous jewell" called *Bone aventure*:

> For I dare saye that there nys erthly man
> But, an he can *Bone aventure* take,
> There can no favour nor frendshyp hym forsake.[140]

In concert with the fact that Desyre only lends the narrator *Bone aventure*, her

conditional voicing ("an he can *Bone aventure* take") is telling—favor and friendship

will be withdrawn along with Desyre's jewel.

The stone's name reveals the absurdity of trusting in Fortune. Desyre says no

more than this: if you have good fortune ('bone aventure'), then you will have

Fortune's favor. This meaningless circularity suggests the superstitious delusionality

of any control which "erthly man" might feel with respect to fortune. Her jewel and

its French name only multiply empty signs (produced by Desyre) to conceal the bare

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[137] *Bowge of Court*, 92-94.
[138] *Bowge of Court*, 68.
[139] He also lacks money, being of "smale substaunce," and like Hoccleve, suggests a reciprocal relation between friendlessness and penury.
[140] *Bowge of Court*, 101-103.

fact of fortune's arbitrariness. But if Fortune does favor the courageous, the deck is

surely stacked against one called Drede. Desyre foretells his fate;

> Fortune gydeth and ruleth all our shyppe.
> Whom she hateth shall over the see-boorde skyp.[141]

Nevertheless, Drede goes on the ship with the merchants and prays with them for

Fortune's favor.[142]

The part of the allegory with which I am principally concerned begins here,

with the succession of exchanges between Drede and seven rivals: Favel, Suspycyon,

Hervy Hafter, Disdayne, Ryote, Dyssymulation, and Disceyte. In each encounter,

Drede faces flattery, deception, and threat, but the first deception is his self-

deception—setting out with Fortune's favor, he puts on an unjustified fearlessness:

> The sayle is up, Fortune ruleth our helme,
> We wante no wynde to passe now over all;
> Favoure we have toughther than ony elme.
> That wyll abyde and never frome us fall.[143]

This sanguine attitude withers when he spots his rivals:

> But under hony ofte tyme lyeth bytter gall,
> For, as me thoughte, in our shyppe I dyde see
> Full subtyll persones in nombre four and thre.[144]

From this group of "subtyll persones," the first to approach Drede is Favel, or flattery,

described in Drede's initial assessment of the seven "Wyth fables false, that well

coude fayne a tale."[145]

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[141] *Bowge of Court*, 111-112.

[142] *Bowge of Court*, 120-126.

[143] *Bowge of Court*, 127-130.

[144] *Bowge of Court*, 131-133.

[145] *Bowge of Court*, 135; ". . . *The Bowge* disconcertingly calls into question the validity of the distinction between poetic and courtly feigning." Griffiths, *John Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 60.

As with other texts combining discourses of satire and counsel, the author

implicitly compares his own verbal performance with that of cunning and deceptive

rivals; Favel speaks in the familiar voice of the satirist-counselor, declaring himself a

plain-speaker and not a flatter:

> But this one thynge ye may be sure of me,
> For by that Lorde that bought dere all mankynde,
> I can not flater, I must be playne to the.[146]

Favel disclaims any personal desires apart from his regard for Drede, and offers help

in everything:

> Nay, naye, be sure, whyles I am on your syde
> Ye may not fall; truste me, ye may not fayle.[147]

With a bit of invective, Favel brings satire's dynamic into play, excluding a notional

third party in order to bind himself in solidarity with his addressee:

> Thyse lewde cok wattes shall nevermore prevayle
> Ageynste you hardely; therefore be not afrade.

This encounter is the first of a series in which Drede's anxiety mounts as he

increasingly realizes his shipmates are not to be trusted; at the conclusion of Favel's

speech, Drede observes that "he ware on hym a cloke / That lyned was with doubtfull

doubleness."[148] Grim drollery accompanies the rising menace, as when the

personification of flattery says he is not a flatterer while telling the personification of

fear not to be afraid. The very discourse by which counselors have traditionally

distinguished themselves from flatterers forms the basis of flattery's speech. Here, as

throughout *The Bowge*, the vice figure swears an oath ("By that Lorde that bought

dere all mankynde") whose elaborateness is proportionate to the centrality of his lie

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[146] *Bowge of Court*, 162-4.
[147] *Bowge of Court*, 169-70.
[148] *Bowge of Court*, 176-77.

