FEELINGS AS HERALDIC DEVICES IN LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH CHIVALRIC ROMANCE

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This project argues that we can read feelings in medieval chivalric romance the same way one reads conventional heraldic imagery, and doing so shows us how feelings are a site for identity construction in ways that align with our understanding of identity today. The project finds clear evidence that late medieval romance writers thought of feelings as functioning similar to more conventional elements of heraldry, like a knight's coat of arms, his device, his colors, or his battle cries, in the sense that feelings typically attach to specific knights but are also shared by knights within the same chivalric community. The dual nature of the chivalric device—both a stable, abstracted indication of allegiance and malleable ornament of individual identity—is what makes it productive for understanding how social selfhood is constructed in romance, and the project proposes the term 'feeling-emblem' to describe the highly public way in which emotional expressions are used to communicate different aspects of that selfhood.

The project mainly tracks a category of weak negative emotions which Sianne Ngai calls "ugly feelings," and it does so for two reasons: (1) these kinds of emotions are well-represented in the battlefield romances of late medieval Britain which I study most closely, and (2) emotions like irritation, anxiety, envy, and disgust are historically stable in a way that other emotions of medieval romance are not, meaning that focusing on ugly feelings helps us find lines of continuity between medieval and modern identity constructions. By focusing on feeling-emblems of weak negativity, then, the project aims both to better understand how medieval audiences imagined themselves through their period's most popular literary genre and to explore how our own discourses around identity today are shaped and challenged by that process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Preface

While working on this project, I have watched with equal parts joy, awe, and dismay as the scholarship of feelings in medieval art has continually reached newer and vaster expanses. Almost every area of specialty seems to have its own criticism of medieval affect now, whether one studies mystic writing, allegorical poetry, troubadour songs, Christian materiality, Chaucer, *speculum* literature, crusade narratives or, of course, chivalric romance.[1] As varied as the subjects are the approaches taken by scholars of medieval affect, with studies variously aiming to catalog the gestures and looks represented throughout an entire genre, or understand how one emotion functions differently across texts, or recuperate nuance in medieval words which has been lost over time, or theorize about the social and political function of feelings in medieval society, or describe the emotional response provoked by medieval art in readers/viewers both past and present, or situate medieval representations of feelings in a larger discourse of identity and positionality.[2]

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[1] Some recent contributions in these fields, given in the order listed above, include: Robert Glenn Davis's *The Weight of Love: Affect, Ecstasy, and Union in the Theology of Bonaventure* (2017); Nicolette Zeeman's *The Arts of Disruption: Allegory and Piers Plowman*; Carol J. Williams' "Two Views of the Feeling Heart in Troubadour Song," in *The Feeling Heart in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (2019); The chapter "Wonderful Things" in Stephanie Trigg and Thomas A. Prendergast's *Affective Medievalism: Love, Abjection and Discontent* (2018); Glenn Burger's "Becoming One Flesh, Inhabiting Two Genders: Ugly Feelings and Blocked Emotion in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*" in *Medieval Affect, Feeling, and Emotion* (2019); The chapter "The Politics of Princely Emotion" in Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy's *Medieval Sensibilities: A History of Emotions in the Middle Ages* (2018); Marcel Elias's *Crusade Literature and the Interrogation of Self: Romance and History, 1291-1453* (forthcoming). I have left off contributions in chivalric romance because this scholarship is abundantly represented throughout this introduction and each chapter.

[2] Again, works are listed in the order given above: Barry A. Windeatt's "Towards a Gestural Lexicon of Medieval English Romance," in *Romance Rewritten: The Evolution of Middle English Romance, A Tribute to Helen Cooper* (2018); Martha Bayless's "Laughter in a Deadly Context: Le Sacristain, Maldon, Troilus, Merlin," in *Tears, Sighs, and Laughter: Expressions of Emotions in the Middle Ages* (2017); Andrew Lynch's "'What cheer?' Emotion and Action in the Arthurian World" in *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Body, Mind, Voice* (2015) and his "Emotion and Medieval 'Violence': the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* and *The Siege of Jerusalem*," in *Writing War in Britain and France, 1370-1854* (2018); Anne Baden-Daintree's "Kingship and the Intimacy of Grief in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*," in *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature* (2015); Sarah McNamer's *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (2011); Gillian R. Overing's chapter "Men in Trouble: Warrior Angst in *Beowulf,*" in *Rivalrous Masculinities* (2019) and Lynn Ramey's *Black Legacies: Race and the European Middle Ages* (2018).

In characteristic fashion for medieval studies whenever a new theory enters the mainstream, we have reached our "affective turn" later than most, but evidently we are making up for that lost time now. Of the approaches to understanding medieval affect I have mentioned so far, the most interesting to me are those which focus on the social function of feelings—expressing identity, maintaining interpersonal relationships, navigating conflicts, reinforcing and challenging norms of behavior, communicating outside of verbal or written language. Now, medievalists have been studying the social function of emotions for decades, and my own specialization of chivalric romance is particularly useful for this kind of study due to its obsessive attention lavished on public expression and performance, but I am trying to bend our affective turn away from "big" feelings (e.g. pride, love, anger, grief, shame) and toward the littler feelings which make up most of the fabric of our emotional lives. To those skeptical of this last point, I would ask them to reflect on their own experiences. How often do we truly hate others relative to the frequency with which we feel a low level frustration about them? Is ardent love what it takes to keep people together for a lifetime, or is it something closer to a mixture of fondness, comfort, and shared sense of self? Of the myriad global crises we are living through right now, are tragedy and panic the prevailing sentiments, or is it anxiety, restlessness, irritability, and inertia?

Of course, it make sense that we tend to focus on "big" feelings when describing our emotional selves: there is obvious value in being able to discern the difference between happiness, anger, and sadness, particularly across cultural or linguistic boundaries, and these are feelings which stick in our memory (even if we feel them only briefly and later struggle to recall what provoked the feeling). Conversely, "littler" feelings (they are little only in comparison to "big" feelings) are elusive, subtle, and less obviously useful; many of us could likely get by day-to-day without conclusively parsing the nuances of "irritated" and "frustrated" or "nervous" and "anxious." It is, in fact, precisely the fineness or the granularity of such feelings which makes them so important. They are hard to talk about, hard to know, hard to share, even when widely felt, and this fosters an intimacy when they are held in common between people.

I sometimes find this intimacy of mutual understanding with medieval romance, at least when considering one of the genre's many representations of the sort of feelings I have already called "littler" and will variously refer to in each chapter as "minor," "ugly," or "negative." This is not to say that I have ever had the sort of instantaneous, overpowering sense of identifying

with a romance and seeing myself in its depictions—the experience of finding an emotional soulmate—that sometimes inspires scholarly passion projects on a text. This is not that. The intimacy I feel with medieval romance has taken time. Specifically, it has taken me the time to cultivate my own vocabulary of feelings, to consider what sensations I struggle to understand and share, and only through this sustained practice have I understood better how medieval romances engage in a similar practice. In short, in order to write about the social function and the representation of feelings in medieval romance, I had to start from modern discourses of feelings and work backward in time and language.

The point of departure for this project is Sianne Ngai's *Ugly Feelings*. She coins the term "ugly feelings" to describe the uncomfortable, frustrating, off-putting sensations and expressions which seem to dominate our cultural moment, and she insists that ugly feelings are a product of structures like advanced capitalism, globalized warfare and terrorism, and systemic racism. Other theorists of affect whose work provided the original spark for my project, like Sara Ahmed, Cathy Park Hong, and Lauren Berlant, make similar cases that emotional negativity is a defining trait of modernity and is directly produced by modernity. I do not disagree on the first point, but in the pages which follow, I have set out to prove that the ugly feelings of today all have clear antecedents in medieval art. What's more, this project finds that writers of medieval romance (and their audiences) understood ugly feelings not just as a convention for the genre but as part of a stable heraldic sign system used to communicate identity.

Even now, after years of work on this project, it feels strangely scandalizing to equate the emotional negativity of medieval peoples with our own, perhaps out of concern that I am sacrificing historically specific contexts in the process or treating the past only as a mirror for the present. Nonetheless, I have tried to sit with that discomfort about the project, because it speaks to a process of unlearning. Medieval studies, like any historically minded discipline, often cautions its scholars to make very careful comparisons to the present during their early forays into the field, and not without good reason: we do real damage to living cultural traditions and to our understandings of the past when our interpretations of a period and its people are overly broad or self-serving. Of course, if this expectation becomes internalized for scholars of medieval literature (as it has for me), then we end up holding our subject at an awkward distance, near enough to identify but not near enough to identify *with*. This is the frustration which drives a critic like Carolyn Dinshaw to focus on amateur readers rather than "professionals" in *How*

Soon Is Now?, and I share her enthusiasm for approaches to medieval literature which operate "outside of regimes of detachment governed by uniform, measured temporality" (5) and a strict divide between the medieval and modern. We do not always have to understand the past in the terms it gives us, and my work is an effort to foster an understanding which speaks to us as "moderns" on the terms that have meaning today. So, I hope that this project prompts in my readers some degree of critical discomfort, transgression, or restlessness as they consider how best to know the emotional experiences of medieval romance, because that seems only fitting: in speaking of ugly feelings past and present, shouldn't we be prepared to feel them ourselves?

Feeling-Emblems: Reading Romance at the Intersection of Sign Systems

The sustained work of this project is to bring together two distinct scholarly discourses concerning medieval chivalric literature and to show that they are fundamentally part of the same conversation. The first of these discourses focuses on heraldic imagery in romance, particularly on how the creative use of chivalric symbols can shape identity positions. Whether we're speaking of a son who wears his father's mangled armor as part of a revenge vow, a young woman who adopts male clothing and appearance to make her eligible to inherit, or a Muslim knight who carries a checked black-and-white escutcheon marking his ambiguous position in a Christian court,[3] the sign system of heraldry is dynamic, polysemous, and deeply tied to characters' identities. The most central component of this heraldic sign system is the chivalric device, often identified in chivalric manuals by reference to shields, badges, blazons, colors, or simply "cognisaunce" (literally, "knowledge or understanding," but usually in reference to military field signs).[4] These devices function as signs indicating both a knight's allegiance and his sovereign's identity, and in the examples above they also articulate aspects of characters' lineage, gender, and race.

The second discourse which this project incorporates is one concerning representations of feelings in chivalric romance. The discourse arguably begins historically with attention to the

[3] Brunor, or "La Cote Mal Taillée" in the Prose *Tristan*, Silence of *Le Roman de Silence*, and Sir Palomedes in Malory's *Morte Darthur*, respectively. On the matter of black-and-white checks being used to symbolize biracial identities, see also the character of Feirefiz from Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*. Feirefiz, half-brother to Percival, has a French father and a "Moorish" mother, and his skin is described as being mottled black-and-white. This trope becomes increasingly common in travel narratives and romances of the Early Modern period.

[4] *Bloodied Banners* 60-61.

honor/shame binary in these romances, as these are considerations which explicitly motivate the actions of almost all romance characters (if only those in the aristocratic class). However, since at least the 1980s, critics have pushed back on this binary as reductive, and they have noted that a much wider spectrum of feeling is present in these texts than can be described by either honor or shame. Indeed, romances like *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* readily offer their nuanced emotional vocabularies for consideration, sometimes seeming to invent terms bespoke for the alliterative needs of the moment and sometimes drawing up familiar forms of emotion words already attested elsewhere. This tension between lexical innovation and reliance on convention is mirrored in how the romances themselves handle feelings: when read at scale (i.e. across the vast genre of chivalric romance), emotional expression is highly formulaic and ritualized in its depictions,[5] and yet individual romances abound with feeling words and ways of talking about feelings which are altogether new to Middle English, at least as far as the surviving record shows. Like heraldic imagery, feelings in chivalric romance are neither totally conventional nor totally original. Rather, they are a blend of the two, staking both their expression and intelligibility upon the sensitivity of medieval audiences to a balance between *imitatio* and *innovatio*.[6]

As scholars of affect and of chivalric literature repeatedly note (though rarely with reference to one another's work), both emotions and heraldic devices are socially dependent sign systems, and so their signs are vulnerable to being misinterpreted or deliberately misrepresented.[7] In the Augustinian framing used by medieval scholars of sign theory, this would

[5] Barry Windeatt takes on this project of reading at scale most directly in his attempt to create a "gestural lexicon" of medieval English romance. As he says, any given instance of a bodily gesture in a romance is more significant in the context of the "romances' distinctive gestural idioms more largely" (150), because romances that appear in multiple manuscripts might vary in the particular description of the gesture, suggesting that scribes did not attach heavy significance to any one representation.

[6] René Girard, a longtime thinker about *mimesis* and "mimetic desire," discusses at length the false opposition in post-medieval societies between innovation and repetition. As Girard argues, the "Latin *in-novare* implies limited change, rather than total revolution; a combination of continuity and discontinuity" that relies on "the kind of passionate imitation that derives from religious ritual and still partakes of its spirit" (19).

[7] The translation of one's personal feelings into a socially codified emotion is not necessarily a smooth process, and it asks that we confront the role of power and authority in mediating that process (e.g. whose language for emotions is being used to codify feelings, what sorts of feelings are fully represented in the language and what sorts aren't, and what the ultimate utility is for codifying those feelings in the first place). There are also considerations of power and authority that come into play with the display and reading of heraldic emblems, though these are more often "top-down" assertions of power rather than the "bottom-up" confrontations *against* power that comes with codifying feelings. Said differently, a person trying to express their feelings in words will eventually have to confront the power structures in language that limit their expression, while an ambassador bearing a heraldic device of their lord

make emotions and heraldic devices "given" signs, meaning that their interpretation is based on convention, not something inherent or "natural" to the thing itself. We can call an emotion "anger," for instance, because of an identifiable set of behaviors, expressions, and looks which tend to accompany a spectrum of subjective feelings.[8] Similarly, medieval aristocrats and those in service of the aristocracy know that the "attitude" of three lions depicted on a shield as *passant guardant* (three feet on the ground, one foot raised, full face shown) is emblematic of values like prudence, resolution, and sovereignty because of long-standing associations with the Plantagenet ruling line and the royal arms of England. In both cases, the sign system in question relies on historical precedent, cultural context, and on accrued associations for its stability; without these elements, the sign systems we use to code (and decode) feelings or heraldic devices break down. Practical examples of this communicative breakdown abound in our day-to-day lives: much of the semantic content of armorial devices is opaque to us now without consulting specialized guides to heraldry, and any translator faced with carrying over an emotion word from one language to another must surely confront the temptation to simply leave it "in the original" for simplicity's sake.[9] In combining these two sign systems I do not mean to suggest that we can reach a more stable hybrid system, only that we can uncover a more precise sign system that already existed in the extant chivalric literature.

By weaving together these two strands of critical interest in heraldic imagery and medieval feelings, we come to a more comprehensive understanding of how emotional expression operates in chivalric romance, and hopefully this can bear productively on our understanding of medieval peoples themselves.[10] Instead of treating the melodramatic emotional

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will have to navigate the task of representing their lord's authority without also becoming the proxy for all violence directed at that lord.

[8] Burrow also argues for this interpretation of Augustinian sign theory in the context of reading emotional gestures in chivalric romance: he suggests that the expression of affect is closer to a natural sign while the expression of emotion is more akin to a given sign (2-3).

[9] As Linda Hutcheon argues, the process of adapting a work from one medium to another is also a "re-mediation" or "translations in the form of intersemiotic transpositions from one sign system to another." This specific sort of translation requires "recoding into a new set of conventions or signs" (*Theory of Adaptation* 16), much like how culturally contingent emotion words require recoding when translated into a new medium.

[10] Here I mean both the broader, collective cultural sense of "people" and the historically-specific, individual and group identity sense of "people." The dissertation takes the former sense as its entire reason for being (i.e. we can know the cultural moment of late medieval aristocracy in England through its depiction of feelings in romance) and the latter sense as its focus for each individual chapter (i.e. we can know concrete, historical identities through the feelings expressed by individual characters and their social organization).

outburst in one text or the frantic hand gestures in another as aberrations from the norm of an otherwise formulaic emotional behavior in chivalric literature, we can see them as part of a pattern which points to fluency with the language of feeling. As I go on to show in each chapter, this emotional fluency enables texts to represent more complex identity positions than might otherwise be possible, from queer knights to decolonial resistance fighters to gender non-conforming Muslim princesses. By way of demonstrating this concept, I turn now to an example of what I call "feeling-emblems" in practice, from the romance *The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain*.

Sometimes described as a "minor" Gawain romance, *Gologras and Gawain* begins with Arthur returning from pilgrimage in Jerusalem. He and his men soon come across the castle of Gologras, a sovereign lord in France, and Arthur sets out to gain the lord's fealty through conquest. The central narrative concerns a series of escalating individual duels, with most of Arthur's men and the opposing army relegated to the sidelines until Gawain himself rides out to challenge Gologras. The two champions fight brutally, and when Gawain has his opponent by knife blade and insists that he surrender, Gologras says he will only accept mercy if Gawain agrees to appear captured so that Gologras can return with him in triumph to his castle. Perhaps due to this narrative preoccupation with the spectacle of single combat, the poem affords much of its space to descriptions of heraldic devices, as in the scene where Gologras first rides out to combat:

> For to greif thair gomys, gramest that wer,
> Thus thai schupe for ane salt, ilk sege seir;
> Ilka soverane his **enseyne** shewin has thair;
> Ferly fayr wes the feild, flekerit and faw
> With **gold** and **goulis in greyne**,
> Schynand scheirly and scheyne;
> The sone, as cristall sa cleyne,
> In **scheildis** thai schaw.
>
> Be it wes mydmorne and mare, merkit on the day,
> Schir Golagros mery men, menskful of myght,
> In **greis** and **garatouris**, grathit full gay,
> Sevyne score of **scheildis** thai schew at ane sicht.
> Ane **helme** set to ilk **scheild**, siker of assay,
> With fel **lans** on loft, lemand ful light.
> Thus flourit thai the forefront, thair fays to fray,

The frekis, that war fundin ferse and forssy in fight.
Ilk knyght his **cunysance** kithit full cleir;
Thair names writtin all thare,
Quhat berne that it bare,
That ilk freke quhare he fare
Might wit quaht he weir.[11] (ll. 472-492, emphasis added)

The description in this passage follows a pattern repeated throughout the poem: it begins with an itemized list of gear (insignia, jeweled armor, greaves, garters, shields, helmets, lances) followed by an affective interpretation of that gear (e.g. what level of animosity is expressed by the knights' outfitting and what reactions their gear provokes in onlookers). Here, Gologras and his men display their shields and arms with the seemingly obvious expectation of grieving and frightening their enemies,[12] but we should be cautious about taking such aggressive intentions for granted. *Gologras* on the whole is heavily concerned with negotiations of diplomacy on the battlefield, and characters are just as likely to signal peaceful intentions as violent ones through their chivalric "cunysance." Indeed, as the narrator explains, each knight's "cunysance" displays both his literal name and his identity more broadly conceived ("quaht he weir"). This incorporation of text into the predominantly visual discourse of armorial displays is uncommon for the genre—Thomas Hahn refers to it as "a kind of captioned identity for a literate spectatorship"[13]—but it is not altogether surprising when placed alongside the other uses of lexical items as part of the heraldic sign system.[14] The foremost case of this practice concerns

[11] To grieve their enemies, most hostile that were [present], / Thus they prepared for an assault, each noble warrior; / Each sovereign displayed his heraldic sign; / Marvelously fair was the field, sparkling and dappled / With gold and red in the green [field], / Shining brightly and beautifully; / The sun as clean as crystal, / Shone in the shields. / By the time it was midmorning and more, as the day goes, / Sir Gologras's merry men, proud of might, / In greaves and garters, fitted out gaily, / Seven score of shields they showed at one sight. / A helm set to each shield, tried and true, / With lethal lances aloft, gleaming brightly. / Thus they deployed the forefront, to frighten their foes, / The warriors, who had proven fierce and hardy in fighting. / Each knight displayed his device full clearly; / Their names all written there, / Which knight was where, / That each warrior wherever he went / Might make known who he was (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

[12] "For to greif thair gomys," and "thair fays to fray" respectively.

[13] "The honor of each knight depends upon the recognition by others of his distinctive arms, and then of his deed. The writing of knights' names - a kind of captioned identity for a literate spectatorship - seems out of keeping with the highly visual character of heraldic sign systems" (p. 281, note to l. 488).

[14] Jones suggests that this incorporation of text is actually well-precedented in other kinds of battlefield sign systems, like banners: "Heraldic display on the battlefield was not simply a means of telling friend from foe. Instead it was a socio-cultural tool, displaying martial prowess and the family and tenurial associations that underpinned the martial elite. Individual recognition was not a practical necessity for most warriors, indeed a system of collective identification would have served better. For one group, however, it was essential that they be recognised on the

how feelings are incorporated into heraldic imagery to identify individual knights and to clarify their role in battlefield negotiations.

The opening scene in *Gologras* acts as a sort of miniaturized version of the poem's larger plot: Arthur and his men stumble upon a powerfully fortified city and decide to send a messenger who can ask whether or not the city's governing lord will provide Arthur's retinue with food. Kay volunteers to bring the message,[15] but in characteristic fashion, his arrival in the strange lord's hall is so bungling and offensive that he ends up being chased out of the city altogether (his chief crime is stealing a leg of meat from the lord's servant and resolutely refusing to apologize). In place of Kay, Arthur sends Gawain "the gay, gratious, and gude" (l. 118), who refers to himself as meeker in mood ("mekar of mude") than the crabby Kay and thus more capable of finding friendship with the offended lord. Arthur agrees, saying that no one is as "bowsum" (humble, amiable) as Gawain nor as skilled at quelling anger. He then sends Gawain out to indicate good intentions the way one might indicate peace by flying a recognizable flag or approaching a strange knight with one's helmet removed. In this introductory scene, the *Gologras* poet establishes Gawain as a character who is identifiable specifically through the feelings and affects he displays (gay, gracious, and good), and he quickly goes on to develop that initial sketch when Gawain next acts as messenger in the court of Gologras:

> Than Schir Gawyne the **gay**, **gude** and **gracius**,
> That ever wes **beildit in blis**, and bounté embrasit,
> **Joly** and **gentill**, and full **chevailrus**,
> That never poynt of his **prise** wes fundin defasit,
> **Egir** and **ertand**, and ryght **anterus**,
> Illuminat with **lawté**, and with **lufe** lasit,
> Melis of the message to Schir Golagrus.
> Before the riale on raw the renk wes noght rasit;
> With ane clene contenance, cumly to knaw,

battlefield. For those who commanded troops there were vital reasons for displaying their identity as widely as possible. The vehicle for this display was the banner and, whilst the symbols on it served the same purposes as those on the shields and surcoats of other knights, the banner's connection with commanders gave it a wider significance and function" (32).

[15] The "boidword," or the speech that bodes of one's intentions, is the poet's term of choice for such diplomatic missions. Feeling-emblems as I propose them here function as another form of "boidword." When, for example, Gawain presents himself to Gologras as "gay, good, and gracious," he is asserting through affective disposition how he will conduct himself and pledging to abide by certain behavioral norms, even when Gologras makes undue demands of him.

Said: "Our soverane, Arthour,
Gretis the with honour,
Has maid us thre as mediatour,
His message to schaw.[16] (ll. 389-401, emphasis added)

The above description of Gawain reaches a level we can call "emblematic" in a number of ways. Most obviously, the poet repeats (with variation) the alliterative phrase "gay, gude and gracius" which he uses for Gawain in the poem's first scene. Although these words appear with other characters, like "gude Gyromalance" or "Gologras the gay," only Gawain carries all three consistently. Furthermore, the narrator spends several lines describing Gawain's personality in a register that directly recalls the use of heraldic catalogs elsewhere in the poem. Gawain is joyous ("beildit in blis"), jolly, gentle, chivalrous, perfect in his honor ("prise"), eager, adventurous, and "[i]lluminat with lawté, and with lufe lasit." This last phrase in particular invokes a heraldic register, as knights are repeatedly described in the poem as having shields, armor, and gems that "shine" or are "bright" with their virtue, and "lasit" means fastened or buckled, like a suit of armor. So, Gawain in this passage is illuminated with loyalty and fastened or bound up with love, such that he appears not only girded with his feelings but adorned with them.

Gawain's speech is itself also emblematic, because he refers to himself as a mediator who expresses the diplomatic content of Arthur's message through his comport or what he can "schaw" with his person. The verb "showen" in Middle English is semantically dense,[17] but almost all uses of it concern looking upon some sort of sign that can be presented for scrutiny. At least one sense of the word is explicitly tied to displaying banners, as when Gologras first rides out to combat and the narrator says that each of his commanders "his enseyne shewin" for Arthur to see. In the context of Gawain's speech, however, it is not visual heraldic imagery but the displayed feelings of Gawain and his companions that does the necessary diplomatic work for Arthur. This passage, ultimately, reveals a structure of socially coded meaning that cannot be totally explained by established understandings of either heraldry or chivalric emotions, and so I

[16] Then Sir Gawain the gay, good, and gracious, / That ever was anchored in bliss, with largesse filled, / Jolly and gentle, and fully chivalrous, / That never a point of his honor was found deficient, / Eager and lively, and right adventurous, / Illuminated with loyalty, and with love bound up, / Speaks of the message to Sir Gologras. / Before the lord this knight was not discomposed; / With a candid look, comely to behold, / Said, "Our sovereign, Arthur, / [Who] greets you with honor, / Has made us three as mediators, / His message to show" (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

[17] See, for example, Julian of Norwich's *Shewings*, the title of which refers to the series of divine visions or revelations that appeared to her as an anchoress.

propose the term "feeling-emblem" to meet that emergent need. Of course, this term would be excessively precise in its application if it could not also apply to examples of chivalric sign systems that have already been critically analyzed through myriad other theoretical lenses. So, in the spirit of due diligence, I turn now to show how feeling-emblems can help us understand in a different way that most famous of all signs in chivalric literature, the green girdle of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

Briefly, the green and gold girdle (or sash or garter) is a gift Gawain receives from Lady Bertilak to keep him safe from harm when he faces the Green Knight in a beheading contest. By rights, Gawain should himself give the girdle to Lord Bertilak, because the two have been carrying on a game of exchanges each day. Instead, Gawain holds onto the girdle, having sworn himself to secrecy at the request of Lady Bertilak, who knows already that Gawain is famous for his courteousness to women. When Gawain does eventually arrive to the Green Chapel wearing the girdle, the Green Knight (who is actually Lord Bertilak) reveals that he was in on his wife's trick, and says to Gawain, "yow lakked a lyttel, sir, and lewté yow wonted" (l. 2366), but that it was only for love of his life that he kept the girdle, and so he should not be blamed. The Green Knight suggests that the girdle will be a "pure token" of the game that knights once played at the Green Chapel, then takes his leave. Gawain, mortified to have this shame revealed, returns to Arthur's court with the conviction that the girdle serve as a token of his cowardice ("Þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere in my nek"), only to have the whole court laugh off his self-seriousness and insist that each lady and lord of the Round Table take up a similarly styled sash as a sign of renown and courtly fashion. Finally, the surviving *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* manuscript contains a later scribal addition at the end of the poem: "hony soyt qui mal pence" ("shame upon whoever thinks bad of it"). This maxim was used as the motto of the Order of the Garter, and it figures prominently into escutcheons of the arms of Knights and Ladies of the Order of the Garter. The addition of this maxim suggests at least one reader's response to the poem and invites us to consider the lines of influence between the romance narrative and chivalric orders in the real world.

Even from this cursory treatment (which I expand upon in my third chapter), it is clear how dynamic a symbol the girdle is in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Literally a "given" sign, it ostensibly represents loyalty when Gawain first receives it from Lady Bertilak, but it quickly accrues feelings of shame, cowardice, covetousness, and fear (all terms Gawain uses

himself in reference to the girdle) when Gawain withholds it from Lord Bertilak and later when he wears it to the Green Chapel. Maybe the most striking reappraisal of the girdle as a feeling-emblem occurs when Gawain returns to Arthur's court and his peers refuse to read the girdle as a sign of shame, going so far as to laugh loudly and insist that everyone adopt the girdle as a sign of pride. And lest any ambiguity remain concerning the "emblematic" status of the girdle, we have the final incorporation of the Order of the Garter's motto into the manuscript. Whatever else that motto stands for in the poem, we can easily see it as appropriating the affective accruals of the girdle into the actual historical founding of the chivalric order, turning associations of shame ("honi") into literal badges of honor.

The girdle in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is not a symbol contained entirely by either the sign system of emotions or the sign system of chivalric emblems; it is interwoven with components from both (knit with virtues, in the words of Lady Bertilak),[18] such that it is practically impossible to discuss the object without reference to the affective values bound up in its history or to its function as a public sign of knightly identity. To be sure, it is not a totally straightforward example of a feeling-emblem, and the continual recoding of the girdle (from being a sign of loyalty to deceit to shame to respect to pride) demonstrates just how vulnerable feeling-emblems are to reinterpretation or indeed to outright misreading. Still, the girdle attests to both how feelings attach to chivalric emblems and how they become emblematic themselves, in the sense that the expression of certain feelings helps to identify individual knights and their intentions. Like in the plot of *Gologras*, Gawain's ability to "show" courtesy to the Green Knight/Lord Bertilak and to Lady Bertilak makes him suitable to the beheading contest in the first place and to carrying the girdle for Arthur's court. Where complications arise—to Gawain's continual frustration—is in the interpretive gap between a knight showing feeling-emblems and others reading them on his behalf. As we will see in cases from other poems, this gap is often a productive space for the assertion of complex identity positions that rely on feeling-emblems as a way to challenge dominant social and political forces.

To better understand how I will be engaging these complex identity positions through the language of feeling, I turn now to argue for the critical usefulness of two terms which are not

[18] "'Now forsake ȝe þis silke,' sayde þe burde þenne, / 'For hit is symple in hitself? And so hit wel semez. / Lo! so hit is littel, and lasse hit is worþy; / Bot who-so knew **þe costes þat knit ar þerinne**, / He wolde hit prayse at more prys, parauenture…" (ll. 1846-1850, emphasis added).

themselves represented in the romances I study: queerness and race. It is easy to find discrete examples of each term represented in various texts and yet frustratingly difficult to construct an internally coherent sense of either "medieval queerness" or "medieval race" from those examples. Nonetheless, this is the task I have set for myself below, not out of the misguided belief that I will somehow settle the scholarly debate around medieval European understandings of sexual orientation and masculinity or race and ethnicity, but because I will be discussing various ways in which queerness and race are articulated through feeling-emblems and I would rather do so with my own parameters.

On The Feelings and Practice of Queer Chivalry

Over the last twenty to thirty years, medieval studies has benefited immensely from the contributions of scholars working in fields such as masculinity studies, queer theory, and the history of emotion. Indeed, I delight in the relatively new degree of nuance with which we now can (and must) speak of what it meant to be male in the Middle Ages and how that maleness intersects with issues of power, sexual and gender identity, violence, and the writing of history. Scholars have dramatically reshaped the way we understand almost every dimension of maleness in medieval society, and they continue to draw important parallels between the literature and our own contemporary discourses around masculinity[19] (e.g. how masculinity is plural, or in crisis, or toxic, or constructed, or performative, or fragile, or culturally contingent). Gareth Lloyd Evans's *Men and Masculinities in the Saga of Icelanders* (2018) is only one such recent project specifically aimed at locating a more complex, intersectional, and often problematic, understanding of how masculinity is constructed in medieval literature. As he argues, masculinities in Icelandic sagas are fundamentally plural, and they signify differently depending on who is performing them, with what other identity positions overlaid, and in what social contexts. Interrogating how those masculinities operate is important critical work toward removing "any claim that masculinity may seem to have to a natural authenticity, abstracted from the cultural discourse or the matrix of gender relations which constitute it" (9). Anticipating

[19] For example, Jo Ann McNamara's coining of "*Herrenfrage*" (the "question of men") to describe the eleventh and twelfth century cultural anxiety about masculinity which came about as a result of population expansion and celibate men taking over the majority of Church positions seems to apply increasingly well year after year to the anxieties of cultural "traditionalists" in our own era.

Evans's point by twenty years, Ad Putter traces the same false claim to masculinity's authenticity made by medieval writers, though his study examines the role of cross-dressing in chivalric romances as a method of asserting that femininity is constructed and only masculinity is natural (*Becoming Male in the Middle Ages* 288).

It would be far beyond the scope of this project to discuss meaningfully what makes masculinity normative or queer across the totality of the medieval period in Europe, and so I mean to be clear that when I use the term "queer masculinity," it is entirely within the context of medieval chivalric romance and its representations of maleness. Admittedly, this does not really narrow the swathe of literature for which I must account (it is a genre prolific in its composition and one overwhelming interested in men), but it helps me be more specific about what I am labeling queer and normative when I use these terms.

Of course, looking for "normative" sexuality in a premodern cultural context is itself troubling for many working on the history of sexuality. As Karma Lochrie argues in *Heterosyncrasies*, the norming of *anything* (e.g. patterns of habitation, life expectancies, birth and death rates, physiology) is really a product of nineteenth century statistical science, and we cannot talk about heteronormativity in the Middle Ages without fundamentally misunderstanding medieval heterosexuality and desire more broadly.[20] While I deeply appreciate Lochrie's term "heterosyncrasy" for its utility in opposing "a unified, monolithic, and presumptive understanding of heterosexuality in favor of a more idiosyncratic, diversified, and even perverse take on heterosexuality" (xx), I will continue using the terms queer and normative for their familiarity and do so without the implied appending of *-like* to sexual categories (e.g. heterosexual-*like*, homosexual-*like*) as other scholars have done so as to avoid being bogged down by lexical precision.[21]

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[20] As she says in the introduction to *Heterosyncrasies*, frequently building on frameworks of Foucault, norms "are the result of the science of statistics mainly in the nineteenth century—a science of numbers that produced concepts such as populations, minorities, and the 'average man.' The same science that would eventually allow Alfred C. Kinsey to explode American culture's view of sexual norms had created those norms in the first place" (xxi). Lochrie, like James Schultz in his chapter discussing "heterosexuality before heterosexuality" in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality* and Louise Fradenburg in *Sacrifice Your Love*, agues that medieval desire is not ever strictly heterosexual, in the sense that such desire is not called into being by the sex of the object of desire. As Lochrie goes on to demonstrate, much of medieval sexuality is constructed and articulated through cultural frameworks that do not translate with any degree of ease to modern contexts (e.g. theologically-constructed ideas of sexuality like chaste marriage, willful virginity, and mystical sex).

[21] Pugh, making a case for the continued use of terms like "normativity," cites Judith Bennett's term "lesbian-like" as an example of how to describe medieval sexualities in (approximate) modern categories: " "I ask my readers to

I take seriously (and agree with) Lochrie's suggestion that instead of talking about normative sexuality, we should more precisely be discussing cultural anxieties about certain "trajectories" of desire and the fear from dominant culture that such trajectories might be disorderly or destabilizing to social cohesion (xxii). However, because my argument for Chapter 2 is based squarely on the claim that queer masculinity in *The Morte* is not disorderly (and is in fact crucial to the chivalric social order), I cannot follow Lochrie's suggestion without doing a disservice both to her and to the poem. My hope is that because I am principally concerned with masculinity—which *does* have attendant discourses in medieval literature of ideal chivalric conduct and how a man should perform maleness—and less with sexuality, my use of "normative" in this case is warranted. To borrow Louise Sylvester's reasoning in *Medieval Romance and the Construction of Heterosexuality*, it is entirely reasonable to call normative the identity positions and behaviors which have the most formal social coding and societal structure reinforcing them within a given cultural-historical context. Accordingly, I have collected three illustrative examples of what I consider normative medieval masculinity from relevant texts within the broader category of "chivalric literature," and I will use these examples as foils against which to construct/identify queer masculinities in *The Alliterative Morte*.

My first example comes from Jean Froissart's *Chronicles* of the Hundred Years' War, and concerns the creative liberties he takes in characterizing the illicit relationship between Edward II and Hugh Despenser the Younger. Froissart writes less than half a century before the composition of *The Morte*, and his writing is valuable to me as a "historical" account of the Hundred Years' War, which looms large in the background context of *The Morte* and would have weighed heavily in the minds of its original audience. After this, I consult the chivalry manual of Geoffroi de Charny for what he has to say about chivalric masculinity and the appropriate conduct of knights in matters of love. Geoffroi takes many of his style cues from older forms of aristocratic conduct manuals and the "mirror for princes" genre, and so despite the fact that he writes from the perspective of an accomplished knight, his *Book of Chivalry* is mostly useful in showing how a highly valorized knight constructs and characterizes ideal chivalric masculinity.

Finally, I turn to *The Morte* itself for an example of normative masculinity. The easy choice here is Cador, because his hyper-masculine speech calling for war in the poem's opening

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supplement the suffix *-like* to *heterosexual*, *homosexual*, and *heteronormative* in the ensuing analysis to spare both of us the weight of clunky neologisms" (*Sexuality and its Queer Discontents in Middle English Literature*, 10).

counsel scene represents arguably the worst qualities of men in any time period or culture. But as I go on to show in Chapter 2 itself, Cador is repeatedly rebuked for his careless aggression by other knights and by Arthur himself, and so his version of chivalric masculinity is by definition not normative. However, within the same scene, we can look to the chorus of other knights (Ewain fitz Urien, Lancelot, and Lot) for how they speak about the conquest to come and the war against Lucius. Unlike the highly inflamed Cador, the remaining knights of the Round Table who give counsel in this scene each express versions of the same desire for personal glory and the performance of heroic deeds, all couched in the language of tournament games. Additionally, the counsel offered by the territorially acquisitive kings of Scotland, Wales, and Brittany presents us with another model of masculinity which is normative for the genre in its patriarchal and conservative overtones. This emphasis on the renown of the individual, the highly public performance of heroism, and social conservatism identifies a type of normative masculine self-interest in the poem at odds with the queered masculinity Arthur articulates on the battlefield.

Jean Froissart begins Book 1 of his *Chronicles* with a speedy account of the recent wars between France and England, tracing the English ruling line from Edward I through to the campaigns of Edward III. Interspersed in that rundown are sundry references to the misrule of Edward II, and Froissart seems to take a certain delight in that particular chapter of his chronicle, because he teases his audience with the details repeatedly.[22] At issue here for Froissart is not precisely the governing of Edward II, but rather the male company he keeps and the counsel he gets from that company—specifically from his "favorites," Piers Gaveston and Hugh Despenser the Younger. Froissart is not alone among the chronicle accounts of his era in attacking the intimate homosocial (and purportedly homosexual) relationship between Edward and the two noblemen, but he goes to substantial lengths to characterize this personal relationship as the central fault of Edward's rule, rather than blaming any number of other political, familial, cultural, or societal upheavals which led to the many crises of rule during the Hundred Years' War. According to the *Chronicles*, it is precisely the publicity of Edward's intimate male

[22] "When he died, his son from his first marriage, who was the father of fair king Edward, succeeded him to the crown yet did not remotely resemble him in understanding or prowess, governing and ruling haphazardly on account of counsel given to him, for which he later suffered terribly, as you will discover hereafter if it please you."

relationships and the distance they created between him and his queen, Isabella of France, that led to the failure of his rule, as is clear from Froissart's account of Hugh Despenser's death:

> Quant la feste fut passee, le dit
> messire Hue, qui point n'estoit
> amé la endroit, fut amené devant la
> royne et tous les barons et chevaliers qui
> la estoient assembléz.
> ...
> Quant il fut ainsi liéz, on lui coppa
> tout premier le vit et les couillons,
> pour ce qu'il estoit **heretesique** et **sodomites**,
> ainsi comme on disoit mesmement
> du roy et pour ce avoit le roy **dechacié**[23]
> la royne de lui et par son ennort.
> Quant le vit et les couillons lui furent
> coppéz, on les getta ou feu pour ardoir aprés luy fut
> le ceur tiré hors
> du ventre et jetté
> ou feu
> pour tant qu'il estoit faulx de cuer
> et traictre et que par son traictre conseil
> et ennort le roy avoit honny son royaume
> et mis a meschief et avoit fait deco
> ler les plus grans barons d'Angleterre,
> par lesquelz le royaume devoit estre
> soustenu et deffendu.[24] (emphasis added)

I have singled out the charges of heresy and sodomy leveled against Despenser because of their notorious function as politically expedient ways to legitimize or delegitimize threats to a ruling entity, as the case may be. Allegations of heresy and sodomy both crop up frequently in European historical accounts (ranging from the late medieval period through the early modern and into the 19th century) and have long been used by various European state powers as

[23]The verb *dechacier* in Old French means "to drive out, expel; to alienate."

[24] When the feast was over, sir Hugh, who was not beloved in those parts, was brought before the queen and knights assembled... First, his private parts were cut off, because he was deemed a **heretic**, and guilty of **unnatural practices**, even with the king, whose affections he had **alienated** from the queen by his wicked suggestions. His private parts were then cast into a large fire kindled close to him; afterwards, his heart was thrown into the same fire, because it had been false and traitorous, since he had by his treasonable counsels so advised the king, as to bring shame and mischief on the land, and had caused some of the greatest lords to be beheaded, by whom the kingdom ought to have been supported and defended… (From Chroniques, Besançon 864, F 9 r-ff).

convenient categories of criminality for any and all subversive actions. As Ruth Mazo Karras discusses, allegations of sodomy and heresy don't just intersect in the criminal charges made by medieval state powers against dissidents, they are often used interchangeably, so that ecclesiastical and secular authorities can "borrow" categories of criminalization from one another when advantageous ("The Regulation of 'Sodomy'" 985).[25] Indeed, reviewing this very passage in Froissart, Claire Sponsler notes the proto-Foucauldian technologies of discipline at play, including the public performance of Despenser's punishment, the ritual purging of his body parts from the body politic, and the reassertion of heteronormativity in place of the transgressive male-male relationship that alienated Edward from Isabella.[26] For the purposes of my own work, it suffices to note that the qualities of masculine rule which Froissart identifies as non-normative or non-dominant (what I am calling queer) in this passage include (1) public displays of male-male intimacy and affection, (2) primacy of the relationship between a king and his male advisor over the relationship between king and queen, and (3) accepting counsel which threatens to bring shame upon the kingdom or nobility. As I show in Chapter 2, these are definitions of normative masculinity which *The Morte* repeatedly and directly transgresses in its depiction of the relationship between Arthur and his knights, but first I turn to Geoffroi de Charny for further reference on the fitting conduct of a manly knight.

The model of chivalric conduct which Geoffroi de Charny lays out in his *Book of Chivalry* is exhaustive in both scope and detail, covering not only the scale of knightly deeds and the the proper earning of *prouesse* but also full-fledged concepts of lay piety and even a kind of chivalric pedagogy. At its core though, the *Book of Chivalry* is a reform document, outlining what the chivalric *mentalité* should mean to knights of Geoffroi's contemporary moment (he is active as a knight during the first phase of the Hundred Years' War, from 1337-1360). As such,

[25] Though the medieval charge of "heresy" might be more familiar as a category for religious dissidents who identify as Christian but are regarded as heterodox by the Church, Karras notes that much of state anxiety around sodomy and heresy concerned Islamic societies rather than Christian ones. According to Karras, this anxiety about cultural and religious difference which encouraged charges of sodomy and anxiety proliferated in the Latin West shortly before Froissart wrote his *Chronicles*. So, it is altogether imaginable that Froissart's account of Hugh Despenser's crimes might also be indexing a distinct xenophobia or Islamophobia for his readers.

[26] Isabella's adroit manipulation of spectacle and ceremony, as recounted by Froissart, reveals how public performance could be used to authorize a particular interpretation of complicated political events, an interpretation that used sexual and bodily symbolism to justify a king's removal from power. At the same time, Froissart's narrative furthers the production of a compulsory heterosexuality, one founded on the excising of sexual difference (Sponsler 144).

Geoffroi's writing is most valuable for its representation of the normative chivalric mindset and a self-conception of the knight during the mid-fourteenth century. As Ruth Mazo Karras notes, although chivalric ideals always existed in a problematic relationship to the actual social practice of knights, it is nonetheless true that "the ideology of chivalry exercised a powerful influence on late medieval mentalities, which in turn influenced how people behaved" (*From Boys to Men* 22). In short, reading chivalric conduct manuals will never tell us how the typical knight really conducted himself, but it can certainly give us a clearer idea of how knights imagined themselves and how they described their relationship to other groups in society.

On the whole, Geoffroi is more flexible than most in his expectations for knightly conduct: he presses knights to do their best, but never requires the impossible of them, and makes allowances for minor indiscretions like gambling. He is not overly prescriptive in his definitions of masculinity, but two excerpts from his manual are highly relevant here. The first concerns male intimacy during the knighting ceremony, and the second concerns proper relations between a knight and lady. Both are given below:

> On the eve of the ceremony, all those who are to be knighted the next day should enter a bath and stay there for a long time, reflecting on the need to cleanse their bodies henceforth from all impurities of sin and dishonorable ways of life; they should leave all such impurities in the water. Then they should come out of the water in the bath with a clear conscience and should go and lie in a new bed in clean white sheets… Then the knights should come to the beds to dress those to be knighted; the stuff in which they dress them, the linen and all that goes with it should be new… Then the knights should robe them in red tunics… Then the knights bring black hose and put them on those to be knighted… Then the knights bring them white belts with which they gird them… After that the knights bring them red cloaks and place them on their shoulders as a sign of great humility... (168-169)[27]

> But make sure that the love and the loving are such that just as dearly as each of you should cherish your own honor and good standing, so should you guard the honor of your lady above all else and keep secret the love itself and all the benefit and the honorable rewards you derive from it; you should, therefore, never boast of the love nor show such

[27] Et puis quant vient la veille dont l'en doit estre chevalier le landemain, il se doivent mettre en un bin et y demourer une longue piece en pensant que il doient laver et nettoier d'illec en avant leurs corps de toute ordure de pechié et de deshonestes vies. Et toute celle ordure doivent laissier dedanz celle eaue. Adont se doivent partir tout net de conscience de celle eaue et de ce bain et se doivent aler gesir en un lit tout neuf et les drap blans et nez… Puis doivent venir les chevaliers au lit pour vestir yceulz et les doivent vestir de neufs draps, linges et toutes choses neuves… Puis les doivent vestir li chevalier de cotes vermeilles… Et puis leur apportent les chevaliers chauces noires… Et puis leur apportent les chevaliers une courroie toute blanche… Dont leur apportent les chevaliers un manteu vermeil et li mettent sus les espaules en signe de tres grant humilité…

> outward signs of it in your behavior that would draw the attention of others. The reason for this is that when such a relationship becomes known, no good is, in the end, likely to come of it; great difficulties may arise which then bring serious trouble. The greatest pleasure to be derived from love is not found in saying "I love so and so," nor in behaving in such a way that everyone will say: "That man is the lover of that lady." And there are many who say that they would not want to love Queen Guinevere if they did not declare it openly or if it were not known. (119)[28]

In the first passage above, Geoffroi describes the ritualized bodily intimacy between established and initiate knights of the same order. Though he stops short of saying so directly, we must assume that the initiate knights are naked when they lie down to be dressed by their peers. In the process which follows, they are dressed in symbolic garments by the senior knights, with various parts of their body attended to in turn, always in reference to a collective "les chevaliers." As this description makes clear, there is evidently a ceremonial context specific to the chivalric *mentalité* in which male bodily intimacy is not only normative but highly coded in its meanings.[29]

There is nothing to suggest that this highly structured context for male intimacy translates to less ritualized, more spontaneous contexts, such as tending to a fellow knight's wounds or expressing affection, as we see when Arthur's men disrobe and treat Priamus. Curiously, Geoffroi makes no mention of such battlefield wound-tending among knights throughout his *Book of Chivalry*, despite the fact that he must have been familiar with such intimate experiences, and possibly involved in several himself. This suggests that acts of spontaneous bodily intimacy among knights were not part of the ideal chivalric masculinity Geoffroi assembles in his manual, however common they were in practice. Furthermore, it opens up the possibility that such non-ritual contexts for male intimacy are legible as queer because they occur outside the prescribed model of male relationships between knights.

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[28] Mais gardez que les amours et li amers soient telement que vous gardez si cher come vous devez amer vos honnours et vos bons estaz que l'onneur de vos dames gardez souverainement et que tout le bien, l'onneur et l'amour que vous y trouverés, gardez le secretement sanz vous en venter en nulle maniere, ne faire aussi les semblans si tres grans qu'il conviegne que autres ne pluseurs s'en apperçoivent, que nul bien en la parfin, quant il est trop sceu, n'en vient mie volentiers, mais en peuent avenir moult de durs emcombriers qui puis tournent a grant ennu; et ce n'est mie le plus grant deduit que l'en en puisse avoir que de dire: "J'ayme celle la," ne de vouloir en faire telx semblans que chascun doie dire: "Celi aime trop bien par amours celle dame la." Et moult en y a qui dient qu'ilz ne vouldroient pas amer la royne Genyevre, s'il ne le disoient ou s'il n'estoit sceu.

[29] As Richard Zeikowitz notes in his reading of this passage from Geoffroi, even without the slightest trace of homoeroticism, the Christianized chivalry of the traditional bath and dressing ritual promotes a form of homosocial intimacy" (22).

Turning to the next example from Geoffroi, the passage concerning the expectation of privacy between a knight and lady paints a familiar portrait of the *fin amors* ethos in chivalric romance. For example, Geoffroi characterizes secrecy as inherently good because it discourages boasting, and he even invokes the most public lady of Arthurian romance as a negative example. This model of courtly chivalric conduct more closely approximates the trials of Gawain in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (particularly his conflicting obligations to secrecy and to public admission of his behavior) than anything we see in *The Alliterative Morte*, and that is precisely why I include it here as an example of normative heterosexual relations. The narrative of *The Morte*, after all, takes place almost entirely within the public realms of the court and the battlefield, and although knights repeatedly comment upon the public gaze as a reason to watch one's conduct, ladies (whether queens, wives, or distressed maidens) are always treated as afterthoughts.[30] The expression of love between men, by contrast, is never censured in the poem by knights or the narrator,[31] nor is it ever viewed skeptically with the suspicion that knights are showing each other love out of a desire for public renown. In sum, the descriptions of ceremonial male intimacy and prescriptive model of heterosexual love from Geoffroi contrast wildly from the depiction of male-male love in *The Morte*, which creates the space (and the need) to identify queer male desire and queer masculinities in this poem.[32] The last example of normative masculinity I turn to now comes from the poem itself.

[30] Heng reads the demotion of the maiden on Mont-Saint-Michel (Helena, duke Hoelus's niece) from a named character in Geoffrey of Monmouth (Helena, duke Hoelus's niece) to an unnamed woman in *The Morte* as yet another example of the poem's preoccupation with maleness: "That the *Morte* is preoccupied with men and knights… is reiterated by the utter lack of narrative interest in even the eponymous possibilities of the pilgrim site that had so engaged Geoffrey's fancies. Despite the fact that a church and monastery… are to be built there, the crag cannot be memorialized as 'Helena's Tomb' because by no shred of narrative memory has the maiden's name been retained. Instead, the only line of figural continuity the Morte arranges is vested entirely between men" (127).

[31] The one case which might fit this description of public censure is Arthur's conduct at the death of Gawain, but I read that instance of Arthur being chastised by his men as one rooted in the inappropriate expression of grief, not love (Gawain, of course, being dead by this point, and incapable of responding to Arthur's emotional outpouring, regardless of whether or not there is love bound up in the grief).

[32] I consider this project to identify queer male desire and queer masculinity to be in keeping with Peggy McCracken's invitation to look for queer figures in medieval romance who do not conform to conventional forms of desire or who have ambivalent relationships to normative sexual economies. Although her chapter in *Queering the Middle Ages* is concerned with a very particular queer subject formation—the chaste knight of grail romances who disavows sexual reward in order to pursue spiritual reward—her reading of "non-desire" in chivalric romance certainly bears on the general disinterest characters in *The Morte* show concerning heterosexual relationships with their wives and queens.

As I go on to show in my second chapter, *The Morte*'s opening counsel scene revises and subverts the account given in its source material (Layamon's *Brut*) by substantially altering the exchange between Arthur and the Roman envoy. The *Morte* poet pointedly reimagines for a late medieval audience both the social dynamics of rule within Arthur's kingdom and the affective vocabulary available to characters, but he also creates space within the poem for an exploration of various chivalric masculinities by narrating the speech of several of Arthur's most reputable men. I suggest in the chapter proper that this decision has a prismatic effect upon the reader, in the sense that each of Arthur's men refract a version of Arthur's "countenaunce" through their speech, echoing his calls for retaliation against Lucius but in a way tinged by their own individual characters and motivations.

Cador, the first to speak, welcomes the return to great deeds of arms with a hyper-masculine crusader mentality ("Now wakenes the war! Worshipped be Crist!"), but he is quickly rebuffed by Arthur for not thinking beyond his "merry wordes" and simply doing "as thy herte thinkes." The kings of Scotland, Brittany, and Wales all echo Arthur's words by making various arguments for his right rule as an insular hero who can redress the wrongs done by Rome in the past and unite their disparate peoples under one banner. Following this, the knights Lancelot, Ewain fitz Urien, and Lot vow to follow Arthur into battle, though each of them emphasizes the prowess they will display and the feats they will accomplish as individuals rather than as part of a collective army. In contrast (or complement) to the more *auctoritas*-minded kings of Scotland, Brittany, and Wales, these three knights are clearly interested in the personal reputation they can gain through chivalric contest upon the battlefield, describing Lucis in terms more characteristic of a recreant knight than a continent-controlling despot.[33]

We are thus presented with two clear strains of masculine identity in this scene which go unchallenged by Arthur (or anyone else) when expressed. The first strain is characterized by the paternalism of the speeches each king makes to Arthur (e.g. Arthur will protect their downtrodden peoples, save their women from being ravished, reclaim lost lands from a heathen foe, and restore the honor of their ancestors), and this we can recognize as normative or dominant for both the specific poem and the genre more broadly. The masculinist injunctions of

[33] For example, Ewain describes his intention to steal the eagle-standard of Lucius's army as a form of public humiliation, Lancelot promises that he will be "at journee with gentle knightes / On a jamby steed fully jollily graithed" and that he will joust with Lucius himself, while Lot imagines riding through the whole company of his enemy amassed on a "round feld" before him.

these kings are delivered through a series of rhetorical appeals to an identifiably conservative, xenophobic, and backward-looking desire to restore their kingdoms to greatness which is very much alive and persistent in twenty-first century white supremacist discourse. The language of Arthur's top knights, by contrast, is normatively masculine in conforming perfectly to the chivalric ideal put forward in conduct manuals by writers like Geoffroi de Charny. This category of masculinity is fiercely individual in nature, and to the extent that it entertains any consideration for the welfare of other knights, it is solely in the possibility that the shame of another knight's defeat could reflect back unfavorably on oneself. We can plausibly treat both of these masculinities as normative within the poem's fiction because they are articulated repeatedly by different characters and embraced by Arthur at the time.

At this point, one could reasonably ask how Arthur (or more accurately, the poem itself) could be proposing a queer chivalric masculinity which pushes back against both of these culturally dominant versions of aristocratic maleness if these dominant versions are overwhelmingly the focus of the poem's attention. As a provisional answer, I suggest that—however much the *Morte* poet dedicates huge narrative tracts to depicting culturally dominant, conservative models of masculinity—he clearly critiques the hypermasculine, individualistic glory-seeking of knights like Lancelot, Ewain, and Lot through Arthur's attempts to foster a radically collectivist and emotionally conversant chivalric community. As Gareth Lloyd Evans notes, again writing about the Icelandic sagas, when a character's performance of an aggressive masculinity that would otherwise make him the "ultimate male" begins to interfere with homosocial society and its interpersonal bonds, he is often rejected by the patriarchal society altogether (142). Although Arthur would be ill-served by casting out three of his best knights at the beginning of a campaign, it is nonetheless clear in his speech I quote at the beginning of Chapter 2 (in which Arthur says that his manhood and identity are derived from his men) that he is trying to discourage their socially destructive hypermasculinity and emphasize the mutual bond uniting them.

The queer critique of paternalistic masculinity and territorial acquisitiveness is less direct, and the poet never comes close to fully disowning the xenophobic, orientalizing crusader mentality of his sources, but there is at least a clear understanding that this model of masculinity is doomed from the start and prone to horrific collateral damage (we need look no further than the poem's title to see this). For this latter category, embodied by the kings of Scotland, Brittany,

and Wales in the opening scene, it is not until much later in the poem, shortly before the death of Gawain, that Arthur realizes he has been betrayed by this conquest-driven, expansionist model of "manhed."

In sum, the chivalric communities of *The Morte* are queer not so much because they express a sexuality which we might today recognize as non-heterosexual, but because their orientation, attraction, and group definition is structured around a studied focus of male emotionality, male desire, and especially the male body which is demonstrably outside of the established masculine norms of conduct for knights as given by chivalric manual writers like Geoffroi de Charny. What might otherwise be described as homosocial becomes queer in this context because the masculinity of Arthur and his closest knights is identifiably non-normative and transgressive according to the standards of chivalric manuals and the models of masculinity on display elsewhere in the poem.

This formulation runs counter to how queerness is understood by many feminist and queer scholars working in medieval studies because of its emphasis on social organization and order rather than disorder. Karma Lochrie's "heterosyncrasy," for instance, approaches medieval male queerness with an eye for instances of "same-sex desire that fall into the sprawling categories of disorderly desire, whether they are heterosexual or homosexual by modern judgements" (xx). Similarly, in his wide-ranging study of the "masculine self," Derek Neal claims that there are two versions of masculinity available in late medieval England: a normative masculinity that "aligned with regulatory forces, embodied open honesty, with a transparent concord between the inner and outer person" while emphasizing self-control, and a "rebellious, aggressive, sensual" masculinity which found expression "in the individual self and especially in the male body" (243-244). This latter "self-gratifying" masculinity is as close to using the word "queer" as he comes in his entire study, and it is disorderly in the extreme, but it falls far short of describing the masculinities available to men in *The Morte*. Queer chivalric masculinity, as embodied by Arthur, is open, transparent, and oriented toward social cohesion while simultaneously being sensual and prone to the intense expression of feelings. It is for that reason that I reject entirely the dichotomy that Neal and others set up when discussing medieval masculinity (i.e. that masculinity is either normative and orderly or queer and disorderly), because the queer masculinity of *The Morte* is at the same time almost all of the qualities Neal

tries to separate into two groups, minus the socially destructive and fiercely individualistic qualities.

Neal's approach to medieval masculinity is reductive when read against the masculinities on display in *The Morte*, but it is all the more so when applied to other texts, even those in the same genre. In *The Sultan of Babylon*, for example, the character Floripas adopts a masculine chivalric register in the second half of the poem, heightening her calls for bloodshed and chaos at the moment of her professed conversion to Christianity (a moment which typically marks a pacification of the Muslim princess character and, in some versions, even a somatic whitening of her skin). She directly echoes the affects and injunctions to violence expressed by Charlemagne's men and those of her formerly Muslim brother Ferumbras, troubling any easy distinction between Christian and non-Christian knights. Furthermore, Floripas and characters like her clearly further a version of masculinity that is not itself rooted in maleness. As Karma Lochrie argues, critical attention has been woefully underpaid to both female masculinities and trans-masculinities in the field of medieval masculinity studies,[34] and I read Floripas's character in Chapter 4 as a plausible representation of female masculinity.

My work in Chapter 4 is part of a larger effort to extricate the broad spectrum of medieval masculinities and the coded feelings associated with them from the mire of hegemonic masculinity that has long set the tone of the conversation and determined who gets to be a part of it. The very construct of "normative" masculinity becomes increasingly volatile in the context of crusader romances like *Sultan*, because the genre uses effeminacy as a secondary marker of difference for Muslim characters, even when they have converted to Christianity. As I argue, there is no real consistency or logic to the way that romance writers ascribe masculine or feminine qualities to Muslim characters, with the exigencies of a particular scene seeming to take precedence over earlier characterizations, and so a poem like *Sultan* can end up producing surprisingly destabilizing figures like Floripas at the same time that it tries to depict her as subdued. To better make sense of this conundrum, I need to clarify how I will be engaging racial discourses (both medieval and modern) in this project. Below are provision definitions of race and racial difference, along with examples of how feeling-emblems get racialized in several relevant texts.

[34] "Medieval Masculinities without Men" (209), in *Rivalrous Masculinities*. Lochrie is directly invoking Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and Jack Halberstam's *Female Masculinity* in both her chapter's title and in her effort to address the critical neglect regarding masculinities other than hegemonic, male masculinity.

My definition of race and racial difference in the context of the Middle Ages must be predicated at least in part on our contemporary sense of both those terms, because the texts I discuss do not use either of them. If I am to speak meaningfully about discourses of race in a medieval context, I cannot consider only the terms that tend to be translated as "people," "tribe," or "nation,"[35] and must instead try to read for similarities between medieval and modern ways that race is described and discussed. As Thomas Hahn said decades ago when calling for the study of racial identity formation in the Middle Ages, our study must work bilaterally, such that medieval discourses can "illuminate the function of race within modern and contemporary conditions" as well as the reverse.[36] Hahn leads by example in this injunction, explaining that although "color may not be the primary category of racial identity or distinction in medieval thought or social organization," he still dedicates much of his attention to its role as a signifier of difference because "color stands at the heart of much contemporary discourse on race" ("The Difference the Middle Ages Makes" 10). Likewise, I examine somatically marked race and other biological signifiers of racial difference in my discussion of medieval chivalric romance, because even in the study of pre-modern texts, these physical signifiers are "never 'innocent,' neutral, or without cross-cultural evaluative meaning" (6).

