

3-3-2009

"Doulce chose est que mariage": Exemplarity and Advice in the Works of Christine de Pizan

Anne Marie West
Florida State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

West, Anne Marie, "'Doulce chose est que mariage": Exemplarity and Advice in the Works of Christine de Pizan" (2009). *Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations*. Paper 1153.

This Dissertation - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at DigiNole Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigiNole Commons. For more information, please contact lib-ir@fsu.edu.

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

"DOULCE CHOSE EST QUE MARIAGE":
EXEMPLARITY AND ADVICE IN THE WORKS OF
CHRISTINE DE PIZAN

By
ANNE MARIE WEST

A Dissertation submitted to the
Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Awarded:
Spring Semester, 2009

Copyright © 2009
Anne Marie West
All Rights Reserved

The members of the Committee approve the Dissertation of Anne Marie West defended on March 3, 2009.

Lori J. Walters
Professor Directing Dissertation

Anne E. B. Coldiron
Outside Committee Member

Reinier Leushuis
Committee Member

Nancy Warren
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above named committee members.

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and parents.
Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Lori Walters, whose insight and continued support as a teacher and mentor have made this dissertation possible. She has warmly welcomed me into the international community of Christine scholars. She has also provided valuable opportunities for manuscript study through seminars and study abroad that will enable me to attain research goals beyond my doctoral studies. As a mentor, she fully dedicates herself to her students and their projects. She inspires students to become scholars, addressing not only academic issues but also practical concerns in the profession.

I am grateful for the many years of direction and sage advice from Dr. Reinier Leushuis. His perceptive comments will continue to guide me in future academic pursuits. During the dissertation project, I have also had the privilege of working with Dr. Anne Coldiron and Dr. Nancy Warren, members of my dissertation committee whose advice and enthusiasm were greatly appreciated.

At Florida State University, I have benefited from the generosity of the Winthrop-King Institute and the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics. I have had the opportunity to learn from exceptional professors and enjoy a dynamic intellectual environment. As a teaching assistant, I have gained valuable classroom experience. In particular, I am appreciative of the professional advice and guidance from Dr. William Cloonan and Dr. James Tarpley.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	vii
1. AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND EXEMPLARITY IN CHRISTINE STUDIES	1
Medieval Autobiography and Christine Studies	2
Understanding Exemplarity.....	7
A Note on Christine's Manuscripts.....	25
An Introduction to the Author's Life.....	29
2. CHRISTINE'S MEMORIAL TO ETIENNE.....	40
An Intertextual Memorial.....	40
Identifying Etienne	46
3. ETIENNE AS EXEMPLARY HUSBAND.....	65
Introducing Etienne.....	65
A Moral Husband.....	71
Additional Characteristics	91
4. CHRISTINE AS EXEMPLARY WIFE AND WIDOW	111
An Intertextual Widow Persona	111
A Moral Persona.....	121
5. CHRISTINE'S DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE	147
Authority through Experience	147
Christine's Explicit Response to Misogamist Authors	159
Christine's Implicit Continuation of the Debate	167
6. PROVIDING GUIDANCE THROUGH POSITIVE EXEMPLARS	169
Political Exemplars	175
Domestic Exemplars.....	185
Spiritual Exemplars.....	192
CONCLUSION	195
APPENDICES	201
A Selected Works.....	201
B Copyright Permission Letter	203

BIBLIOGRAPHY	205
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	221

ABSTRACT

In this study, I explore how Christine de Pizan challenges misogynist thought through the use of exemplarity in her works. Christine's defense of women in the late medieval period has been well-documented by scholars. Yet, she also addresses the criticisms of marriage prevalent in contemporary literature, which are founded on the principle that women are inherently immoral. In keeping with Christine's stated belief in the moral responsibility of authors, she directly condemns misogynist authors and their works that appeal to medieval readers including the *Romance of the Rose*. During approximately the same time frame that Christine records her opinions as a literary critic of these works, she features positive marital exemplars in her own writings that support her point of view.

I first examine the autobiographical elements of Christine's works that highlight her personal marital experience. Christine draws authority from her first-hand knowledge of marriage, which supersedes the flawed assumptions of scholars lacking this life experience. She creates an intertextual memorial to her late husband's good character and recounts her story as a wife and widow. Christine's exemplary narrative promotes the idea of a perfect friendship in marriage, a notion that upholds marriage as a religious and natural union. Furthermore, her close marital relationship contests the veneration of extramarital affairs as seen in the renewed interest in courtly love literature. To further substantiate her views on marriage, Christine recalls the exemplary stories of legendary wives and widows from France's cultural memory. Through these exemplars, Christine promotes the communal benefits of marriage. In particular, I analyze the advantageous impact of marriage in political, domestic, and spiritual contexts.

CHAPTER 1

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND EXEMPLARITY IN CHRISTINE STUDIES

Christine de Pizan's marriage to Etienne de Castel played an integral role in her literary career. While scholarly research focuses on the influence of her father, the court astrologer Thomas de Pizan, or Christine's plight as a widow, Christine cites her ten-year marriage as the most joyful time in her life. She praises marriage in numerous works, addressing scholarly, lay, and even female audiences.

Since the ninth century, marriage had been one of the seven sacraments in medieval society. In the New Testament, Christ represents marriage as a product of Divine law (Selinger). Paul regarded marriage as a reflection of the union between the Church and Christ as we shall explore in later chapters (Eph. 5.23-25). However, the exact definition of marriage was a subject of debate among theologians, especially certain topics entailing consent, the validation of marriage, and divorce. In the twelfth century, Gratian's canon law (c.1142) distinguished Christian marriage as a monogamous and permanent union based on consent. Yet, it was not until the mid-fifteenth century when the Church faced the increasing criticisms stemming from the Reformation that the Council of Trent (1545-63) standardized ideological issues, Church practices, and official canonical texts (Duby 11; Margolis, "Marriage" 606; Gies 137-40).

Medieval literature captures the conflicting ideas regarding marriage and love, particularly the exploration of different states of interpersonal relationships from courtly love (*fin'amor*), in which the pursuit of desire reigns (*eros*), to spiritual or divine love (*caritas*), in which the soul seeks a higher bond that reflects the mystery of Christ's union with the Church. Christine's support of marriage counters the glorification of courtly love, a social practice of extramarital affairs that was championed by Andreas Capellanus in the twelfth century work *The Art of Courtly Love* and inspired by Ovid (Parry 4; *Dictionnaire* 60; hereafter *DLF*).¹ Although Christine did write tales of courtly

¹ Georges Duby describes the courtly love relationship as one in which a young, unmarried nobleman pursues a married lady in a prohibitive setting that leads to secrecy, acts of service, eroticism, and a certain amount of danger. See 57-62. See also Zink, 46-48.

romance, such as *One Hundred Ballads of a Lover and a Lady* (ca. 1405-10) and the *Duke of True Lovers* (1403-05), her works present the destructive nature of courtly love that often results in the loss of a woman's reputation or death (Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Selected Writings* 216-17; hereafter SW).² James Schultz points out the disparate outcomes of courtly love for men and women, as the relationship commonly enhances the reputation of the man but damages that of the woman (168).

This project examines how Christine represents marriage as both a natural and a religious union that contributes to a peaceful and stable society. She creates a memorial to her husband in her works at the same time that she constructs for herself an authorial persona as a virtuous wife and widow. Specifically, I will consider how she does so by employing the rhetoric of exemplarity. Christine portrays her late husband as well as herself as exemplary characters who respond implicitly to the critique of marriage and women prevalent in medieval literature and scholarly circles. She presents her opinions about marriage in her works through further use of exemplarity and advice directed towards both sexes, drawing role models from classical antiquity, Christian doctrine, French history, and contemporary society. Among the works I will analyze are the *God of Love's Letter*, the *Book of the City of Ladies*, the *Book of the Three Virtues*, the *Book of Christine's Vision*, and her engagement in the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*.³

Medieval Autobiography and Christine Studies

Christine de Pizan's literary legacy, entailing more than thirty works, encompasses poetry and prose. Her works offer readers a variety of perspectives on the literature of late medieval France – from the creative realm of allegorical journeys to the straightforward style of didactic manuals. Scholars have credited Christine with the prestigious distinction as the first professional French woman writer, or as Charity Cannon Willard states in *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works* (LW), Christine is

² For Christine's reaction to courtly love in the *Duke of True Lovers*, see Autrand, 25-28.

³ Titles will appear in English. See Appendix A for a list of the original French titles of Christine's relevant works. Hereafter, I will refer to the later works as the *City of Ladies*, the *Three Virtues*, and *Christine's Vision*. See Appendix B for the copyright permission letter for SW.

“France’s first woman of letters” (15). However, the manner in which we regard her works continues to elicit debate, especially the issue of their potentially autobiographical nature.

Scholars must be cognizant of their modern perspective when negotiating the vast corpus of medieval literature. A prime example is the orderly genre classifications that have appeared in literary criticism, which offer both the advantage of observing literary trends and the disadvantage of anachronistic thoughts that may lead to misinterpretation or restrictive analysis. In the Victorian era, a rising interest in autobiographical writings led to scholarly studies of autobiography as a distinct literary genre and efforts to (re)interpret past writings through the newly constructed literary paradigms (Spengemann 175-76). Modern critical terms such as autobiography thus require prudence when applied to medieval literature.

Michael Sheringham’s study of French autobiography explores authors’ intentions and the subsequent scholarly criticisms of these intentions. While delineating critical approaches to autobiography, Sheringham defines the purported fundamental goal of autobiography: “the primal impulse from which autobiography allegedly springs, that of bringing form, meaning, and coherence to past and present experience” (1). This inspiration for autobiography transcends modern classifications of time periods and corresponding literary characteristics. Indeed, the attempt to find meaning in one’s life is a human characteristic. To review one’s life, to reminisce, to memorialize all respond to human needs.

Sheringham begins his examination of French autobiography several centuries later than my project’s focus, with the eighteenth-century writer and philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). Crediting Rousseau’s autobiographical work *Confessions* (1782) as an influential founding step in the genre of autobiography, Sheringham writes:

Partly thanks to Rousseau’s *Confessions*, autobiography has come to suggest all but irresistibly the idea of connections, the perception of some sort of pattern and linkage in the disparateness of past experience. Narrative therefore seems its natural ally, since narrative implies connectedness: beginnings, middles, and ends, causes and effects, origins and consequences. (31)

This idea of connections or links echoes his earlier statement about autobiography as a meaningful endeavor to review one's experiences. Moreover, he associates autobiography with a linear narrative story, which explores the chain of events that comprise one's life, based on Rousseau's autobiographical model. The concept of a linear autobiographical narrative, a thread of self-examining details, predates Rousseau's masterpiece. There is evidence of an emergent autobiographical voice in medieval works, including those of Christine de Pizan.

Anne Paupert finds that the strong concentration of autobiographical material from the beginning of Christine's career until 1406 indicates her search for a sense of self and meaning, a quest that echoes Sheringham's stated goal of autobiography ("Narracion" 51-53). Paupert's examination of the autobiographical thread in Christine's works forms the foundation of my research project. In her analysis of *One Hundred Ballades*, the *Path of Long Study*, *Fortune's Transformation*, and *Christine's Vision*, Paupert concludes that part 3 of *Christine's Vision* should be considered as the first prose autobiography in the French language ("Narracion" 69). She regards *Christine's Vision* as both a personal and an intellectual autobiography ("Narracion" 65).

Christine's seemingly autobiographical narrative is more complex than a simple linear narrative. Instead of a clearly defined "autobiography" in an independent work, Christine wove her narrative throughout numerous texts. She inserted personal sections or allusions into her verse and prose within the framework of another textual narrative, primarily in the works the *Path of Long Study*, *Fortune's Transformation*, and *Christine's Vision*. In these texts, Christine introduces herself as a participant in the story, constructing a framework with a character similar to the author, a scholarly medieval widow named Christine to whom I will refer as Christine-protagonist. In point of fact, we observe the life story or biography of Christine-protagonist rather than the "autobiography" of the author in these allegorical works.

Christine's creation of a self-oriented main character in the *Path of Long Study*, *Fortune's Transformation*, and *Christine's Vision* underlines the intertextual nature of these works. These three texts reveal information about Christine-protagonist in a complementary manner, restating and adding details to develop her biography through intertextuality. To further challenge the limitations of modern literary analysis and its

distinctions, the biographical details of Christine-protagonist in these works align with the first person voice in many of Christine's early lyric widowhood poems as well as her personal correspondence, which addressed contemporary literary issues in the form of public letters. This confluence of voices, all cloaked in the I/Christine widow persona, has engendered considerable scholarly reflection about the factual content of Christine's literary works. Whether we view certain aspects as predominantly autobiographical is a matter of individual perspective. We cannot delineate the transition between fact and fiction in the widow persona of Christine-protagonist to the same extent as we could with a modern author, given our dependency on the existent manuscript record as the sole source of data -- a practical limitation inherent in medieval literary analysis. We can only recognize that Christine intentionally created a self-inspired character that she frequently featured as the protagonist of her works.

In light of this polemic idea of Christine's "autobiography," which in truth is an issue that cannot be resolved with precision or certitude, I direct my research towards an alternate aspect of the question -- the purpose of Christine's widow persona within the greater context of her corpus and society. In particular, I will examine her portrayal of marriage, both through the recurrent thread of Christine-protagonist's personal experience and marital advice, and how this relates to her defense of marriage in medieval society. Anne Paupert notes the correlations among the above-mentioned works, including the figure of Christine's husband, Etienne de Castel ("Narracion" 59; note 20). However, Paupert focuses on the impact of *Christine's Vision*. In addition to Anne Paupert, numerous scholars have briefly observed the similar descriptions of Christine's marriage in her texts. For example, Blumenfeld-Kosinski cross-references *Christine's Vision* to *Fortune's Transformation* (SW 188; note 3). Likewise, Christine Reno and Liliane Dulac's edition of *Christine's Vision* lists the corresponding passages in *Fortune's Transformation*, *One Hundred Ballades*, and *Other Ballades* (177-78). In this project, I aim to provide an in-depth analysis of Etienne's portrait. After observing Christine's memorial to her exemplary husband, I will turn to her self-reflective persona in her texts as an exemplary widow. I will then consider the significance of these portraits in view of Christine's unmistakably expressed support of marriage, both in her personal correspondence and in her literary works. Finally, I will conclude with

Christine's additional efforts to create role models in her texts to support marriage as a natural and religious union.

In the course of this study, I use the term "autobiography" in reference to this analogous character Christine-protagonist, without strictly adhering to modern connotations. How accurately the character of Christine-protagonist represents the author Christine is less important in this study than the reason for which she fashioned and recurrently employed this character. Christine uses a self-inspired character in her works in accordance with the belief that she expresses in her public letters – literature should serve the common good. In Christine's expansive letter from the summer of 1401 that berates the poor teachings found in the *Romance of the Rose*, she declares: "a work without usefulness, which is harmful for the common good even if it is delightful and was painstakingly written, cannot be praised" (McWebb 131; lines 275-77) ("car œuvre sans utilité et hors bien commun ou propre – poison que elle soit delitable, de grant labour et coust – ne fait a louer"; 132; lines 285-87).⁴ Considered one of the most popular works in the medieval period, the *Romance of the Rose*, a thirteenth century two-part allegorical work composed by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, narrates the poet's pursuit of the Rose, his love interest (*DLF* 1308). This underlying belief in the didactic function of books propelled Christine to participate in the epistolary Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*. Expending resources on deleterious works was morally irresponsible as well as wasteful, especially when those efforts could be directed towards a constructive purpose.⁵

Therefore, I shall examine how Christine's writings about marriage transcend the autobiographical goal of searching for a sense of self. She records her personal experience in marriage through the widow persona for a more lofty and noble purpose than self-discovery. Christine presents both her late husband and herself as role models for a healthy marriage at a moment in time when the institution of marriage and the value of women in society were greatly questioned, even mocked in contemporary

⁴ Only Christine's texts will also be cited in the original French to allow for an examination of her word choice and poetic eloquence.

⁵ Perhaps this ideology was partially shaped by the communal nature of medieval book production and the value of manuscripts. From the scribe to the illuminator to the patron, manuscript production involved a considerable amount of cost and labor. For a detailed study of this topic, see Rouse.

literature. In the process of writing these perceived autobiographical passages, Christine transforms what we would consider autobiography into exemplarity. By writing a didactic narrative, she follows a respected tradition of exemplary literature that instills Christian morals.

Understanding Exemplarity

The Tradition of Medieval Exemplarity

The high prevalence of exemplary rhetoric in medieval literature affirms the societal concern with proper conduct and the transmission of this knowledge through literature. Through a brief overview of the medieval exemplar, we shall see both the extent to which the exemplar appeared in a variety of literary forms and Christine's facility with this rhetorical device. She features exemplars in her works, appropriating an effective tool of social education to represent her voice and potentially inspire her readers to lead a moral life. Christine's use of exemplarity would have been a familiar rhetorical device for her readers as well as a more persuasive and authoritative method of instruction than the humble voice of a female author that Christine described in a letter as "no stronger than the voice of a little cricket" (McWebb 185; line 938) ("ne suis fors comme la voix d'un petit gresillion"; 182; line 904).

With its roots in antiquity, exemplarity was a rhetorical device that developed and flourished in the Middle Ages. The term exemplar or *exemplum* in Latin (plural *exempla*) carries several related meanings. The principal denotation signifies a behavior or virtue worth emulating, that is an example or paradigm. This term also describes a rhetorical function, a tool of persuasion that cites an authoritative source with the aim to promote an idea or shape one's perspective. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle deems example as one of the two primary methods of argumentation (Lyons 6).⁶ Exemplarity can also assume a more verbose form – as an "illustrative story" that contains a virtuous lesson (*DLF* 437).⁷

⁶ He states that the other method is enthymeme.

⁷ John Lyons points out a lesser known medieval definition of *exemplum* – "a clearing in the woods." He observes that this meaning symbolically gives order to the woods of history and forms a definitive realm of inside and outside, see 3. He also provides a detailed discussion of the use and misuse of this term, as it has been considered a genre instead of a rhetorical device, see 8-12.

Alexander Gelley comments on the use of exemplarity in medieval culture: “Since the truth of the Christian teaching was not open to question, exempla served to educate and persuade, not to analyze or test doctrines” (4). The moral story resembled the homilies found in the Bible and thus resonated with the medieval Christian society.

In his monumental work on the exemplar in the Middle Ages, Jean-Thiébaud Welter divides the sources of exemplars into two categories. In the first category of source material, authors derived exemplars from sacred and secular literature. Sacred literature, including the Bible and hagiographies, were valuable sources of model behavior (Welter 83-84). Various editions of the Bible were reinterpreted to emphasize its exemplary content through page layout. The main text, often visually centered on the page, could be surrounded by a paratext that enhances the reading experience and guides the reader to focus on certain aspects of the text through commentaries, translations, and illustrations. For example, the *Bible moralisé* offers moral lessons, both in commentaries and illustrations, which complement the corresponding text (Brown 20).

Another highly developed and popular form of exemplary religious literature centered on saints’ lives. Preeminently didactic, hagiographic literature was approved by the Church as the correct influence for both men and women of lay and secular audiences. This devotional literature, which appeared in Latin, commonly features saints and martyrs whose religious determination persevered when confronted with severe obstacles and even bodily harm. Their stories of spiritual devotion encourage the reader to overcome any trials and vices that impede one’s faith (Welter 88-94). Indeed, the inspirational impact of saints’ lives in medieval culture extended far beyond hagiographic literature, from the practice of naming patron saints for protection from misfortune to the extensive network of pilgrimages for personal salvation as well as blessings from saints’ relics in sacred sites, such as Jerusalem, Rome, St. Jacques-de-Compostelle, and Conques.⁸ Hagiographic literature is just one manifestation of the medieval reverence for Christian saints and a tangible example of the rhetoric of exemplarity.

⁸ For more information on pilgrimages, see the chapter “Les chemins de Saint-Jacques” in the Guide Gallimard, *La France médiévale*, 201-15.

The existent manuscript record bears witness to the sustained interest in hagiographic literature throughout the Middle Ages. For example, the *Life of Saint Alexis*, a long hagiographic poem in the vernacular language, is a remarkable example. Besides being one of the first vernacular works in French literature, it appeared in manuscripts from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, demonstrating a prolonged success and continued relevancy to the medieval reader (Zink 25-26; *DLF* 1330). In Christine's time, we can see the monarchy's preference for hagiographic literature through the inventories of its personal libraries. For example, one of Christine's distinguished patrons was the Queen of France, Ysabel of Bavaria. She commissioned numerous religious works for her personal library, including a *Life of Saint Margaret* in 1398 (Gibbons 389). The inventory of the king's library at the Louvre that was composed in 1423 reveals that Charles VI's collection contained a copious amount of hagiographies, featuring the lives of Mary, Jesus, St. Louis, St. Denis, and St. Thomas Aquinas, among others (Douët-D'arcq 315-16).

Christine composed her own version of a hagiographic work in part 3 of the celebrated work the *City of Ladies* (1405).⁹ Through the voice of the allegorical figure Lady Justice, Christine presents vignettes of female saints and pious women, including the Virgin Mary (3.1) and Saint Christine (3.10). By design, Christine recounts the trials of their faith and emphasizes their virtuous qualities. In the case of Saint Christine, Lady Justice prefaces her story with words that introduce the saint as an exemplar (3.9):

I will tell you about Saint Christine, not simply because she's your patron saint, but also because she was a particularly splendid example of a virgin-martyr. I won't omit any of the details, for hers is a most beautiful and inspiring story. (217)

Si te diray encore de sainte Cristine, et pour ce que elle est ta marreine et moult est vierge de grant dignité, plus a plain t'en diray la vie qui moult est belle et devote. (460)¹⁰

⁹ The *City of Ladies* exists in 27 manuscripts (Reno and Dulac XI).

¹⁰ All English quotes from the *City of Ladies* are from the Penguin Books edition. All Middle French quotes are from the Biblioteca Medievale edition, *La città delle dame*. While the Penguin edition is based on the

Through Lady Justice, Christine provides an abbreviated commentary or gloss on the subsequent narrative that prepares the reader for an exemplary story. Saint Christine's steadfast refusal to renounce God and worship idols, even when faced with appalling forms of torture, leads Christine-protagonist to immediately pray to her patron saint after the tale, asking for her prayers to assist "all women to make a good end" (223). The reader witnesses how reading Saint Christine's story positively affects Christine-protagonist. In this instance, Christine-protagonist prays to the saint and requests her protection of women and intercession with God. Readers may benefit from Saint Christine's story if they recognize the moral lesson and follow Christine-protagonist's example of active reading.

In the introduction to the English edition of the *City of Ladies*, Rosalind Brown-Grant documents that Christine mostly adapts the saints' lives in part 3 from Jean de Vignay's *Miroir historial* (1333), which is a French translation of the thirteenth century encyclopedic work, the *Speculum maius* by Vincent of Beauvais (xviii). Indeed, Christine directly acknowledges the *Miroir historial* as a key source of the saints' lives, when Lady Justice informs the reader that they can learn about other inspirational saints, like Saints Cecilia and Agnes, in the *Miroir historial* (217). Christine thus offers the reader further reference material for saints' lives. Both Lady Justice's pre-reading comments and Christine-protagonist's reaction to Saint Christine's story indicate that Christine understood that saints' lives served as exemplars for medieval readers.¹¹

A final type of exemplary religious literature combines both the oral and written traditions. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the mendicant orders began incorporating exemplars into sermons, attempting to make them comprehensible to the audience. The exemplars reinforced the sermon's religious teachings. As a testament to this growing popularity of exemplars, an innovative type of literature emerged in the thirteenth century that captured these stories in collections and served as exemplary

Duke's manuscript, BnF f.fr.607, the Biblioteca Medievale edition cites the Queen's manuscript, Harley 4431, as its base manuscript. Earl Jeffrey Richards, the editor of the bilingual Middle French and Italian edition, observes that the two manuscripts are almost identical despite the difference in years between these manuscripts, see 514.

¹¹ Catherine Sanok provides a new approach to exemplarity in *Her Life Historical*. She discusses how medieval writers employed the stories of female saints to reflect on the changing culture of fifteenth century England.

reference material for preachers. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, manuscripts reveal a shift from the prevailing use of Latin in exemplar collections to vernacular languages. The choice of the vernacular language indicates an effort to engage a wider medieval audience (Welter 110-17; *DLF* 437).¹² As a devout Christian woman, we can imagine that Christine was aware of the accepted use of exemplars in sermons as well as their effectiveness through her religious observance. Her writings explicitly demonstrate a textual link between her works and this form of religious literature. Scholars have identified a compilation of exemplary stories for preachers as a recurrent source in Christine's works. She draws from the *Manipulus florum* (1306) by Thomas Hibernicus in multiple texts, including the *Letter from Othea*, *Fortune's Transformation*, the *Book of the Deeds and Good Customs of the Wise King Charles V* (hereafter *Charles V*), the *Three Virtues*, and *Christine's Vision* (Reno and Dulac xxxiii-xxxiv).

Yet, perhaps the most significant connection between Christine and the rhetoric of exemplarity in the Church occurred through the stimulus of her relationship with the prominent churchman Jean Gerson (1363-1429). In 1389, Gerson began preaching to the king and the French court, where Christine resided. He became the chancellor for the University of Paris in 1395, a position that Bernard McGinn denotes as "the foremost academic post in Western Christendom" (McGuire, *Early Works* xiii). From his sermons to his mystical writings and letters, Gerson left a vast corpus, totaling over five hundred works that vary in style (*DLF* 783-85). James Connolly remarks that in Gerson's church sermons, "he was sure to make a practical approach to his subject and to enliven his talk by anecdotes drawn either from the *Books of Examples* or from his own experience" (155). Likewise, we shall see that Gerson employs the rhetoric of exemplarity in other works.

Gerson became a strong ally for Christine's criticisms of the *Romance of the Rose* in the early 1400s, a debate which I will explore in a later chapter (*LW* 78). However, the exact nature of their relationship is unknown (McLeod 272). In addition to

¹² Numerous Latin works were translated into the vernacular in the fifteenth century. For instance, *Gesta Romanorum*, from the mid-fourteenth century, was translated into French as *Le Violier des Histoires*. Other works were originally composed in the vernacular. In this category, a well-known French text is the fourteenth century collection of moral stories by the Franciscan Nicole Bozon, *Les contes moralisés* (ca.1320-50). This work contains exemplary stories from folklore and history, recast with a Christian moral. See *DLF*, 437 and 1069.

Gerson and Christine's intellectual parity in the debate on the *Rose* and Christine's reference to him in her letter to Pierre Col from 2 October 1402 (McWebb 144-47), we can trace the influence of one of Gerson's sermons in Christine's literary works. His sermon to the French court on 7 November 1405, *Vivat Rex*, supported the Duke of Burgundy's call for political reform and expressed concern for the dauphin Louis. Christine echoes Gerson's message in two of her subsequent works – *Christine's Vision* and the *Book of the Body Politic* (LW 156-57, 178).

A secondary source of exemplary material stemmed from secular literature, including works on history, philosophy, and folklore (Welter 107). Similar to the exemplar collections for preachers, secular works were presented in a moralizing format. For example, the classical mythological stories of Ovid were reworked in the *Ovid moralisé*. In this anonymous work, commentaries follow the classical stories that reinterpret the moral objective from a Christian perspective. Besides rendering the classical text acceptable to a Christian audience, the commentaries, combined with the manuscript illustrations, offer a multi-dimensional reading experience. More than twenty manuscripts of this text from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries survive. Additionally, later editions and prose adaptations suggest its lasting value to medieval readers (DLF 1093). The *Ovid moralisé* was a major source for Christine as well as her contemporaries, including Guillaume de Machaut, Eustache Deschamps and Jean Froissart. Christine refers to the *Ovid moralisé* in the *Letter from Othea* and in *Fortune's Transformation* (SW 29).

Some moral vernacular works that were directed towards women combined both sacred and secular exemplars. The nobleman Geoffroi de La Tour Landry wrote a practical educational work for his three daughters, *Le Livre pour l'enseignement de ses filles* (1371). Inspired by another women's educational work, the anonymous *Miroir des bonnes femmes*, Geoffroi employed examples from hagiographies and biblical history to instruct his daughters in proper conduct. Additionally, Geoffroi included secular exemplars to reflect on daily life (DLF 498-99). Another advice manual directed towards women from a male author is the anonymous *The Goodman of Paris* '*Mesnagier de Paris*' (c.1393), which was contemporary to Christine's life. The author, a wealthy bourgeois, counsels his young bride on the proper conduct of a Christian wife and her

household duties. In the first section that treats the behavior of a virtuous wife, the author cites exemplars from popular stories and his personal experience (*DLF* 1011).

Following these examples, Christine composed her own version of a practical advice manual for women in the *Three Virtues* – one of the texts that was influenced by Thomas Hibernicus' *Manipulus florum*. This book, which was dedicated to the princess Marguerite of Guyenne, is the sequel to Christine's *City of Ladies*. Christine addresses all stations of women in this work and gives moral and social advice, touching on the topic of marriage and employing exemplars as we shall see in later chapters. Besides sacred and secular literature, Welter adds that exemplars were inspired by the author's personal experience, memories, and knowledge of current events (83-84). Several of Christine's venerable sources, St. Augustine and Boethius, leave such a literary legacy. In her texts, she demonstrably reveres their good examples and responsible authorship.

Saint Augustine. Saint Augustine's autobiographical work, the *Confessions* (397-98), showcases his conversion from a sinner to a saint within the Christian framework (Hampton 28).¹³ Augustine had a successful secular career as a teacher in a variety of cities, including Carthage, Rome and Milan. In 387, he was baptized by the Bishop of Milan, Saint Ambrose. Reluctantly, Augustine became the Bishop of Hippo in the Roman territories of North Africa (*Confessions*, Introduction xv-xxiii). The *Confessions* is a long prose poem in Latin that depicts his faults and conversion to Christianity. Augustine recollects his troubled youth, in particular his struggle with lust. In the *Confessions*, he addresses God through a clever arrangement of Biblical verses, which combined with his voice, takes the form of a monologue of self-inquiry through the perspective of Christian theology.

Towards the beginning of the *Confessions*, Augustine conveys his disapproval of obscene literature such as Terence's *Eunuch*: "I bring no charge against the words which are like exquisite and precious vessels, but the wine of error is poured into them for us by drunken teachers" (19; bk. 1, sec. xv 26). In this expressive metaphor, Augustine regards authors as teachers, deeming them morally responsible for the message of their works. He also imparts his reverence for literature and its potential to

¹³ Lori Walters analyzes how Saint Augustine "applied reflections on theological concerns to matters of state," in her article "The 'Humanist Saint': Christine, Augustine, Petrarch, and Louis IX," 874, 876.

become something “exquisite and precious.” Augustine reveals another fundamental belief in this opening book about human interaction: “You [God] have also given mankind the capacity to understand oneself by analogy with others” (8; bk. 1, sec. vi 10). Thus in writing about his life, Augustine serves as an example of one man’s triumph over vice through spiritual enlightenment that may inspire his readers to lead a virtuous Christian life. His autobiography endures as a didactic and morally responsible work.

Augustine’s legacy lasted well into the medieval period, despite the centuries that elapsed between its composition and Christine’s time period. Based on the prominence given to St. Augustine in Charles V’s library, we can understand that he was the theologian most revered by the French monarchy (Walters, “Magnifying” 243-44).¹⁴ In Christine’s works, she repeatedly displays her knowledge of Augustine’s teachings and her respect for him as an authority of church doctrine. For example, she mentions his views on greed and pride in the *Path of Long Study* (lines 4621-36, 4871-84). Christine directly cites his exemplary legacy in the *City of Ladies* (1.10). In this work, we encounter two exemplars through his story. Christine features not only Augustine but also his mother, Monnica, as role models. In the context of Christine’s reference, Lady Reason defends women’s nature against the Latin proverb, “God made women to weep, talk, and spin” (qtd. in *City* 26). Lady Reason recounts how Augustine converted from his sinful ways to Christianity, inspired by his devout Christian mother, Monnica. She discloses that his salvation was achieved through the intercession of his mother’s prayers and tears. Christine promotes this encouraging example of repentance for both sinners and the pious women in their lives. Lori Walters observes that her reference to Monnica echoes the divine influence of Mary and “Holy Mother Church” (“Magnifying” 246). Indeed, the effect of Monica’s piety extended beyond Augustine. In the *Confessions*, Augustine records how Monnica patiently bore the short-temper and violent ways of her husband Patrick and prayed for his salvation. At the end of his life, Monnica converted him to Christianity (*Confessions* 168-70; bk. 9, sec. ix 19-22). After her death, she becomes for her son an image of “Holy Mother Church.”

¹⁴ In her biography *Charles V*, Christine lists Saint Augustine’s *Soliloquies* as third in importance of works that the king had translated into French, see 3.12. His conversionary story was known through the translation of St. Augustine’s *Soliloquies*, which shows the influence of *Confessions*. See Hasenohr, 74.

More importantly for this study, Augustine is one of the prominent sources of wisdom in *Christine's Vision* (Walters, "Constructing Reputations" 126). Lady Philosophy recurrently quotes Saint Augustine as she reprimands Christine-protagonist's complaints about her misfortune and provides comfort to the desolate widow (3.16, 3.18, 3.19, 3.25, 3.26, 3.27). Her consolation is an amalgam of wisdom from the Church Doctors and respected classical authors. Interestingly, Lady Philosophy's consolation, which continually revisits Augustine's advice, employs a rhetorical style that resembles Augustine's format of answering questions through scripture in his *Confessions*. Through the references to Augustine, Lady Philosophy conveys that Christine-protagonist's suffering is not without purpose and can lead to spiritual improvement. She provides memorable and often vivid words of wisdom. To illustrate the nature of her Augustine-inspired advice, Lady Philosophy alludes to Augustine's metallurgical metaphor in *On the Sixtieth Psalm* -- gold is purified in the test of fire (3.18). This imagery reassures Christine-protagonist, and through her, the reader, that life's challenges are meaningful.

Boethius. The classical scholar, Ancius Boethius (c. 480-525), wrote an autobiographical work that inspired countless medieval authors, including Christine.¹⁵ Living during the time just after the fall of the Roman Empire (c. 475), Boethius faced shifting political dangers as an advisor to the Ostrogoth king Theodoric.¹⁶ Theodoric maintained a limited degree of autonomy in Italy from the Byzantine Empire during the Acacian schism between Rome and Byzantium. However, after the end of the schism in 518, Theodoric's political instability intensified and he sent representatives to Byzantium. From these talks, Theodoric suspected treason on the part of his Roman aristocratic subjects. Therefore, he imprisoned and executed Boethius (Tierney and Painter 75-76).

Although Boethius endured political disgrace during his lifetime, his literary legacy persevered. His autobiographical work, the *Consolation of Philosophy* (c.525),

¹⁵ For Boethius' influence on Christine as well as Guillaume de Machaut, Eustache Deschamps, and Alain Chartier, see Glynnis Cropp's article. After his exile from Paris in 1415, Jean Gerson was also inspired by Boethius in writing the *Consolation of Theology* (1418), see McGuire, *Early Works*, 20.

¹⁶ Theodoric (454-526) murdered Odoacar to become the ruler of Italy in 493. He was the political contemporary of the French king Clovis. Theodoric personally embraced a system of marriage alliances, marrying Clovis' sister, see Tierney and Painter, 75.

presents an enlightening dialogue between Philosophy and the imprisoned author who was unjustly condemned. In the course of this text, Boethius learns to accept the fickle nature of Fortune through Philosophy's guidance. His plight was fundamental to medieval thought, as evidenced in the popularity of this work (SW 38; note 8). Besides the sheer volume of surviving manuscripts, we can recognize the breadth of his influence from the references made to the *Consolation of Philosophy* by others authors, including Christine (DLF 205).

Boethius' work impacts Christine's early writings, especially those texts that portray the widow persona. In the *Path of Long Study*, she names Boethius' work as a source of comfort for Christine-protagonist during her widowhood. Preferring solitary reflection in a small study, Christine-protagonist reaches for the *Consolation of Philosophy* one evening as she struggles with her own misfortune.¹⁷ She recounts:

And then I found a book which I loved very much, for it took me out of my state of dismay and desolation: it was Boethius' profitable and celebrated book, *On Consolation*. I then began to read, and as I read, the grief and pain that so weighted on me were dissipated, when I learned from the book of the punishments suffered by Boethius in Rome, and put myself in his place, *for a good example is very helpful in achieving comfort and removing displeasure*. He was an extremely virtuous and valiant man, who was wrongly exiled for having given good advice and helped the common good. (SW 63, my emphasis)

Et lors me vint entre mains/ Un livre que moult amay,/ Car il m'osta hors
d'esmay/ Et de desolacion:/ Ce ert *De Consolacion/ Boece*, le
prouffitable/ Livre qui tant est notable./ Lors y commençay a lire,/ Et en
lisant passay l'ire/ Et l'annuyeuse pesance/ Dont j'estoie en mesaisance --
/ *Car bon exemple ayde moult/ A confort, et anuy toulte* --/ Quant ou livre
remiray/ Les tors fais, et m'i miray,/ Qu'on fist a Boece a Romme,/ Qui tant

¹⁷ Christine precisely dates this melancholy evening to 5 October 1402, see lines 185-88.

ert vaillant preudome/ Et a tort fu exillié/ Pour avoir bien conseillé/ Et au
bien commun aydier. (98-100; lines 202-08)¹⁸

Here, Christine describes the general reputation of the *Consolation of Philosophy* in her society, referring to it as “celebrated.” She also inserts the opinion of Christine-protagonist, commenting that this was a beloved work that she knowingly sought during a sorrowful moment. Boethius’ confrontation and acceptance of imminent death at the whim of Fortune provides the ever-grieving widow Christine-protagonist with a new perspective on her personal situation and dispels her grief. Christine reveals an interesting aspect of reading in this quote. She depicts the reading process of Christine-protagonist, whose imagination allowed her to vicariously experience Boethius’ suffering – putting herself “in his place.” In the original French, she writes, “m’i miray.” Her language evokes the idea of the mirror or speculum, which is not only a common topos in medieval didactic literature but also appears throughout Christine’s corpus.¹⁹ Literature can be a tool for self-reflection. Furthermore, Christine emphasizes the significance of exemplary stories and their beneficial impact on the reader in a dictum, as I emphasized in the quotation. At this moment, she inserts a saying that reaches beyond the voice of Christine-protagonist or even Christine as an author. She presents the benefits of exemplary literature in language that intimates that this concept is widely acknowledged. Boethius’ autobiography is thus an exemplar for all who encounter misfortune. Christine-protagonist specifies the lesson that she learns from Boethius: neither material nor transitory things bring lasting happiness, only virtue and faith in God can achieve this (lines 235-94). This message is an elaboration of an allusion that Christine makes to Boethius in an earlier text (SW 63; note 4). In the *Letter from Othea* (c.1400), she writes a short fable about Fortune, which she follows with an allegory or spiritual interpretation that refers to Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy*. Christine quotes Boethius’ view that the Epicureans cannot attain happiness through their worldliness (SW 38).

¹⁸ All Middle French quotes from the *Path of Long Study* are from the *Lettres gothiques* edition that was executed by Andrea Tarnowski.

¹⁹ For in-depth discussions of the Mirror for princes genre and Christine’s use of the mirror tradition, see Kate Forhan’s book, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* and Rosalind Brown-Grant’s book, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women: Reading Beyond Gender*.

Boethius' influence in Christine's works extends beyond these two texts. According to Reno and Dulac, Christine also draws from the *Consolation of Philosophy* in *One Hundred Ballades*, *Fortune's Transformation*, and *Christine's Vision* among others (xxviii-xxxi).²⁰ In the latter work, Christine-protagonist receives comfort from an allegorical female figure after her personal complaint against Fortune in part 3. Lady Philosophy explicitly refers to Boethius' advice to scorn material wealth during her consolation to Christine-protagonist (3.22, 3.23, 3.25, 3.26). While in Boethius' work, his consolation is delivered through Philosophy as the title suggests, Christine's allegorical figure transforms from Philosophy to Theology. Yet, Boethius does reflect on God, albeit neither Christ nor specific references to the Christian Bible appear (*Consolation*, Introduction 28). Christine's source for *Christine's Vision*, an anonymous translation of the *Consolation of Philosophy* that dates to the early fourteenth century, brings to light Boethius' widespread popularity. Reno and Dulac note that this translation exists in 58 known manuscripts (xxviii). Both his autobiography and that of Augustine are didactic models of spiritual improvement for society that were deeply revered in the Middle Ages.²¹ The increasing presence of exemplarity in medieval literature explains Christine's familiarity with this common literary technique. Why was exemplarity valued so highly as a tool of persuasion in medieval culture and how was it so effective as a rhetorical device?

Reading, Writing, and Exemplarity

The predilection for exemplars in medieval literature intimates the societal preoccupation with tradition. The medieval author searched the past for role models and subsequently provided guidance through exemplarity. As Karlheinz Stierle explains, exemplars offered moral principals through the medium of history (182).²² The widespread use of exemplarity suggests a shared common heritage and the awareness

²⁰ See also Benjamin Semple's article, "The Consolation of a Woman Writer."

²¹ Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski also cites Abelard's *Historia calamitatum* and Guibert de Nogent's *De vita sua* in her list of influential models for medieval autobiography. See her article "Christine de Pizan et l'autobiographie féminine," 18.

²² "Ce que l'exemple implique, c'est le principe moral. Ce dans quoi il s'explicite, son *médium*, c'est l'histoire."

of a cultural memory that has recently interested medieval scholars. Mary Carruthers and Pierre Nora explore the significance of memory in medieval culture in their respective works *The Book of Memory* and “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.” In Mary Carruthers’ perceptive book, she introduces a fundamental difference between modern and medieval thought: while modern pedagogy separates memory from learning, memory was a component of learning in medieval culture that entailed the application of knowledge (1-2). These studies have provided scholars with a refreshing perspective on medieval thought and new interpretations of this literature, including Christine studies.

Medieval reading ideology largely derived from the philosophy of the twelfth century mystic and Canon Hugh of St. Victor (c.1078-1141). Differentiating between several states of reading, Hugh distinguished *lectio* from *meditatio*. While the former comprises reading and studying, the latter involves internalization of the material. The reader mediates on the text, memorizing its contents and applying its message to his own life in a form of active reading (Carruthers 162-63). Through this process, literature can become a dynamic and influential force in the reader’s life.²³ As we have seen in the *Path of Long Study* (lines 202-08), Christine depicts how Christine-protagonist not only seeks comfort from Boethius’ work but also envisages herself “in his place” (SW 63). This vicarious experience resolves Christine-protagonist’s emotional distress.

In the case of exemplary literature, the reader’s internalization of the text or *meditatio* presents guidelines and role models of proper conduct. Timothy Hampton discusses how the universal appeal of the exemplar makes it relevant to the reader’s everyday life (11). By choosing a specific exemplary figure, the author endeavors to interpret history and relate this model to the present day, or as Hampton states, “to move beyond word to flesh” (3). The author’s selective presentation of history conveys a particular moral, following what Barthes describes as an ideological history (qtd. in Stierle 186). The reader is encouraged to imitate the praiseworthy behavior, making the book a vehicle of social, religious, and political instruction.

²³ Stierle notes that for Aristotle, exemplars can influence future actions as one considers a similar situation in the past, see 183.

Christine's literary advocate, Jean Gerson, clearly expresses his view of literature as a means of moral instruction in *The Mountain of Contemplation*. He establishes eleven rules that lead to a contemplative life, which he used with his sisters. Among these rules, Gerson advises his sisters on the spiritual benefits of literature, instructing them to conduct daily readings: "each day read aloud a part of a good book among you to strengthen you more and more in your holy endeavor" (McGuire, *Early Works* 126). Moreover, in his *Treatise Against the Roman de la Rose* (1402), Gerson speaks against immoral literature, observing that "sinful words and writings corrupt good morals and quash the shame out of sins and any moral prudishness from all young people, for whom it serves as the chief protection against all evil" (McLeod 291). Gerson's didactic view of literature and concern for the moral texts recalls Augustine's statement about immoral works acting as "drunken teachers." If immoral works become socially acceptable, then these works may provide immoral lessons and detrimental societal role models. Thus the medieval practice of interpretative reading necessitates responsible authorship. For this reason, Mary Carruthers maintains that writing was foremost "an ethical activity in monastic culture," quoting an excerpt from a twelfth-century sermon that describes writers as "scribes of the Lord" and the parchment as "pure conscience" (qtd. in Carruthers 156).

Christine features the concept of writers as religious scribes in her works, most notably in *Christine's Vision* through the persona of Christine-protagonist. Christine crafts the "autobiographical" character in part 1, beginning with a dream framework in which Christine-protagonist witnesses a fanciful creation story. A gigantic figure, named Chaos, is nourished by a colossal shadowy mother figure who fashions humans from universal human dough – composed of bitter, sweet, heavy, and light materials. The mother figure bakes them in a human mold that resembles a waffle iron in Chaos' mouth. She then assigns a gender to the small bodies and feeds them to Chaos (1.1-2). As Christine-protagonist witnesses this process, she is incorporated into the human dough and reborn in the mouth of Chaos (1.3). Christine describes the way in which this mother figure made the protagonist a female according to her inclination since the shape of the human mold was androgynous, a detail that in itself provokes debate about the elemental differences between the sexes and raises the question whether essence

precedes gender. She introduces the mission of the reborn Christine-protagonist. After a childhood that was spent adapting to the customs of a foreign land, she encounters Libera, the Crowned Lady who is the allegorical figure of France (1.5). Libera assigns Christine-protagonist the prestigious role of her personal secretary or *antigraphe*. Lori Walters perceives that Christine juxtaposes Christine-protagonist against Divine Holy Wisdom, the world's secretary. Walters remarks, "Christine ingeniously establishes a parallel between her own work as France's secretary and the work of God and his Evangelists, who served as the world's secretaries in writing Holy Scripture" ("Constructing Reputations" 129-30). Libera's appointment of Christine-protagonist as her personal scribe endows the narration of this character with an authoritative voice.

Christine demonstrates her awareness of an author's moral responsibility and the process of *meditatio* in the gloss of *Christine's Vision*. As if sensing the enigmatic nature of her text, she included a prefatory gloss in one of the three known autograph manuscripts, the ex-Phillipps 128. Glosses provide commentaries, translations or clarifications of the main text. They often appear in the margins of the text or as a subscript or superscript to the text (Brown 59). However, the gloss to *Christine's Vision* was later added to the manuscript in a separate gathering (Reno and Dulac xl–xlii). The gloss was analyzed and published by Christine Reno in her 1992 article "The Preface to the *Avision-Christine* in ex-Phillipps 128." This startling modern discovery shed new light on Christine's intentions as an author. While discussing her use of allegory in the prefatory gloss of *Christine's Vision*, Christine calls attention to the multiple layers of textual interpretation for her readers. She expressly states three: personal, communal, and spiritual interpretations, and explains how these levels reflect the connection between the microcosm and macrocosm (McLeod xxv). Finding such explicit instructions regarding an author's intent is rare in medieval literature. Christine exhibits a genuine concern that the complexity of her poetic language be comprehended by her audience and applied as representative of self, society, and spirituality. Following her clear proposal for a multi-level interpretation of this work that contains the most complete "autobiographical" narrative, her story is not merely a literal account of her life or a one-dimensional self-portrait, but resonates on a communal and spiritual level

through the rhetoric of exemplarity. Christine transforms individual experience into a collective experience.

Indeed, Christine Reno and Liliane Dulac declare that the “autobiographical” portions of *Christine’s Vision* serve a greater purpose. In the introduction to the Champion critical edition, Reno and Dulac observe that autobiography is not read for itself; it provides the opportunity for self-improvement through imitating exemplary behavior (“L’autobiographie ne peut donc être lue pour elle-même.... L’autobiographie n’est donc pas une fin en soi; elle fournit l’occasion et le moyen d’un dépassement exemplaire”; xvii-iii).²⁴ This observation brings to mind the medieval reading practice of *meditatio*.

While focusing on the theological savvy of Christine in his article “Somewhere between Destructive Glosses and Chaos,” Earl Jeffrey Richards asserts: “In all her writings, she [Christine] seeks to recuperate the immediacy and particularity of women’s experiences . . . and to recast it as an allegory of the universal” (50). Richards then quotes the words of Lady Opinion in *Christine’s Vision* (2.12) – that moral transformation requires the intervention of a perfect being (51). While Richards approaches this proposition from a theological viewpoint, I would like to point out that Christine’s use of exemplars, while arguably not perfect beings given their human nature, are at least potential role models who contribute to the moral betterment of society. She demonstrates this in part 3 of her *City of Ladies*, the section that we have noted resembles hagiographic literature. The virtues of female saints approach that of the Virgin, a morally perfect human being.

Beyond the gloss to *Christine’s Vision*, the theme of an author’s moral responsibility and preoccupation with *meditatio* permeates Christine’s other works, as we have previously seen in the presentation and reception of Saint Christine’s story in part 3 of the *City of Ladies*. Laura Kathryn McRae’s analyzes Christine’s perspectives on reading and writing in this work, in particular Christine’s preoccupation with truth as a guiding principal for literature. McRae evaluates how Christine-protagonist demonstrates the correct method of reading in the beginning of the *City of Ladies*. Christine-protagonist, whom McRae designates as the “inscribed reader” (421),

²⁴ All quotes from *Le livre de l’advison Cristine* are from the Reno and Dulac edition.

becomes despondent upon reading the misogynist critiques of women in Matheolus' work *Lamentations* (413; 1.1). The virtues of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice appear beside her as a corrective and guiding force. The Three Virtues, the allegorical figures of authority in this text, admonish Christine-protagonist for perceiving this slanderous work as truthful and charge her with the creation of a female utopia that is resplendent with female exemplars (1.2-4). These virtues are essential in interpretation, particularly Reason who represents self-knowledge (McRae 422).

With the assistance of Reason and Rectitude, Christine-protagonist populates the city with exemplary women from France's cultural heritage in parts 1 and 2. Christine adapts these first two sections from Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women* '*De claris mulieribus*' (c.1375). Brown-Grant proposes that she may have known Boccaccio's work through the French translation *Des cleres et nobles femmes* (xviii). Boccaccio parallels Augustine's call for moral literature with the advice that "A reader must choose literature which does not lure him to evil" (qtd. in McRae 414). As a source for this text that seeks to counter Matheolus' prejudiced portrayal of women, Boccaccio's work adheres to a higher standard of truth. For McRae, Christine's originality in her recasting of Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women* lies in the equal focus on the author's responsibility to create a moral work and the reader's interpretation of the work, leading McRae to consider the *City of Ladies* as a "prototype of responsible interpretation" (415). She remarks: "Thus, just as a reader is responsible for ascertaining the truth contained within a work during the act of reading, a writer as active reader must also unveil the truth" (413).²⁵ In the *City of Ladies*, Christine-protagonist bears the double responsibility of the reader and writer in search of a truthful representation of women (McRae 413).

It is worth noting that Christine herself cites the pursuit of truth as her motivation in participating in the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*. In her introductory letter to the collection of epistles that she presented to Queen Ysabel, Christine writes, "I defend the honor and praise of women.... I am motivated by truth" (McWebb 108, 111; lines 19, 23). She expresses this sentiment throughout her letters. For instance, in her reaction to

²⁵ For an analysis of the theme of truth in late medieval French literature, including Christine's works, see Nicole Pons' article "'Pour ce que manifestation de Verité': un thème du débat politique sous Charles VI."

Jean de Montreuil's Treatise on the *Romance of the Rose* during the summer of 1401, Christine reproaches Jean de Meun for condemning all married women based on a selection of poor examples. She then cites a list of exemplary wives from the Bible and French society, a list that we shall examine later, while she declares that she is motivated by the truth (McWebb 127-29).

Kate Forhan further discusses the *exempla* found in Christine's writings and their importance to the medieval audience. While she analyzes the *Book of the Body Politic*, the literary techniques employed in the two works are similar. Forhan observes, "for the medieval reader or listener, *exempla* were not merely discursive 'filler' but were the whole point of the book. They were the pearls of wisdom.... [they] are not coincidentally a very pointed and direct critique of the conduct of contemporary politics... and show that it is in the prince's own self interest to behave virtuously" (194-95). The *exempla* presented a moral lesson that was drawn from a life story, a format similar to the medieval *fabliaux* that was very accessible and memorable to a medieval audience. According to Rosalind Brown-Grant, she herself sets an example of moral action through writing this work: "Christine acts as a model for her female reader by showing her how to emulate the virtue of women whose stories are recounted in her text, in line with the Petrarchan ideal of an *imitatio*" (153). Therefore, Christine creates a moral handbook in an accessible and practical format.

Thelma Fenster rightly proclaims that Christine's use of exemplary characters is more important than the development of heroines in her works. Fenster closes her article on her heroines with the suggestion that Christine herself, armed with a sibylline voice as seen in the *Book of the Duke of True Lovers*, may be the best exemplar for her readers ("Heroine" 123). While Fenster refers to Christine's prophetic voice, my project explores the didactic voice she assumes through her use of self-reflective widow persona. Certainly, Christine does offer herself as a paradigm of the virtuous widow, but she also memorializes her husband Etienne as an exemplary man and husband.

Medieval literature thus manifests a tradition of exemplarity, specifically pertaining to works that impart moral instruction to a secular audience. We can see in Christine's writings both her use of exemplars that stem from these established forms of inspirational and didactic literature as well as her reverence for the well-established role

models Saint Augustine and Boethius. Likewise, Christine expresses her concern for the moral responsibilities of authorship. She consciously chose role models with the intent to inspire her audience to ameliorate one's life, following her ideology of literature serving the common good. In her works, she appropriates the exemplar to offer advice to her readers on an array of topics. As will be demonstrated, Christine creates role models that lend weight to her defense of marriage as a natural and religious union. John Lyons considers multiplicity and iterativity as effective characteristics of exemplarity, as seen in Aristotle's works (26). Indeed, her series of exemplary wives and widows, particularly in the *City of Ladies*, reinforce her message. What is remarkable about Christine's use of marital exemplars is that in addition to selecting role models of virtuous spouses from her culture's shared memory, she establishes herself and her late husband Etienne as exemplars, or what Welter labels the "exemplum personnel" (107).

A Note on Christine's Manuscripts

Before delving into Christine's use of exemplarity in her works, several preliminary issues involving medieval authorship must be addressed. How can one discuss Christine's conscious efforts to create self-inspired exemplars when even the identification of a medieval author, patron, or scribe can present insurmountable challenges for the modern scholar? In a time before the advent of the printing press or the development of copyright law, the task of discerning a medieval author's perspective elicits valid concerns about the author's works, given the method of book production.