("I can not flater").[149] This underscores the hopelessness of communication in

Drede's environment; the ultimate recourse in claiming sincerity, the oath, is

altogether perverted.

In Favel's last words to Drede, he urges a collusive secrecy: "Farewell tyll

soon. But no word that I sayde!"[150] This introduces one of the main aspects of social

relations in *The Bowge of Court*, which is 'audience segregation,' to use one of

Erving Goffman's terms. Each of the vice figures attempts to appear differently to

different interlocutors. Their requests for secrecy typify their duplicity. Such

requests are the dark side of 'positive politeness' strategies that create solidarity and

intimacy between speaker and addressee, such as the privacy of discourse between

Gower and King Richard. To disclose a secret to someone is to admit them to an

exclusive circle—it is exclusivity, after all, that secures secrecy. A secret also binds

its sharers in a power relation because of the sense of obligation and preference it

creates; in *The Bowge of Court*, this obligation and preference is a distorted effigy of

the faith and loyalty Gower tries to evoke.

After Favel comes "Suspicyon," whose libellous discourse contrasts Favel's

false praise. As we overhear these two along with Drede, we find that Favel betrays

his pact of secrecy with Drede almost immediately, but Suspicyon immediately

betrays Favel in turn when he speaks of him to Drede:

> Beware of him, for, I make God avowe,
> He wyll begyle you and speke fayre to your face.
> Ye never dwelte in suche an other place,
> For here is none that dare well other truste;[151]

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[149] *Bowge of Court*, 163-164.
[150] *Bowge of Court*, 175.
[151] *Bowge of Court*, 199-202.

Strictly speaking, what Suspecte says is factual, but this does not make him honest,

and his blanket condemnation includes himself. For him, the disclosure of truth is an

instrument to harm others and preserve himself, and to this end, disclosure is to be

sought from others before it is granted:

> I have a favoure to you, wherof it be
> That I must shewe you moche of my counselle—
> But I wonder what the devyll of helle
> He [Favell] sayde of me, whan he with you dyde talke—
> By myne avyse use not with him to walke.[152]

Suspycyon offers to tell what he knows about Favell in exchange for Drede's own

secrecy, to which Drede fearfully agrees.

Unlike every other figure in the poem, Drede observes his promises, whether

from fear of retribution, or, as Kozikowski suggests, because he is actually, beneath

the allegorical guise of a timid courtier, *Timor domini*, the incorruptible fear of the

Lord. This possibility is corroborated by the fact that Drede never takes part in the

constant oath-swearing and blasphemy. Skelton leaves this dilemma unresolved, as

Drede offers no explanation for his motive beyond the fact of the promise itself. He

does not reveal Suspycyon's secret information even to the audience, saying "I dare

not speke; I promysed to be dome," in a tone that seemingly begs the reader's

forebearance for shying away from betrayal, and in doing so, draws the reader (or

audience) into the moral universe of the narrative.

After Suspycyon comes Hervy Hafter, a fast-talking confidence artist whose

rapid changes in topic, non-sequiturs, and musical patter disarm Drede with confusion

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[152] *Bowge of Court*, 206-210. Behind the interaction of these figures we may read Psalm 64:2: "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity." In Suspycyon, we see also verses 5-6: "They encourage themselves *in* an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep." (KJV)

before he suddenly reveals his resentment at being passed over for Fortune's

preference:

> I wyste never man that so soone coude wynne
> The favoure that ye have with my lady.
> I pray to God that it maye never dy.
> It is your fortune for to have that grace;
> As I be saved, it is a wonder case.
>
> For, as for me, I served here many a daye,
> And yet unneth I can have my lyvynge;[153]

Hervy Hafter, like his predecessors, charges Drede with secrecy and appeals to

friendship: "But I require no worde that I saye!"[154] Then comes Disdayne, in whose

speech Hafter's indirect resentment blossoms into open contempt:

> It is great scorne to see suche a hayne
> As thou arte, one that cam but yesterdaye,
> With us olde servauntes such maysters to playe.[155]