The last two decades of scholarship[37] have done much to unpack how representations of somatic race in medieval literature and art signify real embodied identities and abstract ideas differently. Critics continue to push back the timeline on the so-called "invention of race" in European cultural history, finding earlier and earlier evidence of the ideologies and conceptual paradigms that are eventually used to justify chattel slavery in the Early Modern period. Pursuant

[35] See, for example: Latin *gens* ("tribe; people; family") used in the Declaration of Arbroath to identify Iberian people; Middle English *nacioun* ("A nation, people; a race of people; a political country, nationality") used in John Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum* to identify the "maures" of "blak colour;" Old English/Middle English *leod* ("a people, people group, nation") used in the Ms. Cotton Otho C.XIII version of Layamon's *Brut* to identify the Irish people.

[36] "The Difference the Middle Ages Makes" 10.

[37] The Winter 2001 *JMEMS* volume on "Race and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages" edited by Thomas Hahn is a commonly cited starting point for this discourse. As I have suggested already, the volume is seminal to many conversations about medieval race in the years since, to be sure, but the longer tail of this scholarship predates the volume by decades. Even a conservative take on the beginnings of this discourse would need to recognize Edward Said's *Orientalism* as an originary point.

to that development, the critical project of recovering racial discourses from medieval texts must seek to offer insights and conclusions which are valuable to non-medievalists. Too much of Medieval Studies as a discipline and tradition is behind the flourishing of white nationalism today for medievalists to pretend like we can be totally inward-facing and only consider our own historical moment with our old tools. As S. J. Pearce and Kathleen Kennedy say in different ways, the resistance among medievalists to think of medieval representations of blackness, whiteness, and racial difference more broadly in modern terms is a key part of our complicity in the violence done against our medieval subjects.[38] Less often noted but equally important is the fact that the resistance among some critics (particularly those working in a northern European context) to connect our scholarship to post-medieval critical discourses of race only serves to alienate future cohorts of medievalists from this necessary endeavor. Let us consider, for example, all the emerging scholars of color working on the history of racial discourses, and then let us consider what our discipline offers them—in terms of critical frameworks, accessible outlets for publication, and academic communities—that they could not find more robustly represented in almost any other field. The point I aim to make here is that if Medieval Studies is to do right by such emergent scholars, we should be spending more time making our scholarship on medieval representations of race legible to non-medievalists and potential medievalists (using terms which have currency outside our discipline) and less time being fixated on establishing an ironclad claim to "historicity."

My study is decidedly not a strict historicist reading of race in the context of medieval Britain, but neither does it assume that a historicist reading is inherently more illuminating (or even more "true") than my approach of drawing from the vocabularies of modern critical discourses about race to recontextualize the construction of difference in chivalric romance. As a point of comparison, in my Chapter 2 discussion of queer chivalry, I begin by thinking about queer orientation in a modern context and then look for representations of subjects, desires, and experiences which comport with that understanding of queerness. Whenever possible and appropriate, I frame my reading in the chivalric understanding of "normative" sexuality discussed above, so that it is clear that I am defining the knighthood in *The Alliterative Morte*

[38] Pearce 180; Kennedy 250-1.

Arthure as queer by both medieval and modern standards.[39] A similar approach guides my discussion of race in this introduction and later in Chapter 4 when I discuss representations of Muslim characters in crusader romance.

When trying to distinguish racial difference from other more easily identifiable categories of difference (ethnic, religious, geographic), I start, as elsewhere, by thinking about race as a modern discourse. The underlying historical problem in trying to locate discourses of race and queerness is at least somewhat the same. How can one find queerness when heteronormativity is a post-medieval construct; how can one find racial difference when biological race is a post-medieval construct? The forces behind these constructs are themselves often intertwined: the dual European projects of colonialism and imperialism, with their emphases on state control over bodies, relentless categorization of groups into socio-economic hierarchies, and sanctioning of brutality as a way of subduing dissent, have erected and relied upon robust structures of racism and queerphobia for their power in every society those projects touched.

The assumption underlying my critical approach is that medieval Europeans (as represented by the work of romance writers and chroniclers) did recognize and make judgments about aspects of identity which correspond to modern racial difference.[40] Certainly, medievals did not have the same vocabulary or insistence on biology as a site of racialization, but they noticed somatic race, they attributed ethnic differences to ancestry and genealogy, and (most

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[39] Johnathan Goldberg and Madhavi Menon argue in "Queering History" that many historicist studies of queerness are flawed from the start because they try to locate queerness in the past by producing it as an object for scholarly study and emphasizing difference over sameness (effectively privileging the "hetero-" over the "homo-"). To address the problem of heteronormative historicism, Goldberg and Menon propose the term "unhistorical": "In opposition to a historicism that proposes to know the definitive difference between the pat and the present, we venture that queering requires hat we might term 'unhistoricism.' Far from being ahistorical—or somehow outside history—unhistoricism would acknowledge that history as it is hegemonically understood today is inadequate to housing the project of queering. In opposition to a history based on hetero difference, we propose homohistory. Instead of being the history of homos, this history would be invested in suspending determinate sexual and chronological differences while expanding the possibilities of the nonhetero, with all its connotations of sameness, similarity, proximity, and anachronism" (1609).

[40] Correspondence is the key term here, because I am not tracing a definitive trajectory of medieval racial thinking to its modern equivalent, only identifying a relationship between the medieval and modern racializations of affect that is sometimes coincidental and sometimes causal. As David Nirenberg says when discussing the treatment of medieval Spain's Jewish population, the suggestion "that we can benefit from the systematic juxtaposition of various strategies of naturalization need not imply that these strategies can be arranged into an evolutionary history of race, just as the argument that we can learn from the similarities we discover between, say, fifteenth-century ideologies and twentieth-century ones need not suggest that one followed from the other" (87). At times in this project, particularly in my third chapter, I am more confident than Nirenberg that a given instance of medieval racial logic clearly contributes to modern racial logic, but I generally agree with his prudence, because there is much about medieval racial discourses (even just in the context of the British Isles) which my work here does not address.

important) they entertained prejudices about skin color independent of its status as an indicator of moral worth, religious identity, or climate of origin. Now, in the texts that I study here it is rare to find somatic race commented upon without any mention of another category of difference (e.g. a character being Muslim, North African, Arab), but one cannot discount the issue of race altogether simply because it tends to co-occur with other aspects of difference. This is particularly true in romance, a genre which is compulsively interested in characters signifying and resignifying their identities. A character like Palomides is identified several times over in his difference from the rest of the Round Table's Christian European chivalric community (he is Muslim, Middle Eastern, and biracial).[41] But when he converts to Christianity during the Grail Quest and later when he is enfeoffed with the dukedom of Provence by Lancelot, that does not somehow erase his racial identity or his Middle Eastern ancestry.

As scholars like Cord Whitaker catalog, late medieval literature is full of the constituent parts which make up the modern discourse of race: descriptions of skin color as a signifier of a particular people, of physical differences which supposedly reveal internal character traits, of claims about the purity of one's lineage, and crucially, of anxieties about miscegenation.[42] This does not mean that these constituent parts ever look to a modern perspective like a cohesive concept of race and racial difference, but this should not preclude study of those parts as representative of an emergent discourse of race in the later Middle Ages. After all, it would be disingenuous to suggest that modern discourses of race themselves are somehow unified or coherent across all communities and cultures. Biological race as we talk about it today in a Western context is really several overlapping discourses of scientific and popular prejudices. Among those overlapping discourses are the civility/savagery binary of early modern writers, the Enlightenment's privileging of neoclassical rationality over all other forms of knowledge, the nineteenth century's justification of imperialism by way of social Darwinism and Manifest Destiny, and countless segregationist laws designed to disenfranchise people of color and prevent "racial contamination." Of course, shot through all of this is the centuries-long project of

[41] Palomides' position with regard to the Arthurian court is perhaps closest to Priamus, the Muslim knight I discuss throughout Chapter 1 in the context of *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*. Both knights are Muslim men whose names harken back to the Trojan War and who descend from Middle Eastern/North African nobility. Both men are marginalized in the Round Table brotherhood because of their religious and ethnic identity, but they are also arguably more legitimate inheritors of the translation of empire than Arthur is through Brutus.

[42] Whitaker discusses these intersecting concepts and the plurality of terms used to signify them in his introductory discussion of *The Turke and Sir Gawain* (*Black Metaphors* 13-17).

economic, political, colonial, cultural, and sexual exploitation of black and brown bodies which is chattel slavery, a project whose perpetrators derived their justifications from the above discourses as much as they dictated the terms of future discourses of race and racial difference. This interplay between various discourses of prejudice and oppression is what ultimately produces race, as scholars like Geraldine Heng suggests with the term "race-making" or Barbara J. Fields and Karen Elise Fields suggest with "racecraft." As Ta-Nehisi Coates famously writes in *Between the World and Me*, "race is the child of racism; not the father."[43]

I call racial difference in the European Middle Ages those representations, expressions, or categorizations of identity which don't fit squarely within the bounds of another kind of difference (whether that is religious, ethnic, cultural, or geographic difference). As a consequence, this means that in places I am discussing a concept closer to religious race (Ferumbras in *The Sultan of Babylon*), metaphorical race (the English soldiers in *The Bruce* or the giant of Mont St Michel in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*), or ethnoracial identity (Palomides in *The Morte Darthur*) more than biological or phenotypic race *per se*. By this I mean that the task of separating out signifiers of racial difference from other signifiers of difference in medieval identity formations is complex, and it is one I only set myself to periodically in this project (e.g. in my Chapter 4 reading of the description of the Moorish army in *The Bruce*). More often, I discuss race and racial difference as they co-occur alongside other categories of difference.

With all this said, it is still prudent to offer a clear accounting of race (even a flexible one) which is specific to the insular context of the British Isles that I take as my subject throughout each chapter. To the extent that it can be separated out from discourses of religious and cultural difference, race as I define it in and around late medieval Britain is a categorical construct based on phenotypic markers like skin color, characteristic facial features, and overall

[43] Geraldine Heng focuses on discrete movements of what she calls "race-making" in *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* because this, she says, reveals "specific historical occasions in which strategic essentialisms are posited and assigned through a variety of practices and pressures, so as to construct a hierarchy of peoples for differential treatment" (3). Karen E Fields and Barbara J. Fields propose the term "racecraft" precisely to distinguish the diversity and the contradictory practice of racial discourses from both "race" and "racism." They refer to racecraft as something which exists in "mental terrain" and "pervasive belief" and originates "in human action and imagination" (*Racecraft* 18). As they go on to say, the "will to classification" is a foundational aspect of racecraft, and one which generates racial discourses which have no consistent logic or uniformity cross-culturally. Ta-Nehisi Coates's project with this aphorism (*Between the World and Me* 7) is to discredit the idea of race as an unchangeable fact of reality, and thereby to critically evaluate the structures of power which racial discourses have enabled and supported for centuries.

physical appearance, plus the elements of ancestry and "blood"[44] (the constellation of character traits which medieval peoples imagined inhered in one's body and were acquired from previous generations, eventually giving rise to the idea of blood purity). This definition mostly comports with those proposed for medieval Europe more broadly by scholars working from the theoretical approaches of critical race theory and decolonial theory.[45] In order to be more precise about race as a concept in medieval Britain, we need to consider Britain's relationship (geographic, demographic, and cultural) to continental Europe and the rest of the world.

The critical perspective is always evolving on how multicultural and multiethnic medieval Britain was, thanks mainly to the work of scholars who practice what S. J. Pearce refers to as "critical compassion" and a "fingertip sensitivity to text in context" when trying to hear the silenced voices of medieval subjects in the archive.[46] Keeping this in mind, I aim to be

[44] Kathleen Biddick discusses how medieval "blood" laws enacted by the English monarchy functioned as a colonial technology to suppress other racial and ethnic groups in Britain. As Biddick says in her Foucauldian reading of these laws and statutes, blood becomes a "juridical substance" which can be regulated and controlled via prohibition on miscegenation (Biddick 453). Barbara Fuchs examines a similar colonial technology in the context of Spanish conquest in the Americas, focusing on a sixteenth century outgrowth of the earlier medieval ideas of blood which Biddick treats in her article: "In its focus on genealogy, the racial system in the Spanish colonies in the New World can be traced partially to the obsession with 'limpieza de sangre,' or blood purity, in the Iberian peninsula. What began in Spain as religious and cultural intolerance gradually became, over the course of the sixteenth century, an essentializing obsession with genealogy and blood that marginalized even those Jews and Moors who converted, however unwillingly, to Christianity. This ideology, honed and exacerbated over the same decades in which the Spanish were carrying out their conquest of the New World, translated into a system of white/Spanish privilege in the colonies that persisted despite the increased frequency of interracial unions over the generations" (Fuchs 9).

[45] See, for example, Lynn Ramey's statement about race early in *Black Legacies*: "Despite widespread belief that race is a uniquely modern construct, many elements of the key discourses on race were already present in the Middle Ages. Climate-based theories that black skin develops from the heat of the sun were well articulated long before the fourteenth century. Literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries already shows a preoccupation with skin color and the coding of black as evil and white as good. Law codes of fifteenth-century Spain exhibit a preoccupation with 'purity of blood,' and literary works from Germany and France indicate that despite conversion a trace, a taint, of infidel blood could remain and preclude complete integration. All medieval European societies showed legal and literary fears of miscegenation" (2).

[46] Pearce 177. Pearce is responding primarily to projects like Heng's *The Invention of Race*, and she cautions against the recolonization of subjects in the medieval subaltern (175-176), by which she means the scholarly study of oppressed medieval subjects through the language and lens of the oppressors. Pearce encourages us to think critically about our own present-day "identiary commitments and the relationship of those commitments to [our] scholarship" (176) regarding medieval subaltern subjects, and then incorporate this thinking into "a fully informed appreciation of the different types of colonial and imperial thinking that informed the creation of our field and the ways in which they hide in the most basic tools of our trade" (177). As she goes on to say, attention to a specialized vocabulary and deep reflection on the perspective from which we narrate the past is essential to a true decolonization of Medieval Studies: "To insist upon languages and specialist expertise is not simply gate-keeping, as it has become fashionable to claim, but rather it allows for both the fingertip sensitivity to the materials and, more important and less self-evident, for the fostering of scholarly empathy and critical compassion that is a foundational step in decolonizing the Middle Ages" (178).

as careful as possible with regard to historical populations and majority views on othered subjects when speaking about the insular context for race and racial difference. I make no broad claims about the lived experience of any ethnic or racial group in Britain[47] or definitive statements about the firsthand exposure that medieval peoples in Britain may have had to communities from Northern Africa, the Middle East, or Asia. All that I am trying to do is present the late medieval British discourses about race as expressed by the dominant culture of mainly white, Anglo-Norman Christians. This dominant culture both produces and consumes the vast majority of chivalric romance written in late medieval Britain, and so my discussion of race is always keeping that cultural and literary context in mind, even as I draw from scholars who are discussing legal or mercantile texts.

In medieval British popular discourse, terms which marked racial difference as I defined them above typically referred to Jews, non-Anglo ethnic groups based in the British Isles (Scots, Welsh, Irish, Nordic peoples), and an imprecise, largely imagined category of non-European peoples whose members could include North Africans, Middle Easterners, and potentially any non-Christian, whether white or not. There is ample historical evidence that medieval British peoples were aware of Middle Eastern and North African peoples as different racial groups from their own, but these understandings were not consistent or coherent and tended toward abstraction and metaphorical use.[48] Largely because of its geographic location, economic and cultural insularity, and relatively minor role in the early Crusades,[49] the British Isles had significantly less real-world contact with cultures and communities outside of Europe than did countries like Spain, France, or really anywhere in the Mediterranean. This relative isolation produces a binary racial discourse in romance and chronicle writing in which characters are either marked as English/Western European or as part of a massive category of otherness mostly defined by association with non-Christian religious belief. As I discuss throughout Chapter 4,

[47] See Heng's claim (via Robert Stacey) that the Jews of medieval England were representative or "archetypal" of other communities of medieval Jews throughout Europe (*Invention of Race* 58).

[48] See Siobhain Bly Calkin's *Saracens and the Making of English Identity* for a discussion of how this abstraction of racial identity functions to support proto-nationalist ideologies in England.

[49] See, for example, Simon Thomas Parsons's study of Angevin literary depictions of "insular contribution to the crusade" during the reign of Henry II ("The Inhabitants of the British Isles on the First Crusade: Medieval Perceptions and the Invention of a Pan-Angevin Crusading Heritage") and Christopher Tyerman's *England and the Crusades, 1095-1588*.

this undefined category, which tends to be represented by the term "Saracen" in chivalric romance, is frustratingly nebulous, and it represents the extent to which religious race[50] is the overarching conceptual framework for marking racial difference in medieval Britain.

The idea of treating the religions of Islam or Judaism as racial categories is understandably abhorrent to us today, because that rhetoric has propelled so many projects of Muslim and Jewish persecution in the West for centuries, and it is also nonsensical to suggest that a faith practice can be equated to a racial identity.[51] Here I am very intentionally distinguishing *racial* identity from *ethnic* identity, particularly in the case of Judaism, as shared religious practice is a large part of what constitutes ethnicity (meaning that the persecution or minoritization of religious groups is often also done on the basis of ethnicity), but religious practice is not significant in constituting racial identity by any modern sense of the term. And yet, despite an understanding today of this difference between religious and racial identity, the history of antisemitic laws and biopolitical regulations enforced against Jews in England (a history which led to the Statute of Jewry in 1275 and the Edict of Expulsion in 1290, then went right on going afterwards) points to a form of prejudice which is based on the belief that a community is essentially different because of its religious practice, even if members of that community convert.[52] In fact, the enduring skepticism of the dominant Christian culture toward

[50] *Invention of Race* 8. This is a term Heng uses repeatedly in *Invention of Race*, and it is not without its detractors, but I use it (as she does) as a conceptual foil to genetic or biological race in medieval discourses about racial identity. Some scholars argue that Heng's definition of race (particularly religious race) is so capacious as to be basically unproductive for premodern critical race scholarship or even counterproductive to contemporary critical race studies. Julie Orlemanski wonders, "what, if anything, does not count as race in Heng's account" (Orlemanski 164), noting that the scope of "race" as Heng uses it pulls the word "closer to 'otherness' or 'difference,' terms criticized by Heng for their bland generality." Joseph Ziegler suggests that by freighting the word "race" with so many associations, meanings, and feelings, we may "diminish race's significance and impact in the twentieth century, for if every assertion or acknowledgment of difference among groups of people is racial, nothing is racial" (Ziegler 569-570).

[51] As Denise Kimber Buell says of race in the context of Early Christian universalism, the modern popular perspective that race refers to fixed biological traits does not comport well with most classical and medieval views on the subject: "I am not convinced that 'fixity' necessarily distinguishes race from ethnicity or other discourses of human difference… Racial discourses are pluriform and do not remain constant over time; in some historical contexts factors including custom, education, and religious affiliation have been part of the ethnography of race. To be sure, some fundamental essence such as blood, flesh, or seed is often asserted as the basis for reckoning membership in a group classified as a race. But ideas about race, like ethnic, religious, and national claims, 'gain persuasive power by being subject to revision while purporting to speak about fundamental essences.' I emphasize this double-sided character of racial discourse, in part to indicate its resonances with other discourses, notably theological and ethnic ones, that similarly modulate between an insistence on essences while accommodating change" (114-115). The embedded quote is derived from an earlier monograph of Buell's.

[52] Merrall Llewelyn Price identifies the twelfth century as a turning point in how English popular culture viewed conversion from Judaism to Christianity: "In England, Henry III seems to have taken a personal interest [in

Muslim and Jewish converts to Christianity is perhaps the clearest evidence that religious race was an active concept in medieval Britain: for an individual to face continual othering even after assimilating to the majority religion requires a logic in which they can be identified with a category of difference which is not based in cultural practice (e.g. religion or ethnicity).[53] This logic, I suggest, approximates a discourse of race in medieval Britain, and it depends mostly on anxieties related to ancestry, blood purity, and miscegenation.

Blood as a site of constructing racial identity is well-attested in medieval Britain. Kathleen Biddick discusses how medieval debates over nobility "explored whether one is noble by blood and descent… or through the normative, self-regulating possibilities of disciplinarity" (452-453), and she points to the Statutes of Kilkenny as a "colonial moment" in which Anglo-Norman nobles sought legal prohibitions against intermarriage with the Irish.[54] As Biddick argues, these statutes constituted a "racializing moment" rather than an ethnicizing one because they were establishing categories of difference based on blood, not religious belief. Similarly, Jonathan Davis-Secord examines how race is negotiated in various manuscripts of Layamon's *Brut*, claiming that before 1204, "the Normans had maintained a sense of cultural and even racialized distance between themselves and the 'native' inhabitants of Britain, viewing, for example, the Welsh and the Scots as barbaric threats to the English nation" (157).

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conversion], establishing the *Domus Conversorum* in London in 1232, and often arranging for converts to be baptized in his presence: his son Edward would later enforce an obligation for Jews to attend weekly Dominican conversionary sermons. But conversions during Henry III's reign and thereafter were nevertheless conflicted: some imprisoned Jews were able to secure their freedom by converting, placing the authenticity of spiritual change in doubt. Even those who appear to have had genuine spiritual conversions to Christianity were still considered by Christians and Jews alike to have remained Jewish in identity, as were the children, grandchildren, and even spouses of converted Jews" (48-49).

[53] Heng, for one, argues that the racialization of Jews relied fundamentally on a racialization of the senses—evidenced by stereotypes about the ways that Jewish people supposedly sounded, smelled, and appeared. This racialization of the senses ensured that the reality of race itself would increasingly be authenticated through "feeling" and "sensing," and not through "rational thought" (*Invention of Race* 81).

[54] "On 18 February 1366, Lionel Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward III, presided over an Irish parliament that passed the Statutes of Kilkenny. These statutes, which expressed deep anxiety about the Gaelicization of the Anglo-Irish, gathered together and codified a series of prohibitions against the mixing of the Anglo-Irish with the Irish. Most saliently the statutes produced a notion of racial purity by proscribing, under pain of excommunication, any intimate Anglo-Irish alliance with the Irish, whether it be by marriage, godparenting, fostering of children, concubinage, or sexual liason [*sic*]. I define the statutes as a racializing moment, rather than an ethnicizing one, since they prohibited marriage *between* various Christians and denied the Irish entrance into English monastic communities. The statutes thus define both domestic and spiritual miscegenation and in so doing fabricate blood as a juridical substance. One can thus read blood historically as the material racialized *effect* of these statutes. The statutes juridically constituted Englishness, even at the expense of 'Christianness'" (Biddick 453).

David-Secord's larger point is that a comparison between the Caligula and Otho manuscripts of Layamon shows how discourses of national identity gradually effaced discourses of racial difference in the construction of a single, coherent English people. Both Biddick and David-Secord are tracking how a ruling Anglo-Norman nobility racializes various populations in the British Isles as Other but gradually incorporates them into an emergent English identity. As a text like *The Bruce* shows, the idea of there being some essential racial difference between the English and non-English peoples of the British Isles never disappears entirely, but race does increasingly become a way of referring to non-white, non-Christian groups outside of Britain in the later Middle Ages, and the popular discourse develops new words like "Moorish" in the process of that cultural shift.

The term "Moor," commonly associated with early modern studies of race rather than with medieval ones, is active in Britain by at least the late fifteenth century, and it does the work of signifying ethnic difference for a medieval British audience (*Black Metaphors* 14). Kathleen Kennedy pushes the emergence of "Moor" as a racialized term even further back, finding attestations in English as early as 1300.[55] Though Kennedy notes that the "medieval English Moor may seem to display 'uncodified diversity' like its early modern successor," she argues that the term has both biopolitical and sociocultural racialized markers embedded in it. The biopolitical markers include associations with "dark skin and the African continent," while the sociocultural markers typically include "language, writing, and fine textiles" (250). Kennedy is particularly attentive to the adjective "Moorish" (and related "Moresque," "*moreske*," and "*mores*"), which tended to be applied to Arabic writing on material goods in a kind of "medieval English Orientalism" (216). In Kennedy's words, the "English expressed familiarity with these [Arabic and pseudo-Arabic] scripts as a language of a people that they believed existed in the world," suggesting that "they had an idea about what [that script] was, if not the range of languages it might encode" (216). As she is careful to note, this is an initial foray into the study, and it requires precisely the kind of critical compassion which S. J. Pearce advises in order to counter the cultural prejudices embedded in Medieval Studies as a discipline if we are to

[55] Kennedy 214.

understand how sociocultural and biopolitical markers of race related in medieval British society.[56]

As I suggested above, the term "Saracen" is both a vague and a strategic term in medieval British society for signifying racial and religious otherness. It can refer to basically any non-Christian group, and it has highly racializing and Orientalizing effects when it is deployed to describe characters in chivalric romance. When used in chivalric romance, it is either directly invoking the context of the Crusades or making a comparison with the Crusades for the sake of dramatic emphasis, and in both cases, the term "Saracen" reflects a white, Christian, Western European worldview and anti-Muslim ideology. We can say this with confidence because no individual or group self-identifies as "Saracenic" (Kennedy 231); it is always a term applied from the outside as a way of ascribing difference. In Chapter 4, I discuss the several overlapping categories of difference which are contained in the term, as well as why I refer to characters as Muslim who are identified as "Saracen" by the romances themselves. "Saracen" is an imagined exonym used by Western Europeans to mark otherness across multiple axes, and so there is no modern replacement for it which simultaneously captures its racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic dimensions.

The problem then in discussing "Saracen" characters as Muslim is one of imprecision and of problematic conflation, because it collapses the racialized component of "Saracen" into the real-world self-identification of "Muslim," thereby recreating the medieval episteme which imagined Islam (and Judaism) as a religious race rather than a faith and cultural practice. My solution to this is to speak of Muslim characters being racialized rather than to speak of Islam as a race, because racialization is a process which can affect a greater diversity of characteristics of

[56] From Pearce's review of Geraldine Heng's *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, underscoring that critical compassion is both a scholarly and a pedagogical practice: "When a concept as seemingly modern as race appears in medieval materials it paradoxically offers a more comfortable arena—by virtue of its temporal distance and apparent foreignness—in which students, especially, can think through the issues and test out ideas that they can then take out into their own daily lives; it also shows them, again, that medieval people were not so different from themselves. While empathy can be a fallacious and destructive category of analysis, when it is not used as a substitute for critical analysis but rather to encourage it, I find that it can be useful in a classroom setting. Perhaps a better term for what I mean is critical compassion: this is not the trap of empathy, assuming that others experience the world in the same way or that these experiences can be rendered emotionally comparable; rather, it is an internalized, personal drive to use critical tools to come to a better personal understanding of the experience of another, whether in historical terms or not… Although it might not be the first thing that comes to mind when defining the methodological parameters of a project, critical compassion has an important role to play in a scholar's toolkit, and in a student's. And although a drive toward viewing the medieval through a lens of critical compassion may originate in classical-liberal notions of property, that language can be deployed to prioritize and value the identities of the subjects under study… To pursue an understanding of the Middle Ages through the lens of critical compassion is both intellectually rigorous and supremely humane" (148-9).

one's identity than are contained by the concept of race as I've defined it for medieval Britain. So, for example, the Arabic script which Kennedy discusses is racialized as "Moorish" by British consumers, but this does not mean that the script itself reflects or is specific to any real-world group. Importantly, racialization is a process which happens from the outside, in the sense that it is the dominant culture of Britain ascribing racial identities to the makers of objects marked with Arabic script or to the characters identified as "Saracen" in crusader romances.

Again, in talking about how race is constructed from the outside there is some risk of reifying the racial thought structures of medieval Britain's dominant culture rather than dismantling them. I hope to avoid that risk by aiming my critical focus precisely as those thought structures themselves, and so in my Chapter 4 discussion of crusader romances, I am primarily interested in examining the discourses which racialize subjects, not in recovering the voices of historical subjects themselves. In sum, my work in that chapter seeks to destabilize whiteness as a normative category of racial identity by unpacking the many ways in which medieval romance tries anxiously and insistently to mark racial otherness upon non-Christian, non-European, non-white bodies. In keeping with the focus of my other chapters, my work in Chapter 4 emphasizes how feelings are racialized whenever they violate a white, masculine, Western normativity. Chivalric romance offers a unique opportunity to examine feelings as a site for racialization for the same reason that it is rich area for the examination of queer affection (Chapter 2) and anti-imperialist political sentiments (Chapter 3): the genre deploys an elaborate discourse of emotion, and it is particularly attentive to the ways in which bodily gestures, expressions, and outbursts can be used to signify individual and group identity.

Crusader romances in particular (and poems wearing the garb of crusader romances, like Barbour's *The Bruce*) rely on a sustained vocabulary of emotions, affects, and behaviors associated with Christian and non-Christian knights in order to emphasize difference or collapse difference when either case is desirable. Sometimes there is little underlying stability to the way that such a vocabulary of difference is applied to individual characters, because many crusader romances rely on the assumption that key Muslim characters can be converted to Christianity and assimilated into a Christian chivalric community as a form of religious conquest (paralleling the plot's military conquest). However, even as a Muslim character's status as racialized or religiously othered often appears to be in flux, the feelings themselves are consistently treated as racialized or religiously othering, and so these feelings—and the matter of who is actually

expressing them—become a primary site of race-making in crusader texts. As elsewhere in this project, my critical vocabulary and theoretical lens for reading crusader romances come from scholars of modernity, even from those who would insist that their work *only* applies to a modern cultural and literary context. I am happy for my study to be a test case for the contrary.

The racialization of feeling is a process which arises from the transgression of an emotional boundary as established by the unmarked racial norm, and it is perhaps easier to identify by example than by lengthy categorical description. When a person's emotional expressions are interpreted not as a reflection of their subjective feelings but as a reflection of their racial identity and the larger racial group of which they're perceived to be a part, those emotional expressions become racialized by their contrast to an unmarked (usually white) norm of expression. If the dominant culture imagines that certain feelings are characteristic of a given racial or ethnic group, it is easier for the dominant culture to dismiss the validity of those feelings and maintain a comfortable distance from them. One of the many reasons that an American judicial system steeped in whiteness and white supremacist ideology continues to ignore and/or downplay anti-black violence is because of how comfortably it questions and holds at a distance the feelings of black people in the United States, whether those feelings are of anger, pain, grief, or hope.[57] They are rendered "black feelings," not the feelings of black people, and their impact is deadened when they must be translated into a white habitus[58] to be considered by the institutional representatives of a racist legal system. To put this dynamic in a medieval context, crusader romances participate in a similar two-part project of erecting and enforcing discriminatory affective norms: first they racialize certain affective expressions of Muslim characters so that they can be categorized as "Other," and then they generalize those expressions

[57] David Sterling Brown makes the case (via Paul Gilroy and a reading of *Titus Andronicus*) that the "'deindividualizing effects' of racism and racial profiling" are key to how the state enacts and authorizes violence on black bodies, treating all black bodies as interchangeable and denying black people "an identity separate from or in contrast to the dominant negative perception of the race as a whole" (10).

[58] See the work of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Carla Goar, and David G. Embrick concerning the psychology of white habitus, building on Pierre Bourdieu's idea of "habitus": "Bonilla-Silva (2003) expands Bourdieu's notion of habitus, emphasizing its racialized character. He defines white habitus as a "racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites' racial tastes, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial matters" (Bonilla-Silva 2003:104). This socialization guides whites' identity and sense of group membership through overt (e.g., parental and teachers' guidance) as well as subtle mechanisms (e.g., messages conveyed on TV, etc.). White habitus promotes in-group solidarity and negative views about non-whites. For example, because racial segregation (which whites view as normal and unproblematic4 creates a situation that severely limits close personal relationships between blacks and whites, whites' collective experiences with blacks are extremely limited and based on racial stereotypes and generalizations perpetuated by the media or through other second-hand sources" (233).

so that they are *nothing but* "Other." This process allows Christian knights (and audiences) to treat as invalid or incomprehensible the emotional expressions of Muslim characters, thereby authorizing crusader violence against Muslim bodies. In these examples, the racialization of feelings is a technology of racist ideology imposed top-down by the dominant white culture, but there is also a sense in which racialized feelings are those which come to be shared by a racial or ethnic group which has endured oppression under similar circumstances and thus developed an overlapping sense of identity.

Cathy Park Hong describes "minor feelings" as "the racialized range of emotions that are negative, dysphoric, and therefore untelegenic, built from the sediments of everyday racial experience and the irritant of having one's perception of reality constantly questioned or dismissed" (*Minor Feelings* 55).[59] Her definition builds explicitly on Sianne Ngai's "ugly feelings," and both theorizations deal with non-cathartic and negative feelings, though Ngai's work is primarily concerned with the feelings of living under advanced capitalism (she treats the racial construction of emotion mainly in her discussion of "animatedness"). There is a fair amount of continuity between the two terms, with both minor feelings and ugly feelings focusing on affective states like irritation, paranoia, and shame or disgust. For Hong, minor feelings arise "when American optimism is enforced upon you, which contradicts your own racialized reality, thereby creating a static of cognitive dissonance" (56), and minor feelings are then treated as overreactions by the very fact that they don't comport with the false expectations of white optimism: "When minor feelings are finally externalized, they are interpreted as hostile, ungrateful, jealous, depressing, and belligerent, affects ascribed to racialized behavior that whites consider *out of line*" (57, emphasis original). So enduring and unrelenting are the existential frustrations of minor feelings that Hong says if she "were to describe minor feelings as a sound, it would be the white noise of whooshing traffic" in her hometown of Koreatown, Los Angeles

[59] Hong does not directly cite Sara Ahmed's idea of race as "sedimented history" (which itself derives from the work of Sarah Lloyd and Julie Moore), but these are clearly compatible understandings of race as accumulated layers of cultural "sediment." Unlike Hong, however, Ahmed follows the metaphor of sediment at length, unpacking how race is the result of slow, accumulated build-up around our identities: "...differences become congealed in entities; differences become sediment, heavy histories that weigh us down. You can encounter someone, and recognize them in an instant, as black, as brown, as white, as to be feared, not to be feared, because of what you have already swallowed. Phenomenology as a way of approaching things teaches us about 'sedimented histories,' how histories become second nature, what bodies do not have to think (to think). To think of race as a sedimented history is to think of how race matters as matter. Something becomes sedimented, when it has settled, often near a barrier, as that which stops a flow. And race is precisely this: a congealing, a solidifying: a history that becomes concrete, a physical barrier in the present: stop. Or not: go" ("Race as Sedimented History" 95).

(58), and implicit in this analogy is the idea that the unrelenting sonic palette of traffic represents at once movement and stasis, life and mechanization, signal and noise, and of course, the overwhelming presence of whiteness and the lack of any actual substance to that whiteness.

Both minor feelings and ugly feelings are products of modernity, their authors argue, deriving from structural racism/white normativity and global capitalism, respectively. But these affective categories have close analogs in the wide genre of medieval chivalric romance, which itself is heavily interested in the expression of feelings which do not fit into a traditional honor-shame binary. By taking the work of Hong and Ngai on the racialization of feelings in a modern context, we can, *mutatis mutandis*, understand how counterparts for that process unfold in chivalric romance. We can even begin to unpack how the racialization of feelings in a medieval context deposits early layers of the sediment which makes up the very modern context which Hong and Ngai explore so fully. Here I follow the lead of both Hong and Ngai in illustrating by example rather than exhaustive definition, and I draw those examples from representations of Muslim characters of color in three Middle English romances: *The Sultan of Babylon*, *The King of Tars*, and Malory's *Morte Darthur*. Because it is the most straight-forward example of racialized feelings, I begin with the last of these three.

Sir Palomides is not original to Malory's *Morte Darthur* (little is), but he is significantly more developed than he is in Malory's French sources, the Prose *Tristan* and the Post-Vulgate Cycle's *Queste del Saint Graal*. Indeed, throughout the two sprawling books about Sir Tristan of Lyonesse, which combined make up the largest chunk of the Arthurian narrative arc in *The Morte*, Palomides is among the most frequent companions and frenemies of Tristan, acting as his chief foil throughout Tristan's development into a model knight. As in Malory's sources (his unnamed but authoritative "Frensche boke"), the Palomides of *The Morte Darthur* is the son of Esclabor,[60] and he is "unchristened" for most of the text, although he expresses a desire to convert to Christianity and join the Round Table brotherhood. Also in keeping with the French Tristan narrative, Palomides often shows up as a convenient rival suitor for the hand of Iseult, though his affections are not returned. Both Malory's narrator and numerous characters remark

[60] Esclabor is sometimes the king of Babylon, and sometimes just from Babylon. The early thirteenth century French prose work *Palamedes* (predating the Prose *Tristan*), which principally focuses on Tristan's father Meliadus and the knight Guiron le Courtois, begins the section on Guiron with a reference to Esclabor leaving Babylon to travel to Rome: "A l'époque du couronnement d'Arthur vient à la cour de l'empereur de Rome, faisant partie du tribut, Esclabor, un gentilhomme païen de Babylone, âgé de trente ans, avec sa femme, son frère et ses enfants, dont le préféré était Palamède, qui porte le nom *d'un sien aieul*" (Loseth 439).

on Palomides's prowess as a knight, but his Muslim identity means that the Christian chivalric community tends to treat him as an Other. In this project's coda, I examine Palomides's racial and religious identity and his position relative to the Christian court more fully—particularly a scene in which the narrator describes him as showing "many straunge sygnes and tokyns" after losing to Tristan in tournament—but it suffices for now to note how his broader characterization fits into the theoretical frameworks of Hong and Ngai.

We might best think of Palomides's feeling-emblems as more ugly than minor, which is to say that they are affective expressions better characterized in Ngai's terms of "obstructed agency" and inaction than they are in Hong's terms of racial gaslighting, trauma, and cognitive dissonance. In fact, Palomides's entire *raison d'être* outside of winning worship from Tristan is the pursuit of a creature which symbolizes his restricted agency: his quarry is the Questing Beast (*La Bête Glatissante*), a creature which dazzles with its chimerical appearance and yelping sound[61] but which is functionally unattainable for Palomides. It exists to explain why he keeps crossing paths with members of the Round Table and helps give the impression that Palomides is accomplishing something in Malory's work without actually asserting much agency of his own (slaying the Beast is not even a chivalric quest unique to Palomides; it is a job he takes over from Pellinore). The serialized episodic nature of Palomides's adventures with the Tristan milieu keeps him in a holding pattern from which he cannot break free, and Palomides himself seems aware of this restraint, because he repeatedly describes regret at what he cannot do and frustration at what he is forced to do against his wishes.

In his pursuit of both the Questing Beast and Tristan, Palomides expresses deep and abiding frustration, though it is rarely as obviously exoticized as are the "many straunge sygnes and tokyns" he shows after losing in the Tournament of the Castle Maidens. Rather, Palomides's frustration usually amounts to a "grete hevynesse," like the heaviness he feels when Iseult saves him from Tristan so that he doesn't "dye a Sarezen" and then sends him to the court of Arthur against his will[62] (to be incorporated into the Christian brotherhood of the Round Table). Heaviness is a common feeling in *The Morte*, and many characters besides Palomides feel

[61] And thus meanewhyle com Sir Palomydes, the good knyght, folowyng the Questyng Beste that had in shap lyke a serpentis hede and a body lyke a lybard, butokked lyke a lyon and footed lyke an harte—and in hys body there was such a noyse as hit had bene twenty couple of houndys questynge, and suche noyse that beste made wheresomever he wente. (293.18-23)

[62] 265.35-266.12

"passing heavy" for various reasons, but Palomides's heaviness has less to do with sorrow at some bad outcome than it does with a core part of his identity being trivialized or his chivalric quest being repeatedly obstructed. Malory is selective in mentioning Palomides's racial or religious identity, and although some version of the phrase "Palomydes the sarasyn" appears a dozen times in *Morte Darthur*, that number is overshadowed by the roughly seven hundred times "Sir Palomides" appears on its own. Broadly speaking, Malory writes Palomides such that he is identifiable *as* Palomides when he conforms to the image and behavior of a normatively heroic Christian knight, but labels him Palomides "the sarasyn" whenever he fails a chivalric challenge, expresses undo frustration, or (most tellingly) makes unwanted advances on Iseult. To be sure, Malory does not always attach the label "sarasyn" in this way, but the general pattern is that Malory deploys the term as he would another "title" (like Galahad the Haute Prince or Morgan le Fay) whenever he needs to emphasize the foreignness and impropriety of Palomides's actions or emotions.

The fact that Palomides's feeling-emblem wavers between shades of frustration which are sometimes racialized and sometimes not is in keeping with his own position in Malory's work, in that he is neither totally treated as an Other nor totally treated as an incorporated member of Arthur's court. On this point Dorsey Armstrong says that in "examining Palomides's relationship with the other knights and the Arthurian community… we ultimately see that the supporting ideology of the Arthurian community of a Same/Other dichotomy is always on the brink of collapse" ("Postcolonial Palomides" 203). The representation of Palomides's feeling-emblems in Malory only exacerbates that threat of collapse because it reveals how precarious and contingent are categories of otherness. The text ascribes a racial quality to his feeling-emblems when it wants to emphasize his strangeness or question the validity of his feelings, and it erases that racial quality when Palomides is not acting "out of line" with Malory's understanding of ideal chivalry. In this way, Palomides exemplifies the frustration of having one's agency stripped away by oppressive political and cultural forces, but in order to make the case further for the legibility of feeling-emblems as racialized emotional expressions, I turn to two more examples of similarly restricted agency, both building on Ngai's concept of "animatedness."

Animatedness is the term Ngai gives for an affective state which simultaneously suggests "high spiritedness" and "a puppet-like state analogous to the assembly-line mechanization of the human body" (*Ugly Feelings* 21), and it is the ugly feeling most explicitly concerned with race.

Indeed, Ngai says that it is the racialization of animatedness which "turns the neutral and even potentially positive affect" into an ugly feeling, because the political agency suggested by animatedness (i.e. agitation) is obstructed by the sense that one is "*being* moved or vocalized by others for their amusement" when a subject's animated behavior is interpreted only as a signifier of their racial identity. Ngai points to countless cases in nineteenth and twentieth century American popular culture of ethnic stereotypes which ascribe racialized affective qualities to people of color (like effusiveness, zeal, liveliness, over-emotionality, and exaggerated movement), and argues that these stereotypes function ideologically to construct the racialized subject as "unusually receptive to external control" (91). If Ngai's project looked back to a premodern literary context, she would have found more evidence for the longevity of animatedness as a racialized affect in medieval crusader romance. The genre abounds with exoticized, Orientalized, pornographic descriptions of Muslim characters' over-emotional behavior, not least of all in the example of the Sultan Laban (or Balan) in the *Fierabras* narrative tradition.

In my fourth chapter's treatment of *The Sultan of Babylon*, I focus primarily on Laban's two children, Ferumbras and Floripas, and how they each negotiate the racialization of their feelings by a Christian European audience. Though I do consider Laban's role in *Sultan*—specifically the way that he "charges" or imbues both of his children with a racialized affective force—he is not my focus throughout the chapter. He is indisputably the focus of the poem itself though, holding narrative attention with his impulsive behavior, his anger, his violence, his misogyny, his inconstancy, and his fiery anti-Christian tirades. Despite the fact that *Sultan* adapts the Old French/Anglo-Norman *Fierabras* narrative, it is Laban whose title appears first in the concluding statement of the only surviving manuscript from the fifteenth century.[63] He is both the first and last named character of the poem[64] and the motivating agent behind most of the narrative action.

If *Sultan* were dramatized, the actor portraying Laban would get top billing and would have ample opportunity for emotive, scenery-chewing performances. For example, in the Old

[63] "Here endithe the Romaunce of the Sowdon of Babylone and of Ferumbras his sone who conquered Rome, and Kyng Charles off Fraunce with the Twelfe Dosyperes toke the Sowdon in the feelde and smote of his heede" (Garrett MS. 140, 00000049.tif).

[64] Laban is the first character mentioned outside of the Holy Trinity in the poem's invocation, and he is the last character mentioned if one includes the poem's concluding statement as part of the text (otherwise, Charlemagne is the last mentioned, but Laban still figures prominently in the poem's conclusion anyway).

French *Fierabras*, Laban strikes at his gods, accuses them of being disloyal ("recreanz"), and says that they have brought him shame, but in the same scene from *Sultan*, Laban makes a "grete lamentacion" in which he threatens to "singe of sorowe a songe / And of mournynge" at his gods who "slepe to longe," and he rejoices when they seem to quake in response to his rage.[65] Later on, in scenes that have no direct parallel in the Old French version, Laban threatens to burn his gods and even strikes the golden statue of "Mahounde," provoking a deep fear of divine retribution among his bishops. Of course, Laban's behavior in these scenes confirms for Christian audiences all their wild misconceptions about Muslims propagated by *La Chanson de Roland*: they are polytheists (Laban worships Apollo and Termagant in addition to "Mahounde"), they are inconstant in their faith, they are idol-worshippers, and so on. Laban's elevated affect plays right into medieval Christian stereotypes of a Muslim Other, demonstrating for them the necessity of religious conquest and conversion. But it is also true that Laban's transgressive behavior outstrips the need for his characterization as a villain. When Charlemagne orders Laban baptized, and Laban strikes the bishop with a sword then spits in the baptismal font (a scene taken directly from the Old French), it is hard not to read the poem as deriving a guilty pleasure from Laban's blasphemous behavior and from his invocation of the "almyghty Sathanas." The excess, the melodrama, and the caricature of Laban's performance in this scene all suggest that the poem is using his racial and religious otherness as a safe channel through which to explore transgressive imagery (safe because the audience knows Laban will be punished for his transgression), all while confidently staying on the side of "right." Laban dominates the narrative of *Sultan*, but we must continually ask what interest his transgressiveness serves and what motivates the interest in his exaggerated emotionality and his otherness. So I hold space for Laban here in part because not to do so would be negligent, but also because he perfectly encapsulates the fraught position of the racialized subject in Ngai's theorization of animatedness.

The comparison I made above between Laban's role in *Sultan* and over-the-top theatrical performance was not an idle one; there is a great deal of similarity between the history of

[65] The relevant passage from the Old French *Fierabras* is as follows: Kant Laban l'entent, a poi s'est forsenéz. / Par maltalent ad fait ses dieux devant li porter; / Cil ad pris un espee q'esteit lusant et cler. / A Appopolin et Tervagant grantz coups voit doner. / « Hai! dieux recreanz, mult me fetez vergunder. / Par vous m'est avenu mult grant encunbrer » (ll. 1310-1315). The relevant passage from *Sultan* is as follows: He cryede to Mahounde and Apolyne / And to Termagaunte that was so kene / And saide, "Ye goddes, ye slepe to longe; / Awake and helpe me nowe / Or ellis I may singe of sorowe a songe / And of mournynge right i-nowe. / Wete ye not wele that my tresoure / Is alle withinne the walle? / Helpe me nowe, I saye, therfore / Or ellis I forsake you alle." / He made grete lamentacion, / His goddis byganne to shake. / Yet that comfortede his meditacion / Supposinge thay didde awake (ll. 2105-2118).

reception for Laban and for a character like Shylock in *Merchant of Venice* or Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*. These characters are all given a great deal of "stage time" in their respective narratives, but they are also written with an emphasis on exaggerated emotion and an enthusiasm for violence. That tension, coupled with the fact that they are marked racially in a way that others them from a white European audience, suggests that they are as much the object of their narratives as the subjects, and this is precisely the experiential discomfort which Ngai addresses with animatedness. When Laban spews invective against Charlemagne and the Franks or plays into Islamophobic stereotypes with a glee that verges on camp, it illicits a double reaction from modern audiences. We can find a winking self-awareness in his behavior which seems to critique the ideology of the poem, and at the same time we must confront the reality that a medieval Christian audience would likely not have appreciated any such critique.

For us today, Laban can be understood as an animator (an agitator) against crusader ideology, while for a medieval Christian audience he is most probably understood as just simply animated (an Islamophobic, racist caricature) in service of reinforcing that ideology. Herein lies the fraught utility of racialized animatedness in a work like *Sultan*: Laban's exaggerated "Saracen" affect calls attention to his suspended agency in the poem without actually clarifying how a similar character could achieve meaningful subjectivity or resistance to the crusader project. Laban's animatedness is, in Ngai's terminology, a feeling which is "diagnostic rather than strategic, and… diagnostically concerned with states of *inaction* in particular" (*Ugly Feelings* 22, emphasis original). In essence, Laban's animatedness can tell us what's impeding the agency or subjectivity of Muslim characters of color in *Sultan* without actually saying how to address such a problem. This dilemma is unsatisfying for anyone interested in the political utility of emotions, but "weak intentionality" is an inherent quality of ugly feelings as formulated by Ngai, and this quality contributes to their historical longevity (i.e. the seeming passivity of ugly feelings makes them less obvious targets for socially and politically repressive forces, because they don't appear to be a threat). The entire premise of this project—that we can find analogs for ugly feelings in medieval chivalric romance, and use those analogs to better understand that literature and its textual community—ultimately depends on texts making their social critiques indirectly so that they are less likely to be identified by a dominant culture as problematic.

In my Chapter 4 discussion of *Sultan*, I identify additional racialized feeling-emblems expressed by Laban's two children, and I argue that these feeling-emblems come closer to

helping Floripas and Ferumbras resist (and survive) the crusader project of the Frankish knights than Laban can ever get. Floripas in particular successfully appropriates the chivalric register of her brother and the Frankish knights to assert a hyper-violent feeling-emblem rooted in a kind of female performance of masculinity, and this gendered rhetorical shift (from Muslim princess to Muslim knight) verges on granting her "true" agency in the poem, but even she is eventually absorbed into the Christian community through marriage and animated into advancing Charlemagne's crusader ideology. As I explain, the racialization of Floripas's and Ferumbras's feeling-emblems has a lot to do with a breakdown in communication between the Christian and Muslim armies, which is characteristic of the genre. In *Sultan* (and in the Scottish nationalist romance *The Bruce*, which I also discuss), battlefield noise is an auditory threshold of otherness, and both the narrator and the Christian knights treat as noise any speech or emotional expression which they do not immediately understand. When a Muslim character's expressions are treated as only noise, those expressions look more exaggerated or animated, and it is easier for a Christian audience to dismiss them from the possibility of expressing real subjectivity or emotional validity. Such expressions are stereotyped and voided of actual emotional or semantic content for a Christian audience, and thus they become *purely* markers of racial and religious otherness. This is the progression of Muslim characters' racialized feeling-emblems I trace out in my reading of *Sultan* (it is a progression which ends only in assimilation to the Christian community through conversion or in death), and I conclude that reading as I have here with my reading of Laban's feeling-emblem: such characters can never truly "speak" (in Gayatri Spivak's sense of the word) because any evidence of agency suggested by their feeling-emblems also points to how they are animated and made pliant for consumption by a Christian European audience. To make clearer how my project discusses racialized feeling-emblems in medieval romance, I have selected one more example, this time from the famous "lump-child"[66] scene in *The King of Tars*.

The King of Tars is, at its core, a version of the Constance tale, a narrative popular throughout the high and later Middle Ages. The story type is especially popular in thirteenth and fourteenth century Europe (*Tars* is composed c. 1330 or earlier) with Chaucer and Gower both

[66] John Chandler uses this term in his edition of the poem. Numerous scholars who have written on the poem also use the term "lump-child," such as Jane Gilbert ("Putting the Pulp into Fiction") and Cord Whitaker ("Black Metaphors in *The King of Tars*").

producing versions of the plot in English.[67] In a traditional Constance narrative, the heroine is persecuted and exiled, often for the sins of her father or husband, and it is through her suffering that the men repent and reconcile with their political adversaries. *Tars* takes this basic plot and incorporates a variety of other genre influences, including hagiography and romance. Because of this generic heterogeneity, *Tars* is an outlier subject for my project (the poem is more interested in the aesthetics of romance than it is in the emotional and heraldic vocabulary unique to romance). In Chapter 4, I do draw heavily on critical race scholarship of the poem, particularly that of Cord Whitaker, but my engagement with the poem itself is basically confined to the passage discussed below.

The plot of *Tars* concerns the Christian princess of Tars, who reluctantly agrees to marry the Muslim sultan of Damas in order to end the conflict between the sultan and her father, the Christian king of Tars. The sultan requires the princess to convert to Islam, she pretends to do so, and the two conceive a child together, but the child is born misshappen as a "rond of flesche" without movement, limbs, blood, or bones. Each parent assumes that the monstrous birth is owed to the false belief of the other, and the princess is proved right when the child is baptized Christian and it immediately gains life, turning into a fair child, "wele schapen" with perfect limbs and all. Seeing the power of the Christian God, the sultan converts, and in a much-noted passage, his black skin turns white to signify his new spiritual purity from baptism.[68] The sultan's re- or de-racialization is of obvious interest to critical race scholars, since it complicates the received opinion for medievalists that references to blackness and whiteness in the Middle Ages were primarily metaphorical and did not actually indicate somatic race.[69] My interest, however, is not exactly with the sultan himself but with the child he conceives with the princess of Tars. The child's unusual birth as unformed matter, its liminal status between being and nothingness, and its baptism-induced animation all point to an instrumentalization of racialized bodies which finds resonance in Ngai's ugly feelings.

In her chapter on animatedness, Ngai spends a great deal of time focusing on how the medium of claymation takes inanimate matter and renders it movable and seemingly lifelike.

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[67] Isaacs "Constance in Fourteenth Century England" 260.

[68] His hide that blac and lothely was / Al white bicom thurth Godes gras / And clere withouten blame (ll. 922-924).

[69] See, for example, Cord Whitaker's *Black Metaphors* (particularly his chapter on *The King of Tars*) for an example of how metaphorical blackness operates on characters who are not otherwise racially identified as black.

One work she addresses substantially in her discussion of animatedness and racialized affect is the stop motion film *Animated Putty*, noting variously how the film's "lump of earthy matter" and "lumpen protagonist" (*Ugly Feelings* 89; 90) become imbued with human behaviors and characteristics. Ngai claims that claymation's ugly or crude aesthetic calls attention to the animating powers involved in moving claymation figures, even as actual human agents are conspicuously absent from the frame. In her reading, claymation (and the broader medium of animation) represents the political problem of obstructed agency discussed above, because it portrays figures carrying out exaggerated, "lively" movements while also emphasizing the technologies which externally manipulate those figures and literally stop and start their movement.

Both two-dimensional and three-dimensional animation have historically relied on a "separation principle" of articulating figures, which breaks bodies down into discrete parts so that each body part can be moved independently (*Ugly Feelings* 116). The separation principle of animation tends to amplify certain body parts (e.g. limbs, eyes, mouths), making them seem exaggerated in their expressions. In animated representations of racialized bodies, the separation principle threatens to turn certain body parts into "overdetermined, synecdochic sites of racial specificity" (116) and to propagate racist constructions through the very technology of the medium. Ngai is careful to note that the practical reality of animation is that figures often move in ways which animators do not intend, creating an "uncanny redoubling" of figures' "surplus movement apart from those originally scripted for them, assuming a liveliness that is distinct from the 'life' given to them by the animators and that exceeds their design and control" (116-117). She muses that this uncanny redoubling means that "the very sign of the racialized body's automatization functions as the source of an unsuspected autonomy," and refers to this irony as "the racialized, animated subject's 'revenge,'" a revenge which is produced from obeying the rules of the animators too well (117).

In sum, animation is a "nexus of contradictions" which tends to produce unanticipated affects and behaviors in its subjects as much as intentional, manipulated ones, and this tension requires that we consider "new ways of understanding the technologization of the racialized body" (125). The path which Ngai traces of the racialized body, animated by an external force from lump of clay into lifelike and seemingly human then further into something uncanny,

applies with startling ease to the case of the "lump-child" in *Tars*. I have excerpted below both the child's birth and the subsequent descriptions of how it is given form:

> And when the child was ybore,
> Wel sori wimen were therfore,
> For lim no hadde it non,
> Bot as a rond of flesche yschore
> In chaumber it lay hem bifore
> Withouten blod and bon.
> For sorwe the levedi wald dye,
> For it hadde noither nose no eye
> Bot lay ded as the ston.
> The soudan com to chaumber that tide
> And with his wiif he gan to chide
> That wo was hir bigon.
> […]
> The prest toke the flesche anon
> And cleped it the name of Jon
> In worthschip of the day.
> And when that it cristned was
> It hadde liif and lim and fas
> And crid with gret deray,
> And hadde hide and flesche and fel
> And alle that ever therto bifel,
> In gest as Y you say.
>
> Feirer child might non be bore —
> It no hadde never a lime forlore,
> Wele schapen it was, withalle;
> The prest no lenge duelled thore
> And yede and teld the soudan fore
> Ther he was in the halle.
> That levedi ther sche lay in bed
> That richeliche was bischred
> With gold and purpel palle.
> The child sche take to hir blive
> And thonked our levedi with joies five
> The feir grace ther was bifalle.[70] (ll. 574-585; 766-786)

[70] And when the child was born, the attendant women were sorry because it had no limbs, but lay in the chamber like a cut-off piece of flesh, without blood or bone. The child's mother would have died for sorrow, because it had neither nose nor eye, but laid dead as a stone. The Sultan came to her chamber that evening and began to chide his wife, saying that the woe was her fault… The priest took the flesh and gave it the name John in celebration of the day. When it was christened, it had life and limb, and cried loudly, and skin and flesh and everything else, and all this happened exactly as I tell it to you. There was never a fairer child born—it has no missing limb and was well-formed; the priest no longer stayed there but left to tell the Sultan where he was in the hall. The lady lay in a

In the first excerpt, we notice immediately the total formlessness of the child, devoid as it is of any trait that would make it recognizably human. Less striking, perhaps, but equally important, is the emotional response which the child provokes in onlookers. As one would imagine, the child inspires great sorrow from the princess of Tars and her attending women, and from the sultan a degree of resentful blame-casting. The narrator, who uses a conversational tone and casual second person narration throughout the poem, is uncharacteristically dispassionate in describing the child's birth. Indeed, the narrator's description seems calculated to chill any audience's compassion for the child, in that it defines the child entirely by what it is *not*, stripping away the sorts of identifying features that would make it seem more lifelike or human. The child has *no* limbs, it has *no* blood or bone, it has *no* nose or eye, and the central image of the child—"a rond of flesche yschore"—frames it as an absence, as a cut of meat shorn off from some whole entity. Even just in this one stanza, the poem registers an uncertainty about how to treat the lump-child, because its ontological status as a child is itself uncertain while the implications of its birth are painfully obvious to the sultan, the princess, and the women present: someone is practicing "fals bileve," as the sultan says, and the child is proof positive of divine censure. Of course, as we see in the scene when the child is eventually baptized and gains proper human form, it is the sultan whose faith was out of sorts. Persuaded by the miracle of his child's animation, he converts and his skin "that blac and lothely was / Al white bicom thurth Godes gras" (ll. 922-923). Whatever else the lump-child signifies in the poem (and its meanings surely are plural),[71] it is clearly a narrative device for motivating the sultan's conversion and his incorporation in a white Christian imagined community.

Because the lump-child does not really express any emotions of its own, let alone emotions which are socially coded in a chivalric value system, it is hard to read in the context of racialized feeling-emblems as I have proposed them here. Nonetheless, the lump-child is as salient an example as one could concoct for the kind of external control of racialized bodies that

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bed richly covered with purple and gold. She took the child quickly and thanked Our Lady with the five joys for the grace that had befallen them.

[71] For example, Chandler notes that the lump-child "echoes the creation story of Genesis, where the Lord forms Adam in His own image," and the "ability to create or bestow form is very important to this poem, as the re-forming of the lump-child's body and sultan's spirit are at the core of this poem" (fn. to l. 611). The idea of a misshapen child being born to parents of two different racial backgrounds also certainly plays into fears of miscegenation for a medieval European audience.

Ngai discusses in her chapter on animatedness in *Ugly Feelings*. We might think of the priest Cleophas as the animator responsible for shaping the biracial child into a full human once its association with Islam and blackness has been washed away. Cleophas even gives his own name to the sultan when christening (and whitening) him, such that the sultan is himself animated toward the goal of edifying the audience about the power of the Christian God. In this way, both the lump-child and the sultan become glaring examples of what Ngai calls the "technologization of the racialized body" in service of a larger ideological purpose. In a case like the *King of Tars*, where the animatedness of the sultan and his child is so transparently didactic, it is hard to find a trace of the unintended autonomy which Ngai calls the "racialized, animated subject's 'revenge,' but in Chapter 4 I examine instances of such revenge in John Barbour's *The Bruce* and *The Sultan of Babylon*. In those cases, poets attempt to imbue their works with the ideological bent of crusader romances by animating racialized characters with aggressive, "moody" feeling-emblems. But feeling-emblems are multivalent by nature, and even when characters cannot escape the control of their animators totally, their feeling-emblems can circulate unpredictably throughout the poem, cropping up and attaching to other characters in ways that question the effectiveness of the crusader project altogether. In the remainder of this introduction, I summarize how feeling-emblems operate in each of this project's three main chapters and in its coda.