Medieval literature rests on the study of manuscripts, unique and quite costly works of art and significant human labor. Literature relied on the diligent work of scribes, a process that could produce changes from the original exemplar through human error as well as human will.²⁶ Workshops did provide oversight, as well as universities. The

²⁶ The word exemplar holds another meaning specific to medieval book production. In this context, an exemplar was quite simply a master copy of the work for the scribes, see Brown, 55 and Lyons, 11. Medieval manuscript exemplars often contained directions about the manuscript layout and decoration. Unfortunately, the existence of medieval exemplars is rare, see Brown, 88. In Christine studies, no exemplars have survived. After examining the variations in Christine's lyric poetry collections and dedications, James Laidlaw points out that she constantly revised her works. He speculates that Christine

manuscripts themselves testify to the revision process, revealing corrections, margin notes, and scraping off text. As Mary Carruthers mentions in *The Book of Memory*, the medieval ideology of reading valued completeness, contrary to the modern preoccupation with textual accuracy. An incomplete work was considered imperfect (Carruthers 158). Consequently, this multitude of writers, from the author to the copyists, could produce significantly different versions of texts that contributed to the dynamic nature of medieval literature and reflects its roots in the oral tradition of storytelling (Zink 14). The changeable character of literature, known as *mouvances*, complicates the identification of a single author and his original conception of the work.

For this time period, Christine studies are privileged for several reasons that permit such studies as mine. Christine's active role in the production of her manuscripts is one of the most striking examples of her time (Musée du Louvre 201). Manuscript research supports a close link between Christine as an author and her texts. Unlike the *mouvances* typical of medieval literature, her works survive in manuscripts contemporary to the composition of the texts. Equally important, these manuscripts were produced in Christine's personal scriptorium, ensuring the supervision of the author over their production. This scriptorium produced high quality work as seen in the numerous existing presentation copies of her texts from her workshop during the early fifteenth century. Among the existing manuscripts from the scriptorium, there are both manuscripts that comprise one text and manuscript collections of Christine's works. A current grant from the Arts and Humanities Council funds the research project at the University of Edinburgh entitled *Christine de Pizan: The Making of the Queen's Manuscript* (British Library Harley ms. 4431). This manuscript is a compilation of her works that Christine presented to Queen Ysabel. One of the research objectives centers on Christine's manuscript production; their website provides a complete list of her presentation copies.

Christine's manuscripts leave some trace of identifiable artists and scribes. In the text of the *City of Ladies*, Christine praises the work of a female illuminator, Anastasia, with whom she is on a first-name basis (1.41). Besides documenting Anastasia's name

owned personal exemplars of her own texts, in which she would practice revisions, following the example of the poet Guillaume de Machaut (1300-77), see Laidlaw, 550.

and talent painting landscapes and borders, Christine's compliment highlights her involvement with the production of her works: "I know all this from my own experience as she has done some work for me which has been ranked amongst the finest creations of the greatest masters" (76-77) ("Et ce scay je par experience, car pour moy mesmes a ouvré d'aucunes choses qui sont tenues singulieres entre les vignetes des autres grans ouvriers"; 192). Christine's comment indicates the fine quality of her manuscripts. This reference to Anastasia's talent appears not only in manuscripts contemporary to the composition of the *City of Ladies*, (circa 1405), such as the Duke's Manuscript (BnF f.fr. 607), but it also appears in an edition nearly a decade later, Harley 4431 from 1414 (*City of Ladies*, Introduction xxxix). The inclusion of this compliment to Anastasia's talent in the later manuscript indicates Christine's continued esteem of an artist whose talent was still considered impressive.

Scholars have identified two of Christine's illuminators in addition to Anastasia, naming them based on their identifiable works. First, the Master of the *City of Ladies* worked for her during the early fifteenth century, illustrating several manuscripts including Harley 4431. Another quite creative illuminator, the Master of the *Letter from Othea*, may have had Italian origins, like Christine (Musée du Louvre 276). While Christine directed the decoration of her manuscripts and selected gifted artists, she personally participated in the actual production of the text.

Paleographic studies identify Christine as a scribe as well as an author. Guy Ouy and Christine Reno's exceptional study of Christine's manuscripts in a paleography seminar from 1972-73, which examined over 50 original manuscripts, began to differentiate the handwriting of Christine's scribes. Ouy and Reno emphasize Christine's familiarity with manuscript production, citing the above-mentioned reference to Anastasia (Ouy and Reno 222). Their detailed paleographic study of *Christine's Vision* supports their conclusion that the three known manuscripts contemporary to the composition of the work (c.1405-06) were not only produced in Christine's workshop but also written and corrected by her own hand.

Christine's Vision, a work that figures prominently in this project because of its extensive portrait of Christine-protagonist, illustrates the connection between the author and her text. All three existing manuscripts of *Christine's Vision* are presentation copies

that were produced in her scriptorium. This classification appears in the research findings of the aforementioned project -- the Making of the Queen's Manuscript (<<http://www.pizan.lib.ed.ac.uk/present.html>>). The Parisian manuscript, BnF f.fr. 1176, is the oldest version of *Christine's Vision* and is followed chronologically by the Brussels manuscript, BR 10309, which contains few modifications. Last, the recently discovered ex-Phillipps 128, contains numerous revisions of the earlier versions of *Christine's Vision*, in particular corrections that show an attention to word choice (Reno and Dulac xli). This is the only existent manuscript that is prefaced by a gloss of the first part of *Christine's Vision*. Ouy and Reno conclude that the ex-Phillipps 128 was produced between 1405 and November 1407, since a note added to f.13v mentions Louis of Orleans as living and he was assassinated on 23 November 1407 (232). Reno and Dulac regard the ex-Phillipps 128 manuscript as the edition most reflective of Christine's intentions and therefore base their critical edition of *Christine's Vision* on this manuscript. It is the last known correction of the earlier two manuscripts and as we shall see, was penned by Christine ("Introduction" xli).

Ouy and Reno distinguish two scribes for the existing original manuscripts of *Christine's Vision* based on the handwriting characteristics, who they identify as Scribes R and X. Ouy and Reno build up a case that proves that Christine is Scribe X, the scribe they consider the most talented and prolific writer. Scribe X copied two of the presentation manuscripts of *Christine's Vision* -- BnF f.fr. 1176 and the ex-Phillipps 128, as well as assumed a supervisory role in numerous manuscripts. Scribe X inserted corrections, rubrics, and additions to the manuscripts copied by the scribes, such as the other presentation copy of *Christine's Vision* -- BR 10309 (Ouy and Reno 227-38). Through Ouy and Reno's well-accepted argument that Christine is Scribe X, we can appreciate how Christine was personally involved in the copying and supervision of the valuable presentation copies of *Christine's Vision*.

The existing manuscripts of *Christine's Vision*, as contemporary manuscripts transcribed and corrected by Christine herself, enable the reader to view this work as an accurate expression of the author's voice. It is in this authenticated work that she includes the most expansive narrative of Christine-protagonist as well as an interpretative gloss that encourages the reader to practice *meditatio* and seek deeper

meaning in her work on a communal and spiritual level. Therefore, we might explore Christine's purpose for the inclusion of a self-inspired intertextual narrative and the moral message that her widow persona offers her medieval audience. Instead of examining Christine's works through a modern critical perspective, an approach that Beatrice Gottlieb employs in her article "The Problem of Feminism in the Fifteenth Century," we will be exploring Christine's works through the perspective that she herself posits on literature throughout her writings concerning the moral responsibility of authors. For those readers not familiar with Christine studies, I aim to provide a concise biography. Knowledge of Christine's life is essential before analyzing her literature for the imprint of her life's experiences.

An Introduction to the Author's Life

Christine de Pizan has been the subject of entire biographical studies, especially in the twentieth century. Biographies including those written by Marie Josephine Pinet (1927), Suzanne Solente (1969), and more recently, Charity Cannon Willard (1984), provide outstanding insight into France's first professional woman writer. Italian-born Christine arrived in Paris at the young age of four. Her father, Thomas de Pizan, was a highly regarded astrologer who had accepted a position at Charles V's court and brought his family to France.²⁷ Along with her younger brothers, Paolo and Aghinolfo, Christine enjoyed a privileged childhood on the Right Bank in Paris, near the royal family (*LW* 23).

Around 1379, Thomas chose a husband for his daughter, a scholar from Picardy named Etienne de Castel. Christine was fifteen years old while Etienne was approximately ten years her senior. Although her marital age may be surprising by modern standards, medieval women married at an earlier age. Matrimonial law, set by the Church, required the minimum ages of 12 for women and 14 for men (Shahar 81; Margolis, "Marriage" 609). Furthermore, in the fourteenth century, the practice of early

²⁷ Thomas de Pizan, or Tommaso da Pizzano in Italian, was born in Bologna. However, his family originated in a village in northern Italy called Pizzano. The erroneous association of the family's name with Pisa led to misspelling the surname as *Pisan*. See *LW*, 17.

marriages was reinforced by the devastating population losses from the Black Death, or Bubonic Plague (Gies 233).

Willard identifies Christine's husband as most likely the young university graduate Maître Etienne Castel, whose name appeared in his father's will in 1371. The father, a successful court official also bearing the name Etienne de Castel, provided a variety of services to Charles V (*LW* 34). Suzanne Solente lists the father as the king's *valet de chambre*, a personal domestic servant in the king's household (339). Etienne senior was both an embroiderer, who received ample payments for tapestries, and an armorer, who would have equipped the king and his men with arms (*LW* 34). This assortment of duties suggests that his role within the king's household centered on procuring goods for the king's personal use. His position of honor would have facilitated his son's entrance into the king's service and corresponds to Christine's own description of Etienne's noble origins in *Christine's Vision* (3.4).

At the time of Christine and Etienne's marriage in early 1380, Etienne was currently a notary, a post that testifies to his solid education. Notaries gained appointment through ability instead of election, passing an exam that tested writing aptitude in both Latin and French (Pinet 14; note 1). Training may also have involved a period of apprenticeship assisting other clerks (Daly 104). Willard speculates that perhaps Etienne worked in the chancellory as successful careers commonly began there (*LW* 35).

After their marriage, Etienne advanced to the lifelong position of a royal secretary in 1380. Based on a gift description to Thomas, this promotion almost certainly occurred before May 20 (Solente 339). Royal secretaries composed official documents and correspondence for the king. This post also provided the opportunity for political engagement as they participated in diplomatic missions for and with the king. Willard considers Etienne's advancement to this royal office as proof of his acceptance into the "intellectual elite of Paris" (*LW* 34-35). From a demographic viewpoint, notaries and royal secretaries were certainly among a select group of French society -- the royal officers have been estimated at 0.4 per cent of the population by 1515 (Daly 100; note 5). Holding a position of favor at the court entailed more than professional responsibilities -- it was a lifestyle as a representative of the monarch. In 1482, an

ordinance details the well-established standards of proper conduct and appearance for royal notaries and secretaries: respectable dress befitting their estate, the avoidance of immoral pursuits and companionship, and the endeavor to “lead an honest life” (Daly 105).

Historical archives collaborate Christine’s literary account of her husband’s career. In the years immediately following Etienne’s appointment as a royal secretary, his signature appears on royal documents on numerous occasions. Antoine Thomas examined these signatures. While the majority of the signatures read “Ste. de Castel” (JJ 119 and 120), one exception has an alternate spelling -- “Ste. du Castel” (JJ, 120, n.195). The letters “Ste.” are an abbreviation of his professional title as a royal secretary. As evidenced in the variations of these signatures, the exact form of Etienne’s family name is debatable. In his research, Thomas studied Etienne’s surname: *du Castel*, *de Castel*, and *Castel*. He concluded that *de Castel* is the most accurate form of the surname, based on the spelling used by the family and the majority of Etienne’s own signatures. However, Thomas adds that the use of *Castel* in place of *de Castel* is an acceptable modern substitution (274; note 3). Equally important, I would like to note that Christine writes the surname as *de Castel*, as seen in the long version of the title of her advice book to her son: *Les Enseignemens que je Christine donne a Jehan de Castel, mon filz*.²⁸ In this study, I shall use the form preferred by Christine and Etienne himself in his signatures -- *de Castel*.

Christine’s happiness was marred by the successive calamities that befell her from 1380-90. The death of Charles V in 1380 left her father Thomas without a supportive patron; his social status and finances began to deteriorate. In spite of the lifelong appointment of many royal offices, these positions were not entirely secure. Upon the death of the king, the majority of royal appointments had to be reconfirmed by the new king, except for notaries and sergeant-at-arms (Daly 107). Furthermore, appointment letters demonstrate that the maintenance of royal offices was contingent

²⁸ This title appears on the base manuscript in Roy’s edition of the work – BnF f.fr. 836, fol. 42. Roy states that this manuscript, part of four volumes destined for the Duke of Berry, was composed under Christine’s supervision. See Roy 1: v-vi, 3: 27. Likewise, in the Queen’s manuscript Harley 4431, Christine presents her name as “Cristine de Pizan” in the rubric of *Les Enseignemens* (fol. 263v). See Roy 3: 27, 1: xii-xiii. However, Willard translates this title as *Christine’s Teachings for Her Son, Jean du Castel*. See *Writings*, 59. In the Champion edition of *Christine’s Vision*, Reno and Dulac prefer *du Castel*, based on the Burgundian historical records, see 177, note IV/ 27-41.

upon the good graces of the king through the flexible expression “as long as he pleases us” ‘tant qu’il nous plaira’ (Odart Morchesne qtd. in Daly 107). In the aftermath of Charles V’s death, the regency protected the ruling interests of the dauphin Charles VI. Thus, the late king’s brothers vied for control of the regency. Unquestionably, Thomas’ prosperity changed drastically after the death of Charles V as a result of the new political scene. Thomas’ credibility was undermined because he was accused of poisoning someone at court. While Thomas prescribed a mercury-based cure that was not uncommon in his day, modern medicine has long since discovered the ill effects of mercury (*LW* 38).

Despite Thomas’ recent misfortune, Christine’s marriage was joyful. She gave birth to three children between 1381 and 1385 (*LW* 35). Soon, a second death deeply affected the family -- around 1387, Thomas died.²⁹ After his death, Christine’s two brothers returned to Italy. Historical documents record the sale of a family property by the brothers in Bologna dating to 2 November 1394 (Solente 341). Therefore in Paris, Etienne became the head of the household (*LW* 39).

In 1390, Etienne accompanied Charles VI on a diplomatic mission to Beauvais, a town approximately 50 miles north of Paris that had already suffered damage from the Hundred Years’ War (*Petit Larousse* 1173).³⁰ Perhaps Charles selected Etienne for this mission because of his Picard origins. Beauvais lies just south of the medieval region of Picardy, although modern geography includes Beauvais within Picardy (*Petit Larousse* 1610). During this visit, Etienne succumbed to an epidemic (*LW* 39). Further details are unknown. Yet, Etienne’s illness was sudden and fatal, both characteristics of the plague (Pernoud 44).

Outbreaks of the plague shattered the growing prosperity of France in the fourteenth century. The first European outbreak occurred in the 1340s, killing roughly a third of the population in France. Jean Froissart (1337-1410) writes of the pestilence in his work the *Chronicles*. Froissart describes religious men who practiced public

²⁹ Thomas’ name disappears in royal household records by 1388, see Willard, 39.

³⁰ The Hundred Years’ War (1337-1453) was a prolonged series of skirmishes between England and France rather than a continuous war. The conflict began when the English King, Edward III, invaded France to claim the French throne from the Valois king Philippe VI. Edward III burned the suburbs of Beauvais during his march on Paris in 1346. For more information on the conflict, see Froissart, *Chronicles* and Tierney and Painter, 501-20.

penance “to entreat God to put a stop to the mortality in which “people died suddenly” (111). Later outbreaks occurred sporadically throughout the next century (Tierney and Painter 479-82).³¹ Other speculations about Etienne’s rapid decline cite the lower standards of public hygiene at this time and the well-intentioned but possibly harmful healing practices of the king’s doctors, an observation already brought to light in the case of Thomas’ support of mercury-based cures (Pinet 22-23).

Suzanne Solente narrows down the date of Etienne’s death to between 29 October and 7 November 1390, based on the historical records of the king’s journey to Beauvais (340). Charles VI survived the epidemic in Beauvais, although he suffered from a debilitating fever that caused hair loss (Pernoud 44). Possibly, the king never fully recovered considering that the onset of his severe mental illness occurred less than two years later. Charles experienced his first crazed episode in 1392, fatally attacking one of his men during a campaign to Brittany. According to Froissart, the king’s doctors were not shocked by his behavior, declaring that the king had been sick for some time (397). Froissart’s statement raises the question whether Charles’ illness in Beauvais led to his serious malady. Between 1392 and his death in 1422, Charles endured 44 manic episodes, lasting for intervals of 3-9 months with varied periods of remission from 3-6 months each (Clin 100). His degenerating mental illness left him unable to effectively rule France and worsened the political instability among the royal princes.

Etienne’s unexpected death irrevocably altered Christine’s life. She was now solely responsible for herself as well as the household, which was comprised of her three children, niece and widowed mother. Christine then endured a serious illness and confronted further loss -- the death of one of her children, which occurred sometime between 1396 and 1399 (Rains 56; *LW* 43). Compounding her personal grief and the liability of supporting the household, she faced multiple legal disputes that targeted her husband’s estate over the next 14 years (*LW* 35; *SW* xi). Historical records confirm legal disputes years after Etienne’s death. In the introduction to *Charles V*, Suzanne Solente refers to two trials that involved Christine that date to 20 July 1411 and 23 August 1412.

³¹ See also Demurger, 13-20 and Gies, 223-34.

The former identifies her as the widow of the late Mr. Etienne de Castel: “veufve de feu maistre Estienne de Chastel” (qtd. in Solente xvi).³²

Notwithstanding Christine’s precarious finances and hardships, she remained a widow and chose a less conventional path – she drew on her family’s estate to support the household. In 1392, Christine sold 3 parcels of family property near Melun, which lies southeast of Paris, to Philippe de Mézières (Solente 342; *LW* 40).³³ Additionally, she began to generate income through her writing career. Willard proposes that Christine may have earned money by copying manuscripts, perhaps continuing a practice established by her husband (*LW* 45). Her handwriting may testify to Etienne’s educational influence as noted in Ouy and Reno’s manuscript analysis. They conclude that Christine actively participated in the production of her manuscripts, both revising other scribes’ work and copying manuscripts herself in an elegant and talented handwriting that contains flourishes reminiscent of the clerical writing style. This handwriting style may offer a tangible example of Etienne’s lasting impact on Christine’s career as a writer (227-32). Willard comments that her handwriting resembles the style used in the chancellory instead of the common literary style found among contemporary authors (*LW* 46-47).

Eventually, Christine became a court writer whose legacy has lasted perhaps even longer than she herself predicted in *Christine’s Vision*.³⁴ She not only wrote for prestigious royal patrons, but also held a position of favor with the French Queen, Ysabel of Bavaria. In the letter that Christine addressed to the Queen from 1 February 1402, which prefaces the collection of epistles from the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*, she calls herself Ysabel’s “humble lady in waiting” (McWebb 109; line 14) (“humble chamberiere”; 108; line 15). Christine’s exact status in the queen’s residence remains unknown, but for her self-description as “chamberiere” and the well-known

³² The later trial reference records her son’s name with a different spelling and without “de”: Jehn Castel.

³³ Like Etienne, Philippe de Mézières was an intellectual with Picard origins at the French court. His family was from the minor nobility in Amiens. After Charles V’s death, Philippe resided in the Celestin religious convent adjacent to the queen’s residence at St. Paul. He then wrote a critique of the turbulent political situation and the monarchy in his work the *Songe du Vieil Pelerin* (1386-89), see *Dictionnaire*, 1144-45. Solente’s biography of Christine specifies the location of the sold properties -- Mémorant, Perthes, and Étreilles.

³⁴ Lady Opinion predicts Christine’s legacy in part 2.2.

image of Christine presenting her book to the queen, encircled by the queen's ladies (Harley 4431 folio 3). Ysabel surrounded herself with an official entourage in her royal residence at the Hotel St. Paul. Marie-Véronique Clin's biography of the queen records 15 ladies in waiting who received financial support from the queen, including a salary and other benefits such as garments and a dowry. These women, many of whom were foreigners like the queen and Christine, were ranked from *demoiselle d'honneur* to *dame d'honneur* in French. Since the hotel was independent from the king's residence, Ysabel maintained a host of other attendants, from servants to members of the nobility. Christine figures herself among Ysabel's attendants in some capacity. Ysabel's financial records reflect the queen's patronage, gifting Christine with a goblet and money as compensation for her works (Clin 58-64).³⁵

Only two of Christine's children reached adulthood -- Marie and Jean. Their lives reflected the intellectual and devout interests of their parents. Marie led a religious life, entering the Abbey of Poissy in 1397. Willard hypothesizes that Christine's connections at the French court may have enabled this opportunity, given that the Queen's daughter, also named Marie, entered the convent that same year. With regards to Christine's financial situation, she would have had difficulty providing a dowry for her daughter's marriage (*LW* 43). The dowry, a gift from the bride's parents to the husband upon marriage, often consisted of money or property. One of the results of the patriarchal system was the importance of the dowry for female children, who may not have benefited from the family inheritance (Duby 14; Bell, "Dowry" 265). By the Late Middle Ages, accumulating the dowry had become such a costly challenge that the Florentine government created a dowry savings-bond, the *Monte delle Doti*, for a female child's family (Gies 279). After Marie entered the Abbey of Poissy, Christine was soon inspired to write the *Tale of Poissy* (1400) in which she recounts visiting her daughter in the Dominican convent (*LW* 43).³⁶

³⁵ Here, Clin refers to Christine's epistles on the *Romance of the Rose* and her dedication of her poems to the queen in 1405, see 61. For a detailed analysis of the queen's gift giving and financial records, see Rachel Gibbon's article, "The Queen as 'social mannequin.'"

³⁶ Several sections of the royal priory have survived in modern times, including the abbey enclave, the town walls and the barn. For more information on this historical site, see the city's multi-lingual website, <<http://www.ville-poissy.fr/>>.

In all probability, Christine joined her daughter in the Abbey of Poissy around 1418. Upon the assassination of Louis the Duke of Orleans in 1407 by his cousin John the Fearless, the Duke of Burgundy, the political climate in Paris became perilous. The prolonged external conflict with England was compounded by the internal dissension between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs.³⁷ When the Burgundians entered Paris in 1418, the dauphin Charles VII and his court fled. As stated by Christine in her last work, the *Tale of Joan of Arc* (1429), she retreated to an unnamed “closed abbey” at this time (SW xiv, 252). The records of the Englishman Sir John Fastolf, who was living in the occupied Paris and owned an English translation of one of Christine’s texts, corroborates Christine’s exile and names Poissy as the location of her retreat (*Ditié*, Introduction 2; LW 203).

Christine and Etienne’s son, Jean, followed his father’s legacy in both his professional career and personal tragedy. Jean gained the appointment of secretary in the royal chancellory. Willard notes that beginning in 1409, royal documents bear Jean’s signature (LW 196). Jean also followed the literary tendencies of his mother. He wrote an allegorical poem, *Le Pin*, which survives amidst a collection of Alain Chartier’s works (DLF 760).

Moreover, Jean was appointed as a *ministre* in Charles VI’s literary group the Court of Love ‘*La Cour amoureuse*’ (DLF 760). Founded in 1400, Bozzolo describes this society as the first true French humanist institution. The group proclaimed its devotion to honor and serve women through virtues such as humility and loyalty. At the society’s meetings, members recited poems that reflected the courtly love tradition as well as listened to mass and dined together. Surviving manuscripts reveal that the members included the royal family, knights, scholars, and men in the king’s service (Bozzolo 1-3). Yet, this society has also been criticized as having been “nothing but a beautiful social game” to distract the nobility from the plague outbreaks (Huizinga 140-41). After listing the royal family members, the group’s charter appointed 24 men as *Ministres de la Court d’amours*, an honor that was bestowed upon Christine’s son. The charter describes the *ministres* as men who were “knights, squires, and others, having expert

³⁷ Louis of Orleans’ son, Charles, then became the Duke. Charles’ father-in-law was Bernard d’Armagnac, whose name represented the adversaries of the Burgundian party, see Tierney and Painter, 534.

knowledge in the art of rhetoric, who have established a good reputation as writers” (my trans) (“chevaliers escuiers et autres, ayans experte congnoissance en la science de rethorique, approuvéz factistes par apparence et renommee”; Bozzolo 36; lines 44-45). Jean’s name appears in the roster before the noted literary scholars, Jean de Montreuil and Gontier Col.³⁸ The members’ names are accompanied by their coats of arms. According to Bozzolo, Jean de Castel’s coat of arms comprises a golden castle, with three towers, on a blue background that features a gold star to the left of the castle (68).

Jean married a Parisian from a family of royal servants, Jeanne la Page (*DLF* 760). Around 1418, Jean and his wife followed the dauphin into exile. Recalling his father’s mission to Beauvais, Jean participated and represented the royalty on diplomatic assignments. Jean is named as one of four ambassadors who travelled to the Court of Castille; this reference appears in the records of Charles VII’s visit to Mehun-sur-Yèvre on 25 November 1422 (Thomas 273-74).

Unfortunately, Jean died at an early age, around 1425. Similar to Christine’s plight, her son’s widow Jeanne was left to raise three children. Their children’s names have certainly created some identification difficulties in tracing the family’s history – Jean, Jean, and Jeanne (*DLF* 760). On 27 December 1431, Jeanne wrote a letter to Henry VI. As a widow, she requested permission to return from her thirteen years in exile to Paris in order to live with her parents (Thomas 272-74). Jeanne’s letter, which is preserved in the archives, does not mention her mother-in-law, Christine, who was in the Burgundian territory of Poissy (*LW* 202-03). Perhaps Christine’s death was the catalyst for Jeanne’s letter to Henry VI. Scholars approximate her death to some time shortly after she completed the *Tale of Joan of Arc*, possibly in 1430 (*Ditié*, Introduction 1). The lack of precise historical records and revealing unfinished works leave the details of her passing uncertain. However, by 1434, Guillebert de Metz referred to Christine in the past tense (*Solente* 347). Although there is no literary trace of Christine’s relationship with her daughter-in-law and grandchildren, it is worth noting that Jeanne remained in exile nearly six years after the loss of her husband and

³⁸ “Maistre Jehan de Castel” is the fiftieth member listed in Vienna, State Archives, Toison d’Or, ms. 51 and member number 38 in BnF f.fr. 5233. In these manuscripts, Gontier Col is member 53 and 44, respectively. Jean de Montreuil appears only in the BnF f.fr. 5233 manuscript as member 45. See Bozzolo, 68-73. Huizinga states that the inclusion of the Col brothers and Jean de Montreuil, Christine’s opponents in the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*, proves the society’s frivolity. See 141.

requested reentry into Paris to live with her parents at a time that coincides with Christine's estimated death (Thomas 273). This timing suggests that she and Jeanne may have maintained a relationship during exile. Once Christine passed away, Jeanne sought family support from her own parents.

Jeanne's return to Paris proved fortuitous for her family. Of Jeanne's two sons Jean, one followed the family custom and held a scholarly position in the king's service as a notary and secretary (*DLF* 760). Thomas notes that royal documents bear his signature from 1461-63; in 1470, his name appears along with the title of the king's secretary (271-72). He died some time before 1474 (*DLF* 760).

Jeanne's other son Jean achieved even more lasting renown than his father Jean and his grandfather Etienne. In 1439, Jean became a Benedictine monk at the Priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs in Paris, a significant ecclesiastical power in the north of Paris (Cazelles 235).³⁹ He eventually entered into the king's service, gaining the honorable position as the chronicler of Louis XI in 1461 because of the king's discontent with the monks of St. Denis. Jean also composed religious works. While his poems dedicated to Our Lady have been lost, Jean's surviving work *Specule des pecheurs* (c.1468) demonstrates his interests in virtuous literature as it reworks the Pseudo-Augustinian *Speculum peccatorum*. In 1472, Jean became the Abbot of Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, which lies south-east of Paris.⁴⁰ He died in February 1476 (*DLF* 760; Thomas 271-72).

It is from Christine herself that we glean the most information about her life. Christine's corpus spans several decades and includes more than thirty works. She inserts the self-reflective widow persona within the framework of stories, weaving together fact and fiction in a manner that defies modern literary distinctions. Christine memorializes her late husband Etienne and their marriage in a variety of genres, from poetry to allegory.

³⁹ The priory, which was originally situated just outside of Philippe Auguste's city wall, had jurisdiction over nearby residents, estimated to between fifty and ninety thousand people around 1340. In 1360, the priory was included in the city of Paris when Charles V expanded the city's limit with a new wall. The priory's refectory and chapel currently house the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers and its parish church still remains as Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs. See Cazelles, 235-36. On the map of Paris from 1380, the priory is adjacent to the Templar grounds, see Musée du Louvre 22.

⁴⁰ Today, visitors to Saint-Maur-des-Fossés can view the remains of the long-standing abbey (641-1796), which are identified with historical plaques. See the city's website <<http://www.saint-maur.com/>>.

CHAPTER 2

CHRISTINE'S MEMORIAL TO ETIENNE

An Intertextual Memorial

An analysis of the references to Etienne de Castel in Christine's ostensibly autobiographical passages presupposes not only a close link between Christine-author and Christine-protagonist, but also a clearly defined husband figure. Christine's references to this cherished husband appear in numerous works over a timeframe of at least a decade. Of interest in this study are Christine's early lyric poems as well as the longer allegorical works the *Path of Long Study*, *Fortune's Transformation*, and *Christine's Vision*. In these texts, Christine builds a cohesive portrait of her late husband and their life together through the first person voice and recollections of Christine-protagonist. She presents complementary details in her texts, with repetition and expansion, which create a consistent account of his virtuous character and a harmonious marital life. Christine's allusions to her husband within her own corpus reveal a conscious effort to memorialize him. In light of the intertextual nature of this analysis, I will provide a brief overview of the relevant texts.

Christine began writing lyric poetry after Etienne's death in 1390. Charity Cannon Willard suggests that her early career may have been influenced by the prevailing interest in reviving courtly poetry, an interest that we have pointed out in the establishment of the Court of Love by the royal princes in 1400. This artistic atmosphere in Paris enabled Christine to develop her talent. Accordingly, she chose fixed poetic forms that would have been well-received (*LW* 53). Yet, Christine's choice of topics in her early poems shift from conventional courtly love stories to poems that capture the author's melancholic reflections as a widow. Scholars associate this first person voice of the widow persona with Christine's personal voice. For these reasons, I shall refer to the widow persona as Christine to simplify the discussion of her poems. The audience can perceive the emotional distress as she alternately mourns Etienne and praises his good example. Christine intersperses her widowhood poems and references throughout

several poetry collections. In tracing Christine's portrait of Etienne, I will consider poems from her first works: *One Hundred Ballades*, *Other Ballades*, *Rondeaux*, and *Virelays*.

The earliest known collection of Christine's writings, the *Livre de Christine*, was prepared between 1399 and 1402. This compilation includes twenty-one works, beginning with *One Hundred Ballades* (Laidlaw 533). Willard notes that Christine may have been influenced by other poets who composed ballade collections, including the work *Le livre des cent ballades* (1390) by courtiers and the ballade collections by Guillaume de Machaut and Eustache Deschamps (LW 59). Indeed, in Christine's *Letter to Eustache Morel*, she praises his writings and views him as an inspiration (SW 109-11; Willard, *Writings* 56). The ballade was initially a short poem that accompanied a thirteenth century dance, named the *ballette*. By Christine's time, the ballade was the most popular form of short lyric poetry. Its form had evolved to a poem with three stanzas that each end in a refrain, followed by an envoy, or closing stanza that addresses a patron. This fixed form of poetry has survived throughout the centuries, finding a renewed popularity in English nineteenth century literature (Yelland, Jones, and Easton 18). Christine's ballades demonstrate her experiments with versification, given that they contain a remarkable variety of rhyme patterns and length (Varty xxvii-xxix; SW 5).

In *One Hundred Ballades*, Christine professes the inability to suppress her sadness after the death of her husband. She directly addresses her reluctance to write love stories given her personal situation and emotional state in ballade 1. Therefore, she begins the collection with a series of poems about mourning that scholars regard as "autobiographical," partly due to their highly original content and departure from traditional ballade subjects. Anne Paupert distinguishes the widowhood poems as ballades 5-14 and 17-20 ("Narracion" 55; note 10). Following these widowhood poems, Christine unfolds two love stories in a manner that reflects the conventions of courtly love, reminding her audience to not interpret the love stories as autobiographical in the median poem – ballade 50 (SW 5; Walters, "Chivalry" 45).⁴¹ In the refrain of this ballade, Christine explains that the courtly "love poems" (SW 7) ("ditz d'amours"; 1: 51; line 2)

⁴¹ Blumenfeld-Kosinski remarks that the courtly love stories appear in ballades 21-49 and 65-88, see SW, 7-9.

are not inspired by personal experience, but by “the knowledgeable poets” (SW 7) (“tous sages ditteurs”; lines 8-9).⁴² Christine disqualifies the courtly love poems as autobiographical. As she does not refer to the opening widowhood poems in this explanation, Christine implicitly suggests that these poems are based on personal experience.

In another assortment of poems, *Other Ballades*, Christine resumes the voice of an introspective widow in some measure. This collection, which contains 53 ballades, has a less thematic structure than *One Hundred Ballades*. Numerous poems underwent revision and were presented to patrons (Laidlaw 522; LW 61). We shall see how Christine develops Etienne’s portrait as an exemplary husband in ballades 8 and 26.

Christine did not limit herself to ballades. She composed over sixty rondeaux, some of which bear witness to her perpetual sadness as a widow. The existent manuscripts display Christine’s constant efforts of revision (Laidlaw 536-41). Similar to the ballade, the rondeau may have begun as the thirteenth century dance song *rondet*. This fixed form comprises three short stanzas that feature two rhymes. The refrain (A) appears at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the poem, with a sample rhyme pattern of Abba abA abbaA (Varty xxix-xxx; LW 57). Kenneth Varty claims that Christine followed the traditional usage of the rondeau in that it was “rarely used as a vehicle for serious subject-matter” (xxx). Yet, when examining Christine’s rondeaux, the reader is immediately struck by the grave tone of numerous poems. I will be analyzing several rondeaux that treat the same subject matter of Christine’s widowhood ballades – her despair and loneliness after the death of her good husband, hardly a lighthearted topic.⁴³

One final form of short lyric poetry is significant for this study – the virelay. Kenneth Varty observes that the virelay dates to the thirteenth or fourteenth century and its name might reflect the French word *virelai* or *vireli* that signifies “to turn or twist.” Often ranked third in popularity after the ballade and the rondeau, the virelay also has a

⁴² All Middle French quotes from *One Hundred Ballades*, *Other Ballades*, *Rondeaux*, and *Virelays* are from the Maurice Roy edition, *Œuvres poétiques de Christine de Pizan*.

⁴³ Anne Paupert has identified the poems 1-7 and 9 as part of Christine’s personal reflections on widowhood, “Narracion,” 55, note 10. Since poem 11 discusses widowhood instead of poem 9, this may be a Roman numeral typographical error in her article.

musical background or association. The virelay demonstrates more flexibility than other poetic forms, but it is generally characterized by an odd number of short stanzas. Like the rondeau, the virelay commonly employs two rhymes. The refrain (A) alternates with the stanzas, forming the pattern: Abba cdcd abbA cdcd abbA. This pattern corresponds well to the twisting connotations of its name and perhaps even the turns found in dance and music (Varty xxxi). As we shall see, Christine applies this circular poetic form to her turbulent emotions, evoking the theme of widowhood in poems 1, 4, 14, and 15 (Paupert, "Narracion" 55; note 10).

In addition to Christine's short lyric poetry, I will consider the longer poetic works the *Path of Long Study* and *Fortune's Transformation* as well as the prose of *Christine's Vision*. In the *Path of Long Study* (c.1402-03), Christine fashions a frame story with the main character Christine-protagonist, a middle-aged widow who embarks on a journey of self-examination after the loss of her husband. Christine-protagonist declares that she was young when she married and that her husband passed away 13 years ago. She provides the date of 5 October 1402 for the frame story, thus placing his death around 1389 -- nearly matching the date of Etienne's death in 1390. Christine-protagonist attributes her hardships to Fortune's jealous nature, in particular her widowhood.⁴⁴ Christine savors the joyful memories of her marriage and describes her marital relationship in poignant detail. Reminiscent of Christine-author's transition to a scholarly life after Etienne's death, this allegorical dream story reveals the protagonist's choice of a scholarly path in life over a religious path with the assistance of a wise and female guide, the Sibyl.

Other details strengthen the association of Christine-protagonist with Christine-author in this work. The Sibyl refers to Christine-protagonist's father, bearing the same first name of Thomas, when discussing philosophers and the correct path of study (line 1045). Christine-protagonist's mother appears at the end of the frame story, knocking at her bedroom door and thus wakening her from sleeping late (lines 6395-96). We know that Christine's mother survived the death of Thomas and was part of her household (LW 39). However, the timeline of the frame story in the *Path of Long Study* is

⁴⁴ Anne Paupert lists Christine's works that treat the intertextual theme of Fortune's hardships for the widow Christine. See "Narracion," 55.

indeterminate. Moreover, when introducing Christine-protagonist to Lady Reason, the Sibyl reveals her birth in Italy and arrival in France at a young age – details that align with Christine’s life (lines 6292-6300). Hence, Christine creates a self-inspired character, whose general life story reflects the author’s experiences.

Shortly after writing the *Path of Long Study*, or perhaps even contemporary to the composition of this work due to the overlapping dates, Christine composed the allegorical work *Fortune’s Transformation* (1403).⁴⁵ This multi-volume work explores the effects of Fortune’s inconstant nature on both world history and an individual’s life. Reminiscent of the *Path of Long Study*, she introduces a main character at the beginning of the work, Christine-protagonist, whose life closely resembles the author’s. Christine-protagonist reveals that misfortune affected her life when she was 25 years old, an age that parallels Christine’s age at Etienne’s death (1.1-2). She identifies other traits that mimic the author’s life: her Italian origins (1.3), a scholarly father who was a philosopher (1.3), and her given name (1.5). Christine-protagonist presents her name through wordplay: “just add the letters I, N, E to the name of the most perfect man who ever lived [Christ]; no other letter is necessary” (94) (“Le nom du plus parfait home,/ Qui oncques fu, le mien nomme,/ I.N.E. faut avec mettre,/ Plus n’y affiert autre lettre”; 1: 20; lines 375-78, 20).⁴⁶ However, Christine-protagonist’s mother in this text is the allegorical character Nature, who gifts her daughter with a crown of the virtues Discretion, Consideration, Recollection, and Memory (1.8-9).

Christine-protagonist narrates an elaborate wedding at the court of Hymen and ten years of marital happiness, with affectionate descriptions of her husband’s character and ability (1.10). She paints a vivid portrait of Fortune’s jealousy, which she holds responsible for her altered fate. She loses her husband, who is the captain of her ship in the allegorical setting, and subsequently assumes his role as the captain. Her transformation involves not only her new responsibilities on the ship but a gender change that enables her to physically become a captain and steer the ship to safe harbor (1.12). Understandably, this gender change has provoked scholarly discussion

⁴⁵ In the introduction to the text, Christine dates the completion of this work to 18 November 1403. See Solente, 1: 3.

⁴⁶ All translated quotes from *Fortune’s Transformation* are from SW unless noted otherwise. All Middle French quotes are from the Suzanne Solente edition, *Le livre de la Mutacion de Fortune*.

about the analogy to Christine's foray into the male-dominated world of medieval scholars and writers.

Finally, this leads us to *Christine's Vision*, an intricate three-part work that recounts the history of France, the reign of Opinion in the University, and the consolation of Lady Philosophy who transforms into Lady Theology. Christine again introduces the character Christine-protagonist as part of the frame story as we have seen in Christine-protagonist's extraordinary rebirth and new responsibilities as France's *antigraphe*. Contrary to the early placement of Christine-protagonist's life story in the *Path of Long Study* and *Fortune's Transformation*, Christine culminates the work with Christine-protagonist's plaint and biography. Anne Paupert considers this change in placement as indicative of the importance of "autobiography" in the work. For her, autobiography is an essential key to interpreting *Christine's Vision* that has been overlooked in previous research. Paupert suggests that the work is organized in accordance with Christine's intellectual development -- her studies in history, science, and philosophy are mirrored in the three parts that emphasize these areas ("Narracion" 52-54, 61-63).

In her dialogue with Lady Philosophy, Christine-protagonist laments her hardships, reflecting on the changeable and jealous nature of Fortune. She unfolds a chronological narrative of her life that complements the narratives of Christine-protagonist in the earlier texts. Certain details resurface, such as her Italian birth and young arrival in France (3.3). Christine-protagonist also praises her scholarly father, explicitly named Thomas, and remembers the childhood limitations imposed by her earthly mother on her education (3.4). She then speaks forthrightly about a topic pertinent to this study -- her father's role in arranging her marriage as she reaches adulthood. In this text, the allegorical setting dissipates when Christine-protagonist narrates her life. She situates herself in late medieval France, at the courts of Charles V and VI, approaching Christine's real life more than in the other works. Christine-protagonist depicts her husband's life, his tragic death after ten years of marriage, and her widowhood with verisimilitude (3.4-6). Consequently, Willard views the narrative in part 3 as the most complete and specific "autobiography" of Christine ("Franco-Italian" 336).

Identifying Etienne

Throughout Christine's widowhood poems and narratives in the voice of Christine-protagonist, we find the developing portrait of a beloved husband whose memory cannot be forgotten. In her lyric poems and Christine-protagonist's narrative passages, Christine does not refer to this husband figure by his given name. The absence of a proper name for this character complicates identifying Etienne as the real-life inspiration for the husband figure of Christine-protagonist. The scholarly notations in these works declare that Christine refers to her husband Etienne. Indeed, we shall see how the biographical details indicate that she draws from the memories of Etienne when narrating Christine-protagonist's life and her memories of her late husband. As with many authors, Christine transfers her life experience into her writings. She simply prefers poetic language when mentioning this husband, a choice that may reflect her personal grief or aesthetic sensibilities. Christine evokes her exemplary husband through respectful addresses, endearments, metaphors, and descriptive language, all of which I will analyze in this chapter.

Yet, Christine's omission of a proper name for the husband figure also has a narrative function – it allows the reader to identify this character as an Everyman. Like so many of the women in France who had been widowed from outbreaks of the plague or from the intermittent fighting in the Hundred Years' War during the fourteenth century, Christine abruptly found herself as the grieving head of the family. Therefore, her choice to represent this husband figure through the memories of his widow and leave his character unnamed would have allowed the medieval audience to identify with this common cultural experience more readily than a modern audience, providing a mimetic marker to encourage active reading. Christine presents the image of an everyday husband whose memory and good example could inspire others.

Christine's reflections on the universal experience of loss among French women surfaces in another work -- the *Letter on the Prison of Human Life*.⁴⁷ In this work, she attempts to comfort the Duchess of Bourbon, Marie of Berry, who had recently lost

⁴⁷ For the original French, see Kennedy's edition of *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*. SW presents excerpts in English 248-52.

several close family members within a short timeframe. Like Christine, Marie experienced the loss of her husband Jean and her son Charles the Count of Eu, who were both captured during the battle of Agincourt (1415), as well as the death of her father Jean the Duke of Berry (15 June 1416).⁴⁸ Christine states that even though the Duchess was fortunate to be married to the “handsome and good Jean, Duke of Bourbon” (“bel et bon Jehan, duc de Bourbon”; 38; lines 892-93) the Duchess has “not been exempted” from the sadness that so many French women were experiencing (SW 249) (“Tu n’as pas... esté ne n’es exempte ne exceptée”; 17; lines 20-21).

I have suggested that the omission of Etienne’s proper name enables readers to view his character as an Everyman. An additional consideration stems from Christine’s situation at court as she wrote – she indicates multiple times that her prolonged mourning is unseemly at court and that she must hide her true feelings and deep sorrow. Christine writes of the need for dissimulation, explaining that she must compose light-hearted stories and poems. For instance, in rondeau 7, she speaks of her hidden grief: “And I must hide when my heart sighs by singing and pretending to laugh. But God knows what I endure. I do not know how I will continue” (my trans) (“Et me fault par couverture/ Chanter quant mon cuer souspire,/ Et faire semblant de rire;/ Mais Dieux scet ce que j’endure;/ Je ne sçay comment je dure”; 151; lines 8-12). In this environment, Christine struggles to conform to the court’s expected behavior after an appropriate period of mourning. While she is able to voice her continued sorrow in certain works, Christine’s choice to leave Etienne unnamed would have allowed her contemporary readers to see beyond her personal experience to the human experience of the loss of a beloved partner.

Jacqueline Cerquiglini has identified one interesting manifestation of Etienne’s name that appears through wordplay in *Jeux à Vendre*, a group of poems that Christine included in her first collected works the *Livre de Christine* (*Cent ballades* 23; Bergeron 175). In *Jeux à Vendre*, Christine utilizes a popular form of poetry that entertained social gatherings in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Scholars speculate on the rules of the poetry game, proposing that the initial verse that introduces an object along with the

⁴⁸ Additionally, Marie mourned the death of three cousins and her son-in-law Philippe of Burgundy. See Kennedy’s introduction, 4-5 and SW 249; note 1. For the battle of Agincourt, see Demurger, 100-103.

following lines of exposition correspond to an alternating male-female dialogue (Roy 1: xxxiv). However, Bergeron remarks that this general rule does not fit all of Christine's poems in *Jeux à Vendre*. Numerous poems represent solely a female voice, including the poem that Cerquiglini signals out, poem 70 (Bergeron 174; note 55).

Christine closes the collection with poem 70, a poem that departs from the prevailing theme of courtly love. She begins poem 70 of *Jeux à Vendre* with the following statement: "I offer you 'escrinet' quite simply" (my trans) ("Je vous vens l'escrinet tout plein"; Roy 1: 205; line 1). Christine explains the term *escrinet* in the subsequent lines: "You will plainly find my name there [in "escrinet"] and the name of he whom I loved dearly and because of whom I suffered many troubles" (my trans) ("Mon nom y trouverez a plain/ Et de cil qu'onques plus amay,/ Par qui j'ay souffert maint esmay"; lines 2-3). Although Jacqueline Cerquiglini credits Christine with inventing the term *escrinet* (*Cent ballades* 23), Greimas' *Dictionnaire de l'ancien français* cites the inventive thirteenth century poet Gautier de Coinci⁴⁹ as the first to pen this term in his *Oeuvres* from 1220. The word signifies a small chest, derived from the word *escrin* (Greimas 250).⁵⁰ In this context, *escrinet* would be a container for Christine's writings on a tangible level. The subsequent lines indicate that she stores writings or memories of her marriage and widowhood in this chest. In doing so, Christine's actions bring to mind the prevalence of small chests in courtly literature that guard the memories and tokens of the love relationship.⁵¹ For instance, in Marie de France's lay "The Nightingale" the knight has a small golden chest fabricated to act as a coffin for the nightingale's body, enshrining a symbol of their relationship that he holds close to him in the absence of his lover (216; lines 149-56). Lori Walters notes that Christine's introductory verse is multifaceted and may also be translated in the context of a writer presenting their work:

⁴⁹ Gautier de Coinci (c. 1177–1236), a Benedictine monk, is best known for his work *Miracles de Nostre Dame*. His poetry as well as his songs demonstrates a clever manipulation of words. See *DLF*, 489-90.

⁵⁰ An alternate spelling is *escrignet*. See Hindley, Langley, and Levy 288.

⁵¹ Reinier Leushuis explores this theme in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron*. See his article, "Dialogue, Space, and Selfhood."

“I offer you the entire collection.” This translation reflects the poem’s arrangement as the final poem of the collection.⁵²

Christine’s poetic ingenuity lies in the fact that the word *escrinet* can also be viewed as a combination of her and her husband’s names, *Cristine* and *Estiene*. In this interpretation, Christine’s first lines of poetry explain that their proper names are literally found in the word *escrinet*, explicitly linking the two figures (Cerquiglini, *Cent ballades* 23). We have already seen how Christine records her name through wordplay in *Fortune’s Transformation* (lines 375-78). She also introduces her name in the closing ballade of *One Hundred Ballades* (Roy 1: 100). Likewise, Christine would be inserting her name as an author in the final poem of this collection. However, the word *escrinet* is more complex than a simple merger of proper names, reworking the letters from both names. The first letters of *Estiene* (ES) begin the word, followed by the first letters of *Cristine* (CRI). Next, the letters NE derive from the end of the both of their proper names. The letter T interrupts the logical flow of the word since it appears towards the middle of both names. Cynthia Brown suggests that the physical arrangement of letters might evoke the image of a husband’s embrace as his name surrounds his wife’s.⁵³ This term embodies the sublime marital union of two hearts that Christine-protagonist evokes in the *Path of Long Study*, which I will explore later.

Given Christine’s intertextual references to this much-loved husband and the previous scholarly attributions, I shall refer to this husband figure as Etienne in both the widowhood poems and the longer allegorical works. In this chapter, I will explore how Christine introduces and portrays Etienne in her writings. She writes in the first person narrative voice and employs a variety of linguistic tools when discussing Etienne.

From her earliest short poems to her longer allegorical works, Christine identifies Etienne in a similar manner. She calls him, quite simply, her husband or *mary* in French. Once she establishes his marital status, Christine refers to this husband through numerous grammatical parts of speech. A prime example of Christine’s writing style when depicting Etienne is ballade 8 from her collection *Other Ballades*.

⁵² I would like to thank Lori Walters for her insight during the editing process of this chapter.

⁵³ I would like to thank Cynthia Brown for her perceptive comments during a luncheon on 11 April 2008.

In ballade 8, Christine contests the complaints of jealous and angry husbands based on her own experience and the good example of her husband. She states in the first person voice: “I have a husband” (my trans) (“j’ay mary”; 1: 216; line 6). In this declarative phrase, Christine uses the present tense. Since this ballade focuses on the good example of her husband rather than her mourning, she presents a living portrait of Etienne. The verb tense in the declaration “I have a husband” reflects Christine’s decision to never remarry. She affirms this desire to always honor their wedding vows through Christine-protagonist in both the *Path of Long Study* (lines 105-8) and *Christine’s Vision* (3.6). In the later text, she pronounces: “Mindful of my vow and the good love promised him, I decided in a sound determination never to take another [husband]” (111) (“n’oubliant ma foy et bonne amour promise a lui, debileray en sain propos de jamaiz autre n’avoir”; 100; lines 16-17). Christine-protagonist prefers solitude and her memories of Etienne to remarriage.

In the remainder of ballade 8, Christine continues to advocate marriage while leaving Etienne unnamed. She alludes to her husband through several parts of speech that refer to the antecedent in line 6 -- the opening assertion “I have a husband.” In the refrain, in which Christine highlights her husband’s selfless and caring nature, she utilizes the subject pronoun *he*: “He is worth everything I desire” (“Il vault trestout quanque je vueil”; lines 8, 16, 24, 28). Next, she identifies Etienne in the third stanza through the possessive adjective and noun: “my husband” (“mon mary”; line 23). Finally, in the envoy, Christine pairs the demonstrative adjective *this* with the noun: “This husband [of mine] has no equal” (my trans) (“Ce mary: il n’a nul pareil”; line 26). Even though Christine does not call her husband by his given name, she clearly refers to the husband figure of the author through the first person voice and features him as the central character of the poem.

To further demonstrate Christine’s writing style, she applies these techniques while recounting Christine-protagonist’s marriage and Etienne’s rapid demise in *Christine’s Vision* – the first person voice and the creation of the anonymous husband figure of Christine-protagonist (3.4, 3.6). Christine-protagonist uses the possessive adjective and noun a number of times, naming the husband figure: “my husband” (111,

112) (“mon mary”; 99-101; lines 2, 23, 41, 44).⁵⁴ The original French text contains a variation that is not reflected in the English translation -- “mon dit mary” (100; line 23). Since the French word *dit* derives from the verb *dire* ‘to say or tell,’ this literally translates to “my said husband” – explicitly pointing out the previously established husband figure in the text.

In the context of Christine-protagonist’s narrative in *Christine’s Vision*, she refers to Etienne through grammatical parts of speech that unmistakably refer to her husband. We can encounter the clear-cut use of the subject pronoun *he* (“il”; 100) as well as the indirect object pronoun *him* (110-11) (“lui”; 98, 100). For example, Christine’s aforementioned pledge of loyalty to her late husband makes use of the indirect object pronoun: “the good love promised him” (111) (“bonne amour promise a lui”; 100; lines 16-17).

As in ballade 8, Christine-protagonist also names her husband through the demonstrative pronoun *cellui* in *Christine’s Vision*, which varies in the English translation as “him” (110) (“cellui”; 98; lines 30, 33) and “this good man” (111) (“ycellui tres bon”; 100; lines 7-8). In the latter example, Christine’s application of the demonstrative pronoun accomplishes more than a straightforward identification of Etienne – she follows this pronoun with a descriptive phrase that reveals his good character. Indeed, Christine’s writing technique of revealing additional information about Etienne’s conduct as a husband and his marital relationship through the demonstrative pronoun and a descriptive phrase is a recurrent characteristic in his portrait, both throughout the widowhood poems and Christine-protagonist’s narrative passages. To illustrate, we shall return to Christine’s short lyric poems.

In ballade 5 of *One Hundred Ballades*, Christine pairs the demonstrative *cil*, an older variation of *cellui*, with a descriptive phrase (Larousse 117). On the one hand, she reveals details concerning Etienne’s role as her husband and the head of the household through the demonstrative. She names Etienne as “he who was the master of all my belongings and my intellectual formation (my trans)” (“cil qui estoit le chief/ De tous mes biens et de ma nourriture”; 1: 6; lines 11-12). On the other hand, Christine expresses

⁵⁴ All English quotes from *Christine’s Vision* are from the translation by Glenda McLeod, which is largely based on Sister Mary Towner’s edition *Lavision-Christine: Introduction and Text*.

her anguish through the demonstrative phrase in the refrain: “When he who kept me alive died” (my trans) (“Quant cil est mort qui me tenoit en vie”; lines 8, 16, 24, 28). Here, Christine uses the demonstrative pronoun to provide a poetic description of her loss. The word order in the original French juxtaposes the husband and death with the contrasting image of the author and life. That she selects this line as the refrain of the ballade stresses Christine’s consuming feelings of loss in a tangible manner. On a stylistic note, the shortened form of the pronoun, *cil*, preserves the decasyllabic meter in both examples.⁵⁵

One of Christine’s rondeaux provides a further example of her use of a demonstrative phrase to sketch out the portrait of her late husband in her short poems. Christine continues the widow theme in rondeau 3, portraying her loneliness and despair. In the third stanza, she unveils the source of her grief through a descriptive phrase that introduces her husband with the demonstrative pronoun *cil* in French: “Since I lost my love, by foul Death betrayed,/ Grief has struck me, which has to perdition led/ All my good days, and so my joy has fled” (Willard, *Writings* 53) (“Puis qu’ay perdu cil par qui ramenteue/ M’est la doulour, dont je suis affolée, Tous mes bons jours et ma joye est alée”; 1: 149; lines 8-10). Although the English translation conveys Christine’s poetic sentiment of loss, it is far from a literal translation. In the original French, she again opts for the shortened form of the demonstrative pronoun *cil* to maintain the decasyllabic meter. In this demonstrative phrase, Christine elaborates on the depth of her loss that we witnessed earlier in ballade 5 of *One Hundred Ballades*, identifying her husband as the root of her happiness. Christine appropriately selects the verb *ramentevoir* ‘to remember’ as she records her sadness (Larousse 527).