We have seen this kind of secret grousing already from the master's perspective in

Walter Map's *De nugis curialium*. Here, we see it from the perspective of the

preferred servant who is driven away by threats both veiled and open:

> We be thy betters, and so thou shalte us take,
> Or we shall the oute of thy clothes shake![156]

If, as Susan Crane argues, clothes and not skin are "the frontier of the self" in the late

Middle Ages, Disdayne's threat is more than trivial, for it promises not only to

deprive Drede of his clothes, but of his social identity.[157]

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[153]*Bowge of Court*, 269-275.
[154]*Bowge of Court*, 276.
[155]*Bowge of Court*, 327-329.
[156] *Bowge of Court*, 342.
[157] Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity during the Hundred Years' War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 6.

The abrupt arrival of the scurrilous Ryote, a foul-mouthed, drunken, disheveled pimp, interrupts this pivotal moment of danger with a dark sort of comic relief. In contrast with the aloof Disdayne, Riot is overly familiar, but this attitude suggests an equivalent degree of contempt for Drede's person. As I discuss elsewhere, a lack of regard for one's own face is equally an attack on an addressee's face, just as Drede's describes: "I was ashamed so to here hym prate."[158] Like Disdayne, and unlike Favel and Suspycyon, Ryote addresses Drede with the familiar pronoun:

> And, syr, in fayth, why comste not us amonge
> To make *the* mery, as other felowes done?
> *Thou* muste swere and stare, man, aldaye longe,
> And wake all nyghte and slepe tyll it be none.
> *Thou* mayste not studye or muse on the mone.
> This worlde is nothynge but ete, drynke and slepe,
> And thus with us good company to kepe.
>
> Plucke up thyne herte upon a mery pyne,
> And lete us laugh a placke or tweyne at nale.
> What the devyll, man, myrthe was never one.[159]

Ryote urges a false fellowship in superficial 'myrthe' that Drede may obtain at the expense of his dignity and integrity. It is false because Ryote really only wants a new partner with whom to dice in the vain hope of winning back his losses. But this cartoonish libertine soon discloses his true condition: "I am not happy, I renne ay on the losse!"[160] When Drede does take up game, Ryote demeans himself and Drede further still by offering the services of his "lemman:" "I lete her to hyre that men may

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[158] *Bowge of Court*, 373.
[159] *Bowge of Court*, 379-388.
[160] *Bowge of Court*, 399.

on her ryde."[161] Ryote exits the scene as abruptly as he entered, leaving Disdayne to

talk with the newly arrived Dyssymulation "in sadde communicacion."[162]

Dyssymulation's appearance is striking—in his hood are two faces. One is

lean and pale, and on that side he has a knife up a sleeve upon which is written the

word "Myscheve."[163] In the other sleeve, Drede sees a "spone of gold, full of hony

swete, / To fede a fole, and for to preye a dawe."[164] On the sleeve concealing this

spoon are the words *A false abstracte cometh from a fals concrete.*"[165] Honey

recalls Drede's embarcation, when fortune seems to present a good face and favorable

wind, "but under hony ofte tyme lyeth bytter gall."[166]

The honey, in this case, is the rhetoric of the flatterer. Dyssymulation

addresses Drede, once more, in a flattering, deferential tone: "How do ye,

mayster?"[167] He cites scripture (or says he does), and appeals to Drede's goodwill on

the basis of shared values and literacy, a strategy of satire-counsel encountered

already:

> But as for that, connynge hath no foo
> Save hym that nought can: scryptuure sayth soo.
> I know your vertue and your lytterkture
> By that lytel connynge that I have.[168]

Dyssymulation's reference to his "lytel connynge" parodies the humility topos as

well, but his performance belies his claim to simplicity; he is the most dangerous of

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[161] *Bowge of Court*, 400-413.
[162] *Bowge of Court*, 420.
[163] *Bowge of Court*, 428-433. In Skelton's period, this word has far harsher connotations than at present day, implying both a wound, bodily harm, misfortune, or grief, and also slander and abuse. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "mischief."
[164] *Bowge of Court*, 435-437.
[165] *Bowge of Court*, 439.
[166] *Bowge of Court*, 131.
[167] *Bowge of Court*, 442.
[168] *Bowge of Court*, 447-450.