Summary of Chapters

Following this introduction, my second chapter, "*The Alliterative Morte Arthure* and its Queer Chivalric Imagination," tracks the occurrence of seemingly dishonorable (or "unworshipful," in the parlance of the genre), gestures and articulations, arguing that instances of such behavior are essential rather than antithetical to the structure of a hyper-masculine chivalric community in the poem. As Anne Baden-Daintree observes, *The Morte* is an "essentially public text" ("Kingship" 89), with almost all of its narrated action occurring within the public arenas of the battlefield or Arthur's council of elite knights. Perhaps as a result of this emphasis on display, the poem amasses a robust vocabulary for modes of nonverbal and subverbal communication, from bodily writhing and hand-wringing to various forms of emotionally raw grunting and wailing. While the poem certainly registers through the voices of Arthur's knights a persistent

anxiety about these expressions—in particular their opacity of meaning and impression of poor comport—it returns to them frequently enough to suggest an underlying curiosity or even obsession.

While these unworshipful behaviors seem to threaten the honor (and thus the very social currency) of the Round Table knighthood, they reaffirm by their presence just how interdependent the lives and identities of individual knights are upon their peers. As Arthur says to his council at the poem's outset, "My mensk and my manhed ye maintain in erthe, / Mine honour all utterly in other kinges landes; My wele and my worship of all this world rich, Ye have knightly conquered that to my crown longes" (ll. 398-401). His "mensk" (at once his honor, his station, and etymologically his "mannishness") is materially constituted in the world by the actions of his knights, and so any harm that comes to them rebounds upon his own embodied self. By the poem's end, with the Round Table dissolved and its best knights dead, Arthur says that irreconcilable sorrow ("bootless bale") is his closest kin ("full sib to myself"), as if to suggest that he could reconstitute his community of fellow men with the love and grief he feels at their passing.

The poem represents this relationship between maleness and social identity through its attention to scenes of intensely emotional bonding and physical intimacy between men. The poem abounds with scenes of men touching men, whether that touching happens on the battlefield, in the post-battle triaging of wounds and carrying of corpses, or in loving embrace. These scenes of male bodily intimacy on the battlefield are highly aestheticized, with descriptive detail lavished on knights' bodies first in violence and then in grief ("Visualising War" 71). One scene in particular, concerning the healing of Gawain and Priamus by other knights, invites the poem's audience to think of themselves as participating in the process through some curious narratorial choices. Such moments show how the poem transgresses bodily boundaries between knights and asks us to consider the ways in which bodies are mutually connected. Throughout Chapter 2, I suggest that the interest in male bodies and all-male intimacy is indicative of the *Morte*'s fundamentally queer gaze and its attempt to imagine a queer chivalric community through the language of shared feeling.

The dependence of "manhed" or "mensk" upon the sharing and circulation of affective energy is at its most pronounced upon the battlefield, where feelings function like other signifiers of identity and allegiance, such as banners and coats of arms. Feeling on the battlefield is both

deeply tied to individual identity—often alliteratively, as with the "grouching" of Gawain or the "carping" of Kay—and implicated in the exchange of violence, because such feelings are conventionally aired publicly as prelude to (and justification for) a battle. But unlike other chivalric markers of identity, these negative feelings are not purely outward-facing; a central exchange of *The Morte* revolves around the claim that "hething" (hate or scorn) is home-loving, or tending to return precipitously upon those who project it. And while this claim is nominally directed at the kings of Syria and Libya, it resonates most strongly for Arthur, whose imperial conquest on the Continent and rashness of action bring about the end of the Round Table. Thus, the organization of a social, masculine identity around the sharing of unworshipful emotions is simultaneously the promise and the threat of *The Morte*'s model of knighthood, equally celebrating and elegizing a queer desire for all-male community within the Arthurian imaginary.

The theoretical framework for Chapter 2 comes largely from Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*. The idea of a queer orientation being a "turning away" from heteronormative lines of attraction and toward the bodies of one's own desire helps us understand two ways in which *The Morte* is a queer poem: the knights of Arthur's court consistently turn away from heterosexual relationships to invest all their care and feeling upon each other, and the poem itself turns away from its narrative of violent conquest to focus on scenes of intimate touch between men. Ahmed's discussion of orientation is also useful in thinking about *The Morte*'s relationship to "The East," because the overarching plot of the poem concerns Arthur's campaign to conquer a coalitional army of African, Middle Eastern, and Asian soldiers. As Chapter 2 concludes, *The Morte*'s proposal of a mutually supportive queer community of knights seems to rely on the projection of "hething" toward a Muslim Other, such that the queer potential for feeling-emblems in the poem always entails the practical reality of feeling-emblems being used for xenophobic or Islamophobic ends.

My third chapter, "Feeling-Emblems and the Navigation of Borderlands Space in Three Gawain Romances," explores how emotions signify emblematically in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and in two adjacent texts: *The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain* and *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*. The Gawain of these poems is, by reputation, the greatest knight of "courteisie," and his adventures often consist largely of navigating increasingly tangled obligations to duty and etiquette. Compared to the unfavorable treatment Gawain receives in French romances, the northern English and Scots writers of these texts cast him in a more

sympathetic light as a hero whose transgressions derive from failing to navigate courtly obligations carefully rather than from out-and-out corruption. Such a recuperative treatment is at least in part motivated by Gawain's perceived value as an implicitly Scottish knight (he is associated through his father, King Lot, with the Orkney and Lothian regions of Scotland), around whom northern English and Scots romance writers can organize borderlands stories of baronial resistance to southern English authority.

The chapter begins by grounding my readings in the historical and cultural context of the Anglo-Scottish Marches, a tract of land which served as a kind of political buffer between England and Scotland from the mid-thirteenth century until the Union of the Crowns in 1603. As the border region between two kingdoms, The Marches become the site for a great deal of violence in the later Middle Ages, in the form of direct warfare, proxy fighting, and localized conflicts between feuding families on either side of the boundary. The Marches also develop a distinct culture and a regional identity distinct from that of either Scottish or English national identity, due in large part to the fact that much of what constitutes Scottishness or Englishness at the time is rooted in the politics and culture of Edinburgh and London, respectively. At the same time, the people inhabiting the Marches must continually navigate issues of national and familial allegiance, and they must do so without the protections or guarantees afforded city dwellers. Accordingly, the sign systems which encode identity are less stable in the Marches, and more open to being misread, manipulated, or otherwise misrepresented. This vulnerability to interpretation applies equally to the sign system of feeling-emblems.

In my readings of these three Gawain poems, I use the backdrop of the Anglo-Scottish Marches to show how each poem depicts emotional expressions as emblems in interpretive contest, wavering between the symbolic meaning Gawain assigns to them and the ones they accrue from association with others. At stake in each of these romances is the extent to which chivalric devices can (or cannot) retain the intensity of the feelings knights attach to them when put under scrutiny. To repeat an example discussed above, the sash of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* first enters the poem in a gift-giving game between Gawain and Lady Bertilak, and Gawain dishonestly holds onto it because he believes it will protect him from the beheading he is about to face at the hands of the Green Knight. When Gawain is ultimately taken to task for this failure of courage, he says that he will bear the sash as a sign of his frailty, and returns to Arthur's court humbled. The court, however, ignores Gawain's intent with the sash—a deeply

ambiguous laughter fills the hall as he recounts his tale in shame—and decides instead that each knight should wear it as a stylish accessory. A later scribal hand appends the motto of the Order of the Garter to the end of the poem ("hony soyt qui mal pence," or "shame upon the person who thinks evil of it"), creating the impression that this contested heraldic symbol of negative feelings is itself generative of a historical chivalric order. The sash, a material symbol of a border ("bord" in Middle English), is thus appropriated by monarchical powers twice over in the poem's surviving manuscript, once when Arthur decides that Gawain's personal symbol of shame will become the pride of his court, and again when the writer of the chivalric motto lays claim to the poem as an origin story for the Order of the Garter. For an audience of "borderers," this double appropriation could have easily recalled the ways in which both the Scottish and English crowns increasingly asserted authority over the Marches without actually protecting or improving the quality of life for its inhabitants.

In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Gawain's sash shifts from a symbol of sin and shame to one of courtly fashion and pride in the Arthurian enterprise, and one which crucially solidifies its masculine community of knights by projecting blame for Gawain's indiscretion onto the "wyles of wymen." In *Gologras*, the juxtaposition of graphic scenes of combat (in which knights fight while weeping openly and writhing with woe) against highly ceremonious battlefield conduct and lapidary detail makes it difficult for onlookers to accurately assess the severity of the fight between Gawain and his rival, Gologras. Consequently, almost all narrative attention in the poem is directed at resolving the confusion between performative chivalric contest and sincere negative emotional expression. The poem's climax sees the autonomous knight Gologras persuading Gawain to feign defeat, because he has an elaborate "devis" or plan for resolving the fight without a fatality, and when the deception is eventually revealed, Arthur promises to return Gologras's land to him and recognize his sovereignty. This conclusion, and particularly Gawain's willingness to display a false feeling-emblem before a crowd of onlookers, suggests an underlying awareness in the poem that chivalric emblems (both conventional and affective emblems) are inherently unstable in a borderlands space. The tidy resolve of the poem, in which both Arthur and Gologras recognize each other's sovereignty, reveals how the instability of chivalric emblems in borderlands space can lend itself to imagined alternatives to the history of warfare that actually played out in the Marches.

Awntyrs is another poem which largely concerns the sovereignty of a local lord, and this is the poem of the three which most explicitly cites the Marches as its context: the challenging lord, Galeron, holds some land in Scotland, including territory which abuts the Debatable Lands in the southwestern region of the Marches. *Awntyrs* consists of a diptych of narratives (with the feudal land dispute following an encounter between Gawain, Guenevere, and Guenevere's mother's ghost), and the poem uses this diptych to critique the romance tradition of glorifying violence and materialist symbols. The poem identifies the threshold to interpreting feelings-as-devices most clearly in its representation of Guenevere's dead mother: part ghoulish specter, part lamenting and tormented prophet, she demands recognition at the same time that the horror of her affect nearly causes Gawain to ignore her warnings. Later on in the poem, it is actually Galeron's lady who expresses a feeling-emblem nearly identical to that of Guenevere's mother, and it is the frightfulness and desperation of this action which persuades Guenevere to spare Galeron and incorporate him into the Round Table knighthood. I argue that the feeling-emblem shared by these women crosses the divide of the poem's diptych and does the necessary communicative work and conflict resolution which none of the men are able to initiate in *Awntyrs*, thereby producing a cohesive and inclusive Arthurian community, if still one predicated on imperial domination and land acquisition.

I group these three romances together in part so as to reduce the likelihood that the burden falls entirely on any one poem to represent in full the nuances of borderlands politics. But there is a rationale for organizing this triplet which I derive from the poetic forms and styles shared across the poems: even though *Gologras* and *Awntyrs* are regularly placed together with other popular Gawain romances, editors have long-noted that these two poems are distinct in the "exceptional artfulness of their meter, verse forms, and descriptive detail [which] separate them from the unchecked narrative movement of the other poems."[72] The comparatively elaborate structure of their composition, including alliterative long lines arranged into thirteen line "Wakefield stanzas" of abababababcdddc, points to their potential appeal to more elite literary audiences while the very fact of their many surviving copies suggests broad popularity among an emergent class of Northern bourgeoisie. Both of these poems have a kind of double positionality then, drawing freely upon the narrative content of other rollicking popular romances at the same time that they interpolate formal elements from earlier composers like Langland and the

[72] Hahn 22 fn. 39.

Gawain-poet. Consequently, I consider them suitable comparator texts for *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a work whose structural intricacy and attention to courtly pastimes suggests its intended audience was aristocratic rather than popular.

Though they do so differently, each of these poems sets its action in some version of borderland space, both literally in the interstices between ruled territories and figuratively in spaces where the codes of behavior are ambiguously defined. In such settings, abstract chivalric values and their concomitant feelings are repeatedly translated and interpreted across borders, whether that border separates the terrestrial from the supernatural (*Awntyrs*), the imperial from the provincial (*Gologras*), or the familiar from the strange (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*). To better understand what's at stake in these negotiations, my work in this chapter relies on a variety of theorists of the border, from Gloria Anzaldúa to Homi K. Bhabha to Mary Louise Pratt to Jacques Derrida. Each of these thinkers offers a perspective on the kinds of cultural hybridity, identity contradictions, contact zones, and translation issues which arise in borderlands space and manifest in the emotional expressions of these three Gawain romances.

My fourth and last full chapter, "The Racialization of Affect in Middle Scots and Middle English Crusader Romance Narratives: John Barbour's *The Bruce* and *The Sultan of Babylon*" argues that these two poems structure categories of racial, gendered, and religious otherness through their coding of emotional expression. Noise, the pervasive sonic condition of the battlefield, marks a communication breakdown in *The Bruce* and *Sultan*, the point where intelligible language gives in to pure shouting, brawling, sound. But noise implicitly also calls attention to what is lost in that breakdown, suggesting that the semantic content of battlefield speech can be creatively reimagined, often in the service of pre-existing ideas about racialized bodies and identities. The chapter begins with a reading of John Barbour's *The Bruce* and its account of "noyis" during the Battle at Bannockburn books. Though *The Bruce* at first seems to share little thematic content with *Sultan*, Barbour's poem draws upon the genre of crusader romance at length in its opposition between the Scottish and English forces, and the poem's version of Robert the Bruce even recites a version of *Fierabras* (the main source text for *Sultan*) to entertain and inspire his men. So, including *The Bruce* is valuable as a way of creating continuity between the crusader poems of this chapter and the project's larger focus on Scots and English chivalric romance.

In *The Bruce*, English soldiers openly recognize that they are fighting "against the right" of the Scots' just cause, mirroring the words of Muslim knights in *Sultan* who openly recognize the religious authority of Charlemagne's campaign; elsewhere, characters make specific comparisons between going on crusade and the present fight against the English. Still, the trope of the "fighting Scot" troubles any easy parallel between *The Bruce* and crusader romances by representing the Scottish knights simultaneously as worshipful heroes shouting down the English enemy in Robert's name and as raging, screaming, looting marauders. While it would be a stretch to claim that this trope means a late medieval audience would be more inclined to identify with a Muslim character in a crusader romance, members of the Scottish gentry did actually make claims to an imagined North African/Middle Eastern ancestry as part of the argument for Scottish independence.

An early part of the section on *The Bruce* focuses on the legend of Scota, which rose to popularity among the aristocracy of Scotland in the early fourteenth century. The legend—which was cited indirectly in petitions sent to the papal curia in 1301 and later in the Declaration of Arbroath—claims a progenitor of the Gaels in Scota, the daughter of an Egyptian pharaoh, who travels to the Iberian Peninsula and eventually settles in the British Isles. For the Scottish gentry of the age, this origin myth serves a crucial ideological function by giving them a reputed lineage which can rival that of Brutus of Troy (thereby circumventing the claim from Edward I of England that he had rightful rule over all of Britain through Brutus). For Robert I of Scotland and for his lairds, this imagined ancestry, connected as it was to the Iberian Peninsula, Egypt, and sometimes to ancient Scythia, offered a real political strategy for claiming rightful sovereignty from England, and it did so through posturing at an identification with non-European peoples. Though *The Bruce* does not mention the legend of Scota directly, it would have been well-known to Barbour through contemporary chroniclers like John of Fordun, and part of my argument for this section of the chapter is that the poem expects us to consider this legend when it characterizes the Scots with the crusader romance conventions of Muslim knights. Barbour's innovation and poetic contribution to the oddity of this legend is in connecting the Scots to non-European peoples through affect and feeling rather than through genealogy or blood. His primary register for describing affect and for racializing that affect is a sonic one, and *The Bruce* is especially attentive to the power and signifying potential for noise.

"Noyis" in *The Bruce* does similarly unifying work for its company of knights as other categories of dysphoric feelings discussed in the earlier chapters, as when the Scottish forces' shouting at Bannockburn seems to multiply and strengthen their number in the minds of the English, until even the bravest and best among the English tries to flee the fight. It is the power of noise to disorient which makes it such a weapon of fear in *The Bruce*, disrupting as it does an army's ability to perceive the enemy or make legible their signs upon the battlefield. Sometimes noise functions as a proper feeling-emblem, like when a knight fighting for the English shouts his own battle cry as he charges to his death, but more generally in *The Bruce* noise is an expression of pure feeling, devoid of semantic or identity-conferring content. The ubiquitous shouting of the Scots, for example, communicates battlefield intention and emotional disposition, but little else, and so noise marks an auditory boundary of intelligibility the way that physical distance marks an interpretive boundary in the Gawain romances. I preface my treatment of *Sultan* with this example of "noyis" from *The Bruce* in order to show how the inherent ambiguity of noise is negotiated in a poem which indexes categories of difference several times over.

Though noise plays an important role in the emotional expression of several Muslim characters in *Sultan*, the most compelling case for study is that of Floripas, the Sultan's daughter. Because she is the foremost Muslim princess of a crusader romance, Floripas occupies a highly contested identity position. Indeed, much of the poem's narrative concerns the project of converting her to Christianity, which simultaneously subverts the authority of Laban, her father, and makes her marriageable to Charlemagne's knights. But Floripas is as resistant a character to categorical containment as the poem offers, and her behavior—increasingly violent, aggressive, prone to bursts of caustic laughter, and emotionally vivid—suggests a more complex model of identity positions than the crusader narrative of forced conversion would ask us to believe.

While Floripas in many ways seems to conform to the noisiness of a racialized, gendered affect of otherness, it is not clear that this in any way detracts from her agency and self-determination in the poem. In fact, I argue that Floripas's emotional expression during and after her battlefield conversion to Christianity subverts the authority and finality of that conversion, specifically by invoking the violent imagery of her brother Ferumbras. More than just an echo of his invocation against the Douzepers, Floripas's speech is an instance of the words of a Muslim Other being converted from noise to intelligible (and radically destabilizing) language within the cultural imaginary of a Christian chivalric community. Borrowing Jack

Halberstam's concept of "female masculinity," I read Floripas as appropriating the rhetorical position of a knight, in that she speaks assertively in a register of chivalric metaphors and echoes her brother's battlefield threats against the Franks. In this reading, Floripas effectively inherits the sonic feeling-emblem of Ferumbras after his conversion and baptism, such that all of the poem's affective energy and insistence on marking difference gets charged upon her. Via the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, I consider whether this development in Floripas can offer lasting resistance to the Christian project of anti-Muslim violence, if not in its own cultural moment, at least for us as modern readers today.

My work concludes with a coda concerning Thomas Malory's *The Morte Darthur* and its emphasis on the earning of "worshyp," Malory's preferred term for what is often called chivalric prowess elsewhere in the literature. Malory is, in several ways, an inevitable endpoint for my research, as his literary project is directly concerned with compiling, revising, and recontextualizing narrative content from sources discussed in each chapter. My thesis is forward-looking chronologically, attending as it does to the feelings and the cultural imagination of an emergent late medieval bourgeois readership of romances, and Malory's literary sensibilities typify that readership with their emphasis on chivalric pageantry, tournament, and decorum. *The Morte Darthur* is also a work whose historical legacy is inextricably bound up in the rise of print culture, as the editorial interventions of its printer and marketer, William Caxton, made Malory's composition all the more appealing to a bourgeois readership eager to see itself championed in an imagined chivalric past.

Broadly speaking, Middle English romance as a genre is interested in the utility of violence as a technology of social order, or more precisely in the potential for the dealing of violence among knights to be converted into chivalric propriety and social rank. In the Gawain poems I examine throughout Chapter 3, for example, the brute violence of territorial conquest is sublimated into games of aristocratic politesse, and it is often a potentially hostile exchange (of prisoners, of land holdings, of axe blows) which functions to convert a violent chivalric culture to suit the tastes of an emerging mercantile society. While this translation of real violence into performative violence is certainly applicable to the larger category of romances I examine, the coda argues for something of the reverse process in *The Morte Darthur*. That is, for Malory, notions of "worshypful" feeling and aristocratic gentility are the cultural starting point, not the intended end point, and the task at hand is to render such affective states in the vigorous

language of life-and-death chivalric contest. In effect, Malory presents the highly ornamental and performative tournament battles of *The Morte* as accomplishing the same social and political ends for Arthur as actually sending knights into the countryside or out on crusade. There are significant stakes to this endeavor for an aristocratic or merchant class English readership living under the shadow of ongoing wars with France: by representing the feelings associated with the earning of "worshyp" in terms compatible with the actual violent work of military engagement, Malory equates the *affective disposition* of chivalry with the actual *doing* of chivalry. This is, then, a closing example of a chivalric device and its attached feelings being adapted to assert the importance of a particular identity position—here the "worshypful" tournament knight of Malory's Arthurian imaginary—at the same time that a historical emergent bourgeois knighthood is appropriating the conventions of heraldry to authorize itself through economic rather than military prowess.

The coda reserves much of its space for the figure of Palomides, whom I've discussed briefly above. Though Malory does not significantly develop Palomides from the version which appears in the Prose *Tristan*, Palomides remains a remarkable and complex figure in the Arthurian court. He is professedly Muslim for much of his narrative arc but intends to convert to Christianity, his father is Middle Eastern, his coat of arms is a black-and-white checkerboard, he is heroic in battle but also treated as a comic foil, he is nominally interested in Iseult as a lover but is almost exclusively found talking about, thinking about, and desiring to find Tristan, and his chief chivalric pursuit is he Questing Beast. Without overstating the case, Palomides is a fitting culmination for the focus of each chapter because he can speak to the feelings and emotional expressions bound up in queer chivalry, in living life on the "border" of identity categories, and in the experiences of a Muslim knight in a Christian community. For Palomides, the endless cycle of chasing a quarry which he can never catch and being subjected to both micro- and macro-aggressions from those around him engenders a deep frustration and irritability rooted in an awareness that the rules of chivalry are not made for him. If Malory sets out to turn aristocratic pretensions into real deeds of chivalric violence with *The Morte Darthur*, then he certainly succeeds with the treatment of Palomides, though this does little more than reproduce the old religious and racial prejudices of his source texts.

CHAPTER 2

THE ALLITERATIVE MORTE ARTHURE AND ITS QUEER CHIVALRIC IMAGINATION

Chapter Introduction

Critical treatments of the *Brut* tradition and the Matter of Britain in Middle English poetry often reasonably begin with the early chronicle sources like Gildas, Bede, and Geoffrey of Monmouth. Geoffrey's *Historia regum Britanniae* in particular looms large as an influence upon the historical imagination of medieval Anglo-Norman writers, and its version of Britain's past continues to shape representations of the Arthurian world today, particularly in the revisionist rhetoric of white nationalist political groups. For the time being, however, I will be putting these chronicle influences to the side in my discussion of *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, beginning instead with its more immediate forebear, the late twelfth/early thirteenth century *Brut* of Layamon. This is in part so that I can fully treat the work that has already been done by critical race scholars and other scholars of color on these chronicle sources in my fourth chapter, rather than giving them short shrift here. A further justification for beginning with Layamon is that I am not hunting for textual origins in my reading of the *Morte* but for aesthetic and affective novelty in how it envisions a fictional British past—for contrastive ways of representing in poetry the familiar paces of the Arthurian imperial saga—and Layamon is the best-suited text to that end.

Written in an alliterative form and Anglo-Saxon vocabulary inherited from Old English poetry, Layamon's version of the *Brut* also incorporates a sporadic line-internal rhyme scheme and some Anglo-Norman terms which reveal its debt to Continental poetic forms. The *Morte* in turn mirrors these stylistic choices by very consciously modeling itself on alliterative Old English poetry while simultaneously making playful allusions to French/Norman Arthuriana.[73] To a significant extent, then, these two Middle English poems share cultural, aesthetic, and

[73] An early example in the poem occurs in the description of the feast when Arthur hosts the Roman senators: "All with taught men and towen in toggles full rich, / Of sank real in suite, sixty at ones" (ll. 178-179). The phrase "sank real" here refers to royal blood, but it also connotes the French term "seint-gral" for the Holy Grail. This apparent pun becomes a sort of folk etymology for the term "Holy Grail" within later Grail literature, but its earliest recorded use in the *MED* is here in the *Alliterative Morte*.

historiographic reference points, but are separated by roughly two hundred years in their composition. This historical distance between the poems and the common ground they share thematically permits us to conduct a diachronic study of cultural change within the aristocratic class to whom such "popular" poems were typically addressed.[74] I aim for precisely such a study in this chapter, with the specific goal of identifying the existential concerns and affective sensibilities which seem to be emergent for a late medieval aristocratic audience, because identifying these emergent qualities can complicate the idea of medieval dominant culture as it is appropriated today by right-wing discourses of nostalgia and bygone empire. In starting with a comparison between their representations of the same introductory passage from Arthur's conquest of the Continent, I locate evidence that the expression of both individual and group identity (the building blocks which make up Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities") have developed meaningful new affective dimensions by the time of *The Morte*'s writing.

In a key scene from the *Brut* tradition dating back at least to Geoffrey's *Historia*, Roman envoys or senators come to Arthur demanding that he swear fealty to the Emperor Lucius in recognition of an old arrangement between Julius Caesar and the British ruler Cassibellaunus (or Cassivellaunus). In Layamon's version of this scene, Arthur's men leap up from their table, indignant at the thought of paying tribute to a Roman king, and it is only Arthur's sober words and staid, flat affect that maintains peace over the exchange:

> Æfne þisse worden; Bruttes buȝen from borden.
> þer wes Ar[ð]ures hird; **hehliche awraððed**.
> and muchene að **sworen**; uppen mære ure Drihten.
> þat alle heo dede **weoren**; þa þeos arunde beden;
> mid horsen al **to-draȝene**. **dæð heo sculden þolie**;
> Þer heo buȝen to; Bruttes **swiðe wraðe**.

[74] While it is harder to speak with certainty about what "popular" literature means in medieval studies than in our own contemporary culture (because the audience of medieval popular literature is still wealthy, educated, and limited in size relative to the actual populace), the study of popular literature is no less stigmatized. As Nicola McDonald notes in her introduction to *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, popular medieval romance is regularly judged as "low-class" and unworthy of serious criticism, even by its own would-be advocates (see Pearsall, "The Development of Middle English Romance"), when compared to the "elite" literature of Chaucer or Langland. As McDonald goes on to say, however much this denigration of romances seems to be class-based, there is also an intensely misogynistic critique of romances for their emotional earnestness and perceived femininity (2). Such stigmas are similar to the ones which affect theorists like Ngai and Berlant face in discussing "feminized" genres like melodrama and soap operas. It is in large part because both medieval romance and these more modern genres have been maligned for their power to elicit feelings of embarrassment, sensationalism, or pleasure in the critic that I choose to pair affect theory with a reappraisal of the emotional expression in *The Morte*.

luken heom bi uaxe; and **laiden** heom to grunde.
þer weoren men Romanisce; **reouliche atoȝene**.
ȝif Arður ne leope to; swulc hit a liun weore.
and þas word seide; wisest alre Brutten.
Bilæueð bilaueð swiðe; þas cnihtes on liue.
ne sceollen heo on mine hirede; nenne harm þolien.
heo beoð hider iriden; ut of Rom-leoden.
swa heore lauerd heom hehte; Luces is ihaten.[75] (ll. 12393-12406, emphasis added)

As the bolded verbs and verb phrases demonstrate, there is an abundance of highly affective and violent language in this scene (wrathe predominates, but there is also the swearing of oaths, dragging by horses, pulling of hair, and throwing of Romans upon the ground). However, these terms are exclusively attached to Arthur's men, and the phrase "ȝif Arður ne leope to" serves almost as a volta in the poem's tone, shifting narrative attention to the calm and wise reasoning of the king of the Britons as Arthur explains why the Romans must be protected. As seen here, the Arthur of Layamon's poem contrasts his stoic governance with the glory-eager calls for bloodshed on the part of knights like Sir Cador, and overall the passage characterizes Arthur as a king whose judgment should not be questioned.[76] This is a strictly hierarchical relationship between Arthur and his men, and if there is a degree of communal identity suggested by the repeated reference to a third person plural "Bruttes," Arthur himself is still figured as the individual champion, akin to the way contemporary romances like *Havelok* and *King Horn* fashion their heroes. By comparison, in *The Morte*'s retelling of this passage,[77] the narrator's language is significantly more attentive to both the heraldic imagery of the Roman envoy and the

[75] "At these words the Britons leapt from the board; there was Arthur's court exceedingly enraged; and swore mickle oath, upon our mighty Lord, that they all were (should be) dead, who this erand bare; with horses drawn in pieces, death they should suffer. There leapt towards them the Britons exceeding wrath; tore them by the hair, and laid them to the ground. There were (would have been) the Romanish men pitifully treated, if Arthur had not leapt to them, as if it were a lion; and said these words—wisest of all Britons!—'Leave ye, leave quickly these knights alive! They shall not in my court suffer any harm; they are hither ridden out of Rome, as their lord commanded them, who is named Luces.'" (translated by Madden 118-119)

[76] See Arthur's curt reply when Cador and Gawain offer their own counsel as to how best the court should deal with the Roman visitors: "Sitte adun swiðe; mine cnihte alle. / and ælc bi his lifen; luste mine worden; / Al hit wes stille; þat wunede inne halle / Þa spak þe king balde; to riche his folke" (ll. 12462-12465).

[77] I choose my verb carefully here, because finding a direct line of influence from any given chronicle version of Arthur's life down to *The Alliterative Morte* is no easy task. Although scholars have largely agreed for at least half a century now that Layamon is an unlikely direct source for the *Morte* poet (see William Matthews; Valerie Krishna), I use Layamon because his version of the *Brut* represents the broader category of chronicle accounts in the centuries preceding composition of *The Morte*. Whether or not it was a direct source is of little consequence to my study, because I am primarily tracking poetic innovation on the part of the *Morte* poet.

characterization of Arthur's emotional disposition as heavily dependent upon and intertwined with that of his men.

When the Romans arrive in the opening lines of *The Morte*, the senator presents his credentials in the form of Lucius's royal seal and points to the armorial device (a "targe") inscribed upon it "with notaries sign." Though seemingly civil in its initial entreaty, the senator's assertion of a foreign authority over Arthur's court quickly devolves from diplomatic rhetoric to name-calling and open threats.[78] In response, before even speaking a single word, Arthur proceeds to overpower the senator and his retinue through the sheer affective force of his glare and his blushing appearance:

> The king blushed on the berne with his brode eyen,
> That full bremly for brethe brent as the gledes,
> Cast colours as the king with cruel lates
> Looked as a lion and on his lip bites.
> The Romanes for radness rusht to the erthe,
> For ferdness of his face as they fey were;
> Couched as kennetes before the king selven;
> Because of his countenaunce confused them seemed! (ll. 116-123)

When the senator finds strength to address Arthur again, he declares that the "vout" (expression) of "thy visage has wounded us all," and another of the Romans flat out begs for mercy. In reply, Arthur says that he will not "warp wordes in waste" or act "wilfully in this wrath to wreken myselven," choosing instead to seek the counsel of the "richest renkes of the Round Table."

This version of the exchange as told in The *Morte* lays out in quick succession nearly all the constitutive parts of the conflicts to follow in the poem's sprawling narrative: a formal challenge made through the presentation of chivalric devices, a gesture or expression of emotional intensity which precipitates the battle, and the collective action of a community of knights made in the express interest of their own elite social status. Most immediately, the depiction of Arthur's "countenaunce" provides us with this template for how emotion is converted into action in the poem, but it also establishes a visual-tactile register that proves emblematic of the poem's affective discourse. This particular register—although original as an

[78] In Mary Hamel's edition of *The Morte*, she describes the senator's message as "carefully legalistic, especially in its emphasis on credentials and documentation" (256). As she observes, this description from the poet (and other instances in the poem) reflect a "specialized legal knowledge" which may have been influenced by contemporary documents in which Henry IV summonses Scottish nobility to his court (256-7).

addition to the story told in earlier *Brut* chronicles—arguably develops as a specialized instance of a more common visual and tactile register which we find in chivalry manuals of the era.

In his *Book of Chivalry*, Geoffroi de Charny advances a kind of pedagogical theory of chivalry in which young knights learn of war-making from observing more senior knights and from first-hand experience on the battlefield. These experiences spur knights ever onward, such that they discover new frontiers of earning honor the more experienced in war they become:

> And the more these men see and themselves perform brave deeds, the more it seems to them, because of the high standards their natural nobility demands of them, that they have done nothing and that they are still only at the beginning… They therefore take pains to travel to different places and to endure great physical hardship in their journeys through many countries across land and sea. (17.23-33)

This method of learning chivalric conduct through participatory observation reinforces the value of sight and the public gaze of other knights upon the battlefield, not least because of the shame and prowess at stake in conducting oneself well in warfare. What goes unsaid by Geoffroi here is the fact that any knight-in-training who is to learn chivalry by this model—and then model it himself—must be skilled at both reading and expressing the affective disposition proper for a man-at-arms. There is then an assumed visual literacy among knights upon the battlefield, such that they are expected to measure their own personal experience of chivalric conduct against the performance of the same by other knights and then redress any lack they find in themselves by seeking out new and braver deeds to complete. This example from Geoffroi represents the hierarchical model we see in Layamon, with Arthur (the senior knight) correcting the battle-eagerness of his men by displaying the appropriate conduct of a knight for the occasion. Arthur expresses a flat, composed chivalric affect, and his men immediately fall in line and leave off their former outrage. In *The Alliterative Morte*, however, hierarchy is thoroughly unsettled, and there is much more back-and-forth between the affective displays of Arthur and his men, suggesting that Geoffroi's model is insufficient for capturing how the poem wants us to read the feelings associated with chivalric behavior.

Arthur's gaze upon the Roman envoy inspires "ferdness" (fear, terror) with its forcefulness in a way that troubles the distinction between the subjective experience of feelings and the objective appearance of coded emotions. The poem struggles to capture just what is

happening to the Romans as they suffer Arthur's "blushing," mixing its similes[79] until the whole scene is confused with feeling and affective intensity. This confusion—both that which is experienced by the Romans and that which is represented in the poem's haphazard description of their behavior—reemerges throughout *The Morte* and signals attempts by the narrator to represent or "read" the feelings of knights as chivalric emblems. As we will see, these moments of confusion around the legibility of feelings correlate to scenes of intense bodily intimacy between knights, regardless of whether they are on or off the battlefield. For now, it suffices to note that, although the "bremly" feelings in the scene above seem to emanate solely from Arthur, their forcefulness in provoking fear and confusion is in fact deeply tied to the Round Table brotherhood and its members.

When Arthur does get around to hearing the counsel of his most senior knights, each one reflects back to him a version of the "brethe" (anger) conveyed by the king's glare, but warped by their own concerns and character traits. Cador welcomes the call to valiant deeds of arms regardless of the justification behind it, Aungers says Arthur should claim right rulership over all other kings, the rulers of Brittany and Wales (along with Sir Lot) are eager to "wreke full well the wrath of our elders" against the Romans for previous injustices to their peoples, Ewain fitz Urien praises conquest for its own sake, and Lancelot supports the whole enterprise as an opportunity for jousting and giant-killing. Tying these various rationales for bloodshed together, Arthur "kindly comfortes these knightes" by assuring them that they maintain his honor in earth, and that all of his wealth and worship is owed to their conquering:

> Then the conquerour kindly comfortes these knightes,
> Alowes them gretly their lordly avowes;
> "Allweldand God worship you all!
> And let me never want you, whiles I in world regn;
> My mensk and my manhed ye maintain in erthe,
> Mine honour all utterly in other kinges landes;
> My wele and my worship of all this world rich,
> Ye have knightly conquered that to my crown longes." (ll. 395-406)

Arthur is stating a basic fact of medieval monarchical rule when he claims to owe his continued high standing to the support of his knights, but this is an uncommon acknowledgement (and

[79] e.g Arthur glares with the heat of coals ("as the gledes") but also looks "as a lion," and the Romans rush to the ground as though mortally wounded ("as they fey were") and yet also cower before Arthur "as kennetes."

consequently a notable one) to find within either the romance or chronicle tradition.[80] Instead of the narratorial critiques we find in poems contemporary to *The Morte* which fault Arthur as incompetent, foolhardy, or unserious (e.g. "sumquat childgered," in the words of the *Gawain*-poet), this passage comes to us in Arthur's own speech and complicates rather than simplifies the image of his rule. Specifically, the Arthur depicted here is intensely aware of his own vulnerability in the absence of his men ("let me never want you, whiles I in world regn"), of the fact that honor circulates within its own economy of exchange, and of the multiple voices contained within the countenance of the royal "I."

The affective force of Arthur's "countenaunce" is so striking because it operates on two different axes of Arthur's identity as sovereign, unifying his roles as lawful ruler and as heroic warrior through a single scornful gaze (his "cruel lates"). Arthur himself refers to these identity values as his "mensk" and his "manhed," and while both terms ostensibly refer to states of personhood,[81] "mensk" is used much more figuratively and commonly denotes an honored state, high social station, or judicial favor,[82] as seems to be the case here. The dual voice with which Arthur speaks is a distinctive component of the *Morte*'s representation of royalty, which Christine Chism has documented at length in her account of how the poem invokes "chivalric nostalgias" of the warrior-king:

> The *Morte Arthure*'s Arthur proves his nobility in combat as vigorously as any of his knights. By making Arthur at heart an ideal knight with a thin veneering of royalty, the poet constructs a fantasy of solidarity between king and noble at a time of intensifying factional division and alienation between royalty and nobility climaxing in the deposition of Richard II. In the poem, these solidarities extend beyond oaths and even bloodlines and infuse their corporeal identities until king and nobility become virtually one body;

[80] *The Morte* is a rare work in the surviving corpus of Arthurian literature when it comes to confidently blending elements of both the romance and chronicle tradition. Patricia Ingham says of this tendency that the Morte poet "imagines the chronicle-romance relation as one of shared interests" (*Sovereign Fantasies* 81) rather than necessary opposition. Her chief example of this claim is in the fact that Arthur's death in the Alliterative *Morte* "results from a complex dynamic of international and domestic affairs registered in the sovereign's own territorial ambitions" (80), with the international components (his conquest on the continent) deriving from the chronicle tradition and the domestic components (betrayal by Mordred and others) coming from romance. Thus the narrative arc of the Alliterative *Morte* examines or critiques simultaneously the importance of chronicle and romance characterizations of Arthur as ruler.

[81] Middle English "mensk(e)" derives from Scandinavian and Proto-Germanic forms meaning "mannishness," and is cognate with modern German *Mensch*.

[82] *MED*, "mensk(e)," n. 1a, 2a.

> the poem's Arthur both incarnates and contains the chivalric self-expressions of his knights and captains, while they in turn express his own fierce emotions and desires. (190)

As Chism suggests (and as the above passages from the poem's opening demonstrate) the "fantasy of solidarity" in the poem is primarily maintained through the reciprocal expression of feelings between Arthur and his knights. Just as the Round Table knights mirror Arthur's angry disposition back to him when they offer their counsel, Arthur prefaces his decision to wage war on Lucius with the assertion that his honor, wealth, and manhood are all maintained by the work of his men.[83] In this sense, Arthur speaks to the Romans not just through the dual voices of warrior and king, but also through the voices and feelings of his knights, so that we begin to see the Arthur of this poem as a composite figure, constituted by the chivalric brotherhood he nominally leads.

To be sure, this sort of backward-looking idealization of earlier models of seigneurial chivalry is in keeping with the politically conservative, even proto-nationalist, bent of poems written during the Alliterative Revival. And yet, the conceit through which the poem articulates that conservative bent—an intimate brotherhood of knights sharing fierce emotions and bodies with one another in mutual support—is politically radical and utterly destabilizing to any simple categorization of the poem's social politics. This is the tension at play in the opening scene of the poem, in which Arthur and his men hold counsel with a much more robust emotional vocabulary and intimacy among themselves than anything attested in earlier versions of the *Brut* narrative[84] and yet nonetheless resolve to declare unrelenting war upon Lucius, an adversarial placeholder for all things culturally and ethnically foreign. It is the remaining work of this chapter to demonstrate that the poem's understanding of chivalry is motivated by these two conflicting

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[83] Valerie Krishna, in her edition of the poem, observes that the plural of majesty is uncommon in the *Morte Arthure*, and Arthur typically refers to himself in the singular: "Most of the instances in which he does use the plural may be interpreted as collective references to himself and his men" (3-4). As she notes, it "may be significant that the only example that can be identified definitely as a plural of majesty occurs in an arrogant statement that Arthur makes when he is at his zenith, just after the capitulation of Rome and just before the dream prophesying his downfall... " (4).

[84] In addition to the descriptive attention to Arthur's looks and "countenaunce," see his caution that Cador not rush headlong into action "as thy herte thinkes" (l. 262). This phrase, somewhat idiomatic for doing as one pleases, is notable for suggesting the heart as a thinking organ in the poem's emotional discourse. For more on this idea, see essays in *The Feeling Heart in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Meaning, Embodiment, and Making*, among which are treatments by Eric Jager, Heather Webb, and Robert Erickson on the heart as the seat of intellect, will, memory, and conscience in the medieval imagination (3).

impulses toward an emotionally expressive and emphatically queer community of men on the one hand, and a xenophobic, brutalizing model of Anglo-European imperialism on the other.

Sharing Male Bodies and the Intimacy of Touch on the Battlefield

To say that *The Morte* represents feelings as being fundamentally based in a shared group experience is, on its face, not a novel claim, however much it might run counter to what we think of when discussing personal "feelings" in a modern context. Indeed, much of the recent work on historical emotional expressions suggests that, to a medieval sensibility, feelings would not have been meaningfully compartmentalized as strictly personal or communal, private or public.[85] Personal feelings flowed forth from the shared feelings of a group and back into them, and these communal feelings were often themselves foundational for collective identities among a class or category of people.[86] This means that a group's feelings (and its particular discourse of feelings) were just as important in identifying the constituent members of that group as were other shared qualities like beliefs, cultural references, lived experiences, or identity positions.

In the largely secular social context of *The Alliterative Morte*'s characters and its audience, the collective identities at stake are based in particular feelings presumed to be available only to the aristocracy due to their social refinement and their cultural familiarity with the emotional vocabulary of courtly literature (*Medieval Sensibilities* 249). According to this social hierarchy, medieval emotions like anger or "ennobling love" helped the aristocracy distinguish itself from non-elite classes not only in what emotions they could feel but in which ones they could publicly display and own as theirs, much like the way more conventional heraldic imagery would be used (249). To that end, the naming of emotions is key to how the

[85] "If today we primarily think of and live out our emotions as intimate occurrences, we can only understand those of the Middle Ages by going beyond the dichotomy of the intimate and the shared, of what is private and what is public. It is only by refusing to separate the psychological and the social, and instead drawing them together, that affectivity will find its place within the broader historical narrative" (*Medieval Sensibilities* 248).

[86] Then, as now, this is particularly true of social rituals and events like festivals, weddings, or religious processions, which could "unite the people who participate in them, setting off processes of emotional communion and identity fusion" (*Medieval Sensibilities* 225).

aristocratic community defines itself and its others, and this fact is reflected amply in the emotional vocabulary of *The Morte*.[87]

The poem's radical intervention in this aristocratic social structure of feeling occurs when it tests the limits of communal feelings as chivalric emblems. If the elite chivalric community becomes "virtually one body" (in Chism's words) through the mutual expression of feelings, then what happens to that body when the feelings at play are not conventionally courtly[88] or have not passed fully into the realm of what can be named? In answering that question, the poem regularly turns its descriptive attention to intimate accounts of male bodies and the intense but seemingly dishonorable feelings shared across those bodies. These moments, I argue, mark the emergence and the promise of a queer, compassionate chivalric imagination from the poem's otherwise fatalistic perspective on the future of the aristocracy.

However else scholars characterize the battlefield poetics of *The Morte*—grotesque in detail, xenophobic or ethnically exoticist in rhetoric, and thoroughly unconcerned with the welfare of women and non-combatants—critics note with some consistency that "intimacy" is a governing aesthetic value for the poem.[89] By intimacy, I mean that throughout the poem, its sprawling narrative of conquest is interrupted by depictions of close emotional and physical

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[87] For more on the instrumentalization of emotions in medieval romance, see Andrew Lynch's chapter "What Cheer?" Lynch argues for the existence of "functional emotions" in Layamon (52). According to Lynch, the emotion of "cheer" in particular "is inextricably linked to an emotional evaluation of the preceding action and to the potential within emotion for further action," though he acknowledges that cheer "also retains a spontaneity that can exceed both the prescriptions of emotionology and of political utility or any situated 'goal-oriented' behavior" (62). Of course, the naming and categorizing of emotions is not strictly a medieval preoccupation. As Martha Nussbaum argues, "[t]he fact that we label our emotions alters the emotions that we can have. […] In the process of labeling, we are also frequently organizing, bounding some things off from others, sharpening distinctions that may have been experience in an inchoate way. From then on, we experience our emotions in ways guided by these descriptions." (*Upheavals of Thought* 149). Similarly, Brian Massumi describes emotion as narrativized affect, in the sense that writing about emotion represents the "sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience" into "narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning" (*Parables for the Virtual* 28). For Lynch, Nussbaum, and Massumi, the primary concern with naming emotions is ascribing a function to them, whereas feelings are much more resistant to instrumentalization because of their internality to a feeling subject.

[88] i.e. Feelings that are not ennobling, often identified as "unworshipful" in the parlance of the genre.

[89] Anne Baden-Daintree, for example, writes at length about how Arthur's grieving for Gawain on the battlefield occurs in a liminal space where emotions typically reserved for private space are expressed publicly while nonetheless retaining a high degree of intimacy ("Kingship" 87). Writing again about intimacy in *The Morte*, Baden-Daintree focuses her attention on the scene in which Gawain is disrobed by Arthur's men, noting how "the actions of clothing and unclothing" suggest "the application or removal of identity as a soldier being intimately connected with the material presence of the uniform" ("Visualising War" 74).

connection between knights, and that these connections cross battle lines repeatedly.[90] As Geraldine Heng observes, *The Morte* is "vitally, urgently invested in probing the male body, inside and out" (Empire 126), both in the battlefield penetration of bodies with swords and in the more private searching of wounds and handling of corpses in grief after the fighting is finished. One such scene, following Arthur's solo battle against the Giant of Mont-Saint-Michel, seems included precisely to establish an upper limit on the notion that knights of the same brotherhood do in fact experience a continuity of embodied selfhood.[91] After the giant breaks Arthur's ribs in its death throes, Kayous and Bedivere approach to search their lord's body for wounds:

> They heve up his hawberk then and handelles there-under
> His hide and haunch eek on height to the shoulders,
> His flank and his felettes and his fair sides,
> Both his back and his breste and his bright armes.
> They were fain that they fande no flesh entamed
> And for that journee made joy, thir gentle knightes. (ll. 1156-1161)

While their searching of Arthur's body is thorough, the knights conclude that they found no flesh "entamed" (wounded or injured), a declaration at odds with the assertion just ten lines above that the giant "thrustes in sonder" three of Arthur's ribs as it dies. We can make sense of this discrepancy by situating the passage in its immediate narrative context and in relation to other scenes of bodily searching in the poem.

A pessimistic reading of the passage could argue that the failure of Kayous and Bedivere to detect Arthur's injury as the appropriate symbolic conclusion to the Mont-Saint-Michel episode: if we interpret the first battle between Arthur and the giant as a microcosm of the poem's larger narrative arc (it begins with Arthur's arrival on the continent, climaxes in his

[90] The trope of mutual respect growing begrudgingly between two enemy knights of equal prowess is a well-worn one in romance, and it often presages an outsider or errant knight's incorporation into the chivalric community (genealogically related, perhaps, to the folk motif of the "Fair Unknown," whose worth as a knight is repeatedly demonstrated through his deeds, in lieu of a title or lineage that could recommend him). In crusader romances, this trope helps scaffold the conversion of a heathen knight into Christendom, as with Sir Ferumbras in *Sultan of Babylon*. Unlike these examples, *The Morte* is rarely interested in turning intimacy between enemy knights into lasting amity; if anything, the poem's pattern is to bring enemies together in mutual hatred, depict them in a scene of intimate grappling or wounding, and then let that exchange play out in full violent end, without any expectation of peaceful resolution or detente.

[91] This particular scene does not occur in any earlier version of the *Brut*, suggesting that the searching of Arthur's body is distinctly important to the *Morte* poet as part of a more nuanced depiction of chivalric combat and its bodily intimacy.

defeat of an exoticized, heathen threat to his people's welfare, and ends with his literal downfall from the mountain), then Arthur's unseen wound is a suitable metaphorical representation of Mordred's betrayal—which ultimately destroys Arthur's empire from "inside" the bounds of his own kingdom. In this framing, the searching of Arthur's body at Mont-Saint-Michel could be taken as an example of the poem dramatizing "the structural rather than the accidental weaknesses in the traditional chivalric ideal of strong warriors bound by their loyalty to an illustrious king" (Chism 192). I find this interpretation persuasive, largely because it has a strong precedent in how earlier poets used the episode in their versions of the *Brut* to foreshadow the events to come in Arthur's reign. And yet, even though this iteration of the giant battle does seem to dramatize an emergent failure of the chivalric bond, this iteration of the giant battle also deploys the searching of Arthur's wounds (an exchange not present in earlier *Brut* texts) in order to establish a sensory discourse of intimacy that will be explored more successfully in later scenes.

For all the obvious physicality of Kayous and Bedivere heaving up Arthur's hauberk and "handling" the under-parts of his body, their search is also governed by intense visual inspection. The conclusion they come to—that there was "no flesh entamed"—suggests that they measure injury by what is both externally visible and touchable: the verb "entamen" has meanings primarily concerned with wounds that are laid open or bodies that are cut into such that their inner parts become exposed.[92] It is, after all, sensible that their assessment of Arthur's body would be done with battlefield practicality rather than with the careful medical acumen of "leechcraft." If a fellow knight or lord does not *look* or *feel* injured, there is enough reason for the observer to assume that he is not, and indeed we almost exclusively see characters reporting injuries that are visible or feelable in the poem (the only reason we have the account of Arthur's ribs being broken is the narrator's semi-omniscient perspective). Consequently, when we speak of "intimacy" between men in the poem, we should be thinking of how it is represented through sight and tactile sensory perception, because this register of closeness is the one privileged by the poem even more so than speech.[93]

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[92] *MED*, "entamen," v. The verb descends from French *entamer*, ultimately back to Latin *tangere* ("to touch, grasp"). It warrants clarifying that the narrator is the one who uses the term "entamed" in his indirect speech reporting the conclusion reached by Kayous and Bedivere; the two knights do not use the term in their own speech.

[93] Note, for example, the fact that Arthur does not deny the conclusion that his flesh is not "entamed," though the narrator does not treat it as a deception either.

As one concise example of the importance of tactile intimacy, the verb "touchen" is a remarkably flexible word in the poem, capturing a broad cross-section of the activities of Arthur's men and their foes: it has the literal sense of making contact with an enemy in battle, Sir Ewain describes touching the eagle banner of Lucius as a form of heroic bravado, and it appears frequently in idiomatic constructions like Arthur looking for a "trews touchand these needes" (a truce which addresses the matters at hand). It is not surprising that for *The Morte*—a text in which the dressing, undressing, piercing, and ornamentation of armor features so prominently—touch is so conceptually and symbolically laden a sense, nor that its sensation would be bound up so closely with sight. Of course, there are numerous medieval theories of vision which posit the "emission" of beams from the eye (such beams see by touching objects and returning to the eye of the viewer), but of more immediate concern when discussing tactile sight in the genre of chivalric romance is the discourse of heraldic imagery itself.

In the context of medieval sign theory, a person's heraldic device was understood to act as a sign or token of the bearer identifying them directly, and these devices adorned much more diverse items of personal property than just armor, weaponry, and military banners; as Ross Arthur notes, both historical and literary examples abound of women, clerics, and other non-combatants with their own heraldic coats of arms (Arthur 48-49). There is, both on and off the battlefield, an obvious practical necessity to clearly reading the signs shown on someone's heraldic device, as these signs impart crucial information about that person's identity, intent, allegiance, and personal history. In the terms used by Augustine, heraldic devices are not natural signs (*signa naturalia*), but given or conventional ones (*signa data*),[94] and so they are profoundly mutable depending on circumstance.

Within the genre of chivalric romance, the practice of heraldic sign reading is rarely straightforward, and plots regularly revolve around heraldic signs being appropriated, obscured, inherited, or otherwise distorted in such a way as to confuse the would-be orderly process of identification through heraldic insignia. Even apart from deciphering errors, the mutability of heraldic devices—newly created knights may adopt elements of a device belonging to his lord, and established knights may reinvent their own devices—means that a knight can be signified by

[94] "Now some signs are natural, others conventional. Natural signs are those which, apart from any intention or desire of using them as signs, do yet lead to the knowledge of something else, as for example, smoke when it indicates fire… Conventional signs, on the other hand, are those which living beings mutually exchange for the purpose of showing, as well as they can, the feelings of their minds, or their perceptions, or their thoughts" (*On Christian Doctrine*, II, 1-2).

more than one device, or multiple knights could be signified by a single device (Arthur 53). When this process of translating a heraldic sign from one figure to another happens at a great enough scale, it produces a kind of physical, tactile mobility of the sign itself that Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco describes as "the chivalric dialectic of localization and dislocation":

> The emblem is made to demarcate a space, but is also made to traverse it—emblems travel on moving bodies and across history sculpted and painted on media that remain throughout long periods of time. The poetics of the emblem is, in the end, how groups, institutions, or individual, political, or natural entities codify power. The coat of arms of the king worn on the bodies of the knights represents the political body of the king himself, an embassy, as if they were credentials. (217)

Rodríguez-Velasco makes particular note of the Old French term *meuble*, which could refer to a heraldic sign as well as to personal property, and *meuble* carries in its etymology an association with the Latin *mobilis* ("moveable, flexible, pliant"). Heraldic devices as both Ross Arthur and Rodríguez-Velasco discuss them are subject to intense visual and tactile scrutiny in their uses. Because of the sorts of sensitive social and political negotiations which these devices mediate, they are often instrumental when it comes to establishing feelings of security and intimacy between their wearers, whether those relations are based in kinship, fealty, or camaraderie on the battlefield.

This largely visual and tactile discourse of intimacy, in which the battlefield gaze of others plays a crucial role in the measure and report of closeness between knights, is hastily sketched out at the base of Mont-Saint-Michel, but it becomes substantially more developed in the poem's next depiction of bodily searching between Gawain and Priamus. In this later exchange, the poem achieves its most direct articulation of how bodily feeling (both tactile and emotional) enables a surprising intimacy on the battlefield and opens up space for the expression of affective dispositions outside the scope of the traditionally sanctioned "aristocratic" emotions.

Shortly over halfway through the poem, after Arthur has finally defeated Lucius on the field and renewed his conquest through morally suspect *chevauchée*-style warfare in the surrounding countryside and at the Siege of Metz, the narrative lapses into a curiously bucolic register. Gawain and his peer knights have just rushed out from camp to organize a hunt, and they pass through natural scenery of woods, hills, and valleys, all largely untouched by working hands ("mowen and unmade, mainovred but little") and brimming with edenic plenty. In the lines

that follow, Gawain meets Priamus, the two do battle with minimal introduction, and Gawain is "touched" grievously by Priamus's sword. After Priamus is wounded in turn, he calls an end to the fight by introducing himself so that others can heal them both with his special salve. As his name suggests, his lineage includes figures of antiquity like Alexander, Hector, plus " Judas and Josue, these gentle knightes," but Priamus also describes himself as being in possession of "Alexandere and Afrike and all tho out-landes" (l. 2607), such that he seems to represent both a Mediterranean and more fully African inheritance. After this introduction, they transition out of the *locus amoenus* through another description of edenic beauty.

The passage recalls a similar thematic strain from the Mont-Saint-Michel episode when Arthur, Kayous, and Bedivere pass through forests where deer run wild, flowers flourish, and birds sing sweetly and "full loud" (ll. 920-930). Both scenes, so characteristic of the expository hunting scenes and the *locus amoenus* of more fantastic chivalric romances, are jarring as tonal changes from the gritty battlefield poetics that comprise the majority of *The Morte*'s length. In other romances, the springtime, idyllic romp in the woods often serves as a magic-infused boundary marker, shifting knights into liminal places away from the collective body of the chivalric brotherhood. Here, the *Morte* poet clearly invokes the trope to a similar end, but rather than emphasizing the marvelous quality of the woodland transition, the primary effect is to tighten the scope of the poem's narration, bringing it in from the expansive to the intimately personal.[95]

The narrative shift toward intimacy is signaled verbally in the Mont-Saint-Michel version of the *locus amoenus* transition when Arthur tells his companions "to bide with their blonkes and boun no further" (l. 937) because he will fight the giant alone, and it establishes the paradigm for how Gawain separates himself from his peer knights to seek wonders on his own. When Gawain comes across Priamus, his rival is first introduced by way of cataloging his armorial devices.[96] This catalog, a frequent feature of the poem's battlefield scenes, consistently signals a turn toward narrative emphasis on affective description as well, suggesting an association between

[95] This tightening of the narrative scope is functional on several fronts. For one, this narrative strategy isolates Arthur from his full retinue, forcing him to prove his worthiness as ruler by conquering the giant. For another, as Kateryna Rudnytsky observes, it turns the episode at Mont-Saint-Michel into a condensed, even miniaturized version of the poem's overarching plot, with the giant's behavior foreshadowing many of the foes Arthur will face while campaigning.

[96] "He bore gessenande in gold three grayhoundes of sable, / With chappes and chaines of chalk-white silver, / A charbocle in the chef, changand of hewes, / And a chef aunterous, challenge who likes" (ll. 2521-2524).

descriptions of feelings and heraldic emblems in the mind of the *Morte* poet. The pairing between descriptions of chivalric devices and chivalric affect seems owed to the fact that they are both components of the poem's aestheticization of violence as spectacle. As Anne Baden-Daintree observes (of the poem as a whole and of the Gawain-Priamus episode in particular), the treatment of violence as visually aestheticized verges on the "cinematic," in that the poem offers its audience different "camera angles" on its fight scenes, often with an uncomfortable level of bodily intimacy and graphic precision. The end result of this "cinematic" style is that the audience is invited to imagine or "see" certain details that might not actually be available to a battlefield observer ("Visualizing War" 71). Baden-Daintree interprets this particular quality of the text to represent a sort of secular devotion to the "contemplation of damaged bodies and acts of wounding" (74), but there is also a contemplation of intimacy itself at play in these scenes of *loci amoeni*. Specifically, the Gawain-Priamus episode expands upon the depiction of searching Arthur's wounds in the Mont-Saint-Michel scene by representing how a community of knights successfully remediates violent conflict through the collective tending to bodies.

Where at Mont-Saint-Michel the poem gestures to the emotional and physical intimacy that comes with tending to battle wounds, after the battle with Priamus its descriptions are rather more explicit. Even Gawain's language, characteristically brusk and aggressive, is seemingly more tender: he protests that his wounds are "but gosesomer" and that his men should tend first to Priamus, whose "salves shall soften us bothen" (ll. 2687-2691). The lengthy description of tending to Priamus which follows is notable not just for the methodical stripping and searching of his body, but in particular for the tense shift in the narrator's speech which gradually incorporates the audience into the treatment process:

> Then presses to Sir Priamus precious knightes,
> Avisely of his horse hentes him in armes
> His helm and his hawberk they taken off after,
> And hastely for his hurt all his herte changed;
> They laid him down in the laundes and laght off his weedes,
> And he lened him on long or how him best liked.
> A foil of fine gold they fande at his girdle,
> That is full of the flowr of the four welle
> That flowes out of Paradise when the flood rises,
> That much fruit of falles that feed shall us all;

Be it frette on his flesh there sinews are entamed,
The freke shall be fish-hole within four houres.
They uncover that corse with full clene handes,
With clere water a knight clenses their woundes,
Keled them kindly and comforted their hertes;
And when the carves were clene they cledde them again. (ll. 2698-2713)

Some of the first lines concerned with disrobing Priamus clearly recapitulate those about Arthur at Mont-Saint-Michel, but where in the previous example the searching scene is given largely through direct and indirect report by Bedivere, in this case the poet brings the audience in as co-caretakers of the body. The key narrative shift occurs at the introduction of the curative salve, because this permits the narrator to make an aside about the fruits of Paradise "that feed shall us all." The narrator's use of the first person plural in the poem is rare (at least outside of the opening prayer that God "give us grace to guie and govern us" on earth), and though we do encounter the occasional reference to Arthur's army as "ours" (e.g. at l. 1912), for the most part the narrative tone postures toward impartial reporting throughout. This quality to the narrator's address is in keeping with the poem's roots in the chronicle tradition, a form of history-telling which depends on a certain legitimizing temporal distance between its characters and audience. Here, however, the audience is directly included in the Christian community of those who believe in the promise of Paradise and are sustained by its gifts. And after the narrator concludes his aside, the tense shift into the simple future does not immediately return to the narrative past, turning instead into a present tense which makes the process of healing Priamus seem both more immediate and more directly addressed to the poem's audience.