Likewise, in the *Path of Long Study*, Christine repeatedly identifies and develops the husband figure of Christine-protagonist through the demonstrative pronoun and a descriptive phrase. While numerous examples in this text provide revealing information about her loving relationship with Etienne, one last example will suffice at this time. She reflects: “I constantly remember the man because of whom (and no other) I used to lead a joyous – even glorious – life, until Death snatched him away” (62) (“Sans cesser

⁵⁵ Kenneth Varty states that the decasyllabic line is Christine’s favored poetic meter for ballades, followed by the seven-syllable line and the octosyllabic line, xxix.

remembrant cellui/ Par lequel sens autre nullui/ Je vivoye joyeusement/ Et si tres glorieusement,/ Quant la mort le vint happer”; 90, 92; lines 73-77). In this excerpt, Christine-protagonist revisits the idea that her husband created her happiness. She incorporates the epithet *cellui* as part of the rhyme scheme, pairing it with the contrasting “autre nullui” or “no other.” In this instance, the demonstrative pronoun produces a stylistic effect in the versification. Christine’s choice of a demonstrative pronoun instead of a proper name to identify Christine-protagonist’s husband permits the poetic expression of her love through rhyme.

The writing techniques that Christine employs in the above examples when describing Etienne appear throughout her short poems and the biographical passages of Christine-protagonist. The first person narrative voice delineates a clear husband figure. Additional grammatical forms, such as the possessive and the demonstrative, identify this husband figure and reveal aspects of his character and marital relationship. Yet this is not the sole manner in which Christine addresses Etienne. She identifies Etienne through several recurrent epithets that call attention to his authoritative role as a husband.

Respectful Epithets

In her works, Christine refers to Etienne with numerous epithets that contribute to the notion of an intertextual husband figure. Her consistent use of the epithets *chief*, *maistre*, and *patron* conveys a sense of reverence for his position as the head of the household. Indeed, the husband assumed legal responsibility for his wife. This system found validation in the Christian teachings of Paul (Margolis, “Marriage” 607-08). Paul wrote: “Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church. He is the savior of his body. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things” (*Douay-Rheims Bible*, Eph. 5.22-24). In French, this word “head” is translated as “chief,” a middle French word that primarily denotes “the head,” both literally and

figuratively; it should not be confused with the English cognate that expresses different meanings (Larousse 109).⁵⁶

In Christine's works, she identifies Etienne with the epithet *chief*. For Christine, this term indicates the head or master of the household. Christine-protagonist openly discusses her husband's role after Thomas' death in *Christine's Vision* (3.6): "My husband now remained the head of the household" (111) ("Or fu demouré chief du mainage mon mary"; 99; line 2). Christine-protagonist describes her husband with the epithet *chief*, a term for Etienne that echoes the earlier references to him in Christine's widowhood poems. If we reexamine the previous quote from ballade 5 of *One Hundred Ballades* with the use of epithets in mind, we find that she employs identical language to identify Etienne.

In ballade 5, Christine remarks that Death has taken, "he who was the master of all my belongings and intellectual formation (my trans) ("cil qui estoit le chief/ De tous mes biens et de ma nourriture"; lines 11-12). In these lines, she emphasizes her husband's role as a provider. Since line 11 ends with the epithet *chief*, it is a part of the ballade's rhyme scheme (a): ababbcbC ababbcbC ababbcbC bcbC. Christine demonstrates her facility with poetry through the clever word choice of the (a) rhymes, which creates a meaningful word group associated with her husband. She exercises another meaning of *chief* in the preceding phrase: "O cruel death, you have brought an end to all of my good days" ("O dure mort, or as tu trait a chief/ Touz mes bon jours..."; lines 9-10). Indeed, the life of Christine's husband, or *le chief*, has ended "traire a chief." Appropriately, in writing of her mourning, she foils the epithet *chief* with the rhyming words *meschief* 'misfortune' (line 1) and *grief* 'sad or painful' (line 3) (Larousse 411, 334).

Christine reuses the epithet *chief* in ballade 20 of *One Hundred Ballades*, a poem that she dates to nearly 10 years after Etienne's death. She proclaims that she is still a widow and has not remarried. She weaves the word *chief* into the refrain, ending the line with this term (C): "Still I have no master" (my trans) ("Encor n'en suis pas a chief"; 1: 21; lines 7, 14, 21). This ballade contains only three stanzas without an envoy:

⁵⁶ See the Gallica website for the full text of ancient French Bibles. For instance, this passage appears in the *Bible de Lefèvre d'Étaples* (1530), <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k54287d.pagination>>, and the *Bible de Louvain* (1550), <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k53708d/f928.pagination>>.

ababbcC ababbcC ababbcC. As in ballade 5, Christine links the suitable rhyme combinations of *chief* with *meschief* ‘misfortune’ (line 6). In the second and third stanzas, Christine pairs the refrain with words that resemble *chief* but convey alternate meanings. In the final stanza, she foils the refrain with, “my burden does not end” (my trans; Larousse 8) (“Se ma pesance n’achief”; line 20). The repetition of word *chief* in the refrain as well as the play on words through other incarnations of this term all bring to mind the epithet that Christine uses for her husband.

Similar in concept to the epithet *chief*, Christine frequently refers to Etienne as *maistre* ‘master’ in both her short poems and longer allegorical works. Her use of this epithet strengthens the argument for connecting the husband figure of the Christine-protagonist with Etienne de Castel. Independent of Christine’s literary works, historical archives confer the title *maistre* to Christine’s husband. The historical records of the House of Burgundy list Christine’s husband as “maistre Estienne du Castel” (Reno and Dulac 177; note IV/ 27-41). As noted previously, Charity Cannon Willard identifies Christine’s husband as the university graduate Maître Etienne Castel. Accordingly, the title *maître* can reflect Etienne’s educational level, having completed university study and become a *Maistre en ars*. Furthermore, *maistre* was a professional title given to clerks, notaries, and other legal professionals – a usage equally applicable in Etienne’s case considering that he was a notary (Larousse 395). A final aspect of this epithet concerns his role as the master, or head, of the household, which further applies to Etienne’s status after Thomas’ death. We can find multiple significations of the epithet *maistre* for Etienne in Christine’s works.

In *Christine’s Vision*, Christine-protagonist refers to both her husband and father with the epithet *maistre*. In this text, she draws on the professional and intellectual connotations of the term. First, Christine-protagonist explicitly uses this epithet with her father in *Christine’s Vision* (3.3, 5). She introduces him as “Master Thomas” (“Maistre Thomas”; 96; line 53) and writes of the misfortune in “Master Thomas’ household” (110) (“le maisnage de Maistre Thomas”; 98; lines 6-7). In both instances, Christine capitalizes the word *maistre* as if it is a professional title or a respectful form of address. Christine-protagonist later applies this epithet to both her father and husband when she regrets not having benefitted more from their considerable knowledge (3.9). She refers

to them as “masters of knowledge” (118) (“les maistres de science”; 109; line 20). Given the descriptive nature of this reference, the word *maistre* is not capitalized. Interestingly, Christine recognizes her husband as an intellectual equal to her father in this phrase, presenting them both as “masters.”

Additionally, Christine utilizes the epithet *maistre* for her late husband when alluding to his authoritative role as a husband in other texts. For example, in ballade 11 from *One Hundred Ballades*, she selects three epithets to describe her husband in the first stanza. Christine laments:

Alone am I and alone would I be
Alone by my lover left suddenly.
Alone am I, no friend or master with me (Willard, *Writings* 41)

Seulete suy et seulete vueil estre,
Seulete m’a mon doulz ami laissiée,

Seulete suy, sanz compaignon ne maistre (1: 12; lines 1-3)

This emotive poem displays Christine’s profound grief in mourning through anaphora with the repetition of “Alone am I” (“Seulete suy”). Akin to ballades 5 and 20, she finishes a verse with an epithet for her husband. In this instance, the epithet *maistre* ends line 3 and belongs to rhyme scheme (a): ababbbbB ababbbbB ababbbbB bbbB. Amidst the predominance of (b) rhymes, the word *maistre* is a noticeable contrast. The specific use of this epithet for Etienne recurs in *Fortune’s Transformation*, strengthening the intertextual portrait. Christine features this same combination of (a) rhymes, pairing the epithet *maistre* with “estre,” in her long allegorical work when discussing the husband figure of Christine-protagonist (1.10; lines 975-76). In this latter example, Christine-protagonist speaks of the beginning of her marriage, designating Etienne as her “new master” (101) (“nouvel maistre”; line 976). Both the content of these examples – the use of the term *maistre* to refer to Etienne, and their form – the parallel rhyme scheme, demonstrate the intertextual nature of Christine’s references to Etienne.

Elsewhere in *Fortune’s Transformation*, Christine speaks about Etienne in an analogous manner to the use of *maistre* -- the respectful epithet *patron* (1.12). Although the English edition translates the examples in this text as “my master” (104), Christine

employs a different word in the original French – “mon patron” (1: 46-47; lines 1175, 1184, 1202). The word *patron* signifies “master” in a more general sense. Yet this term also includes the connotation of “the master of a ship,” a meaning that corresponds to the figurative language in the text (Larousse 464). In *Fortune’s Transformation*, Christine’s maritime metaphor illustrates the loss of Christine-protagonist’s husband. As a ship faces perilous waters when the captain is lost at sea, so Christine-protagonist and her family confront a troubling reality without the head of the household. During the windy storm, Christine-protagonist explains how they lose “our good master” (105) (“nostre bon patron”; 1: 48; line 1238). Akin to Christine’s intertextual use of the epithets *chief* and *maistre*, she identifies Etienne as *patron* in several works both before and after *Fortune’s Transformation*.⁵⁷

Before *Fortune’s Transformation*, Christine introduces the metaphor of a lost ship and the epithet *patron* for her husband in ballade 13 of *One Hundred Ballades*. Christine laments the death of her husband in “the perilous sea” (“la mer perilleuse”; 1:14; lines 7, 14, 21). She states that there is now, “No good master, or captain of the ship” (my trans) (“Nul bon patron, ou meneur de nacelle”; line 16). Christine justifies that it is natural that “the heart mourns and suffers” (my trans) (“le cuer deuille et cuise”; line 17). This example again links the terminology that she uses for Etienne in her widowhood poems and in Christine-protagonist’s widowhood narratives.

Moreover, Christine revisits the maritime metaphor and corresponding use of the epithet *patron* for Christine-protagonist’s husband in *Christine’s Vision*. When Christine-protagonist recounts how she had to unexpectedly lead the household after her husband’s death, she invokes this metaphor once again (3.6):

Now I had to go to work (which, being indulgently raised on rich meats, I had not learned to do)⁵⁸ and pilot the ship remaining without master or captain on the stormy sea, that is, the desolate household misplaced and in a foreign land. (112)

⁵⁷ Anne Paupert identifies and briefly mentions Christine’s use of the intertextual theme of boat without a captain in these instances. See her article, “Narracion,” 55-56.

⁵⁸ Although McLeod translates this as “rich meats,” another translation is “rich fare.” SW translates this expression as “Thus I had to set to work, which was something that I who had been brought up in delights and finery had never learned,” 188.

Or me convint mettre mains a œuvre, ce que moy nourrie en delices et
mignotement appris n'avoye, et estre conduiserresse de la nef demoree en
orage et sanz patron, c'est assavoir le desolé mainage hors de son lieu et
païs. (100; lines 33-36)

Here, Christine-protagonist follows the metaphor and reference to her deceased husband, the *patron*, with a clear explanation of her family's situation as a grief-stricken household in a foreign country. While the examples of the lost *patron* in ballade 13 and *Fortune's Transformation* are more poetic and ambiguous, Christine explicitly connects Christine-protagonist's straight-forward widowhood narrative with the metaphor of the lost captain or master in *Christine's Vision*.

Through the frequent use of respectful epithets, Christine establishes the high regard in which she holds her late husband. The recurrent names *chief*, *maistre*, and *patron* for Etienne in numerous texts reveal a deferential attitude towards him as the head of the household. Furthermore, the consistent epithets and imagery found in her short lyric poems and longer works, such as *Fortune's Transformation* and *Christine's Vision*, establish an intertextual husband figure. Yet, Christine's use of epithets for the husband figure also disclose a more intimate and sentimental aspect of their marital relationship. She alludes to Etienne through endearments in her widowhood poems and allegorical works.

Endearments

Christine regularly selects the epithet *ami* when referring to Etienne. Although this term denotes "friend" in modern French, it conveys an additional meaning in Middle French. The term *ami* can signify a more personal relationship, that of an intimate friend or lover (Larousse 25). Ullrich Langer recalls Cicero's observation that friendship *amicitia* is derived from love *amor*. Because of the variable use of terms such as *ami* and *amant*, the nature of the relationship is revealed through the text (Langer 118).⁵⁹

⁵⁹ This is also the name of an allegorical figure in the *Romance of the Rose*, but in keeping with the courtly love ideology, this character encourages deceit in the love relationship. See Brown-Grant, "Moral Defence," 160. Langer refers to Cicero's work *De amicitia*.

Accordingly, in the English translations of Christine's works, *ami* appears as both *friend* and *lover*.

As seen in the above quoted stanza from the well-known ballade 11 of *One Hundred Ballades*, the epithet *ami* is the first by which Christine identifies her husband in this ballade: "my lover" (Willard, *Writings* 41) ("mon doulz ami"; 1: 12; line 2). The word *doulz*, while not directly translated in the English edition of the poem, heightens the intimacy of this epithet since it means "sweet."⁶⁰ Christine applies this epithet *mon doulz ami* to other contexts within the same poetry collection, such as ballades 22 and 25 in the cycle of courtly love poems. Her choice of such affectionate language in her widowhood poems reveals the loving relationship she enjoyed with her husband. Furthermore, in ballade 11 Christine incorporates the word *ami* into the refrain: "Alone am I, friendless and so lonely" (Willard, *Writings* 41) ("Seulete suy sanz ami demourée"; lines 7, 14, 21, 25). Christine's emphasis of this sentiment conveys the depth of her mourning for her *ami*.

Christine repeats this same tender epithet when discussing her husband several poems later in ballade 14 of *One Hundred Ballades*. In this poem, she portrays the contrast between her current loneliness and earlier marital happiness. Again, Christine opens the poem with the affectionate description of her late husband: "Alone and in great suffering in this deserted world full of sadness has my sweet lover left me. He possessed my heart, in greatest joy, without grief" (SW 5) ("Seulete m'a laissié en grant martyre,/ En ce desert monde plein de tristee,/ Mon doulz ami, qui en joye sanz yre/ Tenoit mon cuer, et en toute leesce"; 1: 15 ; lines 1-4). In this ballade, Christine reveals more details about her relationship with her *doulz ami* and his adoring nature. The epithet *ami* recurs in each subsequent stanza: "my dear lover dead" ("mon ami mort"; line 9) and "my lover" ("mon ami"; line 20). In all instances, Christine places the epithet *ami* at the beginning of the line, an arrangement that accentuates the epithets and offers a certain amount of symmetry between the stanzas.

On a sensory level, the sound of Christine's poems is calculated to elicit a reaction from her readers. Concerning poetic analysis, Katz and Hall observe in their guide *Explicating French Texts* that "the human mind tends to associate intellectual

⁶⁰ The word *doulz* is commonly spelled *doux* or *doulx* in Middle French, see Larousse, 215.

concepts with sense impressions: we group certain sounds with certain feelings or ideas” (12). Following the guidelines in the general table of sound impressions in this text, Christine’s ballade 14 has a remarkable effect when voiced. The combination of the vowel [o] and the long consonants [l, m, n, r] occur frequently throughout the ballade, as well as in the epithets *mon doulz ami* and *mon ami mort*. Among the potential sound impressions, Katz and Hall correlate the vowel sounds, [ou, o, on], which they designate as *voyelles sombres* with “weight, seriousness, gravity, sadness” (13). Furthermore, they link the long consonants [l, m, n, r] with “duration, length, softness, sliding, fluidity” (Katz and Hall 14). Appropriately, Christine’s ballade of perpetual mourning, which she ends with the declaration that she “will always weep for his death” (SW 6) (“je pleureray sa mort”; lines 20-21), evokes a sense of enduring sadness through its sounds.

Likewise, Christine develops the intimacy between Christine-protagonist and her husband through the epithet *ami* in *Fortune’s Transformation*. In this work, Christine-protagonist details both their wedding ceremony and joyful relationship using the term *ami* for her husband three times. She imparts how he upheld his wedding vows as a faithful husband with the description “vrays amis” (1: 38; line 934) and “loyal ami” (1: 40, 49; lines 995, 1273).⁶¹ Christine-protagonist’s language draws attention to her marriage as a monogamous relationship founded on trust.

Christine’s use of the epithet *ami* in *Christine’s Vision* (3.7) brings to light the conscious effort of the author to memorialize Etienne throughout her works. Through the character of Christine-protagonist, she recalls her earlier writings and specifically mentions the portrait of her late husband in her early poems:

These [muses of the poets] led me to rhyme tearful laments regretting my dead love and the good times departed – just as appears in the beginning of my first poems, *One Hundred Ballads*. (117)

... ycelles me faisoient rimer complaints plourables, regrettant mon ami mort et le bon temps passé, si comme il appert au commencement de

⁶¹ While the first example appears as “true lover” in the English version (101), the later epithet “loyal ami” has two different translations: “faithful” (102) and “loyal lover” (105).

mes premiers dictiez ou principe de mes premieres *Cent Balades*. (107; lines 18-21)

Christine's intertextual reference explicitly identifies Etienne as both the subject of her widowhood poems that were told in the first-person voice and the late husband of Christine-protagonist in part 3 of *Christine's Vision*. Christine equates herself to Christine-protagonist, using the same first-person voice. However, we should bear in mind that these are not entirely reciprocal identities. She projects many of her life experiences on the fictive character Christine-protagonist. Certainly, some of Christine-protagonist's adventures belong to the realm of allegory, such as her extraordinary rebirth from human dough in part 1 and encounter with Lady Philosophy in part 3. What is essential in this excerpt is that she specifies that her portrait of Christine-protagonist's husband is not an aspect that is unique to this allegorical work, but reflects the real mourning of the author. In this comment that resembles an authorial intrusion, Christine suspends the allegorical setting of the work to trace the intertextual portrait that she has created of Etienne throughout her career. To underline this intertextual reference, Christine uses the identical epithet *mon ami mort* for her husband from ballade 14 of *One Hundred Ballades* (line 9).

Christine employs the epithet *ami* as an endearment in *Christine's Vision*, to illustrate the cherished relationships she enjoyed with her husband and father (3.8). She explains that in her solitude as a widow, she began to recollect the "various sententia and polished rhetoric that I had heard in the past when my dear, dead husband and father had been alive" (117) ("diverses sentences et polie rethorique que ouy le temps passé au vivant de mes amis trespases, pere et mary, je avoie de eulx"; 108; lines 6-8). Again, Christine equates her husband and father as intellectual peers. She uses a variation of the previous epithet *mon ami mort* in this example -- "mes amis trespases," which echoes the sounds of the preceding words "le temps passé."

In the same vein as Christine's use of the epithet *ami*, she refers to Etienne as her *compagnon* in numerous texts. Larousse's Middle French dictionary defines *compagnon* as someone who shares a bond of friendship (129). Christine selects this epithet as second among the terms used to describe her husband in ballade 11 of *One Hundred Ballades*. Upon his death, Christine now has "no friend" (Willard, *Writings* 41)

("sanz compaignon"; 1: 12; line 3). She develops this notion of marital companionship or friendship in other works through a derivative of the term *compaignon* -- *compaignie*.

Christine applies similar language for Etienne in the narratives of Christine-protagonist in the *Path of Long Study*, *Fortune's Transformation*, and *Christine's Vision*. First, in the *Path of Long Study*, Christine-protagonist voices her appreciation of her husband's companionship. She affirms that, "His company was so pleasing for me that when he was near me, there was no living woman more overwhelmed with the good things of life" ⁶² (62) ("Sa compaignie m'estoit/ Si plaisant, quant il estoit/ Pres de moy, m'yert femme en vie/ De tous biens plus assouvie"; 92; lines 91-94). Christine presents an abbreviated version of this description in *Fortune's Transformation*. In this text, Christine-protagonist says of her first meeting with her husband: "I found his company pleasing" (101) ("j'oz sa compaignie chiere"; 1: 38; line 937). Finally, in *Christine's Vision*, she includes this characteristic when Christine-protagonist mourns his loss (3.6). Christine-protagonist proclaims, "I was justifiably filled with bitterness at this time, regretting his sweet company and the departed joy that had lasted but ten years for me" ⁶³ (111) ("Si fu a bon droit plaine d'amertume, regraittant sa douce compaignie et la joie passee, qui ne mes X ans avoit duré"; 100, lines 13-14). Here, we find the contrasting sentiments of bitterness and sweetness. Christine-protagonist's choice of the adjective *douce* for her husband's companionship evokes the previous use of the epithet *mon doulz ami* in ballades 11 and 14 of *One Hundred Ballades*. Thus in multiple texts, Christine depicts an amicable marital relationship with the use of the epithet *compaignon* for Etienne and the derivative *compaignie*.

From Christine's poems to her longer allegorical works, we can perceive her continued sadness as she incorporates references to her late husband into these texts. Indeed, Christine candidly draws our attention to her intertextual memorial to Etienne in *Christine's Vision*. As seen in the numerous examples above, she often integrates the epithets and descriptive phrases for her husband into the rhyme scheme of her works, lending significance to the form as well as the content of the references.

⁶² This could also be expressed as "more blessed with the good things of life." In her bilingual edition, Andrea Tarnowski translates *assouvie* into modern French as "comblée de bonheur," see 93.

⁶³ SW offers a slightly different translation: "I had just cause to feel bitterness, missing his sweet companionship and the past joys that had barely lasted ten years for me," 187-88.

While the use of epithets for Etienne's name certainly has a poetic function in certain instances, the absence of his name in Christine's intertextual portrait reminds the modern reader of the differences between modern and medieval literature. As seen in the scope of this project, which encompasses three of Christine's allegorical works, medieval allegories contained character names that reflected their function or their nature instead of a traditional Christian name. For example, Christine-protagonist encounters the Crowned Lady and Lady Philosophy in *Christine's Vision*. In the same manner, she identifies Etienne through his characteristics. We see the recurrent use of epithets that convey respect (*chief*, *maistre*, and *patron*) as well as terms that indicate an amicable marital relationship (*ami* and *compaignon*). Through his name, Christine depicts him as a good husband -- both as a leader of the family and a companion to his wife. These epithets contrast sharply with the name of the popular allegorical figure the Jealous Husband or *Jalousie* in the *Romance of the Rose*, a character who Christine openly criticizes as a poor marital role model in her letters from the literary debate. Christine writes:

Then, in the passage of the Jealous Husband, my God, what could possibly be the benefit of such shameful and insulting speech, frequently uttered by those poor souls afflicted by this illness? What good example can this possibly set? (McWebb 123; lines 104-08)

Puis ou chapitre de Jalousie, pour Dieu! quieulx grans biens y peuent estre nottéz, n'a quel besoing recorder les deshonestetés et laides paroles qui asséz sont communes en la bouche des maleureux passionnéz d'icelle maladie? Quel bon exemple ne introduction peut estre ce? (122; lines 108-12)

Christine expresses this strong disapproval of the Jealous Husband in a letter that she composed during the summer of 1401, which was contemporary to the approximate dates of her first poetry collection the *Livre de Christine* (c.1399-1402). Her three allegorical works that feature Christine-protagonist's husband follow shortly thereafter (1402-05). Thus, we can observe how Christine develops the portrait of her late husband during a time when she censured Jean de Meun's poor marital role model. In

light of her fervent belief that literature should serve the common good, Christine creates an intertextual portrait of a moral husband. From the inception of Etienne's persona, she identifies him as a positive role model through her use of epithets. Christine offers the portrait of Etienne as a virtuous husband whose qualities, as we shall see, are exemplary.

CHAPTER 3

ETIENNE AS EXEMPLARY HUSBAND

Introducing Etienne

In many of Christine's widowhood poems, the reader learns of Etienne through Christine's memories. Likewise, Christine-protagonist's descriptions of her late husband in her self-reflective passages are the basis of his literary persona. The reader rarely interacts with this figure, but frequently observes his laudable past actions through the cherished memories of the author and her self-inspired character. Thus, Christine constructs an exemplary husband figure through these descriptions. Yet there is one extraordinary instance when she gives voice to Etienne and presents him as an active character. I will close this chapter with a discussion of Etienne's first person voice in ballade 26 of *Other Ballades*, a voice that brings to life the respectful husband that Christine has carefully constructed through descriptions.

We shall examine how Christine's intertextual portrait of Etienne encompasses his physical appearance, moral fiber, and praiseworthy accomplishments. Through these descriptions, Christine draws from both secular and religious notions of an ideal man. As we shall see, Christine portrays her husband as a young, handsome, loving, and courtly man, which reflects the revival in courtly literature during this time. In his discussion of the courtly body, James Schultz remarks, "courtly lovers respond to beautiful bodies... they are responding to the visible nobility of the body: beauty is nobility." He adds that goodness and courtly behavior were qualities that were featured in courtly love relationships (Schultz 169-70). These characteristics are the opposite of the *villain* that appears in medieval literature who often demonstrates jealousy, crudeness, and other vices (Zink 46-47). At the same time, Christine establishes Etienne as a highly moral man who exhibits Christian virtues and remains faithful to their marital vows. She offers her marriage to Etienne as an example of reciprocal love within the religiously sanctioned marital relationship.

Christine depicts the physical appearance of her husband in a consistent manner throughout numerous texts, portraying him as an attractive man. On a tangible level,

she emphasizes his beauty, youth, and vitality, often writing a series of descriptive adjectives or nouns. Christine first provides a physical description of Etienne in her poetry.

In ballade 9 from *One Hundred Ballades*, an apostrophe addressed to Death, captures Christine's despair. She lists her husband's attributes, including his attractiveness, in a series of descriptions: "you [Death] took from me my handsome, good and wise man" (my trans) ("tu [Mort] m'ostas le bel et bon et sage"; 1: 10; line 13). In this line, Christine pairs a physical description of Etienne with his moral qualities. She places the physical description as the first aspect in this series of words. While this word order may have had sentimental significance to the author, it certainly has a purpose in light of the poem's form. Christine's pairing of "handsome" and "good" creates alliteration in the original French "bel et bon." This word arrangement also leaves the last word of the line "sage" in accordance with the rhyme scheme, in which "-age" is rhyme (b): ababbcbC ababbcbC ababbcbC bcbC. Neither "bel" nor "bon" would fit the rhyme scheme of this poem.

Christine repeats this flattering description of her husband in ballade 8 from *Other Ballades*. Parallel to the first example, she lists her husband's positive characteristics in a series: "handsome and good" (my trans) ("Bel et bon"; 1: 216; line 7). Again, Christine states that her husband was attractive and possessed a good character in an alliterative combination that is not connected to the rhyme scheme. However, she does not specify the exact time of composition of this ballade, a detail that would provide a frame of reference for comparison to ballade 9 of *One Hundred Ballades*.⁶⁴

In Christine's allegorical works, Christine elaborates on the flattering descriptions of Etienne that she introduced in her widowhood poems. Christine-protagonist portrays Etienne as both physically attractive and an exceptional man in the *Path of Long Study*, using the same language in her ballades. She declares: "In my opinion, he was without equal in the world; I could not have wished for anyone more wise, prudent, handsome

⁶⁴ Even though Christine's first poetry collection was compiled between 1399 and 1402, Christine claims she composed ballade 9 in *One Hundred Ballades* 5 years after her husband's death, which would be approximately 1395: "For five years I have missed you" (my trans) ("Il y a cinq ans que je t'ay regrettée"; 1: 10; line 9).

and good than he was, in all respects" (62) ("Que de moy il n'avoit per/ En ce monde, ce m'iert vis;/ Car souhaidier a devis/ Je ne peüsse personne/ Sage, prudent, belle et bonne/ Mieulx que lui en tous endrois"; 92; lines 78-83). Christine-protagonist recalls her husband's positive characteristics in a list that echoes ballade 9 of *One Hundred Ballades*. She adds the virtue of prudence, which I will analyze shortly. While the form of the adjectives "handsome" and "good" demonstrates a slight grammatical difference from the earlier examples, this does not alter the meaning. The adjectives for "handsome" and "good" are feminine in gender in order to agree with the antecedent of the feminine noun "personne" 'anyone.' What is noteworthy in this excerpt, however, is that Christine reverses the order of the descriptions that first appeared in ballade 9 of *One Hundred Ballades*. Here, she begins the list with "sage" 'wise' and ends the line with the alliterative pair "belle et bonne" 'handsome and good.' Her ending word choice "bonne" rhymes with the preceding line's final word "personne," a rhyme that would not have succeeded if Christine had maintained the same word order as ballade 9. Furthermore, the rearrangement of adjectives permits alliteration at the end of this line with "peüsse personne," a device that she uses in the following line with "belle et bonne." In these two descriptions of Etienne, Christine's flexibility with word order demonstrates her poetic eloquence.

Etienne's portrait in the *Path of Long Study* is more engaging than a straightforward or objective observation. Christine-protagonist introduces the description of her husband through her first person perspective with the phrase, "In my opinion." She also includes her appreciation of late husband's qualities with the past conditional statement, "I could not have wished for anyone more wise, prudent, handsome and good than he was, in all respects." Christine employs comparison adjectives when her self-inspired character reflects on the extent of Etienne's attractiveness and good character, declaring that he is "without equal." This writing technique is common in medieval literature especially when presenting the hero or heroine of a story.

To illustrate this technique with just one of many possible examples, the popular Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes frequently utilize superlative descriptions. For instance, Chrétien introduces Erec, the hero of *Erec and Enide*, in an analogous fashion to Christine portrait of Etienne that elevates the main character to a man "without equal

in the world”: “So striking that nowhere on earth/ Could you find a handsome man – no knight was better loved” (4; lines 85-87).⁶⁵ This example is not a flat and omniscient description of Erec. Chrétien details the reception of the hero as beloved and engages the reader, using the second person pronoun. Similarly, Christine’s description of Etienne is dynamic, appearing through the lens of the first person voice of Christine-protagonist and providing the reaction of this narrator. Moreover, Chrétien highlights the exceptional qualities of the main character through the use of comparative adjectives and the conditional assertion that Erec is the ultimate example of a knight. This writing technique validates the author’s choice of a hero, and in Christine’s case, her effort to memorialize her husband. As seen in the likeness of these two examples, Christine elevates Etienne’s portrait through the conventions of heroic portraits in medieval literature. Etienne was a man worth remembering because of his outstanding characteristics.

Christine further elaborates on Etienne’s physical attributes in *Fortune’s Transformation*. The descriptions in this work demonstrate the highly intertextual nature of Etienne’s portrait. She begins with an account of Christine-protagonist’s marriage, representing Etienne as an attractive young man accompanying the God of Love: “Hymen had brought a handsome, pleasing youth with him.... I found his company pleasing, for he was handsome of body and of face” (101) (“Avecques lui [Ymeneüs] ot fait venir/ Un jovencel bel et plaisant Et j’oz sa compaignie chiere,/ Car bel fu de corps et de chiere”; 1: 38; lines 924-25, 937-38). In this description that was partially quoted earlier, we can see how Christine repeats and develops the previous choice of “handsome,” specifying both “body” and “face” in this text. Christine-protagonist mentions Etienne’s young age, calling him a “youth.” Reminiscent of the *Path of Long Study*, Christine-protagonist reminds the reader of her perspective. She conveys her positive feelings about Etienne with an expression that signals out her opinion -- “I found.” The English translation, while accurate in content, does not convey the lyricism of Christine’s poetry. She introduces Etienne in a verse that is rich with poetic eloquence: “Un jovencel bel et plaisant.” Christine uses consonance with “jovencel” and “bel.” The word order of Etienne’s depiction again fulfills the requirements of the

⁶⁵ *Erec and Enide* is the first Arthurian novel and dates to approximately 1170.

versification. Christine pairs “handsome” with “pleasing” in the original French “bel et plaisant.” This arrangement successfully rhymes “plaisant” with the end of the following line -- “faisant” (line 926).

A few lines further in *Fortune’s Transformation*, Christine-protagonist compliments Etienne’s physical appearance, in a manner that echoes the widowhood poems and duplicates the first example from the *Path of Long Study*: “He was handsome and good under all circumstances, wise courtly and upright” (102) (“Bel et bon ert en tous endrois,/ Sage, courtois et amoit drois”; 1: 40; lines 999-1000). In these lines, Christine-protagonist expands her list of Etienne’s positive qualities, adding a qualifier “under all circumstances” as well as the traits of courtliness and integrity. Christine repeats the alliterative pair “bel et bon” that has become habitual in her intertextual descriptions of Etienne. The English translations of the *Path of Long Study* and *Fortune’s Transformation* have a slight variation in wording due to the translators’ preferences. Etienne was “handsome and good under all circumstances” or “in all respects.” However, in the original Middle French, she chooses the same encompassing language in these two texts to depict Etienne’s beauty and goodness: “belle (bel) et bonne (bon)...en tous endrois.” These descriptions of Etienne are identical, albeit the different antecedents altered the gender agreement of the adjectives handsome and good.

Apart from Etienne’s handsome appearance, which is a prominent feature of his intertextual portrait, Christine refers to his youth and vitality on several occasions. When Christine-protagonist first meets Etienne in *Fortune’s Transformation*, she portrays him as a “youth” in the previously quoted line (“jouvenel”; line 925). Derived from “jouvent” ‘youth’ in the twelfth century, the term “jouvenel” indicates a young man (Larousse 371).⁶⁶

Several years later, in *Christine’s Vision*, Christine-protagonist emphasizes Etienne’s youth and vitality, both at the time of their marriage and at the moment of his death. She introduces Etienne as her father’s choice of husband for her (3.4). Christine-protagonist depicts him as “young” (110) (“jeune”; 97; line 28). When she recounts

⁶⁶ An alternate form of “jouvenel” is “jouvenceau,” see Larousse, 371.

Etienne's sudden death, she again points out his youthfulness (3.6). However, in this instance Christine-protagonist provides more details:

Because of said Fortune, death deprived me of him when he was thirty-four years old, in the flower of his youth, fit, ready, and on the point of rising to a high rank. (111)

Pour laquelle dicte Fortune, Mort, lors qu'il estoit en sa fleur, apte et apresté et sus le point ... de monter en hault degree, le me tolli en fleur de jeunesse comme en l'aage de XXXIIII ans. (100; lines 8-11)

Since this work is in prose, Christine's poetic talent lies not in the form of this description, but in her use of figurative language. The association of youth with blossoming or flowers appears in the English translation and conveys a similar meaning. Yet, we must notice the emphasis in the original French – Christine-protagonist repeats the flower imagery twice in this excerpt to underline the tragic loss of her vibrant husband who anticipated a promising career. She includes the factual details of Etienne's age to illustrate his youthfulness and support her figurative imagery. Furthermore, Christine-protagonist expresses the shock of Etienne's death through the personification of Death. The original French conveys a stronger sense of agency than the graceful English translation "death deprived me of him." Like the allegorical figure of Fortune, Christine capitalizes death, "Mort," and uses the verb *tollir*, which literally translates to a more forceful sense of loss: "to take (away), abduct, remove, capture" (Larousse 626). This unexpected arrival of Death contrasts with the images of Etienne's burgeoning career and vitality.

Through Christine's repetitive descriptions of Etienne as a handsome and good man who was full of life in her works, she creates an intertextual portrait of a beloved husband who also possessed qualities that were valued in courtly love literature. This portrait is consistent and supports the notion of her "autobiographical" inspiration. With regard to the timeline, this selection of Christine's references to Etienne that depict his physical appearance span approximately a decade -- from her recorded dates of circa 1395 for ballade 9 of *One Hundred Ballades* to her date of 1405 for *Christine's Vision* (3.10). As seen in the above extracts, Christine combines physical descriptions of her

husband with moral descriptions. Etienne is not only physically attractive, but more importantly possesses a virtuous character. In fact, her descriptions of Etienne's physical appearance are fleeting in comparison to the time she dedicates to praising his good character.

A Moral Husband

Christine memorializes Etienne's virtuous character in her widowhood poems and certain allegorical works. She recounts Etienne's respectful comportment with her as well as his interaction with others. In addition to the multiple references to Etienne's admirable qualities that appears in the coupling of "handsome and good" and Christine-protagonist's all encompassing declarations that aver his character as good "under all circumstances" that appear in the *Path of Long Study* and *Fortune's Transformation*, Christine recognizes Etienne as virtuous and honest man, or *preudomme* in French (Larousse 504; Reno and Dulac 244). In *Christine's Vision*, she opens section 3.6 with this term when Christine-protagonist's recalls how Etienne accepted responsibility for the family after Thomas' death (99, line 2). By characterizing Etienne as a *preudomme*, Christine-protagonist establishes a further point of comparison between her husband and father since she refers to her father with the same language in the preceding section. Christine-protagonist enumerates her father's shining qualities, including "his genuine reputation for probity" (111) ("la vraie reputacion de sa preudommie"; 99; line 41). Possessing an honorable character like Thomas, Etienne is fit to lead the household.

Christine-protagonist repeats the description of her husband as a *preudomme* in section 3.6 (100; line 41), which appears in the English edition as "an honorable man" (112). At this time, she relates how her husband's honest business records prevented a fraudulent claim on his estate after his death. Further in the text, Christine-protagonist solidifies the family reputation for moral integrity. She applies the same description, *preudomme*, to her brothers Paolo and Aghinolfo when discussing their return to Italy. She depicts them as "wise, worthy and moral men" (124) ("saiges preudeshommes et de belle vie"; 116; lines 44-45). Thus Christine-protagonist illustrates the family

reputation for good character through the father Thomas, his own two sons, as well as the son he accepted through marriage – Etienne.

In the search for a suitable husband for his daughter, Thomas valued morals and intelligence over tangible wealth or power (3.4). Christine-protagonist recalls: “my father thought that the most worthy man possessed both great learning and good character” (110) (“mon dit pere reputast celui plus valuable que le plus science avec les bonnes meurs avoit”; 97; lines 27-28). Accordingly, Thomas refused several suitors whose station in life or material wealth appeared favorable on a surface level: “knights, other gentlemen, and wealthy scholars” (“chevaliers, autres nobles et riches clers”; 97; lines 23-24). Eventually, Thomas chose Etienne, “whose virtues surpassed his wealth” (“de qui les vertus passoient la richesce”; 97-98; lines 29-30). Christine-protagonist indicates her father’s acceptance of Etienne into his family, “I was given to him, whom father accounted a suitable son” (110) (“a celui qu’il reputa comme propre filz je fus donnee”; 98; lines 30-31).

In *Christine’s Vision*, Christine-protagonist mentions a significant aspect of her husband’s good character – his religious standing. As she writes of Etienne’s death in Beauvais, she asserts, “by the grace of God, his end was a good Catholic’s” (112) (“la Dieu grace, fu la fin comme bon catholique”; 100; line 24). Christine-protagonist intimates that despite the epidemic in the village and the modest entourage of the King, Etienne was able to receive the sacrament of last rites.⁶⁷ She strives to memorialize Etienne’s life as that of a good Catholic, with a strong emphasis on his virtuous character. Certain virtues recur in her descriptions of Etienne that correspond to his portrait in other works, in particular his exceptional wisdom, prudence, and loyalty.

Wisdom

Christine extols the value of wisdom throughout her works. To cite just a few examples, in the public sphere, she presents wisdom as an integral characteristic of the ideal ruler in the *Path of Long Study* through an allegorical debate. In this work, Christine also selects a personal guide for Christine-protagonist who embodies classical

⁶⁷ Christine also mentions the notion of one’s beloved dying as a faithful Catholic in her *Letter on the Prison of Human Life* to Marie de Bourbon. She refers to Marie’s loved ones who must have “ended their lives in salvation.” See SW, 251.

wisdom – the Sibyl. Moreover, she pays tribute to the wise leadership of Charles V in establishing this virtue as part of his title in her biography of the monarch from 1404: the *Book of the Deeds and Good Customs of the Wise King Charles V* (Walters, “Constructing Reputations” 132). Bonnie Birk’s recent book *Christine de Pizan and Biblical Wisdom* examines how Christine applies Biblical wisdom, and more specifically the allegorical figure of female wisdom, in her works the *Letter from Othea*, the *City of Ladies*, and *Christine’s Vision*. In view of Christine’s demonstrable interest in the virtue of wisdom, it is not surprising to find this attribute a key element in the portrayal of her husband as an exemplary man.

Wisdom is a prominent feature in Christine’s list of her husband’s virtues. As seen in the previous quotations from the widowhood poems and allegorical works, she explicitly describes Etienne as “wise” ‘sage’ in numerous instances: ballade 9 of *One Hundred Ballades* (1: 10; line 13), the *Path of Long Study* (92; line 82), and *Fortune’s Transformation* (1: 40; line 1000). These specific occurrences are merely a sample Christine’s efforts in praising Etienne’s wisdom. Among her short lyrical poems, she labels Etienne as “wise” ‘sage’ in one of the most revealing poems that memorializes her marriage – ballade 26 of *Other Ballades*. In this poem, Christine features marriage in a positive light, drawing from her personal experience.

A sweet thing is marriage,
I can well prove it by my own experience.
It is true for one who has a good and wise husband
Like the one God helped me find. (Willard, *Writings* 51)

Doulce chose est que mariage,
Je le puis bien par moy prouver,
Voire a qui mary bon et sage
A, comme Dieu m’a fait trouver. (1: 237; lines 1-4)

The virtue of wisdom is not only essential in Etienne’s character but also to the versification in the original French. Christine ends line 3 with “sage,” connecting it to rhyme (a) of the rhyme scheme: ababbcbC ababbcbC ababbcbC bcbC. In order to preserve the versification and maintain “sage” as the ending word, she uses the

enjambment “A” ‘has’ in line 4, which reveals a conscious manipulation of language in these lines. Christine purposefully rhymes “sage” with “mariage” ‘marriage’ in this stanza (line 1), a rhyme that reinforces the message of the poem and demonstrates her eloquence in combining poetic form and content or *la forme et le fond*. In the subsequent stanza, Christine repeats the use of “mariage” as part of the rhyme scheme (a): “On our wedding night” (“La premiere nuit du mariage”; line 9). The Harley 4431 manuscript contains an interesting variation for “mariage” – “mesnage” ‘household’ in this line (note 9). Although this choice works well in both form and content, preserving the connection between wisdom and marriage, Christine ultimately rejects it for the repetition of “mariage” in later manuscripts. Furthermore, the last line of the first stanza introduces the notion of divine providence. She presents the active role of God in selecting a moral and wise husband, supporting the notion of marriage as a religious union.

For an explanation of the importance of wisdom, and the connection between wisdom and prudence, Christine cites the greatest authority, the Bible, in the *Path of Long Study*. In this text, Christine-protagonist witnesses and records an allegorical debate on the nature of an ideal human government. Numerous virtues make their case before Lady Reason. During this debate on leadership, Lady Wisdom quotes the words of Solomon in the book of Proverbs:

If wisdom enters into your heart/ And learning rests in the center of your soul,/ Wise reflection will please you/ And never leave you,/ And prudence will guard you/ From all misfortune. (my trans)⁶⁸

Se sappïence en ton cuer entre,/ Et sciënce se fiche ou centre/ De ton ame, conseil plaira/ A toy qui point ne te laira,/ Et te conservera prudence/ De toute mauvaise accidence. (408; lines 5427-32)

At this time, Lady Wisdom reminds the reader of the Biblical view of these virtues: wisdom and prudence can prevent misfortune. Accordingly, Christine establishes

⁶⁸ Christine’s quotation is rather accurate. However, for the exact verse from the Bible, see Prov. 2.10-12: “If wisdom shall enter into thy heart, and knowledge please thy soul: Counsel shall keep thee, and prudence shall preserve thee, That thou mayst be delivered from the evil way.”

Etienne as an exemplary Christian man through recounting the good deeds that derived from his exceptional wisdom and prudence in her works.

In *Christine's Vision*, Christine-protagonist explains Etienne's development into a worthy head of the family, with an emphasis on his wisdom. She clearly expresses his good character and admiration from others (3.6):

My husband, a young, prudent, wise, and worth man, highly-esteemed by the princes and all those who frequented his office, now remained the head of the household; and he maintained the position of this family through his wise prudence. (111)

Or fu demouré chief du mainage mon mary, jeune preudomme saige et prudent, et tres amé des princes et toutes gens frequentant son dit office, par lequel, moiennant sa saige prudence, estoit soustenu l'estat de ladicte famille. (99; lines 2-5)

Christine-protagonist mentions wisdom twice in this excerpt, attributing Etienne's continued prosperity to his virtues. His accomplishments fulfill Solomon's words of advice. Unlike the fall from favor that Christine-protagonist's father Thomas experienced at court under the regency (3.5), Etienne safeguarded the family's standing through his wisdom and prudence.

Christine-protagonist again points out her husband's wisdom as a source of his success when recalling his career. She describes Etienne as, "on the point of rising to a high rank as much through scholarship as wise and prudent government and acquisition of properties" (111) ("sus le point, tant en science comme en sage et prudent conquete et gouvernement, de monter en hault degre"; 100; lines 9-10). Christine-protagonist indicates that her husband was not only well-educated, but also well-versed in more practical matters that ensured his family's prosperity at court.

Christine honors Etienne's wisdom through more than the clear-cut use of the adjective *sage* in her writings. In the preceding chapter, Christine's effort to draw a parallel between her husband and her father was examined through the respectful epithet *maistre*. Indeed, she labels them both as learned and wise men in *Christine's Vision* (3.9), or in her words "masters of knowledge" (118) ("les maistres de science";

109; line 20). Christine weaves the classical image of the Fountain of Wisdom or Learning throughout numerous texts, and she links this image to both her father and her husband.

In the *Path of Long Study*, Christine-protagonist is led to the Fountain of Wisdom 'Fontaine de Sapience' on Mount Parnassus by her guide, the Sibyl. Christine-protagonist describes the great fountain as a verdant oasis with the melodic sounds of bubbling water (SW 70-71). The Sibyl explains that the fountain originated from the impact of Pegasus' hoof and is controlled by the nine Muses (72). In the notes to *Selected Writings*, Blumenfeld-Kosinski observes that Christine combines two details from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Pegasus created the Fountain of Helicon on Mount Helicon while the Muses frequented the springs on both Mount Parnassus and Mount Helicon (72; notes 8-9).⁶⁹ The reader encounters multiple descriptions of the fountain that emphasize not only its beauty but also the clarity of the water, which reflects the metaphor of the water as a source of insight and learning. Christine-protagonist describes the fountain as "pure, clear, and deep" (70) ("nette, clere et profonde"; 134; line 806) while the Sybil later describes the fountain as "beautiful, clear, and healthy" (72) ("belle, clere et saine"; 146; line 994). The Sybil then relates information about Christine-protagonist's father: "Your own father knew this place very well, and he certainly should have, because he often spent time here, and carried away great learning" (73) ("Ton pere meismes y savoit/ Bien la voye; si la devoit/ Savoir, car bien l'avoit hantee,/ Dont grant science en ot portee"; 150; lines 1045-48). At this time, the Sybil refers to other wise men who visited the fountain, including the classical figures Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Seneca, and Hippocrates (73).

Christine prefigures the fountain metaphor in the prologue to the *Path of Long Study*. As she addresses her royal patrons Charles VI and his brothers, the dukes of Berry, Orleans, and Burgundy, Christine describes her tale of an allegorical debate about leadership qualities as "diverting food for thought" (SW 61) ("matiere aucunement de solacier"; 88; lines 35-36) that she brings to their attention. Interestingly, she compliments the wisdom of the royal princes with the fountain metaphor. She views

⁶⁹ SW also notes the reference in Ovid for the story of the fountain's creation (5.254-68), 72, note 9.

them as: “a living fountain of supreme wisdom” (SW 61) (“fontaine vive de souverain sens”; 88; lines 47-48). Thus in the prologue, Christine foreshadows the preoccupation with wisdom in the text, evokes France’s classical heritage as known through the *Grandes Chroniques de France*,⁷⁰ and establishes a parallel between the monarchy and the personal example of her father.

In *Fortune’s Transformation* (1.3-4), Christine-protagonist explains that her father spent time at the Pegasus’ Fountain of Philosophy on Mount Parnassus. Again, Christine-protagonist lauds the beauty of the fountain, presenting it as “deep, clear and very exalted” (SW 93) (“parfonde, clere et tres haultaine”; 18; line 330). From the repetition of the descriptive adjectives *parfonde* and *clere* to the fact that Christine-protagonist’s father visited this source of wisdom, there is a patent intertextual thread between *Fortune’s Transformation* and the *Path of Long Study*.

In *Fortune’s Transformation*, Christine-protagonist develops the fountain metaphor. There, Thomas discovered magical stones that endowed him with extraordinary abilities. One stone, which represented his knowledge of astrology, enabled Thomas to foresee the future with “celestial powers” (92) (“Celestial fait devenir/ Cellui, qui a droit l’a trouvee [la pierre precieuse]”; 15; lines 254-55). The second stone signified his knowledge of medicine and was “more fine than refined gold” (93) (“Car oncques l’or, que l’en affine,/ N’autre pierre ne la valu”; 17; lines 292-93).

In *Christine’s Vision*, Christine-protagonist connects the image of the Fountain of Wisdom to both her husband and father as she laments how she should have sought more knowledge from them before their tragic deaths (3.9).

I must detest you [foolish youth], since when I was at the two fonts of Philosophy themselves – those noble fountains so bright and wholesome – I, like a young and pampered fool, took not my fill of them, even though the beautiful water pleased me... (117-18)

⁷⁰ The *Grandes Chroniques de France*, an account of French history that links the monarchy to the Trojan kings, was extremely popular in medieval France. Began by the monk Primat at Saint-Denis in the thirteenth century, it was modified by others over the next two centuries. See *DLF*, 296-98. Scholars have cited this as an important source for several of Christine’s works, including *Christine’s Vision* and *Charles V*. In particular, Solente identifies manuscript BnF f.fr. 2813 as one of Christine’s sources. See Reno and Dulac, xxxvi-xxxvii.

Tant hair te dois, quant ou temps que j'estoie a mesmes les II beaulx
conduis de philosophie, coste si haultes fontaines tant cleres et saines, et
moy comme fole jeune trop mignote, non obstant que les biaux ruissiaux
me pleussent, ne m'en emplissoie. (108; lines 6-10)

In this statement, Christine-protagonist's father does not merely possess magical stones from the fountain as in *Fortune's Transformation* – he has become the fountain. Christine-protagonist represents both her father and husband as Fountains of Philosophy. We can note how Christine-protagonist's description parallels the descriptions in the earlier texts from the vocabulary to the description of the quality of the water. Christine reuses the word *clere* as in her two previous works. Moreover, the word *saine* recalls the Sybil's description in the *Path of Long Study* and the term *haulte* echoes Christine-protagonist's use of *haultaine* in *Fortune's Transformation*. Thus in these three seemingly “autobiographical” narratives of Christine-protagonist, we find the recurrent image of the Fountain of Wisdom and how this image applies to not only her beloved father but also her husband. In addition to the figurative image of the Fountain of Wisdom, Christine constructs two exceptional metaphors that she evokes in her widowhood poems and allegorical works. These intertextual metaphors illustrate Etienne's wise guidance as a good master.

First, we shall explore the context of Christine's use of the epithet *patron* that we witnessed in ballade 13 of *One Hundred Ballades*, *Fortune's Transformation*, and *Christine's Vision*. She establishes Etienne as a remarkable sea captain and attributes his misfortunate death to stormy seas. In *Fortune's Transformation*, the vivid and extensive description of the maritime metaphor is an integral part of the work and sets the scene for Christine-protagonist's remarkable gender transformation.

Christine-protagonist portrays her husband as a wise sea captain because of his knowledge, skills and exceptional leadership. Etienne's wise guidance inspires her use of respectful addresses that I signaled out earlier in this text. In addition to calling her husband “our good master” (105) (“nostre bon patron”; 1: 48; line 1238), Christine-protagonist lauds her husband's competency throughout the story. She explains,

... and with his great knowledge of navigation, he could very competently steer a ship in any weather. He was a very knowledgeable master of a vessel and knew very well how to direct it, just as he should. (102)

Et avec la grant escience,/ Qu'il avoit en bien gouverner,/ Moult savoit
sagement mener/ Une nef en toute saison./ Patron estoit moult sages
hom/ De galee et bien la savoit/ Guyer, tout ainsi qu'il devoit. (1: 40-41;
lines 1002-08)

In this excerpt brimming with praise, Christine-protagonist extols her husband's wise leadership twice in the original French through the word *sage*. In the first instance, she details his competency in steering a ship with two adverbs – “very” ‘moult’ and “competently” ‘sagement’ (line 1004). Christine-protagonist further underscores this point by modifying the description of him with an adverb -- “very knowledgeable” ‘moult sages’ (line 1006). She emphasizes her husband's knowledge through the adverb “well” ‘bien’ that modifies the verbs “to lead” ‘gouverner’ and “knew how to direct” ‘savait guyer’ (lines 1003 and 1007).⁷¹ Christine-protagonist also signals out the breadth of his knowledge with the phrase “in any weather” ‘en toute saison’ (line 1005). This phrase echoes the all-encompassing description of Etienne's good character, including his wisdom and prudence “in all respects” ‘en tous endroits’ that appears in the *Path of Long Study* (92; lines 78-83) as well as the more abbreviated compliment in *Fortune's Transformation* (1: 40; lines 999-1000).

Within the framework of her metaphor in *Fortune's Transformation*, Christine expands the image of Etienne as an astute captain. Christine-protagonist's narrative comprises more than a list of his positive qualities; she provides examples of his heroic feats at sea. Through her adventurous story that captures Etienne in action, readers are able to form their own opinion of his worthiness and not rely solely on Christine-protagonist's subjective memories.