the antagonists whom Drede so far has met, inasmuch as his motives are less

transparent:

> For allbeit this longe not to me,
> Yet on my backe I bere suche lewde delyinge.
> Ryghte now I spake with one, I trowe, I see –
> But, what, a strawe! I maye not tell all thynge.
> By God, I saye, there is a grete herte-brennynge
> Betwene the persone ye wote of, you –
> Alas, I coude not dele so with a Jew.[169]

Everything Dyssymulation says here is of uncertain meaning and ambiguous force. It

is no simple matter of merely taking what he asserts and reading its opposite as his

true intention, for there is no straightforward proposition. It is otherwise with what

follows:

> I wolde eche man were as playne as I.
> It is a worlde, I saye, to here of some –
> I hate this faynynge, fye upon it, fye![170]

Here again are Favel's protestations of plainness and guilelessness, coupled with a

familiar association of dissimulation with friars in Dyssymulation's oath "by Saunt

Fraunceys, that holy man and frere."[171] Dyssymulation, copying again the rhetoric of

the satirist-counselor, redirects Drede's attention to a third party:

> Naye, see where yonder stondeth the teder man!
> A flateryng knave and false he is, God wote.[172]

This 'teder man', Leigh Winser suggests, symbolizes a false threat spun out of

rhetoric, and if *The Bowge of Court* was staged as she suggests, it is quite literally a

straw man, a false man among false men.[173]

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[169] *Bowge of Court*, 456-469.
[170] *Bowge of Court*, 463-5.
[171] *Bowge of Court*, 470.
[172] *Bowge of Court*, 484-485.

Before parting, Dyssymulation reveals a final resemblance between himself

and the literary counselor as author of mirrors for princes: "Ye must be ruled, as I

shall tell you how."[174] This utterance subverts the entire tradition of advisory

literature. Emptied of goodwill, it becomes a strategy to elicit a particular response.

The question remains: how is an ethical discourse possible, how is true

communication that seeks mutual understanding and benefit possible when every

convention can be appropriated to the local, self-serving strategy of a situated agent?

As these vices advance and retreat from the interactional "stage" of *The*

Bowge of Court, their discourse becomes progressively less meaningful, more devoid

of propositional content, and more confusing in their interpersonal rhetoric. This

progression culminates with the arrival of the final vice, Disceyte, whose costume is

the most concealing and frightful:

> He was trussed in a garmente strayte—
> I have not sene suche anothers page—
> For he coude well upon a casket wayte,
> His hode all pounsed and garded lyke a gage.[175]

Even more than Dyssymulation, Desceyte's opening salvo is unresolvable to a

coherent sense:

> 'But by that Lorde that is one, two and thre,
> I have an errande to rounde in your ere.
> He told me so, by God, ye maye truste me.
> Parde, remembre whan ye were there,
> There I wynked on you—wote ye not where?
> In A *loco*, I mene *juxta* B:

[173] Examining the poem's dramaturgical qualities, Winser looks at the sequence in which characters appear, their stage-blocked interactions, and their vividly described costumes (indeed, as she points out, the costumes are the only things to receive extensive visual description), and exhaustively cross-references these features with records of contemporary theatrical practice to argue that *The Bowge of Court* was written for performance by a troupe of actors as much as for individual reading. Leigh Winser, "*The Bowge of Court*: Drama Doubling as Dream," 18-21.

[174] *Bowge of Court*, 493.

[175] *Bowge of Court*, 505-508.

Woo is hym that is blynde and maye not see![176]

Desceyte changes the frame of reference, turning physical space into a logical or

textual *locus*, and biblical text from counsel into threat. He compounds the strategies

of the other vices, appeals to trust, suggestions of solidarity, and the exclusion of a

reviled third party, but it all comes at last to a mortal threat described to the end as an

offer of help:

> But to here the subtylte and the crafte,
> As I shall tell you, yf ye wyll harke agayne:
> And whan I sawe the horsons wolde you hafte,
> To holde myn honde, by God, I had grete payne;[177]

The constant and general appeals of secrecy from each to each result eventually in a

mockery of fellowship in which none can assist or defend another; they can only

conspire:

> For forthwyth there I had him slayne,
> But that I drede mordre wolde come oute.
> Who deleth with shrewes hath nede to loke aboute!"