As rendered by the narrator, the healing of Priamus and Gawain is a process undertaken mainly by a single nameless knight, who with clear water "clenses their woundes" after the group of peer knights "uncover that corse with full clene handes" in a sort of ongoing present tense. What the *Morte* poet enables here is a bridging of the poem's textual community with its in-text chivalric community through the avatar of the nameless knight: this figure holds space in the scene for an aristocratic audience to imagine themselves as constituent members of community of knights depicted therein. While chivalric literature as a genre hardly lacks for wish fulfillment narrative devices through which audiences can insert themselves into the exploits of hero knights, this is a rare example of inviting the audience into the role of a non-violent, cooperative, community of healers. What's more, because Priamus himself is a rightful ruler of

various African lands (whose authority does not derive from Arthur), this episode represents the emergence of a diverse, multiracial, and multicultural group among the knights present. Crucially, through the all-male group of "precious knightes" who undress, treat, and dress again Priamus and Gawain with their caresses and comforts, this imagination of a cooperative chivalric community becomes fundamentally queer.

Imagining a Queer Chivalric Community

Thus far, we have touched on several scenes in which *The Morte* retells familiar beats in the Arthurian narrative with a distinct and original emphasis on emotional expressions between men of the same chivalric order. In the opening exchange between Arthur and the Roman senators, the public airing of feelings among Round Table knights is an essential part of how the chivalric community defines itself. In essence, the counsel scene demonstrates that being able to satisfactorily reciprocate the wrath of Arthur's "countenaunce" is what marks knights as worshipful in the esteem of the *Morte* poet. Elsewhere, we have seen how the sharing of feelings in decidedly less public, more intimate moments of bodily touching help to solidify that sense of chivalric community, and indeed in ways that invite the imagined participation of the poem's audience. Taken together, these qualities of the poem's particular version of Arthurian knighthood suggest more than just a passing interest in how bodies feel (that is, how they express feelings and how they feel to the touch) and in the identifiably queer relationships which feelings help structure in a community of knights.

Building upon the understanding of chivalric queerness which the introductory chapter outlined, I mean to clarify now how precisely I am using the term queer with regard to *The Alliterative Morte*, because I only glancingly discuss queerness *qua* queer sexuality in the context of this poem. Such a move might at first seem to recall the pernicious scholarly tendency to appropriate the term "queer" for anything even remotely at odds with dominant culture (and yet always conveniently divorced from the explicitly sexual and gendered meanings of the term). However, I am employing it here in what I hope to be a historically-situated definition which does not assume modern heteronormativity can be projected infinitely backward into the past.[97]

[97] I have chosen Ahmed's theorization of queer desire because she anticipates precisely such a critique of being "antisex" or "antierotic" in her discussion of lesbian contact. As Ahmed says, "we don't have to take the 'sex' out of lesbianism to argue that lesbian sociality tends toward other women in ways that are more than sexual, or even more

Rather than trying to identify an explicit queer sexuality in *The Morte*—a task which, in this case, tends to rely upon pointed readings of sexually suggestive passages in which knights are pricked "privily" by swords or "lovely lances" of enemies "lushen togederes" during combat[98]—I have set my sights on relationships between men in the poem that could represent queer subjectivities by other criteria.[99] A guiding principle of this approach is to avoid recapitulating the critical erasures of earlier scholarship which often defined queerness so stringently as to be unfindable in the textual evidence available.[100] As Richard Zeikowitz argues in *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*, when looking for historical evidence of same-sex desire, "one need not limit the search to sexual possibilities," and we can instead train our eye for "subtler forms of same-sex desire—ones that do not suggest genital sex takes place" (3). Chivalric romance, as a genre structured around iterative questing and trial, is more explicitly driven by "desire" than other genres (medieval or modern), making it ideally suited to this sort of search. To that end, I have prioritized a definition which emphasizes non-heteronormative worldviews, social structures, and gazes as metrics of queerness rather using queer in its strictly sexual sense.

Early in her introduction to *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed begins to unpack the various semantic layers and implications of the term "orientation." Encapsulating ideas of visual viewpoint, directional lines, and longstanding distinctions between the East and West, orientation also becomes a conceptual shorthand for describing how individual and group identities are organized, and which identities are deemed normative:

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than solely about desire. Lesbian bonds can involve orientations that are about shared struggles, common grounds, and mutual aspirations, as bonds that are created through the lived experiences of being 'off line' and 'out of line.' To be orientated sexually toward women as women affects other things that we do" (103). I am similarly emphasizing the non-sexual (social) dimensions of queerness in my treatment of *The Morte*, not because I believe those to be more consequential, but because they are more clearly represented in the poem as concerns the sharing of feelings between knights.

[98] l. 2648 and l. 1459 respectively.

[99] Pugh calls this an "expansive view of the queer" in his study of medieval male figures, saying that although none of the men he discusses are "homosexual or express a desire to experience sexual relationships with other men," they are nonetheless "ideologically queered from the masculine privilege of western society precisely because their gendered identities and sexual desires are rendered suspect in a manner congruent to the construction of the sexually queer" (*Sexuality and its Queer Discontents in Middle English Literature* 7).

[100] This is precisely the case James Schultz makes (though from the perspective of sexual normativity rather than queerness) when explaining why heterosexuality as a concept and category is a "threat" to medieval studies: using heterosexuality as the "norm" is not just anachronistic for the Middle Ages, it isolates identity positions as "queer" in modern terms only and in practice tends to erase meaningful nuances in medieval sexualities ("Heterosexuality as a Threat to Medieval Studies" 28).

> We might say that we are orientated when we are in line. We are "in line" when we face the direction that is already faced by others. Being "in line" allows bodies to extend into spaces that, as it were, have already taken their shape. Such extensions could be redescribed as an extension of the body's reach. A key argument of this book is that the body gets directed in some ways more than others. We might be used to thinking of direction as simply which way we turn, or which way we are facing, at this or that moment in time. Direction then would be a rather casual matter. But what if direction, as the way we face as well as move, is organized rather than casual? We might speak then of collective direction: of ways in which nations or other imagined communities might be "going in a certain direction," or facing the same way, such that only some things "get our attention." Becoming a member of such a community then, might also mean following this direction, which could be described as the political requirement that we turn some ways and not others. We follow the line that is followed by others: the repetition of the act of following makes the line disappear from view as the point from which "we" emerge. (15)

For Ahmed, this practice of affirming previous "orientations" into a linear continuity is the history of heterosexual normativity, and any "turning away" or reconsidering anew the objects of our orientation is the history of diverse queer subjectivities. The immense value of this approach to defining queerness in my own work is that it emphasizes rather than diminishes the relationship between individual and group identity formation in response to dominant cultural forces that construct and maintain certain categories like heterosexuality as normative. The lines of direction which orient us toward certain objects and away from others shape our perception of ourselves, of others, and of others in relation to ourselves. At scale, this awareness of how our bodies are directed in relation to those around us becomes the foundation not just for sexual normativity and queerness but also for social organization around national, cultural, and racial directional lines.

At the most basic level, this formulation of queer desire as a turning away from the normative (or compulsory) straight orientation helps us understand the affective community of *The Alliterative Morte* because it clarifies how and why intimacy between knights occurs as it does: scenes depicting intimacy are set aside in the poem as a narrative turning away from the main plot of conquest, which itself is "oriented" towards a conglomerate of Middle Eastern and Asian foes. As Ahmed says, heterosexuality becomes normative only through the repeated "'tending toward' certain objects and not others" (91), through the continual denial of queer potential, and this leads to social space itself becoming straight as queer orientations are

continually suppressed. Consequently, queer bodies approach their objects of desire outside of this straight orientation, obliquely, through new lines of direction which make contact between queer bodies possible. It is this very intimacy of social and sexual contact, which Ahmed refers to broadly as "touch,"[101] that puts bodies in reach which would otherwise be inaccessible to queer desire (103-107). Because of this inherent intimacy, touch plays an important but unpublicized role in Ahmed's conception of queer orientation, and it tends to get largely subordinated to the primacy of sight as an orientating sensation. Perhaps this is owed to our wealth of figurative constructions which privilege sight and seeing as a shorthand for knowledge, or perhaps it simply reflects the ultra-modern texts and socio-political conflicts Ahmed is working with (sight, of course, is key in queering relationships between the objectivized appearance of a thing and the subjective experience of a thing). Either way, the application of Ahmed's queer phenomenology to decidedly pre-modern texts is a happy excuse to reconsider how the sensation of sight is tied up with other bodily senses and medieval ways of knowing.

Earlier, in discussing the Middle English verb "touchen," I briefly mentioned that medieval theories of vision were much less prone to creating a rigid distinction between person seeing and person or thing seen than our modern understanding of optics is; if anything, there is a sort of involuntary existential entangling which transpires for the medieval viewer when one's eye beams rebound off an entity in the world and return with traces of that entity directly into the eyeball. We need only consult the flourishing study of Christian materiality by medievalists for countless examples of theologians, political reformers, and lay writers discussing the sensory potency (feelings of rapture, eroticism, or treachery, depending on the writer) of looking at devotional objects throughout the Middle Ages.[102] I will discuss the importance of hearing as an orientating sensation in my fourth chapter on *The Bruce* and crusader romance, where "noyse" on the battlefield plays a crucial role in determining who counts as intelligible ally of the Scottish

[101] Here she is drawing upon Merleau-Ponty's work on bodily sensitivity in *Phenomenology of Perception* and *The Visible and the Invisible*.

[102]Caroline Walker Bynum emphasizes the way that medieval devotional objects call attention to their "stuffness" and the spiritual power contained within matter itself (*Christian Materiality*). Sarah Beckwith, in turn, shows how these same devotional objects, particularly representations of the crucified Christ, help religious audiences create a new form of collective (and potentially radical) subjectivity through enacting *imitatio* together (*Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings*). Karma Lochrie has written widely on the importance of materiality as a mode of discourse through which female mystics can assert a spiritual identity independent of Church authority ("The Language of Transgression: Body, Flesh, and Word in Mystical Discourse," *Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies*).

cause and who is a craven English soldier or exoticized Muslim knight.[103] Neither smell nor taste are well-represented in the texts I examine, either in descriptions given by narrators or by characters, but it is nonetheless worth considering how senses other than sight can contribute to the construction of both normative and queer orientations.

For now, it suffices to say that Ahmed's emphasis on vision in conceptualizing queer phenomenology translates easily into my discussion of *The Morte*, with the single caveat that we imagine vision and touch as deeply blended together and equally important as measurements of intimacy. In the passages I have reviewed thus far, we have seen how embodied intimacy, in particular touch, is a fixture of the poem's depictions of relationships between men. Now we can plausibly say that the descriptive dwelling upon touch between knights and the emotions bound up in touching others is explained by Ahmed's theorization of queer orientation as a turning away from the model of a normative, straight masculinity (as lauded, for example, in chivalric manuals). Queer desire in *The Morte*, denied any other line of direction that might allow bodies to reach each other, turns to the intimacy of touching wounded knights and the intense sharing of feelings upon the battlefield in order to escape expectations of conforming to a repressive, stoic chivalric masculine ideal.

If, as I have suggested, we can take Arthur's claim that all his "mensk and manhed" are maintained by his men to be the poem's initial overture to the possibility of a queer chivalric community, then each subsequent instance of intimate touch between knights is an opportunity to elaborate upon and refine what that community might look like. The searching of Arthur's body at Mont-Saint-Michel establishes a crucial visual-tactile discourse of intimacy sustained throughout the rest of the poem, and the searching of Priamus's body implies that this intimacy

[103] I follow the recent trend away from using the term "Saracen" to identify what are ostensibly Muslim characters in these texts. As Shokoofeh Rajabzadeh has recently argued, uncritical use of the term outside of direct quotations can potentially reproduce the racism and Islamophobia in the source material (e.g. in Middle English crusader romances), and this is tantamount to casually deploying racial slurs or pejoratives in the scholarship. Rajabzadeh proposes replacing the term "Saracen" with the term "Muslim," so as to make explicit that racism and Islamophobia and to "value the victims who suffer from the violence in the primary material over the material itself" (1). I will continue to make reference to the trope of the "Saracen knight," because this enables a useful distinction between the real, historical religious identities of Muslims and the xenophobic, stereotyped representation of a non-Christian other which was imagined by a late medieval English audience and called "Saracen" within the literature. In the genre of Middle English romances I discuss, "Saracen" does not perfectly equate to Muslim, and often it is a term applied to any category of non-Christian outsider, including Danes, Saxons, and exoticized giants. My continued use of the term "Saracen" in a critical capacity is an effort to produce racially conscious scholarship by "call[ing] these primary texts what they are: racist, Islamophobic, and hateful" (4). As I argue, the critical examination of how affect and emotional dispositions become racialized in these romances is one more way of contributing to the production of racially conscious scholarship.

extends to the broader community of knights within the poem's fiction. Furthermore, because the depictions of intimate touch are always presented as narrative asides to the main plot (often bookended in the text by the boundary-marking tropes of the *locus amoenus*), these scenes of intimacy invite an oblique participation from the poem's audience.

Each of these defining moments in how community is imagined in the poem—the descriptive emphasis on emotions being shared among the Round Table knights, on the searching of Arthur's body, on the community of hands tending to Priamus—represents what Ahmed calls a queer orientation, because each asks us to reconsider (to touch) in a new way the bodies, behaviors, and feelings that are so familiar to the chivalric imagination. Each scene of intimacy between men which I have traced out in *The Morte* asks us to consider how the poem's particular affective expressions could be read as queer feeling-emblems if their legibility were not denied by the strictures of heteronormative orientation. When we retain that potential for the queer encounter and the legibility of the queer feeling-emblem in the poem, we can see intimate relationships between men as if for the first time and allow the history of those relationships to come alive through closer attention to its symbols, patterns, and language. With this groundwork of historically-situated understandings of queer and normative masculinity set in place, we can turn to the poem proper and apply this framework of queerness to the feeling-emblems I have identified previously.

Rereading The Morte through a Queer Discourse of Feeling-Emblems

My study of *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* was born out of a desire to account for the elaborate emotional vocabulary in the poem in a way that did not simply relegate it to the status of a curiosity or aesthetic eccentricity on the part of the poet. The language of gesture, look, and emotional expression is often highly formalized and semantically coded in romance,[104] and it stood to reason that the poem's attention to feeling-words was more than purely descriptive and in fact did similar community-defining work as other lexicons characteristic of the genre. If such feeling-words do indeed function in the capacity of emblems and other heraldic imagery, then they would logically be vulnerable to the same sorts of misreadings and appropriations as more

[104] See Burrow's comprehensive cross-genre study (*Gestures and Looks in Medieval Narrative*) and more recently Windeatt's lexicographic work ("Towards a Gestural Lexicon of Medieval English Romance)").

conventional chivalric signifiers. That is to say, just as heraldic imagery gets deployed in *The Morte* and similar texts to construct categories of sameness and otherness, friend and "alien," it is also regularly the focus of critical uncertainty or a site of proxy warfare (as when Ewain fitz Urien "touches" or steals the eagle standard of Lucius and takes it back to his companions in victory).

In this section, I examine three brief passages from the poem which reveal how the sharing of "ugly feelings" among knights functions as a component of their chivalric code and its emblematic signifiers. The sharing of such feelings opens up the possibility of *The Morte*'s version of knighthood becoming a queer, emotionally intimate community of men, but it also inevitably leads to its own undoing. The inevitability of this undoing is not necessarily a critique of queerness itself in *The Morte*, but rather of the imperial project at the poem's center and its endlessly widening gyre of violence oriented toward a non-European other.

When Arthur and his men first encounter Lucius's vanguard, Cador makes two significant pronouncements that define the chivalric ethos of the poem. In the first, he vows to attack the King of Lybia in revenge for the death of Sir Berille. His language, particularly the metaphor of battlefield vengeance as repayment ("corn-bote"), belies how much his character envisions violence in transactional terms:

> "Yon king," says sir Cador, "carpes full large,
> Because he killed this keen — Crist have thy soul! —
> He shall have corn-bote, so me Crist help!
> Ere I kaire of this coste, we shall encounter ones:
> So may the wind wheel turn, I quite him ere even,
> Soothly himselven or some of his feres!" (ll. 1784-1789)

In addition to suggesting a distinctly economic tinge in Cador's mind to the meting out of retributive violence, "corn-bote" echoes the "boteless bale" which continually plagues Arthur. Indeed, one could reasonably read the whole of *The Morte* through its consistent interest in "bote/boot,"[105] as the term is a concise shorthand for simultaneously indexing a spiritual panacea, physical recovery, and financial acquisitiveness.

[105] Some of the many meanings to "bote" which seem to be at play in *The Morte* include "advantage, help, profit, good, benefit" (1a); "relief/deliverance, remedy" (2a); "salvation/redemption" (3a); and "the cure of a disease or a wound, healing, recovery from illness" (5a).

The above passage is most important for my own work, however, in how it illustrates the value of Cador's emotional negativity in conflating a specific individual enemy (the King of Lybia) with his larger community ("his feres"). Cador moves briskly from vowing revenge against Lybia to the more general category of any heathen among Lucius's ranks, revealing just how effortlessly his crusader hatred attaches to new enemies as the situation allows. One of the poem's most succinct expressions of its chivalric ethos, after all, comes in another speech by Cador shortly after this one, in which he claims "hething is home-hold, use it who-so will!" Hatred, or "hething," Cador claims, is home-loving, and it returns again upon its user, perpetuating the economy of violence within the poem.

Cador's description of "hething" as home-loving and self-injuring comports well with the poem's overall depiction of violence as cyclical in nature. Thus the "wind wheel" simile he deploys,[106] which models a mechanical and almost unconscious process of paying out Cador's "quiting" upon Lybia and his peers. The wind wheel is instrumental in the poem's construction of an ideological enemy, because it enables such emblematic feelings as Cador's hatred and fear of a Muslim other to circulate upon the battlefield as military banners and coats of arms do, moving among the non-Christian forces and aligning them in such a way that they appear as a collective enemy rather than diverse individuals.

Ahmed uses the term "affective economies" to explain how emotions move between bodies rather than residing within a given subject or object, creating a "relationship of resemblance" that flattens distinctions between the individual members of a group[107] ("Affective Economies" 119). This economic quality of emotion is how communities turn hate and fear concerning a recognizable other into love and pride for themselves.[108] For both Ahmed and the

[106] The image of the "wind wheel" or windmill foreshadows Arthur's vision of Fortune's Wheel towards the end of the poem. The two wheel images are also each other's conceptual counterpart in the sense that they both represent theories of judgment and how things are fated to occur.

[107] This in turn is the foundation for constructing the imagined white subject and the imagined white nation: "The ordinary white subject is a fantasy that comes into being through the mobilization of hate, as a passionate attachment tied closely to love. The emotion of hate works to animate the ordinary subject, to bring that fantasy to life, precisely by constituting the ordinary as in crisis, and the ordinary person as the real victim" (118). We need scarcely scratch the surface of a text like the Morte to see how such a process plays out, and here the poem's early counsel scene is illustrative: when Arthur asks his senior knights how they should respond to Lucius's demand of fealty, the counsel, including Arthur, begin with calls for violence ("Now wakenes the war! Worshipped be Crist!") and charges against "alienes" in their lands, only at the end justifying their conquest with the deeds of valor they'll perform and the prowess they'll earn.

[108] Citing Heidegger, Ahmed explains that fear depends on anticipation or futurity, on an object of fear that is approaching rather than already here. The possibility of a feared object passing by, however, does not alleviate the

knights of *The Morte*, it is precisely the translatable nature of emotions that makes them so potent: grief is converted into a hate at the cause of that grief, and the grief is itself "contagious," sticking to an ever-larger collective image of a hated other.[109] Cador, filling the gap left by Berille as champion knight, becomes only the newest surface to project "corn-bote" onto Lybia or countless others among the opposing Muslim army. And just as this translation of feeling among knights can be leveraged to support Arthur's imperialist aims and the xenophobic crusader aspirations of his men, it has the potential to foster a socially queer solidarity among the Round Table knights, even to the point of authorizing alternatives to a heterosexual lineage for the Arthurian line.

After Cador repays his "corn-bote" battle debt to Syria and Lybia (and indeed, to a whole retinue of the "hethen harageous king"), he returns to Arthur in victory. However, upon hearing from Cador how several knights have died in the fight, the narrator tells us that "the worthy king writhes and weeped with his eyen" (l. 1920). This gesture of writhing—uniquely expressed by Arthur in six different scenes—is a hallmark to the poem's depiction of opaque states of feeling.[110] The behavior correlates almost perfectly with moments in the poem when Arthur must confront a reality starkly at odds with his dream of conquest. Here, at the first mention of death among the Round Table knights, Arthur is realizing the full weight of hatred being home-loving: just as the king's manhood and worship are maintained in earth by his knights, the death of those same knights appears to inflict a rebounding wound upon his own body.

Arthur proceeds to chastise Cador's rashness, telling him that there is no prize to be had in simply rushing into battle unprepared. But Cador challenges him on this claim, underscoring the seemingly arbitrary nature of how worship is earned while on campaign.[111] In effect, Cador

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fear, but simply dislocates it, rendering it ultimately more fearful: "When the object of fear threatens to pass by, then fear can no longer be contained by an object. Fear in its very relationship to an object, in the very intensity of its directedness toward that object, is intensified by the loss of its object" (125).

[109] This collective of a hated other is most expansively realized in Mordred's army, which is composed of equal parts traitorous groups within Arthur's kingdom and "Saracen"/pagan outsiders: "Of Sarazenes and Sessoines (Saxons) upon sere halves / He has sembled a sorte of selcouthe bernes" (ll. 3130-3131).

[110] At Mont-Saint-Michel, for example, the narrator says he "welteres, he wresteles, he wringes his hands; / There was no wye of this world that wiste what he mened" (ll. 890-891).

[111] "'Sir,' say Sir Cador, 'ye know well yourselven; / Ye are king in this kith; carp what you likes! / Shall never berne upbraid me that to thy borde longes, / That I sholde blinn for their boste thy bidding to work! / When any stertes to stale, stuff them the better, / Or they will be stonayed and stroyed in yon strait landes.'" (ll. 1928-1933)

implores Arthur to leave off writhing and weeping at his rash battlefield action and simply recast that anguish as pride in the work of his men. This is precisely what Arthur does, immediately recovering his composure and rewarding Cador for his work. He says that Cador is "one of the doughtiest that dubbed was ever," and because Arthur has no (known) offspring, Cador or one of his children becomes "apparent to be eier"[112] (ll. 1942-1944).

This progression from emotionally messy violence to Arthur's inarticulate gesturing to the eventual reassertion of social norms is paradigmatic of the Morte, and it reveals just how quickly the relationship between knights moves from a realm that often gets labeled homosocial (or "late medieval bromance," as Ruth Mazo Karras says of a similar dynamic in another text)[113] into one that is properly queer. Arthur's sharing of his grief and outrage with Cador not only maintains the solidarity of the collective chivalric community, it goes so far as to authorize an heir to the throne, thereby creating a potential futurity for Arthur's kingdom which disrupts (and exists wholly outside of) heterosexual lineage.[114] And while the *Morte* poet may be referencing the suggestion of a familial tie between Cador and Arthur which appears in Layamon,[115] this particular passage is original to *The Morte* and goes unremarked upon by the narrator. Here is the

[112] The idea of Cador's son, Constantine of Cornwall, becoming heir to the throne has a precedent going back at least to Wace's *Roman de Brut*, but in that text it is just an interim appointment until Arthur returns from Avalon. Here in *The Morte*, this passage makes Arthur's intentions seem permanent, even if the narrator will later make reference to Arthur as the *rex quondam rexque futurus*. Similarly, in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Cador has an unclear kinship with Arthur (he raises Guinevere as his ward and possibly has other family ties) that grants his children special place in the line of succession. The transfer of power between Arthur and Cador's children as presented in Geoffrey seems to be more permanent than in Wace, but it is wholly unclear what motivates it, and the succession follows basic "heterosexual" lines of primogeniture inheritance; it is not a "queer" succession such as takes place in *The Alliterative Morte*.

[113] "David and Jonathan: A Late Medieval Bromance," in *Rivalrous Masculinities*. Karras says that the relationship in medieval Christian narratives of David and Jonathan exemplifies the primacy of male friendship above all other types of relationship in the late Middle Ages (166).

[114] On the subject of imagined alternatives to heterosexual lineages, Carolyn Dinshaw argues persuasively that non-linear temporalities (which abound in medieval narratives in genres as diverse as court poetry, popular folklore, chronicles, and saints' lives) are inherently queer because they challenge the idea of *auctoritas* and the domination of past over present and future (*How Soon Is Now?*). Her claim that figures and forms of desire "out of sync with the ordinarily linear measurements of everyday life" (4) are queer because of their unique relationships to time bears directly upon Arthur as *rex quondam rexque futurus* ("the once and future king"). Arthur, in this formulation, is as much queered by time as by the more conventional forms of desiring and relationships with which I am primarily occupied.

[115] Arthur tells him, "Hercne me Cador; þu ært min aȝe cun" (l. 10710) as a prefatory remark before promising him all of Dorset if he kills Childric. This sort of land-reward is well within the bounds of a typical bestowal for deeds performed in service of the king; legitimizing a full-fledged heir to the throne is altogether different in a feudal society that recognizes primogeniture right of succession.

poem's beginning to make good on its promise of a queer chivalric imaginary, based in the primacy of fraternal relationships above all others,[116] and these efforts compound in the lines that follow, if to less successful ends.

Shortly after Arthur's exchange with Cador, another of Arthur's men, Sir Kay (Kayous in the text) returns to him after encountering the Romans. Unlike Cador, Kay is mortally wounded, and his last entreaty to the king is to give his regards to Guinevere and ask that his wife, who "wrathed me never," pray for his soul.[117] Kay's request in full is to be buried and to have the appropriate noble ladies given notice, which is as much cursory consideration as the poem ever gives to its women or their subjective experience.[118] By contrast, the poem dedicates a sprawling passage to Arthur's grief and ensuing behavior:

> Then romes the rich king for rewth at his herte,
> Rides into rout his dede to revenge,
> Pressed into the plump and with a prince meetes
> That was eier to Egypt in those este marches,
> Cleves him with Caliburn clenlich in sonder!
> He broches even through the berne and the saddle bristes,
> And at the back of the blonk the bewelles entamed!
> Manly in his malencoly he meetes another… (ll. 2197-2204)

The passage goes on describing Arthur's retributive violence for another thirteen lines as he carries out Cador's "wind-wheel" model of vengeance. Clearly, the fact that Arthur and his

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[116] Tison Pugh locates a similar queer chivalric brotherhood in *Amis and Amiloun*. As he reads this romance, the characters of Amis and Amiloun swear fraternal oaths to each other that not only strongly resemble those of heterosexual Christian marriage rites, but also create a privileged relationship between the two knights to the almost total exclusion of all other social bonds, including to their duke and future wives (*Sexuality and its Queer Discontents in Middle English Literature*, 107). Although there is more social hierarchy at play in the example of queer brotherhood I have selected from *The Morte*, as Arthur is nominally Cador's sovereign, not his equal, their relationship as I have outlined it is largely unmarked by top-down authority (and the Round Table itself is a physical metaphor representing egalitarianism, anyway).

[117] "'I am wathely wounded, waresh mon I never; / Work now thy worship, as the world askes, / And bring me to burial; bid I no more. / Greet well my lady the queen, yif thee world happen, / And all the burlich birdes that to her bowr longes; / And my worthily wife, that wrathed me never, / Bid her for her worship work for my soul!" (ll. 2186-2192).

[118] Critics like Heng tend to emphasize the overall misogynistic tone of the poem, and while I agree that the poem is generally uninterested in women, it is much less condemnatory of women than a fair amount of other Arthurian romance. The denouement of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* comes to mind here, in which Bertilak/the Green Knight explains that it was the "craftes" of Morgan le Fay that "bigyled" him, making sure to throw in for good measure a declamation on Biblical beguilers like Bathsheba and Delilah. This particular strain of antifeminist rhetoric arguably draws more from clerical writing than romances, but it is all too common in both genres.

knights can still leverage their grief productively into further violence suggests that the chivalric community has not disintegrated and is actually spurred on by this outpouring of grief. Perhaps the most salient line of the passage concerns Arthur becoming "manly in his malencoly," not least because this attribution of masculine force to melancholia is markedly different from its typical characterization in medieval humoral theory. John Gower, for instance, in *Confessio Amantis* (roughly contemporary with *The Morte*'s composition), introduces melancholia as follows:

> Of th'erthe, which is cold and drye,
> The kinde of man Malencolie
> Is cleped, and that is the ferste,
> The most ungoodlich and the werste;
> For unto loves werk on nyht
> Him lacketh bothe will and myht:
> No wonder is, in lusty place
> Of love though he lese grace. (ll. 7.401-408)

Similarly, John Trevisa, in his translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum*,[119] refers to melancholy as a humor provocative of fear, sorrow, and overall pessimism:

> If þis humour haue maistrye in any body, þyse beþ þe signes and tokenes… þe pacient is faynt and ferdful in herte withoute cause. Galien seiþ if þe dredes of suche endureþ withouten cause, his passioun is melencolia. And so al þat haþ þis passioun wiþouten cause beþ often dredeful and sory, and þat for þe malencolif humour constreyneþ and closiþ þe herte. And so if men askeþ of suche what þey drede and wherfore þei beþ sory, þey haueþ none answere. Somme weneþ þat þey schullen dye anon vnresonabliche. Somme drediþ enemyte of som oon. Som loueþ and desireþ deþ. (Bk. 4, ll. 12-23)

These philosophical and poetic accounts of melancholy present the experiential condition of the humor as wildly different from the behavior Arthur exhibits at the death of Kay. The coldness to which Gower refers is also crucial, as lack of heat is consistently associated with femininity in various iterations of humoral theory from Galen through to the early modern playwrights. Thus, for the poem to describe Arthur as "manly" in his melancholy is already a queering of humoral

[119] M. C. Seymour, general editor, Clarendon Press, 1975.

gender roles as medieval physicians prescribed them.[120] My further point, however, is that the queering of gender roles on display in this passage reveals an underlying instability about how feelings are categorized and made legible on the battlefield.

Although there is a potential prestige to melancholy which distinguishes it from the class of non-cathartic ugly feelings I am primarily interested in—Ngai categorizes melancholy with other "potentially ennobling or morally beatific states" (6) like sympathy and shame and notes that melancholy has long been the assumed sensibility of the male intellectual class (214)—Arthur's "manly" vengeance in this passage is close to unrecognizable as melancholy in either the medieval or modern sense. What the poem here calls "malencoly" is more like an in-between state in Ahmed's affective economy, some ambiguous feeling in the process of being converted from grief-stricken paralysis to unrestrained violence.[121] The poem's insistence on calling Arthur's behavior melancholy would suggest that it's still legible as a feeling-emblem, that it's still capable of unifying and marshaling the Round Table forces upon the battlefield against an identifiable enemy. Nonetheless, the creeping sense of semantic imprecision in the poem's narration (this thing is *not* melancholy) suggests a decreasing capacity for the sharing of feelings among the chivalric community to bind its members together toward one aim or identity. It is only in the poem's final scenes when the unifying potential of ugly feelings fully disintegrates and undoes the Arthurian project altogether.

The death of Gawain, which precipitates the final collapse of the Round Table and the eponymous "morte" of the poem, is easily the most frequent subject of critical scrutiny among

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[120] Vern Bullough identifies Galenic science as but one conceptual paradigm that imposed gender-based hierarchy on men and women in the Middle Ages. As Bullough explains, the heat associated with men was used as an explanation for why male sex organs can grow outside of the body (apparently making them superior to female sex organs) and this heat also factored into the etymologies of figures like Isidore of Seville, in which the name for man (*vir*) itself came from male force (*vis*) ("On Being a Male" 32).

[121]Baden-Daintree suggests that the conversion of paralyzing feelings like grief into productive anger and violence is a central interest of *The Morte* and general and of Arthur in particular ("Kingship"). According to Baden-Daintree, Arthur's public ceremony of grieving acts as the liminal, ritualizing space in which that emotional conversion can occur. On the subject of unrestrained violence, Andrew Lynch argues that "violence" itself is not a term we can readily apply to many medieval texts, because the very idea of violence (closer, he says, to a "violation" than our modern sense of the word) is so dependent upon judgments of right and wrong behavior within the contexts of the narrative ("Emotion and Medieval 'Violence'". Indeed, Lynch claims that we cannot even call Arthur's campaigns on the continent "violent" unless we know whether or not Arthur's intense emotions and behaviors "truly provide virtuous models of feeling and benign sources of emotional contagion for readers outside the text" (47-48). Neither violence nor just force are cognitive categories in medieval literature, according to Lynch, they are poetic expressions which depend on "the links between aesthetics, ethics and action formed in texts" for their meaning (53).

theorists of medieval emotion who work with the text at all. The reasons for such regular attention to this scene are plenty: the narration reaches its melodramatic peak,[122] Arthur's grieving weaves in a variety of affective expressions from elsewhere in the poem, including those displayed by the giant of Mont-Saint-Michel, and the poem even holds a space of compassion for Mordred, Gawain's cousin-killer, taking the time to relate (in far greater detail than is typical in the source material) his guilt and regret.[123] Indeed, Gawain's death assembles all the affective signifiers and feeling-emblems from the poem's earlier depictions of intimacy between knights, including emotional asides from the narrator, repeated touching and caressing of bodies, identification and empathizing between foes on the battlefield, and Arthur's weeping and wild gesticulating. Furthermore, the scene brings the poem's interest in public, shared expressions of feeling full circle by returning to the concerns of its opening lines. In the exchange between the Round Table counsel and the Roman envoy, we saw how the affective force of Arthur's "countenaunce" unified his men into a shared chivalric pursuit, creating a communal sense of identity between king and knights that was entirely grounded in their shared feelings. Here, as Arthur kneels weeping on the ground, cradling his nephew's body, the integrity of that communal identity falls apart under the stress of the public gaze and the chastisement of his men:

> "Blinn," says these bold men, "thou blunders thyselven!
> This is bootless bale, for better bes it never!
> It is no worship, iwis, to wring thine handes;
> To weep als a woman it is no wit holden!
> Be knightly of countenaunce, als a king sholde,
> And leve such clamour, for Cristes love of heven!"
>
> "For blood," says the bold king, "blinn shall I never
> Ere my brain to-brist or my breste other!
> Was never sorrow so soft that sank to my herte;
> It is full sib to myself; my sorrow is the more." (ll. 3975-3984)

[122] See, for example, the following lines: "Was never our seemlich king so sorrowful in herte, / Ne that sank him so sad but that sight one. / Then gliftes the good king and glopins in herte, / Grones full grislich with gretande teres, / Kneeles down to the corse and cauht it in armes, / Castes up his umbrere and kisses him soon, / Lookes on his eye-liddes that locked were fair, / His lippes like to the lede and his lire fallowed" (ll. 3947-3954).

[123] "Yet that traitour als tite teres let he fall, / Turnes him forth tite and talkes no more, / Went weepand away and weryes the stounde / That ever his werdes were wrought such wandreth to work! / When he thought on this thing it thirled his herte; / For sake of his sib-blood sighand he rides…" (ll. 3886-3891).

Tellingly, it is a not a specific knight in Arthur's retinue who emplores him to stop, but "these bold men" collectively, and the behavior they identify by misogynistic critiques is precisely the hand-wringing and weeping at "bootless bale" which has been increasingly characteristic of Arthur's affect since the beginning of the campaign. At this crucial moment, the same grief that had previously unified the chivalric community on the battlefield (being readily translatable into unrestrained violence) becomes a threat to that community, and Arthur's countenance ceases to work like a mirror for the sentiment of his men. Even Arthur's language becomes more individualistic and inward-looking, as he catalogs the feeling parts of his body that are suffering at Gawain's death. Arthur's men appear to reject his mode of emotional processing in this passage because they recognize it as a threat to the social structure of turning grief into violence that has driven their imperial conquest throughout the rest of the poem. Calling it womanly is just a convenient way to delegitimize it as an alternative to the social sharing of grief through violence that has held their chivalric community together at the death of knights previously.

In the final line of the passage quoted above, Arthur's mourning finds expression in a phrase which comes close to recapitulating his speech to the Round Table counsel about his "mensk and manhed" living in his knights, but here Arthur refers only to an ambiguous "it" that is "full sib" to himself. This "it" could reasonably describe Gawain (his nephew) in some sense, but grammatically it seems to imply the weight of sorrow itself. In this reading, Arthur's non-cathartic, individualized grief has so fully displaced the productive sharing of feelings among his knights that it ultimately becomes his closest and only relation. Said differently, his "bootless bale" has become so illegible to the Round Table knights as a feeling-emblem that it no longer has any force to unify them under a common cause or affective banner.

Chapter Conclusion

The examples of public emotional expression which I have assembled in this chapter warrant a distinct identifying label like "feeling-emblems" because they reinforce social structures for the chivalric community independent of their discrete instances of expression. That is to say, when Arthur repeatedly wrings his hands and "welteres," or Gawain continually "grouches," such (otherwise idiosyncratic) expressions of emotion become emblematic of individual and group identities, and like heraldic symbols upon the battlefield, these emotional

expressions signal the need for particular actions by other members of the chivalric community. What I have described as the emblematic quality of the poem's language arises elsewhere in its rhetorical style, and in particular with its frequent repetition of half lines and narrative tags. While much mid-20th century scholarship regarded this "formulaic" approach to filling in the poem's B verses as a flaw in the *Morte* poet's craft,[124] Valerie Krishna reappraises their value as poetic devices:

> In spite of their stereotyped nature, however, it is a mistake to regard these B verses as empty tags or mere fillers. In the first place, even the most repetitious are sometimes used with more subtlety than is apparent at first glance…
>
> In close succession, where their stereotyped quality is even more evident than usual, they are like a refrain that helps to set the mood of a passage. In the description of the feast, the repetition of the *ynewe* 'in plenty' formula and the *taste wham þem lykys* formula enhance the picture of abundance and luxury…
>
> Another conventional rhetorical passage in the *Morte Arthure* is the description of costume or armor. Here again the poet aggrandizes his subject through amplification, in this case through an enumeration of details. As Benson points out, amplification through particularizing and specifying is characteristic of ME alliterative poetry. That is, rather than using a generality... the alliterative poet achieves his effects by the enumeration of an abundance of concrete, usually visual, details, with the grandeur (or humility) of a character implied by the details rather than actually stated. (29-31)

Just as the stereotyped or formulaic half lines accomplish aesthetic or narrative work for the *Morte* poet, the repetition and elaboration of feelings and affective dispositions allows them to rise to the level of recognizable emblems. The particular feeling-emblems I have tracked in *The Morte* (sensations of vulnerability, resentment, fear, or bodily intimacy) are queer because they appropriate the discourse of chivalric emblems to make legible emotional expressions and behaviors which are not normatively masculine (according, at least, to the definitions of normative masculinity I have selected from contemporary chivalric literature).

One final way in which *The Alliterative Morte* exists as a queer text that bears mentioning is in relation to the stylistic and aesthetic norms of its genre, or more accurately, its genres. After all, however much *The Morte* wears the trappings of romance in its Arthurian subject matter, it looks just as much like a classical epic in terms of its narrative scope and poetic aestheticization of warfare. In drawing upon two massive Continental poetic traditions, namely the French romances and the Latinate epics available to a medieval poet, *The Morte* positions

[124] see R. A. Waldron; John Finlayson.

itself as inheritor of those traditions. But the distinctly Anglo-Celtic qualities of its make-up, from the alliterative meter to the wealth of Anglo-Saxon terms to the appropriation of originally Welsh folk characters as heroes of a then-nascent British imperialism, mark it as marginal to the various literary-cultural centers occupied by names like Virgil and the Chrétien de Troyes.

The assimilation of Welsh (and otherwise Celtic) material into an explicitly British conception of the nation is a handy example of the various ways in which *The Morte*'s queering of its cultural inheritance can also look to us in hindsight like it is speaking from the dominant cultural position. Addressing this tension specifically in queerness's relationship to systems of normativity, Tison Pugh argues that queerness is not always subversive to culturally dominant ideology in its operation, as "it rebels against ideological identity codes in some instances while quelling such resistance under other circumstances (*Sexuality* 3). However, the historical ascendancy of Britain to imperial dominance in the centuries after the composition of *The Morte* cannot not totally overwrite the ongoing *potential* for queering of genre, cultural norm, or ideology as it existed for the poem's first audiences. As Pugh himself and others like Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler[125] often point out, queer medieval scholarship cannot become overly concerned with cultural eventualities, origins, or societal progressive narratives if it is to locate queer potential and queer becomings throughout history.

We can look back on the late fourteenth century and recognize it as a time of emergent cultural prominence for poetry in English, but it is altogether harder to say how the *Morte* poet would have understood his project and its ability to speak back to the dominant European literary culture of his age. What we can say is that the text as it survives exhibits a clear aesthetic identity which stands as a challenge to its Continental forebears. It is perhaps most indicative of *The Morte* generic queerness that its plot unfolds in the narrative interlace style characteristic of Celtic art and Anglo-Saxon poetry rather than that of sequential, linear Virgilian action; for example, in his opening invocation, the narrator prays that God may teach him "to warp out some word at this time" that might be "[p]lesand and profitable to the pople that them heres" (ll. 8-10). From its outset, *The Morte* invokes the language of weaving to characterize its poetry, suggesting that it aims to create something new--a new blend of genres, a new literary center, a new chivalric imagination--out of the materials it inherits from both English and Continental poetic traditions. This fixation on newness extends to the poem's depictions of feelings and

[125] See, for example, their introduction to *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages* (xi).

alternative masculinities, many of which are novel (or totally *sui generis*) to the genre, though as I've argued, the more central interest for the *Morte* poet is in re-envisioning familiar feeling-emblems in queer contexts rather than inventing them out of whole cloth.

The queering of chivalric masculinity through the creative use and social coding of feeling words is a radically subversive project built into *The Morte* at all the levels I have tracked here, and doubtless several more, but it is not without a counterbalancing cultural conservatism which persists through the very same feeling-emblem structure. There is, after all, a high degree of ethnic exoticism and orientalism which *The Morte* trades on for its narrative thrust, and if the *Morte* poet suggests that Arthur's territorial expansionism is doomed from the start, we never get the sense that this is because Western imperialism itself is the problem, rather that Arthur has just fallen to greed and the whims of Fortune. And if we pursue the metaphor of feelings-emblems as extensions of the battlefield discourse of heraldic imagery, they must presuppose an identifiable category of emotional otherness against which the chivalric community can be organized and unified (just like how opposing armies use distinguishing banners and insignia to differentiate one another in combat). Lucius's army of Muslim knights (some Middle Eastern, some African, many Mediterranean) has to be characterized in an emotional vocabulary distinct from that which is used for Arthur and his knights (e.g. the "hething" of Syria and Lybia), or else the feeling-emblems of each army would be too easily confused with one another.

This cultural or ethnic othering which I believe feeling-emblems are highly susceptible to is ultimately rooted in the crusader mentality which governs a host of chivalric literature significantly predating *The Morte*. It is a delusional form of medieval race logic specific to chivalric literature which maintains that the Muslim knight must always be identifiably Other (through language, religious practice, weaponry, skin color, size, clothing, etc) while at the same time understanding that the Muslim knight is actually so close to identifying with the Christian knights as to be easily converted or assimilated to the side of right (or "dreit," to borrow the word from *Roland*).[126] I say all of this here so as to be clear that my queer reading of feelings in *The Morte* is by no way meant as an exhoneration of its most racist, xenophobic, and nationalist

[126] The well-known and representative assertion from *Chanson de Roland* goes as follows: Paien unt tort e crestiens unt dreit, or "Pagans are wrong and Christians are right," as said by Roland himself in rallying his men. In the words of Sharon Kinoshita, this poem (and perhaps all crusader literature) "is haunted by a crisis of nondifferentiation" between Christians and pagans strongly at odds with the conventional wisdom of its "monological fixity" opposing the two groups (79).

sentiments. As Ahmed again reminds us, we must be careful that, in making queer critiques of heteronormative structures of oppression, we do not accept unchallenged other normativities and their oppressive histories, like whiteness, Christianity, and Eurocentrism.[127] It is my hope, in arguing that coded emotional vulnerability makes possible a queer (and thus subversive) chivalric community in *The Morte*, that I have also called attention to the possibility of this same code being used by hegemonic powers, in this case to propagate Islamophobia. As I go on to show in my fourth chapter, feeling-emblems as a concept can help us identify how a poem like *The Morte* encourages these sentiments through its characterization of knights in the Christian and Muslim armies, and how similar cases of orientalizing or emphatically foreignizing certain affective dispositions persist as a political strategy for far right groups into our present day.

[127] Her most concise distillation of this point goes as follows: "white subjects might be very aware of heteronormativity because of being queer (queerness as estrangement from social and sexual norms) but not be aware of whiteness because of being white (whiteness as an alignment with social and racial norms)" ("Problematic Proximities" 128).

CHAPTER 3

FEELING-EMBLEMS AND THE NAVIGATION OF BORDERLANDS SPACE IN THREE GAWAIN ROMANCES

Chapter Introduction

In my second chapter, I proposed that *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* creates a queer chivalric community by depicting emotionally vulnerable and affectionate relationships between men through an explicitly chivalric discourse of feeling-emblems. My argument was that *The Morte* conjures this queer community as an imagined alternative to the emotionally repressive reality of homosocial brotherhoods of knights. In doing so, the poem levels an increasingly direct critique of the role that retributive chivalric violence played in historical conflicts of the fourteenth century, most notably during the Hundred Years' War, when *chevauchée*-style warfare devastated countrysides across England and France. In short, I said that *The Morte* uses feeling-emblems to sustain emotional bonds between men as a way of suggesting for its audience that this is what chivalry could have been, instead of the often merciless military apparatus that it actually became throughout the later Middle Ages. Such a suggestion may have been cold comfort for an aristocracy facing the waning days of its power amid a growing bourgeois class, but the descriptive attention which *The Morte* lavishes upon feeling-emblems and emotional vulnerability gives us a glimpse of what real queer relationships between knights may have looked like in their own cultural context. The potential for locating obscured histories of queerness was my ultimate aim with my treatment of *The Morte*, and feeling-emblems provided the conceptual structure to do that work. In this chapter, I look again at the imagined alternatives which feeling-emblems enable, but this time in the context of territorial disputes and anti-imperialist sentiments in the contested borderlands between Scotland and England.

My argument for this chapter is that the representation of feeling-emblems in a selection of Gawain romances point to an attitude of resistance to English imperialism which is at odds with the conventional role Gawain plays in the Arthurian narrative arc, and this resistant attitude is identifiably grounded in the historical context of the Anglo-Scottish Wars. The three Gawain romances I discuss are all "border" poems in some sense—two of them directly concern

territorial disputes, and one largely takes place in the wilds outside of Camelot—and they are all interested in exploring the limits and obligations of Arthur's role as king. Each poem positions Gawain as the primary mediator for Arthur's authority while also making him confront the legitimacy of those who challenge Arthur, whether those challengers be foreign kings, the vengeful dead, or skeptical outsiders of the court. As a result, Gawain is torn between his duty to serve the Round Table knighthood and the pledges he makes to others while on adventure. This split loyalty requires that Gawain display feeling-emblems which can signify in multiple ways simultaneously. In other words, the Gawain of these romances becomes a knight of the borderlands in both a literal and affective sense, and thinking of him as such gives us the opportunity to better understand the feelings of those who historically inhabited the borderlands between England and Scotland.

Methodologically, I draw upon the work of some of the most well-known thinkers in decoloniality, as well upon as theorists of borderlands space more generally: Gloria Anzaldúa, Homi K. Bhabha, Jacques Derrida, and Mary Louise Pratt, to name the foremost. I also incorporate the most recent work of medievalist historians and literary critics whose scholarship focuses directly on the Anglo-Scottish borderlands during the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries. I have foregrounded this scholarship and background information about the Anglo-Scottish borderlands (or "Marches") in the chapter because it is important that my reading of these Gawain romances as border poems be historically situated in the context of the Anglo-Scottish Wars. There is a danger when adapting the work of a given decolonial thinker into a new cultural and historical context to make generalizations about how borderlands operate and how identities are negotiated in borderlands space. For me, that danger includes making overly broad comparisons between the Anglo-Scottish Marches and the history of the border between The United States and Mexico (Anzaldúa) or the history of English colonialism in India (Bhabha). So, I will insist throughout this chapter that I am discussing the Anglo-Scottish context specifically, and whenever I step away from that context (e.g. to discuss parallels between the Anglo-Welsh and Anglo-Scottish borderlands as sites of English imperial projects), I do so not to erase meaningful difference, but rather to clarify my readings by careful contrast with other decolonial scholarship. Because the breadth of Arthurian literature is so vast among European traditions, narrowing down my focus to the specific historical and cultural context of the

Anglo-Scottish Marches means first distinguishing one Gawain from the plurality that existed across medieval literatures.

In the wide array of romances, epics, and courtly poems that make up the genre of Arthurian romance, individual countries' traditions tend to amass the narratives of some knights more than others. Lancelot, for one, is indelibly associated with the French works of Chrétien de Troyes, as is Tristan, despite the latter having clear Celtic and Brittonic beginnings. Percival, though not a German hero in the strictest sense, casts a long shadow in medieval German literary history thanks to Wolfram von Eschenbach's version of the romance, *Parzival*, derived largely from his precursors in Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval* and the Celtic figure of Peredur. Kay and Bedivere, two of the earliest additions to the Round Table, are consistently associated with Welsh place and family names, which is fitting in light of the fact that they both originate in stories like *Culhwch and Olwen* and the Welsh Triads. Gawain, also ostensibly a Welsh figure in origin, is fairly unique among Round Table knights in how well-represented his stories are across diverse European strains of Arthuriana.[128]

Even just a cursory look at the plurality of names to which Gawain responds across literary traditions can reveal how far-reaching his appeal is for poets writing in various dialects (and periods) of French, German, Italian, Welsh, Latin, Spanish, English, and the Scandinavian languages. He has been Gwalchmei ap Gwyar, Gauvain, Walwen or Waluanus, Walewein, Galvano, and more throughout the Middle Ages, rivaled perhaps only by Lancelot or Tristan in the mutability of his name and in what his knighthood represents. As I showed in my introductory chapter, courtesy is a consistent characteristic of Gawain's, but this relatively stable quality of his personality can still be bent to very different overall characterizations. For example, courtesy can be an outward sign of Gawain's inner perfection, as in *Gologras and Gawain*, or it can be a thin veneer concealing corruption and villainy as in the Prose *Tristan*, or it can guide Gawain mostly toward chivalric conduct with only the occasional lapse into fearfulness and romantic dalliance, as in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. As a direct result of this translation of Gawain across Arthurian literary traditions, his reputation as "the most

[128] On Iberian Arthuriana, see the work of Antonio Contreras Martín and María Luzdivina Cuestra Torre (on the "Hispanic *Lancelot*" and the "Iberian *Tristan*," respectively) in *The Arthur of the Iberians: The Arthurian Legends in the Portuguese and Spanish Worlds*. For a survey of how Arthurian narratives and the Matter of Britain more generally have been incorporated into Scandinavian legend and literature, see Marianne E. Kalinke's chapters in *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and Rus' Realms* and Sofia Lodén's "The Arthurian Legacy in Sweden." On the adaptation of Arthurian legend into Italian literature, see Gina Psaki's introduction to *The Arthur of the Italians: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval Italian Literature and Culture*.

courteous knight" means vastly different things depending on its historical, cultural, political, and gendered social contexts. The particular meaning we derive from a given work's representation of knighthood is often directly tied to the concerns that are front of mind for each poet.

When it comes to the concerns of Scots and Northern English poets, the Gawain of these romances tends to reflect a model of chivalry that is largely independent of centralized government and Arthur's rule. This is not to say that Gawain somehow acts *against* Arthur's authority, only that his adventures frequently take him into chaotic conflicts and the liminal, wild, borderlands spaces between kingdoms where the only power to which he can appeal is his own. This unique aspect to Scots-influenced Gawain romances makes the most sense when placed in context of the growing Scottish independence movement of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, during and following the military campaigns of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce and the rise of a borderlands culture in the buffer territory between Scotland and England.[129]

Starting in the mid-thirteenth century,[130] England and Scotland formally recognized a borderlands region between the two countries as the Marches.[131] Now commonly called the Anglo-Scottish Marches to distinguish the region from the Anglo-Welsh Marches, the region was the frequent focus of international conflict in the later Middle Ages. The collective territory of the Marches was itself comprised of sub-regions which were mirrored on both sides of the border (both Scotland and England had an East March, a Middle March, and a West March), and each nation's government appointed an administrative Lord Warden of the Marches responsible for maintaining border security. Between the founding of the Marches and their eventual conversion into the Middle Shires in 1603 (following the Union of the Crowns, when James VI of Scotland

[129] As John Todd explains in reviewing the history of the Western Debatable Lands (near Carlisle and Galloway), the Anglo-Scottish border was well-established by the thirteenth century, and parts of it really only became a semi-autonomous "no man's land" in the fifteenth century ("The West March on the Anglo-Scottish Border in the Twelfth Century" 12).

[130] The Treaty of York was signed by Henry III of England and Alexander II of Scotland in 1237. The treaty establishes Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmorland as under English control, and creates an Anglo-Scottish border line that is largely unchanged from today. A subsequent agreement in 1249 between the two countries codified laws and customs of the borderlands based on juridical traditions that had existed in the region for years ("Scottish Influences on the Medieval Laws of the Anglo-Scottish Marches" 165-166).

[131] "March" in this case literally means a border between two countries, and it is cognate with the name for the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia (Old English *Mierce* or *Myrce*). See *MED* "marche" n. 2.

took the English throne as James I), the Marches developed a distinct borderlands identity separate from the nascent national identities of England or Scotland.

Scholars who work on the history of the Anglo-Scottish Marches have disagreed for at least the last fifty years[132] about the extent to which borderers identified with their local kinship groups over their respective countries.[133] The issue is particularly contentious for those scholars examining legal records in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a period when border administrators often attributed nationalist motivations to otherwise quotidian crimes (e.g. a Tudor-bankrolled administrator might readily ascribe a charge of sedition to the crime of theft if it was done by a Scot to an Eglishman). My study concerns the Marches during a period mostly prior to the Tudor era, book-ended by *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* around the turn of the fifteenth century through to *Gologras and Gawain* in the very early sixteenth century. This interval of time sees the Anglo-Scottish Marches at the height of their territorial contest and instability, with land and power being consolidated around roughly a dozen prominent surnames on each side of the border (e.g. the Armstrongs, Bells, Douglases, Percies, Musgraves, Grahams, and Storeys).[134] This is not to say that the families of borderers[135] inhabiting this region from the fourteenth through the early sixteenth centuries imagined themselves as totally divorced from the national politics of London and Edinburgh (in point of fact, their entire life along the border was inflected by those politics). It is, however, likely that these families—local lords and lairds of the land and the people who lived on that land, many with kingroup ties to the region pre-dating the Norman conquest—understood the national interests of England's and Scotland's ruling class as

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[132] G. W. S. Barrow's "The Anglo-Scottish Border," a lecture later published in *Northern History* in 1966, essentially begins the modern debate around the historical characterization of the border and its peoples.

[133] Richard Firth Green argues persuasively for the fluid mixing of kinship groups across the border in both the medieval and early modern periods, claiming that "for such people ties of kinship would always have trumped national loyalties" well into the sixteenth century ("The Border Writes Back" 105). Cynthia Neville, by contrast, finds that "national consciousness," if not national identity, prevailed throughout the Marches in the Middle Ages ("Local Sentiment and the 'National' Enemy in Northern England in the Later Middle Ages" 435-437).

[134] Goodman 196.

[135] I use the term "borderer" to identify inhabitants of the Anglo-Scottish border region as distinct from other groups who would have identified socially with either their national Scottish and English communities or with their own local communities. This term, along with the synonymous term "marcher," is used in critical discourses of both the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-Welsh Marches. Here I am referring almost entirely to inhabitants of the Anglo-Scottish Marches when I use the term "borderer." I avoid using the term "marcher" for the most part because it tends to be applied to march lords specifically (rather than the more general population of the Marches) starting in the fourteenth century. "Borderer" is a more inclusive, less confusing term for the population I am discussing.

forces imposed from outside their immediate community, not deeply-rooted parts of their individual or social selves.

Even if, as Jenna Schultz argues, by the late sixteenth century "a sense of Englishness or Scottishness permeated the region and created a strong marker of distinction" such that "borderers and administrators often expressed a national identity rather than one associated with a regional kinship group or locale,"[136] we should be skeptical of how resilient that sense of Englishness or Scottishness was when pressed by dire circumstances and need. The rule and administration of English law was not universally consistent across English land holdings in the later Middle Ages,[137] and a family that had survived generations of inconstant English laws, administrators, and military interventions in the borderlands might recognize Englishness over kinship when necessary without putting much stock in Englishness as a marker of identity.

The observation of region-specific laws and social customs is a legitimate basis for locating a shared sense of identity in the Marches, but because these laws and customs are neither totally Scottish nor totally English,[138] I suggest that we should think of them properly as a distinct borderer identity. There is an easy historical case to be made for this lack of "national sentiment" in the borderlands before the sixteenth century (even at the height of the Anglo-Scottish Wars), because nationhood itself was still inchoate in the British Isles. But we need not appeal to that fact. It simply suffices to note that the most established, landed, and powerful kinship groups of the Marches continually intermarried and formed periodic alliances (even across the border) throughout the later Middle Ages, such that "regardless of where their centers of power lay, representatives of virtually all these families might be found on both sides of the border" (Green 105). Even Schultz, who consistently argues for the primacy of national

[136] *National Identity and the Anglo-Scottish Borderlands* 4-5.

[137] In "Civilising the Natives: State Formation and the Tudor Monarchy, c. 1400-1603," Steven G. Ellis claims that "the English system of law and administration was not universally in operation. It was supplemented in the borderlands by different forms of march law and marcher lordships… Thus, if we focus on the rule of the wider feudal condominium of the medieval English monarchy, there were in fact three distinct administrative regions: lowland England, with supposedly 'standard' administrative structures; the conquest lordships of the borderlands in which 'standard' structures had been partially imposed; and the non-English continental possessions whose administrative structures were quite different. England's medieval empire was, in reality, an extremely diverse patchwork of lordships, duchies, towns and kingdoms, with five or six separate blocs of territory separated by land or sea, and with many marches to patrol and defend" (81).

[138] See Cynthia Neville ("Scottish Influences on the Medieval Laws of the Anglo-Scottish Marches" 163-165) for more on this blending of Scottish and English legal traditions in march law. Neville claims that march law always owed more to "the Scottish legal tradition than it ever did to English common law" (163), but she recognizes that it is impossible to exclude English influence altogether in this history.

identity over kinship group identity in the Marches, acknowledges that kinship groups "could form cross-border alliances during raids, or an administrator could align himself with borderers from the opposite kingdom to quell illicit activities" (4-5). It is this long-standing fluidity to the border line of the Marches[139] that both accommodated and provoked a great deal of the violence and instability for which the region has become famous.

By the late fifteenth century, the region was notorious in reputation for violence and cross-border raids, largely carried out by the so-called "border reivers," who attacked people on both sides of the border without particular regard for national allegiance. Property theft, ransoming, cattle raiding, and more violent crimes of opportunity are frequently cited in legal records of the fifteenth through seventeenth century. In fact, the freebooting of local chiefs in the Anglo-Scottish Marches gives us the very word "blackmail" ("mail" here meaning rent or tribute to protect one from raiding),[140] first attested, according to Robert Pitcairn's *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, in 1530.[141] Of course, all this localized violence and raiding took place against the backdrop of larger, iterative wars between England and Scotland throughout the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and these wars periodically included a French military presence as well (either due to the Hundred Years' War between France and England (1337-1453) or the revival of the Auld Alliance between Scotland and France (1295-c.1560)). This is all to say that, however much we might imagine the Marches as a periphery—a frontier, by definition of the term "march"—we must also bear in mind that this region was very much the center of ongoing conflicts at varying scales between England and Scotland throughout the later Middle Ages.[142] The borderlands between the two countries were staging grounds for all kinds of

[139] G. W. S. Barrow uses "fluidity" as a way to characterize the borderlands before the Treaty of York in 1237 in place of terms like "vagueness" or "ambiguity" ("The Anglo-Scottish Border" 23-24). He argues for this term on the basis that, even without a formal treaty agreement delimiting counties into either English or Scottish control, peoples living in the borderlands between the two countries could readily use geographic features like dikes and waterways to distinguish between the territory governed by one sovereign or the other. I mostly agree with this insistence on recognizing that the classification of a "march" by definition implies a clear border or periphery, though I am more willing than Barrow to entertain the possibility of "a sizeable tract of territory… where the English and Scottish kingdoms as it were shaded off into each other" (23) in the minds of medieval borderers.

[140] *OED* "blackmail" n. 1.

[141] Pitcairn I.i.145.