Christine-protagonist first claims that her husband's wise governance significantly benefited her, especially in their treacherous coastal country. She states that in their

⁷¹ There is no direct translation for *gouverner* in the English edition from SW. Larousse's Middle French Dictionary provides multiple definitions of this term, many of which convey *to direct, lead, or manage*, see 331.

land, success necessitates knowledge of “how to lead and direct ships and vessels, both in good weather and in storms” (102) (“monter/ Et savoir le tour de bien duire/ Nefs et galees et conduire/ Et par beau temps et par orages”; 1: 41; lines 1016-19). Christine-protagonist continues her praise with the assertion, “In all of these things my master was so adept that he had saved me from many dangers by his subtle knowledge of that great oceanic sea full of ancient adventures” (102) (“De tout ce estoit mes patrons sages,/ Si qu’il m’avoit de maint peril/ Gettee, par son sens subtil,/ De celle grant mer oceane/ Plaine d’aventure anceane”; 1: 41; lines 1020-24). Christine-protagonist again signals out her husband’s wisdom with the adjective *sage*. In this instance, Christine-protagonist credits her husband’s “subtle knowledge” ‘sens subtil’ of the sea with her rescue from numerous pitfalls. We can only wonder about the experiences that might have inspired Christine to portray Christine-protagonist and Etienne caught in stormy seas and confronted with perilous situations. Certainly, navigating the “storms” or changing political scene after the death of the wise king Charles V, with its power struggle between the late king’s brothers and regency government, required a certain amount of finesse. If we consider the sea as a metaphor for the French court, Christine credits Etienne with saving her from disastrous situations at court -- perhaps the financial situation of Thomas’ household upon his death, the intricacies and drama of courtly life, or the effort for such a bright woman to conform to conventional behavior at court. This image of Etienne as a heroic figure who protects his wife from danger with his intellect and aptitude echoes the image of Etienne as a wise head of the household who is able to restore the family’s prosperity that we examined a moment ago in *Christine’s Vision*. Several years after Christine portrays Etienne as a heroic figure in the maritime metaphor in *Fortune’s Transformation*, she revisits this theme of his wise leadership in the contemporary setting of the French court in *Christine’s Vision*.

Returning to the nautical adventure in *Fortune’s Transformation*, Christine-protagonist then reveals that Etienne’s proficiency as a captain benefited others. She recalls, “We appropriately mourned him who had governed us, who was such a good pilot that he had saved many from death” (105) (“Helas! A bon droit regraitions/ Cil soubz duquel la main estions,/ Qui tant estoit bon conduiseur/ Que de perir garda

plusieur”; 1: 49; lines 1269-72). In this excerpt, Christine-protagonist discloses the benevolent nature of her husband, the “good pilot” who assisted many others. Her language is more dramatic than the earlier description her own “dangers.” Here, she presents Etienne’s intervention as life-giving through the statement that he “saved many from death.” A plausible source of Christine’s inspiration for Etienne’s compassion in the allegory lies in the scope of his profession as a royal secretary – a diplomatic mission, a word of advice concerning the politics at court, or even a show of support as a royal officer for other court members. Again, she revisits this aspect of Etienne’s persona in *Christine’s Vision*. His positive relationships with others correspond to the descriptions of his reception at court in *Christine’s Vision* that I will explore shortly. We shall see how Christine-protagonist claims that her husband was beloved by the court (3.6).

Second, Christine develops a metaphor to illustrate Etienne’s role as a wise and good master in her short poems through the image of a protective shepherd. She first crafts this image in ballade 14 of *One Hundred Ballades*, the poem we previously examined for her use of the epithet *ami*. In the third stanza, Christine depicts her mourning through two images that are rich in religious undertones – a lonely turtledove, which I will consider later, and a sheep that is separated from its shepherd.

In Jane Taylor’s detailed poetic analysis of ballade 14 and rondeau 1, she comments on Christine’s choice of animal images: “Christine is of course exploiting the rich donor field provided in the Middle Ages, for all sorts of purposes, by the animal world: in a still largely agrarian society, the lamb bereft of shepherd is the image *par excellence* of separation and bereavement” (117). In ballade 14, Christine expresses her distressed state with an alarming metaphor: “like a lamb the wolf attempts to kill, which panics when its shepherd leaves it” (6) (“com brebis que lop tache a occire,/ Qui s’esbaist quant son pastour la laisse”; 1: 15; lines 17-18). She calls attention to her exposure to predators, or wolves, without the protection of her husband, or shepherd. Christine explores this theme of the vulnerable widow in *Christine’s Vision*. Christine-protagonist explains how she faced considerable adversity as a widow. Not only did the opportunistic claims on her husband’s estate made by numerous debtors threaten her family’s financial security, but the harmful and unfounded rumors about her fidelity endangered her reputation (3.6-7). We know from the historical records that Christine-

protagonist's account of multiple law suits reflects the real-life experience of Christine (LW 35).

Christine revisits the image of her husband as a shepherd in rondeau 1, a poem of mourning that she dates to seven years after her husband's death (line 5). In the first stanza, Christine portrays herself, "like a shepherdless sheep gone astray" (Willard, *Writings* 52) ("com brebis sanz pastour esgarée"; 1: 147; line 2). This brief description captures the lonely mindset of the author without her husband's guiding presence. Here, the sheep is a despondent image, signaling a shift from the previous image of the panicked lamb threatened by a preying wolf in ballade 14. Although the English translations differ slightly in these two examples – "lamb" versus "sheep," Christine selects the same word in French to describe herself – "brebis." In both poems, the loss of the shepherd is a negative event that significantly alters the fate of the lamb, leaving it without guidance and protection.

Christine's use of the shepherd metaphor in her other works sheds light on these two brief references to her husband in her short poems. Throughout her works, she associates wise leadership with the image of a protective shepherd. Indeed, in the *Path of Long Study*, the allegorical figure Wisdom delineates the ideal prince according to Aristotle's *Ethics*, which she directly cites in the text. Wisdom states that the prince should resemble, "the shepherd who protects his sheep from danger" (my trans) ("... sus les brebis le pastour,/ Qui garder les doit de mal tour"; 414; lines 5521-22). Here, Christine offers the shepherd paradigm as a source of wisdom through the authoritative voice of Aristotle. She was familiar with *Ethics* through Nicole Oresme's translation in the early 1370s (414; note 1).

Christine expands this notion of the ideal ruler as a shepherd several years later in the *Book of the Body Politic* (1404-07), where she links the religious connotations of the shepherd to the political realm. In this work, Christine instructs the prince on how to lead a virtuous lifestyle and become a wise leader, lessons whose importance eclipses the humble source (1.1). After detailing the value of a wise master who oversees the prince's education (1.3) and the essential morals that he should instill in the prince (1.4-1.8), Christine introduces the moral responsibilities of the prince with the rubric "How the

Good Prince Must Resemble the Good Shepherd” (SW 206). She then explains that the compassionate and selfless ruler must protect his people, following the model of Christ:

The good prince who loves his country will guard his people carefully by the example of the good shepherd. He guards his sheep and takes great care to defend them against wolves and harmful animals, to keep them clean and in good health, so that they can grow and yield profits.... (206)

Le bon prince qui aimera son pays gardera le siens soigneusement a l'exemple du bon pasteur, si comme il garde ses oeilles, lequel par grande cure pour les deffendre des loups et des males bestes, et qu'elles soient nettement tenues et en santé, afin qu'elles puissent acroistre et fructifier et donner laine entiere.... (13)

In this quotation, Christine underlines the practical responsibilities of the prince who oversees the prosperity of his subjects. The ideal ruler not only provides protection for his subjects but also ensures their well-being.

Thus, Christine explores the metaphor of a good master as a shepherd on three levels in her works. On a personal level, in her poems she presents her husband as a shepherd whose death leaves her wandering without guidance and vulnerable to predatory animals. In her other texts, she clearly establishes how Etienne's virtues enabled him to become a good master under whose guidance their family prospered, similar to the image of a shepherd in Christine political application of the metaphor. On a communal level, she invokes the image of a shepherd when describing the compassionate and protective nature of the ideal ruler. The perfect prince must defend his people from harm and facilitate their prosperity. Christine draws inspiration for this advice from the Good Shepherd, whose example on a spiritual level is the epitome of guidance and protection and would have resonated deeply with her medieval Christian audience.

The shepherd metaphor has a substantial Christian foundation, appearing in both the Old and New Testaments (Taylor 117). Following this metaphor, Christian leaders act as a guiding shepherd for the fold or congregation. In the Old Testament, the Lord directs Moses to honor Joshua as a church leader of the children of Israel, stating “...

lest the people of the Lord be as sheep without a shepherd” (Num. 27.17).⁷² The image of wandering sheep reappears in the New Testament. When Jesus begins to heal the sick and preach to the multitudes, the people are described with the same language that we saw in her widowhood poems: “like sheep that have no shepherd” (Matt. 9.36).⁷³ Christine evokes the Christian iconography of a protective shepherd with a direct Biblical allusion when she correlates widowhood to the metaphor of a lost sheep without its shepherd in her poems.

Furthermore, the Bible accentuates the role of the guiding shepherd. In addition to Joshua, the Lord later commands that David lead the people of Israel away from a sinful life: “my servant David shall be king over them, and they shall have one shepherd” (Ezek. 37.24). The Old Testament also prophesizes the parable of the Good Shepherd in the New Testament, in which Jesus is the shepherd of the Christian fold: “I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David: he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd” (Ezek. 34.23). This prophecy is fulfilled in the book of John. Jesus represents himself as the one true shepherd for the Christian fold (John 10). He proclaims, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep” (John 10.11).⁷⁴ The shepherd’s presence provides comfort in times of distress, accompanying and protecting the faithful believer in the walk of life. In the parable, Jesus even mentions the predatory nature of the wolf in the absence of a protective shepherd (John 10.12), an image that Christine applies to her widowhood in ballade 14 and the *Book of the Body Politic*.

Christine employs this shepherd imagery for other Christian leaders in her works. For example, Saint Margaret, who Christine includes in the *City of Ladies* (3.4), was a virgin shepherdess. She introduces Margaret with the comment that her “legend is very well known” (206) (“la legend est assez sceue”; *Città* 440). Margaret resisted the advances of Olybrius, a prefect, and was tortured in a dungeon. As legend goes, Margaret defeated a dragon, an incarnation of Satan, and was beheaded. She then

⁷² This metaphor recurs in 1 Kings 22.17 and 2 Chron. 18.16.

⁷³ This metaphor recurs in Mark 6.34.

⁷⁴ See also the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15.3-7.

became the patron saint of pregnant women, protecting women in labor. Moreover, in Christine's last work, the *Tale of Joan of Arc*, she exalts the actions of Joan: "But after all, a woman -- a simple shepherdess -- braver than any man ever was in Rome!" (*Ditié* 44; sec. 25) ("...Mais, toute somme,/ Une femme -- simple bergiere --/ Plus preux qu'onc homs ne fut à Romme!"; 32-33; lines 197-99). In restoring the throne to the exiled French heir, Charles VII, Joan protected the entire nation, a country which viewed itself as the most Christian nation (*City of Ladies* 2.35).⁷⁵ Christine directly precedes this praise of Joan with a Biblical allusion to Joshua, who we noted in the Old Testament shepherd metaphor of a Christian leader. God answered Joshua's prayer to protect the people of Israel from a massive Amorite attack through the miraculous act of preventing the sun from setting, allowing Joshua to defeat the Amorites (Josh. 10.12-14; SW 256). Considering the reverence with which the Christianity regards the shepherd, alternately equating this role with Christian leaders and with Christ himself, and how Christine herself commemorates the protective role of the shepherd in her other works in both the spiritual and temporal world, she elevates the memory of her late husband to an exemplary Christian husband by employing this iconographic metaphor.

Prudence

While the virtue of prudence may not be in the forefront of the modern consciousness, this quality is an essential trait of leadership that appealed to the medieval reader. In Larousse's Middle French dictionary, the term *prudent* indicates someone who has foresight or good sense (511). As previously noted in the *Path of Long Study*, Christine connects prudence with wisdom, citing the Biblical authority of Solomon in the book of Proverbs when discussing the positive effects of these virtues on one's life (408; lines 5427-32). Although she cites a specific biblical verse through the voice of Lady Wisdom (Prov. 2.10-12), this is not an isolated message in the Proverbs. The importance of prudence, recurrently presented as a companion of wisdom, is a major theme throughout this book that appears though direct as well as

⁷⁵ Christine also wrote a poem, the *Tale of the Shepherdess* (1403), which differs from the traditional pastoral poems of knightly amorous conquest. Her shepherdess is a knowledgeable narrator who is troubled by her emotions; see SW, 45-59.

figurative language.⁷⁶ We can see this partnership of virtues in several striking examples in Proverbs: the advice to consider wisdom a sister and prudence a friend (7.4), to value wisdom more than gold and prudence more than silver (16.16), and to build a house with wisdom and strengthen it with prudence (24.3). In these examples, the Bible represents wisdom as the preeminent virtue to cultivate, with prudence as a worthy supporting virtue. In Christine's intertextual portrait of Etienne, we can find both virtues present; but, Christine places a stronger emphasis on Etienne's wisdom. She commonly associates his prudence with wisdom. If we examine how Christine treats the virtue of prudence in her works, including who merits this accolade besides her husband, we can gain a deeper understanding of the nature of this compliment.

Christine memorializes Etienne as a prudent man through Christine-protagonist's narratives in two of her allegorical works – the *Path of Long Study* and *Christine's Vision*. As seen in the earlier quoted passage from the *Path of Long Study*, Christine-protagonist lists prudence second, after wisdom, when enumerating her husband's admirable characteristics (92; line 82). Her description emphasizes the extent of his virtues and her delight with such a commendable husband. Later in this text, we can find Christine's biblical citation from Proverbs, which suggests that the ideal Christian man will be wise and prudent. Since Etienne's description corresponds to Solomon's insight, Christine offers Etienne as an exemplar of virtue. For a point of comparison, who else does Christine recognize as prudent in the *Path of Long Study*?

Apart from her husband, Christine only distinguishes one individual from contemporary France as a prudent man in the *Path of Long Study*. Towards the end of the work, she introduces the late king Charles V as a prudent ruler during a debate on the magnitude of wisdom (382; line 5008). Again, Christine pairs prudence with wisdom in Lady Wisdom's discussion of a virtuous character, similar to Christine-protagonist's list of Etienne's virtues earlier in the text. For Charles V, Lady Wisdom focuses on the king's record as an exceptional leader whose good sense resolved conflicts:

His great prudence was evident, because his good sense saved him more
than the aide of his vassals in terrible adversity. His good sense permitted

⁷⁶ See also Prov. 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 3.5, 3.13, 3.19, 4.1, 4.5, 4.7, 5.1, 7.4, 8.1, 8.14, 9.6, 9.10, 10.23, 14.7, 16.16, 18.2, 19.8, 21.30, 23.4, 24.3, and 28.16.

him to bring his enemies to an end and chase them out of France. (my trans)

Sa grant prudence bien paru,/ Car par son sens fu secouru/ En ses
aversitez greigneurs/ Plus que par l'ayde de seigneurs./ De ses ennemis
au dessus/ Vint par son sens, et traire ensus/ Les fist et saillir hors de
France. (384; lines 5035-41)

Lady Wisdom reiterates that prudence is a source of Charles V's political success, a statement that echoes her quotation of Solomon that indicates that this virtue can prevent misfortune. The prudent and wise leader can improve the lives of others through his heightened sense of morality.

The legendary figures of classical antiquity fare better in the *Path of Long Study*, implicitly suggesting the lack of prudence among Christine's contemporaries. In this same debate on the ideal characteristics of a ruler, Lady Wisdom selects three classical men as befitting of the virtue of prudence. First, Lady Wisdom lists Socrates as a wise and prudent man, who on account of these virtues was an admirable leader (390, 392; lines 5136-40). As we have previously noted, Socrates visited the Fountain of Wisdom in this same text, an image that Christine used to link her husband to other wise men. Lady Wisdom then ascribes the virtue of prudence twice over to Ulysses (398, 400; lines 5271-5280). According to her, Ulysses was able to confront tremendous ordeals, including tempests, the Cyclops, his descent to Hell, and Circe, "with the aid of his great prudence, wisdom, and great foresight" (my trans) ("Par l'ayde de sa grant prudence,/ Sapïence et grant providence"; 400; lines 5279-80). A final classical figure who Lady Wisdom describes as prudent is Julius Caesar. As the allegorical figure of Wisdom describes the ideal characteristics of a prince, she recalls Gaius Julius Solinus's description of the Roman Emperor (435; note 1): "there was never a man ... who acted with more prudence when necessary" (my trans) ("oncques homme ... ne a faire/ Chose prudent et necessaire"; 436; lines 5874-78). In all three instances, Lady Wisdom again links the virtue of prudence with wisdom. The actions of these revered classical heroes, men who figure among France's illustrious ancestors according to the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, uphold Christian notions of virtue as seen in Solomon's words.

In the *Path of Long Study*, Lady Wisdom illustrates the virtues of prudence and wisdom through the legends of exemplary men – King Charles V, Socrates, Ulysses, and Julius Caesar, all leaders and heroes, among whose exalted company Christine-protagonist places her husband.

Similar to the *Path of Long Study*, we have also seen Christine-protagonist's repeated effort to praise Etienne's prudence in the previous quotes from *Christine's Vision*. In section 3.6, Christine-protagonist mentions her husband's prudence three times in the original French: "prudent," "sa saige prudence," and "sage et prudent conquest et gouvernement" (99-100; lines 3, 4, 10). In these examples, Christine-protagonist ascribes Etienne's promising career and agreeable relationships with others to his prudence, a conclusion that parallels Lady Wisdom's words about Charles V's successful reign in the *Path of Long Study*.

Earlier, in part 1 of *Christine's Vision*, the Crowned Lady openly discusses the vices prevalent in her country. When addressing the prevalence of avarice in her realm, she mentions that prudence can help combat this vice (1.16).⁷⁷ Yet, according to the Crowned Lady, few men are prudent: "they are always in the minority" (26) ("c'est petit"; 31; line 84). In this quote, the authoritative voice of the Crowned Lady explicitly expresses what Christine implicitly implies in the *Path of Long Study* – prudent men are scarce in her society. Since Christine-protagonist invokes the virtue of prudence so frequently in the portrait of her husband in *Christine's Vision*, her endeavor to memorialize her husband as an exceptional man is evident.

In Christine's other works, she draws attention to the value of prudence. In particular, she imparts advice to her son Jean de Castel in *Christine's Teachings for Her Son* (1400). Christine instructs, "Study seriously to inquire/ How Prudence you can acquire" (Willard, *Writings* 59; lines 9-10) ("Tant t'estudies a enquerre/ Que prudence puisses acquerre"; Roy 3: 28). She deems Prudence the "mother of all virtues" (line 11) ("celle est des vertus la mere"), explaining that she will protect him from the malevolence of Fortune. This advice clearly illustrates its magnitude in the moral education of her son. For Christine, being armed with the virtue of prudence is

⁷⁷ In a similar manner, Christine places Lady Wisdom's speech that concerns wisdom and prudence after a discussion of the negative effects of wealth in the *Path of Long Study*.

invaluable when confronting misfortune, advice that echoes Solomon's words in the *Path of Long Study*. After she wrote this advice to Jean, Christine solidified Etienne's portrait as a prudent and wise man in the *Path of Long Study* and *Christine's Vision*, as if she sought to ensure that her son follow his father's written example.

Loyalty

Christine draws attention to another virtuous aspect of Etienne's persona -- his loyalty. As an exemplary Christian husband, Etienne upholds the Church's position on marriage as a monogamous union, a concept that evolved during the Middle Ages. Polygamy was actively practiced by the Merovingian kings and nobles. For instance, Chlotar I (497-562), the son of Clovis, maintained numerous wives, estimated from two to as many as four wives at one time (Gies 53). During the Carolingian era, monogamy along with concubinage gradually prevailed as seen in the well-known example of Charlemagne. He lived monogamously with each of his four wives, although he also retained concubines (Gies 87-88).

The Church's espousal of monogamy, as seen through Gratian's canon law (c.1142), had a sound basis in scripture. God forbade adultery in the Ten Commandments that he gave to Moses, a decree that is repeated in both the Old and New Testaments.⁷⁸ The New Testament clarifies that marriage to another, while one's wife or husband is still living constitutes adultery.⁷⁹ Marital fidelity is a notion that had both spiritual and practical significance to the medieval world. Since marriage reflected the mystic union between the Church and Christ as we have seen in Eph. 5.23-25, this union must be permanent and loyal. From a practical standpoint, the Church sought to resolve conflicts over legitimacy through prohibiting adultery and promoting monogamy in the patriarchal system of medieval France. Loyalty was also important aspect of marriage for Jean Gerson. He criticized the *Romance of the Rose* in his treatise because he found in this work, "the dissipation of loyalty outside and within marriage" (McWebb 303; lines 635-36).

⁷⁸ See Exod. 20.14; Deut. 5.18; Matt. 5.27; Luke 18.20; and Rom. 13.9.

⁷⁹ See Matt. 5.32; Matt. 19.9; Mark 10.11-12; and Luke 16.18.

Christine features Etienne's fidelity in *Fortune's Transformation*. A closer look at her descriptions of this virtue reveals that she pairs this compliment with the endearment *ami*. Christine-protagonist first refers to Etienne's loyalty when recalling their wedding vows. She declares that during the wedding ceremony, "the youth promised by his faith to be a true lover and loyal companion" (101) ("le jouvencel m'a promis/ Par sa foy estre vrayz amis/ Et compaignie me feroit/ Loyal"; 1: 38; lines 933-36, 38). Christine ends line 934 with the plural form of *ami*. She couples this rhyme with *promis* from the preceding verse, forming a meaningful poetic unit. Etienne's vow also promises exclusive companionship, supporting the Biblical view of the marital union in which the husband and wife become one flesh: "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. 2.24).⁸⁰

Shortly afterwards in *Fortune's Transformation*, Christine-protagonist confirms that her husband did fulfill his vows. She relates that she was honored by his love, since "he was so faithful to me, and so good" (102) ("Si me fu si loyal ami/ Et si bon..."; 1: 39; lines 995-96). In the original language of this example, Christine-protagonist employs *loyal ami* as an epithet for her husband, a description that she expounds upon further in the text. When Christine-protagonist recalls her reaction to her husband's death, she reflects, "he had been such a loyal lover to me that there would never be another like him, or even resembling him in any way" (105) ("tant m'estoit loyal ami/ Que jamais ne sera ami/ Pareil, ne semblable, en nul cas"; 1: 49; lines 1273-75). Christine ends these consecutive lines with the repetition of the epithet *ami*: "loyal ami" and "jamais ne sera ami." She begins the next verse with the enjambment "Pareil." Through the use of the future tense in her all encompassing declaration, Christine-protagonist underlines that her faithful lover can never be replaced, a vow that explains her desire to remain a widow.

Christine also praises the late king Charles V as a contemporary example of a loyal spouse. Approximately one year after writing *Fortune's Transformation*, she explicitly demonstrates her knowledge of the religious view of marital fidelity in her monumental biography *Charles V*. She titles section 1.29, "Here is the virtue of chastity in the person of King Charles" (my trans) ("Cy dit de la vertu de chasteté en la personne

⁸⁰ This precept appears throughout the New Testament. See Matt. 19.5-6, Mark 10.8, and Eph. 5.31.

du roy Charles”; 1: 82). Christine then asserts that Charles V was a chaste Christian husband in his marriage to Jeanne de Bourbon: “He remained faithful to his marriage according to God’s will” (“Il gardoit son marriage loiaument et selon Dieu”; 1: 82). Christine establishes Charles V as a wise ruler and an exemplary Christian husband, drawing attention to his faithful nature. As with the other Christian virtues of wisdom and prudence, we can sense Christine’s concern for creating literature that provides moral role models. Etienne exhibits traits that mirror the behavior of the wise king and follow religious teachings. Christine’s intertextual portrait of Etienne presents not only a handsome young man but also a moral husband who embodies Christian virtues. She further develops his exemplary persona through characteristics that reflect this dual heritage of worldly and spiritual ideals.

Additional Characteristics

A Loving Partner

After considering Christine’s repeated use of the epithet *ami* and viewing numerous passages that depict Etienne, we can already glimpse the amicable nature of their marital relationship. Christine offers her marriage as an example of a loving partnership, a concept that challenges misogynist thought and certain notions in courtly love literature. Christine demonstrates that mutual love is possible within a religiously sanctioned relationship.

Viewed as more than a practical arrangement, Christian marriage incorporates notions of love, based on biblical scriptures that praise a loving marriage. While Christian doctrine does prescribe the submission of a wife to her husband, as seen in the earlier discussion of Christine’s respectful epithets for Etienne, this concept can be misconstrued if taken out of context. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he addresses this topic (5.21-33). After Paul states, “Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord” (5.22), he continues with a directive to men, as well:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered himself up for it: That he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: That he might present it to himself a glorious church,

not having spot or wrinkle, or any; such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the church: Because we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (Eph. 5.25-30)

Paul compares the marital union, a union that he subsequently refers to as a “great sacrament” (5.32), to Christ’s relationship with the Church which in itself reflects a sacred and mysterious bond.⁸¹ Following Christ’s example, a husband should love, nourish, and cherish his wife. To focus solely on Paul’s words about the rightful subservience of a wife ignores the reciprocal nature of an ideal marriage and the responsibilities of a husband. This biblical model emphasizes a mutually respectful marital relationship.

The illustrious medieval philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) viewed “the union of man and woman” as a reflection of natural law (Sigmund 51). Moreover, he supported the notion of *maxima amicitia* in marriage, or a “union of two hearts” in which friendship is the basis of marriage (Margolis, “Marriage” 607; Langer 128, note 29). For Aquinas, marriage could form a “perfect friendship,” offering the benefits of procreation, physical intimacy, and love (Langer 128, note 29). Discussions of the nature and definition of friendship appear throughout classical literature. However, several distinguishing features of friendship include shared interests, a developed relationship over time, and virtuous characters (Langer 20, 22).

During Christine’s time, Jean Gerson endorsed Thomas Aquinas’ view on marriage. In his *Treatise against the Romance of the Rose* (1402), he criticizes Jean de Meun for not praising marriage, a union “which is ordained by Nature” (McWebb 295; line 485-86). Besides the numerous examples of unhealthy marriages in this work, we see explicit statements such as: “Marriage is an evil bond” (135; line 8803). Additionally, the allegorical figure Ami imparts strategic advice to the lover in order to fulfill an illicit relationship instead of recommending marriage. In medieval society, the marital union

⁸¹ Similarly, marriage appears as a spiritual union in the lives of saints whose mystical marriage with God represents a “transforming union.” See Poulain.

achieved perfection in the marriage of Mary and Joseph, promoted as the ideal marriage (Brooke 53). Gerson also explores this theme in his *Josephina* (1417) through his portrayal of the Holy Family. He focuses on the companionship of Mary and Joseph; they perform daily tasks together as a harmonious couple while Jesus is at play (McGuire 114).⁸²

In courtly love literature, there are various forms of the love relationship. James Schultz distinguishes four patterns of intimacy based on the dynamics of power or control within the relationship. Apart from tracing the pattern of physical intimacy, he distinguishes two models that demonstrate a dominant-subordinate relationship between the lovers – entailing favors and implied contracts. The last model demonstrates a reciprocal relationship, which he points out appears in the example of Chrétien de Troyes' Erec and Enide (145-149). For instance, as these characters gaze at each other, "Even their hearts beat as one" (48; line 1505). Although this couple exhibit mutual love in marriage in a courtly romance, I would like to point out that this relationship results in negative consequences as Erec loses his honor because he is consumed by his loving marriage. Erec's new bride Enide reproaches him for renouncing his chivalric duties after their marriage. His recreance or *recreantise* propels the storyline, as Erec attempts to regain his honor.⁸³ As we shall note, a reciprocal love relationship is an essential feature of Christine's marriage. However, Christine portrays such a bond as an ideal relationship whose only downfall is the intervention of death.

Christine's language in the *Path of Long Study* echoes the paradigm of a harmonious marriage, in particular the theory of *maxima amicitia*. Christine-protagonist emphasizes the closeness of her relationship with Etienne:

Our love and our two hearts were completely in accord; much more than between brothers and sisters, our two wills were one, whether it was a question of joy or of sorrow. (62)

⁸² Late medieval art offers an ambiguous interpretation of Joseph, as some works feature him as a "saintly spouse" and others depict him as an aging secular husband. Sheingorn explores this dichotomy, noting that books, such as conduct books and Books of Hours, encouraged girls to marry older men through exemplarity and images such as those of Mary and Joseph. See Sheingorn, 84-85 and 90-92.

⁸³ After a series of adventures, Erec redeems his good reputation as a warrior and is crowned alongside his wife in a double coronation ceremony. This ending portrays their marriage as an equal partnership.

Si avions toute ordenee/ Nostre amour et noz .ii. cuers,/ Trop plus que
freres ne seurs,/ En un seul entier vouloir,/ Fust de joye ou de douloir. (92;
lines 86-90)

In this excerpt, Christine-protagonist features herself as a respected companion of her husband. Etienne's treatment of his wife upholds Paul's command to love his wife as Christ loves the Church. Christine-protagonist describes her marital relationship with language that accentuates the unity of the couple – their love was mutual and their will and emotions were harmonized. This accord intimates that the couple spent considerable time together, especially in light of Christine-protagonist's assertion that their relationship was even closer than that of siblings. Her allusion to sibling relationships brings to mind another Biblical passage, which features the loving couple in Solomon's Canticles of Canticles. This Old Testament book captures the intimacy of a newly joined couple.⁸⁴ The husband repeatedly refers to his wife as "my sister, my spouse," demonstrating their close marital relationship (4.9-10, 4.12, 5.1-2). Christine-protagonist's marital relationship visibly illustrates the Biblical ideal of a married couple becoming one flesh. Although Christine wrote the *Path of Long Study* thirteen years after Etienne's death, she captures the enduring nature of love through Christine-protagonist's sentiment: "For the great love that linked our hearts together does not allow me to forget him" (62) ("Car la grant amour ne laisse,/ Qui noz cuers en une lesse/ Mist tous .ii., que je l'oublie"; 94; lines 135-37). Again, we witness Christine's effort's to highlight the unified nature of their loving marital relationship. In the original French, she employs language that closely reflects the scriptural image of two becoming one.

In the previous discussion of Christine's use of endearing epithets such as *ami* and *compaignon* for her husband, I noted additional references to Etienne's pleasant companionship in Christine's allegorical works: *Fortune's Transformation* (1: 38; line 937), the *Path of Long Study* (92; lines 91-94), and *Christine's Vision* (3.6, 3.7). In this last text, Christine-protagonist elaborates on her reaction to the loss of her husband's companionship. She expresses her regrets that, "his sweet company and the departed joy ... had lasted but ten years for me" (111) ("sa doulce compaignie et la joie passee,

⁸⁴ Interestingly, Jean Gerson imparts some advice about the intended audience of Canticles in his *Treatise against the Romance of the Rose*. He writes that theologians recommend that this book be read by persons over age thirty, see McWebb, 291.

qui ne mes X ans avoit duré”; 100; lines 13-14). Christine-protagonist indicates a continued positive marital relationship throughout the ten year span. This account of her marriage reveals Christine’s staunch support of marital fidelity, a position that challenged the contemporary penchant for extramarital affairs that were romanticized under the tradition of courtly love. Christine-protagonist’s husband was not only a faithful lover but also a loyal companion, characteristics that reflected the model Christian marital union and negated the desire for extramarital affairs.

As documented by Christine, Charles V had a loyal and affectionate marriage to Jeanne de Bourbon. She provides details of their peaceful relationship, emphasizing the exemplary conduct of the monarch who spent time with his wife and respected her:

In such a manner, the king treated his loyal spouse, whom he always held in peace and love He was often in her company, always with a joyful countenance and very pleasant and amiable manner ... and thus in all respects he behaved with respect, love, accord and peacefulness towards her. (my trans)

En tel maniere le sage roy gouvernoit sa loial espouse, laquelle il tenoit en toute paix et amour En sa compagnie souvent estoit et tousjours à joyeux visage et moz gracieux plaisans et esbantans ... et ainsi cellui en tous cas la tenoit en souffisance, amour, unité et paix. (1: 57; 1.20)

Christine’s portrait unveils the personal aspect of the king’s character as a good husband. In this excerpt, she highlights Charles V’s companionship and respectful comportment towards his wife. She also draws attention to the peaceful unity of their relationship. These characteristics of the marital relationship of Charles V mirror Christine’s own descriptions of her marriage to Etienne. She demonstrates that the exemplary conduct of Charles V towards his wife can be emulated by his subjects in everyday life. Christine’s personal experience validates this idea. She represents her husband Etienne as a loving companion who treated his wife with respect.

Similar to Christine’s use of metaphors to illustrate her husband’s role as a good master through the sea captain and shepherd metaphors, She depicts the unified nature of their relationship though figurative language. Christine strives to portray marriage as

a natural and monogamous union through the personification of turtledoves, highlighting their faithful character. Several of her short lyric poems that reflect upon widowhood contain this metaphor.

First, Christine employs the metaphor in ballade 14 from *One Hundred Ballades*. She begins the ballade with an explanation of her suffering; she is in mourning for her “sweet lover” ‘mon doulz ami’ (1: 15; lines 1-7). In the second stanza, Christine establishes their closeness when she states that she happily spent her childhood and first youth with him (lines 8-14). She finishes the ballade with two metaphors in the third stanza that provide further details about her marital relationship – the lone turtledove and the shepherdless sheep that I previously discussed.

While the shepherd and wolf imagery expresses Christine’s vulnerability without her husband’s valuable protection, the turtledove conveys another sentiment. In ballade 14, Christine writes: “I’m like a turtledove without its mate, who turns away from greenery and heads towards aridity” (SW 6) (“Com turtre sui sanz per qui ne desire/ Nulle verdour, ains ver le sec s’adrece”; lines 15-16). The beginning of the metaphor portrays a solitary turtledove that for an undisclosed reason has lost its mate. She portrays the turtledoves as a defined pair – the living turtledove and the mate, using singular nouns. Christine’s language suggests that turtledoves innately seek monogamous companionship like humans, following Thomas Aquinas’ theory of natural law. Moreover, this image depicts the lone turtledove rejecting the fecundity of nature for a barren landscape, an action contrary to a bird’s natural instinct that reflects its personification. Since each turtledove has but one natural mate, no replacement is possible even upon the loss of this mate. Jane Taylor observes that “the turtle-dove above all stands as the very emblem of tragic conjugal faithfulness in most bestiaries” (117). Christine accurately compares herself to this personified turtledove. She was widowed at the still youthful age of 25, but refused to remarry and bear more children. Christine affirms this image of the chaste turtledove through the poem’s refrain in which she promises to forever shed tears for her loss (lines 7, 14, 21). Taylor remarks that through the turtledove imagery in this ballade, Christine demonstrates her “deliberate choice” to remain alone (121).

Christine repeats this same combination of metaphors in rondeau 1, again following the image of a lone turtledove with the shepherdless sheep. However, in this poem, the turtledove image dominates. She not only opens the short poem with this image, but also employs the opening line as the refrain: “I’m like a turtledove without its mate, all alone” (my trans) (“Com turtre suis sanz per toute seulete”; 1: 147; lines 1, 7, 12). At this time, Christine duplicates line 15 of ballade 14, adding the development “all alone” with the term *seulete* that has inspired considerable scholarship. Furthermore, she uses the endearment “my sweet mate” ‘mon doulz per’ for her husband in line 4 of this rondeau, selecting the same term *per* as the turtledoves in the refrain.⁸⁵ Thus, Christine adapts the endearment for her husband in previous poems, *mon doulz ami*, which conveys the loving companionship of their relationship, to the figurative context of turtledoves. In the turtledove metaphor, Christine’s use of the term *per* underlines the natural desire for a monogamous union.

Christine explores the theme of a lonely turtledove into her collection of poems *Jeux à vendre*. Amidst light-hearted poems that sell or present flowers, musical instruments, and animals, she inserts the intertextual image of the lost turtledove in poem 12: “I will offer you the turtledove,/ All alone and by herself,/ Without her mate she flies astray,/ As thus I remain” (my trans) (“Je vous vens la turterelle./ -- Seulete et toute a par elle/ Sanz per s’envole esgarée,/ Ainsi suis-je demourée”; Roy 1: 190). As in the two previous poems, Christine describes the turtledove with the exact expression “without its mate” ‘sanz per.’ In this instance, she also combines two elements from rondeau 1 -- the term *seulete* that she uses with the turtledove (lines 1, 7, 12) and the notion of being lost or astray that she employs with the shepherdless sheep (line 2). Christine clarifies that this image reflects her state in line 4.

Christine’s turtledove metaphor has roots in Christian doctrine. Similar to the use of the shepherd metaphor, she carefully selects an image that contains religious overtones to validate her support of marriage as a Christian union. Christine’s metaphor of a pair of turtledoves recalls the poetic love story in Solomon’s Canticles of Canticles (Taylor 117). In the couple’s loving dialogue, the turtledove becomes a flattering remark. For example, the husband compliments his beloved wife’s face: “Thy cheeks are

⁸⁵ Taylor translates *per* as “peer, equal,” 118.

beautiful as the turtledove's, thy neck as jewels" (1.9). An even closer link between Christine's poems and the Biblical association of turtledoves with a married couple involves the use of the word *dove* as an endearment. As the husband in *Canticles* repeatedly calls his beloved "my dove" (2.10, 2.14, 5.2, 6.8), so Christine refers to her husband as her turtledove mate -- "my sweet mate" 'mon doulz per' in rondeau 1 (line 4). One of the Biblical examples of the endearment in *Canticles* has particular significance that unites the threads of Christine's portrait of her husband. The beloved calls his wife, "my sister, my love, my dove" (5.2). We have already seen how Christine's description of her marital relationship in the *Path of Long Study* alludes to the first portion of this quote -- the close bond of siblings. In her poems, Christine draws further inspiration from the Biblical precedent of figurative language that uses the bird as a term of endearment.

The presence of turtledoves in *Canticles* is associated with the arrival of spring. The husband describes nature's fertility after the winter, "The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle[dove] is heard in our land" (2.12). He includes this in a loving dialogue that encourages intimacy between the couple, a reference that alludes to human fertility as part of nature's cycle. In Christine's ballade 14, she presents a contrasting image of the turtledove in mourning, which turns from verdant nature to seek a barren landscape due to the loss of her mate.

A final observation on the Biblical significance of turtledoves concerns the presentation of Jesus. Eight days after Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple of Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph, who exemplified the ideal marital couple for medieval Christianity, presented their son to Simeon and the prophetess Anna (Luke 2.21-39). Following Christian tradition, a pair of turtledoves or pigeons was sacrificed to purify Mary after childbirth (Luke 2.24). The pair of turtledoves, which were intended as a sin offering and a burnt offering, symbolically cleansed Mary from procreation. This ritual, which dates to the time of Moses, counterbalances the fertile symbolism of the turtledoves through death (Lev. 12.8). The image of the Holy Family with a pair of turtledoves appears in numerous medieval works that scholars have previously

established as texts that were familiar to Christine such as Jacques de Voragine's *La Légende dorée* (Reno and Dulac xxxix).⁸⁶

Besides Christine's explicit praise of Etienne in her texts and her figurative language that evokes turtledoves in her poems, she employs another technique in her poems to describe Etienne's loving and respectful nature -- dialogue. While Christine is still the author behind the work, in ballade 26 of *Other Ballades* she chooses to filter her voice and place Etienne as an active character in the center stage of the poem's narrative. Through the use of direct and indirect speech, Christine gives voice to her late husband's persona, a voice that reveals a respectful and sensitive man concerned with the insecurities of a young bride.

Christine weaves one theme throughout ballade 26 -- the sweetness of the marital relationship as seen in her personal example.⁸⁷ In the title line, she describes marriage as "a sweet thing" 'doulce chose' (line 1) and introduces her husband with the familiar descriptions "good and wise" 'bon et sage' (line 3). Through the use of epithets, Christine illustrates the reciprocal nature of their loving relationship. She refers to her husband both with the direct title of "husband" 'mary' (line 3) and the epithet "the gentle man" 'le doulz' that appears in the refrain (lines 8, 16, 24, 28). In return, when Etienne declares that God joined them together, he calls his wife "sweet beloved" 'doulce amie' (line 19). While Charity Canon Willard translates these two endearments slightly differently, we can see in the original French how Christine tangibly demonstrates Paul's notion of mutual love in an ideal marriage by employing the same loving epithets.

Christine also uses language that evokes a courtly love story. She describes their first night together and the hundred kisses that he bestowed on her (line 14). Christine emphasizes the sweetness of his words or his "doulz langage" in the third and fourth stanzas (line 17). Through indirect speech, she recalls his declaration that "he is completely mine" ("il est tout mien"; line 26). Etienne himself speaks in a courtly manner, using a formal register of language and stating that he is at her service, which we will examine shortly (lines 19-20). Yet, he prefaces this statement with a sense of

⁸⁶ For example, the manuscript BnF f.fr. 241, a Parisian manuscript of the *Legenda aurea* from 1348, contains the image of the birds in the Presentation at the Temple (fol. 62). See the library's online image database, <<http://mandragore.bnf.fr>>.

⁸⁷ See chapter 3, 73.

divine providence (line 18), a statement that echoes his wife's earlier remark about God sanctioning their marriage (line 4). Thus Etienne's first words mention God. She presents her husband as both a courtly and pious man, that is a man who lives in the world and exhibits certain traits of courtliness but who is primarily guided by his faith.

Christine's poem captures the joy and intimacy of their wedding night in an elegant manner, similar to Solomon's Canticles of Canticles. She remembers that Etienne was courteous and caring on their first night together. Indeed, she praises his self-control and specifies that he demonstrated no "base conduct" 'villennie' (lines 9-15, 21-22). Etienne's behavior further reflects the convention of disciplined conduct found in courtly love relationships. When remarking on the physical aspects of the love relationship, Schultz comments: "Courtly lovers are not merely expected to exhibit courtly self-discipline in general. They are also supposed to exhibit restraint and self-control in love" (162). Christine chooses a refrain that draws attention to her husband's considerate nature: "And surely the gentle man loves me well" ("Et certes le doulz m'aime bien"; lines 8, 16, 24, 28). In light of her blatant criticism of the vulgarity in the *Romance of the Rose* – both in its language and content, it not surprising that Christine places a strong emphasis on Etienne's respectful behavior and language. Both Christine and Jean Gerson condemned the use of vulgar language in the *Romance of the Rose* (McWebb 118-23). As previously seen in her censure of the Jealous Husband, Christine draws attention to his "shameful and insulting speech" (McWebb 123; line 106) ("les deshonestetés et laides paroles"; 122; line 110).

In the final stanza of ballade 26, Christine addresses the princes in the envoy – a choice that may be surprising given the intimate subject matter of the poem. Certainly, the courtly aspects of the poem would have reflected the royal interest in courtly literature. However, Christine's portrait of a good marriage would have also appealed to the princes for political reasons since marriage played an important role in maintaining a stable society in countries that were based on a hereditary monarchy. The king, considered the head of the body politic in medieval thought, could ensure a stable society through the good health of his relationships. His marriage, a fundamental component to building the king's dynasty, served as an example for his many subjects. At this time, Charles VI and Ysabel were deplorable marital role models for their

country, especially in contrast to the preceding monarch: Charles fluctuated between manic episodes and the queen lived a separate life in her residence at St. Paul. Several years later in 1405, the king was officially given a mistress, Odette de Champdivers, who was referred to as the *petite reine*. This unprecedented arrangement protected Ysabel from Charles' violent behavior (Autrand 415-16).

Etienne's attentive comportment in ballade 26 resembles an earlier ballade from this collection – ballade 8. In this poem, Christine draws attention to the fact that her husband's example offsets the poor examples of "jealous or angry husbands" (my trans) ("jaloux, rechignez et pleins d'yre"; 1. 216; line 4). She employs a variation of the familiar epithet *le doulz* for Etienne, calling him her "sweet master" 'le doulz sire' (line 22). He is not jealous of her friends and welcomes them, as she states with another allusion to the *Romance of the Rose* by mentioning the character's name Bel Accueil (lines 21-23). Christine highlights Etienne's pleasing and courtly nature, explaining that he doesn't argue with her and wants everything that she wants: "sanz moy desdire, Il vault trestout quanque je vueil" (lines 7-8). Indeed, this last statement is the refrain of the ballade (lines 16, 24, 28). Yet, contrary to the latter ballade, Christine does not address the princes in the envoy. Her concluding stanza declares that her husband is without equal "il n'a nul pareil" (line 26), a sentiment that we have seen developed in the *Path of Long Study* (lines 78-83) and in *Fortune's Transformation* (lines 1273-75).

A Courtly Manner

In *Christine's Vision*, Christine provides various background details about Etienne that situate him in the author's contemporary French society (3.4). When Christine-protagonist first refers to her husband, she describes his education and origins. She states that her intended husband was: "a young scholar and graduate, well-born, of noble Picardian family" (110) ("ung jeune escolier gradué, bien né et de nobles parens de Picardie"; 97; lines 28-29). Etienne's noble lineage, along with his father's position in the king's household, facilitated his entry into the king's service. As Christine-protagonist pays tribute to Etienne's considerable knowledge and virtues, she also describes Etienne's professional life, informing the reader of his amiable reception at court and relationship with others.

Christine-protagonist relates how her husband gained his court appointment as a royal notary and secretary with verisimilitude in *Christine's Vision* (3.4). The Prince selected Etienne for the vacant position because of his aptitude ("souffisance"; 98). While Christine-protagonist mentions Etienne's ability, she also points out that he maintained a privileged relationship at court. Etienne was a "beloved servant" (110) ("tres amé serviteur"; 98) whose presence the king commanded at his side. She states that this office was awarded by the Prince, which at this time would refer to Charles V. The king died later that year on 16 September 1380 (Reno and Dulac 177).

Christine-protagonist then remarks that the court's positive reception of Etienne continued after the death of Charles V. After portraying Etienne as a wise and prudent husband (3.6), she again discusses his standing at court. Christine-protagonist recalls that he was, "highly-esteemed by the princes and all those who frequented his office" (111) ("tres amé des princes et toutes gens frequentant son dit office"; 99; lines 3-4). In both instances, she uses the same word in French *amé* to convey Etienne's congenial professional relationships, even though the English translations vary as "beloved" and "highly-esteemed." Christine-protagonist broadens the portrait of Etienne's reputation in the later example. She perceives that all who interacted with her husband at court, including the princes, embraced him.

Christine-protagonist's depiction of her husband's relationships in *Christine's Vision* corresponds to an earlier remark in *Fortune's Transformation*. In this text, Christine-protagonist completes a list of her husband's venerable characteristics with the following descriptions: "courtly and upright, and he greatly valued nobility" (102) ("courtois et amoit drois et noblesce ot chiere"; 1: 40; lines 1000-01). In light of these characteristics, we can see how Etienne earned the reputation as *amé* at court, in particular amongst the nobility. Christine does not define "courtly" behavior. However, this may refer to the general conventions of disciplined behavior at court in the matter of manners, speech, and actions. In particular, Schultz lists the contexts in which men could exhibit courtly behavior: "table manners, festivals, tournaments, and hunting" in addition to daily interactions (160).⁸⁸ By describing Etienne's reputation and behavior at

⁸⁸ For a discussion of the societal constraints for men in relation to fighting and women in the thirteenth century, see Schultz' chapter "Masculine Anxiety and the Consolations of Fiction," 173-88.

court, Christine-protagonist demonstrates that her personal opinion of his admirable qualities was echoed by others, even the nobility.

A Prosperous Husband

Along with the portrayal of Etienne's success as a court officer in *Christine's Vision*, Christine features another aspect of her husband's persona – his attentive nature and concern for her needs on a tangible level. We have already noted the overwhelming effort on Christine's part to memorialize her husband as a good master and companion through her use of epithets and figurative language in her intertextual portrait. She provides concrete details about their material wealth in several texts to illustrate the prosperity owed to Etienne's successful career.

To better understand the level of Etienne's professional success, we can consider the household's composition. In two of Christine's allegorical texts, she refers to Etienne and Christine-protagonist's large household. First, Christine-protagonist describes her household staff at Hymen's court in *Fortune's Transformation*: "Hymen gave me a good and well-trained household and attendants: four handsome squires, three beautiful ladies-in-waiting, with whom I considered myself well fitted out..." (101) ("Belle gent et belle maisgnée/ Me bailla bonne et enseignée:/ .IIII. escuiers, .III. damoiselles,/ Qu'on tenoit a beaulx et a belles,/ Dont je me tins a bien parée..."; 1: 40; lines 985-90). In this description, Christine-protagonist enumerates multiple servants of both genders whose physical appearance pleased her. Even if we hesitate to accept this description as an accurate account of Christine's household because of the allegorical context, Christine-protagonist's perception of good fortune is clear. Her positive adjectives and abundant number of servants indicate a heightened sense of material comfort.

Christine-protagonist presents the comparable image of a sizeable household in *Christine's Vision* (3.6) (Reno and Dulac 177; note VI/ 4-5). As the new head of the family after Etienne's death, Christine-protagonist lists her financial responsibilities: "... at twenty-five, I remained behind, burdened with three small children and a large household (111) ("...et moi de .XXV. demouray chargée de trois enfans petis et de grant mainage"; 100; lines 10-13). Christine-protagonist does not specify the

composition of her household as in the earlier text, *Fortune's Transformation*. Yet, the choice of the word “burdened” conveys her overwhelming sense of responsibility for her many dependents. This point of view contrasts sharply with Christine-protagonist's earlier sense of prosperity when her husband was alive and she regarded a large household favorably. In her widowhood, Christine-protagonist's financial struggles were so impressionable that she revisits the numeric count of her household in this same section. She transcribes a dialogue between herself and a man who does not understand her new-found obligations. Christine-protagonist denies that she was merely “a single woman alone” (113) (“seule et senglé”; 102; line 100). She writes: “I explained it to him, saying that I was six times myself” (113) (“luy exposay disant que j'estoie ·VI· fois moy meismes”; 102; line 102). McLeod notes in the English edition that this figure of six dependants, mirrors the author's life and includes Christine's three children, her mother, and a niece (147-48; note 24).

Christine-protagonist reflects in numerous texts that her married years were marked by both a lack of hardship and an all-encompassing sense of well-being as her husband offered her many things for which she was grateful. In the *Path of Long Study*, Christine-protagonist mentions her husband's generous nature with material goods. After remembering Etienne's pleasing company, she declares:

... there was no living woman more overwhelmed with the good things of life; for he showered upon me, to the best of his ability, every pleasing, delightful and enjoyable thing. It is right that he used to please me – no more, alas! In truth he pleased me so much that if I devoted all my time to praising him, I do not think that I could say enough good about him. (62)

... n'yert femme en vie/ De tous biens plus assouvie;/ Car de toute riens
plaisans,/ Delitables et aysans/ A son povoir il m'aysoit./ A bon droit s'il
me plaisoit,/ Plaisot, lasse! voirement/ Me plaisoit si tenrement/ Que de lui
assez louer,/ Pour mon temps y alouer/ Tout entier, me semble bien,/ N'en
diroie assez de bien. (92; lines 93-104)

In this excerpt, we note that Etienne frequently offered his wife lovely material gifts. Christine-protagonist comments that this gallant treatment epitomized proper behavior

for husbands through her subjective statement “It is right” ‘A bon droit’ (line 97). Etienne assumed the actions of a courtly lover who doted on his love, leaving no desire for Christine-protagonist to seek attention outside of the marriage. In return, Christine-protagonist offers her praise of his actions, creating a good reputation that was an invaluable asset in medieval society. Her praise, as seen in the selection of the word “dire,” is both oral and written. Christine’s written memorial to Etienne in this text solidifies his legacy beyond her circle of acquaintances. Yet she points out that regardless of the amount of her praise, she could never entirely convey the depth of his goodness.

Christine repeats this providential sentiment in *Fortune’s Transformation*. In this work, Christine-protagonist testifies to her husband’s considerable efforts to protect and provide for her. She writes:

... but I was above all honored by him [her husband] into whose keeping I had been given, who worked hard for me so that, experiencing no difficulties, I felt very comfortable at that court. And he was so faithful to me, and so good that, by my soul, I could not praise highly enough the good things that I received from him. (101-02)

Mais surtout je fus honoree/ De cil a qui on me bailla/ En garde, qui se
traveilla/ Pour moy, affin que, sanz mesaise,/ Fusse a celle court a mon
ayse./ Si me fu si loyal ami/ Et si bon, sur l’ame de mi,/ Que louer assez
ne pourroye/ Le bien, que par lui recevoye. (1: 40; lines 991-98)

Here, Christine-protagonist commends the benefits that derived from Etienne’s moral conduct as a diligent worker, faithful husband, and good person. While Christine-protagonist’s descriptions are more ambiguous than the reference to his pleasing gifts in the *Path of Long Study*, she expresses that she profited greatly from his actions with “good things.” With language nearly identical to the earlier text, Christine-protagonist declares that she could not praise her husband enough. Christine inverts the word order in the original French from “assez louer” in the *Path of Long Study* (line 101) to “louer assez” in *Fortune’s Transformation* (line 997). In both texts, Christine-protagonist

employs the conditional tense in her assertion that even this written memorial does not fully glorify her husband's exemplary behavior.

As with other aspects of Etienne's persona that reflect the conduct of established role models, particularly the late king Charles V, Christine's descriptions of Etienne's generous nature reflects her portrait of the monarch in *Charles V*. To recommence with her depiction of the king's marital relationship with Jeanne de Bourbon in Book 1.20, in which we previously witnessed the peaceful and loving conduct of the king towards his wife, Christine reveals details about the material aspects of their relationship. She writes:

[the wise king used to keep his loyal wife] continually entertained, like sending her unusual and beautiful things; many jewels and other gifts he presented to her himself, or if he thought that they would please her, he obtained and purchased them. (my trans)

[le sage roy tenoit sa loial espouse] en continuelx plaisirs, comme d'estranges et belles choses lui envoyer; tant joyaulz, comme aultres dons, se presentez lui fussent, ou qu'il pensast que à elle deussent plaire, les procuroit et achetoit. (1: 57)

In this excerpt, Christine offers an intriguing glimpse of the behavior of the king in his personal relationship. She does not merely present an idealized portrait of a king in both public and private spheres; Christine grounds this portrait in the reality of fourteenth century France through showing the efforts of a husband who continually seeks pleasing gifts for his wife. Charles V actively demonstrates his generosity and affection towards Jeanne through these frequent gifts. Besides providing for his wife's material comfort, as befitting a husband, Charles exhibits the qualities of a courtly man who also aims to delight his lady through tokens of love. Christine's inclusion of these details, intermingled with the description of Charles' faithful and respectful comportment, create a well-rounded example of marital conduct from an authoritative figure.