Desceyte's final deception saps the wall between his own identity and Drede's: "I

drede mordre wolde come out."

    This attempt to devour and assimilate Drede's identity is the culmination of

each vice's successive efforts. Just as Suspicyon and Favel at the outset fear Drede

will 'begyle' them ("he may us both begyle,") they and their successors seek to

remake him in their own image, as when Hervy Hafter urges him,

> Tell me your mynde, me thynke ye make a verse,
> I coude it skan and ye wolde it reherse.[178]

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[176] *Bowge of Court*, 512-581.
[177] *Bowge of Court*, 519-522.
[178] *Bowge of Court*, 189; 244-245.

Hafter's co-option of Drede's identity as a poet goes with all of the vices' efforts to make Drede just as they are—flatterer, libertine, fraud, even a conspirator to murder.

Drede resists all of these temptations and threats, and his tempters turn on him:

> And as he [Disceyte] rounded thus in myne ere
> Of false collusyon confetryd by assente,
> Me thoughte I see lewde felawes here and there
> Can for to slee me of mortall entente.

"Mortall entente" plays off a double-meaning of the word "entente," which, like its Latin root *intentio* includes notions of referential meaning and volitional purpose. "Confetryd"is a *hapax legomenon*, probably derived from 'fetter,' to chain or bind, but visually and anagramatically, it also evokes 'counterfeit'. On an allegorical level, the point here is traditional; vice has power over us by our own assent. Drede never gives this assent. He always shows propriety and politeness in his responses to whichever of these villains he meets, but he never triumphs over them. He does not resist or rebuke, but defers and deflects—in the end, his only option is flight:

> As they came, the shypborde faste I hente,
> And thoughte to lepe; and even with that woke,
> Caught penne and ynke, and wroth this lytell boke.[179]

For Fish, this leap is suicidal surrender to the forces of mutability that overwhelm him. For Kozikowski, this is "dying to the world," becoming free of vice and being born to eternal life.

But we do not know if Drede leaps or not. The poet wakes before his thought leads to action. Skelton allows for both possibilities; he does not decide for the reader, but pushes the reader to decision:

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[179] *Bowge of Court*, 530-532.

> I wolde therwith no man were myscontente;
> Beseechyinge you that shall it see or rede,
> In every poynte to be indyfferente,
> Syth all in substaunce of slumbrynge doth procede.
> I wyll not say it is mater in dede,
> But yet oftyme such dremes be founde trewe.
> Now constrewe ye what is the resydewe.[180]

This is how it ends. Skelton does not vouch for the truth of his vision on the basis of

any relation with any specific reader, but offers it as a simple report, which may be

true, as dreams sometimes are. His *captatio benevolentiae*, stripped to a bare

minimum, would more justly be called an aversion of ill-will: 'I wish no man to be

miscontent, and I beseech readers to be indifferent.'

What does this mean, to be 'indifferent?' In Skelton's period, it meant what

educated speakers still mean by disinterested—not apathetic, but impartial, neutral,

fair, even-handed. But what does it mean *here* for the reader to be indifferent?

Perhaps, as Heiserman, Fish, and Griffiths all in their own way suggest, Skelton

would have this poem taken as a 'work of literature,' absolved from a situational

context that might implicate him in some partisan struggle.[181] When Hoccleve's Old

Man denounces hypocritical clerics, a subtle incongruity is suggested by indirect

clues to his religious affiliation. When Gower foregrounds his resemblance to false

counselors, he can appeal to a real-life relational context to distinguish his authority

as one trustworthy and plain-spoken. We have seen this strategy as far back as John

of Salisbury and Walter Map, who portray themselves in dialogue with their betters in

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[180] *Bowge of Court*, 533-539.
[181] Greg Walker suggests that if Melvin J. Tucker happens to be correct in dating the astrological identifier at the opening of the poem to the King Richard III's reign in 1380, this does not necessarily place the time of composition to that date, but rather serves to distance the court condemned by the poem from the one to which it is addressed. Greg Walker, *John Skelton and the Politics of the 1520s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 9-17.

order to distinguish themselves from false rivals. All of these depend on faith in a

real relational context, but in the *Bowge of Court* there is no such thing. There are

only fictions. Favel can never be anything but flattery itself; his affirmations to the

contrary only condemn him.