[142] As Cynthia Neville notes in reviewing the evolution of march law, "the border line itself as a locus of justice has an ancient pedigree," and it gave rise to a "'third' kind of law" which operated in the border region, neither wholly Scottish nor English in its enforcement ("Scottish Influences on the Medieval Laws of the Anglo-Scottish Marches" 164).

territorial disputes, whether these disputes were local and opportunistic in nature as with the raiding of border reivers or imperial and anticolonial as with the Hundred Years' War and the Scottish Wars for Independence, respectively. It is no great wonder then that the region gained such a reputation for instability. It is this reputation for instability and violent contest, rather than any particular historical reality, that I take as my subject here.

As with any historical study in which the characterization of a region's people, their identities, and their cultural practice is mostly derived from the accounts given by legal records of a state apparatus, we must read these accounts skeptically. In fact, we must even be willing to imagine that the version of history to which these accounts attest is the polar opposite of the reality that the peoples themselves experienced. In the introductory chapter and in Chapter 2, I discussed the issue of unreliable historical accounts at length in the context of queer chivalry, non-normative masculinity, and the often misleading accounts given by chronicle sources and the writers of chivalry manuals. In this chapter, the issue at hand is the extent to which the Anglo-Scottish Marches were actually violent (or more violent) compared to other regions of England and Scotland during the same time period. The fact of numerous wars and the presence of border reivers is uncontested, but as many critics note,[143] it was often advantageous to ruling powers in both England and Scotland to characterize the Marches as dangerous, lawless regions under constant assault. For the English, the "barbarism" of the Scots legitimized their civilizing conquest,[144] and for the Scots, the threat of incursions from the south warranted continued Scottish expansion and defense of the borderlands.[145] A violent reputation for the Marches was instrumental for personal gain too, not just for stirring up proto-nationalist sentiments and levying armies. Border administrators could conveniently ignore peaceful interactions in the Marches and focus exclusively on crimes of feuding and raiding to solicit more funding from their governments. Administrators might also emphasize their role in punishing violent crime as a means of persuading governments to ignore their "inefficiencies in office."[146]

So, as I discuss the Anglo-Scottish Marches and their representation in the romance imaginary of the Gawain poems, I mean to be clear that my study examines how those

[143] e.g. Schultz, Neville ("Local Sentiment"), Goodman, Ellis.

[144] Ellis 83.

[145] Goodman 197.

[146] Schultz 91.

representations enable a literary audience to play out real-world political conflicts of the borderlands in different social—and specifically affective—terms. Much in the same spirit of scholars like Richard Firth Green (who reads traditional ballads as the vernacular poetry of Anglo-Scottish borderer culture "writing back" against central authority)[147] or Randy Schiff (who sees both *Awntyrs off Arthure at Terne Wathelyne* and *The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain* as articulating the "social logic" of a "fundamentally marcher zone"),[148] I take the Anglo-Scottish Marches to be the great unnamed presence of the romances discussed in this chapter.

This study is immeasurably indebted to the scholarship of decolonial and intersectional theorists, as well as theorists of borderlands space more generally. Gloria Anzaldúa is first and foremost among those thinkers, and her *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* influences every part of my work here. Her critical vocabulary, her conceptualization of the borderlands as a space and a people always criminalized, and her demand that Western thought recognize ambiguity and contradiction in the identities of those it has colonized are all active in my analysis of these borderlands romances. As Anzaldúa explains, the "borderlands" geography between the United States and Mexico resists being culturally absorbed by either nation in its entirety, and as a result its people have developed identities affected by *la mezcla* (hybridity, mixture). To address this hybridity, Anzaldúa formulates a "new mestiza" in the language of the borderlands, an intersectional model of identity that can resist imperialist structures of oppression like patriarchy, heteronormativity, white supremacy, and anti-indigeneity. Locating (and representing) this new mestiza consciousness in Chicanx and Latinx art is a political imperative for Anzaldúa, a necessary part of sharing the history of cultural hybridity, settler colonial violence, and resistance with white audiences so that they will come "to see that they are not helping us but following our lead" (85) in matters of activism or social justice. It is this political imperative to recover a history of borderlands identities that I follow in finding parallels between Gawain romances and the Anglo-Scottish Marches.

Of course, after acknowledging my debt to Anzaldúa, I must immediately acknowledge the impression a reader might have that I am appropriating the ideas of an anti-imperialist, decolonial Chicana theorist to focus attention on the kind of colonial and imperial forces her

[147] "The Border Writes Back" 105.

[148] "Borderland Subversions: Anti-Imperial Energies in *The Awntyrs off Arthure* and *Gologras and Gawane*" 624-625.

work resists. I am not alone in occupying this problematic position in relation to Anzaldúa's work, and a number of other scholars working on borderlands identity in the Anglo-Scottish Marches make similar acknowledgements[149] (they all should, because any such text written after 1990 owes her a similar debt, but not all are so forthcoming). I am wary also of the tendency for scholars working on Scottish, Welsh, Breton, and Irish literature to present their subjects in the same relation to England as indigenous populations understand themselves to be vis-a-vis colonizing powers, which is to say that they often ignore the later complicity that Scottish, Welsh, Breton, or Irish peoples have had in colonial and imperial projects *against* indigenous populations.[150] My acknowledgement regarding Anzaldúa is not borne of a desire to hold medieval Scottish (or Welsh or Irish) peoples responsible for the deeds of their descendents or to erase the historical fact of their colonization and conquest by the British; to do either would be absurd. Rather, I only want to make explicit that my project rejects categorically the type of revisionist histories which seek to exculpate modern day groups in the British Isles, the United States, and elsewhere from associations with colonialism, majority status, and whiteness by fixating on a point in the past when the ancestors of those groups were oppressed. Such ideologically motivated histories have flourished in recent years, propagating nonsense like "white genocide" by pointing, for example, to the historical and present day plight of some white Afrikaners in South Africa or to the oppression of Christian minorities by Ottoman rulers. There are dire consequences to these complete distortions of decolonial and anti-imperialist theory, as demonstrated by the fact that the mass shooter at Christchurch in 2019 and others continue to cite such ideas in their manifestos.[151] So, while I have plenty of faith that the reader would not lump

[149] Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell, in their introduction to *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300-1600*, try to recognize Anzaldúa while explaining why her concept of "la concienscia mestiza" doesn't precisely apply (5-6). Richard Firth Green (in the same volume) makes a similarly brief acknowledgement of Anzaldúa's importance to his work. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen is arguably more substantial in recognizing his debt to her work in "Hybrids, Monsters, Borderlands: The Bodies of Gerald of Wales" (in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* pp. 85-104). Michael Faletra also approaches Gerald of Wales thinking about Bhabha and cultural hybridity in Chapter Four of his monograph, *Wales and the Medieval Colonial Imagination*. Whereas Cohen is mainly interested in thinking about how characterizations of monstrosity tend to be directed at culturally hybridized or colonized populations, Faletra is more concerned with how hybridity accounts for the ways that Wales is incorporated into the Matter of Britain tradition.

[150] This is an even more pernicious tendency in lay scholarship regarding the identities of Celtic immigrants to the United States. There is a frighteningly large popular appetite for comparing the struggles of Irish Americans and Scottish Americans to the oppression of black, indigenous, and Latinx/Chicanx peoples. We would do well to remember the reality of how both white Scots and white Scottish-Americans profited from their involvement in the economy of chattel slavery.

[151] Moses 201-203.

my work in with such conspiracies and madness, the stakes are too high to take such things for granted.

Accordingly, although this chapter seeks to clarify how historical populations inhabiting the Anglo-Scottish border found representations of themselves through the popular genre of chivalric romance, it makes no claim that this is the same work which Anzaldúa and others have done to recover the history of Chicanx and indigenous identities in the literature and art of *la frontera*. My own work incorporates the theories and thought structures we inherit from Anzaldúa because not to do so would be criminally disingenuous, but I am only attempting to show how her work informs our understanding of other historical oppressions, not to make false equivalencies. This is true of every decolonial thinker I cite here.

My project also engages ideas from several other theorists of cultural contact zones, all of whom discuss directly the role that cultural translation has in shaping borderlands identities. Indeed, Mary Louise Pratt's definition of the term "contact zone" is highly influential in my framing of this project. Of contact zones, Pratt says, "I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" ("Arts of the Contact Zone" 34).[152] The contact zone is a formulation of cultural and linguistic exchange that can contrast the often idealized and totally self-contained "speech community" or "textual community," enabling us to imagine how cultural transmission happens at sites of contact but across different groups of people who would not necessarily identify themselves as belonging to a single community.

In addition to Pratt's model of the contact zone, Derrida's essay "Living On/Borderlines" is a constant presence in my mind as I explore how Gawain romances imagine the crossing of borders in different ways. Derrida's initial preoccupation in this essay is how to approach a text, or more specifically, how to identify a text's edge (*bord*) so that we can say what is "the text" and what is outside the text. Any sort of quotation (direct, indirect, "invisible") complicates finding that edge, though, such that a text seems to be "written on the brink" (81) between its inside and

[152] As she explains, although "subordinate peoples do not usually control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what gets absorbed into their own and what it gets used for" (36) through a process of "transculturation" (a term she borrows from the Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz).

outside,[153] simultaneously referring to its own contents and presenting another text to be read "without touching it, without saying anything about it, practically without referring to it" (fn. to p. 80). Derrida's larger point in calling attention to the border of a text is to show how, in a Benjaminian sense of a translated text's "afterlife," a text can only "live on" if it is "*at once* translatable *and* un-translatable" (fn. to p. 102), seemingly capable of being carried over[154] the border of language and yet not completely. This interest in troubling borders and in carrying semantic content across borders (without referring to the works on either side of that border) will become most apparent in my reading of *Awntyrs*, but it remains relevant throughout. One of the many ways that Derrida unpacks the word *survivre* is as a kind of living on the borderline itself, and this "living on" is highly pertinent in thinking about the relationship between these borderlands Gawain romances and the actual borderers themselves. Ultimately, the question I hope to answer in my readings of these texts is what parts of a historical borderer culture are not translatable into the standard chivalric framework—or what parts resist being incorporated into the Arthurian imperial project. Derrida is a useful beginning here, but locating the resistant parts of that culture (and the culture's corresponding social identity) demands more concrete thinking about how subjects are formed in borderlands space.

Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* is a natural next step in theorizing identity formation in the Marches, both because he directly engages Derrida and Benjamin on translation and because he addresses how power affects transmission between majority and minority cultures. Bhabha is interested in thinking about how subjects are formed in the "in-between," which is to say in cultural interstices where "intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (2). Here Bhabha is speaking of the interstices created by colonial histories (like Anzaldúa is) and by the cultural translation that occurs in migrant life (like Derrida and Benjamin are). In both cases, Bhabha argues that the subjectivities which arise in these interstices are a "social articulation of difference" (3) from the majority perspective. The articulation of this difference works to "authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation," and in the process it often destabilizes

[153] We need not step outside the genre of chivalric romance to find examples of these different forms of quotation. Indeed, it is much more common for medieval romance writers to indirectly cite earlier texts, or to deliberately mis-cite one another in claiming "auctorite" for their own work.

[154] Here Derrida's and Benjamin's understandings of translation comport nicely with medieval thinking. Middle English "translacioun" (and the Latin *translatio*/Greek *metaphora* from which it derives) connotes both literal and figurative "carrying over."

ideas of an inherited cultural tradition. As Bhabha argues, the ultimate political function of articulating this cultural hybridized subjectivity is to pose "questions of solidarity and community from the interstitial perspective" (4), to imagine a community that is both multicultural and representational of complex identities. Again, this kind of re-imagining community is precisely the project I am invested in as I treat each of these romances: the task at hand is to understand how the borderlands environment of each text enables the construction of chivalric identities that are more complex or more independent of the imperialistic version of knighthood that so often dominates these narratives.

I am not ever making a claim that the version of the Anglo-Scottish Marches depicted in these romances is a closer or "truer" account of the borderlands than we might find otherwise.[155] It is simply a different account, inflected by the desire to find a lasting Scottish resistance to England and perhaps one not predicated so wholly on military dominance. The success of the Scottish cause in the Wars for Independence (such as it existed) was owed more to a deep knowledge and relationship with the geography of the Marches and tactical ingenuity than it was to sheer numbers. The development of a distinctly Scottish model of chivalry, too, played a role in mobilizing the actual campaigns of Scottish military leaders and the versions of those campaigns put down in poetry.[156] Together, these elements of life in the borderlands, both real and imagined, create a version of the Arthurian kingdom in Scots Gawain romances that demands to be read through the lens of historical border conflict and colonial resistance. It is in trying to meet that demand that I turn my attention to the convention of allegiance-switching in the Marches and how this convention relates to the recoding of feeling-emblems.

In addition to feuding, raiding, and ransom, another commonly reported practice in the Marches was switching of allegiances, as in the case of a Scottish borderer professing allegiance to an English patrol, or the reverse.[157] This practice was mainly a pragmatic strategy for

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[155] See King ("'According to the custom used in French and Scottish wars': Prisoners and casualties on the Scottish Marches in the fourteenth century") for claim that border warfare was not actually that deadly for gentry, and that's why the borderers stayed committed to the scottish wars.

[156] See Callum Watson's unpublished dissertation *Attitudes Towards Chivalry in Barbour's Bruce and Hary's Wallace* for more on the ways that Scottish poets reworked standard chivalric ideals and tropes to construct a distinctly Scottish chivalric hero in *The Bruce* and *The Wallace*.

[157] Per Schultz: "Unwillingness to commit to a complete union between the two kingdoms meant that legal matters continued to plague local and crown officials. The borderers took advantage of this discord, which allowed the borderline and disparities between the kingdoms to persist… As with legal differences, borderers attempted to use their national identity as a way to avoid persecution" (101).

surviving in a militarized borderlands space and escaping legal jurisdictions within which one has outstanding warrants. But allegiance-switching also reflects the absence of borderers' identification with the national ideologies that much of modern scholarship continues to attribute to the wars between England and Scotland. This is not to say that the social identities of borderers were somehow unstable or inauthentic as a result of their cultural hybridity, only to say that—living, as they were, at the inflection point of the Anglo-Scottish Marches—borderers would not have socially organized themselves around *national* identity first and foremost.[158] Many border families had lived in the region before its formal designation as the Marches, and their interests were not represented by either Tudor policies in England or by the elite class sentiments of the barons who called for Scottish independence in the Declaration of Arbroath (1320).[159] The allegiance-switching that came to be characteristic of the Marches is thus partially a tactic for existing in a contested landscape and partially a reflection of a borderer identity that resists easy classification along national lines.[160] This unique quality of the Marches as a borderlands space—where signs of political allegiance and fealty are always in contest—makes it an ideal setting for the Gawain romances I take as my subject in this chapter and in particular for the ambivalent ways in which feeling-emblems get used by characters.

In battlefield poems like *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, the legibility of feeling-emblems at a distance is what gives them their utility and value as community-building signs: characters can successfully read feeling-emblems of others and thus distinguish friend from foe in the chaos

[158] Kate Ash treats this issue at length in her essay, "Friend or Foe? Negotiating the Anglo-Scottish Border in Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* and Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*." As Ash shows, there is a long history of representing borderer communities as having a hybridized culture, and these representations sometimes serve the direct interest of borderers themselves, but they are also characterizations often leveraged to serve the political expediencies of Scottish and English national sentiment ("Friend or Foe?" 51-53). A "messy" borderland, she points out, is one in need of controlling, and this can be reason enough for imperial action on either side of the border.

[159] Penned by Scottish barons (signed by over fifty nobles), The Declaration of Arbroath was written to Pope John XXII in rebuke of the Pope's excommunication of Scottish King Robert I following the First War of Scottish Independence. In crafting an argument about the historical legitimacy of Scotland's independence as a kingdom, the Declaration makes sweeping rhetorical appeals to the joint cause among Scots of all stations. In reality, it is almost exclusively the interests of the nobility and the clergy that are represented in the document. As R. James Goldstein argues, the supposition that any of the "middling to lowest classes doubtless shared in the production of national ideology" owes more to their membership in the same textual community as their social superiors than it does to actually producing the text of that community (*The Matter of Scotland: Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland* 79-103).

[160] Neville refers to this process as "opportunistic allegiance," and notes that juries often "dealt especially harshly with persons who attempted to take advantage of wartime conditions by playing both sides of the game" ("Local Sentiment" 426). Jones discusses war-time instances "of the use of someone else's emblems of identification as a *ruse de guerre*" when it would have been advantageous to be mistaken for someone else (25).

and affective intensity of battle. In a borderlands space, however, this legibility is a liability, and so the feeling-emblems we see on display in the Gawain romances regularly assume a degree of nuance and even ambiguity that doesn't arise in *The Morte*. As with the more conventional signs of allegiance (flags, shields, chivalric insignia) that are subject to being switched, the feeling-emblems of the Gawain romance borderlands are "switchable" in a way that is both a survival strategy and a marker of characters' identities. In some cases, knights must deliberately misrepresent their feelings to resolve a fight peaceably (*Gologras and Gawain*). In others, knights repeatedly assert a feeling-emblem as an outward sign of their inward self only to have it misread or trivialized again and again until the feeling-emblem itself is a cipher (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*). And still in others, feeling-emblems are a technique for asserting ever greater claims to authority over contested space, until it becomes difficult to imagine at all how a borderlands knight might signal his opposition to that authority (*Awntyrs off Arthur*e). As I have already suggested, the Gawain of these romances is not a consistent character across texts, but he enables similar imperial (and anti-imperial) projects in each because of his positionality. Gawain is a knight whose very identity crosses the English-Scottish border, and it does so frequently in service of Arthur's efforts to expand his rule. And yet, because these romances are written in a culture that recognizes an "ordered" chronology of Arthur's rise and eventual fall, the shadow of Gawain's eventual collaboration with his half-brother (the usurper Mordred) hangs over him and his role in the narrative. However much Gawain may sometimes act as an Arthurian enforcer in these texts, the possibility of his betrayal or subversion of the imperial project remains open, and other knights even manage to turn that possibility into real political resistance and material gain.

Gawain, connected by family association with the Orkney Islands and Lothian in Scotland,[161] becomes a kind of Scottish resistance hero in some romances and an advocate for the autonomy of local (implicitly Scottish) barons in others. Both the Orkneys (extending off the northeastern tip of Scotland) and Lothian (in the southeast, abutting the borderlands) tie Gawain to late medieval Scottish military projects, as Scotland only reclaimed the Orkneys from Norwegian colonization in 1472, and the Lothians (Midlothian, East Lothian, and West Lothian) saw heavy conflict throughout the Anglo-Scottish Wars. As an Arthurian parallel to the

[161] In dominant late-medieval Arthurian narrative lineage, Gawain's father, King Lot, rules over both Lothian and the Orkneys. Gawain's mother, Morgause, is also Arthur's sister, and she gives birth to Agravain, Gaheris, Gareth, and Mordred. This family is something of a mixed bag when it comes to its chivalric reputation: Gawain, Gareth, and Lot tend to come out favorably as supporters of Arthur's rule, while Agravain, Gaheris, and Mordred are characterized as usurpers or, at the very least, factionalists.

mytho-historical account of John Barbour's *The Bruce*, Gawain of these Northern romances helps popularize and anchor an emergent Scottish national identity through his ambivalent relationship to Arthur's court. Gawain ("the most courteous knight") must constantly confront the communicative gap between how he wishes to present himself and how others interpret his behavior, his affect, and his feelings. Each of the central poems I treat in this chapter (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain*, and *The Awntyrs off Arthur at Terne Wathelyne*) emphasizes how for Gawain and for those around him, one's body, armor, adornments, and expressions are emblems in interpretive contest, wavering between the symbolic meaning a character assigns to them and the ones they accrue from association with others. At stake in each of these romances is the extent to which chivalric devices can (or cannot) retain the intensity of the feelings knights attach to them when put under scrutiny. As we will see, this dynamic in which Gawain repeatedly confronts how others characterize him—a dynamic which relies directly on heraldic registers—ultimately serves as a proxy for larger political negotiations of Scottish resistance, English colonialism, and the sorts of identity positions that can only arise in borderlands space.

Before moving on to the three poems I've selected to represent how feeling-emblems operate in the borderlands of chivalric romance, a brief clarification of terms is in order. In Chapter 2, while discussing *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, I made frequent appeals to the importance of sight and touch as faculties associated with knights' feelings and affinities for one another. Sight and touch are much more closely associated with each other in medieval theories of perception than they are in modern epistemologies. I argued that this compound visual-tactile sense could help us understand how Sara Ahmed's concept of queerness as an orientation (a non-straight way of directionally positioning oneself and encountering the world) operated along senses beyond sight alone. The intimate scenes of touching between knights are coded as queer because they affirm the knights' emotional, social, and (implicitly) sexual orientations towards each other and because they occur outside the bounds of normatively masculine conduct for a knight. For this chapter, I am again calling attention to the importance of sight, but this time in order to emphasize how sight is doubted or questioned on the battlefield and in various chivalric contests.

The operant quality of sight in the Gawain romances I discuss here is scrutiny.[162] Characters are consistently concerned with the work of performing chivalric prowess publicly before a crowd of onlookers (the "prese," as *Gologras* records at l. 236) and with the work of judging the performances of other knights. In fact, the desire to prove merit by performing chivalry well is central to the plot of each romance,[163] such that the substance of knighthood and the spectacle of knighthood become virtually indistinguishable from one another. These poems are among the most ornate and spectacular of the surviving Middle English romances when it comes to descriptions of armor and the theatrics of chivalry. Every item is jewel-encrusted, every piece of metal gleams, every fight has (several) dramatic beats, and every character knows the honor-bound rules of combat and the romance script they must follow—the Arthur of *Gologras* even cites a proverb which he claims to have read often in romances as a guide in how to act.[164] Concomitantly, however, this blending of substance and spectacle engenders a skepticism, even an anxiety, among onlookers that what they see is not what is real, and this is where sight becomes principally a mode of scrutiny.

In my introductory chapter, I discussed how the Middle English verb "showen" operates in *Gologras and Gawain*: characters "show" their feeling-emblems as an act of public presentation (and representation) before onlookers, whether those onlookers are enemy knights on the battlefield, a knight's own comrades, or various interested parties who are adjacent to the fighting. There is nothing inherently deceptive about the act of showing: in an honor economy, a knight must show himself in his own lands and in foreign ones to gain worship, and a knight who conceals himself is quickly forgotten. But if the act of showing suggests unity between a knight's

[162] The word "scrutiny" is attested in various Middle English and Early Modern dialects, and the delightful Scots variant "scrutination" is attested from 1649 (*DotSL* "scrutination" n.). However, the more accurate period-specific term in use for these Gawain romances is simply "luke" (*DotSL* "luke" n.1). The sense of "having a look" at something as a shorthand for investigating it is very much active in the fifteenth-sixteenth century dialects of Scots I discuss here. The term is used in *Gologras* in the construction "lurk for ane luke," meaning to hide for the sake of onlookers.

[163] In *Gologras and Gawain*, the entire ruse which Gologras concocts while fighting Gawain is a strategy for saving face before his people. In *Awntyrs off Arthur*, the knight Galeron states outright that his fear of being laughed at by others undergirds his challenge to Gawain ("To lese suche a lordshipp me wolde thenke laith, / And iche lede opon lyve wold lagh me to scorne," ll. 432-433). In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the Green Knight originally arrives at Arthur's court to test its merit, and Gawain steps up to participate in the beheading contest once the Green Knight has called out the entire court as lacking in worthiness. In all three poems, the self-display of public fighting is ultimately an attempt to command the interest and respect of others.

[164] "Oft in romanis I reid: / Airly sporne, late speid" (ll. 878-879).

outward presentation and inner self, it also creates the possibility of disunity. This possibility accounts for the Gawain poems' preoccupation with "seeming" in general and the term "seemly" in particular. "Semeli," as it often appears in the poems[165] (as both adjective and adverb), is a conventional romance term for anything visually beautiful, appealing, suitable, worthy, or natural. In general, the term is purely functional, offering a short descriptive term that easily fits the alliterative need and the length of the line, but it also suggests a larger underlying concern about the way knights show themselves. As these poems assert in different ways, a knight should be what he seems, but this is not guaranteed to be the case, and so the visual scrutiny of onlookers—especially scrutiny in the practice of reading looks, gestures, and feeling-emblems—becomes a crucial technique in borderlands space for evaluating chivalric identities and their correlating measures of worship.

I treat *The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain* first out of the three Gawain romances which this chapter discusses. Chronologically, *Gologras* comes about a hundred years later than *The Awntyrs off Arthur* or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and it is one of the first texts printed in Scotland in 1508 as part of the Chepman and Myllar Prints.[166] I begin with *Gologras* because, by the end of the fifteenth century, the border conflict had been entrenched for hundreds of years (throughout the Scottish campaigns for independence), and even regional feuds between surnames and kinship groups in the Marches were taking on the significance of proxy warfare between the English and Scottish crowns. As Randy Schiff notes, the relative lateness of the poem's composition date around 1500 means that the anti-imperialist and proto-nationalist sentiments found in other Scots romances are even "more advanced" in *Gologras*.[167] Starting with this poem and its relatively direct confrontations with Arthurian expansionism can help attune us to echoes of similar confrontations in the past.

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[165] Once in *Awntyrs* (l. 456), nine times in *Gologras* (ll. 381, 1092, 1197, 1257, 1303, 1331, 1337, 1355), and eleven times in *SGGK* (ll. 348, 622, 672, 685, 865, 882, 888, 916, 1198, 1658, 1796).

[166] The Chepman and Myllar Prints were chapbooks and pamphlets (eleven altogether) from the press of the same name, bound into a single volume and circulated for popular consumption in the early sixteenth century (Hahn 232). Included in the selection of prints was poetry from Scots makars like William Dunbar and Robert Henryson, plus works by John Lydgate, the romance "Eglamour," and "A Gest of Robin Hood."

[167] Schiff argues that "it was not until well into the fifteenth century that the Anglo-Scottish marches began to lose their character as a borderlands culture, a development suggesting that the *Awntyrs* dates from the very dawn of national consolidation on both sides of the border, while the later *Goloras and Gawane* reveals the more advanced stage of this process" ("Borderland Subversions" 614-615).

After showing how knights in *Gologras* use feeling-emblems as a kind of strategic allegiance-switching the way that real historical borderers and border reivers did in the Anglo-Scottish Marches, I move on to an analysis of *Awntyrs off Arthure*. Despite having some key similarities with the battlefield epic *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*,[168] its plot structure, thematic content, and aesthetic sensibility are much more like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and other late fourteenth/early fifteenth century chivalric romances. For one, it exhibits a free-flowing mix of medieval genre tropes from exempla, folklore, and chivalric romance. This genre mixing—along with its dense rhyme scheme in which each stanza starts with phrases from the end of the previous stanza—marks *Awntyrs* as "a distinctly literary effort" that "emerged from a transitional cultural context, in which a literate author has fully exploited oral stylistics and techniques" (Hahn 169). It is something of a commonplace to describe huge swathes of late medieval literature as the product of a "transitional context" between oral and literary cultures, but *Awntyrs* earns that description in the way it layers its constituent parts, presenting literary allusions to hagiography through the stock idioms and phrases of oral alliterative poetry.[169] Even the poem's structure feels "transitional," because its narrative is made up of two loosely connected halves (almost precisely equal in length) that together make a "diptych" romance,[170] and the reader must traverse the joint between each half of the narrative diptych like a border line as they proceed through the poem.

From its setting[171] to its thematic content, genre mixing, and poetic structure, *Awntyrs* demonstrates a "pervasive concern with borders and limits, with things that are never quite this or that," write Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell in their introduction to a collection on the

[168] See William Matthews's *The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the Alliterative Morte Arthure*: "Some uncommon resemblances occurs in the heraldic devices used in the two poems. The device borne by Gawain is usually described in romances as a double-headed eagle or a lion--Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is unique in making it a pentangle. In both *Morte Arthure* and *Awntyrs of Arthure* [sic], however, this device is slightly different from normal--one or more 'griffones of golde.' More striking is their agreement about Mordred's device. Descriptions of the traitor's arms are rare in the romances, but heraldic authorities say that they were very similar to Gawain's… It is persuasive evidence of the connection of *Morte Arthure* and *Awntyrs of Arthure*, therefore, that they agree in describing his arms as a saltire engrailed, the former mentoning 'þe sawturoire engrelede' (l. 4182), the latter 'a sawtire engrelede of siluer fulle schene' (l. 307)" (157).

[169] The central allusion in the first half of *Awntyrs* is to the Mass of Saint Gregory, a story that was popular throughout the later Middle Ages and was included in the immensely influential collection of hagiographies, the *Golden Legend*.

[170] Spearing 1981, pp. 186-87.

[171] Much of the poem takes place near Tarn Wadling and Inglewood Forest, located in the border county of Cumberland.

Marches (*The Anglo-Scottish Border* 1). As Bruce and Terrell argue, *Awntyrs* and works like it attest to a thriving contact zone culture in the late medieval and early modern Anglo-Scottish borderlands, one in which the Marches themselves become "a crucial third term in the articulation of English and Scottish national consciousness and cultural identity" (3-5). *Awntyrs* fixates on border crossing, on transitional spaces, and on the imagined possibility of erasing altogether the divisions between communities (even though the text itself reminds us of just how impossible a goal that is in reality).[172] The poem uses feeling-emblems to tackle the same fundamental problem as that of *Gologras* (namely, how to construct and maintain a chivalric identity in contested territory), but it finds a totally opposite solution by trying to generalize the feeling-emblems of Arthur's court to an ever-expanding community of subjects. Such a project is tenable within the romance fiction of *Awntyrs*, but in my last reading within this chapter, I explain why feeling-emblems are ultimately unproductive for sustaining this kind of expansionist Arthurian fantasy.

For so beloved a text as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (*SGGK* for brevity's sake), the heraldic imagery in question is largely already digested by more than a century of scholarship, but reading the poem in a borderlands context and with an eye for feeling-emblems can yield novel insights yet. At first glance, *SGGK* is situated about as far from the Anglo-Scottish marches as is possible in medieval Britain: the poem begins in Camelot, which serves as a convenient nowhere setting with strong connections to the south of England.[173] The Camelot of *SGGK* is not the bastion of security we might expect for a seat of Arthurian power, but rather an insular court surrounded by a vast wilderness. The wild lands surrounding Camelot are personified most obviously in the Green Knight himself, whose name (Bertilak de Hautdesert) suggests the "high wilderness" or "high wasteland." Such a name would be an apt description of the southern uplands, a region of Scotland that is mountainous and lightly populated and which

[172] As Bruce and Terrell are quick to point out in the introduction to their collection, *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity 1300-1600*, the history of the Anglo-Scottish Marches complicates models of cultural hybridity and *mestizaje* from theorists like Homi K. Bhabha and Gloria Anzaldúa. There are fewer "cultural contradictions" between the Scottish and English borderers in the Marches than between the populations that Bhabha and Anzaldúa discuss, and yet, the border itself has a centuries-long "symbolic significance as a marker of immutable national difference" which discouraged the kind of conscious tolerance and hybridity each theorist proposes.

[173] Camelot arguably has its closest real-world parallel in Winchester Castle in southeast England. By contrast, *Awntyrs* takes place in "Rondoles Halle," which is most likely Randalholme Hall in Cumbria (in England's northwest), and *Gologras* describes castles that recall those around Glasgow (in southern Scotland).

largely overlaps with the historical Anglo-Scottish marches. Scholars like Patricia Ingham have made strong cases for situating the poem in the Welsh Marches, because of the West Midlands dialect the Gawain Poet uses and some place names like "Wirral" (the Wirral Peninsula of Cheshire and Liverpool), and there is certainly as valid a postcolonial reading in the historical context of England's oppression of Wales.[174] Indeed, much of the postcolonial scholarship on medieval Britain has, reasonably enough, focused primarily on the ways that England engaged in sustained colonial projects in Wales from 1350 to 1400 and how the Welsh resisted those projects.[175] The nature of England's power dynamic with Wales—suppressing Welsh language, exploiting Welsh natural and material resources, imagining the Welsh population as monstrous or savage—comports well with how Bhabha and Anzaldúa theorize modern colonial projects, so it is not surprising that medieval Wales draws such critical attention. Scotland and the Anglo-Scottish Marches are a more complicated fit, but postcolonial theory can still offer insights into how national interests are negotiated and resisted in borderlands space.

Less important than situating *SGGK* and its characters in the literal borderlands between Scotland and England is recognizing how the poem inverts the standard relationship between population center and periphery: instead of beginning with Arthur and his retinue riding out to the wild for pilgrimage or for hunting (the way *Gologras* and *Awntyrs* begin, respectively), *SGGK* brings the wild to the court, and it does so under the pretense of testing the reputation that the Round Table knights have earned in their various exploits abroad. The Green Knight's beheading contest, for all its ludic language, is profoundly destabilizing for the security, authority, and worship of Arthur's court, because it threatens to turn even the most established castle into a space as vulnerable to intrusion as the war-plagued borders between Scotland and England. Decapitation, after all, is threatening to a medieval monarch several times over: the finality of its physical violence is certainly daunting on its own, and the idea of removing the *caput* of a court suggests broader political rebellion. Beheading is also a shameful death to a late medieval British community, and one that often resulted from judgments of treason,[176] such as

[174] See Patricia Ingham's "'In Contrayez Straunge': Colonial Relations, British Identity, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" for a persuasive example of such a postcolonial reading situated in the Welsh context.

[175] See Arner, Lynn, "The Ends of Enchantment: Colonialism and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*."

[176] See W. R. J Barron on the legal penalties for treason throughout the Middle Ages: "As the most fundamental felony, it struck at the roots of feudal society through a complex of crimes: compassing or plotting the death of the sovereign, betraying his realm to an enemy, counterfeiting his coinage or falsifying his signature, seducing his wife or the wife of his son and heir. The basis of the felony was the same—betrayal of trust by an attack upon the security

the kind that were handed down when borderers were tried for allegiance-switching practices in the Marches. The tendency for courts to find borderers and reivers guilty of treason for petty and personal (rather than political) crimes was specific to the northern border of England, which is a strong reason to read *SGGK* in an Anglo-Scottish context, in addition to reading it in the more conventionally accepted Anglo-Welsh context.[177]

We can easily imagine how the idea of severing a person's physical body is symbolically representative of the dissolution of a political body and the creation of a problematic border division.[178] In this way, the central motif of the poem—a contest in which both participants are expected to lose their heads—demands that we think of borderlands politics and the way that identities are constructed (or, more precisely, deconstructed) in the geographic periphery, where central authority is weakest and in danger of being severed altogether. At first blush, the wasteland beyond Camelot which I am treating as a border region seems strangely *non*-political: Gawain encounters no other kingdom while journeying in the wild, and Bertilak (as both the lord of Castle Hautdesert and as the Green Knight) seems content to inhabit his own lands rather than make incursions against those of Arthur. There is no obvious political contest at stake in *SGGK* or suggestion of specific national identities the way that there is with *Awntyrs* and *Gologras*, two poems which explicitly concern land disputes. True, *SGGK* is less literal with its representation of political borderlands than the other two Gawain romances are, but it is no less interested in the concept of threatening a centralized authority, as we know from the importance of the beheading game.

Though the borderlands of *SGGK* seem apolitical in the sense that they are not fought over like the historical Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-Welsh Marches were, the poem politicizes

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of the state, its administrative or economic validity, or the legitimacy of the succession—whether directed against the king or some lesser liege lod, and the law made no absolute distinction between high and petty treason. Both demanded exemplary punishment and drawing, hanging, emasculation, disembowelling, beheading, and quartering were employed in various combinations" ("The Penalties for Treason in Medieval Life and Literature" 187).

[177] Rhonda Knight, in her postcolonial treatment of the poem, discusses "regional identities" that tend to be most visible in contact zones of colonial borders. She is mostly interested in a reading of the poem as situated in the Anglo-Welsh Marches, but she acknowledges that the kind of regional identities she locates there are also emergent in the Anglo-Scottish borderlands, and that we can find the presence of both in *SGGK* (260).

[178] I am reminded of the "Better Together" campaign during the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. Similar slogans encouraging cohesion among the nations of the British Isles appeared during the Brexit saga (this time pushing for continued economic unity between the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland). In both cases, the rhetorical move is to encourage political unity through evoking feelings of physical, even bodily, intimacy.

them through their relation to Arthur's court. It is not just that Bertilak/the Green Knight (and by extension, the untamed wilds around Camelot) threaten the authority and stability of Arthur's rule, it is that the whole of Arthur's court misunderstands their relationship to the border space of the wild. From the beginning of the poem when the whole court shrugs off the Green Knight's game until the end when it appropriates the girdle for its own members,[179] the court assumes a level of control over the lands at the edge of Arthur's rule which is never actually borne out by the events of the poem. Repeatedly, *SGGK* suggests that Camelot (the metropolitan court) has a shakier claim to any land or to jurisdiction over any entity outside its walls than the members of its court can appreciate. The borderlands of *SGGK* are, then, political the way that the borderlands of *Awntyrs* and *Gologras* are political, in that they undercut the confidence and security of central, monarchical rule by making the periphery central in their narratives—thereby focusing our attention on the very limits of Arthur's power.

Admittedly, *SGGK* is a more tenuous fit in the Anglo-Scottish Marches than the other two Gawan poems I discuss in this chapter, but the same qualities which make *SGGK* legible as a poem of the borderlands between Wales and England also make it legible as one suitable to the borderlands between Scotland and England. The two marches have much in common in the fourteenth century with regard to sociopolitical instability, English military incursions, and nascent regional identities which are distinct to each borderlands space. It is more important to stress that *SGGK* is a borderlands poem than it is to stress *which* border the poem actually imagines, but I do not want to dismiss entirely the potential for viewing the poem through the historical lens of the Anglo-Scottish Marches. As I show in my reading of the green girdle, there is good reason to think of this emblematic object's social trajectory in the poem as akin to the way that the identities of historical borderers were appropriated and instrumentalized by the monarchies of Scotland and England for their own political exigencies in the region.

For feeling-emblems in *SGGK*, the fact that everywhere is a contested, borderlands-like space means that no sign or chivalric emblem is guaranteed in its meaning, and the value of feeling-emblems for social organization starts to wane. The green girdle which Gawain brings back to Arthur's court does become a faddish garment for the court, but it has been stripped of all semantic content which Gawain, or the Green Knight, or Lady Bertilak assigned to it.

[179] Rhonda Knight says that the court members consume the girdle as a commodity, and though they see it as "a real artifact of the Anglo-Welsh border" culture, they must reject its received symbolic meanings and substitute their own in order to make it safe and assimilable to the court culture of Camelot (Knight 283).

Furthermore, the poem's ending, and in particular the later edition of the Order of the Garter's motto ("honi soit qui mal y pense" or "shame on he who thinks badly of it"), suggests that even if feeling-emblems continue to aid in cohesion of the chivalric community, whatever community survives is fundamentally divorced from the concepts or identities that those feeling-emblems would seem to signify. In this way, the poem depicts the separation of a chivalric community from its originary myth, dramatizing an implicit delegitimization of monarchical authority—which would have been conspicuous to an audience that had lived through the final years of Edward III's rule and the politically unstable end of the fourteenth century in England.

This delegitimization of authority is the lasting legacy of chivalric feeling-emblems in a borderlands context: they can be used as techniques of resistance against imperial incursions like in *Gologras* or as unifying labels of ever-expanding authority and assimilation like in *Awntyrs*, but as they become abstracted from their particular feelings and identities into purely aesthetic signs of chivalric status, what's left behind is a creeping and anxious awareness of the artificiality of the chivalric community altogether. Now, artifice need not imply falseness in and of itself, and enough of chivalry as a behavioral code and social structure relies upon performance that it would be difficult to say anything substantive about feeling-emblems without considering the usefulness of artificiality in its own right. But in the particular border poems I treat in this chapter, visual scrutiny and the pressure to show one's feelings publically are key to communicating one's identity and allegiance, and so artifice in a knight's outward aspect (how he "seems" to be) always threatens to become out-and-out deception. The anxiety engendered by this threat is existential in nature, because a chivalric community built on artifice and purely aesthetic feeling-emblems has no emotional grounding that binds the loyalty of one knight to another. This is a danger Geoffroi de Charny warns of in his *Book of Chivalry* when he claims that simplicity of heart (*la grant simplece*) is a quality desirable for men of worth, that those who are ingenious or overly subtle in their behavior are out of step (*descordans*) in all chivalric deeds that they do, and that we should not esteem too highly those who present outwardly as devout because they may be concealing ill will in their hearts (146-149). As I will go on to argue, artifice is crucial to the function of feeling-emblems in borderlands space as represented in these Gawain romances, but its encroachment into all aspects of the chivalric project means that the emotional core of the community is eroding and there is nothing of substance to take its place.

The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain: Mediating Scottish Baronial Resistance

As I discussed in the introductory chapter, feeling-emblems play a pivotal role in the plot of *Gologras and Gawain* by enabling Gawain to publicly display and then prove courtesy to the autonomous lord Gologras in a way that other Round Table knights like Kay cannot. Gawain's courtesy is so intimately tied to his success as a knight that the poem's narrator describes him as being illuminated by his loyalty and bound up with love, using precisely the same poetic conventions that one would normally apply to descriptions of armor. The *Gologras* poet adores cataloging actual armor as much as he does the affects displayed by fully armored knights, and he regularly lavishes attention not just on the various terms for livery and other chivalric markers,[180] but on the pure spectacle of watching knights clobber each other until the gems "hop" off each other's armor and the gold ornaments are slashed to pieces:

> Sic dintis he delt to that doughty,
> Leit hym destanyt to danger and dreid;
> Thus wes he handillit full hait, that hawtane, in hy.
> The scheld in countir he kest ovr his cleir weid,
> Hewit on hard steill woundir haistely;
> Gart beryallis hop of the hathill about him on breid.
> [...]
> Hit Schir Gawayne on the gere quhil grevit wes the gay,
> Betit doune the bright gold and beryallis about;
> Scheddit his schire wedis scharply away:
> That lufly lappit war on loft, he gart thame law lout.[181] (ll. 947-991)

[180] See Thomas Hahn's introduction to the poem: "The poem reads and resonates as a literary counterpart of the lavish ornamentation and conspicuous consumption that mark the chivalry it describes: specialized terms proliferate for knightly livery, armor, swordplay, combat, horsemanship, landscape, and for the coded behaviors that define aristocratic courtesy and honor. This huge and difficult vocabulary, the poem's exceptionally demanding rhyme scheme and alliteration, and the formidable Scots dialect in which it survives (together with the general unavailability of the text) have given *Gawain and Gologras* [sic] many fewer readers than the energy and excitement of the poem otherwise would claim" (227).

[181] Such blows [Gologras] dealt to that hardy one (Gawain), / Made him subject to danger and fear; / Thus was he manhandled so hotly, that noble, so harshly. / The shield in defense he put over his shining armor, / Held up against hard steel marvelously quickly; / [This] caused gems to hop off the knight all around him onto the field. [...] / [Gologras] hit Sir Gawain on his armor until he was hurt, / Beat down the bright gold and the gems about; / Sliced his glowing garments sharply away: / Those ornaments that so beautifully were set on the surface, he made fall low (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

The passage above concerns the first stage of the battle between Gawain and Gologras, and its action is as stylized and theatrical as the fighting of *The Alliterative Morte* is hyper-violent. Indeed, the *Gologras* poet seems to be almost exclusively interested in outward appearances, and even as he dedicates lines here and there to the reactions provoked by hard combat ("dreid" in this passage, "greif" and "wraith" are common elsewhere), he privileges the affects and looks of knights more than any subjective, internalized feeling which characters might themselves express. So interested in spectacle is the *Goloras* poet that he invents the character Sir Spynagros—mentioned nowhere else in the extant Middle English or Middle Scots romances—to provide running sideline commentary for the audience during the entire confrontation with Gologras, which itself takes up the majority of the poem's length.

Spynagros serves an essential but uncommon function in chivalric romance, acting as a kind of commentator and spectatorial stand-in for the poem's audience. He acts as a battlefield herald for Arthur and the other knights, a role which Robert Jones refers to as akin to a modern "war correspondent."[182] His role is essential to the poem because much of the action revolves around one-on-one duels, during which onlookers are held at a distance (in keeping with the rules of single combat). Onlookers are close enough to tell who is fighting whom, but not close enough to parse the nuances of the fight itself, and certainly not close enough to hear the combatants' speech over the din of battle. This middle distance which the audience occupies is one of many ways that *Gologras* invites us to think of borderlands as spaces in which feudal allegiances, rules of chivalric conduct, and even the visible reality before us are vulnerable to misapprehension. As I show later, a borderlands mentality creeps into Gologras's own language even when not speaking literally about the territorial divisions between his kingdom and that of Arthur. Counterintuitively, the character of Spynagros, who seems to exist only to clear up the ambiguity of this battle in borderlands space, ends up creating more anxiety through the desperate insistence of his analysis.

[182] "The ability of [heralds] to identify the enemy force to their commanders served an important tactical function, allowing a commander to judge best where the greatest strength of his opponents might be found. It also fulfilled an important social function too. Heralds were able to inform their lords of the identity, status and prowess of their opponents, much as they did when announcing the competitors at a tournament, enabling the combatants perhaps to choose their opponents with an eye to winning renown themselves or avoiding a combat in which they would be outclassed. Equally the heralds' role as 'war correspondents', recording and disseminating tales of the deeds of valour performed on the battlefield, ensured that the martial reputation of the warrior, and through him of his lord and family, was maintained and enhanced amongst his peers" (*Bloodied Banners* 28-29).

Spynagros, an astute reader of both heraldry and battlefield behaviors, provides near-constant editorializing breakdowns of each fight that are oddly similar to the conduct of the modern sportscaster. He briefs Arthur on Gologras's identity early in the poem, repeatedly glosses chivalric emblems and events on the battlefield for Arthur ("Quhat signifyis yone schene scheild?" and "Quhat signifyis yone rynging?" the king asks of him on separate occasions). He also gives Gawain a play-by-play breakdown of how to fight Gologras successfully.[183] Cumulatively, these functions of Spynagros and the way that the tone of the fighting oscillates between deadly seriousness and ostentatious pageantry leave us unsure of the attitude we should take with regard to the conflict. As Thomas Hahn says of this uncertainty in his introduction to the poem, Spynagros's "interventions and elucidations of the action underscore the ways in which external appearance, speech events, and social rituals demand interpretation" (230). Spynagros's presence, according to Hahn, implies "the necessity everywhere of cultural explication - technical, moral, political - for those within the poem, as well as for its listeners and readers" (231). In all these ways, the narrative background of this poem is made up of intense visual scrutiny and attention to how things "seem"[184] upon the battlefield. The poem never actually suggests there is any dissonance between what knights *do* and what they *are*; if anything, the poem makes a case that knights are only what they do and what they seem to be, and all matters of internal motivation are irrelevant. Nonetheless, the narrative attention to outward appearances and the way those appearances reach onlookers has wide-ranging consequences for how the poem approaches the utility of feeling-emblems within the chivalric economy.

The chivalric contest at the center of *Gologras and Gawain* pits the eponymous knights against one another in single combat, with Gologras fighting for his right to self-rule and Gawain fighting for the supremacy of Arthur's authority as king. The poem itself tells us that this contest

[183] "When you encounter him on the field, attack him straight on, / And bear your bright lance in the middle of his shield; / Make that course harsh, for Christ's love of heaven! / And afterwards work as I advise, your weapon to wield. / If that man is stunned, stout will be his outcry; / He will become fierce as a bear, and look for no quarter. / Worry not at his voice that loudly will sound. / Even if his strokes deeply dent your shield, / Take no haste in your hand, whatever chances may occur; / But let that strong man rage, / And [let him] fight in his courage, / To swing with sword until he lets up; / Then deal your damage. / When he is winded, strike at that point, and keep him in action: / So shall you stun that stout knight, even if he be strong. / Thus may you succeed in the game, through the lore that I teach; / Unless you work thusly, you deserve that misfortune" (ll. 817-833, modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

[184] Both characters and the narrator use the construction "it semyt/semys" to introduce descriptions of the ongoing battle.

occurs somewhere in southeastern France (Arthur had been heading to "Rone" on his way back from Jerusalem when he comes across Gologras's castle), but scholars have repeatedly noted that this is a version of the Rhone Valley which looks a lot like the south of Scotland. Gologras's castle in particular likely takes some real-world inspiration from Scottish fortifications like Bothwell Castle and Douglas Castle,[185] and the description of the countryside includes details that are more representative of the areas around Glasgow and Edinburgh than inland France.[186] *Gologras* is hardly the only Scots dialect romance from this period to employ France as a "virtual Scotland" or as a stand-in for the Anglo-Scottish borderlands. For example, Randy Schiff argues that *The Taill of Rauf Coilyear* participates in much the same translation, imbuing a Carolinian France with the geography, the poetic conventions, and the contemporary politics of the late medieval Marches.[187] As Schiff notes, *Rauf Coilyear*, like both *Awntyrs* and *Gologras*, "fuses rhyming alliterative long lines and a wheel of shorter rhymed verses," blending elements that derive from "northern England, southern Scotland, and the contested space between" ("Sovereign Exception" 33-34). For a Scottish borderer audience encountering the poem for the first time at the beginning of the sixteenth century, it must have been even easier to find in its depiction of "France" a favorable imagined alternative to the reality playing out in southern Scotland as England continued making incursions against Scottish baronial independence.[188]

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[185] Hahn 283, fn. 237. For more on the mapping of historical geographies of Scotland to the landscape described in the poe, see also the essay by Kristin Bovaird-Abbo, "'Reirdit on ane riche roche beside ane riveir': Martial Landscape and James IV of Scotland in *The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane*." The relevant lines from the poem, describing a large castle with defensive curtain walls and towers overlooking a river, are given here in a modernized version: "Then were they aware of a building, fortified with a wall, / Raised on a magnificent rock, beside a river, / With double moats set together over all, / No one might view them with envy, or get too near them. / The land was pleasing in expanse and delightful to describe; / With a proper sheen shone the sun, seemly and fair. / The king stood viewing that wall, most valiant to see: / On that river he saw / Comely towers to behold; / The king counted in a row / Thirty and three" (ll. 237-247, modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

[186] For example, Gologras's castle is described as being set firmly against the sea ("The sidewallis war set, sad to the see," l. 249).

[187] "Along with landscape, language prevents *Rauf Coilyear* from being decisively situated relative to the Anglo-Scottish Border: much as northern English and southern Scottish dialects often prove too similar to differentiate, so does the poem's windswept, frozen countryside suggest England as readily as Scotland. Indeed, the difference between these realms proves to be key to contextualizing the poem, which recalls the fluidity and turbulence of the militarized marches rather than the familiar landscapes of a single, stable nation" ("Sovereign Exception" 33-34).

[188] See, for example, the thesis guiding Goldstein's analysis in *The Matter of Scotland*: "historical writing," by which he means the two national epics of Scotland (Barbour's *The Bruce* and Blind Hary's *The Wallace*), has functioned to shape a national Scottish identity since the Wars of Independence, and even if the production of that national identity was "mainly reserved to the classes that enjoyed the greatest access to literacy and writing," still the stories of Scottish exploits had a broad oral circulation that enfranchised the wider textual community (6-13).

Of all the idiosyncrasies that make *Gologras* such a compelling poem among Gawain romances—its affection for the specialized vocabulary of knightly gear, its introduction of the sideline commentator Sir Spynagros, its rule-oriented approach to chivalric combat—none is more remarked upon than its conclusion. Once Gawain has his opponent by knife blade and insists that he surrender, Gologras says he would die before letting an opponent make him hide from the gaze of onlookers.[189] When Gawain asks if there is any way to save both the life and the honor of his foe, Gologras says he will only accept mercy if Gawain agrees to appear captured so that Gologras can return with him in triumph to his castle. Once inside the castle, Gologras explains, he will repay ("quyte") Gawain's kindness, though Gawain has to take this repayment on trust. We learn no more of the plan until the two arrive back inside the castle walls. In time, Gologras confesses to the ruse before his own people, asking them to decide his fate (to be free and face death, or to live in service to a foreign king). Gologras's people tell him they would rather he live and swear fealty to Arthur, and so he follows suit, pledging himself both to Gawain and then to Arthur. In an unconventional twist, Arthur ultimately relinquishes Gologras from service at the end of the poem, choosing to recognize Gologras's autonomy without imposing any special conditions. This denouement to the contest, in which each lord remains free in his own land, turns Gawain from Arthur's battlefield champion into a peace broker and turns the usually zero-sum contest of warfare into "an economy of chivalric honor that produces all gains and no losses" (Hahn 228). Gawain's famed courtesy serves him admirably as a feeling-emblem in this exchange, first when he shows the "kyndnes" and "gentrice" necessary for Gologras to extend this plan as an option, and second when he reframes courteousness as deference in pretending to be captured by Gologras.

The passage in which Gologras and Gawain initially discuss the plan is startlingly brief in length (covering just ll. 1068-1111), though it is brimming with each knight's frank consideration of how best to preserve the other's honor. One curiosity to note in this passage is that Gologras refers to his plan as "my devis." This is an apt term for the scheme he proposes, but "devis" in Middle English (and Middle Scots) can also mean a heraldic device or a territorial division.[190] There is no reason to think that Gologras is referring here literally to the land boundaries he

[189] "Sal never freik on fold, fremmyt nor freynde, / Gar me lurk for ane luke, lawit nor lerd" (ll. 1079-1080). Roughly, "Never shall any man on earth, friend or foe, make me hide from the gaze of others, be they unlearned or educated" (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

[190] *DotSL* "devis" n. 1, n.2.

asserts as a lord when using the word "devis," but neither is there any reason to discount that echo of "division" altogether. After all, Gologras is asking Gawain to return with him to his castle as a faux captive, and so to go along with his "devis" is also to transgress divisions several times over (e.g. battle lines, standards of chivalric conduct, measures of honor and worship). As Robert Jones explains, a knight's *devise* (also called a badge) was usually reserved for the tournament field, while the full coat of arms would be used in war.[191] Jones argues that a knight's personal emblem represented on his *devise* was an "arms of peace," because it was predominantly employed in the context of chivalric contest, not in actual military campaigning.[192] If we accept this interpretation of the way knights deployed versions of their heraldic emblems in different contexts, then Gologras is not just referring to a strategic plan when using the term "devis," but signaling to Gawain in a shared chivalric register that his intentions were indeed diplomatic.

The most relevant portion of the passage for my discussion of feeling-emblems is given below, and it illustrates in full the perilous predicament both knights face while trying to orchestrate an honorable resolution to their fight while facing the scrutiny of onlookers from both sides:

> Schir Gawyne rewit the renk, that wes riale,
> And said to the reverend, riche and rightwis:
> "How may I succour the sound, semely in sale,
> Before this pepill in plane, and pair noght thy pris?"
> "That sall I tel the with tong, trewly in tale,
> Wald yow denye the in deid to do my devis:
> Lat it worth at my wil the wourschip to wale,
> As I had wonnyn the of were, wourthy and wis;

[191] Jones suggests that "field signs" or *cognizance* (convenient shorthand ways of distinguishing friend from foe, often pieces of cloth in the shape of crosses affixed to soldiers' gear) are the wartime equivalent of *devises*, because both emblems are abbreviated ways to identify knights as individuals or as part of groups (60-61).

[192] "The importance of the hereditary aspect of arms is reinforced by the fact that as they became more complicated and complex, with a greater number of divisions, there arose a distinction between a knight's arms of war and arms of peace. The latter, reserved for the tournament field, comprised his badge or *devise*, a personal emblem of which the knight might have many, whilst the full coat of arms was to be worn in war. Such a distinction is at odds with those who have argued that heraldry only reaches its full significance on the tournament field, for if that was truly the case then one would expect the *devise* to be used on the battlefield and the heraldic achievement, with all of its divisions signifying the familial ties and ancestry of the knight, to be seen at the jousting lists" (*Bloodied Banners* 21-22).

Syne cary to the castel, quhare I have maist cure.
Thus may yow saif me fra syte;
As I am cristynit perfite,
I sall thi kyndnes quyte,
And sauf thyn honoure."

"That war hard," said that heynd, "sa have I gude hele!
Ane wounder peralous poynt, partenyng grete plight,
To souer in thi gentrice, but signete or sele,
And I before saw the never, sickerly, with sight.
To leif in thi lauté, and thow war unlele,
Than had I cassin in cair mony kene knight.
Bot I knaw thou art kene, and alse cruell;
Or thow be fulyeit fey, freke, in the fight,
I do me in thi gentrice, be Drightin sa deir!"
He leynt up in the place;
The tothir raithly upraise.
Gat never grome sic ane grace,
In feild of his feir![193] (ll. 1090-1115)

Immediately before this passage, Gologras says, "I dreid not the pereill / To dee in this cace!" (ll. 1088-1089), expressing unequivocally that he is prepared to face death in this fight. And yet, Gawain still bothers to ask how he can save Gologras's life while preserving his honor before "this pepill in plane." This is not just a rhetorical question from Gawain (as if he were simply underscoring the hopelessness of Gologras's condition), but a genuine invitation to consider the problem before them. Gawain's question is the rare example in romances of a knight explicitly acknowledging the dilemma which chivalric rules of combat pose (how to find peace while preserving honor on both sides) and then actually trying to work through that dilemma anyway. If it is not clear to Gawain at first that the solution lies in careful projection of emblematic feelings to the crowd of onlookers, Gologras quickly clarifies matters by explaining his "devis."

[193] Sir Gawain rued for the knight, who was royal, / And said to the praiseworthy man, rich and right-minded: / "How may I keep you alive, handsome in hall, / Before these people in the field, and avoid impairing your honor? / "That I will tell you with my tongue, truly in tale, / If you would put yourself at risk to do my plan: / Let it happen at my will the worship to have, / As if I had won against you in war, worthy and wise; / Then go to my castle, where I have authority. / Thus may you save me from disgrace; / As I am truly baptized, / I shall repay your kindness, / And save your honor." / "That would be hard," said the noble, "so have I good health!" / A perilous point, involving great plight, / To rest in your sense of honor, without signet or seal, / And I never saw you before, truly, with my sight. / To live in your loyalty, if you were untrue, / Then I would have encased in case many a good knight. / But I know you are valiant and also fierce; / Before you are fully dead, man, in the fight, / I put myself in your sense of honor, by the Lord so dear!" / He straightened up in the place; / The other quickly rose. / Never had a man gotten such a grae, / In combat with his fellow knight! (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

Gawain's initial esteem in the poem (his "worship") comes from being a knight who can clearly project his courteous affect to opponent knights such that they trust him immediately. In brief, the Gawain of *Gologras* already knows how to "show" feeling-emblems on the battlefield in a way that accurately represents his internal feelings. By contrast, what Gologras asks him to do as part of his "devis" is to deliberately misrepresent feeling-emblems so that each spectator on the battlefield (including Arthur and Spynagros) reads his affect and assumes he has been genuinely captured. This kind of false presentation has a storied history in romances as far as conventional chivalric devices go, and there is a historical precedent in the allegiance-switching tactics used by borderers in the Anglo-Scottish Marches. But using this kind of deliberate misrepresentation for one's feelings is a novel suggestion from Gologras, and a deeply transgressive one. Gawain clearly grasps that this proposal could undermine codes of chivalric conduct because his first response to Gologras is simply, "That war hard, sa have I gude hele!" ("sa have I gude hele" is an oath similar to "on my life"). Not only must he agree to project a false feeling-emblem back to his own liege lord, Gawain must also take totally on merit Gologras's trustworthiness, without having the benefit of either "signete or sele" to guarantee his loyalty. When Gawain eventually agrees to the plan, he puts feeling-emblems to use as a rhetorical technology upon the battlefield. The extreme distress which his falsified conduct causes in Arthur indicates that his feeling-emblem is ultimately successful as a strategy for deliberately misrepresenting himself and his relationship to Gologras.

As Gawain leaves the battlefield for Gologras's castle, Arthur immediately begins to weep before his men, telling any who will listen that the "flour of knighthede is caught throu his cruelté" (l. 1135) and the Round Table will fail now that Gawain has been captured:

> The Roy ramand ful raith, that reuth wes to se,
> And raikit full redles to his riche tent;
> The watter wet his chekis, that schalkis myght se,
> As all his welthis in warld had bene away went,
> And othir bernys for barrat blakynnit thair ble,
> Braithly bundin in baill, thair breistis war blent.
> "The flour of knighthede is caught throu his cruelté!
> Now is the Round Tabil rebutit, richest of rent,
> Quhen wourschipfull Wawane, the wit of our were,
> Is led to ane presoune;
> Now failyeis gude fortoune!"
> The King, cumly with croune,

Grat mony salt tere.[194] (ll. 1129-1141)

The scene is strongly reminiscent of similar behavior in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*,[195] not just in Arthur's loud weeping but in the way he seems totally inconsolable about the situation (the *Gologras* poet uses the term "redles" for this helplessness, and this term has very similar connotations as the "boteless" bale which Arthur shows in *The Morte*). In reality, Arthur is in much better straits here than he is in *The Morte*, because this Gawain only *looks* to be defeated; by contrast, the Gawain of *The Morte* is very much dead, and no amount of "salt tere" will return him to life. But without knowing the details of Gologras's plan, Arthur has only his own sight to judge Gawain's intentions by, and knowing Gawain as "gay, gracious, and good," he never suspects that his champion knight would act falsely.[196] The other knights in Arthur's retinue make the same judgement of Gawain's feeling-emblem, because they also turn somber, darkening their faces ("othir bernys for barrat blakynnit thair ble") and joining together in sorrow ("bundin in baill"). This climactic scene of the poem, which looks like total defeat for Arthur, hinges its dramatic weight not on actual death (the usual conclusion to the fighting that has gone on for two hundred lines beforehand) but on the successful projection of false feelings to the field of spectators.