What is intriguing in Christine's portrait of the king's marriage is that Charles' behavior does not belie the political nature of this union. Charles' marriage to Jeanne was not a private matter, as mentioned previously through the notion of the body politic.

Charles married Jeanne in 1350, when she was only twelve years old (LW 122). Christine conveys that in even an arranged marriage, an affectionate relationship can be formed.

Christine focuses on the reversal of fortune in *Christine's Vision*, revealing the downfall of a large household and presenting an account of material wealth that differs from the earlier works. In this text, we witness the diminishment of Christine-protagonist's family assets after Etienne's death. As a widow, Christine-protagonist remembers how she faced multiple lawsuits and unjust claims on her husband's estate, dishonest trustees of her children's money, and properties troubles, including rent owed on a property that her husband had purchased and outstanding revenues on inherited properties (3.6). In the introduction to *Charles V*, Suzanne Solente observes that while historical records do testify to Christine's real life legal and financial difficulties, the existent manuscripts record trial dates after *Christine's Vision* from 1411 and 1412 (xvi). Thus, years after Christine's grievances through the plaint of Christine-protagonist, the author continued to face legal problems owing to her husband's death.

In *Christine's Vision*, Christine-protagonist reflects on how she maintained the outer appearance of wealth at the court through her possessions (3.6). Specifically, she mentions several cherished items that she was able to keep -- her fur cloak, surcoat, and bed. The surcoat was an outer robe with open sides that was worn by both genders, although it originated from the crusader's armor (Wilcox 47). McLeod notes that this garment indicated a high social status and proposes that Christine-protagonist's reference to her surcoat's refurbishment may have been to luxurious trim or embroidery (148; note 25). In the original French, Christine-protagonist describes the surcoat as being made from *escarlate*. Rachael Gibbons defines *escarlata* as the most expensive wool fabric at this time as a result of its extensive manufacturing process; this fabric was often red, but could also contain blue and yellow dyes that resulted in a variety of shades (31). As for the cloak, this cape-like garment commonly had a fur lining during the winter. Of the popular types of fur found in medieval French clothing -- ermine, miniver, and marten, only the later is gray and corresponds to Christine-protagonist's description in the text (Wilcox 49, 51). Both the surcoat and the fur cloak indicate the affluence during her husband's life. In this passage, she also refers to her

luxurious marriage bed, which was now a source of restlessness. Due to financial hardships, Christine-protagonist then explains that her family's provisions were meager. Eventually, sergeants repossessed some of her belongings, causing her great shame; she resorted to borrowing money from an unnamed benefactor (3.6).

In Christine's lyric poetry, she depicts her privileged marital experience in a manner that strengthens the intertextual connection with these details in the *Path of Long Study*, *Fortune's Transformation*, and *Christine's Vision*. Although we previously considered ballade 5 of *One Hundred Ballades* for the manner in which Christine refers to her husband through a demonstrative phrase, if we recall the content of the poem we witness how she depicts her husband's role as her provider. She defines her husband's household responsibilities as "the master of all my belongings and my intellectual formation" (my trans) ("le chief/ De tous mes biens et de ma nourriture"; 1: 6; lines 11-12). Christine then remembers her fortuitous marriage in ballade 14, the poem of mourning in *One Hundred Ballades* that we examined for animal metaphors. In the second stanza, Christine reflects:

For when I look deeply into my heart and see how sweetly and without hardship I lived from my childhood and first youth with him, I am assailed by such great pain that I will always weep for his death. (SW 6)

Car quant mon cuer parfondement remire
Comment souef j'ay vescu sans asprece
Trés mon enfance et premiere jeunece
Avecques lui, si grant doulour me mord
Qu'a tousjours mais je pleureray sa mort. (1: 15; lines 10-14)

Christine contrasts her current emotional despair to her lighthearted disposition during her marriage. She explicitly notes that during her marriage she was "without hardship" 'sanz asprece' (line 11), a detail that echoes Christine-protagonist's description of "no difficulties" 'sanz mesaise' in *Fortune's Transformation* (line 994).⁸⁹ In this ballade, Christine asserts that she will always mourn Etienne's passing with a dedication that

⁸⁹ In Middle French, the term *asprece* is commonly spelled *apresse*, see Larousse, 38.

parallels Christine-protagonist's efforts to establish her husband's good reputation through praise in the *Path of Long Study* and *Fortune's Transformation*.

Christine again refers to her former prosperity in ballade 20 from *One Hundred Ballades*. She begins by asking how she can compose pleasant things when she has experienced nearly ten years of sadness after the loss of her husband (lines 1-7). In the second stanza, Christine recalls her material comfort during her marriage: "I had ample belongings previously" (my trans) ("J'os des biens assez jadis"; Roy 1: 21; line 8). This observation foreshadows Christine-protagonist's confession of her dire financial situation in *Christine's Vision*, which led to the sale and repossession of her belongings. In the poem, she follows this painful memory with the figurative image of a stormy winter that announced her misfortune (lines 9-14), an image that further prefigures Christine-protagonist's well-developed maritime metaphor in part 1 of *Fortune's Transformation*.

Thus in Christine's poems and allegorical works, we find both the positive and negative aspects of wealth that reflect her marital experience and widowhood. In Christine's complex intertextual portrait of Etienne, she illustrates that he was an attentive husband to his wife on a tangible level. Certainly, pleasant gifts and a moderate level of wealth contributed to the sense of good fortune that Christine conveys in her poems and in Christine-protagonist's narratives. Yet, as a pious Christian, Christine recognizes the ephemeral comfort of worldly goods, demonstrating the loss of wealth in widowhood and Christine-protagonist's ultimate consolation in theology in the concluding part of *Christine's Vision*.

As evident in Christine's writings, a positive marital relationship is a treasure far more precious than material wealth. She conveys this sentiment through the overwhelming focus on the foundations of an ideal Christian marriage. Christine's intertextual portrait of Etienne underlines how his pursuit of a virtuous life enabled him to be an exemplary husband. She reveals another essential aspect of their marital relationship – Etienne's respectful and loving treatment of his wife, which contrasts with medieval models of husbands that feature abusive or unhealthy relationships. However, Christine grounds the portrait of her husband in her contemporary society. Etienne exhibits courtly qualities and maintains a successful career at court, without

compromising his virtues. Her portrait of Etienne represents a virtuous man whose example should be remembered.

CHAPTER 4

CHRISTINE AS EXEMPLARY WIFE AND WIDOW

An Intertextual Widow Persona

In pursuing the thread of Christine's marriage to Etienne in her lyric poems and allegorical narratives, we have observed how Christine consciously creates an intertextual memorial to her late husband Etienne. From the flattering descriptions of his physical appearance to his outstanding moral character, Christine features him as an exemplary man whose story lives on through Christine-protagonist's memories in the context of the works and by extension through Christine's written word. Besides such a shining example of virtue, the author cloaks herself in the humble character of Christine-protagonist in her allegorical journeys. She does not overtly praise her own qualities in admiring monologues as she does with Etienne. Nonetheless, we can glean information about her role as a wife and widow through revealing details. What is the literary legacy that Christine's self-inspired widow persona leaves for the readers, given Christine's demonstrable interest in the exemplary value of literature?

One consistent aspect of Christine's intertextual persona is the identification of herself as widow, both in her early poems and in her allegorical texts through Christine-protagonist. Indeed, Etienne's death was the practical catalyst for Christine's career. In her works, she alternately carries the weight of her mourning, revealing her despair and loneliness, and revisits the joyful memories of her marriage. Thus Christine personally reflects on two of the three categories of women according to medieval clerics, who differentiated between virgins, wives, and widows (Margolis, "Widows" 939). In this chapter, I shall first consider how Christine identifies herself before assessing the defining features of her intertextual persona and their moral significance.

Christine's widow persona in her early lyric poems and allegorical texts has received considerable scholarly attention, especially certain hallmark poems such as ballade 11 of *One Hundred Ballades* and the startling gender transformation in *Fortune's Transformation*. There are several aspects of Christine's persona that bear mentioning in light of Christine's depiction of Etienne. We have seen that Christine

identifies Etienne through the simple description of his role as her husband or *mari* in addition to her use of epithets and metaphors. We shall explore how Christine exercises these same writing techniques when she represents herself as a widow.

Yet, we shall first recall the most elemental aspect of Christine's identity, that is the appearance of Christine's proper name in her texts along with the first person narrative voice. While the significance of the unnamed intertextual husband figure can elicit debate in Christine's apparent autobiographical passages, it is clear that this figure, whom I have designated as Etienne, is the husband to Christine's widow persona. In her first collection of poems *One Hundred Ballades*, she identifies herself in the final poem. She closes the first stanza with the following wordplay: "For whoever would like to know, in the 100th poem I have entirely written my name" (my trans) ("Qui le vouldra savoir ou non,/ En la centiesme entirement/ En escrit y ay mis mon nom"; 100; lines 6-8).⁹⁰ Christine displays her poetic creativity in a similar manner when incorporating her name in the text through wordplay as we have studied in *Fortune's Transformation* when Christine-protagonist spells out her name with a religious reference to Christ (1.5).⁹¹ Alternately, Christine directly names the protagonist in the text and in the rubrics of other works. For example, the rubrics in the *Path of Long Study* clearly name the protagonist as "Cristine" (e.g. before line 451). Moreover, in the text the wise female guide, the Sybil, addresses the protagonist with the gentle words, "Christine, dear friend" (my trans) ("Cristine, chere/ Amie"; 462; lines 6329-30). Likewise, in the *City of Ladies*, the reader learns the identity of the first person voice through the rubrics, which name the protagonist as Christine. As in the *Path of Long Study*, the allegorical figures in the *City of Ladies* soon appear with kind words directed towards the protagonist. Lady Reason identifies Christine by name and even refers to her as her dear daughter (1.4). As the title of *Christine's Vision* indicates, the protagonist's identity fundamentally shapes this work as an individual's narrative. The character Christine-protagonist's uncanny resemblance to the author in these texts is

⁹⁰ In the Harley 4431 manuscript, Christine replaces *entirement* with *proprement*, see Roy, 100.

⁹¹ See chapter 2, 44.

clearly discernible.⁹² To what purpose did Christine readily attribute her name to the protagonist of many of her early works?

By repeatedly penning a self-reflective character in her works, a character whose similarities to the author would have been recognized by her intended patrons, Christine sought to include her perspective and voice in these texts, imbuing her writings with an innovative sense of authorship. She reached beyond the medieval tradition of revising and adapting other works into a new book. Christine affords the reader a glimpse of the author in a manner that would have been precocious in its time not only for the extent to which she includes herself in the texts but also the unexpected advent of an educated female author who is neither a member of the royal family nor a saint. Yet, she affects the voice of a humble widow to temper her personal views.

A Humble Widow

While Christine clearly spotlights the exemplary behavior of her late husband Etienne in the “autobiographical” passages of numerous works, she offers her own example with humility. Indeed, Christine’s self-description as a simple and humble woman is a defining aspect of her intertextual persona, a characteristic that bespeaks the condition of women in her time period. In the Christian tradition, humility is a praiseworthy characteristic that leads to wisdom: “Where pride is, there also shall be reproach: but where humility is, there also is wisdom” (Prov. 11.2). Christine demonstrates this modest attitude as an author in the introductory lines of multiple works and as a character through Christine-protagonist’s relationship with other figures, including her husband Etienne.

Christine represents herself as a modest author through recourse to the humility formula in her works. Glenda McLeod defines the humility topos, which was a standard component of medieval works, as “the prefatory rhetorical posture of submissiveness and humility as a way of engaging the reader” (“Humility Topos” 448). Christine excuses her audacity in writing to the royal family and describes her status as a lowly woman. A case in point is the prologue to the *Path of Long Study*, in which Christine begins with self-effacing speech that addresses the royal family: Charles VI and the dukes of Berry,

⁹² See chapter 1, 45.

Orleans, and Burgundy (SW 61).⁹³ Christine dedicates the text to these nobles and explains her motivation for writing this work, all the while describing herself with modesty. She states, “Most high princes, I present myself to you with extreme and heartfelt humility, in order to implore you very sincerely not to take as presumptuous the fact that I, an unworthy woman, write to such worthies as you” (SW 61) (“Princes tres haulx, a vous tant humblement/ Comme je puis de cuer me recomand,/ Pryant mercies par grant affection/ Que repute ne soit presomcion/ D’escripre a vous de tele digneté,/ A moy, femme, pour mon indigneté”; 86, 88; lines 23-28). In this address, which is only one of several examples in the prologue, the reader witnesses Christine’s deferential attitude towards the monarchy through the humility topos. In the original French, Christine describes herself with the word *indigneté*, a direct contrast to the term *digneté* that she employs for the princes in the previous line. Through the use of opposition, Christine acknowledges her lower social standing in medieval society as a woman addressing a royal audience.

Christine claims to be a simple person in the prologue to the *Path of Long Study* (SW 61) (“simple personne”; 90; line 53). This notion of a simple person or woman appears throughout Christine’s works and is a consistent characteristic of her widow persona. In the *City of Ladies*, Christine-protagonist sheds light on her interpretation of this quality. She portrays herself as a simple and honest woman who exemplifies the natural virtues of women. This category of women contrasts with unnatural and thus immoral women who appear as negative exemplars in the *Romance of the Rose*. In her article “Christine de Pizan and the Misogynistic Tradition,” Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski addresses Christine’s notion of a natural woman, especially in the *City of Ladies* through the examples of Christine-protagonist and the other women (308-11). Christine-protagonist describes the natural condition of women as “simple, quiet, and honest” (SW 128) (“simple, quoye et honneste”; 68). Alternately, Rosalind Brown-Grant translates this expression as “timid, meek, and pure” (18).⁹⁴ In the *Lettres gothiques* edition of the *Path of Long Study*, Andrea Tarnowski confirms that this dedication

⁹³ The first manuscript was presented to the duke of Berry in 1403. See LW, 100; SW, 59.

⁹⁴ For a further discussion of Christine’s simple persona, see Benjamin Semple’s article “The Critique of Knowledge as Power.” Earl Jeffery Richards analyzes the topos of a natural woman in “Somewhere between Destructive Glosses and Chaos.”

follows the literary convention of an author demonstrating humility (88; note 1). Likewise, in the narrative, Christine-protagonist displays a humble attitude throughout her journey towards her guide and mentor, the wise Sybil. Christine-protagonist's humility forges another intertextual link with Christine's voice in the prologue.

Christine-protagonist's humble voice in the beginning of *Fortune's Transformation* (1.1) demonstrates an intertextual link to the prologue of the *Path of Long Study*. Christine opens the book with the following question from her literary namesake: "How will it be possible for me, being simple and of small intelligence, to express adequately that which cannot be well expressed or well understood?" (SW 89) ("Comment sera ce possible/ A moy simple et pou sensible/ De proprement exprimer/ Ce qu'on ne peut extimer/ Bonnement, ne bien comprendre"; 7; lines 1-5). Christine-protagonist's question combines two elements of the aforementioned prologue. She inserts the description *simple* into the form of the line "A moi," following with a self-deprecating sentiment that corresponds to the rhyme scheme in this text. Christine-protagonist's also demonstrates deferential behavior towards her guardians in the narrative, as we shall explore later.

In a similar hierarchical framework in *Christine's Vision*, we observe how Christine-protagonist humbly serves the Crowned Lady as her scribe or *antigraphe* (1.5). Additionally, when Christine-protagonist encounters Lady Philosophy in part 3.2, she kneels before the lady and evokes the humility formula with reference to her gender. Christine-protagonist calls herself "an ignorant woman.... your humble servant" (107) ("femme ignorant.... ta servile mercenere"; 94; lines 7, 15).

In *Christine's Vision*, Christine speaks with humility about her unique position as a female writer. In part 3, Christine offers an introspective look at her professional success and accomplishments in a passage that clearly reaches beyond the frame story of Christine-protagonist's allegorical journey to reflect the voice of Christine as an author (3.10-11). After she recounts how her scholarly pursuits became known despite her desire for a reclusive life, Christine explains that her ability to gain royal patronage as a writer derives from the rare and unexpected notion of a female scholar (3.11):

I presented them [the princes] with some new things from my books on various subjects, small and feeble though they were. These they willingly

saw and by their grace joyfully received like kind and gentle princes, and more I think for the novelty of a woman who could write (since that had not occurred for quite some time) than for any worth there might be in them. (120)

...leur fis presens comme de nouvelles choses, quelque petis et foibles qu'ilz fussent, de mes volumes de plusieurs matieres, lesquelz de leur grace comme princes benignes et tres humains les virent volentiers et receurent a joie – et plus, comme je tiens, pour la chose non usagee que femme escripse, comme pieça n'avenist, que pour la digneté que y ssoit. (111; lines 10-16)

Christine recognizes that her scholarly endeavors were viewed in a somewhat patronizing manner, ascribing her success to the bemusement of her patrons who were surprised to see a woman breaking with conventional female behavior. Willard argues that imprint of Christine's experience as a woman was a distinguishing feature of her early works, offering "originality and authenticity" (LW 51). Furthermore, Willard notes that Christine remained exceptional as a female writer well after her time: "another woman's voice would not be heard in France for more than a hundred years" (LW 51). This comment most likely refers to the Renaissance writer Marguerite de Navarre, a well-educated woman who has in fact been identified as a reader of Christine's works (LW 89).⁹⁵

Even in Christine's impassioned public letters on the Debate of the *Romance of the Rose*, she employs humble language when addressing other scholars as well as the monarchy. For instance, in Christine preface's of her epistolary compilation for Queen Ysabel, she represents herself in the following manner: "... I, simple and ignorant among women, your humble lady in waiting, at your service – desiring to serve you if your kind humility will allow it" (McWebb 109; lines 13-15) ("... moy simple et ignorant entre les femmes, vostre humble chamberiere soubz vostre obeissance, desireuse de vous server se tant valoye en la confiance de vostre benigne humilité"; 108; lines 14-

⁹⁵ Marguerite de Navarre (1492-1549) was the sister of the French king Francis I. She is best known for her collection of stories, the *Heptameron*, that was based on Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

17). Certainly, Christine is quick to acknowledge her shortcomings with self-critical language as both an author and in the context of her character Christine-protagonist.

Christine's manuscripts offer an interesting glimpse of her self-portrait. Mary Weitzel Gibbons' article, "Christine's Mirror: Self in Word and Image," examines Christine's portrait through words as well as manuscript illuminations, since she was involved with the production of her manuscripts and thus held some editorial control over her self-portrait. Gibbons argues that Christine inserts herself into the traditional imagery of the male author, a substitution that creates a significant visual statement. The gestures, gaze, and posture of the figures reveal details about interpersonal relationships. For instance, Christine is a peripheral figure depicted in a reverent posture in the illustrations with Charles VI and his advisors, a portrait that visually embodies her humble language as we have seen in the preceding section. Meanwhile, Christine is the visual center of attention when depicted in an informal setting with Ysabel of Bavaria in the Queen's manuscript, a difference that may symbolize her influence on the Queen. This illustration brings into question the sincerity of the humble language that Christine employs when she addresses the queen in the text (371-73).

Christine's newfound position as a scholarly widow at the French court required diplomacy in gaining the patronage of the nobles. Returning to the analysis of the humility formula in the *Path of Long Study*, Tarnowski reflects that Christine's status as a female writer disturbs the societal order and her womanhood calls for a humble self-representation ("Mais cette humilité devient plus désirable encore du fait de la féminité de Christine; une femme-écrivain ne remet-elle pas en cause l'ordre du monde?"; 88; note 1). Indeed, Christine's unexpected widowhood and struggle to assume the responsibility as the head of the household inspires one of Christine's memorable intertextual metaphors. As we have seen, Christine recasts herself as a despondent woman lost at sea upon her husband's death in her poetry as well as through the character Christine-protagonist in *Fortune's Transformation* (1.12) and *Christine's Vision* (3.6). Her artistic invention of a gender transformation on the part of Christine-protagonist in *Fortune's Transformation* permits her character to steer the ship to safe harbor. In Christine's real-life, she figuratively becomes a man as the head of an important household. Following her natural inclinations and the examples of her

husband and father, she seeks a scholarly life. On a linguistic note, Lori Walters observes that Christine could be best described with language from the *City of Ladies* (3.3) – Christine does not become a *clerc* but what she calls a *clergesce* in her description of Saint Catherine (“Fathers and Daughters” 63).⁹⁶

Christine tempers the depiction of Christine-protagonist with her humble behavior and is cautious not to portray her as a virago, a stereotype of independent and commanding widows to whom Nadia Margolis refers as “socially masculine” (“Widows” 940). In the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*, Jean Gerson praised Christine as a virago for her vigorous engagement in the epistolary exchange, as we shall explore in the next chapter. Indeed, Christine employs this term as a positive quality displayed by Queen Dido in the *City of Ladies*. She carefully fashions her self-inspired character as a strong and humble widow, which reflects on the author’s subservience to her royal patrons. When considering Christine’s humble persona in light of her marital relationship, I refer us back to the respectful manner in which she identifies her husband. Christine’s recurrent use of epithets in her short poems and allegorical narratives, such as *maistre*, *chief*, and *patron*, pay homage to her husband’s role as the head of the household.

While we have observed how Christine represents herself through the widow persona in her writings, she nonetheless situates this humble character in extraordinary surroundings and features her as the protagonist of many works. The juxtaposition between the self-proclaimed simple woman and the complex realm of allegory and dream-visions reflects the medieval penchant for contrary things, *contraries choses*, as well as allows the protagonist a sense wonderment as she discovers the marvels of these dreamscapes.⁹⁷ The allegorical narratives the *Path of Long Study*, *Fortune’s Transformation*, the *City of Ladies*, the *Three Virtues*, and *Christine’s Vision* feature the widow Christine-protagonist and begin with her visionary experience or extraordinary adventures. The narratives are told in the first person voice, which is linked to Christine’s widow persona. Christine-protagonist is compelled to share her stories,

⁹⁶ Christine describes Saint Catherine’s knowledge: “Being well versed in both theology and the sciences” (204) (“Comme grant clergece et apprise es sciences que elle estoit”; 436).

⁹⁷ For a discussion of this writing technique in the *Romance of the Rose*, see Regalado.

presenting the task of writing as a moral obligation or a duty commissioned by allegorical figures. For instance, in the previously mentioned prologue to the *Path of Long Study* in which Christine explains her reasons to the nobility for transcribing the debate on wise leadership, she claims that she is a humble messenger (line 52). Moreover, I refer to the visitation of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice that prompt the writing of the *City of Ladies* and the *Three Virtues* as well as Christine-protagonist's appointment as the Crowned Lady's *antigraphe* that produces *Christine's Vision*. Christine-protagonist does not represent herself as a wise prophet in the same vein as Nebuchadnezzar or Joseph, but as a simple person who receives spiritual enlightenment or "the secrets of the Almighty" (11) ("les secrez du Tres Haut"; 12; line 10) through prophetic dreams or visions as she explains in the beginning of *Christine's Vision* (1.1). She encounters spiritual figures along her journeys who impart wisdom. Reflecting on the symbolism of the chapter in which Christine-protagonist becomes the Crowned Lady's scribe, Christine states in the gloss that she became the *antigraphe* of divine wisdom ("il fust aconite de sainte Sapience divine qui ja l'eust faicte antigraffe de ses aventures"; 6; lines 139-40). For an interesting point of comparison, the religious visionary Margery Kempe (1373 - c.1438), an English contemporary of Christine's, cites the Holy Ghost as having commanded her to record her revelations. The *Book of Margery Kempe* does feature her name in the title but the "autobiographical" narrative was transcribed by male clerks and relates her life, religious activities, and visions from a third person narrative voice that identifies the protagonist as "this creature" (Amt 267-68; Larrington 254-55).⁹⁸ In contrast, Christine's relates her own story through the secular first person voice and the humble widow persona.

Christine's noticeably humility and depiction of women in her writings have made her the target of scathing criticism from the modern scholar Shelia Delany. Delany questions Christine's literary success and status as an emblem of feminine

⁹⁸ As a further point of contrast, Margery Kempe has a negative view of her marriage. She prefers a chaste life with her husband and regrets not having been a devout virgin. For a discussion of Margery Kempe, see Dinshaw, 222-39.

accomplishment.⁹⁹ Delany considers Christine archaic for her deferential tone and display of “feudal nostalgia” for traditional gender roles (314-16). From Delany’s perspective, Christine should have used her writings to praise the “modern working woman” of the late medieval period instead of featuring historical women and nobles in the *City of Ladies*, a selection that reinforces the established domestic roles of women and social hierarchy in late medieval France according to Delany (322).

Delany’s stark criticism lead to a spirited rebuttal from Christine Reno in her article “Christine de Pizan: ‘At Best a Contradictory Figure?’” Reno cautions against using a modern literary perspective when evaluating medieval literature, a practice that can result in misinterpretation as seen in Delany’s article. In her time, Christine’s humble entry into male-dominated intellectual circles was remarkable and almost unprecedented. Reno points out that Christine’s humble approach reflected the need for “delicate diplomacy” given that she was dependant on her patrons. Christine was not a flatterer; she was respectfully to her patrons and recognized her social status. Yet, she incorporated criticism of her society through the veiled language of allegory, such as her description of the vices rampant in France in *Christine’s Vision* (Reno, “Contradictory” 179-80). Indeed, Christine describes her style in the gloss to *Christine’s Vision*:

... after the manner of poets, by which, under the figure of metaphor or veiled speech, much secret knowledge and many pure truths are often hidden. One can often have many meanings in such poetic speech, and when it can be taken in different ways, then poetry is beautiful and subtle.
(3)

... selon la maniere de parler des pouetes, que souventesfois soubz figure de methaphore, c’est a dire de parole couverte, sont muciees maintes secretes sciences et pures veritez. Et en telle parolle dicte par poisie puet avoir mains entendemens, et lors est la poisie belle et soubtille quant elle puet servir a plusieurs ententes et que on la puet prendre a divers propos.
(3 ; lines 7-12).

⁹⁹ Delany mentions Christine’s questionable inclusion in Judy Chicago’s art installation *The Dinner Party*, which recognizes exemplary women throughout time by creating honorary place settings. She refers to Chicago’s deliberation about featuring women from a higher social class. See Delany, 314.

In this explanation, Christine reflects on the ambiguous nature of poetic fiction and how this rhetorical device allows the author to embed truths. Christine-protagonist's persona may conform to an appropriate gender role such as a humble widow; however, her use of allegory permits subtle criticisms of her society in a discrete fashion as we shall see in the example of the Crowned Lady in *Christine's Vision* and her comments about widowhood. Humility is an essential characteristic of Christine's widow persona that acknowledges criticism of her scholarly endeavors. As we have witnessed in the numerous examples above, Christine openly addresses her shortcomings, voicing the possible disparaging remarks of her readers in lieu of her gender, lack of education, and social status. Although Christine consistently affects the role of the humble widow, she establishes herself as an authoritative writer on marriage through her personal experience whose moral message bears consideration.

A Moral Persona

A Young Bride

Christine represents her marriage ceremony to Etienne in several texts, ranging in style from allegory to a more realistic narrative. In each text, Christine offers insight to medieval marriage practices as well as societal values. She portrays marriage in a positive light and Christine-protagonist as an obedient daughter and a virtuous bride, providing an intertextual example of a ceremonious marriage union that counters the practice of clandestine marriages.

Marital law was based on *consensus facit nuptias* since Gratian, Peter Lombard, and Pope Alexander III's ideas in the twelfth century, calling for both parties to give consent through "words of the present" (Gies 139-40). Canon law required neither a religious service by a priest nor witnesses for a marriage to be considered valid (Amt 83). The flexibility of marriage customs, in that there was not one official practice, led the Church to debate the customs and validity of marriage. In northern France and England, couples could become betrothed and marry at the church door, as seen in the English Sarum liturgy that was used from the eleventh through the sixteenth centuries (Amt 83-89; D'Avray 516). In medieval literature, the infamous example of Chaucer's

Wife of Bath recalls her marital experience in the prologue to her tale: “For ever since I was twelve years of age,/ Thanks be to God, I’ve had no less than five/ Husbands at church door – if one may believe/ I could be wed so often legally!” (qtd. in Blamires 199). However, the lack of regulations surrounding marriage could lead to clandestine marriages that defied parental wishes. Yet, parental roles in marriage alliances still had considerable influence given that the young couple was often dependant on the financial support of the parents or guardians (Gies 218).

Beginning with Christine’s early poems, she praises marriage and provides positive examples of a marital relationship as we have studied through Christine’s use of epithets. In ballade 26 of *Other Ballades*, which plays an essential part in this study considering that it directly praises marriage as a “sweet thing” (line 1), Christine provides the feminine counterpart to the epithet *doulz ami* for Etienne.¹⁰⁰ Etienne addresses his wife as “sweet beloved” (Willard, *Writings* 51) (“Doulce amie”; 237; line 19). This epithet echoes the refrain in which Christine refers to her husband as “the gentle man” (“le doulz”; lines 8, 16, 24, and 28). Although the English translations of these epithets differ, in the original French we can observe that Christine selects the same word, a choice that emphasizes the reciprocal nature of their relationship. Christine demonstrates that an affectionate relationship is possible within a religiously sanctioned union.

In *Fortune’s Transformation*, Christine dedicates numerous sections at the beginning of book 1 to the tale of Christine-protagonist’s maturation and marriage. In this text, Christine features religious and secular aspects of marriage customs, emphasizing that marriage is a union supported by both God and Nature. Christine-protagonist recounts her experience under Lady Fortune’s questionable guardianship. While we have noted how Christine-protagonist portrays her father with some verisimilitude – as a noble Italian philosopher (1.3), she represents her mother as an allegorical figure – Nature, whose tireless deeds are remarkable (1.5). Nature consigns Christine-protagonist to the care of Lady Fortune and reappears to bestow a gift to ensure her daughter’s successful marriage at Fortune’s court (1.7). Christine-protagonist explains, “Since it was time for me to be advanced, or married, or affianced,

¹⁰⁰ See chapter 2, 59-61.

my gracious, joyful mother wanted to make me pretty, and therefore gave me some of her jewels" (96) ("Temps estoit que fusse avanciee/ Ou mariee, ou fianciee,/ Pour ce me vould faire jolie/ Ma gracieuse mere lie,/ Si me donna de ses joyaulx"; 1: 24-25; lines 521-25). In this excerpt, Christine features Nature's active role in promoting her daughter's marriage. Blumenfeld-Kosinski remarks that Christine's depiction of Nature in *Fortune's Transformation* amends Jean de Meun's portrayal of this key medieval figure in the *Romance of the Rose* (SW 94; note 8). Jean de Meun presents Nature as a creative force; however, he does not portray her as a guardian of marriage or *pronuba* that appears in other works such as Alan of Lille's *Complaint of Nature* (Economou 716-18).¹⁰¹ Thus in *Fortune's Transformation*, Christine restores Nature's endorsement of marriage. Christine-protagonist introduces her mother's actions with language that reveals her acceptance of society's marriage customs and her compliance with her parents' will. She obediently receives the gift and accepts the timing of her union.

Nature's gift is a crown of precious stones. Christine-protagonist brings this valuable crown with her into the marriage, a gift that recalls the medieval dowry system. However, the reader learns that this dowry holds more than a monetary value. The jewels themselves represent the moral education of Nature's daughter: Discretion, Consideration, Recollection, and Memory, essential qualities for a young bride (1.8-9). Christine-protagonist's symbolic jewels bring to mind the magical stones that her father acquired at the Fountain of Wisdom earlier in the text that symbolize knowledge (1.3-4). Christine-protagonist explains that while her father's jewels were "acquired by great effort," hers are "given freely" (96). In this female paradigm, the jewels make the bride attractive on both a physical level, as seen in her concern with becoming "pretty" 'jolie,' and on a moral level through four highly-esteemed qualities. In a parallel manner, we have studied examples of how Christine-protagonist emphasizes Etienne's youth, handsomeness, and virtue as part of his appeal as a groom.

Christine-protagonist alludes to her maturation through the subtle yet logical depiction of reason (1.10). She recalls, "I was beginning to learn and understand how reason operates" (99) ("... ja commençoie a apprendre/ Le fait de raison et

¹⁰¹ Nature does not promote a reciprocal marital relationship, agreeing with Genius that "no one who sees a woman's heart should put his trust in it. It is certain that no one would do so, since evil might befall him if he did," 279-80.

comprendre”; 33; lines 773-74). Christine-protagonist’s vague language permits numerous interpretations of reason in this allegorical context – the complexities of marriage arrangements, the nature of intimate relationships at court, or the prospects for the daughter of philosopher. Her choice of reason is not dependent on the versification, considering the word appears in the middle of a line instead of at the end of a line. Consequently, Fortune initiates the marriage arrangements for her charge. Christine-protagonist recounts: “she [Fortune] decided to have me deliver a message for her, although I was still rather young” (99) (“Me volt commettre un sien message,/ Tout fusse encore moult joenne d’aage”; 33; lines 777-78). At this moment, the symbolism of the message is ambiguous. However, as the story unfolds we learn that Fortune commands Christine-protagonist to deliver a message to the court of Hymen, where she is immediately prepared for a marriage ceremony.

Christine-protagonist prefaces her personal marital story with a subjective opening that introduces marriage in a favorable light. She states: “she [Fortune] granted me a great honor and benefit as you will now hear” (99) (“... tant d’onneur sienne merci/ Me fist lors, com vous ores ci”; 33; lines 779-80). Christine-protagonist’s commentary shapes the reader’s perception of the following section, describing marriage as an honor. This tempers her initial distraught reaction to Fortune’s directive. Christine-protagonist explains: “And so I took leave of my friends, who wept at my departure; I also wept, but I had to obey the command of my lady, whom no one can contradict” (99) (“Si pris congîé de mes amis,/ Qui plourerent au deppartir;/ Aussi plouray, mais consentir/ Me couvint le comment ma dame,/ A qui ne peut contredire ame”; 34; lines 808-12). Here, Christine-protagonist remarks that despite her personal feelings of sadness in leaving her friends, all must obey Fortune.

Christine-protagonist then unfolds a detailed account of her preparation for the court as well as the wedding ceremony itself and ensuing festivities, clearly promoting the communal celebration of marriage. Once Christine-protagonist arrives at Hymen’s court, she points out the inherently good nature of the marital union through her description of the allegorical figure Hymen. She reflects:

... some [servants] complain about his [Hymen’s] service, and some are proud of it. The fault, however, lies in those who follow bad advice, or in

my Lady [Fortune] who punishes them harshly, from which many arguments arise. As for Hymen himself, he has a good character and wants to do good for everyone. (100)

... les aucuns se desloent/ De son [Ymeneüs] service, autres s'en loent;/
Mais la deffaute tient a ceulx,/ Qui oeuvrent de mauvais conseulx/ ou par
ma dame, qui les bat/ Durement, don't sourt maint debat,/ Car, quant a lui,
de bon affaire/ Est, et a tousouldroit bien faire. (35; lines 833-40)

Here, Christine-protagonist acknowledges and responds to complaints about marriage. In this courtly metaphor, she compares the criticisms of marriage to servants' complaints. According to her, marriage is not the source of the grievances, but man's inability to act wisely through following poor advice. Additionally, Christine-protagonist explains that Fortune can interfere with a couple's happiness, as she mentions Fortune's punishment for previous actions that may lead to marital disputes.

Christine-protagonist's wedding ceremony is an amalgam of secular and religious practices. The festivities take place at Hymen's court, amidst the monochromatic pageantry of nobles. Musical instruments announce Christine-protagonist's arrival. She first becomes a member of Hymen's court, or his "daughter," and receives a gold ring as a token of her service to him. Next, Hymen conducts the wedding ceremony:

Then the god joyfully conferred me to the protection of the youth, and commanded that he faithfully take care of me in sickness and in health, that he not leave me for another as long as I should remain at his court, and that he should treat me as one of his own family. Then the youth promised by his faith to be a true lover and loyal companion.... (SW 101).

Lors le dieu en joye faisant/ Lui a commis de moy la garde/ Et lui commande qu'il me garde/ Saine et malade, sans laisser,/ Ne pour autre me delaissier,/ Tant qu'a sa court je remaindroye/ Et que des siennes me tendroye./ Lors le jovencel m'a promis / Par sa foy estre vray amis/ Et compaignie me feroit/ Loyal.... (38; lines 926-36)

The ceremony itself is conducted in the vernacular language by an allegorical deity in a medieval courtly setting. In spite of the courtly setting and the solemnization by a noble figure, the vows have religious overtones, echoing the Sarum liturgy in their emphasis on monogamy, loyalty, and continued care though failing health (Amt 84).¹⁰²

The mélange of religious and secular influences continues in the ensuing festivities after the Hymen's ceremony. Christine-protagonist recalls that the priest sang a mass, providing another religious component to the ceremony. Christine-protagonist reveals that they "willingly listened to" this religious service (101) ("de bon cuer fu escoutee"; 39; line 946). The celebration returns to secular interests as the young newlyweds receive presents from the guests, partake in a grand feast, and proceed to dancing. At this point, Christine-protagonist's self-analytical voice reappears, commenting that her descriptions have been long-winded. Although Christine-protagonist voices concern about boring her audience, her depiction of a wedding celebration at court opens an interesting window to late medieval social customs for her modern readers. Certainly, the allegorical setting of *Fortune's Transformation* establishes the fictive bent of her narrative and precludes a literal interpretation of Christine-protagonist's wedding. Christine depicts religious marriage customs in a secular setting, a juxtaposition that reflects the variations in marriage customs at this time. More precisely, she introduces Christian elements into an allegorical narrative that reflects France's classical heritage, following the intellectual penchant of her era to reinterpret classical works through Christianity. Additionally, Christine depicts the parental role in marriage arrangements and the communal celebration of marriage, capturing a social interest in promoting and celebrating the institution of marriage.

Christine-protagonist's mention of her wedding in the *Path of Long Study* is brief yet revealing. She remembers, "I was given to him when I was young" (62) ("jeune lui fus donnee"; 92; line 85). Similar to *Fortune's Transformation*, Christine-protagonist indicates her consent to her parent's will in the marriage arrangements. In *Fortune's Transformation*, she explicitly signals out her obedience to the will of her parents,

¹⁰² "N[ame] wilt though have this woman to thy wedded wife, wilt thou love her, and honour her, keep her and guard her, in health and in sickness, as a husband should a wife, and forsaking all others on account of her, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?" In this liturgy, the priest refers to exemplary Christian marriages, including Adam and Eve, and blesses the marriage chamber.

Fortune, and Hymen, all guardians who decide her fate as she reaches marital age. In the *Path of Long Study*, Christine employs a passive expression to indicate her obedience to her parental authority. Once more, she represents herself as a passive participant in the marriage arrangements. Instead of choosing her spouse or even seeking a clandestine marriage, Christine-protagonist trusts her parents with the selection of a spouse to whom she “was given.”

Christine-protagonist’s concise account of her nuptials in the *Path of Long Study* reveals another point of comparison to *Fortune’s Transformation*. She represents herself with a sole description that highlights her young age. Likewise, Christine-protagonist begins the long narrative of her marital union in *Fortune’s Transformation* with the self-description of being “rather young” as seen in the above quoted text (99).

While this succinct reference to the marriage ceremony in the *Path of Long Study* may appear startling in contrast to the lavish details in *Fortune’s Transformation*, we should remember that Christine composed these two texts within a relatively short timeframe and may have even worked on them simultaneously. Thus, Christine did not repeat alternate versions of her wedding ceremony when composing these two works. Instead, she emphasized different aspects of her marital experience in these works to form a complementary narrative. In the *Path of Long Study*, Christine focuses primarily on the closeness of her marital relationship. She provides few details of her life before her marriage. Her candid emotional portrait of Christine-protagonist corresponds to the highly introspective gist of this work that seeks to construct a new identity as a widow and a scholar. Meanwhile, in *Fortune’s Transformation*, Christine places her marital experience within a broader context, including an allegorical adaptation of her own biography and the impact of her husband’s life and death on others. Appropriately, she expands on the events leading to her marriage and the communal celebration in *Fortune’s Transformation*.

Christine composed *Christine’s Vision* several years after the *Path of Long Study* and *Fortune’s Transformation*, when she no longer sought the patronage of Louis of Orleans. Willard explains the distinct shift in tone between the works as a result of her practical situation, given that prose was favored by the Burgundians. Willard considers *Christine’s Vision* as “an appeal by Christine to the new duke of Burgundy on behalf of

France and of herself" (LW 155-57). The Burgundians would have been especially interested in the topic of marriage in 1405 given the recent union between Marguerite of Burgundy and the dauphin, Louis of Guyenne in 1404. This marital alliance positioned John the Fearless' daughter as the future Queen of France, renewing an alliance that was originally arranged by Philip the Bold between the late dauphin Charles and Marguerite.¹⁰³ Louis unexpectedly died in December 1415 (LW 176).¹⁰⁴ Thus, Christine's presentation of her marital experience in *Christine's Vision* is the most realistic and detailed account of her marital experience, as if *Christine's Vision* is the autobiographical gloss for her earlier emotive narratives and figurative language. She links the story of Christine-protagonist's nuptials in *Christine's Vision* with the previous accounts in the *Path of Long Study* and *Fortune's Transformation* through several factors.

In *Christine's Vision*, Christine-protagonist broaches the topic of her marriage with a reflection on fortune, titling section 3.4 with the rubric: "Christine speaks about her good fortunes" (109) ("Dit Christine de ses bonnes fortunes"; 97). She opens with the allegorical figure of Fortune who blessed her family under the reign of Charles V. She also inserts her positive opinion of marriage, stating that a "peaceful married life" 'joyeuse vie en mariaige' is among the "glorious successes" 'gloires des prosperitez' of life (lines 3-4). In the same manner as Christine-protagonist subjectively introduces marriage as a "great honor and benefit" in *Fortune's Transformation*, Christine-protagonist overtly inserts her opinion of marriage in *Christine's Vision* before unfolding her personal narrative.

Christine-protagonist draws attention to her passive role in the marital arrangements and her young age as she recounts her nuptials in *Christine's Vision*. Christine-protagonist introduces the topic of her maturation with the declaration, "To come to the point of my fortune, the time arrived when I was approaching the age when

¹⁰³ The late duke was well-known for his ability in crafting marital alliances, as we shall later see in the king's marriage. Philip invested himself in the alliances of both his children and grandchildren. In this example, he arranged a marriage between the two-year old dauphin Charles and his 7 month old granddaughter Marguerite, who became known in the nursery as "Madame la Dauphine." Philip succeeded in negotiating a 28 year peace treaty with England in 1396 through the marriage of Charles VI's daughter Isabelle and Richard II. See LW, 41-42, 116, and 146.

¹⁰⁴ Louis' younger brother John briefly became dauphin until his death two years later, when the title succeeded to the future Charles VII.

young girls are customarily assigned husbands” (109) (“Et a venir au point de mes fortunes, le temps vint que ja aprouchoie l’aage ouquel on sieult les filles assener de mary, tout fusse je encore assez jeunete”; 97; lines 21-23). This statement echoes Christine-protagonist’s words about her age in *Fortune’s Transformation* before she arrived at Hymen’s court (1.7).

After reading Christine-protagonist’s detailed account of her marriage in *Christine’s Vision*, we learn more about her marital arrangements. As in the previous narratives, Christine-protagonist remains passive in the marriage arrangements. Not only did her father choose Etienne but she recalls that Etienne was chosen from numerous suitors: “... several men – knights, other gentlemen, and wealthy scholars – had asked for me” (109) (“... par chevaliers, autres nobles et riches clers fusse de plusieurs demandee”; 97; 23-24). Christine-protagonist immediately states that she does not mention this because of vanity or pride, once again assuming a humble attitude. She views this as a tribute to her father’s high social standing and relationship with the king. Christine-protagonist obediently marries her father’s choice (3.4): “I was given to him, whom father accounted a suitable son” (110) (“...a celui qu’il reputa comme propre filz je fus donnee”; 98; lines 30-31). This line echoes Christine-protagonist’s brief remark in the *Path of Long Study*. At this point in *Christine’s Vision*, Christine explains her faith in her father’s judgment and makes a direct intertextual reference to this confidence: “In this matter I do not complain about Fortune, for, as I have already said, I could not have done better myself in choosing all the right good qualities” (SW 186)¹⁰⁵ (“En ce cas ne me plains je de Fortune, car a droit eslire en toutes convenables graces, si comme autre fois ay dit, a mon gré mieulx ne voulsisse”; 98; lines 31-33). Again, Christine-protagonist supports both her father’s choice of husbands and his guiding role in her marriage arrangements, deferring to his good judgment. Despite the tragic outcome of her marriage, Christine portrays a positive marital experience in these numerous texts, endorsing both the value of parental guidance in marriage and her society’s customs.

¹⁰⁵ In this instance, I have chosen to present the translation in SW after considering Reno and Dulac’s definition of *grace* in their glossary, 232. McLeod’s translation does not refer to the ideal qualities of a husband, which is an integral part of my project: “In this matter, I make no complaint against Fortune; for truly, in all the proper graces, I would not have essayed to choose better by my own wishes, as I have justifiably said before,” 110.

A Virtuous Widow

In several of Christine's works, she explicitly identifies herself as a widow or *vesve*, a word that remains as *veuve* in modern French (masculine form *veuf*). Derived from the latin word *vidua* that means "deprived of" (Larousse 655), Christine's widow persona does indeed reflect extensively on the loss of her cherished husband. While there was no specific length of time set by the Church for mourning, widows faced the choice to remain a widow or remarry (Hanawalt 60). Therefore, widowhood offered the possibility for women to redefine or redirect their lives; however, socio-economic conditions unequivocally affected this choice. For widows of the nobility, the impact of political marriage alliances and the defense of landholdings were significant practical factors in the consideration of remarriage, especially in light of the intermittent conflicts and shifting political alliances in France during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Peasant widows confronted the pressing struggle for sustenance and the ability to provide the required dues to the local lord. For widows in between these social conditions -- including peasant landowners, merchants, and middle-class urbanites, there may have been greater potential for widows to choose their path if their financial situation permitted. In a secular capacity, widows who assisted their husbands in his occupation may have continued in his stead such as those who belonged to guilds. Alternatively, widows could turn towards a religious lifestyle through entering a lay community or a becoming a nun. Yet, this decision required funding as widows relinquished their worldly goods to the religious institution (Hanawalt 59-66; Margolis, "Widows" 941-43).

Second marriages may have been practical from a financial or social perspective, yet they were neither wholly embraced by the Church nor the community (Larrington 15). The Church's advice concerning widows was dependant on their behavior (Larrington 15). In the New Testament, Jesus emphasized the indissoluble nature of marriage through the Old Testament imagery of two becoming one flesh.¹⁰⁶ In medieval society, this union was perceived as extending beyond the temporal life as evidenced in the correspondence surrounding the death of Peter Abélard. The Venerable of Cluny

¹⁰⁶ See chapter 3, 94.

consoles Peter's widow Héloïse with these words: "God fosters him, I say, in your place, as your other self, in his bosom; and keeps him to be restored to you, by his grace, at God's trumpet call" (qtd. in Larrington 14). This consolation implies that the marital couple would be reunited in the afterlife. Through a commitment to a chaste lifestyle, widowhood was viewed as a "second virginity" by the early Church authorities Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine (qtd. in Margolis, "Widows" 939).

Yet, Nadia Margolis notes that Paul permitted remarriage if a widow was not going to remain chaste ("Marriage" 606). Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians: "But I say to the unmarried, and to the widows: It is good for them if they so continue [chaste], even as I. But if they do not contain themselves, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to be burnt" (1 Cor. 7.8-9). However, in this hierarchy, marriage or remarriage is preferable to committing lust outside of wedlock (Blamires 63-66).¹⁰⁷

Second marriages were generally celebrated modestly, reflecting a certain reserve in the community. In particular, wedding festivities, such as the banquet, may have been more discreet. Communities could demonstrate their criticism of the marriage through *charivari*, a custom in which men dressed in animal costumes and mocked the newlyweds through rowdy singing outside of a married couple's home (Larrington 14-15). The Church forbade *charivari* as it not only mocked the sacrament of marriage but it also perverted the natural order of creation, transforming man into beast. In Christine's time, the practice of *charivari* led to a tragic event at the French court known as the *Bal des Ardents* (Autrand 299-301).¹⁰⁸

As we have noted in Christine's biographical information, she belongs to the latter category of middle-class urbanite widows given that her family's livelihood was dependant upon service to the nobility (Margolis, "Widows" 941-43). In her writings,

¹⁰⁷ Jerome (c.342-420), the Church father who translated the Bible into Latin as the Vulgate edition, interprets this scripture along with others to signify that virginity is morally superior to marriage. See Blamires.

¹⁰⁸ On 28 January 1393, Ysabel celebrated the third marriage of one of her ladies of honor, Catherine. During the wedding festivities, a group of six men chained together, disguised in hirsute costumes that transformed them into wild men, interrupted the celebration with their raucous behavior. As Louis of Orleans approached the men with torch in hand, fire spread from one man to the next. Four of the six men perished before the flames could be extinguished. The Duchess of Berry saved the life of one man who was revealed to be none other than King Charles VI. The four men who died were noblemen; their deaths were mourned over the next four days. Even though this tragic event represents a popular social custom, it created scandal in light of the king's participation. See Autrand, 299-301.

Christine crafts the image of a solitary widow who will not remarry, which supports Christine-protagonist's explicitly stated intention after Etienne's death in *Christine's Vision* (3.6): "Mindful of my vow and the good love promised him, I decided in a sound determination never to take another [husband]" (111) ("n'oubliant ma foy et bonne amour promise a lui, deliberey en sain propos de jamaiz autre n'avoir"; 100; lines 16-17). Christine-protagonist's declaration reveals her personal choice to remain single; she does not intimate pressure from her family to remarry, especially in the absence of an authoritative male family figure given her father's demise and her brothers' departure for Italy. Christine-protagonist recalls her decision even as she began to anticipate "the approaching flood of troubles rushing upon me" (111) ("le flot de tribulacion qui sur moy acouroit"; 100; line 15). Her ability to choose her own path and reject remarriage corresponds to Nadia Margolis' comments about the independence of widows as a function of their social status and wealth.

Through Christine's intertextual persona, she reflects on her personal experience as a widow as well as the communal experience of widows in her society. From her first short lyric poems, she explicitly identifies herself as a *vesve* and draws from traditional widow imagery. In *rondeau* 3, Christine begins with the following stark self-description: "I am a widow lone, in black arrayed" (Willard, *Writings* 53) ("Je suis vesve, seuleté et noir vestue"; 148; line 1). This line serves as the refrain and reappears in lines 7 and 12, a repetition that reinforces her identity. In this verse, she follows *vesve* with the word *vestue*, a choice that strikes the reader with its alliterative sound. Her poignant verse offers a visual portrait of the solitary author in her black garments, an image that resurfaces in *rondeau* 6 (150; line 5). The custom of wearing black mourning garments appears throughout medieval Europe, with the possible addition of a white gauze head covering for women and the exception of French queens who chose to wear white (Wilcox 38, 51). Christine's portrayal of a lonely widow in black corresponds to the imagery prevalent in other medieval works. For instance, in Chretien de Troyes' *Philomena*, a text that was familiar to Christine through the *Ovid moralisé*,¹⁰⁹ Procne vows to wear black as a symbol of mourning for her sister's death: "It is written in our

¹⁰⁹ Since this work only survives in the *Ovid moralisé*, it cannot be compared to autograph manuscripts of Chretien's works. For Christine's use of the *Ovid moralisé* as a major source, see chapter 1, 12.

law that one who is overwhelmed by mourning and grief must wear black” (my trans) (1255; lines 1002-04). Moreover, in Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* (c.1382-87), Criseyde wears a simple dress “in widow’s black” when Troilus first gazes upon her at a feast in honor of Palladion (9; pars. 25-26; Hanawalt 58). Criseyde offers a similar solitary image of a widow: “she stood there, humble and alone” (par. 26). We shall soon explore how both of these characteristics apply to Christine-protagonist’s persona as well.

In addition to representing her widow persona with familiar imagery, Christine evokes her personal experience to address the common hardships of widows in her society. This effort is particularly evident in part 3 of *Christine’s Vision*, when Christine demonstrates how Christine-protagonist shares the common experience of widowhood. As Christine-protagonist presents her complaint to Lady Philosophy, she speaks of her personal financial difficulties through language that conveys the universal nature of her experience (3.6). For instance, she confronts the financial and legal problems after her husband’s death as widow’s fare (“les metz des vesves”; 100; line 37). Christine-protagonist’s candid depiction of her grave financial and legal entanglements as “widow’s fare” shifts the focus from her personal experience to the widespread nature of these problems. Christine-protagonist’s narrative offers a mirror of reflection on her society’s treatment of widows to her readers. From a legal standpoint, medieval widows were entitled to the dower, a share of the late husband’s estate that was intended to support the surviving widow. Whereas the dowry originated from the bride’s family, the dower generally represented one-third of the husband’s property or goods. Upon the death of the husband, the estate had to settle outstanding debt, a practice that Christine-protagonist refers to as the source of her continued legal difficulties in *Christine’s Vision*. Considering the young age of her children, Christine-protagonist acted as a guardian of the rest of the estate and raised her children as the head of the household (Bell, “Dower” 262-63).

In an analogous manner, Christine-protagonist speaks of her family’s meager provisions in universal terms. She states: “the fare was sober, as promised a widow, and yet it was necessary to live” (114) (“Mais le repast estoit sobre, comme il affiere a femme vesve; et toutesfois vivre convient”; 103; lines 116-17). As an alternate

translation, Blumenfeld-Kosinski interprets *affiere* in a slightly different manner: “as it befits a widow” (SW 189). Both of these translations convey that Christine-protagonist’s material hardships were emblematic of a widow’s fate in her society. Christine-protagonist’s tone conveys a sense of acceptance. Indeed, historical records from Paris indicate numerous poor widows as the head of the household, a situation that prompted the establishment of charitable shelters and hospices that attempted to prevent widows from resorting to prostitution. By 1342, there were ten such institutions in Paris (Margolis, “Widows” 941). Barbara Hanawalt points out that legal documents testify to the common status of widowhood, dispelling the myth that from a demographic perspective there were fewer women than men in medieval society because of childbirth (58).