There is a problem toward which other authors have gestured but which

Skelton takes to its logical conclusion: 'real-life' relations, like textual ones, are only

ever grounded in discourse. Since there is no way to discern the true from false on

the basis of representations alone, there is no transcendent guarantor of trust in an

environment where all are self-seeking. To maintain a moral sense in this

disenchanted social world requires that one be fundamentally indifferent.

Indifference is a mode of integrity unassailable by the demands of "collusyon

confetryd by assente." If, in *The Bowge of Court*, the social actor is paradoxically

isolated through his interaction with others, indifference can preserve him from

paralysis or ineffectuality.

Within the court depicted by this poem, and by extension, the world of the

court, no social relation is absolutely dependable—no material performance is a

reliable index of interior dispositions. The only relational context that can guarantee

itself is the individual's relationship with God. Susan Crane argues of the generation

of secular nobility preceding Skelton during the Hundred Year's War that

> . . . their understanding resists associating performance with pretense
> and falsification. Specifically, it rejects the broadly modern
> dichotomy between an inner self that preexists social interaction, and a
> subsequent outer self that conceals a more genuine inner nature.[182]

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[182] Crane, *The Performance of Self*, 4.

Skelton's "indifference" does not presuppose this dichotomy, but allows for it, and even urges it. *The Bowge of Court* transforms a sophisticated but morally certain ethical discourse about self-performance and social relations into the more cynical conception of self-performance that Stephen Greenblatt attributes to the early modern court.[183] If there is a positive corollary to this change, it may be the articulation of an internally-focused ethic of guilt and integrity over an externally-focused ethic of honor and shame.[184] This ethical transformation does not begin with Skelton—it goes back at least as far as John of Salisbury, whose *Entheticus maior* urges clerics to remember their ethical interiority when caught up in the worldly values of the court. While Skelton decries the lapsed morality of the court, he also presents—however apophatically—a way of conceiving moral agency which, if not new, is newly absolved from a way that has failed ruinously.

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[183] I am using the term 'cynical' in the analytical sense of Goffman, for whom a cynical performance is one in which the performer has not invested his or her own faith. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 58-66.

[184] On the role of shame in fifteenth-century culture, see D.S. Brewer, "Introduction" in *The Morte Darthur Parts Seven and Eight by Sir Thomas Malory*, ed., D.S. Brewer (London: Edward Arnold Press, 1968), 23-35.

Conclusion

The eight texts treated in this dissertation suggest the contour of a tradition, one deriving not so much from any conscious identification by their authors with a tradition of 'satire-counsel' (although in many instances, lines of direct reception certainly suggest themselves to further research) as from the common means they employ to comment on the exercise of power in social practice.   I have viewed satire as a social act defined by its effects on the reader and the social roles it assigns to speaker and addressee. Defining satire according to these functions has allowed a clear exposition of how satire abuts and abets counsel, a type of discourse which, even more than satire, is definable in terms of function.

But to ask what a counselor is doing in a particular act of counsel often presupposes different kinds of answers than does asking the same question about the satirist. Inquiring into the counselor's motives, we look for 'historical' answers—the reciprocal effects among discourses, political maneuvers, and institutional forms. Asking after the satirist' motives, we look for 'literary' answers—how the discourse contributes to the work's 'overall design,' how it fits into an ecology of similar literary texts, and how 'historical context' inflects the work as a system of meaning.

I have sought to conflate these two sets of interpretive expectations by looking at the relational rhetoric of texts as a point of contact between the intra- and extra-textual, between verbal forms and the lifeworlds of their production and reception. Relational rhetoric, like any rhetoric, works in anticipation of phenomenologically concrete effects on the reader: how and why, for example, we are discomfited by the interruption of a peer, shocked by that of an inferior, and frustrated by that of a

superior. Gerard Genette speaks of "paratexts", language in excess of the 'bare message,' if such a thing ever exists, that instructs the reader on how to understand and use a text.[1] But there are social as well literary paratexts, a language in excess of bald communication that tells the addressee in what capacity he or she is being addressed. What I have sought to identify, then, is how literary and social paratexts converge in satire-counsel.