What Gawain and Gologras are able to accomplish by instrumentalizing their feeling-emblems for this deceptive "devis" is akin to triggering a sort of emotional pressure release for both sides of the battle. It is a narrative de-escalation tactic for a fight that has progressed past the point of peaceful resolution, and it commonly takes the form of an "anonymous" knight having his helmet knocked off such that his opponent realizes he is actually someone of great renown. Here, the dramatization which Gawain and Gologras enact evokes real

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[194] The king [came] bursting out wildly, that was sad to see, / And ran off fully inconsolable to his rich tent; / The tears wet his cheeks, that warriors might see, / As if all his wealth in the world had been lost, / And other men for grief darkened their looks, / Harshly bound together in sorrow, their breasts were troubled. / "The flower of knighthood is caught through his boldness! / Now the Round Table is rebuked, richest of the land, / When worshipful Gawain, the spirit of our war, / Is led to a prison; / Now our good fortune fails!" / The king, comely with crown, / Wept many salt tears (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

[195] As Christine Chism says of this scene in *Alliterative Revivals*: "Gologras leads Gawain to his stronghold like a captive. Arthur is left alone, confused and weeping, wracked by the same crippling sorrow he displays at Gawain's death in the *Morte Arthure*" (235).

[196] Spynagros is conveniently silent at this point in the poem. His attention to battlefield comportment could have helped give the lie to Gawain's and Gologras's deception here, unless the two are actually that convincing at the false showing of their feeling-emblems.

grief in the full company of Arthur's knights at the thought of Gawain's death and the dissolution of the Round Table brotherhood. Subsequently, when Gologras does eventually ride back out with Gawain to conclude their plan, Arthur is "effrayt" (startled, afraid) at the sight, and it is Spynagros who tells Arthur to hold back from attacking impulsively, because he can tell from the affect of Gologras's men (their "feir") that they mean peace. The manipulation of chivalric feeling-emblems between Gologras and Gawain enables them to perform a kind of battlefield catharsis that would otherwise be totally disallowed by the rules of combat. This catharsis goes so far as to re-open diplomatic negotiations between Arthur and Gologras, creating an imagined alternative to the sort of zero-sum conquest that actually unfolded in the historical conflicts between English kings and local Scottish lairds during the wars for independence.

As I argued in my second chapter, we can only speculate on why a late medieval reading public would find so appealing these kinds of imagined alternatives to their lived experience. For *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, it was the allure of a queer, inclusive chivalric community predicated on emotional vulnerability which contrasted favorably to a historical reality of repressive, normative masculinity. Here, in *Gologras and Gawain* and the Gawain romances I discuss below, there seems to be a lasting appeal to the idea of the borderlands as a space of equitable resolution and cultural resilience, rather than as a space of endless territorial conflict and conquest. Moreover, the resolution is borne of the very same affective intensity that seems characteristic of the borderlands as a land always in political and cultural contest. Tensions run high in the Marches, and the stakes are always dire for any expression of feeling-emblems because they instantly align their expressors with one nation or the other. We could read this situation as a late medieval romance audience finding consolation in the idea that allegiance-switching and the misrepresentation of one's feelings—so often the source of strife in the Marches—could somehow become the borderers' salvation from constant war. Or, more cynically, the poem (and its popularity) point to the allure of weaponizing yet another part of borderlands life: even one's feelings about emplaced identity can be turned into instruments of war-making, raiding, and chivalric combat. It is this second possibility which I argue we find most clearly represented in *Awntyrs*, a poem which shares much of its subject matter and setting with *Gologras*, but one that takes a clearly different tack when it comes to resolving territorial disputes and recognizing political autonomy through a language of feelings.

The Awntyrs off Arthur: Arthurian Assimilation

While *Gologras and Gawain* strategically deploys feeling-emblems to construct an idealized version of Scottish independence from Arthur's rule, *The Awntyrs off Arthur* imagines how the same conflict could play out with a Gologras-type lord if Arthur's supreme rule were not up for debate. Like *Gologras, Awntyrs* gives us a fantasy tinged with the (implied) historical context of the Scottish Wars for Independence, but this time it is a fantasy of political harmony among the lands which Arthur controls as king of Britain. Both the heraldic register and the narrative attention to feelings are much in the vein of what we have already seen in the Gawain romances, but here the key feeling-emblems on display are those of the court's women, who beseech Arthur to break up the fight over territorial control between Gawain and the challenger knight. It is the highly public lamenting and angered screaming of the court's ladies during the fight that echoes the affective intensity of the combatants and translates it into an emotional entreaty which Arthur can understand. Specifically, the emotional reaction which the female onlookers have to Gawain's fighting has a cautionary function: it warns Guinevere by making her recall the wailing plea of her mother's ghost to exercise mercy as queen. This affective entreaty opens up space for peaceable resolution and (eventually) for successful integration of the Scottish knight Galeron into the Round Table brotherhood.

Like many of the Gawain romances, *Awntyrs* focuses on fostering unity across the fragmented regions and kingdoms over which Arthur claims to be the rightful ruler. To the extent that it is possible to speak of a common narrative trajectory among these romances, the plot typically begins with the introduction of an outsider knight representing the interests of a Celtic people (most commonly Scots, Welsh, or Bretons) who are at odds with Arthur's claim over them. Through some kind of chivalric contest, the outsider knight and his people are eventually integrated into the Arthurian community, though not always in a way that explicitly requires their fealty to Arthur (as in the case of *Gologras*, where the eponymous lord and his people ultimately retain control over their lands). *Awntyrs* understands community to mean not just the aristocratic or chivalric elites who are usually implied when romances make reference to the "folke" and the "peple;" in this poem, the chivalric community implies all of Christendom. *Awntyrs* establishes this wide view of community by interrogating directly the role that knights often play in oppressing those among the lower social orders.

The structure of *Awntyrs* is essentially two-part, with the first half concerning the poem's nominal "awntyr" (or adventure), a hunt in the woods. Gawain and Guinevere, separated from the others, come across a ghostly, gruesome apparition of Guinevere's mother:

> There come a lowe one the loughe - in londe is not to layne -
> In the lyknes of Lucyfere, laytheste in Helle,
> And glides to Sir Gawayn the gates to gayne,
> Yauland and yomerand, with many loude yelle.
> Hit yaules, hit yameres, with waymynges wete,
> And seid, with siking sare,
> "I ban the body me bare!
> Alas! Now kindeles my care;
> I gloppen and I grete!"[197] (ll. 83-91)

The ghost's wailing and howling is so pronounced in this passage that the poet duplicates verbs over consecutive lines ("yauland/yomerand" in l. 86 and "yaules/yameres" in l. 87), a rare occurrence in late medieval alliterative poetry, even in the text with the densest alliteration among the surviving Middle English poems.[198] While formal duplication of stock phrases or whole lines is common in the Alliterative Revival (repetition is used structurally in *Awntyrs* to connect stanzas together), this appears to be duplication for emphasis or for a lack of viable alternative words to capture the ghost's affect. The ghost arrests not only Guinevere and Gawain with her lamentations, but also the natural environment around her, making hunting dogs cower and the birds of the forest "skryke in the skowes" (shriek in the woods, l. 129), as though she were creating an animal amplification of her misery. Her speech throughout the interaction seems stuck at the boundary between intelligible language and intense feeling. For example, we could understand the phrase "I gloppen and I grete" to mean "I have fear and I wail," but this would not do justice to the plurality of ways each verb is activated in the poem. "Gloppen" as it's used elsewhere in *Awntyrs* means "to be filled with dread or sadness to the point of paralysis,"[199] and

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[197] There came a fire in the lake, not to conceal a word - / In the likeness of Lucifer, most hateful of Hell, / And it glides to Sir Gawain to block the path, / Howling and wailing with many loud yells. / It cries out and howls with many tearful wailings, / And said, with sighing sore, / "I curse the body that me bore! / Alas! Now kindles my care; / I despair and wail!" (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

[198] See Hahn: "The density of alliteration in *Awntyrs* is higher than that of any other Middle English poem, with almost half its long lines containing four alliterating stresses" (172).

[199] Both Galeron and Gawain are "gloppened" in heart during their fight, leaving them stunned and open to attack from the other.

"greten" indexes at least two homographic verbs, one meaning "to greet or address" and the other meaning "to bewail." When the ghost says "I grete" to Guinever and Gawain, she is simultaneously making a formal speech act and expressing an emotional sentiment that defies speech altogether.

There is no concise way to gloss the semantic content of the ghost's words because it is representing a feeling that is at least in part unspeakable.[200] For a project like mine, which seeks to identify feeling-emblems and to unpack their meanings, their uses, and their social significances, this is frustrating. It is not unreasonable, however, considering that the ghost appears as an *exemplum*, a cautionary tale of the eternal torment that Arthur's court will suffer if they don't amend their ways. The ghost's efficacy as a moral corrective to the court depends on a dramatic, rhetorical blending of both verbal speech and affective intensity.[201] In the following lines, the ghost relates her soul's suffering in "Helle" as an example of wayward living and she then prophecies that Fortune ("[t]hat wonderfull wheelwryght") will bring about the Round Table's downfall through Mordred, with details seemingly drawn directly from *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* itself.[202] Guinevere's mother's ghost goes on to chastise the two as representatives of the greater corruption in Arthur's court, and she urges that they follow Christian law over secular fashion and "[h]ave pité on the poer - thou art of power" (l. 173). The ghost's ultimate injunction is that Arthur and his court repair the division between their material excess and their spiritual poverty. She urges them to "[m]use on my mirrour" (l. 167) for guidance, meaning that Guinevere and Gawain should look upon her visage and understand her suffering as an example of how not to live. Understandably, the sight of her mother's ghost in such straits does in fact

[200] We might think here of Walter Benjamin and the element of resistance, the irresolution or the liminality of translation: "...a translation, instead of imitating the sense of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's way of meaning, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel. For this very reason translation must in large measure refrain from wanting to communicate something, from rendering the sense, and in this the original is important to it only insofar as it has already relieved the translator and his translation of the effort of assembling and expressing what is to be conveyed ("The Task of the Translator" 260). As Homi K. Bhabha shows, Benjaminian translation is immensely valuable when working to understand identities and perspectives that form along the interstices of cultural contact zones (*The Location of Culture*).

[201] Mixed in with the ghost's verbal curses and invectives are lines that render its speech unintelligible in the extreme: "Hit stemered, hit stonayde, hit stode as a stone, / Hit marred, hit memered, hit mused for madde" (ll. 109-110).

[202] According to Hahn and Matthews, the descriptions of Gawain's and Mordred's coats of arms given in *Awntyrs* are almost unmistakably taken from *The Morte*. Descriptions of Mordred's coat of arms in particular are rare in Arthurian romance, and the similarities between the descriptions given in *Awntyrs* and *The Morte* suggests the former has drawn details directly from the latter.

make an impression on Guinevere, and she promises to obey the ghost's injunction to show mercy, charity, and pity on those less fortunate than her.

After the ghost departs, the poem transitions to its second half, which concerns a territorial dispute. The Scottish knight Galeron[203] arrives in Arthur's court demanding that he be returned his lands, which are currently (and wrongfully) held by Gawain. The two knights do battle for the land-claim, Gawain triumphs, but Galeron's lady successfully petitions Guinevere to save her knight's life by expressing feeling-emblems that directly echo the ones which were introduced by the ghost of Guinevere's mother. Through a complicated exchange of oaths, Arthur eventually agrees to give Gawain new lands of his own (including lordship over all of Wales) and to return Galeron's ownership of Galloway, provided that Galeron join the Round Table brotherhood. The poem ends with the marriage of Galeron and his lady, followed by a mass held for Guinevere's mother's ghost. Clearly, the balance of power is secured again in Arthur's favor, but this tidy conclusion disguises how much the poem is invested in scrutinizing Arthurian hegemony and its definition of community. And this scrutinizing tone is evident in the text of *Awntyrs* from its start, when the poem questions outright the morality of marauding knights.

Early in the poem, Gawain asks the ghost of Guinevere's mother what will be the spiritual reward of knights who fight in service of kings, because they earn worship by entering foreign countries without any right and wreaking havoc on "the folke" who live under the kings there:

> "How shal we fare," quod the freke, "that fonden to fight,
> And thus defoulen the folke on fele kinges londes,
> And riches over reymes withouten eny right,
> Wynnen worshipp in werre thorgh wightnesse of hondes?"[204] (ll. 261-264)

[203] The actual "Scottishness" of Galeron is debatable due to scribal corruption. Galeron claims to have land in "Galwey," "Connok," "Conyngham," "Kyle," "Lomond," "Losex," and "Loyan" (ll. 418-420). Some of these names correlate to places in Scotland, but there remains an unresolvable national ambiguity about Galeron. See the appendix for instances of scribal corruption in the *Thornton Manuscript (Lincoln Cathedral Ms. 91)*.

[204] "How shall we fare," said the warrior, "who undertake to fight, / And thus defoul the folk in diverse kings' lands, / And enter into realms without any right, / To win worship in war through strength of arms?" (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

Gawain's attention to contrasting values of right and might ("wightnesse") recalls critiques of Arthur as an overreaching imperialist in *Gologras* and *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, but here the critique comes from within the Round Table brotherhood itself. It is a critical question of the perpetrator by the perpetrator, and notably a question that goes mostly unanswered in the moment.[205] Rather, the question invites us to see how the practice of chivalry enforces divisions in medieval society through licit violence and how "worshipp" itself is predicated on defouling "the folke." This is only the opening salvo of the poem's meditations on community, though, which range from imagining an expansive, borderless Round Table brotherhood to a version of "the folke" that includes those whose souls are still awaiting final judgment in Purgatory. Contrary to the insistent attention to observing (and transgressing) boundaries that we find in *Gologras*, *Awntyrs* proposes a borderless vision of medieval cosmic unity that is at once radical in its inclusivity and yet imperious in its totalizing claims.

As the ghost prepares to leave Guinevere and Gawain, she asks that they consider the example of her torment and let that example spur them toward acts of generosity for the poor and the hungry. This is a familiar reproach of the Arthurian kingdom (and its correlating real world monarchies), though it tends to come more from the religious—hermits, nuns, Grail keepers—than from the damned. Injunctions to pray for the individual dead are also common enough in Arthurian narratives (e.g. when a knight dies in battle or a lady dies after a long life in penitential nunhood), but the ghost seems to be making a broader claim here, implying that Arthur and his knights have an obligation to say Masses for all Christians in Purgatory[206] as an extension of their community on earth:

> "Have gode day, Gaynour, and Gawayn the gode;
> I have no lenger tome tidinges to telle.
> I mot walke on my wey thorgh this wilde wode
> In my wonyngstid in wo for to welle.
> Fore Him that rightwisly rose and rest on the Rode,
> Thenke on the danger and the dole that I yn dwell.

[205] When Gawain poses the question to the ghost of Guinevere's mother, she begins prophesying about the downfall of Arthur and his court, but never answers how knights in general "fare" in a spiritual sense.

[206] The ghost refers to "Helle" as a source of her torment, but it is probably safe to say that she is in fact suffering in Purgatory. There is a long-standing Biblical and institutional precedent for the dead benefitting from Masses said by the living (2 Maccabees 12:46, "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins"), but since at least Origen and Augustine, this has typically referred to those suffering a fire of purification, not a fire of eternal damnation (Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 38.2).

Fede folke for my sake that failen the fode
And menge me with matens and Masse in melle.
Masses arn medecynes to us that bale bides;
Us thenke a Masse as swete
As eny spice that ever ye yete."
With a grisly grete
The goste awey glides.[207] (ll. 313-325)

The ghost's parting words set up concerns that resonate thematically with the second half of the poem, which concerns the aforementioned land dispute. At stake here are questions of whose needs are met among the "folke," what obligations a Christian community has to its constituent members in this life and afterwards, and how people in the present can avoid repeating the spiritual errors of those who came before them. As with Gawain's earlier questioning critique of the chivalric mentality, these questions are not answered directly by the poem. The questions simply linger, demanding that we "[t]henke on the danger and the dole" which they conjure up. As the narrative of *Awntyrs* moves on to its second half, in which a proper chivalric border contest is again resolved through recourse to feeling-emblems, the questions return like revenants. There are answers this time in the feelings shared among women of the court, offering a vision of a cohesive affective Arthurian community, but they come at high cost for Galeron and for lords like him.

Like the first half of *Awntyrs*, the poem's second half begins with the appearance of a seemingly unfamiliar woman before Guinevere and the rest of Arthur's court. This time, the woman is neither a ghost nor a cautionary model against spiritual folly, but she does act as a harbinger for newly arrived danger. The lady strolls ("raykes") into the court leading a knight, then approaches Arthur and demands that the king treat this "errant knight" with the reason and justice which Arthur's "manhede" requires. In the following stanzas, Arthur continues to address the lady directly, asking about the knight's provenance and his intentions. The narrator affords a similarly comprehensive catalog of the lady's "armor" (her grass-green dress, her embroidered cloak, her pleated and jewel-studded hair, her head dress and crown, her kerchiefs and brooches,

[207] "Have a good day, Guinevere and Gawain the good, / I have no more time to give tidings. / I must walk on my way through this wild wood / To seethe in woe in my existence. / For him that righteously rose and hung on the Cross, / Think of the danger and the dole that I dwell in. / Feed the folk for my sake who lack for food / And remember me with services and Masses besides. Masses are medicine to those of us who endure torment; / We think a Mass as sweet / As any spice that you ever ate." / With a grisly groan, / The ghost glides away." (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

etc.) as her knight gets,[208] and the knight only introduces himself as Galeron when Arthur begins speaking to the broader attendance of those in the court.

We might at first judge a degree of indifference to Galeron's lady on the part of the *Awntyrs* poet from the fact that she doesn't state her own name at any point. But we could also take the narrator's reference to her as the "lady,""lemman," or simply "ho" (the feminine singular pronoun) to indicate familiarity, much in the same way that figures like Arthur are rarely identified by name. This latter reading would much better recognize her role as courtly mediator in the narrative, working as she does to translate and re-present feeling-emblems across sides in the dispute between Galeron and Arthur's court. In addition to making the opening envoy between Arthur's English court and the Scottish knight Galeron (traversing the boundary between the two as she strolls into the hall), the lady intervenes at a crucial juncture in the subsequent fight between Galeron and Gawain. Precisely when the fight seems beyond reconciliation, Galeron's lady creates the space for a peaceable resolution by displaying feeling-emblems of anguish that echo the intensity of the fight between Galeron and Gawain. Only Guinevere sees that this feeling-emblem also closely resembles the feeling-emblem her mother's ghost displays during their encounter earlier in the poem.

After Galeron has made his case before Arthur that his lands have been wrongfully taken[209] and Gawain has offered to be Arthur's champion for trial by combat, the two arm themselves and begin a fierce fight. The battle is less lengthy by far than anything we would find in *The Alliterative Morte* or in *Gologras and Gawain*, but still blood-soaked and full of slashing swords. As Galeron makes to charge madly at Gawain, his lady begins to scream and shriek loudly before the whole court: "his lemman on lowde skirles and skrikes / When that burly burne blenket on blode" (ll. 536-537).[210] Though both the verbs "skirlen" and "skriken" are

[208] Ho was the worthiest wight that eny wy welde wolde; / Here gide was glorious and gay, of a gresse grene. / Here belle was of blunket, with birdes ful bolde, / Brauded with brende gold, and bokeled ful bene. / Here fax in fyne perré was fretted in folde, / Contrefelet and kelle coloured full clene, / With a crowne craftly al of clene golde. / Here kercheves were curiouse with many proude prene, / Her perré was praysed with prise men of might: / Bright birdes and bolde / Had ynoghe to beholde / Of that frely to folde, / And on the hende knight (ll. 365-377).

[209] "Thou has wonen hem in werre with a wrange wile / And heven hem to Sir Gawayn—that my hert grylles" (ll. 421-422).

[210] The phrase "his lemman" is not specific enough in its use here to be certain that it refers to Galeron's lady rather than a lady of Gawain's. However, the same phrase (in the same construction) is used again roughly a hundred lines later when it more obviously refers to Galeron's lady. We could also infer that "his lemman" means Galeron's lady because the poem makes no mention of a lady being associated with Gawain.

well-attested in the period, they are rare in a courtly context, and suggest a level of emotional distress that goes far beyond the conventional swooning and weeping that typically occurs on the sidelines during tense chivalric combat. Indeed, what the behavior of Galeron's lady most strongly recalls is the affective intensity of Guinevere's mother's ghost when she appeared before her daughter and Gawain earlier in the poem.

That Galeron's lady shrieks the way she does is distinctive enough to warrant attention, but it bears mentioning that "skriken" is a verb not just of emotional distress but of physical pain, and it's a verb more often associated with animals or human characters who are somehow coded as "other" (e.g. for heathen characters in *Firumbras* and *Wars of Alexander*).[211] In *Awntyrs*, the birds of the forest "skryke" when the ghost shows up howling, and we should understand their behavior as an extension of the ghost, because they are both part of the same cautionary exemplum. In the second part of the poem, this intense affective register is invoked to similarly cautionary ends, though not in a way that makes us think Galeron's lady has any prior knowledge about the ghost of Guinevere's mother. Rather, this is simply a result of the poem's diptych structure in which loose associations between narrative elements and themes connect one half with the other, inviting us to see similarities between two female outsiders who are introduced at the beginning of the poem's two halves. In this case, the repetition of a dramatic, semi-verbal shrieking serves as a border-crossing affect, recognizable as a feeling-emblem of distress and caution despite being transplanted from one side of the poem to the other at a textual contact zone.

After a protracted battle between the two knights, including a transgressive play from Galeron in which he beheads Gawain's horse, Gawain finally seems to be on the verge of winning. In a rare moment of partiality, the narrator tells us that Galeron "lymped the worse, and that me wel likes" (l. 615), and soon Gawain has grabbed him by the collar. Just then, Galeron's lady repeats her "skrilles and skrikes."[212] She "gretes on Gaynour with gronyng grylle" (ll. 619-620), asking that the queen take mercy on Galeron before he's killed. This time, the

[211] The verb "skriken" has an uncertain derivation. It may come from Old English or Old Norse verbs for "to shriek," but it seems to be imitative or onomatopoeic in origin, recalling the sound of birds (*MED* "skriken" v.; *OED* "skrike" v.). Whatever the ultimate origin, the word is clearly used to categorize sounds that do not readily translate into comprehensible speech, as is clear by the fact that it most commonly appears in reference to dehumanized figures (animals or non-Christian peoples).

[212] The second instance of "skrilles and skrikes" repeats the first almost verbatim. The only difference between lines 536 and 619 is spelling and the adverb used for emphasis ("on loud" at line 536 and "on loft" at line 619).

anguished feeling-emblem which Galeron's lady presents to Guinevere recalls strongly enough the same feeling-emblem from her mother's ghost—a concurrent presentation of screaming, shrieking, wailing, and groaning—that Guinevere immediately turns to Arthur and argues for an end to the fight on behalf of Galeron's lady and the two knights.

Guinevere's plea to Arthur is nominally motivated by grief at the "grones of Sir Gawayne,"[213] but it is clearly also the explicit result of Galeron's lady showing her feeling-emblem of "gronyng" anguish (and the implicit result of the ghost's showing of the same feeling-emblem). Both women's lamentations are made as injunctions to mercy, and when Guinevere successfully petitions Arthur to stop the fight, she is effectively honoring her promise to her mother's ghost to look out for "the folke."[214] The actions of Guinvere and Galeron's lady here are clearly made in reference to one of the most reliable of romance genre conventions, namely that of the "harmonizing" heroine who intervenes in the conflict of two feuding men and resolves their dispute amicably (Battles 539; Edwards 58). But both women speak from vastly different social positions than that of the stock romance heroine (usually, a maiden whose well-being depends on marriage to one of the combatant knights). Guinevere, of course, is queen, and she is responsible in the poem for nothing less than the moral redemption of the entire Arthurian project. Galeron's lady has a pre-existing relationship with her knight, and as I have shown, she speaks for him and makes his case in more rhetorically deft sentiments than he seems able to articulate.

In a borderlands romance like this, for which Gawain is little more than a stand-in for a champion knight and Arthur serves only to officiate legal proceedings and prompt the shift from the first half of the narrative to the second, it is not an exaggeration to say that the entirety of the central conflict plays out between the two leading women, each of whom represents a side of the land claim dispute. The feeling-emblem which travels across the borders of this text is not keyed to a specific figure of the court (though it is obviously expressed most directly by the ghost of Guinevere's mother and Galeron's lady). Rather, this feeling-emblem of anguished screaming represents the neglected "folke" first mentioned by Gawain at the poem's opening. It is not Galeron's social status that makes him a strong candidate to represent "the folke" in this poem

[213] The phrase is repeated in consecutive lines, at ll. 633-634.

[214] Interestingly, between the stanza in which Guinevere speaks to Arthur and the stanza in which Arthur actually stops the fight, *Awntyrs* dedicates a single stanza to Galeron as he formally concedes the fight, suggesting that Guinevere's speech has a secondary immediate function to de-escalate the chivalric contest.

(he's still a landed aristocrat fighting mainly for his own interests), but rather an accident of manuscript history.

Awntyrs survives in four separate manuscripts,[215] but there is scribal corruption in each concerning the passage in which Galeron explains where he holds lands, making his actual "Scottishness" a matter of some ambiguity. Galeron claims to have land in "Galwey," "Connok," "Conyngham," "Kyle," "Lomond," "Losex," and "Loyan" (ll. 418-420), and some of these can be confirmed by the fact that they are repeated later in the poem, when Gawain returns lands to his former opponent,[216] but several (like "Lother," "Losex," and "Loyan") cannot be precisely identified or located in Scotland. Instead, they become placeholder names which make possible both Galeron's challenge to Arthur's imperialism and the reciprocating assertion of Arthur's dominance over those lands.[217] Galeron is legibly Scottish in the poem and he self-identifies with the groves and glens of Galloway (the "grettest of Galwey of greves and gyllis"), but his entire identity as a knight is tied up in ownership of regions that are textually and geographically ambiguous, making him fundamentally a knight of the borderlands "folke." Even his association with Galloway reinforces this ambiguity, as Galloway marks the eastern boundary of the Debatable Lands, a heavily fought-over territory in the southwestern region of the Marches. But as with many cases of community neglect and the subsequent attempts to redress that neglect in the Anglo-Scottish Marches, this instance of calling attention to the plight of the "folke" quickly becomes appropriated for the interests of the more powerful.[218] However much the entreaty of Galeron's lady might appeal to Guinevere in (her mother's ghost's) terms of charity and mercy for the unfortunate, Galeron is in actuality fighting exclusively for his own territorial gain as a

[215] "*The Awntyrs off Arthur* survives complete in four separate medieval manuscripts, none of which is based upon any of the other extant copies" (Hahn 169).

[216] Specifically, Gawain mentions "Lauer to Layre, / Connoke and Carlele, Conyngham and Kile; / …The Lother, the Lemmok, the Loynak, the Lile" (ll. 678-682). Interestingly, Gawain does not return Galloway to Galeron's possession.

[217] Hahn describes them as "empty markers of Arthur's power to exercise dominion over border territories" (Hahn 225, footnote to ll. 678-ff.).

[218] As Schultz argues, English monarchs were particularly likely to get involved in arbitrating borderlands disputes during the Tudor period, when being lenient with certain transgressions and in the prosecution of borderers helped maintain stability in the region that served the interests of the crown: "Acquiescing to small demands provided the crown with the ability to hold a modicum of influence in the region. Having strong allies in the borderlands was one method the monarch used to gain authority over her subjects. It brought the surnames into broader diplomatic conflicts but also created a tighter bond and allowed the borderers to strengthen their sense of Englishness or Scottishness" (104).

landed aristocrat. And Arthur, even when persuaded by Guinevere to adopt an attitude of leniency with this knight errant, is still making calculations about how this new development can accrue more imperial authority to him in Scottish lands.

In *Gologras*, the showing of feeling-emblems at a crucial juncture in the one-on-one fight allows both knights to retain their respective honor and to stay free in their own lands by deceiving onlookers about the outcome of the fight. In *Awntyrs*, it is instead the onlookers who intervene by showing feeling-emblems of anguish and then empathy. Rather than maintaining territorial boundaries as in *Gologras*, the practice in *Awntyrs* is to collapse territorial boundary lines nearly altogether. After seeing Guinevere respond to his lady's anguish with a highly public performance of compassion directed to Arthur,[219] Galeron cedes his lands to Gawain and kneels before Arthur. The king, however, recognizes his wife's petition and hands down a verdict in which Gawain will be invested with other desirable lands as long as he makes peace with Galeron and returns to him his land-claim. Gawain, in turn, agrees to this proposition, but says he will only "refeff" (reinvest) Galeron with his forests if the Scottish lord joins the Round Table fellowship.[220] Again like *Gologras*, this complex chain of land appropriation and redistribution produces "all gains and no losses" (Hahn 228) in the chivalric economy of honor, but in *Awntyrs* it serves the larger purpose of assimilating the "errant" Scottish knight Galeron into the Arthurian court and endowing Gawain with lordship over much of Wales. These are still gains in the sense that Galeron has rule over the territories he initially sought to reclaim, but they are ultimately all gains that accrue to Arthur and to an English seat of the British empire.

Feeling-emblems, as with more conventional chivalric devices, tend to get instrumentalized in more utilitarian ways in the borderlands spaces of Gawain romances than in the larger campaigning romances like *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*. My argument so far has been that this utilitarian approach to feeling-emblems is best explained by the fact that battle lines are less well-drawn in the imagined romance version of the Anglo-Scottish marches. Royal authority is weak in these spaces, and local lords have little reason to identify with the imperial projects of a distant king, and so the social structure of chivalric customs that gives

[219] Guinevere takes off her crown and kneels before Arthur, then beseeches him to have mercy for the sake of their marriage: "As thou art Roye roial, richest of rent, / And I thi wife wedded at thi owne wille / … Make thes knightes accorde" (ll. 627-635).

[220] "Withthi under our lordeship thou lenge here a while, / And to the Round Table make thy repaire, / I shal refeff the in felde in forestes so fair" (ll. 683-685).

feeling-emblems their cultural importance is less stable and more open to creative appropriation or deliberate misuse. The most obvious way that this instability plays out in *Awntyrs* is with Galeron's lady, who takes a convention of chivalric romance—the courtly lady who laments as her champion knight faces death at the hands of a fearsome foe—and amplifies it to such emotional heights as to warrant description in precisely the same affective terms that the poem's narrator uses for a demon-tormented ghost.

Such melodramatic excess as we see in the lady's "gronyng" pleas to Guinevere has a clear rhetorical purpose, as it persuades Guinevere to petition for an end to the fight, while the lady's first outpouring of "skirles and skrikes" only seemed to inspire more fervor in the other onlookers.[221] And this is not simply an impulsive, desperate move by the lady to save her knight, but the culmination of her ongoing role as intermediary in the fight. She is the one who introduces Galeron to the court, she is the one who speaks to Arthur on his behalf, and she is the one who gets her "armor" cataloged before Galeron does. When she pleads with Guinevere, Galeron's lady performs the showing of an anguished feeling-emblem that is wholly in keeping with her rhetorical position throughout the poem. She can articulate feelings and vulnerabilities which are clearly beyond the capabilities of Galeron, the knight who sought out Arthur's court for fear of being laughed at in his own stolen lands, and modes of communication are available to her as a courtly lady that are not available to her knight.

Finally, it is her intervention that guarantees the poem's land redistribution scheme: before Arthur speaks his judgment, Galeron has already conceded the fight to Gawain and given up his lands, and it appears to be only for the sake of Guinevere and Galeron's lady that Arthur requires Gawain to make peace with his foe. The final twist, in which Galeron retains control of his lands as long as he is incorporated into the Round Table brotherhood, would surely disgust a fiercely independent borderlands lord like Gologras, but it is about as favorable a deal as a knight like Galeron can win. The poem's conclusion is not a total repudiation of feeling-emblems as methods for the assertion of a borderlands chivalric identity, it simply recognizes that feeling-emblems have a practical limit in how much they can subvert the larger machinery of imperialism and territorial assimilation. The feeling-emblems which Galerfon's lady displays are powerful devices for maintaining her honor and the honor of her knight, but they are ultimately

[221] After Galeron's lady first screams and shrieks for her knight, the narrator tells us, "Lordes and ladies of that laike likes / And thonked God of his grace for Gawayn te gode" (ll. 538-539), strongly suggesting that the lords and ladies present were unbothered by her distress, and even were encouraged by it.

vulnerable to being appropriated by Arthur for the sake of expanding his empire. As we will see in the final exemplar Gawain romance, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, feeling-emblems can undercut the authority of chivalric brotherhood in borderlands space even as they are lifted up as the most iconic symbols of that brotherhood.

Feeling-Emblems on Borders and "Bordures" in Gawain's Green Girdle

Among the most famous descriptive passages in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (second only to the description of the Green Knight himself) concerns the arming of Gawain as he prepares to leave the Arthurian court and venture out into the wider world. The poet dedicates over one hundred lines to cataloging his gear, including an elaborate explanation of his shield and the symbolism of its five-pointed star or pentangle—a virtuoso demonstration of medieval sign systems and their endless capacity for inscribing renewed significance to the same emblems and images by overlaying new meanings on top of old ones.[222] We are told at length what emotions this shield, with its pentangle on the outside and an image of Mary on the inside, evokes in Gawain when he looks upon it: his courage never failed when he "blusched" (or gazed) at it and from it he derived all his "forsnes" or fortitude.[223] Interspersed throughout this passage are frequent reminders of just how Gawain's armor was arrayed with "red ryche golde naylez / Þat al glytered and glent as glem of þe sunne," and even his horse's sadle "glemed ful gayly with mony golde frenges" (ll. 598-604). Gawain's gear is a spectacle unto itself, and a public one at that (attendants literally roll out a red carpet, a "tulé tapit," for him), with Gawain making sorrowful goodbyes to the lords and ladies and going to hear Mass in full armor.

No poem that I treat in this project is more explicitly interested in conveying what it feels like to look on chivalric emblems and in imagining how it could feel to wear those emblems as one's own than *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. There is an almost obsessive level of detail in the poem, as when the narrator tells us that Gawain's helmet has a broad, silken border embroidered with gems and so many parrots and turtledoves and truelove knots on the seams that

[222] The narrator tells us that the pentangle signifies Gawain's faithfulness in five sets of five ways ("faythful in fyue and sere fyue syþez," l. 631): he is faultless in his five senses, he never fails in using his five fingers, his faith is founded on the five wounds of Christ, his fortitude derives from the five joys of Mary, and his prowess as a knight comes from the five chivalric virtues.

[223] "At þis cause þe knyȝt comlyche hade / In þe inore half of his schelde hir ymage depaynted, / Þat quen he blusched þerto his belde neuer payred" (ll. 648-650).

it must have taken someone in town seven winters to sew them all.[224] For the Gawain Poet, even the border (Middle English "borde" or "bordure") of garments and chivalric gear is a rich site for imagination. The border in this passage, while referring to the literal edge of Gawain's garb, is also a space upon which the Gawain Poet has inscribed the realities of lived experience, of labor, and of different ways of marking time's passage (seasonal time versus cloth time).

Like the borderlands territory of the Marches which I propose as historical context for this chapter, this "borde" of cloth is both center and periphery in the passage of Gawain's arming. And similar to how the history of the Marches is written in its war-torn landscape,[225] the "borde" holds memories materially,[226] expressing them in the woven threads and embroidered images which make up its fabric. Bands of cloth in general are curiously emblematic in this scene, like the baldric ("bauderyk") that Gawain hangs his shield by, draping it over his neck in a fashion that "bisemed þe segge semlyly fayre" (l. 622). We can go so far as to say that there is a distinct potency or vitality—even an eroticism—to fabric in *SGGK* that recalls the way we discuss fetish objects and the belief in their magical power.[227] For both Gawain and the Green

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[224] "Hit watz hyȝe on his hede, hasped bihynde, / Wyth a lyȝtly vrysoun ouer þe auentayle, / Enbrawden and bounden wyth þe best gemmez / On brode sylkyn borde, and bryddez on semez, / As papiayez paynted peruyng bitwene, Tortors and trulofez entayled so þyk / As mony burde þeraboute had ben seuen wynter / in toune" (ll. 607-614).

[225] Anthony Goodman notes that much of our understanding about how war-torn the Marches actually were between the fourteenth and sixteenth century comes from estate and judicial records, which are likely to be biased and to reflect *attitudes* toward the Marches more than any particular reality ("The Impact of Warfare on the Scottish Marches, c. 1481-c.1513" 198). Even if, as Goodman proposes, life in the late medieval/early modern borderlands was fairly stable and economically prosperous, the recorded history of warfare, sieges, and raiding clearly leaves its mark in the proliferation of Peel towers (small, fortified tower houses) across the region.

[226] As Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass show in their discussion of portrait subjects, by the early modern period in England there is a robust discourse of material clothing that imagines how clothes can inscribe forms of memory beyond just a person's social status and wealth. The sitters of portraits materialize all kinds of memory (familial, religious, romantic, communal, etc.) in the clothing they wear for portraits, such that "sitters are permeated by what they wear" (12). As Jones and Stallybrass go on to ask, "If a person could be permeated by the material memories of what he or she wore, how could one construct a national subject from 'foreign' materials?" (12).

[227] See Adela Pinch's essay "Stealing Happiness: Shoplifting in Early Nineteenth-Century England" (in the collection *Border Fetishisms*) for a different treatment of cloth borders as stand-ins for geopolitical borders. Though Pinch is discussing a cultural moment in England several centuries later than the period which concerns me, many of her conclusions are relevant to my own work. As she says of an account of a woman shoplifting lace: "the trial of Jane Leigh Perrot can be seen as the story of lace writ small, for the fetishism of lace in late eighteenth-early nineteenth-century England had everything to do with borders and border crossings. Borders between England and France, for example: The Napoleonic Wars suspended the importing of French lace—"real" lace—during much of the period of 1799-1815, which, while aiding the domestic lace industry, made an attachment to good lace an invocation of the tensions among luxury, trade, and politics. Itself a border, moreover, lace is a classic fetish-object… Diaphanous, barely there, both concealing and revealing what lies beneath, lace unavoidably has the erotic associations attendant upon fetish objects of all kinds" (132).

Knight, the clothing and gear that they put on seems to adhere to them, becoming a part of their person and an articulation of their identity in a way that transcends the status of a simple material object.[228] Of course, the most potent piece of fabric that functions as a feeling-emblem in the poem, the green girdle, is not tied to Gawain from the outset. He will need to "win" it in a different kind of contested borderlands space, and he will find it an emblem which accrues to itself complex and conflicting feelings.

When Gawain encounters the green girdle, he has been resting at the castle of Lord Bertilak de Hautdesert and whiling away his days with Lady Bertilak (and living up to his reputation as the most "courteous" knight, a quality of Gawain's that Lady Bertilak knows even before meeting him). Gawain left the court of Arthur initially to seek out the chapel of the Green Knight, so as to finish a beheading game; at the outset of the poem, Gawain takes up the Green Knight's invitation to strike an axe-blow to the stranger's neck, and now, almost a year later, Gawain must receive an equal strike from the Green Knight. Since he lacks the magical recuperative force that permits the Green Knight to survive having his head struck off, Gawain has "drede" at the thought of reaching the Green Chapel. So, when Lady Bertilak offers Gawain her own girdle—a belt of green silk embroidered with gold threads—and tells him that while wearing it no one could harm him ("no haþel vnder heuen tohewe hym þat myȝt"), Gawain happily acquiesces and takes the girdle for his own. Lady Bertilak asks that Gawain conceal the gift from her lord, and he does so as he sets off for the Green Chapel, not realizing that Lord Bertilak and the Green Knight are one and the same, or that Lady Bertilak's gift of the girdle is another test of Gawain's virtue.

Because Gawain initially conceals the girdle while at Lord Bertilak's castle, its status is then only that of a hidden sign, not a feeling-emblem (which is by definition public and showable to others). The girdle certainly has symbolic value at this point, signifying Gawain's

[228] Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco notes that, because the emblem requires a "concrete material manifestations" to express its meaning, the poetics of the emblem as a sign system "belongs to the study of material culture." Rodríguez-Velasco unpacks the historical term *meuble* (meaning a heraldic "charge" here, but *meuble* also refers to personal property more broadly and it is a doublet of the French *mobile*) to show how emblems assert identity and political power through their materiality: "The emblem appears in apparatus that have been created for spatial and temporal practice: coverings, clothing, coats of arms, flags, book pages, ex libris, and super libris, as well as much more durable materials, such as the sculpted stones above the façades of rural and urban homes. It is, therefore, a meuble, or "charge." A charge is a term in the heraldic vocabulary that designates any figure, item, or device that belongs on a heraldic coat of arms and is depicted therein. The emblems are also charges of the construction of political power in space and time: represented by all parties in both, they nevertheless possess a mobile, joint character that largely depends on their creativity" (*Order and Chivalry* 200).

loyalty and courtly commitment to honoring a private oath,[229] but not emblematic value, because the girdle cannot yet be presented as an outward-facing identifier of him and it cannot be generalized as an identifier of a larger chivalric group. We see already, though, that the girdle accrues associations in its movement the way that all gifts do, first serving as a love-token from Lady Bertilak, then becoming a symbol of secret troth between her and Gawain.[230] More precisely, the girdle functions similar to a gift as the sociologist Marcel Mauss defines the term, acquiring a trace from all those who have given and received it over time (and demanding that it be passed on to another), such that it encodes increasingly complex social ties into its very material fabric with every instance of exchange.

The bond which the girdle (or any Maussian gift) creates is "bilateral," "irrevocable," and "dangerous to take," but not inherently positive or negative in its social implications.[231] Maussian gifts define social networks through their circulation, because they are part of a system of reciprocity which records the various obligations held by members of a community, and so one could plausibly say that the gift exchange process is itself the community.[232] As Mauss says, such systems of exchange depend upon an essential inalienability of the gift, meaning that even when the gift "has been abandoned by the giver, it still possesses something of him" (Mauss 12). We could go so far as to say, in such a gift-oriented reading, that the crucial problem in *SGGK* is that

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[229] "And ho bere on hym þe belt and bede hit hym swyþe-- / And he granted and hym gafe with a goud wylle-- / And biso3t hym, for hir sake, disceuer hit neuer, / Bot to lelly layne fro hir lorde; þe leude hym acordez / Þat neuer wy3e schulde hit wyt, iwysse, bot þay twayne / for no3te" (ll. 1860-1865).

[230] The concept of "troth" amounts to one's reputation for integrity or fidelity, but as J. A. Burrow says in his reading of gestures and looks in medieval narrative, "medieval English treats it as rather more thingy" than just a reputation (14). Troth-plighting has a real social, emotional, and legal force to it, and troth can be materially attested by gestures like kissing and hand-holding or by the giving of objects like rings, books, and the green girdle.

[231] See Marcel Mauss's *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* on his theory of the gift: "The gift is therefore at one and the same time what should be done, what should be received, and yet what is dangerous to take. This is because the thing that is given itself forges a bilateral, irrevocable bond, above all when it consists of food" (59). Elsewhere in *The Gift*, Mauss remarks on the force of material things, saying that, "a power is present that forces gifts to be passed around, to be given, and returned… they are contained in a box, or rather in a large emblazoned case that is itself endowed with a powerful personality, that can talk, that clings to its owner, that holds his soul, etc.." (43). He further notes that gifts endure in a way which defies a strictly commercial, capitalist understanding of object, claiming that "things sold still have a soul. They are still followed around by their former owner, and they follow him also" (66).

[232] See Mary Douglas's introduction to *The Gift*, particularly her remarks on the concept of potlatch: "Spelt out it means that each gift is part of a system of reciprocity in which the honour of giver and recipient are engaged. It is a total system in that every item of status or of spiritual or material possession is implicated for everyone in the whole community… The whole society can be described by the catalogue of transfers that map all the obligations between its members. The cycling gift system is the society" (viii-ix).

the girdle operates like an inalienable gift, but Gawain, and later the entire Round Table brotherhood, would prefer to treat it like a commodity, liberated by transactional exchange (i.e. the beheading game) from the dubious associations it picked up on its way to Arthur's court.

And yet, although the girdle does function as a gift in its ability to define social networks through its giving, it is burdened by its inalienability the more it is given throughout the poem. For example, in the exchange between Gawain and Lady Bertilak, the girdle functions as a sign of "confidence" in at least two senses, marking mutually confided trust between Gawain and Lady Bertilak and also instilling Gawain with the courage to face the Green Knight. But by the time Gawain reaches the Green Chapel and finally shows the girdle as a feeling-emblem before his opponent, these accrued values are already under stress from a previous instance of girdle-giving that predates the bedroom scenes at Castle Hautdesert. Eventually, these inalienable ties and symbolic values which have accrued to the girdle will become confusingly intermingled with one another (and thus totally unstable) under the weight of the object's overdetermination.

When the time finally comes for Gawain to make good on the "couenauntez" between him and the Green Knight, the beheading game unfolds messily: Gawain flinches at the first swing of the axe, so the Green Knight makes for a second strike, but he stops mid-arc, seemingly to test Gawain's resolve (though he claims to spare Gawain for his sportiveness in gift-giving at Castle Hautdesert). Finally, his third strike nicks Gawain's neck, sending blood over his shoulders and into the earth, but leaving Gawain's head attached to his body. To Gawain's great frustration and bewilderment, the Green Knight explains his rationale for the "tappe" of his third stoke:

> Fyrst I mansed þe muryly with a mynt one,
> And roue þe wyth no rof-sore, with ryȝt I þe profered
> For þe forwarde þat trawþe and trwly me haldez,
> Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde.
> Þat oþer munt for þe morne, mon, I þe profered,
> Þou kyssedes my clere wyf—þe cossez me raȝtez.
> For boþe two here I þe bede bot two bare myntes
> boute scaþe.
> Trwe mon trwe restore,
> Þenne þar mon drede no waþe.
> At þe þrid þou fayled þore,
> And þerfor þat tappe ta þe.
> 'For hit is my wede þat þou werez, þat ilke wouen girdel,

Myn owen wyf hit þe weued, I wot wel for soþe.
Now know I wel þy cosses, and þy costes als,
And þe wowyng of my wyf: I wroȝt hit myseluen.
I sende hir to asay þe, and sothly me þynkkez
On þe fautlest freke þat euer on fote ȝede;
As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,
So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oþer gay knyȝtez.
Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, sir, and lewté yow wonted;
Bot þat watz for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
Bot for ȝe lufed your lyf; þe lasse I yow blame.'[233] (ll. 2345-2368)

The Green Knight proposes a dizzying moral calculus in his explanation, whereby Gawain's past performance of fidelity (troth, or "trawþe") in the gift-exchange game at Castle Hautdesert and his supposed reasoning for wearing the girdle count favorably in his estimation of fault for the beheading game. The girdle itself transforms from an emblem of mutual confidence to one of moral "lack," becoming a tool not of protection but of scrutiny as we learn that the Green Knight sent Lady Bertilak with the girdle to "asay" Gawain and his chivalric virtue.[234] The Green Knight means for this to be a "lyttel" reproach of Gawain's honor, because he only withheld the girdle for himself out of love for his life, not for wild work or wooing, but it clearly weighs heavily on Gawain: in the lines that follow, he stands "agreued" with blood rushing to his face, and he flings down the girdle, calling it an object of "falssing" (deceitful dealing) that has made him "fawty and falce and ferde" (faulty, false, and afraid). The Green Knight, like several others in the poem, merely laughs at Gawain's distress, then tells him that he can keep the girdle as a reminder of their contest and a "pure token" (l. 2398) of the games that knights played at the Green Chapel.

[233] "'When I first merely feinted to fell you, good knight, / But spared you instead, well then, such was my right: / Such accords with the covenant we cast at the start. / You then honestly honored the oaths that we made / When you gave me your gift, as a good man should do. / The feint that followed was for the next day / When you kissed my wife kindly, and kisses gave me. / In turn for those two days I turned back the fine / Sharp blade. / The true, you see, are spared, / And need not be afraid. / The third day, though, you erred, / And with that prick were paid. / For that girdle of green you go with is mine; / I'm aware that my wife was the one who gave it. / Of your kisses and conduct I'm quite well informed, / For I worked out my wife's plan for wooing you, sir, / All to test and to try you; and, truly, you seem / The most perfect of princes who walk upon earth! / As pearls are more precious than peas, when compared, / So much greater is Gawain, I glean, than all knights! / But you lapsed just a little; your loyalty flagged. / Since the cause was not courtship or covetousness, / But the love of your life, so much less do I blame.'" (translated by Casey Finch)

[234] There is arguably one more link in the girdle's chain of association we can identify: Lord Bertilak eventually tells Gawain that "Morgan þe goddes" (l. 2452) put him up to the original beheading game and bestowed upon him his alter ego as the Green Knight with the express purpose of frightening Guinevere to death. Bertilak does not say that he has gotten the girdle from Morgan, but he does claim to be in thrall to her "koyntyse" (knowledge, skill, trickery, magic), and if we put any stock in that claim, then Bertilak's giving of the girdle traces back ultimately to Morgan.

This suggestion that the girdle be a pure token is at once a clear indication of how much the poem is invested in the emblematic significance of objects and a somewhat absurd proposition on its face: the girdle is already so thickly woven with emotional associations by this point in the poem that it could not be a "pure" sign of *anything*.

Gawain rejects the Green Knight's invitation to take the girdle as a token of their contest (and he rejects the invitation to stay longer at Castle Hautdesert), saying that he will return to Arthur with the girdle, though he will ascribe his own feeling-emblem to it:

> 'Bot your gordel', quoþ Gawayn, 'God yow forȝelde!
> Þat wyl I welde wyth guod wylle, not for þe wynne golde,
> Ne þe saynt, ne þe sylk, ne þe syde pendaundes,
> For wele ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk werkkez,
> Bot in syngne of my surfet I schal se hit ofte,
> When I ride in renoun, remorde to myseluen
> Þe faut and þe fayntyse of þe flesche crabbed,
> How tender hit is to entyse teches of fylþe;
> And þus, quen pryde schal me pryk for prowes of armes,
> Þe loke to þis luf-lace schal leþe my hert.[235] (ll. 2429-2438)

Gawain's language here mostly accords with familiar tropes of medieval spiritual and behavioral correctives. The girdle is to be an outward sign of inward fault and, more importantly, a material reminder to consider when pride at his prowess threatens to "pryk" his spirits. Examples abound of similar emotionally significant chivalric objects, like the shameful cart which Lancelot must ride in to save Guinevere in Chrétien's "The Knight of the Cart," or Malory's rendering of Sir Brunor in *The Morte Darthur* (Kay furnishes him with the nickname "La Cote Male Taile" after Brunor comes to Arthur's court in his father's damaged armor). But the girdle is an object for which a single feeling-emblem can never be sufficient, because it carries the trace of prior concepts and associations through its history of exchange. In fact, the "syngne" that Gawain specifically attributes to the girdle is "surfet," which we could take to mean his immoderate behavior in trying to save his own life, but in Middle English (as now), the word also just means excess or superfluity. Under Gawain's scrutiny, the girdle is a sign of overflow. It is an object

[235] "'But by God,' said Gawain, 'your girdle I'll keep; / I will go with it gladly for goodwill, not pride / In the sash or the silk or the swinging pendants, / Nor for wealth, nor to win thus a wide-ranging fame. / But instead it shall serve as a sign of my fault; / When I ride through the realm I'll recall, to my shame, / Both the falseness and frailty of flesh, how it tends / To invite the most vicious, the vilest, of sins. / Thus when pricked onto pride through my prowess of arms, / I will look on this love-lace to lay that pride low" (translated by Casey Finch).

which cannot retain association with a single specific feeling-emblem because it is constantly being overwritten with meaning. This claim for Gawain is the poem's most honest articulation of the instability of feeling-emblems as instruments of identity expression in the borderlands, and it is an instability that makes Gawain's feeling-emblems even further voided of semantic content when he returns to the context of Arthur's court.

When Gawain returns to court, he bears the girdle and the feeling-emblem of his shame in precisely the manner he promised before leaving the Green Chapel. It is, he says, a "bende" (or band) of his blame (l. 2506), and this term refers to a similar kind of garment ornamentation as the "borde" described when Gawain first sets out at the beginning of the poem.[236] For Gawain, the cloth border of the girdle stands as a "token of vntrawþe" (l. 2509), representing cowardice, covetousness, and inconstancy. He continues the material metaphor by saying that once a person has sewn "harme" (sin, injury, wrong) to themselves, the seam can never be cut: "For mon may hyden his harme, bot vnhap ne may hit, / For þer hit onez is tachched twynne wil hit neuer" (ll. 2511-2512).[237] For Gawain, this fact is self-evident, because he knows the history of the girdle as both a gift object and as a feeling-emblem object, but for Arthur and the rest of the court, cutting the seam and freeing the girdle from its association with negative affects could not be simpler.

For the last time in the poem, Gawain's self-seriousness is laughed off by those around him,[238] and Arthur tries to comfort him by minimizing the fault of his (current) champion knight. The whole court, lords and ladies both, agree that the knights of the Round Table should henceforth wear a "bauderyk" just like Gawain's to commemorate his virtue. The passage is a remarkable instance of Gawain's chivalric community reading his feeling-emblem and absorbing all of the style but none of the substance that he means for it to communicate:

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[236] *MED* "bende" n. 3a: "An ornamental lace, ribbon, sash, etc., on a garment; a stripe or band on a garment or a bedspread; a border; a hatband."

[237] "A person can hide their sin, but they cannot undo it, / For once it is attached it cannot be cut away" (modernization is mine). The verb "tachen" (to fasten, to sew, to tie) is the most concretely sartorial term in this adage of Gawain's, but "twinnen" also has specific senses which refer to undoing seams on fabric and cutting materials into smaller parts. Of course, other terms Gawain uses in this passage, like the verb "weren," also refer more generally to adorning oneself with articles of clothing.

[238] Both Lady Bertilak and the Green Knight do so in their private scenes with Gawain, and Arthur's court all laugh together somewhat anxiously after the Green Knight leaves them at the beginning of the poem. Gawain joins in that last instance of laughter, though the narrator makes clear that both he and Arthur are perturbed by the appearance of the Green Knight.

Þe kyng comfortez þe knyȝt, and alle þe court als
Laȝen loude þerat, and luflyly acorden
Þat lordes and ladis þat longed to þe Table,
Vche burne of þe broþerhede, a bauderyk schulde haue,
A bende abelef hym aboute of a bryȝt grene,
And þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were.[239] (ll. 2513-2518)

Here at last the girdle as a vehicle for feeling-emblems reaches its most widely circulated and depersonalized function. Arthur's court has totally voided it of individual significance as ascribed by Gawain, Lady Bertilak, or the Green Knight, in the process stripping it of any affective value other than it being "swete to were." In the process, however, the court turns the girdle into a functional instrument of community identification, unifying the Round Table brotherhood itself with its visible presence. This appropriation of a personal feeling-emblem for wider use among a chivalric community is ultimately indicative of the way that borderer identities themselves became instrumentalized in larger political conflicts of the region, unsewn from specifically borderlands grievances and concerns and leveraged for whatever legal need was most expedient of the English and Scottish crowns at the time.[240]

Certainly the most self-evident case in which a textual feeling-emblem of the Gawain romances is appropriated for real world chivalric identities is the phrase added in by a later scribal hand to the end of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The motto of the Order of the Garter, "*honi soit qui mal y pense*" (may the person be shamed who thinks badly of it), is inscribed at the poem's conclusion as "*hony soyt qui mal pence*," absent the French adverbial pronoun *y*, such that the motto reads simply as "may the person be shamed who thinks badly."

[239] "The king and the court brought comfort to him. / They laughed right out loud, and at last all agreed— / Every lady and lord who belonged to the Table— / That a baldric be borne by the brotherhood's men, / A silk band wrapped about of bright, glowing green / For the sake of that shining knight, showing respect" (translated by Casey Finch).

[240] Rodríguez-Velasco, in an examination of chivalric orders in fourteenth century Castile, explains how the poetics of the chivalric emblem (specifically, the sash of the Castilian Orden de la Banda) relates to "the chivalric dialectic between localization and dislocation." As he says, there is an "appropriation process" whereby the chivalric emblem is adopted by wider bourgeois communities, at once recirculating the authority of monarchical power and diluting its authority through that recirculation: "The emblem is made to demarcate a space, but is also made to traverse it—emblems travel on moving bodies and across history sculpted and painted on media that remain throughout long periods of time. The poetics of the emblem is, in the end, how groups, institutions, or individual, political, or natural entities codify power. The coat of arms of the king worn on the bodies of the knights represents the political body of the king himself, an embassy, as if they were credentials. In the fifteenth century, the so-called officers of arms are generalized: heralds, pursuivants, and kings of arms who, dressed in the arms of those they serve, become their legal spokesmen and faithful bearers of the laws of the nobility" (217).

The motto is purportedly an utterance of Edward III, who founded the Order. He is supposed to have said this while dancing with the Countess of Salisbury when her garter slipped and he placed it on his own leg. The story is traditional, and has no basis in historical fact, though the phrase could have easily arisen in the context of Edward defending his claim to the throne of France.[241] In this slightly abbreviated form, the motto shifts from being an injunction against the scrutiny of some specific object to a broader prohibition against scrutiny itself. In both versions, the motto invites scrutiny at the same time that it discourages the practice, similar to how the Green Knight's insistence that Gawain "lakked a little" in loyalty (and thus deserved only a little blame) is an implicit invitation to consider what greater lack might look like and what consequences it would have on the Green Knight's estimation of Gawain's character. Tellingly, the shame described by the motto is not the internalized shame Gawain feels at his lack, but rather a social shame that derives from making negative judgments of the girdle as an emblematic object (or of the wider chivalric community). In effect, the motto asks that we suspend the very practice of reading feeling-emblems critically which the poem has itself outlined at length in its copious descriptions of Gawain's armor, of the Green Knight's appearance, and of Arthur's court. There is evidently some sense of community to be gained from the suspension of reading feeling-emblems critically, considering that the green girdle is the genesis of a new chivalric self-presentation in the court. But this sense of community cannot be sustained meaningfully, because there is no shared emotional identity underpinning it.

The narratives of romance and of historical chivalric orders inform and influence one another throughout the later Middle Ages in ways that are often hard to untangle. As the historian Allen Guttman notes, the chivalric tournament has its origins in martial practice (a sort of "mimic war"), but by the late fourteenth century, it is actually real warfare that gets recorded in the conventions and trappings of tournament fighting in the chronicle accounts of Jean le Bel and Jean Froissart.[242] Similarly, the courts of late medieval/early modern England and Scotland both engaged in chivalric pageantry and games long after the practice of warfare had moved away from reliance on the medieval heavily armored knight.[243] We have seen already that

[241] *OED* "honi soit qui mal y pense" phr.

[242] *Sports Spectators* 13.

[243] Discussing the history of public theatricality in late medieval and early modern Scotland, John J. McGavin notes that non-literary theatre (political or religious) often incorporated spectators in a way that thoroughly blurred the boundary between play and reality ("Spectatorship in Scotland" 299). While watching a medieval "history" being

characters in chivalric romance take social cues from the romances they claim to have read (Arthur in *Gologras*, Lady Bertilak in *SGGK*), and so it should not surprise us that real historical members of the aristocracy also constructed their identities in part around the desirable image of a chivalric community found in those same romances. What is surprising, however, is the degree to which this conscious modeling of the self on romance fictions becomes a successful practice for aristocratic groups like the Order of the Garter.

The suggestion that the green girdle of *SGGK* is any way the conceptual basis for the historical Order of the Garter is not an idea borne out by chronology or even by the symbolic objects themselves.[244] The counter-case, that *SGGK* is a sort of historiographic account of the founding of the Order, is perhaps more plausible, but such a case is ultimately unprovable based on either the available historical information or the textual material of the poem itself.[245] The Order has a much more readily apparent origin in Edward III's claim over France in the early years of the Hundred Years' War and his desire to create a pseudo-Arthurian chivalric order which could enforce that claim, first demonstrated by his Windsor Round Table Tournament in 1344.[246] Round Table tournaments and similar romance re-enactments were well-precedented

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performed, spectators were expected to have the necessary critical judgment to tell one from the other, but McGavin also notes instances in which failing to distinguish between play and reality was the primary source of the entertainment (299-301). Similarly, in his treatment of medieval sport, Allan Guttman tracks how chivalric tournaments "became more pageant and less content" from the twelfth to sixteenth century, and finds that "the spectator's role *increased* as the sport became tamer, more civilized, and less spontaneous" (*Sports Spectators* 37-38, emphasis original). As Guttman goes on to show, the actual contest itself did not grow less violent, but the violence was contained to combatants and was less likely to spill over and threaten spectators.