The flagrant mistreatment of widows in Christine-protagonist’s society leads her to present a ballade on this topic, which interrupts the prose narrative in *Christine’s Vision*. Christine-protagonist laments the destitution of widows in a scathing tone that berates the uncompassionate behavior of men of various social standing and positions of authority: nobles, clerks, princes, knights, prelates, judges, and magistrates. Christine-protagonist calls for protection and intervention in the final stanza: “Now good, brave men awaken/ Your virtues, or to much ill fortune/ Widows are willingly condemned” (116) (“Bons et vaillans, or soient esveillees/ Vos grans bontez, ou vesves sont taillees/ D’avoir mains mauix”; 106; lines 213-15). This ballade is another striking example of intertextuality between Christine-protagonist’s narratives and Christine’s voice in her early lyric poems considering that it first appeared ballade 6 in *Other Ballades* (McLeod 148; note 29). However, Christine-protagonist’s plea for assistance resonates more clearly in *Christine’s Vision* than in the earlier text since the readers witness her hardships and hear the story of her misfortune. The context of Christine-protagonist’s detailed narrative, that parallels Christine’s real-life experience, lends authority to the ballade.

Following Christine’s promise of a multi-layered text in the gloss to the ex-Phillipps 128 manuscript, she extends the notion of widowhood in *Christine’s Vision* to an allegorical context. The Crowned Lady, who represents France, compares herself to a widow (1.19). After the Crowned Lady describes the rampant immorality in her land,

she states, “I am like the widow left unprotected by her father, whom everyone takes advantage of and no one pities” (29) (“Je suis comme la vesve de bon per delaissiee, a qui chascun cueurt sure et nul n’en a pitié”; 35; lines 14-15). Here, Christine draws attention to the Crowned Lady’s vulnerability as an unprotected widow. The Crowned Lady’s grim statement echoes Christine-protagonist’s words in part 3, as Christine-protagonist explains in her ballade that widows find no pity from men of power (line 7). Christine’s choice to mention the Crowned Lady’s lack of protection from her father is multi-faceted. The notion of a father’s protection for his widowed daughter has religious connotations, namely because of the biblical advice for a widow to seek her father’s protection and live in his household (Gen. 38.11 and Lev. 22.13). The Crowned Lady’s situation parallels both Christine’s actual life and that of her literary counterpart Christine-protagonist because of the death of Thomas de Pizan or Master Thomas. In applying the metaphor to the current political situation, the widowed Crowned Lady represents France who has lost her king since Charles VI’s crazed episodes prevents him from effectively ruling the country. In this model, the Crowned Lady’s protective father would be the wise king Charles V, an idea that appears in Christine’s biography *Charles V* as she records how he defended France.

To further develop the comparison between the Crowned Lady and Christine’s widow persona, the Crowned Lady then evokes language and images that we have previously seen associated with marriage. She laments the loss of her source of joy and describes herself as a wandering sheep. In the original French, Christine uses two epithets for the Crowned Lady’s husband that we explored in her lyric poems and Christine-protagonist’s narratives – *chief* and *ami*. Christine applies the metaphor of a lost sheep to the Crowned Lady’s state.

Christine’s use of allegorical figures reveals her effort to transform her personal tragedy into a story with universal appeal and meaning. The reader witnesses her changing perceptions of grief as she eventually reaches a deeper level of spiritual meditation. She develops her identity as a widow in extraordinary allegorical settings through classical allusions that provide a foil to her widowhood status and sense of loss. In particular, Christine recurrently features Juno and Fortune. In her earlier writings, she not only explores her connection to these allegorical characters but also depicts her

widow persona as a target of their mythic power. Christine explains her husband's death as direct result of Fortune's wrath, creating a personal mythology that attempts to make sense of Etienne's sudden and rather mysterious death. In this manner, she recasts herself as a victim and aggrandizes her personal experience of loss.

In Christine's texts, she displays her knowledge of Juno's marital powers. The classical goddess Juno (or Hera in Greek), the wife and sister of Jupiter (or Zeus), was viewed as the guardian of marriage and childbirth (*City of Ladies* 262; Hall 182).¹¹⁰ Indeed, Christine narrates Juno's legend in the *City of Ladies* (2.61), stating that she was worshipped by the Samians who believed that "she governed the institution of marriage and answered the prayers of women who invoked her help" (187) ("les Samiens... lui attribuerent aussi les confors des drois de mariage et a son ayde recouroient les femmes en oroisons"; 404). Her recitation of Juno's legend provides a key to Juno's symbolism in her earlier poems.

In *Other Ballades*, Christine's explains her widowhood and ensuing retreat to a scholarly life through references to Juno and other classical figures. Christine seeks Pallas, the goddess of wisdom, in ballade 7: "she'd lead me on the path of comfort and help me carry the load Fortune has made too heavy for me" (SW 12) ("Car par elle je seroie ou sentier/ De reconfort, et de porter le fais/ Que Fortune a pour moy trop chargier fais"; 214; lines 3-5). In this excerpt, Christine alludes to her husband's death as the misfortune that burdens her. She anticipates consolation from intellectual pursuits, that is, by cultivating the presence of the goddess of wisdom, Pallas. Christine ends the stanza with the assertion that the goddess of marriage will not provide solace: "for from Juno I will have no comfort" (SW 12)¹¹¹ ("Car de Juno n'ay je nul reconfort"; 215; line 10). This line reappears at the end of each stanza (lines 20, 30, 34), emphasizing her statement. Although Juno is considered a patron of marriage, Christine will not seek her help as a grieving widow. Perhaps the refrain also refers to her wish to never remarry. Christine further develops this classical symbolism with Juno in ballade 14. In this later poem, she portrays Juno as antagonistic with the following refrain: "For

¹¹⁰ Christine also credits Juno as the goddess of wealth in this passage because of her marital prosperity, 187.

¹¹¹ Willard translates this in the present tense. See *Writings*, 49.

Juno hates me and Misfortune dismays" (Willard, *Writings* 50) ("Juno me het et meseür me nuit"; 223-24; lines 8, 16, 24, 28). In this refrain, Christine describes Juno with an active verb, indicating that the goddess harbors animosity towards her.

As for Fortune, Christine does not merely allude to this goddess as the cause of Etienne's death. She portrays Fortune as an active figure who is personally involved in her story. First, Christine alludes to Fortune in her widowhood poems. Since Fortune is jealous of her joyful marital union, this allegorical figure consequently destroys the author's happiness through the death of her husband. Christine blames Fortune for her perpetual sadness. She weaves this idea throughout *One Hundred Ballades*, specifically in ballades 7, 8, 10, 12, and 18. For example, Christine explains that Fortune's actions have altered her personality in the first stanza of ballade 18. She no longer sings or laughs but resembles a nun. Christine then states, "Fortune has done all this, may God recognize this. She has changed into mournful ways my games and laughter" (SW 7) ("Et tant a fait Fortune, Dieu lui mire!/ Qu'elle a changié en vie doloireuse/ Mes jeux, mes ris"; 19; lines 8-10). She reinforces Fortune's destructive nature in ballade 3 of *One Hundred Ballades* by setting the tragic love story of Hero and Leander in this first series of mourning poems (Walters, "Chivalry" 46-47). Christine revisits the theme of Fortune's responsibility for Etienne's death in *Other Ballades* (ballades 7, 14, 15), *Rondeaux* (rondeau 6), and *Virelays* (poems 4, 14).

In the *Path of Long Study*, the opening passage identifies Christine-protagonist as a victim of Fortune's treachery. After the prologue, Christine-protagonist begins the work with the following declaration: "Since perverse Fortune has long been hostile to me, she cannot now cease from continually harming me through her tricks which kill many, and which have completely defeated me" (SW 61) ("Comme Fortune perverse/ M'ait esté souvent averse,/ Ancor ne se peut lasser/ De moy nuire sans cesser/ Par son tour qui plusieurs tue,/ Qui du tout m'a abatue"; 90; lines 61-66). Straight away, Christine introduces the character Christine-protagonist as Fortune's victim. At the same time, Christine-protagonist mentions that she is one of many victims, making her distressing narrative both personal and communal, as we have seen in the generalized descriptions about the misfortunate lot of widows in *Christine's Vision*.

Next, Christine-protagonist describes herself as a lonely woman, or *seulete* (line 68), and reprises the idea that Fortune's jealous nature is responsible for her husband's death, linking the *Path of Long Study* to the above widowhood poems. Christine-protagonist claims: "I think she [Fortune] envied the joyous, happy life he gave to me" (62) ("Bien croy qu'elle avoit envie/ Du tres joyeux temps plaisant/ Don't cellui m'estoit aysant"; 94; lines 112-14). With this "assault," Christine-protagonist claims that "Fortune has undertaken to kill or imprison my heart" (62) ("elle l'a entrepris,/ Mon cuer rendra mort ou pris"; 96; lines 159-60). The reader witnesses Christine's personal struggle – she is defenseless against Fortune's attacks and overwhelmed by the harm that she has engendered.

As for *Fortune's Transformation*, the impact of the allegorical figure's actions surpasses the textual narrative to headline in the work's title. Christine-protagonist regales the reader with legendary stories of Fortune's considerable powers of transformation, drawing examples from Ovid's tales of Ulyssees, Tiresias, and Iphis (1.11). She then recounts her own gender change, citing Fortune's personal jealousy of Christine-protagonist's life as the catalyst (1.12): "... I truly believe that Fortune came to envy the wonderful comfort in which I was living. She became aware of it and sent for me; thus I was obliged to leave my comfortable life, I could not disobey her" (104) ("Mais bien croy que Fortune envie/ Ot du grant repos, que j'avoye;/ Si s'avise et querir m'envoye;/ Or me falu mont grant repos/ Laisser, desobeïr ne pos"; 46; lines 1168-72). This reasoning echoes Christine-protagonist's comments in the *Path of Long Study*. During the return journey, Christine-protagonist's husband or master perished in stormy seas.

It is not until *Christine's Vision* in 1405 that Christine-protagonist speaks of her husband's death with verisimilitude. In the works preceding this candid account, which in itself is wrapped in the allegorical context of Christine-protagonist's visionary encounter with Lady Philosophy, Christine frequently attributes her husband's death to the malevolent nature of Fortune in her short lyric poems, the *Path of Long Study*, and *Fortune's Transformation*. In *Christine's Vision*, she alters the perception of Fortune. As seen in the previous examples, Christine's widow persona depicts herself as a victim of Fortune and Juno. She presents the reader with the notions that Fortune is mercurial

and that personal happiness engenders jealousy from others. Liliane Dulac argues that the figure of Fortune forges another intertextual link between her works, considering that Christine, through the admonishments of Lady Philosophy, corrects the role of Fortune in *Christine's Vision* that was first presented in *Fortune's Transformation*. In *Christine's Vision*, Fortune's dominance has subsided in light of Lady Opinion's malevolent deeds and the human choice (Dulac, "Thèmes" 79-82). After Christine-protagonist's complaint, Lady Philosophy's reply addresses the notion that Fortune has personally persecuted Christine-protagonist (3.15):

Do you know what leads you to such fancies? It is the excessive affection and good opinion you hold of yourself and your comfortable pleasures; it makes you attribute everything that may have occurred contrary to your wishes to your imagined design. As for the death of the King and the others, God arranged them at that time for the best as with everything He does.... It is not for you to dispute God's judgments (125)

Et sces tu la cause qui te meut a telz ymaginacions? C'est la trop grant faveur et tendreur que as a toy meismes et a l'aise de tes plaisirs qui te fait tout ce qui avient contre ce que vouldroies atribuer au propos de ce que tu ymagine. Car quant est de la mort du roy et aussi des autres, Dieu les avoit ordonnez ad ce terme pour leur meilleur, comme toutes choses ainsi le face. Et des jugemens de Dieu,... n'est pas en vous de discuter en hardies paroles... (118; lines 49-57)

Lady Philosophy's comments are a harsh reminder for Christine-protagonist to look beyond her personal grief and egoism to recognize the all-encompassing supremacy and will of God. Life does not follow Christine-protagonist's "imagined designs" even in this retrospective narrative of her story, an interesting perspective on individual perception that appears within Christine's extremely imaginative allegorical narrative. Christine represents herself as having been proud in the past. She amends her previous misunderstanding of Fortune's capabilities from a chastened position to encourage her readers towards spiritual improvement, following the model of Boethius' *Consolation*. Christine's Lady Philosophy advises Christine-protagonist, as well as the reader, to

accept the death of loved ones and be grateful for the blessings in life, which in her case are being born to virtuous parents, her good mental and physical health, and her children (3.17). As seen in these multiple examples, Christine's widow persona draws from her personal narrative to reveal the challenges of widowhood, from encountering practical hardships to reckoning with feelings of persecution and despair. Tracy Adams comments, "Christine construes the sadness of love as part of the universal human condition" ("Love as Metaphor" 154-55). Through the voice of Lady Philosophy in *Christine's Vision*, which is approximately fifteen years after Etienne's death, she ultimately offers hope and spiritual comfort to her readers.

A Good Reputation. The theme of a good reputation or *fama* ("earthly fame") is an integral part of Christine's corpus and reflects a societal preoccupation with female virtue (Walters, "France's Memorialist" 36).¹¹² In Christine's works, we can find both the examples of the damaging nature of rumors on a woman's reputation as well as the conscious effort to preserve one's reputation. During the time that Christine was developing her intertextual widow persona in her early poems and allegorical narratives, she witnessed the increasingly negative public perception of the reigning French queen Ysabel of Bavaria and responded to this in her *Prayer to Our Lady* in 1402. In the fifth stanza, Christine prays for the queen's spiritual salvation, happiness, and peace.¹¹³ Although Ysabel was not technically a widow, Charles' bouts of insanity left her virtually alone amidst the warring princes, without the support of an authoritative king. By 1405, Ysabel was not merely a figurehead but had been granted political power in the Royal Council due to her husband's ailing mental health. She was the subject of court rumors and negative public opinion, as seen in the political pamphlet *Songe véritable* (1406). Her lavish spending habits and the unreserved behavior of her ladies-in-waiting were censored and appeared inconsistent with the needs of an impoverished kingdom on the brink of civil war. Additionally, rumor abounded that Ysabel was having an affair with her

¹¹² For an analysis of *fama* in regards to medieval law, reputation, and speech, see *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*. In this volume, Lori Walters discusses Christine's manipulation of positive and negative perceptions in *Charles V* and *Christine's Vision*. See her article, "Constructing Reputations: Fama and Memory."

¹¹³ "Pour nostre roïne de France/ Te pry qu'elle n'ait ja souffrance/ De peine infernal, et lui donnes/ Joye et paix"; Roy 3: 3 ; lines 55-58.

brother-in-law, Louis of Orleans. This rumor has never been proved.¹¹⁴ Christine's prayer for Ysabel's salvation registered in the prayer indicates the need for moral improvement on the queen's behalf and Christine's awareness of the queen's visibly negative example.

Christine's livelihood hinged on her ability to maintain a good reputation as a respectable widow, as she needed to cultivate positive relationships with royal patrons. Even if her intellectual opinions were dismissed or viewed with amusement as a novelty, the topic of female virtue was nonetheless a serious matter. Indeed, chastity was essential in forming a good reputation for medieval women, both in marriage and as a widow, which helped to combat the image of the licentious *meretrix* (Hanawalt 60; Margolis, "Widows" 939). Thus in Christine's intertextual widow persona, we can find the consistent portrayal of a chaste widow.

There was an intermediary option between remarriage and dedication to a religious community for pious widows. A widow could become a vowess, effectively taking a vow before a bishop to remain chaste while living a secular life (Hanawalt 60). In *Christine's Vision*, we have previously examined such a vow on the part of Christine-protagonist (3.6) when she recalls her decision to remain faithful to her wedding vows and reject remarriage. Although this memory reflects a personal oath instead of an official vow of chastity as a vowess, Christine-protagonist reaffirms her choice as she reveals this lifestyle to Lady Philosophy, who transforms to Lady Theology and effectively represents religious authority. Furthermore, Christine's promotion of the solitary widow persona in her manuscripts announces her chaste lifestyle in a public manner.

As with Christine's depictions of Etienne, she prefers poetic language when she refers to herself in the short lyric poems and allegorical works. Her imagery testifies to her chaste lifestyle, upholding the aforementioned vow from *Christine's Vision* (3.6). From metaphors to descriptive language, Christine fashions this intertextual portrait of a solitary widow through vivid language.

¹¹⁴ For information on Ysabel's life and reputation, see the biographies by Marie-Véronique Clin and Philippe Delorme as well as Rachel Gibbon's article "Isabeau of Bavaria, Queen of France: The Creation of an Historical Villainess."

During the discussion of the animal imagery in Christine's memorial to Etienne, we considered the shepherd and turtledove metaphors from the perspective of an exemplary husband.¹¹⁵ Likewise, in these metaphors that are rich in biblical overtones, Christine represents her widow persona as a loyal partner and widow. As a shepherdless sheep in ballade 14 of *One Hundred Ballades* and in rondeau 1, she does not seek the protection of a new husband, or shepherd. Christine remains alone despite the threatening presence of the wolf (ballade 14) and her lonely wandering (rondeau 1). In the turtledove metaphor in ballade 14, we explored her emphasis on the monogamous nature of turtledoves that have but one mate and the turtledove's flight towards arid lands as a reflection of her vow to remain a widow. In *rondeau* 1 and *jeux à vendre* 12, Christine highlights the solitary turtledove without her mate, who remains *seulete*.

This term *seulete* testifies to Christine's creative use of language in developing her intertextual widow persona. It can be translated to "little lonely woman" (Walters, "Chivalry" 45; note 8). Besides three of the poems listed above, Christine employs this term in other works, as we have observed in ballade 11 from *One Hundred Ballades*, rondeau 3, and the *Path of Long Study*. This diminutive that recurs in the widow persona contributes to the humble nature of her character and her chaste behavior.¹¹⁶ Christine's solitary widow persona is further supported by a program of illustrations in her manuscripts that feature the widow alone, such as the image of Christine in her study, accompanied by a dog at her feet, at the beginning of *One Hundred Ballades* in the Queen's manuscript (4r).

Yet, Christine reaches beyond the intertextual poetic representations of her chaste widow persona. Christine-protagonist directly refutes the rumors of inappropriate sexual affairs with indignation in *Christine's Vision* (3.6). She proclaims:

Was it not said of me throughout town that I had lovers? I swear to you on my soul, however, that this man knew me not, nor was there any man or creature who might have ever seen me with him in public or private; for

¹¹⁵ See chapter 3, 81.

¹¹⁶ See Mary McKinley's article "The Subversive 'Seulette,'" for an alternate interpretation of this term, along with other words such as *femmelette*, as ironic.

my path did not lie in that direction, nor did I have reason to be there.
(114)

Ne fut il pas dit de moy par toute la ville que j'amoie par amours? ... mais
je te jure m'ame que ycelui ne me congnoissoit ne ne sçavoit qui j'estoie,
ne oncques ne fu homme ne creature nee qui en publique n'a privé me
veist soubz toit n'en lieu n'en place ou il fust, car mon chemin ne s'i
adonnoit ne n'y avoie que faire. (103-04; lines 138-39, 143-47)

Although Christine does not mention the man concerned in her statement of innocence, she confronts the rumors of inappropriate behavior in both public and private settings. In the notes to the Champion edition, Reno and Dulac list the possible men to whom Christine refers: Sir John Montague, the earl of Salisbury, and Jean Gerson (178; note VI/ 138-39). She met the earl in Paris during the fall of 1398. Although Montague visited Paris for diplomatic reasons, his interest in poetry led to their meeting. Indeed, Christine-protagonist recounts this meeting several sections later in *Christine's Vision* and refers to him as a noble and gracious man (3.11). Christine certainly made a favorable impression as the earl invited her son Jean to stay with him in England to keep his son company. She accepted and Jean remained in England for three years, during which time her second son died and the earl himself died in 1400. Christine recalls that she lost some of her manuscripts in exchange for her son's safe passage from Henry IV's court (*LW* 42-43, 165).

If Christine's reference to rumors does refer to her relationship with the earl, her strong denial follows the positive comments she wrote about his generosity the preceding year in *Charles V* (*LW* 42-43, 165). Given that Christine's precise proclamation of innocence focuses on not having been physically seen near the man in question, it is possible that her contact with the earl and arrangement for her son's future was conducted through intermediaries. Any correspondence between the widow and the visiting dignitary, whether through written or verbal messages, would have certainly provided fodder for the rumors of a more substantial relationship. This possibility would shed light on Christine's portrayal of the negative consequences of rumors in the *Duke of True Lovers* (1403-04) and the *Three Virtues*. In the *Three*

Virtues, Christine discusses the harmful nature of rumor at the court for noble women (1.27), including a version of her letter from the Lady of the Tower to an irresponsible princess that first appeared in the *Duke of True Lovers*.¹¹⁷ The message of the Lady of the Tower emphasizes the harmful nature of illicit behavior. Affairs threaten the legitimacy of heirs and undermine the ability of a princess to rule well and be respected. Even if the rumors are unfounded, the Lady insists a ruler's effectiveness is weakened with a blemished reputation.

Following Established Exemplars. As another method of illustrating the good character of Christine's widow persona, Christine draws comparisons to respected role models. We have previously examined Christine's frequent allusions to heroic figures and role models in her intertextual memorial to Etienne, lending credence to the depiction of his virtues such as wisdom, prudence, and loyalty. Christine employs this same writing technique in reference to her behavior as a widow in *Christine's Vision*. Christine-protagonist does not overtly praise her own actions. In adhering to her humble widow persona, she points out her need to acquire patience and seek religious consolation in order to persevere through the rumors about her chastity and the practical hardships of widowhood. She demonstrates how even a simple person, one who did not receive university training in Latin, can learn to model exemplary behavior.

Christine-protagonist's above-mentioned assertion of her chastity in *Christine's Vision* provides two such examples. First, she introduces the passage with a reflection on Jesus' torture and how his suffering taught him patience: "In the example of Jesus Christ, who was willingly tortured throughout his body to teach us patience, Fortune meant for my poor heart to be tormented with all sorts of cruel and bitter thoughts" (114) ("Et a l'exemple de Jhesucrist qui vould estre tourmenté en toutes les parties de son corps pour nous instruire a pascience, vould Fortune que mon cuer fust tourmenté de toutes manieres de dures et desplaisans pensees diversement"; 103; lines 132-35). In this reference, Christine-protagonist surpasses the clever wordplay association between Christine and Christ in *Fortune's Transformation* (1.5) to suggest that her endurance of false accusations can follow his model given that her suffering can lead to acquiring

¹¹⁷ For a further discussion of this intertextual link, see Zhang "Du Miroir des Princes au Miroir des Princesses."

patience. In the original French, Christine-protagonist even employs the term *example*. Lori Walters observes, “The stance of loving self-sacrifice that she adopts in imitation of Christ’s own reflects the ultimate wisdom that Theology can convey to human beings” (“Constructing Reputations” 122).

Second, Christine-protagonist immediately follows this religious comparison with a direct reference to Boethius. She parallels her experience of false rumors to Boethius’ endurance of the false accusations of his treachery. Christine-protagonist questions, “What greater evil and unpleasantness, what greater cause for impatience can arise for an innocent person than to hear herself unjustifiably maligned, as Boethius’ words in his book *Of Consolation* show?” (114) (“Quel plus grant mal et desplaisir puet sourdre a l’innocent, ne plus grant cause d’impatience, que de soi ouir diffamer sans cause, comme il appert par les recors de Boece en son *Livre de consolacion* ?”; 103; lines 135-38). Again, Christine-protagonist comments on the patience required to bear suffering slander about her chastity through referencing an exemplar. Christine-protagonist selects a role model whose situation more closely approaches her own and whose work directly influences this section of *Christine’s Vision*. It is only after the references to these two exemplary men who suffered that Christine-protagonist addresses the unjust rumors that threaten her good reputation.

Furthermore, Christine-protagonist evokes another biblical figure in *Christine’s Vision* who symbolizes patience and suffering – Job (3.6). As she recounts the tribulations of widowhood, in particular the financial and legal distress after her husband’s death, Christine-protagonist states, “whereupon at the height of my misfortunes, I, like Job, succumbed to a long illness” (112-13) “ou comble de mes adversitez fortune[es], me sourdi comme a Job longue maladie”; 101; lines 66-67). Job’s story in the Old Testament bears witness to the strength of religious faith as he refused to forsake God during his trials. In the introductory verse, Job is described as “simple and upright” (1.1). His prosperity and virtue led Satan to question God whether Job would maintain his faith during hardships (1.9-10). Added to the loss of his livestock and his dwelling, Job now mourned the deaths of his servants and children (Job 1.13-19). He further faced the disparagements of his friends and wife. Job suffered from physical afflictions as well that caused deformity (2.7). In the medieval period, Job

became a “protector against the plague, because he himself had survived an apparently similar disease” (Hall 171). His story offers a message of hope as God rewards Job’s faith by restoring his prosperity and relationships with his community. Following this theme of perseverance through personal grief and compounded suffering, Christine-protagonist’s reference to Job foreshadows the religious consolation she receives from Lady Philosophy. Indeed, Lady Philosophy supports this message through further recourse to Christian figures. The multitude of quotations taken from religious authorities such as Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, Saint Gregory, and Saint Bernard to name only a few, emphasize the ideal Christian values that benefit not only Christine-protagonist but all mankind: disinterest in material wealth, happiness through religious virtue, and perseverance in difficult times.

Christine’s impressive scholarly accomplishments changed her status from that of a disadvantaged widow whose belongings were repossessed to a well-known writer whose presence was sought by foreign rulers. However, Christine’s humble intertextual persona does not recommend women to follow in her path as a writer. Instead, Christine promotes the institution of marriage through featuring her experience as a young bride in a positive light, repeatedly describing her marital union as joyful. Her example endorses the beneficial guidance of parents in marriage alliances and the public celebration of this union, contrary to clandestine marriages. Christine reflects on the communal experience of widowhood, from the practical hardships in her society to the emotional process of grief. In Christine’s earlier works, she sought to explain her husband’s death through the allegorical notion of being a victim of Fortune. Christine corrects these thoughts in the final part of *Christine’s Vision*, when she reveals the importance of faith in God’s will. She further defends her reputation as a chaste widow against wide-spread rumors about her conduct. Christine’s widow persona perseveres through her tribulations with spiritual strength, following the examples of legendary role models. Her humble widow persona bears witness to the natural and virtuous woman.

CHAPTER 5

CHRISTINE'S DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE

Authority through Experience

From Christine's debut poetic works to her intricate allegorical narratives, in the previous chapters we have explored the intertextual portraits of Christine's widow persona and her husband Etienne. The widow thinks back to her prior relationship with an earlier self and her husband, offering her readers a positive view of marriage through their harmonious relationship. As stated at the onset of this study, the historical accuracy of these literary figures is less important than Christine's conscious effort to fashion such ideal characters. She weaves these self-inspired role models throughout numerous texts over a span of approximately six years.¹¹⁸ Indeed, the high level of intertextuality demonstrates Christine's continued preoccupation with the positive representation of marriage in literature during these first years of the beginning of the fifteenth century. A closer look at her response to misogynist authors, including her involvement in the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*, reveals that she supports her explicitly stated beliefs through the creation of exemplary spouses in her works, beginning with her personal example. Christine's defense of marriage is fundamentally based on the idea that direct knowledge, comprising personal experience as well as observation, supersedes indirect knowledge, consisting of rumors and assumptions. Her emphasis on individual experience as the basis of moral reflection brings to mind the possible humanist influence of her father, as we shall consider. Despite Christine's humble persona, which we examined in the previous chapter, and her educational status, she establishes her authority to challenge venerated scholars and authors as she defends the sacrament of marriage.

¹¹⁸ For this timeframe, I consider the estimated dates of the *Livre de Christine*, from 1399 to 1402, to *Christine's Vision* in 1405.

Christine's Education

By the Late Middle Ages, the education of noble children reflected a marked difference between the sexes. While reading and religious studies were considered beneficial for girls, secondary education in the traditional fields of the *trivium* (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy) was generally reserved for boys. In 1380, Paris counted over twenty licensed schoolmistresses. Additionally, wealthy families could have educated their female children by tutors. Yet, the underlying focus of women's education was geared towards upholding social values and maintaining social stability. Key topics centered on instilling virtue and imparting practical knowledge, as evidenced by the surfeit of conduct books addressing female behavior. Thus, female education was principally task-oriented. Some aristocrats provided additional practical training to prepare their daughters to assist with estate management. Due to the informal system of education at this time, there may have also been a considerable degree of oral transmission from relatives (Larrington 187-89; Cruz 240-41).

A further point of interest for the sake of our argument is the differentiation between certain skills in the medieval period. For instance, reading was a distinct skill from writing. While the former was commonly viewed as beneficial for women, especially in the reading of devotional works and conduct books, the ability to write was a more esoteric pursuit that the formal education system of the universities advanced for men (Larrington 189; Cruz 240-41). The singular promotion of reading among women, combined with the fact that the preponderance of works were written by men, illustrate the marginalized voice of medieval women. Christine comments on this situation in one of her first works, the *God of Love's Letter* (1399). After Christine expressly criticizes Jean de Meun and Ovid for writing works that depict women as fickle, thereby encouraging men to deceive women, she concludes:

Yet men write on, quite to their heart's content,/ The ones who plead their
case without debate.... If women, though, had written all those books,/ I
know that they would read quite differently,/ For well do women know the
blame is wrong. (55)

Si devisent a l'aise de leurs cuers/ Ceulx qui plaident leur cause sans
partie.... Mais se femmes eussent li livre fait,/ Je sçay de vray
qu'aultrement fust du fait,/ Car bien scevent qu'a tort sont encoulpees.
(54; lines 412-13, 417-20)

Christine points out that the depiction of women as immoral in nature is a categorically one-sided discussion, promoted by male authors. She seeks to respond to this defamation in the written vernacular word, creating a dialogue or the beginnings of a debate. Christine's voice as a female author strives to clear the tarnished image of women in her society and, as is analyzed in this study, the negative portrayal of marriage that is based on the inherently immoral character of women.

In light of this historical background, the breadth of Christine's education and her ability to not only write but direct one of the few examples of a female lay scriptorium in France attests to her self-proclaimed description as a novelty in her society. That Thomas de Pizan's scholarly pursuits had a profound effect on Christine's interests is indisputable. She conveys his influence during her formative years in multiple texts. For instance, in *Christine's Vision*, Christine-protagonist establishes her intellectual lineage towards the beginning of her autobiographical narrative (3.3), presenting not only her father as a noble Italian scholar who was summoned by Charles V as well as King Louis I of Hungary but also her grandfather as a "scholar and doctor" whose reputation facilitated Thomas' success in Venice (108). Additionally, Christine mentions her father in numerous dedications of her manuscripts; for example, in several manuscripts of the *Letter from Othea*, Christine identifies herself as the daughter of Thomas de Pizan and cites his royal appointment as part of her *auctoritas* and intellectual lineage.¹¹⁹

McLeod suggests that Christine may have become aware of Italian humanist ideas through her father, especially considering the intellectual milieu of Bologna and Venice during his life (145; note 6). A product of the cultural and scholarly revival or Renaissance in Italy, humanism was "a concentration of thought on human life in this world, buttressed by firm Christian values" (Bell 173). Thus humanists advanced the study of ancient texts and Early Christian doctrine in the pursuit of self-development and moral improvement (Bell 173). Thomas possibly knew the Italian humanist author

¹¹⁹ Gabriella Parussa's edition of the *Letter from Othea* includes Christine's dedications.

Francesco Petrarch (1304-74) during his time at the University of Bologna (*City of Ladies* 270). Scholars have traced Petrarch's significant influence in Christine's works. Christine specifically names Petrarch in the *City of Ladies* 2.7 and draws from his *Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul* (c.1366) (102, 270). Lori Walters views Christine's profound knowledge and effort to focus on the dignity of the individual as evidence of her humanist traits ("C'est cette érudition ainsi que son effort pour mettre en valeur la dignité de l'esprit humain qui qualifie Christine comme humaniste"; "Autobiographie et humanisme"; 177).

At the same time, in several works Christine intimates the limitations of her education based on her gender. In *Fortune's Transformation*, we witnessed how Christine-protagonist replaces her earthly mother with Nature who encourages her to marry through the bridal gift of a precious crown (1.8). In the sections preceding this gift, Christine-protagonist reveals that her mother's extreme longing for a girl triumphed over her father's wish for a boy. Subsequently, Christine-protagonist was born female and her gender prevented her from undertaking extensive studies with her father (1.6).

But because I was born a girl, it was not at all ordained that I should benefit in any way from my father's wealth, and I could not inherit, more because of custom than justice, the possessions that are found in the very worthy fountain.... and because of this, I lost through lack of learning any chance of taking this very rich treasure (SW 94)

Mais, pour ce que fille fu nee,/ Ce n'estoit pas chose ordenee/ Que en riens deusse amender/ Des biens mon pere, et succeder/ Ne poz a l'avoir qui est pris/ En la fontaine de grant pris,/ Plus par coustume que par droit.... Pour celle cause, en tous endroiz,/ Je perdi, par faute d'apprendre,/ A ce tres riche tresor prendre (21; lines 413-19, 424-26)

Christine-protagonist evokes the metaphor of her father's cultivation of knowledge at the Fountain of Wisdom, which led to his gifted abilities in astrology and medicine.¹²⁰ His wealth is an intangible treasure of knowledge. Christine-protagonist faults social

¹²⁰ See chapter 3, 76.

customs as the reason for her inability to follow in her father's scholarly path. After this excerpt, she decries the injustice of gender inequality in respect to education.

Christine-protagonist insists on her natural disposition towards a scholarly life. She reflects that in spite of her female gender, "still I am inclined toward my true condition and to be like my father" (95) ("Y avoie inclinacion/ De ma droite condicion/ Et pour mon pere ressembler"; 22; lines 449-51). At this point, Christine-protagonist develops the metaphor of her father's treasury of knowledge, applying this imagery to her own situation:

I was not able to prevent myself from stealing scraps and flakes, small coins and bits of change, that have fallen from the great wealth that my father had a great amount of.... and I have acquired a poor hoard, as is well evident in my work (95)

... ne me poz je tenir d'embler/ Des racleures et des paillettes,/ Des petis deniers, des mailletes,/ Choites de la tres grant richesse,/ Don't il avoit a grant largece... Si ay povre avoir assemblé,/ Il en pert bien a mon ouvrage (22; lines 452-56, 459-60)

Christine-protagonist reminds the reader that the quality of her work reflects her limited education. Christine-protagonist's tone corresponds to the humble widow persona that Christine has carefully constructed. In fact, this is not the first time that she evokes the image of collecting a portion of her father's knowledge. In the *Letter from Othea*, Christine-protagonist employs two metaphors: stealing grains from a wheat harvest and gathering the crumbs from a noble table (lines 21-25).¹²¹ Christine-protagonist then claims that Fortune is not able to deprive her of this intangible treasure, a comment that foreshadows the tangible loss of her husband to Fortune in part 1.12.

Likewise in part 2 of the *City of Ladies*, Christine-protagonist represents her gender as an impediment to her education and revisits the idea of taking some of her father's knowledge because of her natural tendencies. Lady Rectitude comments on Christine-protagonist's educational background after recounting the examples of

¹²¹ Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski notes these references in her article "Christine de Pizan and the Misogynistic Tradition," 299.

Hortensia and Novella (2.36). However, Lady Rectitude points out her parents' differing points of view on female education. Christine's father embraced and enjoyed Christine-protagonist's proclivity for study. Conversely, Christine-protagonist's mother conformed to traditional gender roles in her express desire to provide her daughter with instruction on practical and household matters. Lady Rectitude states,

Rather, it was because your mother, as a woman, held the view that you should spend your time spinning like the other girls, that you did not receive a more advanced or detailed initiation into the sciences... Despite your mother's opposition, you did manage to glean some grains of knowledge from your studies, thanks to your own natural inclination for learning. (141)

Mais l'opinion femenine de ta mere qui te vouloit occuper en fillasses, selon l'usage commun des femmes, fu cause de l'empeschement que ne fus en ton enfance plus avant boutee es sciences et plus en parfont.... ne te pot ta mere si empescher le sentir des sciences que tu par inclinacion naturelle n'en ayes recueilli a tout le moins des petites goutelletes. (316)

In the original French, Lady Rectitude's language in this passage conveys a negative opinion of the social duties of women through the word *fillasses*. Maureen Cheney Curnow notes that this term is "a play on the spinning activity and the pejorative suffix – *asses* attached to the word *fille*, that is, stupid activities for girls" (158). This comment reflects on Christine-protagonist's earlier discussion with Lady Reason. In part 1.10, Christine-protagonist informs Lady Reason that men support their criticism of women with a Latin proverb: "God made women to weep, talk and spin" (26) ("plourer, parler, filer mist Dieux en femme"; 84). Certainly, these textual references to Christine-protagonist's education leave many questions unanswered about the author's education. How could Christine have embarked on a prolific writing career that supported herself and her family, producing over 30 works in a variety of genres after the death of her husband and directing the production of her own manuscripts, if she were merely a humble woman armed with the intellectual scraps from her father's table over a decade earlier as she has repeatedly stressed in her intertextual portrait?

Charity Cannon Willard speculates that Thomas' relationship with Gilles Malet may have facilitated Christine's education. Malet was the guardian of the king's library, which Charles V had relocated several years after his coronation to a setting near his personal apartments -- the northwest corner of the Louvre in the Falconry Tower (Cazelles 168). Willard notes the possible trace of Thomas' influence in the library's inventory as numerous manuscripts had an ostensibly Bolognaise provenance. Thomas' acquaintance with Malet and the library could have provided Christine the opportunity to access the library (*LW* 28, 30, 44). Moreover, Malet had occasion to encounter Etienne as he was an executor of the will for Etienne senior, the man who was in all probability Etienne's father (*LW* 34).

Besides the well-acknowledged scholarly influence of her father, Thomas de Pizan, Christine recurrently praises her husband's intellect through an emphasis on his wisdom and knowledge, as discussed earlier.¹²² Indeed, Etienne's considerable wisdom is an aspect of his persona, appearing in the three major works that feature Christine's autobiographical narrative and the early lyric poems. In *Christine's Vision*, she depicts her husband as a source of her learning -- a fountain of knowledge comparable to her father (3.8-9). In this passage, Christine expresses her regret at not having benefitted more from her intellectual family environment, in particular the wisdom of her husband and her father. Christine also recalls her exposure to Latin through them. Etienne's post as a royal secretary provided an opportunity for her to become familiar with manuscripts. Basing herself on several details of the *Epistle to the Queen* (1405), Willard suggests that Christine may have helped Etienne compose letters at home. At the end of this letter, she claims the manuscript is "written by my own hand" ("escript de ma main"; Kennedy 258), a phrase that Willard ascribes to legal documents. Christine excuses the hasty copy as self-produced in absence of any other clerks, inadvertently classifying herself as a clerk (*LW* 47).

Maureen Cheney Curnow points out that Christine's legal-judicial structure, syntax, and language reflect not only her personal involvement in multiple legal battles, but also the depth of Etienne's influence as a royal secretary and notary who employed the Latinate chancery style (158). She discusses the prevalence of legal-judicial content

¹²² See chapter 3, 72.

in Christine's works with respect to her participation in the *querelle des femmes*, in particular in the *City of Ladies*.

According to Curnow, Christine structures her defense of women in the *City of Ladies* in a manner similar to legal discourse. After Christine-protagonist reveals the accusations against women, an allegorical virtue responds to the argument and presents an exemplary story. This is followed by a brief conclusion or Christine-protagonist's concurrence (Curnow 162). Christine's very choice of employing a logical and formal legal structure to counter the misogynist attacks on women supports her argument of women's natural disposition for learning and as Curnow discusses the law (157). As the Three Virtues convince Christine-protagonist of the error in the slanderous opinions of women and ultimately the truth of women's virtuous nature within the framework of the text, so Christine endeavors to alter her readers' misperceptions.

Additionally, Curnow examines Christine's intricate and protracted sentences that echo the complicated juridical language at this time, thus conferring authority to her discourse and to that of her characters, the Three Virtues (164). Her diction demonstrates her affinity for legal language. Lady Reason's summation at the end of part 1 illustrates the legal-judicial speech (1.48):

What more can I tell you, my dear Christine? It seems to me that I've cited sufficient evidence to make my point, having given enough examples and proofs to convince you that God has never criticized the female sex more than the male sex. (87)

Que veulx tu que plus t'en die, fille chiere? Il me semble que assez ay produit de preuves a mon entencion, c'est assavoir de te demonstrier par vive raison et exemple que Dieu n'a point eu, ne a en reprobacion le sexe femenin, ne que celui des hommes. (214)

Curnow points out that Lady Reason's preoccupation with evidence and proof in this statement reflects Christine's message to her readers. Curnow concludes, "she [Christine] is constantly seeking to convince the reader that she is presenting a quasi-legal defense of women" (166). Christine presents Mary as the "deffenderresse" of women at the beginning of part 3, a term that can be equally applied to the author as we

shall in her concerted efforts throughout her texts to promote the underlying virtue of women and the institution of marriage (Curnow 166). While Curnow does reference some of Christine's other allegorical works that defend women, we shall soon see how Curnow's observations apply to her defense of marriage in her poetry and debate letters.

Christine's *Auctoritas* on Marriage

Christine clearly presents her life experience as the basis of her defense of marriage, addressing misogynist claims and explaining her qualifications to speak on this matter in multiple texts. She contends that her personal experience is a source of authority, or *auctoritas*, that permits her to speak truthfully and without presumption, even if she contests the opinions of notable clerks and authors.¹²³ Following the precedence of medieval models of autobiography that we introduced in the beginning of this study such as those of Augustine and Boethius, Christine draws from her experience to illustrate her argument and counter immoral messages in the pursuit of truth.

The emphasis on personal experience was also prevalent in contemporary thought. Benjamin Semple proposes that in *Christine's Vision* Christine draws from Jean Gerson's perspectives on the simple person, emphasizing the importance of life experience and affective spirituality in lieu of intellectual spirituality (117-19).¹²⁴ Gerson's first religious works, such as *The Mountain of Contemplation* (1400), were written in the vernacular and directed towards women, particularly lay women who were interested in leading a spiritual life. Gerson's personal life inspired this focus as he counseled his five sisters to form "an informal religious community" on his family's property (McGuire, *Early Works* 24). In *The Mountain of Contemplation*, Gerson repeatedly illustrates his message with what he deems are simple examples, as seen in rubrics such as "How ordinary people can have wisdom, as is shown by plain examples" and "A simple example shows that aiming at contemplative life is not being

¹²³ Laura McRae defines *auctoritas* as "the precedence of written information and opinion." See 413.

¹²⁴ Alternately, Semple notes that Christine's emphasis on the knowledge acquired through experience suggests a possible Aristotelian influence. See 127, note 5.

presumptuous” (McGuire, *Early Works* 80, 101). Semple comments that even though Christine identifies herself as a simple person, for reasons such as her lack of formal education and use of the vernacular, she is actually a blend of the simple and clerkly perspectives because of her literacy and exposure to intellectual thought (119).

Beginning with Christine’s early lyric poems, she avers her authority to defend marriage based on personal experience. To return to ballade 26 of *Other Ballades*, a seminal poem whose message reverberates throughout Christine’s explicit participation in the *querelle des femmes* and implicit creation of marital exemplars in her works, we shall see that she dedicates herself to establishing her *auctoritas* on marriage. Christine’s persuasive message in this poem recalls Curnow’s observations about Christine’s legal-judicial tendencies in the *City of Ladies* both in the structure of Christine’s argument and her word choice; in fact, the structure resembles classical argumentation through its presentation, narration, confirmation, and summation. She opens with a patent statement of her position: “A sweet thing is marriage,/ I can well prove it by my own experience” (Willard, *Writings* 51) (“Doulce chose est que mariage,/ Je le puis bien par moy prouver”; 1: 237; lines 1-2).¹²⁵ Christine’s assertive opening posits her personal example of a joyful marital life *in medias res*, as if she is replying in a debate on the merits of marriage and the illicit pleasures of courtly love. The term *doulce* frequently occurs in courtly love stories; however, as we have seen in the study of Etienne’s persona and epithets, Christine appropriates the language of courtly love in the discussion of her personal marital experience. She follows her stated opinion in line 1 with the promise of indisputable proof. From this point, Christine illustrates her opinion with her personal example. Appropriately, as Christine assays to prove her case about the benefits of marriage, she first establishes that she is an honest witness. She introduces her account with “It is true” ‘Voire’ (line 3). Christine then presents herself as a witness to his good character: “For I can strongly vouch/ For his great goodness” (“car son grant bien/ De fait je puis bien esprouver”; lines 6-7). In the original French, the word *esprouver* belongs to the b rhyme scheme of the stanza (ababbcbC) and recalls Christine’s intention to prove her case in line 2 with the word *prouver*. Reno and Dulac define *esprouver* as “to verify, learn by experience, or put to the test,” according to her

¹²⁵ For a discussion of this poem, see chapter 3, 73 and 99.

use of this word in *Christine's Vision* (226). Christine also calls a higher authority as witness to her husband's moral fiber. She claims that God saved this good man for her and helped her find him (lines 3-6), as mentioned in the previous discussion. Christine's representation of God's agency in marriage for virtuous people recalls an Old Testament scripture that describes the honor of marriage: "A good wife is a good portion, she shall be given in the portion of them that fear God, to a man for his good deeds" (Eccles. 26.3).

Christine's ensuing account of the caring nature of her husband in the next two stanzas is a remarkably well-structured argument that is based on Etienne's deeds and words. In stanza 2, she illustrates her case with details of her husband's gentle behavior. Christine recalls that she immediately realized her husband's good character, repeating the word *esprouver* in line 10. As Christine further remembers his honorable conduct on their wedding night, she inserts an oath of her truthfulness: "I vow" 'com je tien' (line 14). She proceeds to the example of her husband's words in stanza 3. Etienne's declaration of service in this section evokes one of the conventions of courtly love. In Andreas Capellanus' *Art of Courtly Love*, the seventh rule of love decrees: "Being obedient in all things to the commands of ladies, thou shalt ever strive to ally thyself to the service of Love" (81). However, Christine transposes this characteristic of an illicit relationship to the religiously sanctioned union of marriage. Indeed, Etienne comments that God is the active and guiding agent behind their relationship, instead of a classical figure such as Fortune, Hymen, or Cupid. This second reference to God's endorsement of her marriage validates Christine's defense and demonstrates that their loving marriage follows His divine plan.

Finally, Christine concludes her argument in the envoy, which she addresses to the unnamed "Princes" (line 25). In this stanza, Christine expresses her reaction to Etienne's words of loyalty. Her refrain further draws attention to the description of her husband's loving character: "And surely the gentle man loves me well" ("Et certes le doulz m'aime bien"; lines 8, 16, 24, 28). This line punctuates each stanza as a conclusion to her introductory remarks, the example of her husband's actions, the example of her husband's sweet words, and her summation to the princes. While the refrain serves a poetic function in the text, the message illustrates iterativity or repetition

-- a key component of exemplarity according to John Lyons (26). Through this ballade, which is based on her personal experience and has a legal-judicial structure, Christine offers herself as a living example of proof that marriage is indeed sweet.

This poem does not fit into a thematic suite of poems: ballade 26 is preceded by a poem that celebrates the fecundity of May (ballade 25) and followed by a poem that captures the devotion and adoration of a courtly lover for his princess (ballade 27). The lack of continuity illustrates why Willard considers the poems in *Other Ballades* as mostly “poems of circumstance” (LW 61). Roy suggests that the poems are arranged in a loose chronological order, noting that the handwriting in the Duke’s manuscripts alters after ballade 40 and that these poems may have been composed and copied later (1: xxxvi). This leads the reader to question the circumstances surrounding or even provoking the ballade. Given the fact that ballade 26 resembles a response to a debate, to whom does Christine address her fervent defense of marriage? She provides specific parenthetical information about the intended audience or subject of a considerable number of poems in *Other Ballades*, such as ballade 18 to Queen Ysabel and ballade 20 for Marie of Berry. In ballade 22, Christine directly appeals to Louis of Orleans as she seeks to secure a future for her son in his service. She only addresses “Princes” in the envoy of ballade 26, a choice that we have considered for its underlying significance about the importance of the stability of marriage in a hereditary monarchy. This poem reflects on the literary interests surrounding the Princes and the French court at this time and coincides with the creation of Charles VI’s literary group in 1400, the Court of Love, to which Christine’s son belonged.¹²⁶ We can only imagine the context which prompted Christine’s ballade. Perhaps she presented this poem as part of a verbal debate at court since the structure and language display a well-structured argument. An alternate possibility is that this poem was an epithalamic ballade, considering the intimate details that Christine provides about the wedding night and her explicit support of marriage. As part of her first known collection of writings, the *Livre de Cristine* (c.1399-1402), ballade 26 represents one of Christine’s earliest testimonies about her personal marital experience through her poetry. We shall now examine how Christine

¹²⁶ See chapter 1, 36-37.

public letters from this timeframe reflect her staunch defense of marriage and calls on her personal experience.

Christine's Explicit Response to Misogamist Authors

Christine's defense of marriage is a central theme in her writings during the first six years of her writings of her career. In her verse and prose, Christine challenges the opinions of several influential misogynist authors: Jean de Meun, Matheolus, and Ovid. Equally important, her epistles record a dispute with notable clerks concerning Jean de Meun's *Romance of the Rose*. She openly supports marriage in her letters, connecting her voice as an author in her literary works with that of a woman in her public letters.

At the dawn of the fifteenth century, Christine became a principal figure in the epistolary Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*, which Christine recorded through her collection of these letters for Queen Ysabel in 1402. Blumenfeld-Kosinski notes that Christine also sent a copy of the letters to Guillaume de Tignonville, the provost of Paris ("Debate" 322). The intellectual debate that began in the spring of 1401 was lead by Jean de Montreuil, a royal secretary, whose treatise remains lost (McWebb xii). Aligning her criticism of Jean de Meun with that made by the highly influential Jean Gerson, Christine's letters underline the irreligious bent of Meun's work and the potentially harmful influence of his views on women and marriage (Suranyi 204, 207).¹²⁷

Christine received stinging criticisms from the rhodophiles, notably Pierre Col, a canon who became involved in the debate following the participation of his older brother Gontier Col.¹²⁸ Pierre questioned Christine's audacity in speaking against Jean de Meun, the venerated author whose work was valued as a model of eloquence and who had an established and widespread renown (McWebb 3). To illustrate Meun's notoriety, the thirteenth century *Romance of the Rose* was one of the most copied manuscripts

¹²⁷ Gerson wrote his view on the romance in his treatise from May 1402, *Traictié d'une vision faite contre Le Rommant de la Rose*. Blumenfeld-Kosinski comments that his choice to write in the vernacular permitted him to reach a wider audience, including the readers of the *Romance of the Rose* who did not know Latin. See "Debate," 322-33. See also Walters, "The Seulette."

¹²⁸ Similar to Etienne, Gontier Col was also a royal secretary and notary. Pierre Col addressed Christine in the letter. However, Jean Gerson responded to Pierre in a letter from the winter of 1402-03. See *DLF*, 1311; Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Debate," 342. Eric Hicks labels the pro-*Romance of the Rose* scholars as rhodophiles, naming the opponents rhodophobes.

until the end of the fifteenth century as seen in the hundreds of existent manuscripts (DLF 1309-10). That Christine, an uneducated woman, would dare to reproach such a figure of *auctoritas* incensed Pierre among other clerks.

Furthermore, Christine's status as an Italian-born woman had significance in the Debate. Her criticisms of Jean de Meun, while focused on his use of indecent language and role models, also affronted the nationalist pride that French clerks took in Meun's poetic eloquence. French intellectuals had cited the spread of literature and culture from Italy to France, known as the *translatio studii*,¹²⁹ as proof of their "literary superiority" (McWebb 1). In 1340, Petrarch chose to be crowned poet laureate by the Roman senate rather than at the Sorbonne. Petrarch asserted that "orators and poets were not to be sought outside of Italy" (qtd. McWebb 2). Petrarch further criticized the French for elevating the *Romance of the Rose*: "...Italian eloquence conquers all other languages... France, famous for eloquence, has nurtured and borne to heaven and strives to make [the *Rose*] equal to the greatest [works]; that is, a Frenchman recites here his dream-visions in the vernacular" (2). Earl Jeffery Richards suggests that scholars connected Christine's involvement in the Debate to Petrarch's views. In particular, Gontier Col's classification of Christine's response to the *Rose* as an *invective*, a Latin-based term that appears in Petrarch's works, reflects the Italian poet's alleged influence: "he [Gontier Col] understood her arguments as a continuation of Petrarch's criticisms of the *Roman* and of French literary culture in general" (McWebb, "Introduction" xxiii). In addition to the direct criticism that Christine received, manuscripts reveal that she was ridiculed in correspondence among scholars. For instance, in 1402, Jean de Montreuil wrote of "that woman named Christine" who dared to "bark" against the *Romance of the Rose*; he credits her with a limited amount of sense insofar as women can be reasonable and compares her to the literate courtesan Leontion (qtd. in Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Debate" 331).

For her part, Christine acknowledges her inferior writing abilities, in keeping with the disposition of her humble widow persona that we have analyzed. For instance, she excuses the caliber of her writing at the beginning of her letter about Jean de

¹²⁹ Lori Walters defines *translatio studii et imperii* as "the displacement of the locus of political power (*imperium*) and learning (*stadium*), exemplified in the persons of rulers and their philosopher-advisors, from Ancient Greece to Rome and then to Christian Europe." See "Humanist Saint," 873-74.

Montreuil's defense of the *Romance of the Rose*, dating to the summer of 1401. She states,

Although I am neither learned nor eloquent in style (beautiful phrases and polite, elegant words would certainly make my arguments shine), I will nevertheless express my opinion plainly and in simple French, even if I cannot express it properly in adorned speech. (McWebb 119; lines 29-33)

Et combien que ne soie en science apprise ne stillee de langage subtil (dont sache user de belle arenge et mos pollis bien ordenéz qui mes raisons rendissent luisans), pour tant ne lairay a dire materiellement et en gros vulgar l'oppinion de mon entente, tout ne la sache proprement exprimer en ordre de paroles aournees. (118; lines 31-36)

Christine explains that her views are simply stated in the vernacular language.¹³⁰ She does not use poetic language to improve her arguments, which in the original appears as *raison* – a term that has multiple significations in Middle French, including argument and the faculty of knowledge, intelligence, or sense as seen in the allegorical figure Lady Reason (Larousse 526). Christine's choice of "shine" 'luisans' plays on the association between knowledge and light, and emphasizes the truthfulness of her argument. Therefore, she persists with what she humbly describes as the feeble "voice of a little cricket" (McWebb 185; line 938) ("moy, qui ne suis fors comme la voix d'un petit gresillion"; 182; line 904). Christine explains that she has a moral obligation to voice her opinion against the *Romance of the Rose* because it "may be called idle or worse than idle, even more so if it turns out to be harmful" (119; lines 37-38) ("peut estre appellee oyseuse ou pis que oyseuse de tant comme plus mal en ensuit"; 120; lines 40-41).