Although I have argued throughout my dissertation that satire is a type of discourse available for face-to-face as well as written interaction, we nevertheless more readily associate it with written discourse—with literature. This is because satire is often *metadiscourse*—discourse about discourse. The act of writing down spoken discourse calls attention to the fixed conventions of speech through the altered experience of encountering them in writing, frozen for repeated contemplation. The straining of authors to reproduce the verbal rituals and staging of real-life interaction creates a good likeness; but it is the very proximity of the real encounter to its literary reproduction and extension that nudges these rituals beyond the condition of "use" to that of "mention." Here, textualization of social discourse tends very easily toward satire, which, unlike simple invective, persistently draws attention to its status as discourse through the disruptive literary tropes of parody, irony, burlesque, and pastiche. Satire also calls attention to its status as discourse through the disruptive tropes of relational rhetoric, such as begging, insults, obscenity, and advice.

To make something the object of attention is to make it subject to discernment. In this way, satire serves as a kind of counsel about discourse, a task which Walter Map undertakes in *De nugis curialium* with an exceptionally keen reflexivity. In

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[1] See chap. 3, note 11.

chapter one, I looked at what we gain by considering Walter Map's narratorial persona as coinciding with his real-life social persona in *De nugis Curialium*. Walter Map combines various literary paratexts like dedications and apologia with social paratexts such as offers of counsel, claims of relational affiliation, and, of course, the anecdotes that recreate his social lifeworld in a way that positions him favorably within it. I focused especially on how Walter Map's satire and anecdotes complement each other to fashion a sympathetic community of readers, combining the modes of address to achieve a kind of "phatic communion" with his readers that sustains a situation of camaraderie built on literary and social sophistication.[2] Though I limited my study to the first of the book's five distinctions, I should like in the future to ask how Walter's sardonic authorial presence and his invocation of a particular community of readers—erudite secular clerics like himself and their lay counterparts, the *miles litterati*—inflect his treatments of various genres, such as romance, history, and legend in the other four distinctions.

The second chapter began with Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae* to show satire-counsel in a mode as conventional and unreflective as Walter's is original and self-conscious. For Alan, satire is the schoolteacher's didactic instrument of moral formation; in this capacity, John of Salisbury and Daniel of Beccles adapt it to their own textual counsel. But John of Salisbury's *Entheticus in dogmata philosophorum*, addressed to his political superior Thomas Becket, reveals more care and self-consciousness than does Alan of Lille in undertaking the moral formation of his reader. For John of Salisbury, satire is not only a means of rebuking vice but a way

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[2] Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages," in *The Meaning of Meaning*, eds. C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1923), 296-336.

of constructing solidarity with his reader; through his satires on the parallel

dissemblers of school and court, he bridges the gap between ecclesiastical and lay

spheres of authority, while nevertheless showing the first at an advantage.

In bridging these two rival hegemonic formations, John of Salisbury

anticipates and possibly influences Walter Map, who, like John of Salisbury, moves

in the highest circles. He also anticipates Daniel of Beccles, who addressed his

Urbanus Magnus to more modest lay and clerical readers than kings and bishops,

namely, the minor aristocratic householder and his chaplain. For Daniel, the

subtleties and indirections of satire are a way of addressing two different audiences in

different ways with the same words at the same time. The paratextual, or

metadiscursive, quality of satire becomes apparent, for Daniel's satire imbues his

workmanlike elegiac couplets—at shifts either preciously learned or coarsely

avunculuar—with reflective awareness of the difficulties facing a cleric socialized to

one hierarchy thrust into one with different values and manners. Although not as

accomplished a versifier as Alan or John, Daniel's satiric counsel is often more

memorable.