[244]Edward III founded The Order of the Garter sometime around 1348, while it is generally agreed that the Gawain Poet composed *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* during the reign of Richard II (1377-1399). As Andrews and Waldron note, the defining characteristic of the fabric sash in each case is its color, and the blue of the Order of the Garter is in stark contrast to the green of Gawain's girdle (*Pearl Manuscript* 300).

[245] Francis Ingledew, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the Order of the Garter*, discusses both theories, and ultimately comes down in favor of treating the poem as Edwardian rather than Ricardian (composed sometime in the 1350s or the 1360s instead of the more typical dating at the end of the century). His case for "an intimate relationship between *SGGK* and the Edwardian project" (20) is based on a very delicate theorization of "chivalric historiography," one that requires consideration of *Brut* narrative tropes, chronicle accounts by Jean Froissart and Jean le Bel, the aesthetic sensibilities and allegorical structure of the Gawain-poet's other works, and a very useful lacuna in the historical record. By Ingledew's own admission, his argument for an Edwardian *SGGK* is mostly hypothetical (20-22), and so, while it is compelling as a thought experiment, it has little use to me here.

[246] Per Hugh Collins in his history of the Order of the Garter: "The first indication of a plan by Edward III to create a knightly fraternity came in 1344 with his initiation of the ambitious project to refound the Arthurian society of the Round Table at Windsor… Edward's chivalric initiative displayed a strong secular literary influence with its conscious imitation of the order of the Franc-Palais founded by Perceforest, legendary king of England. The announcement of the project was arranged in order to coincide with a great tournament at Windsor in January 1344… On the third day of jousting, following mass in the castle chapel, Edward announced to the assembled

both within and outside England by the time that Edward proposed his Windsor Table; though many were simply sportive, examples abound of Round Table tournaments that had explicit ceremonial, political, or military purposes undergirding them.[247] The Order, consciously modeled on Arthurian images of a chivalric community, was from its first days a military order of the nobility with the express purpose of expanding English borders and English land claims, not only in France but in Scotland as well.[248]

When the motto of that Order is appended to an actual work of Arthurian romance, a revision of history takes place as the affective imagery and border emblems of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are inscribed into the founding narrative of a nationalist project to establish English military supremacy. Unsurprisingly, this cultural practice of using romance fictions as models (and originary myths) for real chivalric military orders is not contained just to England, and monarchies across Europe followed suit in creating their own orders throughout the later Middle Ages, each with their own symbolic object (the star for France, the band for Castile, the thistle for Scotland, etc.). The lasting impact of the Order of the Garter's appropriation and generalization of the garter as a feeling-emblem is then simply to demonstrate that this trick can be done by anyone—at least insofar as "anyone" means any powerful group motivated to assert ownership over a territory, a people, or a cultural tradition.[249] The girdle (or the garter) ceases to be an object which enables a group to collectively identify with a particular feeling and instead is an image signifying a chivalric social structure that has been vacated of emotional substance and copied *ad infinitum*. The poem even appears to warn us of this possibility in its first description of Gawain's pentangle, which is so laden with semiotic weight that no single reading of its five sides locked together in an "endeles knot" can rise above any other reading. Likewise, the girdle in *SGGK* devolves from a feeling-emblem which can signify individual and shared chivalric

company his intention to found a Round Table 'of the same manner and standing as that which Lord Arthur, formerly king of England, had relinquished.' The companionship of the society, numbering 300 knights in total, was to meet annually for its feast-day, the assigned date falling, according to the almost contemporary continuation of the *Brut* chronicle, in 'the Whytesonwyke evermore yerely'" (6-7).

[247] Munby, Barber, and Brown place the first re-enactment of a Round Table in the kingdom of Cyprus in 1223, and they track a number of dramatic recreations of Arthurian tournament scenes throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (86-99).

[248] The claim over French territory during the Hundred Years' War is always potentially also a claim to Scottish territory, because of the Auld Alliance active between France and Scotland at the time.

[249] See, for example, historical instances of "supernumerary" membership in the Order of the Garter being extended to foreign monarchs when alliances are struck between their countries and England.

identity into a pure status symbol. This unraveling of the feeling-emblem's semantic substance mirrors the historical trajectory of the Order of the Garter from an actual military order into little more than an exclusive group of landed English nobles and foreign monarchs with political allegiances to England.

Chapter Conclusion

What then, is the ultimate use of feeling-emblems as identity markers in borderlands space? In each of the texts discussed here, feeling-emblems first appear to represent and speak for specific individuals or their interests: Gawain's courtesy as a tool of diplomacy in *Gologras*, the shrieking grief of courtly ladies as a reminder to think of "the folke" in *Awntyrs*, and the several conflicting feelings (confidence, shame, regret, pride) attached to the green girdle in *SGGK*. However, each romance shows how these individual feeling-emblems are instrumentalized by the larger chivalric community (and by its reigning monarch, Arthur) in order to assert a larger collective identity, one that looks to us very much like a national identity. Of the three poems, *SGGK* is perhaps the most explicit in asserting that this instrumentalization is dangerous and unsustainable, and it does so by showing us the recklessness of a Round Table knighthood that deliberately refuses to read Gawain's feeling-emblem as he presents it to his brothers. But the other Gawain romances each make their own critiques of how the Arthurian imperial project turns feeling-emblems into tools of territorial conquest. *Awntyrs* gives us a Gawain who openly questions the fate of knights who "defoulen the folke on fele kinges londes" (l. 262), and *Gologras* rejects the proposition of Arthur's totalizing control over foreign lands altogether. Of course, Arthur's authority is not seriously threatened in any of these texts, but that was never the promise of feeling-emblems as a mode of borderlands resistance.

As I hope to have shown, situating these three romances in the historical and political context of the late medieval Anglo-Scottish Marches clarifies the discourses about land, authority, and unstable social identities that are invoked in each. These romances imagine borders (and the crossing of borders) in different ways, but all three share an interest in the possibility of a different outcome to the centuries of warfare that plagued the period of their composition. More specifically, each romance considers how specific feeling-emblems might enable alternative resolutions to the historical conflicts playing out between Scotland and

England and their proxy entities in the fiction of the chivalric narrative. In the end, none of these romances proposes a use of feeling-emblems that can pose a lasting threat to the encroachment of nationalism and imperial authority into borderlands space. Nonetheless, each is successful in imagining versions of chivalric identity that are not dependent on serving that nationalism or that imperial authority. For *Gologras*, this is a self-interested chivalric identity, in which knights engage in a kind of affective allegiance-switching as they present whichever "devis" gives them the best advantage. For *Awntyrs*, the imagined identity enabled by feeling-emblems is one that looks past the order of knighthood altogether, and centers on the pain and grief of the larger Christian community who suffer due to chivalric violence. And lastly, for *SGGK*, the identity which is encoded into the green girdle by feeling-emblems is layered, hybridized—even intersectional—and the complex social ties which the girdle sustains through gift exchange contrast starkly with the empty and transactional sense of chivalric community represented at the poem's end.

What feeling-emblems offer to individual knights existing in borderlands space is not actually a substantial resistance to imperial authority, but instead a form of resilience, or the ability to keep "living on" the border between radical individuality and radical collectivity. The Gawain who returns to Arthur's court in *SGGK*, for example, is reintegrated into his chivalric community with a social status which far exceeds his place in the court at the beginning of the poem, and yet he is painfully isolated from that community because they do not share his reading of the girdle as a feeling-emblem. The poem insists that he pay forward to the group the renown which he earned in adventure, saying that "þe best boke of romaunce" (l. 2521) tells us how the Round Table took the girdle for its own fame, not Gawain's. By citing the authority of romance and using the metonym of the Round Table (a depersonalized object which symbolizes wholeness, egality, and continuity), the poem returns Gawain's accomplishments to Arthur's court with a firmness which seems to undercut the claim that the knights and ladies all adopted the girdle "for sake of þat segge." The Gawain who is inscribed in his personal feeling-emblem starts to unravel when that feeling-emblem is adopted by the wider chivalric community, and thus his radical collectivity within the Round Table brotherhood. But at the same time, Gawain is irreversibly alienated from that community by his awareness of the symbolic value encoded in the girdle by himself, Lady Bertilak, the Green Knight, and so on. He understands it as a multifaceted sign (indeed, as a token for whole aspects of his character), and so when Arthur's

court rejects his insistence upon reading the girdle as a symbol of untroth, he is radically isolated from them. Neither of Gawain's radical social positions wins out over the other, because the poem ends as it begins: with a customary reference to the *Brut* narrative and the siege of Troy. But the girdle as a borderlands feeling-emblem allows him the ability to live on in that state of existential tension, aware (like the borderers of the Marches) that he is claimed by a larger, sometimes domineering, community while also being shunted back to the periphery when he tries to make his feelings heard on a matter crucial to his identity.

In sum, borderlands are "good to think with"[250] in discussions of chivalric emblems, both for traditional and emotional emblems, because thinking with borderlands helps make visible the basic fact that chivalric sign systems always operate on a conceptual threshold. In almost all instances, chivalric emblems simultaneously identify (1) the individual and the group to which that individual belongs, (2) one's present and the past of one's ancestors, and (3) investment in a particular national or religious ideology. And as I suggested in my reading of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, emblems also operate on the inside/outside threshold of the body itself: the clothing to which emblems are affixed both conceals the naked body beneath and acts as the outermost layer of the self presented for public view. Even armor or chivalric gear bearing emblems can function in this liminal capacity; scholarly accounts and chivalric manuals attest to the idea that knights thought of their armor in an embodied sense, as though it were an extension of themselves.[251] Indeed, it is this very threshold quality of chivalric emblems that initially drew me to compare their function in chivalric romance with representations of feelings.

Like chivalric emblems, feelings are liminal, being at once deeply subjective and yet heavily scrutinized and objectified by others. Feeling-emblems as a unified concept arose specifically from my thinking about borders and borderlands, because this is where we see their utility as a tool of social organization and political resistance most thoroughly tested. In the imagined version of the Anglo-Scottish Marches that we find in these Gawain romances, feeling-emblems are under immense social pressure to meaningfully identify knights, and in

[250] As Marjorie Garber notes derisively, this phrase, attributed to Claude Lévi-Strauss, is so often cited in the humanities as to be basically meaningless, "something between a tautology and a cliché" (13). There is some truth to this observation, but the phrase is an apt description for the work I am engaged in here.

[251] As Jones explains, there is a distinct psychological and gendered effect of putting on gear: armor accentuates masculine features, and the donning of a helmet in particular functions as a "transitional ritual" preparing soldiers to shift from a mindset of peace to one of war. The helmet enables this transition because it deadens many of the sensory inputs that would be overwhelming in battle, it cuts off almost all non-verbal communication between the wearer and others, and it can help dehumanize opponents or even the self when worn (104-112).

several instances we see how feeling-emblems can't actually sustain that pressure, such that feeling-emblems become illegible (as in *Awntyrs*) or semantically voided (*SGGK*). For the most part, however, the interpretive gap between the way that a character shows a feeling-emblem and the way it is read by others remains a productive space for asserting complex identities which can resist colonial and imperialist energies.

In my last chapter, I will turn to examine how feeling-emblems function and "live on" when exposed to a different kind of social pressure: the racial and ethnic otherness of crusader romances. Unlike the Gawain romances I examined in this chapter, which are situated in the immediate geographic and sociopolitical context of the Anglo-Scottish Marches, these crusader romances construct a foreign imaginary onto which they can project anti-Muslim anxiety and a racialized misogyny. As I will show, feeling-emblems in this context become heavily distorted in both representation and function by the force of these prejudices, and what is left in their place is an alienating battlefield "noyis."

CHAPTER 4

THE RACIALIZATION OF AFFECT IN MIDDLE SCOTS AND MIDDLE ENGLISH CRUSADER ROMANCE NARRATIVES: JOHN BARBOUR'S *THE BRUCE* AND *THE SULTAN OF BABYLON*

Chapter Introduction

Among the many lines of continuity that we can draw between the culture of late medieval European peoples and that of the modern Western world, arguably the most resilient, the most widespread, and the most noxious of those lines traces a history of Islamophobia from at least the Crusades all the way to our present scourge of anti-Muslim political movements and insistent attempts to delegitimate Islam as a modern religious practice. Throughout the twentieth century and well into the twenty-first, we see time and again that both American and European politicians are comfortable directly invoking the rhetoric and purported ideology of the Crusades to advance their agendas.[252] Of course, the historical consistency of this cultural, religious, and racial othering of Middle Eastern Muslims (and of Muslims more broadly) by Western nations is no accident. European and North American countries are heavily invested in maintaining the dynamic between a Christian "us" and a Muslim "them" for myriad reasons (e.g. the economic incentive of trading as a single Euro-American bloc, the political leverage gained by demonizing Muslim societies and their cultural values, and the community-defining potential that comes from being able to define a specific group as an Other).

Indeed, there are few modern societal ills that the history of Orientalism as a cultural and political practice has not touched or contributed to in some way, and unpacking that fraught history continues to be necessary and illuminating work. But the prevalence of contemporary dynamics of Islamophobia and anti-Middle Eastern racism also threatens to obscure the ways in which similar dynamics played out in late medieval societies of European Christians. Then, as

[252] This rhetoric arguably reached its apogee in the Bush administration's War on Terror, but the anti-Muslim invective of Bush and his cabinet in the months and years following 9/11 had much earlier precedents in the Reagan administration (and Donald Trump readily echoed similar sentiments of both administrations in his attempt to enforce a ban on immigration from majority Muslim countries). Similarly, Emmanuel Macron's calls to end "radical Islamism" and "Islamo-leftism" in France recalls crusader rhetoric and the long shadow of French colonialism in predominantly Muslim regions. In the philosophical spheres, Islamophobia became a trademark of "New Atheist" public intellectuals like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens.

now, Islamophobia and racism were powerful and poisonous forces in the minds of Christian populations, and the conceptual othering of Muslims (both real and imagined) was an effective way to establish and maintain community identity. Often, this strategy of cultural-religious othering operated through highly emotional registers, such as in the description of violent crimes alleged to have been committed by "Saracens" or in the exoticism and exaggeration of Muslim speech, physical features, and behavior.

Similar to how Jewish populations were persecuted throughout medieval Europe (with the figure of "the Jew" used in both religious and popular discourse as a scapegoat for any and all perceived societal ills),[253] Muslims were often treated in literature and art as a convenient antagonist or as a shorthand for evil itself, even when the work in question had nothing to do with Muslim figures or Islam as a faith practice.[254] Examples of this literary hyperforeignism[255]

[253] Steven Kruger uses Derridean hauntology to discuss the ways in which medieval Christianity attempted to render Jews and Jewishness as part of a pre-Christian past while also needing Judaism to legitimize much of Christian theology. Kruger cautions against over-emphasizing the "spectral" quality of Christian-Jewish relations in the Middle Ages because of the risk that this framing runs in understanding medieval Judaism only for its relevance to medieval Christianity. Nonetheless, Kruger says, "I will insist on the usefulness of thinking the spectrality [sic] of medieval Jews and Judaism, not because this reveals everything about their relationship to Christianity and Christians—of course, it does not—but because it enables a reading of some of the complexities of that relationship, including the effects that the construction of Jews as spectral might have upon Jews as real corporeal and social presences. Such effects include both the deadly work that a culture performs upon its spectral others (not just ideological disavowal but real violence) and a space for survival and resistance that spectrality, in its ambivalence as both the disavowed and the inherited, both the absent and the present, both the bodiless and embodied, might open up—a space, for instance, in which medieval Jews might make certain claims for their own priority and for the significance of their traditions" (*The Spectral Jew* 12).

[254] See, for example, David Wacks's treatment of *Tirant lo Blanch*, a romance written (mainly) by the Valencian knight Joanot de Martorell. Wacks compares *Tirant*'s opening episode about William of Warwick to the original *Guy of Warwick*, highlighting the fact that Martorell's version replaces the original Danish invaders with Muslim ones (*Medieval Iberian Crusade Fiction* 140). Wacks argues that this switching of antagonists is not just an instance of a romance writer using Muslims as the "catchall term for non-Christians," but rather that Martorell is "purposefully putting the Arthurian world into communication with the Christian Iberian experience in order to fuse the literary imaginary of the world that produced Western Latin chivalry with that of Martorell's own time and place" (135). Elsewhere in the volume, Wacks notes that category conflations of Muslim and pagan groups were made easier for romance writers and chroniclers by the historical fact that popes and monarchs did indeed order crusades against pagans in regions like Hungary, Sweden, and the Baltics (104-105; fn. 69 to p. 105).

See also Diane Speed's discussion of the "Sarazins" of *King Horn*, an early Middle English romance. Speed argues that the author of *Horn* could reasonably have based his description of "Sarazins" on the Muslim characters depicted in French *chansons de geste*, but that there is no way to say definitively what religious or racial identity "Sarazin" actually indexes in the poem: "*Sarazin* in *King Horn*, it appears, might as easily mean 'pagan' or 'Muslim' as "Dane'" ("The Saracens of *King Horn*" 567), she notes. Regardless of whether the term is intended to reference Muslims or some general category of Scandinavian pagan, Speed argues that the author's main concern "was probably rather with the functional identity of the Saracens as the enemy in his literary construct. The Saracens of *King Horn* are essentially a literary phenomenon, based not on figures from real life, but on other literary phenomena" (595).

[255] Hyperforeignism, sometimes called "emphatic foreignization," is a term in Historical Linguistics used to describe when "speakers go out of their way to make borrowed forms sound even more foreign by substituting sounds which

often get dismissed as being simply the product of an ignorant Christian audience (at best) or of an out-and-out racist, Islamophobic textual community, but there is a more complex racial coding at play here. When texts like crusader romances attempt to categorize a racial or religious Other through specific affects or emotional expressions, they are deploying the same vocabulary of chivalric feeling-emblems which I have tracked already in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* and in several Gawain romances. But unlike those examples, these crusader romances (which usually concern an imagined version of the Middle East and its Muslim denizens) try to translate the language of heraldic imagery across a much more significant cultural divide than exists between England and France during the Hundred Years' War or in the contact zone of the Anglo-Scottish Marches (the immediate historical contexts for *The Alliterative Morte* and for many Gawain romances, respectively).

Accordingly, this attempt to deploy feeling-emblems in a racialized and Orientalizing capacity is often less successful in creating or maintaining identities which can resist the culturally dominant chivalric identities lauded in crusader romances. This is not always the case though, and the figure of the "Muslim princess" in particular clearly illustrates how non-Christian figures can appropriate the feeling-emblem discourse of Christian knights to highly subversive ends (even if such figures are eventually assimilated into the imagined community of European Christians). By way of demonstrating that appropriative potential, I begin with an example of how these Islamophobic uses of feeling-emblems operate in a text that is not itself a crusader romance, but rather one which stylizes itself as such in order to create a more pronounced sense of difference between the Scottish and English armies. John Barbour's *The Bruce*, a work which traffics in Islamophobia without actually concerning any prominent Muslim characters, is a suitable transition between the Scots Gawain romances of my third chapter and the crusader romances of this chapter. It is also an ideal work for considering the acoustic (rather than visual) dimensions of feeling-emblems, due in large part to its unrivaled representation of how "noyis" functions affectively on the medieval battlefield.

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seem to them more foreign than the sounds which the word in the donor language actually has" (Campbell 82). The habit of exaggerating pronunciation to emphasize the foreignness of a loanword is a handy example of the exoticism of Muslim religious practice that is typical of crusader romances as a genre.

By the time that John Barbour is composing *The Bruce* in the latter half of the fourteenth century—and in the process characterizing Robert's English foes in the exoticized terms of unchristian foreigners at the Battle of Bannockburn—Scottish literary culture is already well-versed in using a Middle Eastern imaginary to establish national and racial superiority over the English. The legend of Scota, recorded since the twelfth century,[256] gains significant traction with the Scottish nobility through two historiographic texts by Baldred Bisset: the *Instructiones* and *Processus* (both dated around 1301). Both texts appear to have been written to Pope Boniface VIII as part of a papal petition for the Scottish causes against England, and they make a case for Scottish sovereignty by appealing to the legendary origins of the Scots, much the way that Edward I first makes a case for authority over Scotland because of his ostensible descendance from Brutus of Troy, the mythical founder of Britain. In Katherine Terrell's words, this claim and counterclaim dynamic between English and Scottish nobility represents "a nationalist discourse that had been going on… since the late thirteenth century—a discourse that grounds the mutual antagonism of English and Scots in pseudo-historical arguments that provide ammunition for contemporary quarrels" (321-322).[257]

The legend itself traces the origin of the Scottish people back to Ireland, then to Spain, and eventually back to a mythical figure named Scota, the daughter of an Egyptian pharaoh, who had married Gaedel (*Gaythelos*) of Greece.[258] Scottish chroniclers of the 1300s appear to adapt the legend from earlier Irish myths and, overtime, the chroniclers claim Scota as a distinctly Scottish ancestor, rather than as one shared by all Gaelic peoples.[259] There is good reason to think

[256] Cowan, "Myth and Identity in Early Medieval Scotland" (122-123).

[257] Terrell is actually discussing a sixteenth century poem in this passage, but it demonstrates just how pervasive this racialized discourse is in Scottish-English relations that it is equally potent in 1301 and at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

[258] *Matter of Scotland* 74; Broun 11; see also Farrow's discussion of the "historically fabulous" treatments of Scottish origins in later chronicle accounts like John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* and Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* (Farrow 5-6).

[259] Dauvit Broun remarks that in Bisset's *Processus*, "Ireland itself was demoted to a mere stopping-off point to acquire reinforcements" for Scota's eventual destination of Scotland (120). Sarah Tebbit traces a similar erosion of the connection between Scota and Ireland over time, noting that "Ireland receives no mention at all" in the Declaration of Arbroath, and both the "1301 pleading and the Declaration also shun any association between Pictish and Scottish history" (45). In lieu of Scotland and Ireland being two co-equal descendants of Scota's line, the Picts are overthrown by the Scots as the rightful inheritors of Albany (Scotland).

that the legend rises to popularity among the Scottish nobility at the beginning of the fourteenth century mainly for ideological reasons. In 1301, The prospect of tracing the ancestry of the Scottish people back to an illustrious past which could rival the claimed Trojan and Roman ancestry of the Britons is appealing to Scottish barons, as this is just five years after the English invaded Scotland during the First War of Scottish Independence.[260] A later version of Scottish racial origins given by the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320 claims a slightly different ancestry back to Greater Scythia, and in this account, the Scots are explicitly described as "race of conquerors in search of a homeland" akin to the Hebraic peoples of the Old Testament.[261] The Declaration is also the earliest surviving document to name Andrew the Apostle as the patron saint of Scotland, and it is possible that the claim of Scythian ancestry for the Scots is at least partly based on Andrew's hagiography: Andrew is said by early Church fathers to have preached around the region of Scythia, and later Scottish legends assert that Andrew's relics were brought from Constantinople to the current site of St. Andrews in Fife.[262] This must remain a point of speculation though, because, as Michael H. Brown and Katie Stevenson say in their introduction to a volume dedicated to St Andrews, the "real origin of the link between the apostle and the settlement that bears his name continues to be debated" due to a lack of definitive evidence about whether the relics or the cult at St Andrews came first.[263] In these accounts—and in several other

[260] Cowan agues that the legend of Scota had produced a "shared identity" among the ethnic groups of Scotland by the time of William the Lion's reign as King of the Scots (c. 1165-1214): "During the reign of William the Lion… many of the old origin myths were revamped. The king lists demonstrated that he was descended from both Scottish and Pictish kings. The Pictish Chronicle was copied with its material on Scythia and Scota the daughter of Pharaoh. Scots, Picts and Britons were given a common Trojan ancestry, linking them with the children of Israel. Arthurian stories continued to circulate throughout the country" ("Myth and Identity" 134-135).

[261] *Matter of Scotland* 91; Dukes 227.

[262] Dukes 227; Taylor 23-27. See also Wacks's chapter on *Libro del Caballero Zifar* in *Medieval Iberian Crusade Fiction*. In that chapter, Wacks compares the purported translation of *Zifar* from an Arabic text into a Castilian one to other forms of translation, specifically the translation of eastern relics to the West. As Wacks says, the historical pillaging of relics by Western knights on crusade is a material form of appropriating cultural capital that is mirrored by the symbolic appropriation of cultural capital performed by romances when they narrativize the translation of empire from Eastern antiquity to the medieval West (70). A similar dynamic happens in the Declaration of Arbroath, in the sense that popular Scottish legends held that Andrew's relics were translated from Constantinople to Scotland, and this provided fourteenth century Scottish nobility a justification for linking Scottish ancestry to the regions of Asia Minor in which Andrew is said to have preached. In such dynamics, the vitality which endures in objects associated with saints makes it possible for the holders of relics to claim as authentic cultural identities and lineages which would otherwise be totally spurious. In the case of the Declaration, Andrew's relics are evidence that the Scots, despite being "settled in the uttermost parts of the earth," are blessed by none less than "the first of His apostles."

[263] Brown and Stevenson 4.

Scottish and Irish legendary histories of the Gaels which predate these accounts[264]—the Scots are figured as genealogically connected to peoples of antiquity as renowned as the Romans and Trojan peoples whom the English claim as their ancestors. The obvious difference is that the accounts given by Bisset and the Declaration connect Scotland to Middle Eastern and Asian ancestors (Egypt and Scythia, respectively), with the apparent intention of creating an "anti-British mythology" which could distinguish the Scottish people as a race and a nation from their English opponents (*Matter of Scotland* 91). Between the version of the legend given by Bisset in 1301 and the version given in the Declaration, the Scottish nobility could imagine for themselves an ancestral line which encompassed the Mediterranean, from the Iberian peninsula to Northern Africa to Asia Minor. If it seems like the Scots of this era might have constructed such a fanciful history for themselves with a clear ideological end goal in mind, that is probably because they did: the papal petition submitted by Bisset in 1301 directly invokes Scota as part of a legal rationale justifying war against the English.

As Sarah Tebbit shows, the petition submitted by Bisset to the papal court in 1301 makes much of the imagined ancestry of the Scottish and English peoples, claiming that Edward I has no authority over the Scots as the descendent of Brutus because the Scots are a separate people with their own original leader (48-50). This argument for "jurisdictional separateness," in which Edward is not the rightful monarch over Scottish subjects but an invader infringing upon Scottish sovereignty, suggests that the Scots are *politically* distinct from the English because they are *ethnically* distinct in both the present moment and throughout time.[265] Tebbit goes on to argue that the case made by Bisset and the other Scottish nobles was actually based in an earlier papal verdict by Pope Innocent IV defining legitimate and illegitimate political power, and so the Church had inadvertently "provided advocates of independence with a means of argument based on ethnicity" and had "encouraged the characterisation of the kingdom's freedom in

[264] See Dauvit Broun's *The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of Scots* for a comprehensive treatment of the ways in which fourteenth and fifteenth century Scottish chronicle accounts gradually adopted the legend of Scota as entirely their own, either recasting the Irish as an inferior people among the Gaels or omitting mention of them entirely.

[265] "...it appears to be in demonstration of jurisdictional separateness that the Scottish lawyers introduce an account of Scottish origins. With this they stress their particularity as a people who arrived under the leadership of Scota (whose introduction is an innovation in 1301) with their own 'rites, language and customs—regarding which the Scots have nothing in common with the Britons—and with their [own] king and the new lordship of the Scots.' It is the touchstones of ethnicity in this period—blood, language, laws and custom—that apparently explain the origins of their jurisdictional separateness…" (Tebbit 50). Tebbit is here quoting from a later work on Scottish genealogy, the *Scotichronicon*.

biblical-crusading terms through which the portrayal of a shared ethnicity was sustained" (62). In other words, Scottish chroniclers and lawyers leveraged the existing narratives from myth, folklore, and scripture to forge an entirely fictional ethnic ancestry for themselves, because it was politically advantageous to do so, and (more importantly) it was a conception of "shared ethnicity" which had traction with the wider Scottish populace.

This opportunistic assertion of a shared ethnic identity gets directly to the heart of the texts I treat in this chapter: Scottish nobility try to resist English imperial incursions, and they do so by adopting an entirely imagined ethnic or racial origin which gives them a degree of political freedom in the eyes of the Church. The cumulative picture of Scottish ethnicity cannot help but be convoluted in the extreme as writers of the age repeatedly incorporate more and more versions of the legend of Scota in their legal documents, all while invoking Biblical metaphors in which Edward I is a heretical Pharaoh figure (Tebbit 47). As the Scottish aristocracy made its case to the wider Christian world for its rightful independence from England, it did so in the terms that explicitly identified the Scottish people racially with Middle Eastern and Asian ancestors in opposition to the claimed Romano-Trojan ancestors claimed by the English. In one sense, the Scottish nobility are trying to define a shared ethnic identity for themselves through negation, claiming that what is ethnically Scottish is *not* English (and *not* whomever the English come from). But in another sense, they are making wider and wider claims to being the legitimate inheritors of all of antiquity's culture and power, thereby implicitly disinheriting the present day inhabitants of places as diverse as Spain, Ireland, Egypt, and Persia.[266] This ontological conundrum is striking when it appears in historical and legal documents, but it is one all too familiar to readers of crusader romances. As we will see, the construction of a shared ethnicity which Bisset and John of Fordun enact for the Scots looks in practice a lot like the convoluted racial logic which John Barbour deploys in characterizing the English as Muslim invaders when describing the Battle of Bannockburn in *The Bruce*.

[266] David Wacks discusses a similar strategy of Western Christians claiming the status of the "real" Easterners in the context of *Libro del Caballero Zifar*, a romance in which the Christian knight Zifar is said to be from "the Indies." In Wacks's reading, this insistence on the Christian protagonist's origins in the East is part of the romance's effort to legitimize "the crusading project in the Peninsula and abroad" by "portraying a triumphant Christian knight as master of a fictional East, and by performing the conversion of Andalusi learning… for use in the Castilian court" (*Medieval Iberian Crusade Fiction* 65). Wacks connects this legitimization project of *Zifar* to the larger ideological function of medieval romance, by which he means depicting the translation of culture and empire as descending in a continuous line from antiquity to the present day political context of the writer's own audience.

Books XII and XIII of *The Bruce* concern the famous Battle of Bannockburn, when Robert the Bruce and his Scottish forces defeat Edward II and drive the English host almost entirely out of Scotland. The battle itself is unrivaled in its significance within the history of Scottish military victories, and it is the centerpiece of Barbour's work—Bannockburn is arguably the anchoring event around which the entire narrative is constructed. Since Barbour's chief project with *The Bruce* is the glorification of the Scottish cause through the myth-making of romance historiography,[267] we should not be surprised that anti-English sentiment is at its expressive height in these books. The chivalric conventions are familiar: Robert tells his men at the outset of the battle that the Scots have the right of God, that the English are only motivated by material gain and power, and the narrative is littered with speeches about the winning of honor or "prys." In one memorable scene, James Douglas tells his men not to enter the fray to aid a Scottish contingent that's nearly defeated, because to do so would rob them of part of their hard-earned battle credit.[268] Where *The Bruce* differs from these conventions of chivalric battle is in writing the English as aware of the moral righteousness of the Scots. When the fighting is properly underway and Robert's nephew Thomas Randolph has driven back a portion of the English forces, the poem's narrator treats us to the direct speech of English soldiers:

> The Inglis men sic abaysing
> Tuk, and sik dreid of that tithing,
> That in fyve hundreth placis and ma
> Men mycht thame sammyn se rownand ga,
> Sayand, "Our lordis, for thar mycht,
> Will all-gat ficht agane the richt.
> Bot quha sa warrayis wrangwisly,

[267] Debate continues about the generic classification of *The Bruce*. Barbour himself refers to the poem as a "romanys," but as with *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, there are several other generic lenses through which one could read the poem (chronicle, epic, *chanson de geste*). Rhiannon Purdie argues that the poem is fundamentally a history, because Barbour's intent was essentially to "record for posterity the actual deeds of a documented historical personage" (73), but she acknowledges that romance genre conventions gave Barbour the pacing, narrative structure, and entertaining set pieces to stage that history ("Medieval Romance" 73-74). I use the term "romance" to describe *The Bruce* because it is Barbour's own term and because I am mainly concerned throughout this project with the ways that romance as a genre, not history, represents and codifies feelings.

[268] "For thai that yhondir fechtand ar," / He said, "ar of sa gret bounte, / That thair fayis weill soyn sall be / Discumfit throu thair awn mycht, / Thouch no man help thaim for to ficht. / And cum we now in-to fechting, / Quhen thai ar at discumfyting, / Men suld say we thame ruschit had, / And swa suld thai, that caus has mad / With gret travaill and hard fechting, / Leis ane part of thair lovyng. / And it war syn to leis his prys, / That of sa soverane bounte is, / That he, throu playn and hard fechting, / Has heir eschewit unlikly thing; / He sall haf that he wonnyn has" (XII.114-129).

Thai faynd God all too gretumly,
And thai may happin to mysfall;
And sa may tyd that her we sall."[269] (XII.357-366)

The claim that the English lords are fighting "agane the richt" and making war "wrangwisly" is not just the sentiment of a single English soldier, it appears to be simultaneously expressed in "fyve hundreth placis and ma" among the troops, such that it becomes a ubiquitous sentiment shared across the entire English host. This is a convenient turn within the fictional account of a real battle, because it echoes the many other instances throughout Books XII and XIII where the narrator reminds us of the Scots' right in driving out Edward's forces. But Barbour is not imagining out of whole cloth the idea that the English soldiers have internalized the perspective of Scottish moral righteousness that sees them as villains; he is borrowing a pattern from crusader romances which often figure Muslim knights as somehow accepting of their status as "heathens" within the Christian worldview of crusader knights.[270]

In the imagination of crusader fictions, Christians are right and pagans are wrong, as *La Chanson de Roland* tells us succinctly.[271] What's more, the crusader ideology presupposes that some Muslim opponents will eventually accept this axiom, at least if they are to be converted to Christianity rather than killed. And so, the situation often transpires in crusader romances that Muslim knights appear to be always-already accepting of the moral righteousness of their Christian opponents, and they may even imagine themselves as Christians-to-be.[272] This is a key

[269] ...the Englishmen were so cast down and so fearful at that news that in five hundred and more places you could see [them] gathering together, saying, 'Our lords, for [the sake of] their power, will fight altogether against the right. But whoever makes war thus wrongfully offends God all too thoroughly, and they may take a nasty fall; and so it may happen that we take [one] here...' (translated by A. A. M. Duncan).

[270] An example from a poem roughly contemporary with John Barbour is Priamus in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*. Priamus is a Muslim knight in control of North Africa whose father is "of Alexander blood" and decends from figures like Judas Maccabeus, Joshua, and Hector of Troy. Despite this pedigree, Priamus later says of Arthur, "He will be Alexander eier that all the world louted" (l. 2634), even more worthy a ruler than Hector of Troy (his own ancestor) would be. As I show in the introduction and coda, Sir Palomides is another such example of the Muslim knight who recognizes his own "heathen" status, though this example derives from *The Morte Darthur*, a poem which comes roughly a century after Barbour's composition of *The Bruce*.

[271] The line from *Roland* reads: "*Paien unt tort e chrestien unt dreit*" (l. 1015). Sharon Kinoshita, in her essay (later revised as a chapter) on *Roland*, uses this famous axiom as her point of departure for a critical re-evaluation of how crusader ideology functions in the poem. Kinoshita argues that "the crusader ethos presumed to permeate the poem from the outset is, instead, produced during the course of it"(*Medieval Boundaries* 15) through an impression of alterity which is constructed (and asserted) over the underlying similarity between Christian and Muslim knights.

[272] Palamedes of the *Tristan* narratives is not strictly a figure of crusader romance, but he is the epitome of this dynamic. A Muslim knight who is heavily integrated into Christian courts, in Malory's *Morte Darthur* he explicitly

distinction between the racial logic of crusader romance and that of works from a later period, when the idea of somatically marked race is treated as permanent or immutable: for crusader romances and their Christian imaginary, the promise is of *collapsing* racial or religious difference, not maintaining it indefinitely.[273] Reinforcing the religious idea of underlying sameness in these texts is a practical similarity between Muslim and Christian knights: they both practice battle in the same manner and can recognize and admire one another, leading to a cultural anxiety of sameness that Siobhain Bly Calkin refers to as the "peril of proximity."[274] The fact that this trope shows up in *The Bruce* is notable because it establishes the English forces as the religious Other, and treats the Scots as ideologically pure knights who fight on the side of God. The element of racial coding is only implied at this point, and it requires that we read the poem through its references to the genre of crusader romance. However, at the introduction of

describes himself as only wanting to join the Round Table knighthood once he has converted to Christianity, and he says this long before actually converting. The result is that Palamedes spends the majority of his time in the narrative as a Muslim knight who is already imagining himself as a Christian-to-be. Ferumbras, in *Sultan*, even outright says, "Oure goddis holpe us not todaye, / What devel that ever hem eilith" (ll. 898-899), making clear the point at which his faith in non-Christian "gods" has started to wane.

[273] This is an admittedly simplified schema for the genre's racial logic, and it does not apply equally across all individual crusader romances (or even across all European traditions of crusader romance). As I note in my discussion of the conversion scenes in *Sultan of Babylon*, the possibility of collapsing racial and religious difference is an artistic invention, not a reflection of the historical medieval reality of Muslim and Jewish converts to Christianity. What is true across different cultural contexts in medieval Europe is that scrutiny about the legitimacy of conversion from the dominant culture is only exacerbated by the prospect of interfaith and interracial marriage in which one partner converts after the union. As one might expect, scrutiny centers on the question of whether the offspring will be sufficiently Christian, or indeed whether the offspring will count as a person at all (as in the case of *King of Tars*'s "lump-child," most notably). David Wacks discusses in an Iberian context how crusader romances deploy conversion as a means of smoothing out wrinkles in problematic chronicle accounts, retelling complex genealogical and political histories through a familiar narrative of religious conversion and marriage. As he says of the romance *Flores and Blancaflor*, the conversion narrative is "an allegorization of Iberian history, very carefully woven into the historical record of the events it allegorizes," such that "the love story between Christian and Muslim is textually fused with the foundational narrative of Christian Spain" ("*Crónica de Flores y Blancaflor*" 280-281). This is all to say that the racial logic of crusader romances (and its promise of collapsing difference) is a comfortable fiction which ignores the thorny reality of racial and cultural prejudice against converts, yes, but it is a fiction with a clear ideological motivation underpinning it—just as racial logics from later historical eras have their own ideological motivations which perpetuate them.

[274] As Calkin says of this "peril of proximity" (in a chapter of that title), "the stereotypical nature of these Saracens lies in their bizarre similarity to the literary figure of the European Christian knight. The character supposed to represent alterity is essentially no different from his Christian counterpart, as becomes evident when one examines how Saracen and Christian opponents evaluate each other, how they fight each other, how the two groups reward their members, and how the supposedly different religious communities worship their gods" (24). Later Calkin observes that "one of the concerns prompted by crusade and settlement in the East was the fear that western Chrisitans involved in these activities might lose their sense of proper mores and become too similar to their Muslim opponents" (54). This anxiety manifested both in literary works (like *Beves of Hampton*) and in chronicle accounts of crusading forces in the Holy Land, (like Roger of Wendover's chronicle entry for 1229, in which "crusaders from the Holy Roman Empire, including the Emperor himself, are accused of eating and drinking with Saracens, and of preferring Saracens and their customs to Christians" (55)).

the English knight Giles d'Argentan, the poem fully signals its awareness of the racialized tropes of emotional expression in crusader romance and its ability to deploy those tropes in order to assert Scottish superiority over the English.

As one might imagine, *The Bruce* doubles down on its construction of a racialized Other as the fighting at Bannockburn progresses toward a Scottish victory in Book XIII. One notable case of this racial characterization occurs as Edward is making to quit the field: the poem introduces the Norman knight Giles d'Argentan, and it depicts his rejection of Edward's retreat in the genre conventions of crusader romance. A top knight serving under Edward, d'Argentan has fought in three "derenyheis" (crusades) against "Sarisenis," killing two in each conflict. *The Bruce* itself records him as the "thrid best knycht" (l. 321) of his age, seemingly behind only Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII and Robert I himself.[275] In keeping with this reputation, d'Argentan refuses to flee and tells Edward directly, "Yheit fled I nevir sekirly, / And I cheis heir to byde and de / Than till lif heir and schamfully fle (XIII.306-308). He charges into battle against the Scots shouting "Argente!," and is killed almost immediately in the press of "feill speris" (XIII.309-320).

As with the English host more broadly, d'Argentan is an example of *The Bruce* deploying character traits and emotional dispositions associated with Muslim knights in crusader romances to represent Edward's army as othered.[276] In this case, d'Argentan fits the character type of the "righteous heathen,"[277] in that he clearly distinguishes himself in speech and conduct from the

[275] "He wes the thrid best knycht perfay / That men wyst lyvand in his day" (XIII.321-322). D'Argentan is well-regarded in other chronicle accounts, such as the *Vita Edwardi Secundi* and Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon*. Duncan, in his edition of *The Bruce*, refers to a herald's account in which "d'Argentan was one of the three best knights of the time, with Emperor Henry VII and King Robert I" as the others (fn. to XIII.321-327).

[276] As Calkin says in her chapter on *The King of Tars*, assertions of "a sense of English community in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries frequently accompany acknowledgement of foreign presences within the political and religious institutions of the realm" (99), and often the figure of "the Saracen" is deployed as a shorthand representation for a variety of "aliens" perceived to be a threat to English people. On the subject of the Anglo-Scottish Wars, Calkin notes that "appeals for military and financial assistance against the Scots depicted the Scots as a decidedly unintegrated people, as a people so culturally different from the 'Inglisch' that… they intended 'to destroy the English Church both materially and spiritually.' Descriptions of the Scots in the early 1300s, then, slipped rhetorically between claims that they were recalcitrant members of the English polity and appeals to make war on them because they were so culturally different from the English" (101). Clearly, in a work like *The Bruce*, a similar process is happening, though in the opposite direction: a nascent Scottish national identity is being asserted through the hyperforeignization of the English as a people.

[277] Frank Grady claims that the "righteous heathen" was a topos common in hagiographies, and its primary function was to create for medieval audiences a conceptual continuity between a Christian present and a pagan past: "...medieval folk looked back at their pagan predecessors, seeing in them traits that their own contemporary culture valued—truth, justice, righteousness, mercy—and in trying to find ways to register their appreciation of those

rest of Edward's forces (and from Edward himself). The ideological contradiction apparent in describing a literal crusader knight through the affective and behavioral tropes of a Muslim enemy is characteristic of the kind of tortured racial logic on display through *The Bruce* and its comparators. What we learn from this use of crusader romance tropes is that racialized or culturally distinct affects can be distorted from their "original" racial and cultural identities and appropriated by romance writers to meet the ideological demands involved in depicting unrelated conflicts (and their respective prejudices).

It is an easy, almost unconscious thing for Barbour to represent the English host as craven and knowingly fighting against God's will or to represent d'Argentan the crusader knight as a righteous heathen charging into battle shouting his own place of origin; the poem doesn't need these characterizations to be internally coherent because they speak in a cultural shorthand that only serves to distinguish sameness and difference. The qualities of knights that are coded as racially or culturally othered in *The Bruce* are a kind of feeling-emblem, but not one that corresponds to a real identity position. These feeling-emblems have been extracted (or abstracted) from their association with any version of a real Muslim chivalric identity, and are instead just caricaturizations deployed for the purpose of making an Other out of the English king. This in and of itself would be a confusing application of feeling-emblems in *The Bruce*, but Barbour goes even further by using a different array of racialized feeling-emblems to elevate rather than denigrate another group in the poem: the Scottish heroes of the narrative.

When d'Argentan rushes into battle shouting "Argente!," he is using a verbal equivalent of the visual identity markers which we usually see operating as heraldic signs in late medieval chivalric romance. The battle cry identifies him as an individual (it is his toponymic surname) and as part of Edward's Anglo-Norman army (d'Argentan hails from Argentan, in the Normandy region of France), and the cry is an intensely affective expression (he is knowingly charging to

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virtues, to commemorate them, ended up constructing an oft-repeated motif in which a pagan figure participated in a dialogue with a Christian one; in this dialogue the virtue of that pagan was anatomized and recuperated, that is, made intelligible to contemporary ideological conditions through its textual memorialization. In this activity they were looking back at the past from a position of ostensible enlightenment, that is, from the perspective of a Christian revelation that the pagan past (generally) did not share and that marked definitively the difference between the pagan 'then' and the medieval 'now'" (*Representing Righteous Heathens* 10). Grady argues that righteous heathens (or virtuous pagans) "are thus more than a little like the courtly love objects of medieval romance, at once perfectly unique and perfectly exemplary… But like the Gueneveres and Isoldes of courtly literature (and of course like fetishized objects in general), they too are subject to laws of genre that govern their textual appearances, and they too are objects of libidinal/emotional investment." (8). In this way, the righteous heathen character is readable in the same formal structures as other elements of chivalric romance, like the heraldic emblem and ritualized expressions of feelings.

his own death), so it is a clear candidate for status as a feeling-emblem. As Robert Jones argues, war cries "served a similar function to heraldry and badges" on the battlefield and were specific to certain regions, such that "the consistent use of a single cry might serve to identify an individual or group on the field" or be used in a more improvisational way to distinguish friend from foe, as was the case with strips of colored fabric and other field signs (*Bloodied Banners* 75). Jones rightfully suggests that war cries were not just emblematic, they were also deeply emotional, either serving to inspire a "common feeling" and bolster morale among one's allies or to inspire fear in one's enemies, which Jones calls "a form of psychological warfare" (77-78). Regarding this latter use of noise as psychological warfare, Jones points to instances of such practice among Scottish armies during campaigns contemporary with the events of *The Bruce*,[278] but we need not appeal to those instances, because the most straightforward and dramatic examples derive from *The Bruce* itself.

Noise, or "noyis" as it is often written, is abundant in *The Bruce* and in the books concerning the Battle of Bannockburn in particular. It is present in the din of weapons being swung against armor, the grunts and heaving as men struggle against one another, the commanding call of trumpets and horns, the agony of wounded men screaming, and above all else, it is present in the sound of the Scots themselves, shouting down their English foes. Curiously, Barbour uses "noyis" in seemingly contrasting ways: early in Book XIII, he says that the fighting is so intense that "men no noyis na cry mycht her" (XIII.34), and then just a hundred lines later he describes the same din of battle as "so gret / A noyis… That it wes hydwiss for till her," or hideous to hear (XIII.157-161).[279] We can account for this apparent contradiction by thinking of "noyis" as having a more specific usage than just any cacophonous sound; in all three cases where "noyis" appears in Book XIII, it is accompanied by a version of the noun "cry,"

[278] "Making noise at the enemy to scare them is recorded as a conscious tactic on a number of occasions… In the 1327 campaign the Scots used trumpets as a form of psychological warfare against the English: on the night of the feast of St Peter at the beginning of August, and for the next two nights, the Scots 'around midnight [made] such a blasting and noise with their horns, that it seemed as if all the great devils of hell had been come there'" (78). Here Jones is quoting from the *Chronique de Jean le Bel* (vol. I, 68).

[279] The passage regarding the noise which is hideous to hear reads as follows: "There you could see men fighting for dear life, and men who were worthy and brave do many a courageous act, fighting as though they were in a rage, for when the Scots especially saw their foes standing against them in battle so sturdily, with all their might and main they laid into [them] like men out of their wits… There was such a din of blows, [such] as weapons landing on armour, such a great breaking of spears, such pressure and such pushing, such snarling and groaning, so much noise as they struck the others, and shouted rallying cries on each side, giving and receiving great wounds, that it was horrible to hear" (XIII.135-162, translated by A. A. M. Duncan).

suggesting that both are specifically embodied expressions of language. So when Barbour says, "Sa faucht thai ilkane egirly, / That thai maid nouthir noyis no cry, / Bot dang on othir at thar mycht, / With wapnys that war burnyst brycht" (XIII.37-40), we can understand him to mean that the crush of battle is so fierce that men cannot even cry or shout. This puts "noyis" as it functions in *The Bruce* well within the realms of emotionality and language systems, because "noyis" is an intentional sonic expression which conveys an affective disposition the way that a soldier's battle cry does.[280] Noise, however, communicates at a more fundamental, visceral level than a battlecry like that of d'Argentan does. In the parlance of chivalric imagery, "noyis" is akin to the semiotically condensed *devise* to the battle cry's full coat of arms display.

Unlike the war cry of d'Argentan, the shouting of the Scots is *only* noise, totally divorced from the semantic content which identified d'Argentan with his birthplace and compatriots. The Scots' noise communicates pure feeling, and it has real material consequences on both the morale of the English forces and on the honor economy of the battle. In one scene, while the English are engaged with a contingent of the Scots, a group of yeomen and foot soldiers tasked with guarding provisions fashion makeshift banners out of sheets and strike out to attack the English:

> Thai come with all that assemblé
> Rycht quhill thai mycht the bataill se,
> Than all at anys thai gave a cry,
> "Sla! sla! Apon thaim hastily!"
> And thar-withall cumand war thai,
> Bot thai war wele fer yete away.
> And Inglishmen that ruschyt war
> Throuch fors of fycht as I said ar
> Quhen thai saw cummand with sic a cry
> Towart thaim sic a cumpany
> That thaim thocht wele als mony war
> As that wes fechtant with thaim thar
> And thai befor had nocht thaim sene,
> Than wit ye weill withoutyn wene
> Thai war abaysit sa gretumly
> That the best and the mast hardy

[280] Another emotion word, "anoyis," appears at least a dozen times throughout *The Bruce* (which is roughly the same frequency as "noyis). "Anoyis" expresses a similar emotional frustration as the MnE "annoyance," though it can also indicate a state of sorrow or grieving (*DotSL* "Sor(r)owing, Sorowyng" vbl. n.). This proximity between "a noyis" and "anoyis" further underscores the close relationship between feeling and noise in the poem.

That war intill thar ost that day
Wald with thar mensk haf bene away.[281] (ll. 247-264)

The noise of the Scots' shouting in this passage is representative of its operation throughout the Battle of Bannockburn. In many ways it is stock-standard for the genre (and for works like *La Chanson de Roland*), in that the protagonist knights *should* be battle-eager, and their battle cries *should* be intimidating. Even the theatricality of foot soldiers picking up improvised banners and charging in to help the Scottish gentry is well-suited to the rhetorical conventions of the genre. And yet, this passage is wholly unconventional in the way that it characterizes the Scots through deploying a complex fusion of racial and religious genre tropes. Specifically through the expression of forceful shouting, *The Bruce* connects the Scottish army at once to Muslim antagonists of crusader romances, to Joshua and the *populi israelitici* mentioned in the Declaration of Arbroath,[282] and to a contemporary discourse which counters the English rhetoric of Scottish and Irish "savagery."

At the most obvious, the largely unintelligible shouting of the Scottish foot soldiers recalls the characterization of Muslim knights in crusader romances. The cry "Sla! sla!" does mean something like "Kill them! kill them!" (as Duncan translates), but its imperative mood turns it into more of a chant, akin to the way that Muslim knights in *Sultan of Babylon* shout the nonsense "Antrarian, antrarian!" during their feasting celebration.[283] To that point, Geraldine

[281] They came with all that gathering to just where they could see the battle, then all together they gave a cry, "Kill! Kill! On them now!" and with that they were coming, although they were still far away. The Englishmen who were giving ground by force of pressure, as I said before, when they saw coming towards them such a company, shouting like that, [a company] which they thought was at least as numerous as that fighting against them there, and which they had not seen before, [well,] you can believe without a doubt, that they were so badly disheartened, that the best, the bravest, who were in their army that day, wished that they were [somewhere else] with their honour (translated by A. A. M. Duncan).

[282] "Most Holy Father, we know and from the chronicles and books of the ancients we find that among other famous nations our own, the Scots, has been graced with widespread renown. It journeyed from Greater Scythia by way of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelt for a long course of time in Spain among the most savage peoples, but nowhere could it be subdued by any people, however barbarous. Thence it came, twelve hundred years after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, to its home in the west where it still lives today" (*Declaration of Arbroath, National Records of Scotland SP13/7*).

[283] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen argues that this attempt on the part of the poet to provide a translation of the otherwise opaque term "Antrarian" is an instance of "glossing alterity," as the poet seems substantially interested in trying to inhabit the subjectivity of a religious Other. The fixation on the "joie" of a practicing religious community in the poet's glossing of alterity suggests that the narrative "ultimately inhabits the subject position of that foe to unground the fantasies sustaining his alterity," says Cohen (*Medieval Identity Machines* 209). More recently, Geraldine Heng has proposed an actual etymology for the term, tracing it back to the Arab knight "Antara" (Antarah ibn Shaddad

Heng says that "Saracen" armies in *Sultan* use the phrase "raucously and expectantly," exactly as "King Arthur's men might call out 'Arthur!' or Charlemagne's men 'Montjoie! Saint Denis!'" (*The Invention of Race* 220). And as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen observes in his discussion of the *York Cycle*, language is a fundamental site for the construction of difference, and noise is nothing if not the obstruction of intelligible language,[284] so noise-making is often the way in which medieval texts register "the meaninglessness of all non-Christian identities" ("Kyte oute yugilment" 271). Cohen (by way of Jacques Attali), refers to noise as "body, monster, materiality, the other, the sound of all those differences that seem to have been excluded but inhabit the heart of identity," and he cites Mary Douglas's definition of dirt as "matter out of place" as a useful way of thinking about the ways that noise "hovers between meaningful language and a perturbing nonlinguistic sonority" ("Kyte oute yugilment" 269).[285] Cohen's observation that noise indicates how difference or alterity is constructed through language is valuable in thinking about the acoustics of feeling-emblems because it draws our attention to the threshold of communication which those acoustics enable.[286] At its core, noise as Cohen discusses it is a boundary marker, both in a spatial sense and a cultural-linguistic sense, alerting us to where the signal breaks down and turns into semantically opaque static.

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al-Absi). Heng calls Antara an "absent presence" in the poem who is materialized by the religious practice of the Sultan and his Muslim knights (*The Invention of Race* 221-222).

[284] On the subject of noise in Charlemagne romances, Cohen claims that babies first learn "no!" for the same reason that battlecries of "Montjoie!" from Charlemagne's men are so powerful: they're more noise than word, and they carry a distinct embodied explosiveness that registers with us materially: "Take, for example, the first word that most children learn to recognize, the simple imperative *No*. Babies are most likely to respond to this parental negative not because they comprehend its meaning, but because its sound is projected at the child as a sonic boom, a linguistic force that startles, interrupts, confounds. 'No!' is experienced first and foremost in the body… Battle cries no doubt work the same way as the explosive negative" ("Kyte oute yugilment" 270).

[285] Several other essays in the same issue of *Exemplaria* as contains Cohen's "Kyte oute yugilment" deal directly with noise as a way of marking alterity. Michelle Warren's "The Noise of *Roland*" specifically addresses how *Roland* distinguishes between noise and *chanson*, with the discordance of the former usually being associated with Muslim (or traitorous Christian) characters and the latter being a sonorous virtue of Christian knights. Michael Uebel's "Acoustical Alterity" thinks more epistemologically about the ways that sound is perceived and felt in the body, and "how noise generates new forms of affectivity and how music, or ordered noise, becomes the apparatus par excellence for channeling potentially destructive energies" ("Acoustical Alterity" 353-354).

[286] See Danijela Kambaskovic's essay "Living Anxiously: The Senses, Society and Morality in Pre-Modern England" for the cultural importance of "orderly" perceptions of the senses and the anxiety that comes with sensory disorder: "Although the senses are not always mentioned explicitly in pre-modern treatises, their orderly and 'proper' use generated much moral anxiety. Interestingly, concepts that imply sensual perception are equally important as those that refer to the sense directly, as long as the focus is on ordering and governing one's sensual perception with a view to leading a good life" ("Living Anxiously" 161-162). It is not hard to infer from this association between moral goodness and sensory orderliness how the disorder of "noyis" could accrue a raft of negative associations and value judgments.

In my third chapter, I discussed spatial boundaries as a kind of visual source of pressure on the efficacy of feeling-emblems: in a poem like *Gologras and Gawain*, where the battlefield spectators are literally held at a distance from the main action of the fight, the emotional expressions of individual knights are harder to read, more vulnerable to misinterpretation (or deliberate misrepresentation), and this creates anxiety among onlookers as to whether or not what they're seeing is real. I also discussed how non-physical communicative boundaries, like those which arise when a tormented ghost tries to speak to the living, can impact the legibility of feeling-emblems in a borderlands space. In *The Bruce*, sound is an even more explicit source of pressure on the efficacy, the clarity, and the legibility of feeling-emblems, and so categories of stark alterity are exaggerated between the otherwise very similar English and Scottish forces.

Acoustic feeling-emblems are subject to the same breakdown in communication that happens to visual feeling-emblems in a battlefield context, and that breakdown is often where alterity is most emphasized. However, noise in *The Bruce* operates somewhat differently than Cohen describes in reference to the *York Cycle*, because in *The Bruce*, noise originates from the protagonist knights of the narrative, not from some ethnic or religious Other. The image of the Scots in this passage (and elsewhere) as raging out of their wits subverts the English characterizations of the Scottish as "barbarians" and "savages,"[287] turning that reputed savagery into an immensely potent battlefield weapon which also illuminates the failing courage among Edward's forces. There is also arguably a Biblical allusion at play here, in that shouting down one's enemy recalls the account in the Book of Joshua of the Israelites shouting down the walls of Jericho. As we have already seen, contemporary chronicle accounts of the origin of the Scottish people frequently drew parallels between them and the Biblical Israelites, even going so far as to suggest (via the Legend of Scota) that the Scots ultimately derived from Middle Eastern and Asian ancestors.

There are, then, several overlapping discourses of racial and religious identity at play in how the English and Scottish are represented in the Battle of Bannockburn, and these discourses do not always operate in the ways we might expect. To be sure, much of the characterization of

[287] See Steven G. Ellis's essay "Civilizing the Natives: State Formation and the Tudor Monarchy, c. 1400-1603" for more on the political calculation motivating the claim that non-English peoples in the British Isles were "savage": "Traditionally, Latin Christian authors had used the word 'barbarian' as a synonym for 'pagan.' From the 12th to the 17th centuries, however, the English monarchy adapted and exploited the theory in its dealings with the neighbouring Christian peoples of the British Isles, denigrating the Irish, Scots, and Welsh as primitive savages and barbarians. In this manner, the course of English history came to be represented as the triumph of civilization over savagery" (77).

the English as "Saracens" serves to other them from the (ostensibly superior) Scots and to construct them as somehow heathenous. As Robert Bartlett argues in his discussion of one of Barbour's contemporaries, the Scottish chronicler John of Fordun, chronicle accounts often treat language difference between two groups as representative of a larger ethnic difference.[288] So, emphasizing the "noyis" at Bannockburn is another way to underscore the poem's claim that there is an irreducible divide between the English and the Scots, because in a certain sense, "culture creates ethnicity" (Bartlett 48). It would be a mistake simply to adopt this assertion about ethnicity into my discussion of racial identity (thereby problematically conflating the two concepts), even though Bartlett himself suggests that both ethnicity and race are ultimately social constructs[289] and can "be treated as synonyms" of each other (42). By contrast, I will insist that a claim like "culture creates racial identity" ignores the somatic, biological, and genealogical elements of discourses about race, both medieval or modern. At issue here is the fact that chronicle and romance writers deploy tropes of otherness which sometimes look more like the construction of ethnic identity and sometimes more like the construction of racial identity, and because these tropes are allusive in nature, there is little consistency in a given work between constructed categories of ethnic/religious and racial otherness. As Jesus Montaño says of the construction of race in the lai *Sir Gowther*, "racial construction was indeed an exhaustive process of associations, using a wide variety of ideas in order to construct the Other" (119). As Montaño reminds us, these racial signifiers were invented, fluid, and malleable, and "medieval writers understood that imagining the Other meant ascribing to them stories and images that would be generally read by a wide audience."

While Barlett's principle helps to situate *The Bruce* in the wider context of contemporary chronicle discourses about ethnicity, it is too simplistic for the figurative and allegorical ways which Middle English romances combine discourses of race and ethnicity to represent cultural and political divides within Britain. Siobhain Calkin points to the Anglo-Scottish Wars as

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[288] Bartlett 47-49.