One of Christine's criticisms of the *Romance of the Rose* concerns an author's responsibility for creating a moral text -- literature should instill morality and promote truth. The plot of the *Romance of the Rose* centers around the pursuit of an illicit relationship, as the poet seeks the conquest of the object of his infatuation -- the

¹³⁰ This detail brings to mind what Richards describes as the "fundamentally bilingual nature of the literary culture" at this time given the prevalence of Latin in academic circles. See McWebb, "Introduction," xxiii.

allegorical figure the Rose. The work's graphic sexual language and emphasis on *eros* provides the readers with what Jean Gerson considered dangerous images of man's inability to control human will (Adams, "*Eros*" 2-3). Christine fears this work condones immorality through the poor examples set by the Poet, the Jealous Husband, the Friend, the Old Woman, and Genius concerning marriage and relationships (McWebb 123, 125).

A case in point is Genius' advice for men concerning their wives. Genius, an allegorical figure who Meun portrays as a priest, councils men to distrust their wives and not confide their secrets to them due to their indiscreet nature. He claims that if a husband reveals something private to his wife, she will use that knowledge unconscionably: "Now the woman sees that she has got the upper hand and knows that her husband will in no circumstances dare to school her or complain to her about anything. She has everything she needs to keep him dumb and quiet" (255). Genius also claims that women will eventually disclose the information and may even endanger their husbands. Christine counters this generalized reprobation of wives with the demand for proof in her letter from the summer of 1401:

I ask all those who believe that this is true to tell me when they have seen a man accused or killed, hanged, or reprimanded in the streets due to the indiscretion of his wife. I think they will be hard to find. (McWebb 127; lines 164-66)

... mais je pry tous ceulx qui tant le font autentique et tant y adjoustent foy qu'ilz me sachent a dire quans ont veuz accuséz, mors ou pendus ou reprouchéz en rue par l'encusement de leurs femes: si croy que cler les trouveront seméz. (126; lines 168-71)

In Christine's response, she asks for someone to bear witness to situation in which a wife physically endangered her husband through careless speech or behavior. Christine does not request tangible evidence, only a verbal defense of having seen an example in the same spirit of her attestation to her husband's good character in ballade 26 -- through an illustrative account. She displays her doubt that witnesses can substantiate the rumors. Christine's logical request for proof reflects her legal-judicial influences.

Christine continues her argument with an attack on the credibility of the source, mentioning the importance of experience or in this case the absence of experience. She comments,

he speaks unnecessarily and defamingly of married women who terribly betray their husbands, though he cannot know about the married state from experience, and thus can only speak about it in general terms. (127; lines 186-89)

... tant superflument et laidement parla des femmes mariées qui si deçoivent leurs maris – duquel estat ne pot savoir par experience et tant en parla generaument. (126; lines 190-92)

In this criticism, Christine could be equally referring to Genius or the author Jean de Meun. She then presents her qualifications to speak about marriage and the behavior of wives, noting that it is not simply loyalty to women that motivates her speech. Christine's statements are based in the truth of her experiences:

For, to be sure, my purpose is simply to uphold the absolute truth because I know from experience that the truth is contrary to those things which I am denying. And as much as I am a woman, I am much better able to speak of these things than one who has no experience in this matter, and who thus can go only by mere assumption and guessing. (129; lines 222-29)

... car veritablement mon motif n'est simplement fors soustenir pure verité si comme je la sçay de certaine science estre au contraire des dictes choses de moy nyées. Et de tant comme voirement suis femme, plus puis tesmoingnier en ceste partie que celui qui n'en a l'experience, ains parle par devinailles et d'aventure. (128; lines 230-35)

In the original French, Christine selects the word *tesmoingnier*, "to testify," to represent her ability to speak honestly about wives. In the absence of experience, she concludes that the author has no credibility and writes from conjecture. In this matter, formal education holds no authority, only actual life experience. Contrary to Jean de Meun's advice about women and marriage from an inexperienced and consequentially outside

opinion, Christine's comments on marriage represent an insider's perspective and acts as a "powerful corrective to the authority of these experts" (Case 71). In fact, Christine discredits not only Jean de Meun's authority but also his morality based on this work. For instance, she logically concludes that Jean de Meun writes of immoral women through the character the Jealous Husband because of his own life experience frequenting such women (Brown-Grant 32-33).

In Christine's response to Jean de Montreuil's treatise, she questions Meun's purpose in creating negative exemplars. She declares that such defamation "can serve only to impede happiness and peace in marriage and to render husbands suspicious" (McWebb 127) ("N'y sçay entendre fors empeschement de bien et de paix de mariage, et render les maris . . . souspeçonneux"; 126). As seen in this excerpt, her objection to the *Romance of the Rose* was not just the immoral descriptions of women, but also the practical influence of literature. Helen Solterer explains that for Christine, Jean de Meun's defamation of women carried a "destructive social impact" and became "a matter of civic concern because it jeopardizes the very languages that help define a particular community" (153). To prove the dangerous influence of the *Romance of the Rose* in her society, Christine relates an example of a real-life abusive spouse in her lengthy response to Pierre Col. This abusive husband was one of Pierre's colleagues, certainly a well-chosen example on Christine's part. She equates this man's belief in the book to his faith in the New Testament, claiming that he was inspired by reading the *Romance of the Rose* to kick and slap his wife (McWebb 174, 177).¹³¹ Blumenfeld-Kosinski comments, "Christine is thus aware of the connection between marital violence and reading practices" ("Debate" 326). While the male reader encounters negative depictions of women that focus on sexuality and vice, the female reader confronts the underlying message of female inferiority. Indeed, in Rosalind Brown-Grant's analysis of this topic, she concludes, "Central to Christine's polemic against misogyny is her view that it is a pernicious doctrine which produces harmful effects on male and female readers alike" (Brown-Grant, *Moral Defence* 215). At the end of the *Romance of the Rose*, Jean de Meun neither censures the behavior of his allegorical characters nor

¹³¹ Christine Reno discusses spousal abuse influenced by misogynist beliefs in her article "Christine de Pizan: 'At Best a Contradictory Figure'?" 184.

explains his intentions, a fact that leaves the reader with the lasting image of the rape of the Rose and a multitude of misogynist and misogamist views (Brown-Grant 35-36).¹³²

Additionally, the impact of the *Romance of the Rose*'s negative portrayal of marriage appeared in literature. As seen in Matheolus' *Lamentations*, the thirteenth century clerk regrets his unhappy marriage, stating that if he had read the *Romance of the Rose*, he would have been warned against marriage (Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Misogynistic Tradition" 302-3). It is this very work that discourages Christine-protagonist at the beginning of the *City of Ladies* (1.1). Ironically, Christine-protagonist selects Matheolus' work on the basis of its reputation as a book that praises women. Though, as she soon discovers, it provides a slanderous perspective of the immoral nature of women and discourages men from marriage. Lady Reason speaks to Christine-protagonist about both Matheolus' views and Jean de Meun's *Romance of the Rose* as we shall examine in the next chapter (1.2).

In McWebb's anthology of the Debate, she provides an additional example of the influence of Jean de Meun's negative marital exemplars on medieval authors. She includes an excerpt from Philippe de Mézières' work on marriage, the *Book of the Virtue of the Sacrament of Marriage* (c.1385-89), which references the *Romance of the Rose* three times in its text. Similar to Jean de Meun and his priestly character Genius, Philippe de Mézières wrote this work without having experienced marriage (McWebb 27). He reinvents himself as a physician who offers cures for the ills of marriage, stating: "Further, it is important to know... that dissatisfaction in marriage is nothing other than a continuous fever and a painful disease, no worse and no less painful than colic. The men and women whom God wishes to comfort know this" (29; lines 5-9). In this passage, Philippe represents marital discord as a common and unpleasant ailment. He also intimates God's awareness of this state. It is worth noting that Christine's sale of family property to Philippe occurred in 1392, after his open criticism of marriage in this work but well-before Christine's participation in the Debate and first writings in support of marriage according to the surviving manuscripts.

The *Romance of the Rose* is not the only revered work that Christine questions in both the Debate letters and her literature. She disapproves of the classical author Ovid

¹³² This is a point of common criticism from both Christine and Jean Gerson. See Brown-Grant.

for his depiction of women in *The Remedy for Love* and *The Art of Love*. In the letter to Pierre Col, Christine suggests the latter work should have been named “the art of malicious and false labor of deceiving women” (McWebb 175) (“art de faulse et malicieuse industrie de decevoir femmes”; 172). Christine first suggests this three years earlier in the *God of Love’s Letter* (lines 371-78).¹³³ In the *God of Love’s Letter*, Christine discredits Ovid’s reliability as a source of advice, pointing out that he was exiled from his country (lines 386-88). In the *City of Ladies*, Lady Reason expounds on this topic (1.9). She reveals that in exile, Ovid was castrated because of his licentious ways. His ensuing frustration and jealousy led to his derisive portrayal of women: “once he realized that he could no longer indulge in the same kind of pleasures as before, he began to attack women with his sly remarks in an attempt to make others despise them too” (21) (“car quant il vit que plus ne pourroit mener la vie ou tant se souloit delicter, adonc print fort a blasmer les femmes par ses soubtilles raisons et par ce s’efforça de les faire aux autres desplaire” (74). Lady Reason illustrates that Ovid’s underlying motivation for his defamation of women is immoral and thus undermines his view. However, we have repeatedly seen that Christine asserts the pursuit of truth as her motivation.

Christine’s collection of debate letters that she presented to Queen Ysabel in 1402 captures her response to scholars who disparaged both the institution of marriage and the honor of women. In Christine’s introduction to the polemic letters, she explains,

...you will see the diligence, desire, and will with which I defend myself as much as I can against dishonorable opinions, and where I defend the honor and praise of women. (109; lines 17-19)

...pourrez entendre la diligence, desir et voulement ou ma petite puissance s’estent a soustenir par defenses veritables contre aucunes oppinions a honnesteté contraires, et aussi l’onneur et louenge des femmes. (108, 110; lines 19-22)

¹³³ Blumenfeld-Kosinski notes that Christine displays an ambivalent attitude towards Ovid – differentiating between his negative misogynist viewpoints and his positive legacy as a mythological authority, see “Misogynistic Tradition,” 301.

In the original French, Christine's language highlights her truthful defense or *defenses veritables* and how this contrasts with the clerics' statements. Christine appeals to the Queen to consider this matter and lend her support: "I beg humbly, worthy Highness, that you faithfully support my righteous reasons... and permit me to say more about this matter. All this will be done with your wise and kind approval" (111; lines 27-30) ("Si suppli humblement Vostre Digne Haultece que a mes raisons droiturieres... y vueillez adjouster foy et donner faveur de plus dire se plus y sçay. Et tout soit fait vostre saigne et benigne correction"; 110; lines 29-34). After this letter, there was additional correspondence on the Debate. McWebb remarks on the ongoing nature of the Debate as well as its inconclusive state in her edition of the Debate letters. For this reason, McWebb explains that Christine "would return to it repeatedly and obsessively" (xii-xiii). While her appeal to Ysabel reflects the Queen's prominent position at court, it should be remembered that Ysabel was not the ideal champion of marriage considering her ill-fated union with Charles VI, who by this time had experienced years of mental disturbances. In McWebb's anthology of the Debate, she attempts to place this quarrel in its proper context. She reaches beyond Christine's collection of letters for Ysabel and designates Petrarch's criticism from 1340 as a beginning point (2).

Christine's Implicit Continuation of the Debate

In Christine's public letters as well as in certain literary works, the reader views her straightforward response to misogynist thought and her defense of marriage. In keeping with Christine's emphasis on providing proof that supports one's argument, she makes a conscientious effort to offer positive role models of marriage. We can now understand how Christine's creation of a memorial to her late husband Etienne bears witness to a contemporary and everyday example of a virtuous husband. The intertextual nature of his portrait certainly reflects Christine's continuing preoccupation with presenting a positive exemplar at a time when works such as the *Romance of the Rose* promoted spousal abuse and discouraged marriage.

Christine repeatedly cites her personal experience as the basis of her authority on marriage and weaves the story of the good marriage of the widow Christine

throughout her works. Christine's widow persona offers the image of an obedient daughter who married happily and benefited from a harmonious marriage. Christine's emphasis on the couples' unity and closeness counters Genius' advice to mistrust one's wife that Christine explicitly criticizes in her letters.

We have analyzed how Christine promotes marriage as a Christian union ordained by God through her direct references to God's guidance in her personal marriage in ballad 26 of *Other Ballades*. In multiple texts, her story depicts a monogamous marriage based on loyalty and companionship in accordance with church doctrine and natural law. Christine's elaborate use of metaphors, such as the turtledove and the shepherd in her lyric poems, support these notions.

Christine did not merely provide her own example to defend marriage against criticism. While the manuscript record does not demonstrate Queen Ysabel's support of Christine's expressed views in the Debate, Christine's own texts call on a pantheon of respected sources from classical and biblical history as well as contemporary society who lend authority to her defense of marriage and women. Christine implicitly continues the Debate with these venerated exemplars.

CHAPTER 6

PROVIDING GUIDANCE THROUGH POSITIVE EXEMPLARS

A final aspect of Christine's defense of marriage concerns her frequent use of marital exemplars beyond the self-inspired portraits of Christine-protagonist and her husband Etienne. Christine imbues her works with moral paradigms of wives and widows from classical antiquity, biblical history, French history, and contemporary society. As mentioned previously, the *Grandes Chroniques de France* testifies to the belief that French society was fundamentally linked to classical antiquity as the work traces France's lineage from the Trojan kings.¹³⁴ Indeed, Christine refers to Paris as Athens, another legendary capital of antiquity (*Christine's Vision* 2.1). Therefore, her exemplars represent the perceived cultural heritage of her society.

Christine's vehement argumentation and simple speech in the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose* did not lead to a decisive conclusion, according to existent manuscript records. In the fall of 1402, Christine's verbose response to Pierre Col in the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose* details her criticisms of this work one final time.¹³⁵ Furthermore, she conveys her desire to disengage from the epistolary quarrel because of its unproductive nature. Christine explains that her steadfast views had not changed despite Pierre Col's elegantly stated arguments: "I will not be shaken in my courage to continue to present my views, though they are contrary to yours" (141; lines 15-16) ("ycelles [tes raisons]... ne meuvent en riens mon courage ne troublent mon sentiment au contraire"; 140; lines 16-17).¹³⁶ She credits the "thick worldly obscurity" 'l'offuscacion grosse et terrestre' (lines 3-4) with impeding the revolution of truth, which in turn results in humans presenting opinions rather than pure knowledge, an idea that Christine later

¹³⁴ See chapter 3, 77.

¹³⁵ To better understand how invested Christine was in her argument, this letter spans 23 pages in Harley 4431 (243r - 254r). By comparison, it occupies nearly twice the length of the poem the *God of Love's Letter* (51r-56r).

¹³⁶ The English translation simplifies the complex sentence structure in the original French and presents this statement in an active voice.

develops in part 2 of *Christine's Vision* through the personification of Lady Opinion and her insidious presence at the University of Paris.¹³⁷ In fact, the associations between truth and light or clarity as well as its opposition, falsehood and darkness or obscurity, recur throughout her texts, as we shall examine shortly in Christine's preoccupation with clearly seeing the truth about marriage and women. Despite her sharp criticisms of both the *Romance of the Rose* and rhodophiles including Pierre Col, she ends the letter with the cordial declaration that she does not intend "to offend anyone" (191; line 1047) ("sans indignacion a personne"; 188; line 1046).

Even though Christine officially retired from the epistolary exchange, she continued to express her firm belief in the inherent good nature of women. In her works after the Debate that defend women, particularly the *City of Ladies*, she pointedly restates her belief that contemporary texts misrepresent marriage. Yet, she positions this point of view through authoritative allegorical figures. Christine's Three Virtues endeavor to persuade Christine-protagonist of the virtuous character of women, and by extension wives and widows. In their discourse, they point out exemplary women as an outside source or confirmation of their statements. This effort to seek "support in a commonly accepted textual or referential world" corresponds to what John Lyons classifies as exteriority, another characteristic of exemplarity (28). He further explains that exteriority implies the author stating, "If you doubt what I say, you have only to look at *this* (quotation, example) to see that my assertion is true independent of my making it" (29). Thus Christine rewrites the stories of well-known and respected figures in the context of her defense of women and marriage.

In the beginning of the *City of Ladies*, Lady Reason consoles Christine-protagonist, who is dejected after reading the depiction of female immorality in Matheolus' *Lamentations* (1.2). Christine argues through the voice of her character Lady Reason:

As for what these authors – not just Matheolus but also the more authoritative writer of the *Romance of the Rose* – say about the God-given, holy state of matrimony, experience should tell you that they are

¹³⁷ In part 2.2, Christine describes hovering shadows that surround and advise the university scholars during their discussions. The colorful shadows form part of the colossal shadow, Lady Opinion.

completely wrong when they say that marriage is insufferable thanks to women. (9)

Et la vituperacion que dit, non mie seulement lui, mais d'autres et mesmement le *Rommant de la Rose* (ou plus grant foy est adjoustee pour cause de l'auctorité de l'auteur) de l'ordre de mariage, qui est saint estat digne et de Dieu ordené, c'est chose clere et prouuee par l'experience que le contraire est vray du mal qu'ilz proposent et dient estre en ycellui estat a la grant charge et coulpe des femmes. (48, 50).

In this passage, Lady Reason emphasizes that marriage is a union that is created and sanctified by God. She also observes that Christine-protagonist's personal experience contradicts these slanderous works. Lady Reason's statement about Jean de Meun's blatantly inaccurate portrayal of marriage echoes Christine's comments about Genius' speech in her Debate letter from the summer of 1401, employing similar language in French that signals that the truth about marriage is contrary ("contraire") to the way in which it is represented in the *Romance of the Rose* (McWebb 128).¹³⁸ Lady Reason alludes to the influential nature of the *Romance of the Rose* when she affirms the authoritative reputation of Jean de Meun. In her denouncement of the views of venerated authors, Lady Reason demands proof of their claims:

What husband ever gave his wife the power over him to utter the kind of insults and obscenities which these authors claim that women do? Believe me, despite what you've read in books, you've never actually seen such a thing because it's all a pack of outrageous lies. (9)

Car ou fu oncques trouvé le mari qui tel maistrise souffrist avoir a sa femme que elle eust loy de tant lui dire de villenies et d'injures comme yceulx mettent que femmes dient ? Je croy que quoyque tu en ayes veu en escript que oncques de nul de tes yeulx n'es veys si sont mençonges trop mal coulourees. (48, 50)

¹³⁸ See chapter 5, 161.

Lady Reason's request for an example of a spiteful wife again recalls the Debate letters. In response to Genius' speech in her letter, Christine searches for an eye-witness account of a situation in which a woman's words physically harmed her husband (McWebb 126). In this example from the *City of Ladies*, Lady Reason discredits the negative portrayal of wives when compared to life experience. Christine-protagonist's personal observations trump the authority of an untruthful book. In the original language, we can note the emphasis on vision through the repetition of the word *veoir* or *voir* with both the written word and personal experience. In *De Genesi ad litteram*, Saint Augustine considers physical sight as the initial level of perception in a range of experiences that includes visions and insight (Newman 6).¹³⁹ Lyons' study of exemplarity also addresses the connection between sight and exemplars. He remarks, "Example is part of argumentation as a kind of *evidence* in the full Latin sense of *evidentia*, something capable of being seen, radiating its visibility outward (*ex + videre*)" (28). Lady Reason's response to Christine-protagonist reveals the concern that there is a fundamental error in the perception of marriage and wives that is being perpetrated by misogynist works. If Christine-protagonist uses her own eyes ("tes yeulx"), she will see the truth clearly. Whereas in Christine's Debate letters, she cites herself as a witness to disprove the views with the word *tesmoingnier*, in the fictive world of the *City of Ladies* (1.3) Lady Reason states that her virtuous sisters, Lady Rectitude and Lady Justice, will act as further witnesses ("le tesmoignage de nous"; 52).

Lady Reason aims to not only prevent the negative effects of misogamy on readers such as Christine-protagonist but also to introduce a corrective voice about female nature through the retelling of exemplary stories. Indeed, Christine-protagonist notes that scholars seemingly speak with "one voice" (6) ("une mesmes bouche"; 54) about the pervasiveness of female vice. This notion brings to mind Christine's earlier comments that we considered from the *God of Love's Letter* (1399) that describe scholars who write about women "without debate" ("sans partie").¹⁴⁰ Certainly Christine's subsequent experience in the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose* revealed

¹³⁹ In the article "What Did It Mean to Say 'I Saw'?" Barbara Newman analyzes St. Augustine's ideas as well as other interpretations of vision in medieval culture.

¹⁴⁰ For the full quote, see chapter 5, 147.

the difficulty of opening a dialogue in scholarly circles about this topic, as she was specifically targeted by numerous scholars for her unwelcomed criticisms and observations. Following the straightforward prose of the Debate letters and the antagonistic responses she received, Christine represents the defense of women in the *City of Ladies* through images of warfare and chivalry. Lady Reason invokes chivalric language and codes of behavior to criticize the treatment of women:

The female sex has been left defenseless for a long time now... and bereft of a champion to take up arms in order to protect it.... those trusty knights who should by right defend women have been negligent in their duty and lacking in vigilance (11)

...[les] dames ont par si lonctemps esté delaissees... sanz trouver champion aucun qui pour leur deffence comparust souffisamment, nonobstant les nobles hommes qui par ordenance de droit deffendre les deussent, qui par negligence et nonchaloir les ont souffertes fouler (54)

In this passage, Lady Reason censures the trusty knights' negligence of their responsibilities to defend female honor, a criticism that reflects the topos of recreance that Christine addresses as a vice in other works (*Charles V* 2.19) and appears throughout medieval literature as we have seen in Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec and Enide*.¹⁴¹ Likewise, Lady Reason charges Christine-protagonist with a task that endeavors to protect the honor of women and establishes the framework of the text -- the construction of the City of Ladies, an allegorical fortress for virtuous women.

Therefore in Christine's works after the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*, such as the *City of Ladies*, she supports her explicit criticisms of misogynist views and misogyny through the use of exemplary characters. In the *City of Ladies*, Christine's panoramic survey of commendable women draws examples from multiple time periods as well as different social classes whose legends form the foundations, walls, and turrets of the city. Blumenfeld-Kosinski comments that besides the marked influence of Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women*, Christine may have modeled the *City of Ladies* after a work of the 1370s – Jean Le Fèvre de Resson's *Book of Joy*, which

¹⁴¹ See chapter 3, 93.

contests Matheolus' perspective on women and presents spiritual exemplars (SW 117-18). Through the rhetoric of exemplarity, Christine provides substantial proof of the moral character of women as well as the beneficial impact of marriage on society. Following Curnow's examination of the legal-judicial tone in the *City of Ladies*, the exemplars are witnesses to the Three Virtues' defense of marriage. Yet, Christine's marital exemplars in the *City of Ladies* unquestionably serve another function for the reader.

Christine's exemplary figures act as role models for all women through their remarkable deeds that benefited or aided their husbands, and by extension their families and society. From the beginning of the *City of Ladies*, Christine establishes the proper method of reading this work in the mirror tradition. When Lady Reason first encounters Christine-protagonist, she enlightens this character, as well as the reader, about the didactic function of the text. Lady Reason carries a mirror, a symbolic object that invites self-reflection. She explains to Christine-protagonist that she is concerned with the moral improvement of both men and women "no matter who they may be" (10) ("quelque la creature soit"; 52), which reflects the idea that the Christian soul is beyond gender or social class.¹⁴² Christine sought to improve the behavior within and the interaction between the different social classes in the Middle Ages – the clergy, the nobility, and the workers.¹⁴³

Christine explores the issue of active reading and learning through Christine-protagonist's dialogue with Lady Reason (1.43). After this character attests to women's capacity to learn on an academic level, Christine-protagonist questions their ability to acquire good judgment:

... can women establish between what is the right and the wrong thing to do? Can they modify their current behavior on the basis of past experience? Can they use the example of the present to anticipate how they should conduct themselves in the future? In my view, this is what good judgment consists of. (78)

¹⁴² Brown-Grant notes that Christine's represents gender as accidental, with both genders possessing the same essence. This philosophy stems from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. For a discussion of this point, see Brown-Grant, 119-21.

¹⁴³ For a discussion of this point, see Forhan, 60.

... c'est assavoir qu'elles ayent avis sur ce qui est le meilleur a faire et a ce qui doit estre laissié, souvenance des choses passes, par quoy plus soient expertes par l'exemple que ont veu, sages ou gouvernement des choses presentes, qu'elles ayent pourveance sur celles a avenir. Ces choses, comme il me semble, enseigne prudence. (196)

Christine-protagonist's inquiries target the didactic aim of exemplarity, as well as the mirror genre, and its ability to affect women. She links the proper interpretation of exemplarity with the acquisition of good judgment or *prudence*, a moral virtue that Christine features in her intertextual portrait of Etienne as we have seen. To these queries, Lady Reason replies, "this faculty... is inherent in both men and women, and that some are more generously endowed with it than others" (78) ("ycelle prudence... vient par nature a homme et femme, aux uns plus, aux autres moins"; 196). She concludes that women naturally possess good judgment (79). Therefore, it is possible for wives and widows in need of moral improvement to emulate her positive marital role models, from Christine's self-inspired virtuous widow persona to the multitude of exemplars that she features in the *City of Ladies* through her authoritative allegorical figures. The catalog nature of stories in this work demonstrates what Lyons considers as another central trait of exemplarity – multiplicity, which is a "redundancy of example" (26-27). Combined with exteriority, these two methods of employing exemplarity strengthen the Three Virtues' argument. I shall discuss these exemplars in political, domestic, and spiritual contexts.

Political Exemplars

Christine's works recognize the virtuous behavior and savvy political rule of numerous rulers, a discrete reminder to the royal family that a noble birth does not ensure a noble character. In fact, she makes this point about the virtue of nobility in the *City of Ladies* (2.59). This concern with wise and virtuous leadership appears throughout her career from the *Path of Long Study* and *Charles V* to the *Tale of Joan of Arc*. Of interest in this study, Christine emphasizes the examples of legendary queens

whose political position effectively placed them alongside their husband at the head of the body politic and exercised moral responsibility towards their families and society.

Christine unites two medieval political metaphors through the symbolism of virtuous queens in the *City of Ladies*. Kate Langdon Forhan explains Christine's appropriation of the political metaphors of the city and the human body in *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*. Paul describes the Church through an organic metaphor in Romans (Forhan 46): "For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office: So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (12.4-5). Forhan remarks that Augustine's *The City of God* reinterprets the "Christian community as a kind of baptized eternal city, like Athens, or even Rome.... evoking images of both privilege and safety." Augustine contrasts this celestial city with the secular world (Forhan 47). The body metaphor was later transformed by John of Salisbury in *Policraticus* (1159), in which he demonstrates the interdependence of the social classes through the idea of the body politic. He applies the body metaphor to both the political and religious communities – the king represents the head, the Church epitomizes the soul, and the limbs correspond to the workers (Forhan 52). Therefore, Christine's queens in the *City of Ladies* are enshrined in a virtuous city because of their good rule in the symbolic role of the head of the body politic.¹⁴⁴

In *The Allegory of Female Authority: Christine de Pizan's Cité des Dames*, Maureen Quilligan notes that hope for a peaceful solution to the country's strife still flourished in early 1405. As the City was a microcosm for the larger macrocosm of France, this hope was reflected in Christine's work. Quilligan also discusses the effects of current politics on her writings and the ideological changes between *City of Ladies* and *Three Virtues* (248). A closer look at the current political climate at this time explains her effort to portray exemplary queens in her works.

Charles VI conferred the leadership of the Royal Council to Queen Ysabel during one of his lucid moments in 1403, granting her more power than medieval queens commonly wielded. Indeed, the King's continued illness called for his family to oversee

¹⁴⁴ Willard notes that the *City of God* was translated into French and part of the king's library. In fact, the same artist who illustrated the translation of Augustine's text then worked on Christine's manuscripts of the *City of Ladies*. See *LW*, 135. For a discussion of these metaphors, see also Brown-Grant, 98.

the safety, education, and interests of the dauphin, Louis of Guyenne -- akin to a regency government since Charles had empowered Ysabel to act on his behalf. The guardianship of the dauphin, as well as the control of the political agenda, intensified the conflict among the royal princes, in particular the relationship between Philip the Bold and Louis, the Duke of Orleans. The tension between these two dynamic leaders, who were the king's uncle and brother, respectively, increased to the point of a standoff within the city limits of Paris in 1403. Each Duke housed their personal military guard in their Parisian residences, a situation that could bring about direct military conflict in the capital. At this time, Ysabel was able to negotiate a tenuous peace agreement between the two princes. In 1404, Philip the Bold died. However, the new Duke of Burgundy, his son John the Fearless, differed from his father's political views. He displayed more concern with personal gain and political dominance than continued peace with Louis of Orleans (Famiglietti 12-16; Delorme 184-190).

In 1405, Ysabel withdrew her support of the Duke of Burgundy in favor of the Duke of Orleans. Her relationship with Louis of Orleans provoked widespread criticism. Precisely, their institution of higher taxes in Paris led to a substantial loss of popularity – Ysabel “ceased to enjoy the public's estimation” (Laigle qtd in Quilligan 247). During the middle of July in 1405, a meteorological event was viewed as an ominous portent. A fierce thunderstorm, which caused Ysabel and Louis to take shelter while hunting outside of Paris, produced a lightening strike that destroyed a room in the castle near that of the dauphin, Louis de Guyenne (Quilligan 246-47). While this event may not appear significant to modern eyes, it supported the growing unease of the court and reflected the perceived connection between the microcosm and macrocosm. Ysabel and Louis' financial irresponsibility was unsettling the natural balance of the realm (Delorme 198-99; Quilligan 246).

Shortly afterwards, the tension between Jean the Fearless and Louis of Orleans became a tangible presence in Paris. Rumor reached the court that Jean had amassed an army and was marching towards the capital. Ysabel and Louis fled the court, with instructions to Ysabel's brother, Louis of Bavaria, to follow them in exile with the sick dauphin and his wife Marguerite, a decision that could be perceived as kidnapping the heir. Jean intercepted the dauphin and his escort and brought them back to Paris under

guarded watch. Fearful of a coup d'état, Ysabel and Louis remained at Melun (Famiglietti 47). The anonymous writer of *A Parisian Journal: 1405-1449* records the effects of the turbulent political situation on French society. For instance, the writer states that blacksmiths received emergency orders to fashion protective chains for the city's gates as a defensive measure against the Duke of Burgundy's potential attack (48). Only the persuasive diplomatic skills and political power of the Duke of Berry and the King of Navarre, among other nobles, prevented a coup. A peace agreement was reached on 16 October 1405, shortly after Christine appeal to Ysabel to intercede in her *Epistle to the Queen* (5 October), but the tension between the dukes remained (Delorme 199-206; *LW* 155).¹⁴⁵

Against this backdrop of increasing political strife, there is a striking difference between Christine's works in 1405. Quilligan correlates the effects of the increasing political tension on her works: "Isabeau was still working to keep peace in the realm... In the earlier text [the *City of Ladies*] the women were metaphorically safe from history, impregnable in their transtemporal city" (248, 251)." Later in the year, as Christine wrote her next work, the *Three Virtues*, the threat of a civil war had intensified. Quilligan comments, "In the sequel text [the *Three Virtues*], they [the women] are as vulnerable to social realities as Isabeau of Bavaria" (251). Hence, Christine's works in the early fifteenth century reflect the need for good leadership and highlight the potential influence of women rulers. Her series of characters in the *City of Ladies* encourages the active participation of female rulers in governing the kingdom. Through both warfare and peace negotiations, Christine showcases their competency as ruling wives and widows. Additionally, she emphasizes the importance of the queens' virtuous behavior and the value of their political advice.

Politically, women have successfully demonstrated their capacity to defend and secure the kingdom as wives and widows. Glenda McLeod observes that Christine's use of war-like female rulers in the *City of Ladies* underlines the importance of strong women leaders who were also loyal or loving wives. Lady Reason cites the examples of warrior queens who joined their husbands in battle and displayed courage, such as

¹⁴⁵ Two years later, John the Fearless ordered the assassination of Louis of Orleans. Louis was murdered in a street after leaving Ysabel's residence in Paris on 23 November 1407. Ysabel had recently given birth on 10 November to her last child, Philippe, who did not survive. See *LW*, 182 and Delorme, 208-09.

Semiramis who aided her first husband King Ninus to conquer Babylon (1.15)¹⁴⁶ and Zenobia who fought with her husband King Odenaethus to defeat the Persian king Sapor (1.20). Lady Reason also regales Christine-protagonist with examples of women rulers whose military strength during their widowhood benefited the kingdom. Among such widows, we learn of the feats of Queen Artemisia (1.21, 2.16) and Queen Fredegunde (1.13, 1.23). Lady Rectitude expounds on Artemisia's story in part 2, describing her profound love for her husband King Mausolus and the extraordinary memorial she created to honor him that inspired the creation of the word *mausoleum* (113-14).¹⁴⁷ In the latter instance, when King Chilperic died, his widow Fredegunde vowed to strengthen her heart "with manly courage" (53) ("de hardiece d'omme"; 144) in order to defend the country for her young son who was the heir to the French throne. Brown-Grant points out that in Christine's depiction of exemplars in part I of the *City of Ladies*, "the female body is physically de-eroticised in order to stress that a woman can exhibit the same marital qualities as a man" (170). To Brown-Grant's specific references to warrior queens such as Zenobia (169), I would add Fredegunde's conscious pursuit of "manly courage." Christine represents women in this manner to demonstrate the physical virtues of the female body and women's ability to govern effectively when confronted with war (Brown-Grant 170). Christine underlines the importance of women rulers acquiring manly courage in part 2.9 of the *Three Virtues*, when she advises ladies and demoiselles who are widows to acquire the courage of a man in order to rule their lands.

Alternately, in the *City of Ladies*, Lady Reason features the legacy of women rulers who were able to bring peace to their kingdoms. Lady Reason posits the role of marriage in peace negotiations through the story of Theseus, the King of Athens, and Hippolyta, a noble Amazon warrior (1.19). After prolonged combat, Theseus captured Hippolyta. As Theseus engaged Hippolyta in battle, Hercules defeated the Amazon warrior Menalippe. Hercules released Menalippe as part of the peace treaty with the

¹⁴⁶ For Christine's choice of Semiramis as a foundation stone in the *City of Ladies* and her adaptation of the legend from Boccaccio, see Dulac's article "Sémiramis ou la Veuve héroïque." Richards also mentions Semiramis as a natural, pre-Christian inspiration in "Somewhere between Destructive Glosses and Chaos," 47.

¹⁴⁷ In the glossary to the Penguin Classics edition, Brown-Grant notes that Christine's story repeats Boccaccio's error in combining details from the lives of two separate rulers named Artemisia, 248.

Amazon Queen Orithyia. Yet, he interceded for Theseus, who had fallen in love with Hippolyta during her captivity, and gained permission for Theseus to marry Hippolyta. Their marriage symbolized the peace agreement between Greece and the Amazons. Lady Reason concludes the narrative with the positive impact of their union on a personal and communal level – Theseus and Hippolyta's son Hippolytus proved to be a valiant knight and the Greeks rejoiced over the new-found amity with their former adversaries.

In Christine's time, marriage among the nobility continued to play an integral role in political alliances, embodying a renewed bond or a peace treaty between countries or kingdoms. The current monarch's marriage to Ysabel of Bavaria offers an intriguing variant of marriage practices in medieval France. Philip the Bold began arranging Charles VI's marriage to Ysabel in November 1383.¹⁴⁸ A marriage to the Bavarian princess, who was the daughter of Étienne III, the Duke of Baviaria-Ingolstadt and Tadée Visconti, would strengthen France's allies in light of the Plantagenet threat (Delorme 28-30). Preceding this marriage, in 1382 the King of England, Richard II, married Anne of Luxembourg, the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV. Their marriage reinforced the religious divisions in Western Europe, as both England and the Holy Roman Empire were opponents of France in the Great Schism (Autrand 65; Delorme 29-30). Moreover, Charles VI and Ysabel's marriage followed the wishes of his father Charles V, who expressed the interest that his son's marriage would reinforce France's Germanic alliances (Autrand 137). Despite the considerable strategic benefits of the union for France, Froissart remarks that Charles VI had to first meet the princess and be suitably pleased with her before accepting the marriage. Delorme proposes two explanations for this unusual consideration of the prince's emotions: the revival in courtly love stories and the possible early signs of Charles' mental instability (36). Charles VI and Ysabel officially met at Amiens on 14 July 1385; they were married three days later (Autrand 137). Yet neither the marriage nor Ysabel's position of power as the head of the Royal Council heralded lasting peace in the kingdom.

¹⁴⁸ Upon Charles V's death in 1380, his son Charles VI became king at the age of 12. The royal princes, in particular Charles V's brother Philip the Bold, guided the early rule of young king who immediately faced revolts and social discontent. For a detailed account of these issues, see Autrand, "Le royaume révolté," 75-119.

Christine directly names and praises Queen Ysabel in the *City of Ladies* (2.68). She places Ysabel at the top of the list of notable princesses and ladies of France, following courtly protocol. Christine dedicates only one sentence to the queen in the original French, which provides a general description about her kind nature. Lady Rectitude states:

First of all, we wouldn't refuse entry to the noble queen of France, Isabeau of Bavaria, who, by the grace of God, is now reigning over us. She has neither a shred of cruelty or greed in her body nor a single evil trait, for she is full of kindness and benevolence towards her subjects. (195)

Et tout premierement ne sera pas refusee la noble royne de France Ysabel de Baviere, a present par grace de Dieu regnant, en laquelle n'a raim de cruaulté, extorcion ne quelconques mal vice, mais tout bonne amour et benignité vers ses subgés. (422)

The invitation to the City of Ladies that Lady Rectitude extends to the current queen has a notably tepid tone through the negative structure "we wouldn't refuse entry." Perhaps what is most striking about this reference is what she omits in a work dedicated to emphasizing the extraordinary political achievements and behavior of ruling women – Ysabel's exemplary story as a queen. By the time that Christine wrote the *City of Ladies*, Ysabel had been the queen of France for 20 years and found herself in the midst of intense internal and external strife. She had the potential to realize significant political changes and serve as a contemporary exemplary queen, especially because of her expanded authority resulting from the king's illness. However, Christine briefly speaks of her good character in one sentence, excluding any references to contemporary events or specific actions that would provide proof of these statements.

In comparison, Christine features Queen Blanche of Castile as an exemplary widow queen who achieved peace during a turbulent period. Through her example, Christine also promotes the ability of widows to maintain a virtuous reputation, a theme that reflects the author's personal situation. She discusses Blanche twice in *City of Ladies* (1.13, 2.65), dedicating an entire chapter to her political legacy in part 2 -- just three chapters before the brief reference to Ysabel. From 1226-34, Blanche acted as

the Regent, protecting the kingdom for her son, Louis IX. She confronted not only the external threat from the King of England, Henry III but also the internal discord from the league of barons, similar to Ysabel's complex political situation. Blanche faced another challenging situation that threatened her good reputation. Thibault IV, the Count of Champagne, expressed his romantic interest in the queen. However, Blanche successfully employed his personal devotion for political gain, as she demanded loyalty to the heir and avoided compromising her reputation. We have previously examined the harmful nature of rumor on a woman's reputation through the accounts of Christine-protagonist's widowhood and the reputation of Ysabel.¹⁴⁹ Here, Christine presents an exemplary queen who maintained her good reputation. Christine expounds upon Blanche's virtuous character and actions. For these reasons, both Lady Reason and Lady Rectitude cite Blanche's legend in their respective sections. Lady Reason deems Blanche as "wise and noble" who ruled France "with such skill and care" (31) ("la tres sage et... la noble royne Blanche... qui tant noblement et prudemment gouverna le royaume de France"; 98). In this description, we can note the recurrent virtues that Christine associates with good leadership – wisdom and prudence ("sage" and "prudemment").

In the political realm, a queen or female ruler's good reputation was an integral component of her identity and role in the body politic. Considering the grave consequences of adultery in a society that endorsed primogeniture, a female ruler had both a spiritual and social responsibility to live chastely. In Karen Pratt's study of queenship and adultery, she reflects on the implications of the queen's actions and infidelity within the context of the body politic:

Owing to this symbolic connection between the queen's body and the kingdom, whether she has brought land to the marriage or not, the queen's adultery, sharing her body with two men, is bound to imply the lover's illicit claim to the political power tied to the land.... in the interests of political stability the queen's sexuality needed to be controlled and that her chastity was paramount. (256-57)

¹⁴⁹ See chapter 4, 140.

Often in medieval literature, the queen's sexuality was linked with morality and as with all women, who are descendants of Eve, their sexuality must be controlled (Pratt 236). Similar to Brown-Grant's comments about the perception of queens who are physically de-eroticized, Pratt remarks on the connection between virtuous queens and political stability since infidelity could undermine the legitimacy of the heirs. In particular, Pratt refers to biblical models such as Mary, Esther, and Judith – all three of whom Christine honors in the *City of Ladies* as we shall explore shortly. These women are exemplars of “queen-dowagers and regents whose sexuality was no longer perceived as either a threat or a liability” (Pratt 236). On the other hand, adulterous queens in medieval literature, like Iseult and Guinevere, show a tendency to link the “expression of their own sexual identity... to calamitous political consequences” (Pratt 236).

Christine records how certain noble women have remained chaste during marriage or widowhood, ensuring a pure dynastic lineage through the examples of the Duchess of Anjou, Artemisia, and Lavinia (*City of Ladies* 1.13, 1.21, 1.48). To return to the example of Blanche of Castile, Christine again mentions this queen in the first part of *Three Virtues* (1.9). At this time, Christine focuses on her ability to attain peace between the barons and the king (1.9). Through this story, Christine highlights the obligation of noble women to prevent warfare. The Three Virtues state that men are naturally predisposed to warfare; whereas, women are natural peacemakers. Women who are in a position of political power bear a moral and spiritual responsibility to prevent war. They can use their words to intercede and mediate, a gift that Christine portrays as divine. She cites the Bible to support her statement:

Solomon speaks of peace in the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Book of Proverbs*. Gentleness and humility assuage the prince. The gentle tongue (which means the soft word) bends and breaks harshness. So water extinguishes fire's heat by its moisture and chill. (86)

Et ad ce propos dist Salemon es *Proverbes*, ou .XXVe. chapitre: Douleur et humilité assouagist le prince et la langue mole (c'est-à-dire la douce parole) flechist et brise sa durté, tout ainsi comme l'eau par sa moisteur et froidure estaint la chaleur du feu. (35; lines 62-66)

In addition to Blanche de Castile's exemplar, Christine emphasizes the mediating power of women's speech when their husbands quarrel with their peers or subjects. Liliane Dulac analyzes feminine speech in part 1 of the *Three Virtues*, noting the important social roles of female speech from positive self-representation to the role of *mediatrix* that can instill social stability (17-18). In examining the ideas that Christine puts forth in the *City of Ladies* and especially in the *Three Virtues*, Pratt comments on the virtues and vices in the political context – namely that the queen should avoid avarice and exert her diplomacy through the mediation of political and familial conflicts (239-41).

Furthermore, Christine stresses the advantages of marriage in respect to vital political advice from wives. When heeded, their guidance or warnings benefited their husbands. However, this requires a marital relationship that has a degree of trust or at least mutual respect. In the *City of Ladies*, Lady Rectitude declares shortly after the first reference to Queen Blanche, that while there are some foolish women, many are intelligent and can aid their husbands: "If these women's husbands trusted them or had as much sense as their wives, they would be much better off" (33) ("...se leurs maris les creussent ou eussent pareil sens, grant bien et prouffit seroit pour eulx"; 100).

Christine also demonstrates the consequences of not following female advice, as evident in certain situations which have proved fatal to the headstrong husband. A case in point is her narration of Dido's story, the classical heroine whom Virgil showcases as an example of female passion and vengeance in her relationship with Aeneas. In Christine's retelling of Dido's legend, she reveals that Dido wisely advised her husband Sychaeus to hide his considerable wealth and protect himself from the legendary greed of her immoral brother – Pygmalion, the King of Phoenicia (1.46). While Sychaeus heeded Dido's recommendation to conceal his fortune, he did not safeguard himself and was murdered. Throughout this narrative, Lady Reason refers to Dido's good judgment or prudence.

In part 2, Lady Rectitude reinforces the value of female advice through further classical exemplars. Indeed, the rubric of 2.28 clearly explains its purpose: "Proof against those who claim that only an idiot takes his wife's advice or puts his trust in her" (126) ("Preuves contre ce que aucuns dient que homme est vil qui croit au conseil de sa femme ne y adjouste foye"; 286). Among the husbands who have ignored the advice of

“responsible, trustworthy” (“bonnes et sages”) wives, Lady Rectitude draws two examples from the story of Julius Caesar. She reiterates the example of Portia, who attempted to persuade Brutus from killing Julius Caesar first with her words then through injuring herself (1.25). Brutus was unmoved by his wife’s desperation and, along with Cassius, assassinated Julius Caesar. Once in exile, Brutus himself was murdered. We can surmise that Lady Rectitude selects the story of Portia because of her discretion and wise use of language, to disprove a claim made by Jean de Meun in the *Romance of the Rose* about the indiscrete nature of wives who cannot control their speech (123). Several sections later, Lady Rectitude presents another side of this fatal event with the same purpose. She explains that Julius Caesar also became the victim of his own obstinacy as he did not trust his wife’s premonitions, including a dream that foretold his death the night before his assassination. Despite his wife’s pleas to stay home, Julius Caesar set out for the Senate, where he was murdered by Brutus and Cassius (126).

In the aforementioned selection of Christine’s political exemplars, we are able to detect recurrent themes in her defense of the positive contributions of wives and widows and their integral place at the head of the body politic. Christine presents the stories of female rulers who govern effectively in times of war. Additionally, she demonstrates the benefits of a reciprocal marital relationship in politics, such as the ability of wives to achieve peace for their husbands and provide crucial political advice.

Domestic Exemplars

On a domestic level, Christine validates the wife’s role in the household, both in her familial interactions and her ability to manage responsibilities. In addition to the practical advantages of marriage, she calls attention to the affective benefits of a wife’s companionship. This notion of marital companionship, a central theme in Christine’s intertextual depiction of her marriage to Etienne, resurfaces in numerous portraits in the *City of Ladies*.

First, Christine’s effort to promote the practical contributions of wives in the domestic sphere counters misogynist criticisms that deride women’s character and

natural ability to learn. She does not seek to restructure gender roles in her society, but explains that each gender has natural abilities and tendencies that excel in certain domains (1.11). Her theory about God's division of labor among the sexes presents a logic that revolves around efficiency and productivity. For instance, Lady Reason explains that there is not a need for women to become lawyers because this occupation already has ample participants – “Why send three men to carry a burden which two can manage quite comfortably?” (29) (“A quoy faire envoyeroit on .iij. hommes lever un fardel que .ij. pevent legierement porter?”; 94). From Christine's perspective, the advent of females studying the law would be an unnecessary redistribution of valuable resources. In the first part of the *City of Ladies*, Lady Reason clearly emphasizes how valuable women's contributions have been to society even within the confines of traditional gender roles. In particular, Lady Reason systematically dismisses the Latin proverb that belittles female tears, speech, and craftsmanship through a host of biblical examples (1.10).¹⁵⁰

Lady Reason explicitly points out that women are intellectually capable of assuming nontraditional responsibilities such as learning the law, if such a need arises. Lady Reason states that she can illustrate her assertion with exemplary stories from the past and present of women who governed wisely and widows who managed their households, stories that prove that “an intelligent woman can succeed in any domain” (30) (“femme qui a entendement est convenable en toutes choses”; 94). This dialogue, which introduces a series of exemplars, guides the reader's interpretation of these stories, in the same manner as a gloss. Thus as Lady Reason provides an exemplary lesson to Christine-protagonist within the allegorical framework of the text, Christine-author instructs the reader. In point of fact, Etienne's death was the practical catalyst for Christine's writing career as she confronted the newfound responsibilities of providing for her household. Given that this scholarly text replete with classical and biblical exempla originates from a female author, Lady Reason's argument for the potential of women to acquire knowledge and assume nontraditional responsibilities has greater authority.

¹⁵⁰ See chapter 5, 153.

Christine's literary account of her marriage to Etienne in *Christine's Vision* provides revealing information about domestic relationships. Christine-protagonist highlights the harmful consequences of secrecy in the marital relationship on virtuous widows. She explains to Lady Philosophy that her lack of knowledge about the family's finances reflects common behavior on the part of husbands in her society (3.6). Christine-protagonist acknowledges that irresponsibility rightfully precludes an open discussion of financial matters; however, she reasons that this practice is impractical when wives are prudent and wise. Again, we find that Christine-protagonist applies the same standards of virtue to women that she praises in her description of her husband in this text -- prudence and wisdom. In the midst of this observation about marital relationships, Christine-protagonist inserts another explicit reference to her personal experience that reminds the reader of her authoritative voice.

In the aforementioned dialogue between Lady Reason and Christine-protagonist in the *City of Ladies* about women's ability to acquire good judgment, Lady Reason illustrates her positive response with examples from a domestic context (1.43). She remarks:

If you care to look closely, you'll discover that for the most part women prove themselves to be extremely attentive, diligent and meticulous in running a household and seeing to everything as best they can (79)

Et y prens garde, se bon te semble. Tu trouveras que de leur mainage gouverner et pourveoir a toutes choses, selon leur puissance, sont communement toutes, ou la plus grant partie, tres curieuses, songneuses et diligentes (198)

Lady Reason's advice addresses possible sources of the misconception of female contributions to the household. She first asks Christine-protagonist to reevaluate her perception of domestic relationships by using a more critical eye – to “look closely.” This advice recalls Lady Reason's earlier comments about perception though the contrast between what can be seen in the written word and in real life (1.2). Lady Reason carefully avoids countering broad, sweeping criticisms of the female sex with equally stereotypical language in their defense. She qualifies that most women generally put

forth their best effort. Consequently, Lady Reason carries a mirror to assist those in need of moral improvement and recounts exemplary stories.

Before narrating the tale of Gaia Cirilla, who serves as an example of the ideal wife through her successfully management of the household, Lady Reason quotes a passage from the Bible to further support her point of view (1.44). Under the rubric citing an excerpt from *Proverbs*, Christine begins: “Whoever finds a valiant woman, one of sound judgment, will be a husband who lacks for nothing” (80) (“Qui trouvera femme forte, c’est a dire, prudente, son mari n’ara pas faulte de tous biens”; 198). Immediately following the list of virtues that comprise a prudent woman -- including courage, diligence, and generosity – Lady Reason tells the tale of Gaia Cirilla as an illustration of Solomon’s words.

Gaia Cirilla, the wife of the Roman ruler King Tarquin, illustrates the practical contributions of wives in the domestic sphere (1.45). Lady Reason focuses on her successful management of the household, including her productivity and attentiveness. Additionally, Gaia Cirilla’s good character was evident through her prudent behavior, loyalty, and kindness. Lady Reason closes the narrative with a remark about her legacy -- Gaia Cirilla’s name became part of a marital custom in which her name was evoked as the bride first entered her new home (81). Likewise, Christine promotes the domestic success of widows, providing an image of diligent and virtuous widows (1.12). She revisits this topic in the *Three Virtues*, addressing the household responsibilities and ideal characteristics of wives in all levels of society. For instance, she imparts domestic advice for the wives who are not part of the nobility about the organization and management of the household (3.1). In the *Three Virtues*, Christine offers a contemporary exemplar of a widowed lady who successfully managed the household – Isabelle of Melun, the Countess of Eu (died 1389). The Countess’ wisdom, prudence, and hard work made her household more productive than any of her tenants (2.10).¹⁵¹

Christine’s concern for the good reputation of women surfaces in her representation of domestic marital exemplars and general advice. In the *Three Virtues*, Worldly Prudence explains to Christine-protagonist in the section addressed to

¹⁵¹ The Countess’ daughter-in-law, Marie of Berry, was Christine’s patroness. See the notes in the English translation of the *Three Virtues*, 232.

princesses that women can maintain a good reputation through their prudent behavior at home and in their daily lives (1.11). Specifically, she focuses on Sobriety and Chastity, virtues that can be attained through sensible daily activities, such as devotional and instructional reading from good works – a designation which the *Three Virtues* surely merits. Furthermore, she encourages demure behavior and modest dress. She then reminds the reader of the prudent lifestyle of the late monarch's wife, Queen Joan (1.12). Christine's criticisms of luxurious dress, that is wives and husbands who focus on acquiring and displaying material wealth, echoes the remarks made by other authors of her time about extravagant clothes (2.11, 3.2, 3.3). In Charity Cannon Willard's comparison of marriage by Christine, Eustache Deschamps (*Miroir de Mariage*), and the anonymous *15 Joys of Marriage*, ostentatious dress was one of the few common points in these texts (479). Christine reprimands both the wives and "the wretched husbands" who "abet and even encourage their wives in this display" (177) ("les maleureux mariz voire de telz y a les nourrissent et introduissent en celle folie et le veulent"; 161).

As in a political context, Christine demonstrates that wives can act as peacemakers within the household. In the *Three Virtues*, Christine-narrator listens to Worldly Prudence's teachings, which explicitly describe the wife's role and responsibilities. In particular, Worldly Prudence first asserts, "A lady loving honor, or any woman in the estate of marriage, must love her husband and live with him in peace" (98) ("toute dame qui aime honneur, et semblablement toute femme estant en ordre de mariage, il apertient que elle aime son mary et vive en paix avec lui" (52). She proceeds to explain how to employ female speech to ensure peace in a marital relationship and prevent from having a stormy household full of discord. The first two lessons concern the importance of cultivating an amicable relationship with one's husband and his family (1.13-14).

Wives should inquire about the health and needs of their husband to his servants and physicians to ensure a peaceful household. To exemplify this point, Worldly Prudence refers to Queen Esther's attention to her husband's personal welfare (1.13; 98). Furthermore, wives can intercede if a dispute arises between her husband and his family. Willard notes that this advice highlights an aspect of medieval life that is

unexpected to modern readers – the insecurity of upper-class women's lives due to rivalries. Maintaining a good relationship with a husband's family was vital amongst the maneuvering of the French Court (Willard, "Women and Marriage" 478).