In chapter three, I found a similar reflectiveness about self-performance in

court in the first recension of the *Confessio Amantis*'s prologue. I argued that John

Gower bases his authority as counselor on his personal relation with King Richard II,

a relation he represents in the dedicatory scene describing the occasion of the book's

commission. Gower weaves the paratext of dedication out of the social paratexts of

ritual interaction with a monarch, drawing the reader's attention to the discursive

foundation of interaction. The estates satire occupying the middle of the Prologue is

a shadow that throws into relief the idealized dyad of poet and king, while its

dissembling hypocrites and flatterers afford Gower another occasion for discussing

the ethics of speech and interaction. In the first recension, Gower does not anchor his

authority in the vatic role of poet, but in his lived relation with King Richard. Yet

this relation is enacted and textually reproduced by a discourse ultimately unable to

authorize itself. This tension, as much as any immediate political contingency, may

have prompted Gower to remove the scene from the second recension. By making

his readership more general, Gower also makes his authority more general—a poet

speaking for the nation rather than a courtier addressing his monarch. Yet

paradoxically, this relational model, anticipating Lydgate's laureate poetics, is less

tethered to the real exercise of power.[3]

From Gower's reflective seriousness, I turn to the brash ebullience of the

troubadour Guilhem de Peitieus. Of all the authors discussed, Guilhem is most nearly

contemporary to Alan of Lille, and though their moral sensibilities could hardly differ

more, they resemble one another in their certainty of their own authority. But while

Alan uses satire to rebuke vice, Guilhem uses his particular mode of satire, a

conflation of obscene with economic and political discourses, to perform and

reinforce his political authority. While many of the works of satire-counsel studied in

this dissertation treat authoritative social rhetorics with an eye to ethical scrutiny,

Guilhem's solicitation of counsel forestalls scrutiny or disagreement with overt

mockery and subtle threat, constraining the addressee to complicit laughter or silence.

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[3] For a detailed discussion of the developed of "laureate poetics" in late medieval England, see Robert Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

If Guilhem solicits counsel for which he has no need, Hoccleve receives unsolicited counsel that proves his financial salvation in the *Regement of Princes*. In this text, Gower's reflectiveness is replaced by Hoccleve's anxious self-consciousness, as he negotiates in dialogue with the Old Man an uncertain and unstable poetic authority. As I argued in the fourth chapter, this dialogue rehearses a plurality of relational models—Hoccleve's own uncertain position in his social environment allowed him the imaginative capacity to take up these multiple voices and perspectives. Yet paradoxically, and like Walter Map, Hoccleve emerges through this imitative faculty as a vivid and distinct individual. In this fully realized persona, he presents himself to Prince Henry in a dedication to which he transfers the reflective scrutiny visited on his dialogue with the Old Man.

John Skelton's *The Bowge of Court* diverges from the collection of texts studied in my dissertation insofar as it provides almost no specific connection between its represented interactants and the poet's own immediate circumstances. This allegorical abstraction from real life and real situations allows Skelton to rebut a tradition of writing that holds satire and counsel as not only practically but morally efficacious. He makes explicit a tension often hidden or glossed over in these works—that the satirist-counselor is as dependent on language for his authority as the courtly dissembler—and argues by his narrative that the relational rhetoric aiming for sympathetic communion with the reader is only another strategy of dissimulation. His narrator, in fact, is ultimately expelled from the fictional society of the poem's allegorical ship. Sugaring advice with gratifying humor or salting it with colorful diatribes against perceived threats are strategies persistent and discrete enough to be

represented mimetically in narrative. Skelton's appropriation of these strategies in fact serves to destroy the communicative possibilities they were formerly intended to enable.

The Bowge of Court demonstrates satire-counsel in a make-believe story without authorial evaluation or comment, but it is not the first to do so. In *Le Roman de la rose*, especially Jean de Meun's continuation, the exchanges which take place betwen Lover and Friend, the Old Lady, and Reason are all characterized by patterns of relational discourse similar to those studied in this dissertation; all are marked by some mixture of satire and counsel. In developing this topic for future study, I hope to look further at *Le Roman de la rose*, and also at Chaucer's poetry, including minor works of personal address like the "Envoy to Scogan" as well as the *Canterbury Tales*, whose pilgrims practice the social discourse of everyday life while telling each other tales of "sentence" and "solaas."

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