Second, Christine features the affective advantages of marriage through her choice of exemplary wives and widows in the *City of Ladies*. In her representation of marriage, she emphasizes qualities that we have examined in her self-inspired marital portrait: companionship, fidelity, and steadfast love. In Christine's intertextual portraits of Etienne and the ostensibly autobiographical widow persona, she represents their marriage as a natural and God-given union. Lady Reason states that men who do not love their wives act:

Against nature, in that even the birds and the beasts naturally love their mate, the female of the species. So man acts in a most unnatural way when he, a rational being, fails to love women. (1.8; 20)

... contre nature en ce qui il n'est beste vive quelconques, ne oysel, qui naturellement n'aime chèrement son per, c'est la femelle. Si est bien chose desnaturee quant home raisonnable fait au contraire. (72)

Lady Reason points out that marital love is natural through a reflection of the natural order of all of God's creatures. Consequently, the disdain of harmonious and affectionate marital relationships, as promoted by certain texts, represents an aberration of nature that contradicts God's will. Her comments on marriage bring to mind the figurative language that Christine employs in other texts -- the turtledove imagery and recurrent notion of the couple or *per*. Similarly, she promotes marital love through another authoritative allegorical figure in the *Three Virtues* -- Worldly Prudence. In this character's lessons to wives, she begins with the importance of marital love for all classes of women. Prudence states that besides the obvious benefits of marital love, such a relationship offers other benefits to the soul and to her personal honor (1.13, 3.1).

Christine's series of exemplary women in the median sections of part 2 of the *City of Ladies* treat not only the unwavering love of wives in the face of exigent or adulterous husbands but also their faithful commitment to marriage that is evidenced in

challenging domestic circumstances. Lady Rectitude and Christine-protagonist provide several examples of wives who have loyally supported their husbands even in exile. For instance, Sulpicia forfeited the wealthy lifestyle that she and her Roman husband enjoyed to follow him into exile (2.23). Upon hearing this exemplary story, Christine-protagonist remarks: “Yes, my lady, it occurs to me from what you’ve been saying about these women that I too have seen similar cases amongst my contemporaries” (121) (“Certes, Dame, il me souvient par ce que vous dites de aucunes femmes que j’ay veu en mon temps auques en cas pareil”; 276). At this point, Christine-protagonist is able to reevaluate the perception of her fictive society, reinforcing the view that women are able to participate in an active interpretation of exemplary stories. The reader witnesses Christine-protagonist’s learning process. Indeed, Christine-protagonist then relates her own observations, citing among others certain devoted wives who have followed their husbands into leper colonies despite their personal good health. Christine-protagonist also points out that many women remain faithful to their marriage vows even when faced with abusive or contrary husbands. She closes with the comment that “Such things are everyday occurrences, but no one remarks upon it” (122) (“Et ce sont choses que chacun jour on voit, mais chacun n’y vise”; 278).¹⁵² Christine-protagonist realizes that in her society, the sacrifices and burdens faced by devoted wives are not seen and appreciated, leading to a common misperception of their behavior.

In all, Christine’s domestic marital exemplars accentuate the positive aspects of marriage through the practical contributions of wives and widows. Her exemplars demonstrate admirable qualities, including productivity, prudence, and the ability to promote peace. She also focuses on the benefits of a close marital relationship – the companionship, love, and loyalty of wives. We shall see in the example of Esther, among other exemplars, Christine conveys that wives should not only concern themselves with the physical well-being of their spouses, but also their spiritual salvation.

¹⁵² The French term *viser*, meaning to observe or notice, shares a common Latin root with the word *voir* – *videre*. See Larousse, 660 and 662.

Spiritual Exemplars

On a spiritual level, Christine depicts the positive influence of women in works such as the *City of Ladies* and the *Three Virtues*. In particular, she features examples of wives concerned for the salvation of their spouses. Additionally, Christine shows that some women are chosen by God as intercessors for a greater purpose. Her representation of female spirituality reflects the medieval adoration for the Virgin Mary, a key figure of intercession. Indeed, Christine honors Mary in the creation of her allegorical city. Lady Justice appoints Mary as the Queen of the City of Ladies, and begins the series of hagiographic stories with her example (3.1). She portrays Mary as both a saint and an earthly woman; her dialogue with Lady Justice emphasizes the community of women because Mary considers the other city inhabitants her sisters and friends (201-02). Lady Justice explains Mary's noble qualities in terms that validate marriage as a religious union, proclaiming that God chose a woman to be His bride because of her virtue (202). Mary's positive example outshines the sins of Eve and symbolizes the potential for a higher spiritual union among all members of society. She serves as Christine's ultimate model of female spiritual behavior (Walters "Magnifying" 244-46).

In selecting exemplary Christian wives for her city, Christine features Clotilde, a woman whose piety was credited for leading to the salvation of the French nation (2.35). The Christian wife of King Clovis, she was solely responsible for his redemption. Similar to the mother of St. Augustine, Clotilde's tears and prayers finally converted her husband to Christianity. During a moment of impending defeat on the battlefield, Clovis sought the protection of the Christian God. As the king, Clovis subsequently endorsed Christianity as the official religion of France. Lori Walters observes the strong influence of Christian queens on their husbands and sons. Women like Clovis' Queen Clotilde ensured that the ideal Christian city would be a City of Ladies ("Magnifying" 247).

To further illustrate Christine's effort to portray wives as spiritual intercessors, we shall take a closer look at Queen Esther. She presents Esther's story as an example of the good deeds that wives perform in the *City of Ladies* (2.32). Lady Rectitude recalls how Esther interceded for the Jewish people, begging her husband, King Ahasuerus, to

disregard Haman's advice to kill them. Her humble and pleasing behavior swayed her husband to grant her a wish, which she courageously used to plead for the lives of her countrymen. Lady Rectitude introduces this story by explaining its significance: "On another occasion, God chose the wise and noble Queen Esther to rescue His people from the king Ahasuerus, who had placed them in captivity" (133) "Par la noble sage royne Hester volt austresi Dieux delivrer son peuple de la servitude du roye Assuere"; 300). It is worth noting that Lady Rectitude attributes the qualities of nobility and wisdom to Esther. In this preface, Lady Rectitude points out that Esther was specifically selected by God to effect peace and save God's chosen people through her marriage. When Christine alludes to Esther in the *Three Virtues*, she mentions Esther immediately before explicitly stating that wives should concern themselves with the physical and spiritual health of their husbands (1.13). Esther's proper conduct as a wife enabled her to prevent her husband from murdering countless innocent people.

Finally, the biblical story of Judith, which preceded that of Esther in the *City of Ladies*, demonstrates that widows can also be chosen by God to benefit humanity and carry out God's will (2.31). Lady Rectitude describes Judith as a noble widow who was chaste and valiant. When the Assyrian general Holofernes besieged the Jews, the people of Israel prayed for their deliverance. Lady Rectitude asserts that "He [God] chose on this occasion to send a woman to their rescue" (131) ("volt Dieux yceulx autresi secourir et sauver par femme"; 298). Consequently, Judith enticed the general and gained access to his private quarters, where she beheaded him as he slept. Her actions prompted the Jews to attack the Assyrians and they were victorious. In this story, Christine emphasizes that Judith's virtuous life as a widow led to her divine selection and the salvation of the Jewish people.

As seen from this selection of marital exemplars, Christine strives to place the marital relationship within the context of her society. While her personal example emphasizes the aspects of a reciprocal relationship, her catalog of exemplary wives and widows in the *City of Ladies* and the *Three Virtues* features how marriage can contribute to society on several levels. Politically, Christine addresses the role of the queen and other women rulers who have realized significant changes through their influence as a wife, with mediating speech and wise advice, as well as their ability to

effectively rule with and in place of their spouses. Her narratives demonstrate the wide-ranging impact of a good ruler, such as Blanche of Castile, who can protect the heir's birthright and quell internal dissension. Domestically, Christine focuses on the advantages of a harmonious marriage. In particular, she illustrates the helpful assistance of wives with regards to practical concerns such as household management. Akin to her "autobiographical" exemplary marriage, Christine explores the emotional benefits of marriage and the virtues of spouses including loyalty. She equally affirms the mediating power of a wife's speech in domestic disputes. Lastly, we considered Christine's marital exemplars in a spiritual context. She retells the stories of legendary Christian women who have acted as an intercessor for their husbands' salvation or for that of their people.

This selection of marital exemplars is but a sample of Christine's didactic narratives in the *City of Ladies* and the *Three Virtues*. Christine's virtuous spouses, who represent a portion of the population in the City, provide additional support to her criticisms of misogamy that she voices in other works. Both the cataloging effect and the use of common cultural role models by authoritative allegorical figures epitomize certain characteristics of exemplarity -- multiplicity and exteriority, which strengthen Christine's persuasive message.

CONCLUSION

Over the course of this project, we have primarily explored the works of Christine de Pizan spanning the beginning of her career at the turn of the fifteenth century¹⁵³ to one of her most prolific years, 1405. During this timeframe, Christine's diverse literary production includes numerous genres from lyric poetry to allegorical narrative. Moreover, Christine fervently participated in the epistolary quarrel with prominent scholars of her day on the *Romance of the Rose's* moral impact on readers, a text widely admired for its eloquence and exploits. By compiling and gifting a copy of the Debate letters to Queen Ysabel, Christine preserved an invaluable tool for analyzing her works from this time. The author's own voice acted as a literary critic in a series of public letters, free of the potential influence of a patron for whom Christine composed her manuscripts. Her letters were directed to scholars. Both Christine's impassioned letters in the Debate and her gloss to *Christine's Vision* in ex-Phillipps 128 provide insight on her notions of authorship and literature that in turn clarify interpretation of her writings and connect the author's explicit ideas with her creative works.

For Christine, authors carry a moral responsibility to represent the truth and promote virtue. Following the examples of noted Church Doctors and respected authors, including Saint Augustine and Boethius, Christine values the didactic quality of literature that transforms a text into a multifaceted and symbolic mirror in the process of reflection and the pursuit of spiritual improvement. Readers should actively interpret a text for its underlying message and apply this wisdom to their life. Additionally, Christine explains in her gloss that the ambiguous nature of allegory enables the author to embed truthful messages in the text and facilitates multiple interpretations that shed light on individual, societal, and spiritual wellbeing.

Given her demonstrable concern for responsible authorship, Christine employs an instructive format in her writings that was familiar to her readers in both religious and secular contexts – the rhetoric of exemplarity. As an effective method of persuasive speech, exemplarity provides a narrative context that illustrates a specific message in a

¹⁵³ The manuscript the *Livre de Christine* dates to circa 1399-1402.

memorable fashion. Thus in Christine's works, we encounter the stories of praiseworthy characters whose virtuous words and deeds testify to our moral potential and act a role models for those in need of encouragement. Her works are laden with the inspirational stories of legendary figures from France's cultural memory and more recent past. Yet, Christine does not solely evoke virtuous exemplars. In certain contexts, she also presents exemplary stories that depict the consequences of immoral or irresponsible behavior, which underline the import of the moral lesson in a manner that reflects the medieval penchant for *les contraires choses*.

Christine challenges misogynist views that not only depict marriage as an encumbrance but also caution men about a wife's predilection for vice due to her female nature. She directly rebukes these stereotypes in the Debate letters. Furthermore, she questions the integrity of the *Rose* authors and the purpose of negative marital exemplars, such as Jean de Meun's *Jealous Husband*. In Christine's letters, she defends marriage as a natural and God-given union that forms the basis of a stable society. She declares that her personal marital experience, through her ten year marriage to the royal secretary Etienne de Castel, lends authority to her argument and outweighs the suppositions of authors lacking this experience. Christine's position illustrates her conviction that authors are responsible for the truth of their message and her awareness of the influential power of the written word. Although Christine amassed a collection of polemical letters and requested Ysabel to act as a judge, no judgment was made to validate a particular side. With this in mind, we can note a high degree of intertextuality in Christine's literary works from this time period on the topic of marriage even though she had formally retired from the Debate. Her views on marriage and female virtue reappear in her writings, creating an intertextual link between the author's express beliefs on marriage and her characters, in particular Christine-protagonist. In a variety of texts, Christine uses exemplarity to support and develop her defense of marriage in the Debate.

As Christine explains through the voice of Lady Rectitude in the *City of Ladies* (2.13), misogynist books were not written by female authors. Using the experience of her protagonist to prove the contrary, Christine counterbalances these criticisms with a multitude of positive marital exemplars. Of key interest in this study is the narrative of

Christine's marriage, upon which she establishes her authority. She recounts her "autobiographical" memories and features the story of the character Christine-protagonist, whose first person voice and resemblance to the author lend a degree of veracity to this experience.

In the early chapters of this project, we examined Christine's intertextual memorial to her late husband Etienne. She offers his portrait, an example drawn from her personal experience, as a role model on a collective level for an ideal Christian man and husband. Her works exude a sense of longing for her deceased husband, whom she describes as an ideal partner. She depicts their marital relationship in terms that convey their mutual affection and agreeable companionship, as a perfect friendship and union that reflects the spiritual bond between Christ and the Church. Christine draws attention to Etienne's honorable character through explicit descriptions and figurative language; in particular, she emphasizes his virtues of wisdom, prudence, and loyalty. His good character enabled him to protect his family from financial hardships and positively impact the lives of others. While the vast majority of Etienne's persona surfaces through descriptions from the perspective of Christine as an author and a character within the text, there is one exception in ballade 26 of *Other Ballades*. In this remarkable poem, Etienne becomes an active character whose speech testifies to his gentle and virtuous nature as well as his recognition of God's providential role in their marriage.

After considering Christine's marriage through her intertextual memorial to Etienne, we explored her widow persona in the early widowhood poems and allegorical narratives. Her humble persona, as an author and as the character Christine-protagonist, conforms to literary conventions and aims to deflect the medieval reader's critical reception of her works on the basis of her education and gender. Christine preemptively acknowledges her lack of formal education and qualifies her authority to speak out on marriage based on personal experience. Furthermore, she points out the influential erudite presence of her husband and her father in her life, scholars who commended respect at the French court and earned positions of authority in the king's service. We analyzed two aspects of her intertextual marriage narrative that

complement the above study of Etienne and Christine's marital relationship – her experiences as a young bride and a widow.

Christine places the individual couple in the context of their community and shows their interaction. She recounts her marriage ceremony to Etienne in several texts, ranging in style from allegory in *Fortune's Transformation* to a comparatively realistic narrative in *Christine's Vision*. In each text, Christine offers insight to medieval marriage practices as well as societal values. She does not overtly commend her self-inspired character in the same manner that she does with Etienne. However, we can observe certain moral qualities from her actions as a young bride. Christine's account stresses the significant role of the family in marriage arrangements, as she trusts her father's judgment in his selection of a husband. She reflects that her father wisely chose the finest possible husband for her, a decision that she herself could not have made as well, which led to the 10 most joyful years of her life. This favorable outcome endorses parental guidance in marriage, a position that counters the practice of clandestine marriages. She also furnishes elaborate details about the communal celebration of marriage, portraying religious and secular customs. Christine captures a broader perspective of marriage.

As a widow, Christine-protagonist records her tribulations and reflects on her misfortune, which culminates in a spiritual experience in *Christine's Vision*. She explains her desire to remain faithful to her marriage vows in the *Path of Long Study* and *Christine's Vision*. In spite of her dire financial situation, she decides to never remarry since her husband was an irreplaceable companion without equal. Christine-protagonist reveals the harsh realities of widowhood in *Christine's Vision*, as she was subject to lawsuits and gossip about her relationships with men. She proclaims her honor as a virtuous widow, which recalls a topic that she expresses throughout her works – the importance of a good reputation, especially for women. From her example, the reader witnesses how Lady Philosophy chastens Christine-protagonist for her aggrandized feelings of victimization by Fortune. Lady Philosophy advises her to accept God's will and recognize the common experience of widowhood among all levels of society, a fact that brings to mind the significant amount of human loss at this time through epidemics and incessant warfare that would have been noted by her readers.

Through this intertextual “autobiography,” Christine creates an exemplary marital couple that is based to a certain extent on her personal experience. She depicts a virtuous husband whose affectionate relationship with his wife counters the vignettes of marital disputes and dissension in misogynist works. Furthermore, Christine does not regret her marriage despite its tragic outcome. She reveals how the process of grief can lead to spiritual meditation and a deeper awareness of our shared humanity.

Yet, Christine’s use of exemplarity to advocate marriage reaches beyond her own story. In several works, she draws marital exemplars from authoritative sources who serve as additional role models from ancient to modern times and demonstrate the longstanding benefit of marriage for individuals and their society. Particularly, in the *City of Ladies* and the *Three Virtues*, Christine employs exemplarity in different manner than exploring the personal experience of one character in-depth. Christine introduces an extensive list of exemplars, following the catalogue tradition.

In the *City of Ladies* and the *Three Virtues*, Christine’s frame story posits a despondent Christine-protagonist, who has just read *Lamentations* by Matheolus, in dialogue with the Three Virtues. In response to the misogynist and misogynist views in *Lamentations*, which mirrors other works by Jean de Meun and Ovid, the Three Virtues set out to disprove these slanderous works through logical reasoning and exemplarity. Thus follows an examination of the criticisms of women and marriage with a legal-judicial bent. The Three Virtues state the opposing points of view and refute them with the exemplary stories of respected figures through exteriority. This cataloging technique corresponds to what John Lyons defines as multiplicity, which he deems an essential characteristic of exemplarity that reinforces the persuasive argument (26).

On the subject of marriage, the Three Virtues highlight how wives and widows form an integral part of society, contributing to its political, domestic, and spiritual well-being. In doing so, they reinforce the message that Christine weaves throughout her personal narrative – that marriage is a natural and God-given union that should not be categorically dismissed. Through this multitude of exemplary stories, Christine supports her explicit criticisms in the Debate on the *Romance of the Rose*. In fact, the confluence of similarities, that is, Christine’s views on marriage represented in an allegorical debate format, leaves the impression that Christine has created a textual trial and verdict of the

Debate by the Three Virtues. Through these morally authoritative characters, Christine proffers a judgment of the Debate, providing a resolution that did not occur when the author requested Ysabel's intervention.

In all, Christine's marital exemplars offer an alternate perspective on marriage in medieval literature, a position that contrasts with the glorification of extramarital affairs and supports marriage as a natural and religious union. Exemplarity is a key element of Christine's defense of marriage. It lends authority to her argument, both through her personal example and the stories of legendary wives and widows. She calls for readers to reconsider these stories as representative of the benefits of marriage and to value their own experiences more than the assumptions of others. Her literary legacy provides a clear lens through which readers can begin to reevaluate their perception of society as well as their own actions and beliefs.

APPENDIX A
SELECTED WORKS

Table 1. Selected Works

<u>Date</u>	<u>Middle French Title</u>	<u>English Translation</u>
1399-1402	<i>Cent Ballades</i>	<i>One Hundred Ballads</i>
	<i>Rondeaux</i>	
	<i>Autres Ballades</i>	<i>Other Ballads</i>
	<i>Enseignemens moraux</i>	<i>Moral Teachings</i>
1399	<i>Epistre au Dieu d'Amours</i>	<i>The God of Love's Letter</i> ¹⁵⁴
c.1400	<i>Epistre d'Othéa a Hector</i>	<i>The Letter from Othea</i> ¹⁵⁵
1402-03	<i>Le Chemin de long estude</i>	<i>The Path of Long Study</i>
1403	<i>Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune</i>	<i>Fortune's Transformation</i>
1403-05	<i>Le livre du Duc des vrais amans</i>	<i>The Book of the Duke of True Lovers</i>
1404	<i>Le livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V</i>	<i>The Book of the Deeds and Good Conduct of the Wise King Charles V</i>
1405	<i>Livre de la Cite de Dames</i>	<i>The Book of the City of Ladies</i>
1405	<i>Livre des Trois Vertus</i>	<i>The Book of the Three Virtues</i>
1405	<i>Le livre de l'advision Cristine</i>	<i>The Book of Christine's Vision</i>
1405	<i>Epistre à la reine</i>	<i>The Epistle to the Queen</i>

¹⁵⁴ This is also translated as the *God of Love's Epistle* and *Cupid's Letter*

¹⁵⁵ This is also translated as *Othéa's Letter to Hector* by Willard. The original title is *L'Epistre d'Othéa la Deesse, que Elle Envoya a Hector de Troye Quant Il Estoit en l'Age de Quinze Ans*.

APPENDIX B
COPYRIGHT PERMISSION LETTER

Subject **Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan**

From "Clementson, Elizabeth"

Date Thursday, March 19, 2009 3:53 pm

To "West, Anne Marie"

Dear Anne Marie West:

Thank you for your request to use 1550 words from The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan in your dissertation. Provided the material you wish to use is uncredited in our work to another source, this letter will grant you one time, nonexclusive rights to use the material in your dissertation, and in all copies to meet university requirements including University Microfilms edition, subject to the following conditions:

1. Such material must either be reproduced exactly as it appears in our publication, or if edited to be shown as adapted from our publication;
2. Full acknowledgment of the title, author, copyright and publisher is given;
3. You must reapply for permission if your dissertation is later published.
4. You may reproduce no more than 10% of our book in your dissertation.

Yours,

Elizabeth Clementson
Permissions Manager
W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
500 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10110

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Modern Editions and Translations of Ancient and Medieval Works

- Andreas Capellanus. *The Art of Courtly Love*. Trans. John Jay Parry. New York: Columbia UP, 1960. Print.
- Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Renate, ed. *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*. Norton Critical Edition. Trans. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee. New York: Norton, 1997. Print.
- Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Trans. and ed. V. E. Watts. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin Books, 1969. Print.
- Cerquiglini, Jacqueline, ed. *Cent ballades d'amant et de dame*. By Christine de Pizan. Bibliothèque Médiévale. Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1982. Print.
- Chrétien de Troyes. *Erec and Enide*. Trans. Burton Raffel. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997. Print.
- Christine de Pizan. *The Book of the Duke of True Lovers*. Trans. Thelma Fenster and Nadia Margolis. New York: Persea Books, 1991. Print.
- . *Le Chemin de longue étude*. Tran. and ed. Andrea Tarnowski. Lettres gothiques. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2000. Print.
- . *La Città delle dame*. Trans. Patrizia Caraffi. Ed. Earl Jeffrey Richards. Biblioteca Medievale 2. 2nd ed. Milan: Luni Editrice, 1998. Print.
- . *The City of Ladies*. Trans. and ed. Rosalind Brown-Grant. London: Penguin Books, 1999. Print.
- . *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*. Ed. Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty. Oxford: Society for the Study of Mediæval Languages and Literature, 1977. Print.
- . *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*. Ed. Angus J. Kennedy. Glasgow: Dr. Angus J. Kennedy, 1984. Print.
- . *Epistre Othea*. Ed. Gabriella Parussa. Geneva: Droz (TLF, 517), 1999. Print.
- . *Le livre de l'advison Cristine*. Ed. Christine Reno and Liliane Dulac. Études Christiniennes 4. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001. Print.
- . *Le livre de la mutacion de Fortune*. Ed. Suzanne Solente. 4 vols. Paris,

- Éditions A. & J. Picard & Companie, 1959. Print.
- . *Le livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V.* Ed. S. Solente. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1936. Print.
- . *Le livre des trois vertus.* Ed. Charity Cannon Willard and Eric Hicks. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1989. Print.
- . *Le livre du corps de policie.* Ed. Angus J. Kennedy. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998. Print.
- . *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor: The Treasury of the City of Ladies.* Trans. Charity Cannon Willard. Ed. Madeleine Pelter Cosman. Tenaflly, NJ: Bard Hall P; New York: Persea Books, 1989. Print.
- Douët-D'arcq, L., ed. *Inventaire de la bibliothèque du roi Charles VI fait au Louvre en 1423 par ordre du régent duc de Bedford.* La Société des Bibliophiles. Paris: Ch. Lahure, 1867. Print.
- Fenster, Thelma and Mary Carpenter Erler, eds. *Poems of Cupid, God of Love: Christine de Pizan's Epistre au dieu d'Amours and Dit de la Rose, Thomas Hoccleve's The Letter of Cupid.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990. Print.
- Hicks, Eric, ed. *Christine de Pisan, Jean Gerson, Jean de Montreuil, Gontier et Pierre Col: Le Débat sur le Roman de la Rose.* Paris: Honoré Champion, 1977. Print.
- Kennedy, Angus. "Christine de Pizan's *Epistre à la reine* (1405)." *Revue des Langues Romanes* 92.2 (1988): 253-64. Print.
- Marie de France. *Lais de Marie de France.* Lettres gothiques. Ed. Karl Warnke. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1990. Print.
- McGuire, Brian Patrick, trans. and ed. *Jean Gerson: Early Works.* The Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1998. Print.
- McLeod, Glenda, trans. and ed. *Christine De Pizan: Christine's Vision.* Garland Library of Medieval Literature 68. New York: Taylor & Francis, 1993. Print.
- McWebb, Christine, ed. *Debating the Roman de la rose: A Critical Anthology.* Latin trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.
- Ovid. *The Erotic Poems.* Trans. and ed. Peter Green. London: Penguin Books, 1982. Print.
- Rains, Ruth Ringland. *Les sept psaumes allégorisés of Christine de Pizan.*

- Washington, DC: The Catholic U of America P, 1965. Print.
- Roy, Maurice. *Œuvres poétiques de Christine de Pizan*. 3 vols. Paris: Didot, 1886. Print.
- Saint Augustine. *Confessions*. Trans. and ed. Henry Chadwick. Oxford World's Classics. New York: Oxford UP, 1998. Print.
- Sigmund, Paul E., trans. and ed. *St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics*. Norton Critical Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1988. Print.
- Strubel, Armand, trans. *Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun: Le Roman de la Rose*. Lettres gothiques. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1992. Print.
- Varty, Kenneth, ed. *Christine de Pisan's Ballades, Rondeaux, and Virelais*. Welwyn Garden City: The Broadwater P Ltd., for Leicester UP, 1965. Print.
- Willard, Charity Cannon, ed. *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*. New York: Persea Books, 1994. Print.

II. Critical Studies

- Adams, Tracy. "Eros or Anteros? Christine de Pizan's Economies of Desire." Kennedy, *Contexts*. Vol 1. 1-15. Print.
- . "Love as Metaphor in Christine de Pizan's Ballade Cycles." *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*. Ed. Barbara Altman and Deborah McGrady. New York: Routledge, 2003. 149-65. Print.
- Amt, Emilie, ed. *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Autrand, Françoise. "Christine de Pisan et les dames à la cour." *Autour de Marguerite d'écosse: reines, princesses et dames du XVe siècle. Actes du colloque de Thouars, 23 et 24 mai 1997*. Études d'histoire médiévales, 4. Ed. Geneviève and Philippe Contamine. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999. 19-31. Print.
- Ballet-Lynn, Thérèse. "L'Héroïsme féminin chez Christine de Pizan." *Trivium* 26 (1991): 81-88. Print.
- Baumgartner, Emmanuèle. *La Littérature française du Moyen Âge*. Paris: Dunod, 1999. Print.

- Bell, David K. "Dower." *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*. Ed. Katharina Wilson and Nadia Margolis. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 2004. 262-64. Print.
- . "Dowry." *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*. Ed. Katharina Wilson and Nadia Margolis. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 2004. 264-67. Print.
- Bell, Susan Groag. "Christine de Pizan: Humanism and the Problem of a Studious Woman." *Feminist Studies* 3.3-4 (1976): 173-84. Print.
- Bergeron, Rejean. "Examen d'une œuvre vouée à l'oubli: Les *Jeux à vendre* de Christine de Pizan." *Préludes à la Renaissance: Aspects de la vie intellectuelle en France au XVe siècle*. Ed. Carla Bozzolo and Ezio Ornato. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1992. 163-89. Print.
- Birk, Bonnie A. *Christine de Pizan and Biblical Wisdom: A Feminist-Theological Point of View*. Milwaukee: Marquette UP, 2005. Print.
- Blanchard, Joel. "Christine de Pizan: les raisons de l'histoire." *Le Moyen Age* 42 (1986): 417-36. Print.
- Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Renate. "Christine de Pizan et l'autobiographie féminine." *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome, Italie et Méditerranée* 113 (2001): 17-28. Print.
- . "Christine de Pizan and the Misogynistic Tradition." *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski. Trans. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee. Norton Critical Edition. New York: Norton, 1997. 297-311. Print.
- . "Jean Gerson and the Debate on the Romance of the Rose." *A Companion to Jean Gerson*. Ed. Brian Patrick McGuire. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition. Vol. 3. Leiden: Brill, 2006. 317-56. Print.
- Boklund-Lagopoulou, Karin. "'This Creature': Discourse on Women and Discourse by Women in the Middle Ages." *Gamma: Journal of Theory and Criticism* 1 (1993): 15-39. Print.
- Bozzolo, Carla. *La cour amoureuse, dite de Charles VI*. Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 1982. Print.
- Brooke, Christopher. *The Medieval Idea of Marriage*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989. Print.
- Brown, Michelle P. *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical*

- Terms*. Malibu, CA: The J. Paul Getty Museum; The British Library, 1994. Print.
- Brown-Grant, Rosalind. *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women: Reading Beyond Gender*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1999. Print.
- . "A New Context for Reading the 'Querelle de la Rose': Christine de Pizan and Medieval Literary Theory." Hicks, Gonzalez, and Simon 581-95.
- Brownlee, Kevin. "Martyrdom and the Female Voice: Saint Christine in the *Cité des dames*." *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*. Ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991. 115-35. Print.
- Burnley, J.D. "Christine de Pisan and the So-Called Style Clergial." *Modern Language Review* 81 (1986) 1: 1-6. Print.
- Carruthers, Mary J. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.
- Case, Mary Anne C. "Christine de Pizan and the Authority of Experience." Desmond 71-87.
- Cazelles, Raymond. *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris: de la fin du règne de Philippe Auguste à la mort de Charles V, 1223-1380*. Paris: Hachette, 1972. Print.
- Cerquiglini-Toulet, Jacqueline. "L'amour des livres au XIVe siècle." *Mélanges de philologie et de littérature médiévales offerts à Michel Burger*. Ed. Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet and Olivier Collet. Geneva: Droz, 1994. 333-40. Print.
- . "Le goût de l'étude: saveur et savoir chez Christine de Pizan." Hicks, Gonzalez, and Simon 597-608.
- . "The Stranger." *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*. Trans. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee. Ed. Renate Blumenfeld Kosinski. Norton Critical Edition. New York: Norton, 1997. 365-73. Print.
- Chance, Jane. "Gender Trouble in the Garden of Deduit: Christine de Pizan Translating the *Rose*." *Romance Languages Annual* 4 (1993): 20-28. Print.
- Christine de Pizan: The Making of the Queen's Manuscript*. U of Edinburgh; Arts and Humanities Research Council. July 2008
<<http://www.pizan.lib.ed.ac.uk/present.html>>.

- Clin, Marie-Véronique. *Isabeau de Bavière: La reine calomniée*. Paris: Perrin, 1999. Print.
- Closson, Monique. "La femme et la culture à l'époque de Christine de Pizan." *Sur le chemin de longue étude, Actes du colloque d'Orléans, juillet 1995*. Ed. Bernard Ribémont. Études Christiniennes 3. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998. 65-76. Print.
- Connolly, James, L. *John Gerson: Reformer and Mystic*. 1928. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Reprint Library. Print.
- Cropp, Glynnis. "Boethius and the *Consolatio philosophiae* in XIVth and XVth Century French Writing." *Essays in French Literature* 42 (July 2005): 27-43. Print.
- Cruz, Jo Ann Hoeppepner Moran. "Education, Lay." *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Routledge, 2006. 240-241. Print.
- Curnow, Maureen Cheney. "'La pioche d'Inquisicion': Legal-Judicial Content and Style in Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la Cité des Dames*." Richards, *Reinterpreting* 157-72.
- Daly, Kathleen. "Private Vice, Public Service? Civil Service and *chose publique* in Fifteenth-Century France." *Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages*. Ed. Anne Curry and Elizabeth Matthew. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell P, 2000. 99-118. Print.
- Delany, Shelia. "Mothers to Think Back Through." *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski. Norton Critical Edition. Trans. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee. New York: Norton, 1997. 312-28. Print.
- Demurger, Alain. *Temps de crises, temps d'espoirs, XIVE-XVe siècle*. Nouvelle histoire de la France médiévale 5. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1990. Print.
- Desmond, Marilyn, ed. *Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference*. Medieval Cultures 14. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998. Print.
- Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: Le Moyen Age*. Paris: Fayard, 1964. Print.
- Dinshaw, Carolyn. "Margery Kempe." Dinshaw and Wallace 222-39.
- Dinshaw, Carolyn, and David Wallace, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2003. Print.

Douay-Rheims Bible. DRBO.ORG. <<http://www.drbo.org/>>.

Duby, Georges. *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*. Trans. Jane Dunnett. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994. Print.

Dulac, Liliane. "Authority in the Prose Treatises of Christine de Pizan: The Writer's Discourse and the Prince's Word." *Politics, Gender, and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Margaret Brabant. Boulder, CO: Westview P, 1992. 129-140. Print.

---. "Un mythe didactique chez Christine de Pizan: Sémiramis ou la veuve héroïque." *Mélanges de philologie romane offerts à Charles Camproux*. Montpellier: Centre d'études occitanes de l'Université Paul-Valéry, 1978. 315-343. Print.

---. "The Representations and Functions of Feminine Speech in Christine de Pizan's *Livre des Trois Vertus*." Richards, *Reinterpreting* 13-22.

---. "Thèmes et variations du *Chemin de long estude* à l'*Advisio-Christine*: remarques sur un itinéraire." *Sur le chemin de longue étude, Actes du colloque d'Orléans, juillet 1995*. Ed. Bernard Ribémont. Études Christiniennes 3. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998. 77-86. Print.

Dulac, Liliane and Christine Reno. "Traduction et adaptation dans l'*Advisio Cristine* de Christine de Pizan." *Traduction et adaptation en France à la fin du Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance, Actes du colloque organisé par l'Université de Nancy II, 23-25 mars 1995*. Ed. Charles Brucker. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997. 121-31. Print.

Economou, George D. "Nature." Wilson and Margolis 2: 713-21.

Elliott, Dylan. "Marriage." Dinshaw and Wallace 40-57.

Fenster, Thelma. "Who's a Heroine? The Example of Christine de Pizan." *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*. Ed. Barbara Altman and Deborah McGrady. New York: Routledge, 2003. 115-28. Print.

Ferrante, Joan. *To The Glory of Her Sex, Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1997. Print.

Forhan, Kate Langdon. "Reflecting Heroes: Christine de Pizan and the Mirror Tradition." *The City of Scholars: New Approaches to Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Margarete Zimmermann and Dina de Rentiis. New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1994. 189-96. Print.

Froissart, Jean. *Chronicles*. Trans. and ed. Geoffrey Brereton. New York:

- Penguin Books Ltd., 1979. Print.
- Gelley, Alexander, ed. *Unruly Examples: On the Rhetoric of Exemplarity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1995. Print.
- Gibbons, Mary Weitzel. "Christine's Mirror: Self in Word and Image." Kennedy, *Contexts*. Vol 2. 367-96.
- Gibbons, Rachael. "The Queen as 'social mannequin'. Consumerism and Expenditure at the Court of Isabeau of Bavaria, 1393-1422." *Journal of Medieval History* 26.4 (2000): 371-95. Print.
- Gies, Frances and Joseph. *Marriage and the Family in the Middle Ages*. New York: Harper, 1987. Print.
- Gottlieb, Beatrice. "The Problem of Feminism in the Fifteenth Century." *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Renate. Norton Critical Edition. New York: Norton, 1997. 274-97. Print.
- Greimas, A. J. *Dictionnaire de l'ancien français jusqu'au milieu du XIVe siècle*. 2nd ed. Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1980. Print.
- Guides Gallimard. *La France Médiévale*. 2^e ed. Paris: Éditions Les Nouveaux Loisirs; Centre des monuments nationaux; Monum, Éditions du patrimoine, 2004. Print.
- Hampton, Timothy. *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1990. Print.
- Hanawalt, Barbara A. "Widows." Dinshaw and Wallace 58-69.
- Hasenohr, Geneviève. "Aperçu sur la diffusion et la reception de la literature de spiritualité en langue française au dernier siècle du Moyen Age." *Wissensorganisierende und wissensvermittelnde Literatur im Mittelalter, Perspektiven ihrer Erforschung, Kolloquium, 5.-7, Dezember 1985*. Ed. Norbert Richard Wolf. Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1987. 57-90. Print.
- Herlihy, David. *Medieval Households*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1985. Print.
- Hicks, Eric. "Situation du débat sur le *Roman de la Rose*." *Une femme de letters au Moyen Age: Études autour de Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Lillian Dulac and Bernard Ribémont. Orleans: Paradigme, 1995. 51-67. Print.
- Hicks, Eric, Diego Gonzalez, and Philippe Simon, eds. *Au champ des escriptures, III^e Colloque international sur Christine de Pizan, Lausanne, 18-22 juillet 1998*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000. Print.

- Hill, Jillian M. L. *The Medieval Debate on Jean de Meung's Roman de la Rose: Morality Versus Art*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen P, 1991. Print.
- Hindley, Alain, Frederick W. Langley, and Brian J. Levy. *Old French-English Dictionary*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.
- Huizinga, Johan. *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*. Trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. Print.
- Hult, David. "The *Roman de la Rose*, Christine de Pizan, and the Querelle des femmes." Dinshaw and Wallace 184-194.
- Huot, Sylvia. "Confronting Misogyny: Christine de Pizan and the *Roman de la Rose*." *Translation studii: Essays by His Students in Honor of Karl D. Uitti for His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, et al. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. 169-87. Print.
- . *The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers: Interpretation, Reception, Manuscript Transmission*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1993. Print.
- Katz, Eve, and Donald R. Hall. *Explicating French Texts: Poetry, Prose, & Drama*. New York: Harper, 1970. Print.
- Kellogg, Judith L. "Le Livre de la cité des dames: Reconfiguring Knowledge and Reimagining Gendered Space." *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*. Ed. Barbara Altman and Deborah McGrady. New York: Routledge, 2003. 129-46. Print.
- Kelly, Douglas. *Internal Difference and Meanings in the Roman de la Rose*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1995. Print.
- Kennedy, Angus J. *Christine de Pizan: A Bibliographical Guide*. London: Grant & Cutler, 1984. Print.
- . *Christine de Pizan: A Bibliographical Guide*. Research Bibliographies & Checklists, 42.1. London: Grant & Cutler, 1994. Print.
- . *Christine de Pizan: A Bibliographical Guide Supplement 2*. London: Tamesis, Woodbridge, 2004. Print.
- , ed. *Contexts and Continuities: Proceedings of the IVth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan, Glasgow 21- 27, July 2000*. 3 vols. Glasgow: U of Glasgow P, 2002. Print.

- . "Editing Christine de Pizan's *Epistre à la reine*." *The Editor and the Text*. Ed. Philip E. Bennett and Graham A. Runnalls. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1990. 70-81. Print.
- Klapisch-Zuber, Christiane, ed. *Histoire des femmes en Occident, 2: Le Moyen Âge*. Paris: Plon, 1992. Print.
- Krueger, Roberta. "Christine's Anxious Lessons, Gender, Morality and the Social Order from the *Enseignemens* to the *Avision*." Desmond 16-40.
- Laennec, Christine Moneera. "Christine Antygrafe: Authorial Ambivalence in the Works of Christine de Pizan." *Anxious Power: Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women*. Ed. Carol J. Singley and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney. Albany: State U of New York P, 1993. 35-49. Print.
- . "Prophétie, interprétation et écriture dans *L'Avision Christine*." *Une femme de lettres au Moyen Âge: Études autour de Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Lillian Dulac and Bernard Ribémont. Orleans: Paradigme, 1995. 131-138. Print.
- Laidlaw, J.C. "Christine de Pizan: An Author's Progress." *The Modern Language Review* 78.3 (1983): 532-50. Print.
- Larrington, Carolyne. *Women and Writing in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Larousse. *Dictionnaire du moyen français*. Paris: Éditions Larousse, 1992. Print.
- Lassabatère, Thierry. "La personnification de la France. Autour d'Eustache Deschamps et Christine de Pizan." Kennedy, *Contexts*. Vol 2. 483-504.
- Lechat, Didier. "Autoreprésentation et ironie chez Christine de Pizan: des larmes au sourire." *Humoresques* 11 (1999): 27-42. Print.
- . "Histoire collective et histoire individuelle dans *L'Advison Cristine*." *L'Individu au Moyen Âge : Individuation et individualisation avant la modernité*. Ed. Brigitte, Miriam Bedos-Rezak, and Dominique Iogna-Prat. Paris: Aubier, 2005. 211-27. Print.
- Leushuis, Reinier. "Dialogue, Space, and Selfhood in the *Chastelaine de Vergi* and Marguerite de Navarre's *Héptameron* 70." *Romanic Review* 98.4 (2007): 3-21. Print.
- Lochrie, Karma. "Between Women." Dinshaw and Wallace 70-88.
- Lyons, John D. *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1989. Print.

Margolis, Nadia. "The Cry of the Chameleon': Evolving Voices in the Epistles of Christine de Pizan." *Disputation* 1 (1996): 37-70. Print.

---. "Marriage." Wilson and Margolis 1: 606-16.

---. "Widows." Wilson and Margolis 1: 938-47.

McCormick, Betsy. "Building the Ideal City: Female Memorial Praxis in Christine de Pizan's *Cité des Dames*." *Studies in Literary Imagination* 36 (2003): 149-173. Print.

McGrady, Deborah. "What is a Patron? Benefactors and Authorship in Harley 4431, Christine de Pizan's Collected Works." Desmond 147-64.

McGuire, Brian Patrick. *A Companion to Jean Gerson*. Boston: Brill, 2006. Print.

McLeod, Enid. *The Order of the Rose: The Life and Ideas of Christine de Pizan*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1976. Print.

McLeod, Glenda K. "Humility Topos." Wilson and Margolis 1: 448-52.

---. *Virtue and Venom: Catalogs of Women from Antiquity to the Renaissance*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1991. Print.

McLeod, Glenda K. and Katharina Wilson. "A Clerk in Name Only – A Clerk in All but Name. The Misogamous Tradition and 'La Cité des Dames.'" Ed. Margarete Zimmermann and Dina de Rentiis. New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1994. 67-76.

McRae, Laura Kathryn. "Interpretation and the Acts of Reading and Writing in Christine de Pisan's *Livre de la Cité des Dames*." *Romanic Review* 84.4 (1991): 412-33. Print.

Musée du Louvre. *Paris 1400: les arts sous Charles VI*. Paris: Fayard; Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2004. Print.

Nephew, Julia A. "Gender Reversals and Intellectual Gender in the Works of Christine de Pizan." Hicks, Gonzalez, and Simon 517-31.

Ouy, Gilbert and Christine Reno. "Identification des autographes de Christine de Pizan." *Scriptorium* 34 (1980): 221-38. Print.

Pagot, Simone. "Du Bon usage de la compilation et du discours didactique:

- Analyse du thème 'Guerre et paix' chez Christine de Pizan." *Une femme de lettres au Moyen Age: Études autour de Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Lillian Dulac and Bernard Ribémont. Orleans: Paradigme, 1995. 39-50. Print.
- Paupert, Anne. "Christine et Boèce. De la lecture à l'écriture, de la réécriture à l'écriture du moi." Kennedy, *Contexts*. Vol 3. 645-62.
- . "Le 'Je' lyrique féminin dans l'œuvre poétique de Christine de Pizan." *Et C'est la fin pour quoy sommes ensemble: Hommage à Jean Dufournet, professeur à la Sorbonne Nouvelle: Littérature, histoire et langue du Moyen Age*. Ed. Jean-Claude Aubailly. Vol 3. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1993. 1057-1071. Print.
- . "La narration de mes aventures: des premiers poèmes à l'Advision, l'élaboration d'une écriture autobiographique dans l'œuvre de Christine de Pizan." Hicks, Gonzalez, and Simon 51-71.
- Pernoud, Régine. *Christine de Pisan*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1982. Print.
- Pomel, Fabienne. "Clefs du savoir et du livre allégorique dans *L'Advision Cristine*: le modèle de la révélation." *Les Clefs des textes médiévaux: Pouvoir, savoir et interprétation*. Ed. Fabienne Pomel. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006. 213-26. Print.
- Pons, Nicole. "'Pour ce que manifestation de Verité': un thème du débat politique sous Charles VI." *Penser le pouvoir au Moyen Âge (VIIIe-XVe siècles): études offertes à Françoise Autrand*. Ed. Dominique Boutet and Jacques Verger. Paris: Presses de l'ENS, 2000. 343-63. Print.
- Quillet, Jeannine. *De Charles V à Christine de Pisan*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004. Print.
- Quilligan, Maureen. *The Allegory of Female Authority: Christine de Pizan's Cité des Dames*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991. Print.
- Redfern, Jenny R. "Christine de Pisan and *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*: A Medieval Rhetorician and Her Rhetoric." *Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition*. Ed. Andrea A. Lunsford. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1995. 73-92. Print.
- Reisinger, Roman. "Le contexte patriotique, biographique et psychologique de Christine de Pizan et ses reflets rhétoriques dans *L'Advision-Christine*." Kennedy, *Contexts*. Vol 3. 705-21.
- Reno, Christine M. "Autobiography and Authorship in Christine's Manuscripts." *Romance Languages Annual* 9 (1997): xxi-xxiv. Print.

---. "Christine de Pizan: 'At Best a Contradictory Figure'?" *Politics, Gender, and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Margaret Brabant. Boulder, CO: Westview P, 1992. 171-91. Print.

---. "The Preface to the *Avison-Christine* in ex-Phillipps 128." Richards, *Reinterpreting* 207-27.

Richards, Earl Jeffrey. "Christine de Pizan and Jean Gerson: An Intellectual Friendship." *Christine de Pizan 2000*. Ed. J. Campbell and Nadia Margolis. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. 197-208. Print.

---. "French Cultural Nationalism and Christian Universalism in the Works of Christine de Pizan." *Politics, Gender, and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*. Ed. Margaret Brabant. Boulder, CO: Westview P, 1992. 75-93. Print.

---, ed. *Reinterpreting Christine de Pizan: Essays in Honor of Charity Cannon Willard*. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1992. Print.

---. "Somewhere between Destructive Glosses and Chaos: Christine de Pizan and Medieval Theology." *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*. Ed. Barbara Altman and Deborah McGrady. New York: Routledge, 2003. 43-55. Print.

Rouse, Richard H. and Mary A. *Manuscripts and their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200-1500*. 2 vols. Turnhout, Belgium: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2000. Print.

Salih, Sarah. "At Home; Out of the House." Dinshaw and Wallace 124-140.

Sanok, Catherine. *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2007. Print.

Schultz, James A. *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2006. Print.

Selinger, Joseph. "Moral and Canonical Aspect of Marriage." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 9. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. 18 Nov. 2008 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09699a.htm>>.

Semple, Benjamin. "The Consolation of a Woman Writer: Christine de Pizan's Use of Boethius in *Lavision-Christine*." *Women, the Book and the Worldly*. Ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor. New York: Cambridge UP, 1995. 39-48. Print.

---. "The Critique of Knowledge as Power, The Limits of Philosophy and Theology

- in Christine de Pizan." Desmond 108-27.
- Sheingorn, Pamela. "The Maternal Behavior of God: Divine Father as Fantasy Husband." *Medieval Mothering*. Ed. John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler. New York: Garland Pub., 1996. 77-99.
- Sheringham, Michael. *French Autobiography: Devices and Desires, Rousseau to Perec*. New York: Oxford UP, 1993. Print.
- Skemp, Mary L. "Autobiography as Authority in *Lavision-Christine*." *Le Moyen Français* 35-36 (1996): 17-32. Print.
- Solente, Suzanne. "Christine de Pizan." *L'histoire littéraire de la France*. Vol 40. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1969. 335-442. Print.
- Solterer, Helen. *The Master and Minerva: Disputing Women in French Medieval Culture*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1995. Print.
- Spengemann, William C. *The Forms of Autobiography: Episodes in the History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1980. Print.
- Stierle, Karlheinz. "L'Histoire comme Exemple, l'Exemple comme Histoire. Contribution à la pragmatique et à la poétique des textes narratifs." *Poétique* X (1972): 176-98. Print.
- Summit, Jennifer. "Women and Authorship." Dinshaw and Wallace 91-108.
- Suranyi, Anna. "A Fifteenth-Century Woman's Pathway to Fame: The 'Querelle de la Rose' and the Literary Career of Christine de Pizan." *Fifteenth Century Studies* 23 (1996): 204-21. Print.
- Taylor, Jane H. M. "Mimesis Meets Artifice: Two Lyrics by Christine de Pizan." *Christine de Pizan 2000: Studies on Christine de Pizan in Honour of Angus J. Kennedy*. Ed. John Campbell and Nadia Margolis. Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 2000. 115-22. Print.
- Thomas, Antoine. "Documents sur la vie de Jean Castel." *Romania* 21 (1892): 271-74. Print.
- Tierney, Brian and Sidney Painter. *Western Europe in the Middle Ages, 300 1475*. 5th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1992. Print.
- Walters, Lori J. "Autobiographie et humanisme: La réception de Pétrarque par Christine de Pizan." *Pétrarque en Europe XIVe-XXe siècle: Actes du XXVIe congrès international du CEFI, Turin et Chambéry*, 11-15

- décembre 1995. Ed. Pierre Blanc. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001. 176-86. Print.
- . "Chivalry and the (En)Gendered Poetic Self. Petrarchan Models in the 'Cent Ballades.'" *The City of Scholars: New Approaches to Christine de Pizan*. Eds. Margarete Zimmermann and Dina De Rentiis. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1994. 43-66. Print.
- . "Christine de Pizan, France's Memorialist: Persona, Performance, Memory." *Journal of European Studies* 35 (2005): 1:29-45. Print.
- . "Constructing Reputations: Fama and Memory in Christine de Pizan's *Charles V* and *L'Advison Cristine*." *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*. Ed. Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2003. 118-42. Print.
- . "Fathers and Daughters: Christine de Pizan as Reader of the Male Tradition of *Clergie* in the *Dit de la Rose*." Richards, *Reinterpreting* 63-76.
- . "The 'Humanist Saint': Christine, Augustine, Petrarch, and Louis IX." Kennedy, *Contexts*. Vol 3. 873-88.
- . "'Magnifying the Lord': Prophetic Voice in *La Cité des Dames*." *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales* 13 (2006): 239-53. Print.
- . "La Réécriture de Saint Augustin par Christine de Pizan: De *La Cité de Dieu* à la *Cité des dames*." Hicks, Gonzalez, and Simon 197-215.
- . "The Royal Vernacular: Poet and Patron in Christine de Pizan's *Charles V* and the *Sept psaumes allégorisés*." *The Vernacular Spirit: Essays on Medieval Religious Literature*. Ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Duncan Robertson, et al. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 145-82. Print.
- . "'Translating' Petrarch: *Cité des dames* II.7.1, Jean Daudin, and Vernacular Authority." *Christine de Pizan 2000: Studies on Christine de Pizan in Honour of Angus J. Kennedy*. Ed. John Campbell and Nadia Margolis. Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 2000. 283-97. Print.
- Wandruszka, Nikolai. "The Family Origins of Christine de Pizan: Noble Lineage between City and *Contado* in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries." Hicks, Gonzalez, and Simon 111-30.
- Welter, J.-Th. *L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du moyen âge*. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1973. Print.
- West, Catherine Jones. "Re-envisioning Woman's Place: The Body Politic and

- Spiritual in l'*Avision-Christine*." *New Readings of Spiritual Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century: Secular Force and Self-Disclosure*. Ed. Phebe Davidson. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1995. 1-11. Print.
- Wilcox, R. Turner. *The Mode in Costume*. 2nd ed. NY: Scribner's, 1958. Print.
- Willard, Charity Cannon. "An Autograph Manuscript of Christine de Pizan?" *Studi Francesi* 27 (1965): 452-57. Print.
- . *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works*. New York: Persea Books, 1984. Print.
- . "The Franco-Italian Professional Writer: Christine de Pizan." *Medieval Women Writers* 46 (1984): 333-63. Print.
- . "Women and Marriage Around 1400: Three Views." *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 17 (1990): 475-84. Print.
- . *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*. New York: Persea Books, 1994. Print.
- Wilson, Katharina and Nadia Margolis, eds. *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*. 2 vols. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 2004. Print.
- Yelland, H. L., S. C. Jones, and K. S. W. Easton. *A Handbook of Literary Terms*. Boston: The Writer, Inc., 1980. Print.
- Yenal, Edith. *Christine de Pisan: A Bibliography of Writings by Her and about Her*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow P, 1982. Print.
- . *Christine de Pizan: A Bibliography*. 2nd ed. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow P, 1989. Print.
- Zhang, Xiangyun. "La communauté féminine: lien entre *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* et *Le Livre des Trois Vertus*." *Romance Notes* 34.3 (1994): 291-300. Print.
- . "Du Miroir des Princes au Miroir des Princesses, Rapport intertextuel entre deux livres de Christine de Pizan." *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 22 (1995): 55-67. Print.
- Zink, Michel. *Introduction à la littérature française du Moyen Âge*. Le Livre de Poche. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1993. Print.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Anne Marie West

Education

Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

Ph.D. in French, May 2009

Study Abroad, University of Poitiers, France, Summers 2004 and 2005

University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida

M.A. in French, May 2003

Study Abroad, USF Paris Culture Program, June 2001

Study Abroad, Institute of American Universities, Aix-en-Provence, 2000

Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida

B.A. in English, *magna cum laude*, December 1998

Study Abroad, London Summer Program, Summer 1997

Professional Experience

Teaching Assistant in French, Florida State University

Fall 2003 - Spring 2005, Fall 2006 - Spring 2009

Lectrice (Teaching Assistant) in English, Université Paris-Sorbonne, France

Fall 2005 - Summer 2006

Teaching Assistant in French, University of South Florida

Spring 2002 - Spring 2003

Assistant to the TA Supervisor, University of South Florida

Fall 2002 - Spring 2003

French Club Advisor, University of South Florida

Fall 2002 - Spring 2003

Conferences, Lectures, and Interviews

Paper presented at Boston College, April 5, 2008

“Christine de Pizan: Evoking Heroic Standards for the Everyday Husband”

Romance Languages Graduate Student Conference:

Behind the Cape: Heroes and Antiheroes in Romance Studies

Guest Lecturer in graduate class at Florida State University, February 6, 2008

“Etienne de Castel: the Historical Person and Exemplary Character”

FRW 5419 *Studies in Medieval French Literature*

Paper presented at University of Maryland, February 23, 2007

"Christine's Vision: A Mirror for a Queen"

Graduate Student Forum of the School of Languages, Literatures and
Cultures: *History as Text, Text as History*

Newspaper interview in *La République*, Poitiers, France on July 1, 2005

Profile featured as a human interest story in *Rencontre*

Article entitled: "Une Américaine amoureuse de littérature médiévale"