[289] Bartlett makes this case by way of (a reductive and binary) analogy to the distinction between sex and gender, : "An apparent parallel to the race/ethnicity tangle can be brough in at this point in the attempt to clarify issues. This is the sex/gener distinction. Those who use the terms *sex* and *gender* carefully are seeking to distinguish a chromosomal, biological distinction between people, something they are born with, and the forms of sexual identity they are socialized into… This cannot be the distinction between *race* and *ethnicity*. As opponents of racism have repeatedly pointed out, there are no pure races; there are no clear-cut ways of grouping human beings into discrete biological populations. *Ethnicity* does not stand in the same relation to *race* as *gender* does to *sex*. Put another way, both *race* and *ethnicity* can only be at the *gender* end of the polarity (41, emphasis original).

cultural context for *The King of Tars*, and argues that this poem uses the trope of the recalcitrant heathen to dramatize the English attempts toward integrating the Scottish population by "converting" them.[290] In such an example, issues of both race and ethnicity are involved: the "Scots" are imagined as being assimilable to English society by changing their cultural practice (ethnicity), but they are also imagined as distinctly alien to English society because of qualities which are somatically inherent to them as a people (race). The Declaration of Arbroath abounds with such a blended discourses of race and ethnicity, referring at different points to the line of Scottish royal ancestry "unbroken by a single foreigner," to the fact that God overlooks any "distinction of Jew and Greek, Scotsman and Englishman," and to the "savagery" and "brutishness" of various groups (which are themselves sometimes marked by religious practice and sometimes by geographical area).[291] Similarly, the situation in *The Bruce* is much more complicated than Bartlett allows with his formulation of "culture creates ethnicity," because the poem draws upon a variety of crusader romance rhetorics of race and ethnicity, and because its driving nationalist ideology is woven through those rhetorics in contradictory ways.

As we have seen, the characterization of the Scots turns on tropes and stereotypes of "Saracen" knights from the same crusader romances, while also alluding to Biblical inheritances and suggesting the emergent dichotomy between civility and savagery within the English political imagination.[292] There are simply too many convergent discourses of race, ethnicity, and

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[290] "On the English side, the rhetoric surrounding the Scots revealed a noted slipperiness of categorization. On the one hand, the Scots were depicted as disloyal or treasonous subjects of the King of England… On the other hand, however, the rhetoric of political recalcitrance could shift into a rhetoric of religious difference and threat… In this way, the Scots could shift from the category of recalcitrant political subjects into the category of religious heathens. Their identification was not a stable one. The shifting identifications, however, were all designed to stress Scottish difference from the English and promote military endeavor against the Scots. Ironically, though, the ultimate goal of such differentiation was to collapse the distinct categories of English and Scottish. Fourteenth-century attacks on the Scots aimed to integrate the Scots and English politically and make them share subjection to the English king, thereby ending Scots-English differentiation in the geopolitical arena" ("Marking Religion on the Body" 237-238).

[291] In the Declaration's original Latin, the term translated as "foreigner" is *alienigena* and the terms translated as "savage" and "barbarous" are *ferocissimas* and *barbaricis* respectively. The passage concerning distinctions between various peoples is part of the Declaration's entreaty that the Pope give the same consideration to the Scottish cause as he has to the English: "Therefore it is, Reverend Father and Lord, that we beseech your Holiness with our most earnest prayers and suppliant hearts, inasmuch as you will in your sincerity and goodness consider all this, that, since with Him Whose vice-gerent on earth you are there is neither weighing nor distinction of Jew and Greek, Scotsman or Englishman, you will look with the eyes of a father on the troubles and privations brought by the English upon us and upon the Church of God."

[292] Both within the British Isles and in the wider world, the claim of "savagery" has long been a convenient rationalization for British imperialism and colonial ambitions. As Alex Davis shows in his reading of the Early Modern Arthurian romance, *Tom a Lincolne*, the civility/shame binary reaches cultural dominance in England at the dawn of the Transatlantic slave trade and the establishment of a colonial presence in North America, but it has

difference in the poem for any coherent logic of racial identity to emerge, and that, I argue, is the poem's intention. In *The Bruce*, racial and religious otherness are heavily coded into the emotional expressions of characters who are literally white Christian Europeans, and it appears to be done mostly as a way of asserting a national Scottish identity through the appropriation of that racial and religious alterity.

I want to say directly what Cohen mostly hints at in his discussion of "difference": the deployment of "noyis" in *The Bruce* is a linguistic site where religious racialization itself is constructed, albeit in the absence of actual non-white characters. Barbour writes the English as Muslims to make them seem wrong, foreign, or simply "the enemy," and he writes the Scots as Muslims to assert their resilience, ferocity, and their connection to a Middle Eastern ancestry.[293] In both cases, the characterization is done by deploying faux-Islamic feeling-emblems to assert social identities through a language of racial and religious otherness. It is worth stressing here that the feeling-emblems in question are indeed false representations (even performances), which is to say that they are not the authentic expression of Muslim characters but the result of a Christian romance imagination of what those Muslim characters might think and feel.[294] It is only in a later crusader episode of the poem, in its final book, that Barbour attempts representations of actual Muslim characters, this time derived from historical battles in the southern Iberian Peninsula.[295]

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ideological precursors in the ways that late medieval crusader romances (and other popular chivalric works of the age) classify and valuate different nationalities and ethnic groups ("Savagery, Civility, and Popular Liteature" 271-274).

[293] I have mentioned already that Barbour depicts the Scots shouting down their enemies in a way that recalls the Book of Joshua and implicitly draws comparisons between the Scots and the Old Testament Israelites. As with the legend of Scota, this comparison allows Barbour and the Scottish baronial elite to claim a different (equally spurious) Middle Eastern lineage through a Jewish ancestry.

[294] This process of constructing a fictionalized racial Other entirely through a practice of imagination and repeated narrativization is akin to what Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields call "racecraft" in a more modern context. Racecraft, they say, is neither race itself (the doctrine that humans can be grouped by inborn traits that distinguish them from one another) nor racism (the ideology which applies a double standard based on ancestry). Rather, racecraft is the "mental terrain" where race is constructed through sustained action and imagination: "Unlike physical terrain, racecraft originates not in nature but in human action and imagination; it can exist in no other way. The action and imagining are collective yet individual, day to day yet historical, and consequential even though nested in mundane routine. The action and imagining emerge as part of moment-to-moment practicality, that is, thinking about and executing every purpose under the sun... It is a kind of fingerprint evidence that *racism* has been on the scene" (*Racecraft* 18-19).

[295] Following Alejandro García-Sanjuán, John Victor Tolan, and David Wacks, I mostly eschew the term *Reconquista*, because it is an imprecise description for the Christian campaigns which Castile carried out in the south of the Iberian Peninsula against Muslim states. As Wacks states, though "the term 'Reconquista' is a product

On Robert's deathbed, he tells his men that he had always wanted to go on crusade in order to make contrition for his sins, and asks them to carry his heart against God's foes ("On Goddis fayis myne hert to bere" XX. 191). James Douglas obliges, and has Robert's heart cut out and set in a reliquary,[296] which he proceeds to take to Seville with the ostensible goal of entering the fight against Granada, then still largely controlled by a Muslim Emirate.[297] While in Seville, they are attacked by the "King of Balmeryne" (the Marinid Sultanate of North Africa, named for

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of nineteenth century historiography, the idea it represents is attested in Christian sources as early as the ninth century...By the second half of the thirteenth century, Muslim states were no longer a serious military threat, and the Muslim kings of Granada, Niebla, and Murcia had all accepted their status as tributary states of Castile-Leon, now the only Christian kingdom to maintain a frontier with Islam. However, north Africa was still a threat and an object of colonial speculation, and Castile's campaigns in coastal al-Andalus had more to do with protecting the Peninsula from African invasion than with the elimination of political Islam" (*Medieval Iberian Crusade Fiction* 23-24).

García-Sanjuán deconstructs the notion of *Reconquista* as a historiographical construct of nineteenth and early twentieth century Spain, designed to exalt a Catholic national identity (and its imagined medieval past) while rejecting al-Andalus as emphatically Other. As García-Sanjuán says, the propagandistic discourse of *Reconquista* reaches its peak during the Franco regime, due in large part to Franco's relationship with the Spanish Catholic Church: "The concept of Reconquista was in fact the key for understanding the National Catholic vision of the historical development of Spanish national identity. The Spanish Catholic Church had fully supported Franco from the beginning of his rebellion against the Republican government, and had baptized his coup d'etat in 1936 a "crusade" against Marxism and atheism" ("Rejecting al-Andalus" 130).

Tolan also traces the historical roots of reconquest as a concept in medieval Iberian kingdoms and compares it against the ideological construct of *Reconquista* as imagined by Spanish writers and by the Spanish political and educational institutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Tolan shows by surveying the history of academic perspectives on contemporary Spanish culture and its origins, perspectives on *Reconquista* for much of the twentieth century tended to emphasize a given scholar's interpretation of what constituted "Spanishness" more than they did any evidence for a coherent project of Christian reconquest during the later Middle Ages: "The picture of Reconquest and Repopulation that emerges in recent work is complex. In the eastern aras around Valencia, recent work on land ownership and irrigation practices has shown that neither the transition from the Visigothic to the Muslim period nor that from Muslim to Christian was as disruptive as it has often been portrayed… Yet elsewhere change was more abrupt… The variety and quality of recent research has invalidated and made irrelevant much of the earlier polemical exchange between Arabists and traditionalists" ("Using the Middle Ages" 347).

[296] Douglas was apparently excommunicated for this action, because it contravened Pope Boniface VIII's 1299 papal bull *Detestandae feritatis abusum*, which "condemned tampering with the bodies of the dead, and decreed automatic excommunication for those who did so" (Cameron 110). More precisely, Douglas was excommunicated "for his role in removing the king's heart from his body and this sentence was lifted only in 1331, a year after Douglas's death and following a petition submitted to the Pope by Moray" (110).

[297] The region of Granada shifts in and out of Muslim control during the fourteenth century, and in the years between 1310 and 1330 (roughly, the period from Douglas's ascension as a knight of renown to his death), it was particularly unstable. On Douglas's involvement in the military campaigns in the Peninsula, Sonja Cameron says, "Robert I died on 7 June 1329. By 1 September Douglas had acquired from Edward III a seven-year safe conduct and a personal recommendation written on his behalf to Alfonso XI of Castile. Alfonso was then fighting the Muslims on the frontiers of Granada, this latest instalment of *reconquista* having begun in 1328. His campaigns attracted support from many different countries, and Castile was an obvious and accessible destination for those seeking to participate in a crusade" (111). Earlier scholarship on *The Bruce* (e.g. by W. M. Mackenzie) and accounts of Douglas's death written after Barbour's time both suggest that Douglas's ultimate destination was Jerusalem, and Spain was just a stopping-over point en route to the Holy Land. By contrast, Cameron says, "it seems clear that, contrary to later mythology, Douglas's destination was from the beginning Spain, and not Jerusalem" (117).

the Banu Marin tribe of the Berber ethnic group in present-day Morocco),[298] and Douglas takes up arms on behalf of the King of Spain, leading the vanguard of one third of his army. The battle is staged theatrically, with Barbour providing an appropriately heroic demise for Douglas embellished from the chronicle account of Douglas's death given by Jean le Bel.[299] But the important element to stress of this actual crusader narrative is the introduction of the North African army:

> Apon this maner still thai lay,
> Quhill throu the cuntre thai herd say
> That the hey King of Balmeryne,
> With mony a mudy Sarasyne,
> Wes enterit in the land off Spanyhe
> All haill the cuntre till demanyhe.[300] (XX.390-396).

The crucial term here is "mudy Sarasyne." This is one of the very few references to actual, historical Muslim figures in Barbour's poem, and it is the only instance in which an adjective is appended to the noun (albeit the term used is still "Sarasyne").[301] The adjective "mudy" has two senses in Middle Scots. The first sense is cognate with the Middle English "modi" (both derive from Old English *modig*), meaning variously "proud, haughty; brave, noble; fierce, violent; full

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[298] From Mackenzie: "Balmeryne. A Moorish kingdom in Africa; or, more correctly, of the reigning dynasty, the Banu-Marin. In Chaucer's Prologue it is 'Belmarye' (line 57); in Froissart the name appears more correctly as Bellemarie" (fn. To XX.393). From Duncan: "The emir of Banu Marin (Morocco) sent help to the Moorish king of Granada, who was being attacked by Alfonso XI; the name here is influenced by Scottish Balmerino" (fn. To XX.403).

[299] There are many different accounts of what precipitated Douglas's actual historical death during this battle. Explanations include his over-enthusiasm in charging, his desire to emulate chivalric ideals of battlefield heroism, and the sheer numbers which he and the Spanish army faced. Sonja Cameron cites Blanca Krauel Heredia ("Sir James Douglas's death in Spain, 1330" 89-90) on what Cameron says is "the definitive version of what happened," in which "Douglas's death was the result of a misunderstanding which led him to attack the enemy when no one else did and when no one else even intended to'" (Cameron 113). Cameron herself disagrees with this definitive version, arguing that Douglas's death "occurred in the context of a major battle" but could never be identified conclusively (117).

[300] They remained quietly like this until they heard word through the country that the high king of Banu Marin with many a brave Saracen had entered the land of Spain to conquer the whole country (translated by A. A. M. Duncan).

[301] Some version of the word "Saracen" (e.g. Sarazynys, Sarasenys, Saracenys) is used nine times in the poem. The term "Moor," despite showing up in works roughly contemporary with *The Bruce* (like Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and *The Sultan of Babylon*), does not show up in *The Bruce* itself. The first recorded use of 'Moor" in the *DotSL* dates to 1504.

of passions.[302] The second sense literally and figuratively means "muddy,"[303] and carries connotations of impurity or waywardness in both Middle Scots and Middle English uses.[304] Even if we accept that the term is not being used as a somatic descriptor of Arab or North African skin, we must at least recognize the way that this construction of "mudy Sarasyne" conflates highly charged feelings and a lack of rationality (being "mode-y," or out of one's wits) with judgments of moral turpitude (being "muddy") and then attaches those concepts to the catch-all signifier of racial and religious otherness ("Sarasyne"). This phrase as it appears in *The Bruce* is, then, a concise example of how feeling-emblems can be racialized and deployed for the ideological ends of creating social order and maintaining difference in a crusader romance context.[305]

Perhaps the most chilling aspect of the phrase "mudy Sarasyne" is the fact that it's a racialized feeling-emblem which seems to anticipate the actual racist discourse of dark skin as "dirty" in appearance,[306] a discourse which only rises to cultural dominance in Europe with the advent of a new logic of racial categorization reliant on phenotypic and morphological traits in

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[302] *DotSL* "mudy" adj. 1; *MED* "modi" adj. 1a, 2a, 3.

[303] *DotSL* "mudy" adj. 2.

[304] As Mary Douglas notes in *Purity and Danger*, dirt is not "absolute." Dirt is essentially a social construct which "exists in the eye of the beholder" as evidence of disorder, pollution, uncleanness, and, indeed, of more abstract impurities (2). At scale, this framing of dirt and of dirtiness as disorder puts such ideas on the bottom end of a societal power structure which values order, and an entire discourse of pollution emerges making it possible to speak of pollution in a way that claims (or counter-claims) status and social order (3). In the context of race, this treatment of contamination gets exploited by European colonizers and imperialists to rationalize and justify white supremacist thinking (e.g. in one-drop rules for African ancestry and blood quantum laws for indigenous ancestry in the United States), with white equating to purity from contamination.

[305] As Kim Hall says of race in the Early Modern period: "The easy association of race with modern science ignores the fact that language itself creates differences within social organization and that race was then (as it is now) a social construct that is fundamentally more about power and culture than about biological difference. Most theorists of race do agree that racist thought involves a degree of classification and exclusion used to exercise or to justify control over (or exploitation of) people of other cultures… The trope of blackness had a broad arsenal of effects in the early modern period, meaning that it is applied not only to dark-skinned Africans but to Native Americans, Indians, Spanish, and even Irish and Welsh as groups that needed to be marked as 'other.' However, I assert that in these instances it still draws its power from England's ongoing negotiations of African difference and from the implied color comparison therein." (*Things of Darkness* 6-7).

[306] On this matter of European society treating blackness as contaminated, Franz Fanon says that the "black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man," because he is always forced to be "black in relation to the white man" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 110). This, of course, treats whiteness as the norm and the pure standard, and all differences in appearance from that white norm as aberrant, such that blackness is "overdetermined from without" (116) by a racist discourse the explicit purpose of which is to subject non-white people.

the Early Modern period.[307] If, as Sara Ahmed says, race can be understood as "sedimented history," or as a diachronic process through which "differences become congealed in entities" ("Race as Sedimented History" 95), then a term like "mudy Sarasyne" is an early layer of that sediment in what will eventually become centuries of accreted prejudices against black and brown bodies.[308] What this reveals is how crusader ideologies leverage the available discourses (here, the Old English concept of "mod" as the seat of feelings and the Galenic theory of passions) to articulate race in whatever terms and vocabularies have cultural currency. In the process, such crusader ideologies can create entirely novel formulations of racist thought. The fact remains that the utility of this phrase in Barbour's poem as a racialized feeling-emblem—which identifies a racially, religiously, and indeed, emotionally othered Muslim army—still depends on the imprecision with which medieval Europeans used terms related to dark skin. As I have already demonstrated, racial signifiers of blackness and browness in Middle English chivalric romance and in other genres are often unstable in what identities they actually signify, sometimes becoming totally divorced from actual black and brown bodies, as in the case of Barbour's deployment of "Saracen" tropes to characterize the English and Scottish armies. The slippery quality of racial signifiers in this passage from *The Bruce* is arguably best understood as a result of the text using dark skin color (or even Muslimness itself) as a metaphor rather than as an actual identity marker.

Before moving on to discuss metaphorical uses of blackness in medieval crusader romance, a clarification of terms is in order. As a phrase like "mudy Sarasyne" shows, medieval discourses of race and ethnicity use color words which can, at once, describe the physical appearance and the moral/emotional character of a given person, such that it is hard to tell what a word like "black" actually means. In *Sultan of Babylon*, for example, Laban (the Sultan) is

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[307] The emergent construction of racial categories upon biological traits in the Early Modern period is David Sterling Brown's focus in his reading of the state's subjugation of Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, specifically regarding Aaron's question, "Is black so base a hue?" Here "base" connotes both low status and darkness in color (*OED* "base adj. A.5 and A.6b). As Brown argues, Early Modern ideas of biologically (or phenotypically) determined race have "deindividualizing effects" (2) that make it possible for the state apparatus of the play to authorize violence against black bodies as a category, divorced from the identity of individual characters or their actions. There is a comparable process of deindividualizing the North African army through Barbour's use of the term "mudy" on display in this passage from *The Bruce*.

[308] "Phenomenology as a way of approaching things teaches us about 'sedimented histories,' how histories become second nature, what bodies do not have to think (to think). To think of race as a sedimented history is to think of how race matters as matter. Something becomes sedimented, when it has settled, often near a barrier, as that which stops a flow. And race is precisely this: a congealing, a solidifying: a history that becomes concrete, a physical barrier in the present: stop. Or not: go" ("Race as Sedimented History" 95).

described as growing "both blake, pale and wan" in appearance when he gets angry (l. 310), but the poem also refers to characters who are "blake as More" (l. 1005) or who have skin which is "blake and harde" (l. 2194). Clearly, these uses of the same word signify differently from one another, and in a poem like *The Bruce*, where somatic descriptions of race are functionally non-existent, it is even harder to translate a term like "mudy" into one which comports with modern discourses of race, both scholarly and vernacular.

Strictly on the basis of those modern discourses, in which blackness typically refers to people who are part of sub-Saharan Africa and the global African diaspora, it would be most accurate to say that the people of color described in the crusader romance narratives of *The Bruce* and *Sultan* (Arabs, North Africans, various Middle Eastern groups, and some Spanish) are brown-skinned, with the exception of some groups mentioned, like Ethiopians. And yet, it is also true that the cultural context in which poems like *The Bruce* and *Sultan* are produced—Northwestern Europe, specifically in France, England, and Scotland—did not make consistent distinctions between skin colors and only understood race through a patchwork of competing theories. Even more frustrating is the fact that Early Modern discourses of race and blackness regularly collapsed categorical distinctions between skin color and ethnicity which medieval cultures maintained,[309] and so any historical accounting for the development of racial thinking and racism must attend to the ways that blackness is sometimes present but not identified as such (or, conversely, is identified but not present) in medieval romance. So, there is a fundamental tension at hand in using terms like "black" and "blackness" to identify Muslim characters of color in crusader romances: on the one hand, it risks erasing meaningful difference by leaving out other somatically-derived terms for identity like "dark-skinned" or "brownness," and on the other hand, it is a necessary inclusion if we are to do the actual work of critically appraising the role that medieval crusader romances play in shaping modern discourses of anti-black racism. In an effort to address this tension, I have aimed to be as specific as possible in discussing individual characters' somatic representations in a way that recognizes the actual identities behind those representations, both medieval and modern. In the context of *Sultan*, I refer to Laban, Ferumbras, and Floripas as brown-skinned Middle Easterners or as Muslim

[309] *Black Metaphors* 14.

people of color, and I refer to the "Moorish" army in *The Bruce* as primarily North African.[310] Outside of these distinct literary contexts, though, I use the term "blackness" more capaciously, and I do so in order to describe an imagined category of medieval race logic more than a precise racial identity held by any particular individual or group.

Across many genres of medieval writing, blackness is the conceptual counterpart to whiteness, and though both terms tend to shift uneasily in descriptions of the body between somatic and metaphorical meanings, each is arguably best understood through its relation to the other. As Thomas Hahn says, the black-white color dyad "persistently conveys deep-seated symbolic meaning" throughout the ancient and medieval worlds, and over centuries of accrued symbolism, color as a marker of difference began to "suffuse the cultural identities of black peoples" and "inflected the description of peoples" in a way that privileged whiteness and grew to treat it as the unmarked norm.[311] To understand the emergence of a white normativity in medieval European culture, we would do well to think through its relation to blackness, even when considering racial and ethnic representations which are neither black nor white in a modern sense of those words. The main risk to taking such an approach lies in imposing a simple, binary model on medieval race relations which are irreducibly complex, but, of course, I am not proposing that we collapse every marker of racial identity and difference into categories of "black" or "white." Rather, what I mean is that considering the role of blackness as a descriptor in romance representations of Middle Eastern, Arab, and North African characters helps us see how romances make such characters available to their audiences for consumption.

Because of the relationship between blackness and whiteness and the various medieval sign systems which both terms participate in, describing Muslim characters of color as black

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[310] "Moor" is almost as vexed a term as "Saracen" in medieval romance, though the former at least historically identified Muslim inhabitants of the Maghreb (while the latter is mainly a pejorative exonym for Muslims and non-Christians more generally). I use the term "North African" to describe the ethnic and racial make-up of the Marinid Sultanate's army in *The Bruce* (controlling modern day Morocco and parts of Tunisia, Algeria) because this is the only modern term available which could plausibly refer with accuracy to the diversity of groups under the Sultanate's territorial control.

[311] "It seems hard to accept that the ancient cultural registers that Snowden cites—habitual associations of blackness with evil and death, for example—did not leak through and suffuse the cultural identities of black peoples. Proverbial and stereotypical formulations—such as 'to wash the Ethiope white' or Can the Ethiope change his skin?' which were commonplaces in Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian cultures—simultaneously depend upon and disavow linkage to the real world to achieve their figurative meaning. While blackness in ancient times may not have been charged with the same racial meanings or intensity as polemics surrounding, say, American slavery, it seems nonetheless inevitable that such powerful markers of difference through color inflected the descriptions of peoples in ways that participate in what we now consider discourses of race" ("The Difference the Middle Ages Makes" 10-11).

(instead of, say, as a "Moor" or a "Turk") makes their expressions, behaviors, and indeed their bodies easier to abstract away from the real world lived identities upon which those characters are based. In a surprising way, then, blackness is used in such romances to erase racial and ethnic difference as much as it is used to mark that difference (or even to create different when it's not otherwise evident), and the purpose of that erasure is to make the Others of crusader narratives more open to textual conversion and consumption by a largely Northern European audience. Essentially, the imagined gulf between categories like black and white is easier for a medieval European audience of crusader romances to traverse than is the gulf between categories of Chrisitan and non-Christian. So I will insist on the validity of blackness as a term in discussing how both *The Bruce* and *Sultan* approach the racialization of their Muslim characters of color, even when those characters would not theoretically identify as black. In addition to the rationale provided above, holding space for blackness in my study of these texts also makes it easier to put my project in conversation with the important work of critical race scholars working on blackness in medieval contexts, modern ones, and every period in between.

Thanks to the scholarship of critics who have located clear antecedents to modern racial discourses in medieval texts, we can now speak not only of religious and cultural alterity when discussing crusader romances, travel narratives, and theological works which explicitly concern people of color but also of race and racism in terms which comport with how we understand those words today. Indeed, there is not only one discourse of race in the Middle Ages, but many. Suzannne Akbari has thoroughly documented the different ways that religious belief, geographical location, and even climate are marked somatically; Frank Grady has cataloged the ways that scenes of conversion in "righteous heathen" narratives can effectively re-racialize entire lineages of previous eras by retroactively converting them to Christianity; Geraldine Heng has dramatically widened the scope of what it means to look at instances of "race-making" in the Middle Ages beyond a narrow European context.[312] For the most part, these treatments continue

[312] Akbari's *Idols in the East* functions as a medievalist's companion work to Said's *Orientalism*, and this is Akbari's explicit aim with the book. Accordingly, she traces out several distinct discourses about Islam and the Orient in medieval Europe, and then shows how those discourses filter down into the modern context of Said's own study.

Grady's *Representing Righteous Heathens* is a genre study of hagiographic narratives and their use of the "righteous heathen" or "virtuous pagan" trope. As he shows, these narratives often function to claim pre-Christian figures as part of the larger trajectory of European Christianity, and in the process they effectively whitewash or Occidentalize figures who would have been self-evidently Middle Eastern, black African, Jewish, or otherwise not identifiable as white, European, or Christian in their own moment.

"Race-making" is the term of choice for Heng in *The Invention of Race*, and she defines the process as one which "operates as specific historical occasions in which strategic essentialisms are posited and assigned through a

to think of race as it is represented in isolated genres—because the black body signifies differently depending on the rhetorical aim of the work, and often these rhetorical aims are aligned by genre—but Cord Whitaker's *Black Metaphors* rejects this siloing approach and attempts to understand how blackness itself exists in medieval European literature across disparate genres.

Whitaker takes medieval uses of metaphorical blackness as his subject in *Black Metaphors*. His central aim is to investigate the relationship between blackness and sinfulness in the English Middle Ages and to trace how the legacy of metaphorical blackness inscribed in black bodies continues to enable racist ideology and violence today.[313] To clarify how blackness, whiteness, and racial difference are constructed and maintained in the medieval imagination, Whitaker uses the conceit of the mirage, which (like the metaphor) denotes a thing which appears to be there but in fact is not.[314] The mirage "shimmers" in our vision,[315] allowing us to imagine things that are not real (but which we tend to treat as real); in this way, medieval metaphors for blackness use mirages of the black body to express some idea that is conceptually

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variety of practices and pressures, so as to construct a hierarchy of peoples for differential treatment" (3). Heng's understanding, she says, "is that race is a structural relationship for the articulation and management of human differences, rather than a substantive content" (3). The methodological approach of emphasizing race-making over fixed race as a concept during the Middle Ages lets Heng "point to particular *moments* and *instances* of how race is made… They point to racializing momentum that manifests unevenly, and nonidentically, in different places and at different times—to sketch the dynamic field of forces within which miscellaneous instances of race-making can occur under varied local conditions" (4, emphasis original).

[313] There is, obviously, a great deal of continuity between how Whitaker discusses the concepts associated with blackness in a medieval context and how someone like Franz Fanon discusses the same issue in a modern post-colonial context. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon remarks how in "the unconscious, black = ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality. In other words, he is Negro he who is immoral" (192).

[314] "A mirage is visual, like blackness and whiteness, and is therefore an apt metaphor for this study… Mirage, whether visual or rhetorical, has its genesis in material reality but quickly moves into the realms of imagination and interpretation… The intersections of material reality, imagination, and signification are very much the spaces that the investigation of race calls us to explore" (*Black Metaphors* 4-5).

[315] Whitaker adopts this term from Michelle Warren's "shimmering philology" and "mirage," both terms which she uses in her editorial preface to the special postmedieval issue titled "Philology and the Mirage of Time." What Warren means by shimmer is the perceptual effect of philological study that makes a given word's meaning seem simultaneously present and not present before us (a "trace," in Derridean terms). This effect, Warren says, is created by the intersection of the material world, imagination, and language, such that this particular practice of philology lends to language a shimmer or mirage-like quality as language itself hangs between reality and fiction: "In its most common form, a mirage appears when heat causes light rays to bend, causing an image from above to appear inverted below. The turbulence of rising hot air makes the image unstable and distorted; it appears only along specific sight lines… *Mirage* thus captures the nexus of reality and projection that defines interpretation. Whether at the graphic level (What *is* that blurry letter on the page?) or the abstract level of language systems (Is that mark a blurry letter?), philology constructs meaning out of materiality and imagination" ("Shimmering Philology" 390).

associated with but distinct from actual blackness (sin, moral deficiency, corruption, etc.). And just as the mirage of racial metaphors can assert blackness when it is rhetorically expedient to mark a character as sinful or othered, such mirages can render whiteness invisible by treating it as the "unmarked norm." Both impressions—of blackness as a signifier for racial alterity and whiteness as a signifier for racial normativity—are delusions (mirages) founded on the moral associations between blackness and sin.

For my own study, the most illuminating aspect of Whitaker's work is his insistence on examining metaphorical blackness across genres, because this demonstrates what he calls the "polysemous" quality of racial signifiers in medieval literature. It is in the very nature of the metaphor as a rhetorical device that it unites seemingly unrelated (even contrary) ideas, and Whitaker tracks many paradoxical instances in which "black can serve as a metaphor for sin or salvation, for lack or presence; white for presence or absence, for purity or loss" (6). This lends a "flexibility" to blackness as a metaphorical vehicle, in the sense that blackness (and whiteness) can be made to signify whichever concept is in rhetorical demand for an author of a given text. It is Whitaker's ultimate case that by looking directly at the flexibility and polysemy of the blackness metaphor (or, in his terms, looking directly at the shimmer of the racial mirage), we can find countless instabilities and inconsistencies in medieval race logic and we can better identify just how socially constructed race is in both a medieval and modern cultural context. As Whitaker is careful to clarify, taking such an approach is not meant to abstract blackness away from the material conditions of its embodied reality, but rather to call attention to how belief in such a delusion as the strict dichotomy between black and white continues to inflict real-world violence on black people globally.[316] Both the abstraction of blackness as a racial signifier and the flexibility of it as a metaphor are on display differently in *The Bruce*, and we can see how those deployments of rhetorical blackness have real-world consequences very much in keeping with those Whitaker proposes.

As I have shown already, Barbour's poem betrays its awareness of crusader romance conventions in the way that it deploys racialized affects and other signifiers of Muslim identity to

[316] "Treating the shimmer of the black metaphor might seem to lend itself to studying blackness as an abstraction rather than as a material condition with real-world consequences, but it has not been enough for me to consider blackness and whiteness, darkness and light, in their abstract forms only… The belief in a strict dichotomy between black and white persists in the social, political, and economic landscapes that pervade in the United States, the British Isles, and to different extents, globally. That persistence regularly shows through anecdotally in the United States when immigrants, especially black immigrants, from majority-black countries find themselves thrust into a racial world they do not readily understand" (11).

indicate categories of otherness. But the poem is not secretive about this, and it actually declares its familiarity with the genre of crusader romance early on in the poem. While Robert's men are crossing Loch Lomond in Book III—a slow process, as they have only one tiny boat shared between them—Robert reads to his men the romance of "worthi Ferambrace" to keep their spirits up:

> The King, the quhilis, meryly
> Red to thaim, that war him by,
> Romanys off worthi Ferambrace,
> That worthily our-cummyn was,
> Throw the rycht douchty Olyver;
> And how the Duk-Peris wer
> Assegyt in-till Egrymor,
> Quhar King Lavyne lay thaim befor,
> With may thowsandis then I can say.
> And bot eleven within war thai,
> And a woman: and war sa stad,
> That thai na mete thar-within had,
> Bot as thai fra thar fayis wan.
> Yheyte sua contenyt thai thaim than,
> That thai the tour held manlily,
> Till that Rychard off Normandy,
> Magre his fayis, warnyt the King,
> That wes joyfull off this tithing:
> For he wend thai had all bene slayne.
> Tharfor he turnyt in hy agayne,
> And wan Mantrybill and passit Flagot;
> And syne Lavyne and all his flot,
> Dispitusly discumfyt he:
> And deliveryt his men all fre,
> And wan the naylis, and the sper,
> And the croune that Jesu couth ber;
> And off the croice a gret party
> He wan throw his chevalry.
> The gud King, apon this maner,
> Comfortyt thaim that war him ner;
> And maid thaim gamyn and solace,
> Till that his folk all passyt was.[317] (III. 435-465)

[317] Meanwhile the king read cheerfully to those who were with him the romance of worthy Fierabras, who was honourably beaten by the right doughty Oliver; and how the duke-peers were besieged in Aigremore, where King Lavan lay before them with more thousands [of men] than I can say. There were only eleven inside and a woman, and they were so placed that they had no food inside except such as they captured from their enemies. Yet, they behaved in such a way then that they held the tower manfully, till Richard of Normandy, despite his enemies, warned the king, who was joyful at his news, for he believed they had all been killed. For that reason he turned swiftly back,

The tale Robert tells (as reported by *The Bruce* narrator) is a hyper-condensed version of the *Fierabras* narrative, an immensely popular Charlemagne story that has many lives in Old French *chansons de geste* and Middle English romance.[318] I will turn my attention to the narrative proper briefly in discussing the version which appears in *The Sultan of Babylon*, but it suffices to note now that Fierabras is a Muslim knight who is defeated by Charlemagne's peer knight Oliver then converts to Christianity, while his sister, the princess Floripas, marries another of Charlemagne's knights (Guy), and the Christian forces eventually defeat the Sultan Laban (here rendered as "Lavyne"). The summary given by the narrator is impressively condensed for how long the Old French versions of the *Fierabras* story can be, and we can imagine that the actual telling or reading of the story helps to pass the time in "gamyn and solace" while the rest of Robert's men cross.

To be clear, brevity is not what makes this passage from *The Bruce* truly remarkable. That would be the fact that the version of *Fierabras* which Robert provides—call it something between rote recitation and ekphrastic representation of the poem itself—voids the Muslim characters of any description that might plausibly identify them as Muslim. Fierabras is simply "worthi," his sister Floripas is just "a woman," and their father Laban is renamed the French-sounding "Lavyne," such that he seems to come from the same Frankish stock as Charlemagne himself.[319] This is all the more surprising for a narrative which mainly concerns the

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won [the bridge of] Mantrible, crossed the Flagot [river], and finally decisively defeated Lavan and his whole fleet, setting his men free; the nails, the spear, the crown that Jesus wore and a great part of the [true] cross he won by his chivalry. The good king [Robert] in this way cheered those who were with him, diverting and amusing them until his folk had all crossed (translated by A. A. M. Duncan).

[318] In her discussion of the Middle English adaptation of French crusader romances, Calkin refers to a process of writers "Englisching" their French literary inheritances: *chansons de geste* become English romances through the fact that "romauns" was used to designate texts originally written in French that possessed an element of the fabulous (*Saracens* 20). As for differences in their narrative structure, French *chansons de geste* usually address marriage and dynastic relationships with women (often Muslim princesses), while romances typically explore male-male relationships and their conflicts. Of course, like all generic categorizations, there are exceptions to this distinction between French *chansons de geste* and English romances, and elements from one tradition often made their way into the works of the other. As Barbara Stevenson argues, political trends influenced the popularity of a particular genre or its narrative focus, and this led to a notable rise in translations of Charlemagne romances into Middle English during the reign of Richard II ("Middle English Ferumbras Romances and the Reign of Richard II").

[319] Laban's Occidentalized name and Floripas's loss of her name are symptomatic of a process common in French *chansons de geste*, though usually it is a process specific to the poetic enumeration of a Muslim woman's physical attributes. On the practice of representing Muslim women through French poetic *blasons*, Jacqueline de Weever says, "The Saracen women present a new problematic in the ideology of the medieval aesthetics of the blason, that 'catalogue of delight,' as one Middle English poet calls it. The "delights" must be recognizable as part of the

conversion of both Fierabras and Floripas to Christianity and the failed conversion of their father. Indeed, Robert's telling in *The Bruce* appears to take the assimilation of these Muslim figures as a *fait accompli*, so obviously assured that it doesn't even bear mentioning in the text of the poem. What remains is a chivalric romance which has been divested of marked racial or religious identity, or, said differently, one which has been completely white-washed.

We can only speculate on why Robert and his men find this version of the *Fierabras* narrative more conducive to "gamyn and solace," but surely some possible reasons resemble those behind the modern day practice of whitewashing in popular culture. In representing both Charlemagne's and Laban's people as racially unmarked (racially "invisible," or white), Robert ostensibly makes it easier for his men to identify with each side. Or at least he removes the tension which a Christian audience encounters when reading about a heroic Muslim knight or a desirable Muslim princess, despite the fact that this tension and its related fetishism of the Other is the entire *raison d'être* for the genre of crusader romance. Either way, Robert's telling of the *Fierabras* romance makes it easier for his men to consume the narrative and its Muslim characters of color by removing any signifier of their Muslimness in the first place. That Robert and his own men then later adopt "Saracen" affective dispositions and behaviors during the Battle of Bannockburn might seem to run counter to this instance of white-washing, but this is just racial and cultural appropriation operating in a different fashion. As Whitaker explains, the mirage of white normativity—here demonstrated by Muslim characters who have had their Muslim identity erased—makes it possible to create sameness across categories of racial difference when desirable[320] (e.g. the assertion that someone "doesn't see race"), thereby

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tradition of beauty in the heroine. The Frankish-like Saracen is acceptable; the black Saracen Other remains unacceptable. Lucien Dallenbach suggests that in constructing the Other, we falsify the Other" (*Sheba's Daughters* xxi-xxii). To be sure, Laban is not being given the itemized and aestheticized poetic treatment of the *blason* in this passage, but there is a similar translation of a Muslim figure into a Frankish appearance as de Weever describes.

[320] Writing about the shimmer of race in another Middle English romance, *The Turke and Sir Gawain*, Whitaker describes how the poem's use of the term "Turk" represents an emerging split in the discourse of "Saracens" in chivalric romance: "By the late fifteenth century, the term 'Saracen' had in large part shifted to 'Turk' or 'Moor.' 'Turk' mainly took on the religious connotation of Muslim, while 'Moor' took on the ethnic connotation of 'Arab.' The very status of Saracens was becoming bifurcated as it moved from a single religious and ethnic moniker to a set of terms in which there was some distinction between religion and ethnicity. Yet it remained that neither term was entirely divorced from the other. Despite the development of a mainly religious term and a mainly ethnic and cultural term, neither was immune from being used to connote the other sense. Religion and ethnicity shift in and out of focus in the text's presentation of the Turk" (*Black Metaphors* 14). As Whitaker goes on to note, the shimmer of the Turk's racial identity creates a contradiction sustained throughout the poem: "The Turk is ethnically and phenotypically different. The Turk is ethnically and phenotypically the same. The Turk is not Christian. The Turk is Christian" (15).

ensuring that emblematic signifiers of blackness are available for white communities to appropriate for their own use when *that* is desirable, as we have already seen occur in *The Bruce*. This appropriation of racialized affect is how feeling-emblems get instrumentalized in one poem to enforce white normativity and to erase blackness, but feeling-emblems also have a resistant potential in speaking back against the medieval race logic of a dominant Christian culture. For example, As Jamie Friedman shows in a reading of *The King of Tars*, the very fact that Muslim characters are often described as becoming "white" in affect and appearance when they convert to Christianity reveals how whiteness is constructed (i.e. not normative, foundational, or "natural") in such narratives. In Friedman's words, this narrative emphasis on describing Muslim converts in terms associated with whiteness is done in service of a "fantasized white racial stability" which, in reality, gives the lie to the primacy or stability of whiteness in medieval racial logics ("Making Whiteness Matter" 61). Precisely such a culturally resistant potential to racial feeling-emblems plays out in the romance text recited by Robert, *The Sultan of Bablyon*.

Noise and Racialized Feeling-Emblems in The Sultan of Babylon

We can say with some certainty that the "[r]omanys off worthi Ferambrace" to which Barbour refers is derived from *The Sultan of Babylon* or another Middle English version of the same romance because of specific character names and plot details,[321] but the *Fierabras* narrative itself has a long history in French *chansons de geste*. The earliest surviving version of the narrative dates to the second half of the twelfth century, and it comes to have wide circulation in medieval popular culture throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, being adapted into various regional dialects of French and eventually composed in Middle English as *Sir Ferumbras* and the fragmentary *Firumbras*. Indeed, the *Fierabras* narrative proliferates so much throughout medieval European language and culture that Suzanne Akbari suggests it "can best be described not as a 'text' but as 'texts,' for *Fierabras* was extraordinarily popular, surviving in a large number of Old and Middle French manuscripts as well as a wealth of translations and

[321] In his introduction to the poem, Alan Lupack says, "it is generally believed that *The Sowdone of Babylone* is based on an Anglo-Norman retelling of *Fierebras* rather than directly on the French romance itself." Duncan says only that the form Lavyne (for Balan or Balant) suggests "that Barbour was using an English translation" of the *Fierabras* narrative (fn. to III.435-462), and it is impossible with so cursory a summary of the narrative to say with certainty which is Robert's reference text. Both *Sir Ferumbras* and *Sultan* use forms of Lavan for Balan.

adaptations" (*Idols in the East* 164).[322] Akbari refers to these different versions of the narrative (and their constituent parts) as textual "isotopes"[323] in order to distinguish between instances of the same trope in her analysis (e.g. sometimes Fierabras himself is depicted as a giant, other times simply as an imposing knight). Individual isotopes of the *Fierabras* narrative differ in the details, but almost all versions concern the same base narrative. At the outset, the Pope calls in Charlemagne and his Twelve Peers (among them Roland, Oliver, and Guy) to defend against the attacks of The Sultan, Laban (or Balan). By the time Guy arrives, Laban has sacked Rome and returned to Spain, and eventually Charlemagne's forces meet them and lay siege to the Sultan's fortress. After protracted battles, the Sultan's heroic son Ferumbras defects to Charlemagne's camp, and his daughter Floripas (taking pity on Laban's captured Frankish knights and freeing them) sabotages Laban's castle from the inside and wins the day for Charlemagne and the Franks. Both of Laban's children convert, Ferumbras joins Charlemagne's knights and splits ownership of Spain with Sir Guy as a show of reconquest, and Guy marries Floripas.

As a version of this generalized narrative, *Sultan* also interpolates elements of the French *Destruction de Rome* in its first section and contains a smattering of other literary allusions, such as a reference to the General Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales* in the poem's opening lines.[324] This intertextuality in large part is why I have selected *Sultan* as my "isotope" of choice (to use Akbari's term) out of all other available versions of the *Fierabras* narrative: it is a romance that is highly attuned to the conventions, inheritances, and subversions of romance as a genre, making it ideal as an object of study for a discussion of emblematic feelings. Despite the fact that *Sultan* is not a product of the Alliterative Revival, it possesses many other characteristics which merit grouping it along with alliterative romances like *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, *Sir*

[322] On the subject of these adaptations and translations, Akbari says these " include texts written in Middle English, Provençal, Italian, Spanish, Latin, and Old Irish; oral versions of the romance survived into the twentieth century in South America and, in the nineteenth century, yet another version was adapted as an opera by Schubert… the numerous redactions of *Fierabras* reveal how cultures differ from one another, for several of the versions vary in ways that reveal how the narrative was adapted to fit the needs, concerns, and interests of the culture in which it appeared" (*Idols* 164).

[323] Akbari is adapting a term which Iain Mcleod Higgins uses in *Writing East: The "Travels" of Sir John Mandeville*.

[324] "Hit bifelle bytwyxte March and Maye, / Whan kynde corage begynneth to pryke, / Whan frith and felde wexen gaye, / And every wight desirith his like, / Whan lovers slepen withe opyn yye / As nightyngalis on grene tre, / And sore desire that thai cowde flye, / That thay myghte withe here lovere be" (ll. 41-48).

Gawain and the Green Knight, and *Gologras and Gawain*, all texts I have treated in earlier chapters.

First, *Sultan* (like *The Bruce*) has a composition date roughly contemporaneous with these other poems,[325] so it is produced in a similar historical context as English language and English literature begin their cultural ascendancy in late medieval European society. Second, as an English Charlemagne romance, *Sultan* adapts a narrative about the Matter of France to appeal to a late medieval English audience, with the expectation that this audience will imagine themselves to be the rightful inheritors of Charlemagne's imperial legacy (despite the historical fact of ongoing wars with France throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). This use of an imagined France, or of the European continent more broadly, as the backdrop for revisionist fantasies of English crusading heroism and conquest is shared in some form across several of the poems I examine in this project, most explicitly in *Gologras* and *the Alliterative Morte*. Finally, *Sultan* is a poem that quite candidly caters to an audience sensibility rooted in the presumed supremacy of Christian European culture, while also seeming to level trenchant critiques of the very figure who embodies that supremacist thinking, Charlemagne himself. Like Arthur in *The Alliterative Morte*, Charlemagne in *Sultan* tends towards recklessness and even the perpetration of war crimes on the battlefield, and the narrative is clear on the point that the Romans are the initial aggressors against Laban (Roman forces intercept a ship of Laban's then rob its wealth and kill its crew). For all its Orientalist and xenophobic attitudes toward Muslim characters, *Sultan* is also the *Fierabras* isotope which seems most explicitly interested in "thinking with the Other," as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen notes, since the passages in the poem which offer descriptions of imagined Muslim rituals and religious practices have no known analogues in the romance's sources (*Medieval Identity Machines* 214). Cumulatively, this makes *Sultan* worthy of consideration in the same poetic milieu as other works of the Alliterative Revival and as an iteration of the *Fierabras* narrative which is specifically attuned to representing feeling-emblems of racial, religious, and cultural otherness.

As we have already seen in *The Bruce*, crusader romances often mark difference in terms of emotional expression, because feelings are legible (and efficient) indicators of identity on the battlefield in ways that other chivalric emblems might not be. A crusader romance can easily

[325] *Gologras* is somewhat of an outlier here, surviving only in a 1508 printed version, but as I suggested in my third chapter, its historical parallels all date from the early to middle fifteenth century.

establish categories of opposition between Christian and non-Christian knights through reference to a particular vocabulary of affects, sounds, and behaviors which are (implicitly or explicitly) tagged with associations of racial and religious otherness. Such a vocabulary is more than just narrative convenience though, and feelings in these crusader romances are fundamental to the articulation of embodied identities, sometimes reinforcing and sometimes contradicting other medieval theories of embodiment which are active in such texts. Addressing embodiment and emotion in the context of religious identity, Akbari argues persuasively that medieval European discourses of the Orient regularly attribute the appearance and behavior of Muslim and Jewish peoples (their "bodily diversity," as she calls it) to geographical and environmental explanations,[326] such that Muslim bodies could be considered "irascible" or "lascivious" because of exposure to the sun while Jewish bodies could be defined by a supposed "leakiness" and "permeability" because of the geographical untethering which occurred during the Jewish diaspora (*Idols* 155-156). I am less concerned with the specific attributes Akbari identifies in these populations than I am with her observations about the racialization of such attributes. In this climatic theory of race, geographical location determines a slew of "ethnic characteristics" and behaviors specific to each nation (12), including emotional expressions, meaning that places and feelings are at least as racially tagged as more familiar bodily aspects of identity like skin. Seen in this way, race is coded into expressions of identity that do not always match how Galenic theory understands race as represented by the corporeal body. As Bartlett says (in terms similar to Akbari's), the biological and genetic elements of medieval racial thinking were often overshadowed by other considerations like "the importance of ideas of environmental influence and, more generally, the consistent emphasis on the cultural and social component of ethnic identity (45). This diffusion of racial identity markers across factors like environment, cultural practice, emotional disposition, and yes, the material self, is one way of accounting for what numerous scholars identify as the paradox of representations of the Muslim body (particularly the female Muslim body) in crusader romance: it can be described as both black and white,

[326] "In the medieval imagination, the Orient was the place of origins and of mankind's beginning; it was also, however, a place of enigma and mystery, including strange marvels and monstrous chimeras, peculiarities generated by the extraordinary climate. The bodies of the inhabitants of such eastern regions were marked by the sun, not only in the color of their skin and their anatomy but also in their physiology; these corporeal differences were consequently manifested in their behaviors, emotions, and intellectual capacity. For medieval readers, the irascible Saracen was as much a product of the Oriental climate that was natural to him as of the deviant 'law of Muhammad' to which he was obedient" (*Idols* 3).

familiar and foreign, beautiful and monstrous, etc.[327] When racial signifiers are detached from bodies in such texts, they function mainly to express alterity, not "real" identities, which often serves the interests of the crusading Christian forces, because they can eradicate such racial signifiers through conversion and assimilation. The converse is true too, though, that racialized feelings (e.g. irascibility, lasciviousness, madness) can circulate independent of the bodies that originally expressed them, giving them long lives and afterlives in the narrative trajectory of the romance as a kind of echoing emotional "noyis."

Like in *The Bruce*, noise abounds in *Sultan*. Both sides blow battle horns to marshal their troops, but "hornes of bras" are a distinct instrument of noise-making for the Sultan's army, both on and off the battlefield. Brass horns are an Orientalist trope in the poem (and in the crusader romance arch-text of *Roland*), deployed as an exotic, tantalizing detail any time the poet needs to describe a "Saracen" religious ritual. One of the most commented upon usages of brass horns occurs when Laban makes offerings to his "goddes;" it is an almost pornographic description of imagined religious practice, including the blowing of horns, the drinking of beasts' blood, the frying of serpents in oil, and the chanting of "Antrarian, antrarian!" (which the narrator tells us means "Joye generalle"). Much has been said already about the Orientalist gaze and construction of a religio-racial Other in this passage, so I turn my attention to another, equally significant use of brass horns slightly later in the poem.

After a few initial skirmishes between the armies of Charlemagne and Laban, the latter gathers a vast coalition of troops from all across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to meet at his fortress. In keeping with the exaggerated, exoticizing register of the poem thus far, the army is described as being some "bloo, some yolowe, some blake as More, / Some horible and stronge as devel of helle" (ll. 1005-1006), and Laban requires everyone to participate in more rituals of blood drinking and making of oblations. Revenge is the matter at hand, as the "French dogges" have killed many of Laban's soldiers, and so he implores his men to make offerings, the "better shall it us byfalle" in combat:

[327] Whitaker refers to this paradox when discussing the polysemous ways that blackness signifies when used in medieval religious metaphors (*Black Metaphors* 6). Akbari describes Floripas specifically as a paradox, though she is using Floripas as a particularly evocative representation of a larger trend in the representation of Muslim women (*Idols in the East* 181). De Weever is the most comprehensive when it comes to deconstructing this paradox in her reading of the ways that crusader romance and *chansons de geste* portray the "Saracen woman's treachery" after conversion to Christianity (*Sheba's Daughters* xxvi, in Chapter 3 *passim*).

"Thai have done me vilanye;
Mikille of my people have thay slayn.
And yet moreover thay manace me
And drive me to my contrey agayn;
Wherefore I wole at the bygynnynge
To Mahounde and to my goddis alle
Make a solempne offerynge;
The better shall it us byfalle.
The laste tyme thai were wrothe,
We had not done our duté.
Therefore to saye the southe" [. . .]
There were many hornys blowe.
The preestes senden thikke i-nowe;
Goolde, and silver thikke thai throwe,
With noyse and crye thai beestes slowe,
And thought to spede wel i-nowe.
And every man his vowe he made
To venge the Sowdan of his tene.
Here goddis of golde thai wex alle fade:
The smoke so grete was hem bitwene.[328] (ll. 1015-1034)

In the first half of the passage above, Laban begins to lay out his grievances and how he expects to redress them by appealing to "Mahounde and to my goddis alle." However, just after he begins to elaborate upon how they had "not done our duté" (at l. 1025), the manuscript shifts from first person direct speech to third person narration. Alan Lupack, in his edition of the poem, says that the sense here "suggests that there is a gap of one or more lines after line 1025, though nothing in the manuscript indicates the omission."[329] What looks on the page to be the last line of Laban's speech is ostensibly an introductory phrase, preparing us for more of his invective against the Franks. Instead, the poem shifts back to what Cohen calls its "enjoyment in the Other,"[330] detailing more horn-blowing, more making of "noyse," more slaying of beasts,

[328] "They have done villany to me; many of my people they have slain. And yet still they attack me and drive me back to my country; for that reason I wish at first to make a solemn offering to Mahounde and all my gods; that way the outcome will be better for us. When they were last angry with us, we had not done our duty. Therefore, to speak truthfully…" There were many horns blown. Many priests were dispatched; they threw much gold and silver, they slew beasts with noise and cries, and thought [themselves] to succeed well enough. And every man made his vows to avenge th Sultan of his injury. Their gods of gold began to grow tarnished, the smoke was so great (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

[329] fn. to l. 1025.

[330] "The text's enjoyment in the Other finds its ultimate expression not in the monstrous excesses of the Saracen body, but in the domestic and collective structures of belonging that the Christians resolutely do not allow their

and—in a distinctly unsubtle bit of symbolism—so much lighting of incense that the Sultan's golden idols become discolored.

The coding of otherness in this ritual seems to touch on each of the cardinal senses: we are encouraged to smell the smoke, to hear the horns, to see the "fade" or discoloration of the idols, to taste the "wilde beestes bloode" (l. 1007), and perhaps even to feel the "sore" grievance of Laban's killed men. I concur with Cohen that this depiction does look, from a certain vantage point, like an attempt by the poet to meet the Other, or at least to imagine the sensory experience of participating in this fictionalized ritual. But it should also be said that the narrative delight in describing such an imagined religious practice effectively chokes out the speech of the Sultan himself. We don't actually hear what Laban has to say in this passage, we only get the hyperbolically exoticized description of his religious rituals, and we're then told that "[w]han alle was done, the Sowdan than / Charged Ferumbras redy to be" (ll. 1035-1036), so that he can ride out against Charlemagne and his Twelve Peers. Whatever Laban's feelings, his sentiments, his words might be, they are obscured by the racist fantasy of this passage, and instead they are "charged"[331] upon Ferumbras as he is ordered to go out and make war with the Franks.

By this point in the narrative (roughly one third of the way into the poem), Ferumbras is already a highly visible figure in the battlefield skirmishes that have so far taken place. He is worthy, doughty, and bold, and proves himself both against Charlemagne's men and in the sacking of Rome, which makes up the poem's first narrative arc. To be sure, Ferumbras performs the role of the Muslim Other in leading Laban's forces in the burning of Rome and the looting of its religious relics, but this is largely a role prescribed to him by the poet's source text, the French poem *Destruction de Rome*.[332] Arguably the more telling aspect of Ferumbras's characterization

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enemies to maintain… The only Christian counterpart to the Saracen 'joye generalle' of communal feasting and Laban's 'joye' in his children is Charlemagne's ever-active sword, 'Joye'..." (*Medieval Identity Machines* 215-216).

[331] Middle English "chargen" has many of the same senses as the modern English verb, including ones that are obviously operant here, like "to impose a duty," "to bind by oath," and "to order." But the Middle English verb also has an abundance of senses relating to loading, filling, overloading, and burdening a container with some imposed contents (such as a merchant ship). We might think of Ferumbras in this passage as "charged" (filled up) with the affective weight of his father at the same time that he is "charged" (commanded) to seek out the Twelve Peers for combat.

[332] "The first part of *The Sowdone of Babylone*, dealing with the Saracen assault on Rome, has its ultimate source in the *Destruction de Rome*, a French poem of about 1500 lines, which describes the sacking of Rome by the Saracens. The events of the *Destruction* are introductory to those dealt with in *Fierabras*. The Anglo-Norman manuscript on which the *Sowdone of Babylone* is based abridges and adapts both of the French poems, which are, in turn, adapted by the English author of the *Sowdone*" (Lupack 2).

is in his treatment of the Pope, whom he meets upon the battlefield. Instead of slaying the Pope—it would not be the first act of sacrilege by either side in the poem—Ferumbras immediately becomes overwhelmed by shame at the prospect of killing this noncombatant.[333] Ferumbras tells the Pope, "I hoped thou hadiste ben an emperoure, / Or a cheftayne of this ooste here, Or some worthy conqueroure" (ll. 563-565) and directs him to go home and mind his choir. A similar exchange occurs in *La Destruction de Rome* when Ferumbras realizes the opponent he has been seeking is actually the Pope (*l'apostoille*), but his speech is much more dismissive and castigating in the original, as exemplified by the fact that he greets the Pope as "*veillard*" (old man) rather than by his title, as Ferumbras does in *Sultan*.[334]

The rhetorical function of the scene between Ferumbras and the Pope is clear. We see Ferumbras the doughty Muslim warrior abide by the same chivalric rules of combat as his Christian foes, and even do so with more aplomb and consistency than the King of the Franks himself; after Charlemagne hears about the burning of Rome, for example, he burns a path across the countryside in pursuit, and Laban learns that Charlemagne had "slough bouth childe, wyfe, man / And brente and stroyed alle and some / With thre hundred thousand of bacheleris" (ll. 785-787). As Jacqueline de Weever notes, this is a central paradox to the logic of crusader romances: Muslim knights often abide more strictly by the honor code of chivalry than their Frankish enemies (many of whom are eager to celebrate treason and betrayal, as long as it's done by a Muslim princess to her heathen father).[335] All of this paradox and irony is at play when

[333] Tho come the Pope with grete aray; / His baner to-fore him wente. / Ferumbras than gan to assaye / If he myght that praye entente, / Supposynge in this thoughte, / Ther was the soverayne; / He spared him therfore right noght, / But bare him down ther in the playn. / Anoon he sterte on him all ane / His ventayle for to onlace, / And saugh his crown newe shafe, / Ashamed thanne he was (ll. 547-558).

[334] The relevant passage from *La Destruction de Rome* is as follows: "Mais, qant la ventaille li fu du cole oustéz, / Fierembras vist la corone qe novelement fu raséz. / Qant cil l'a aparceut, si fu espountéz: / « Hai! » dit il, « veillard, mult m'as vergundéz. / Jeo quidai aver jouste od roi ou admiréz. / Ore me su od un prestre el champe melléz. / Meultz te vaudreit en ton cloistre tun sauter solferz / Et les seines en berefrois traire et soner / Ke en chambe ou en bataille escu ne lance portier.» /…Qant l'apostoille l'entent, si prent ajoier... " (*La Destruction de Rome* ll. 651-663).

[335] As de Weever says, the enthusiasm among the Franks to encourage treason on the part of Muslim princesses "undermines the very values [of loyalty to lord and devotion to the community] held to be important and thus misrepresents itself in a self-contradictory discourse" (*Sheba's Daughters* 115). De Weever points to what she calls the "fourth voice" of crusader romances (a voice which speaks in addition to the voices of the Frankish knights, the Muslim Sultan, and the Muslim princess who goes between them). This fourth voice originates from the margins of the Muslim army, and tends to take the form of a commoner who affirms that the Muslim princess is a traitor and "chides the resulting contingencies of the imperialist agenda, upholding the very values that are cast aside in the name of expediency. Neither courtly nor parodic but paradoxically moral, it upholds a morality ignored by the needs of empire building. This protest, coupled with the ambiguities in the portraits, destroys both portraits, that of the white Saracen and the black Saracen" (150).

Ferumbras meets the Pope in battle, but we should also recognize it for the cross-cultural sharing of chivalric feelings which it represents. At this point in the poem, Ferumbras can both express and recognize in his Christian enemies a distinctly chivalric register of feeling-emblems which governs conduct on the battlefield.

Like his counterpart in *Destruction de Rome*, Ferumbras first spots the Pope with a military banner (*l'ensigne*) and misjudges him as a king or "some worthy conqueroure," but then quickly cuts off his attack when he sees the Pope's shaved head and proclaims, "Shame it were to me certayne / To sle the in this bataile" (ll. 567-568). Clearly, the Pope feels the weight of this shame (and the threat behind it), because he immediately leaves the field with a full quarter of the Roman forces, recognizing it wise not to test Ferumbras's generosity. But the formulaic construction about "shame" Ferumbras uses to describe his disappointment in not finding a worthy opponent obscures the reality of what's going on here: Ferumbras is the one in this exchange who embodies chivalric feeling, and he is modeling the conduct of that feeling for the Pope, a figure who has been unconcerned with shame or any other chivalric feeling thus far in the poem. There are numerous other points in the poem at which Ferumbras or another knight boasts that his opponent should quit the battlefield and save himself, but only in this instance does the projection of shame as a feeling-emblem seem to stick. The fact that a false combatant like the Pope can recognize the validity in Ferumbras's charge of shame shows how effective this chivalric register of feeling-emblems is at distinguishing an elite class of knights and the pretenders among them, even when the knights in question share only that register and are divided by religious belief. Indeed, it is the continuation of this feeling-emblem register across a religious divide that drives the plot of the poem up until the moment of Ferumbras's conversion, at which point all the affective energy "charged" upon him passes to Floripas.

For the first half of *Sultan*, Ferumbras continues to represent what is essentially a secular chivalric ideal in terms of his battlefield conduct and treatment of other knights. He is not rendered monstrous by the poet as is the case in other isotypes of the *Fierabras* narrative, nor is his bravado (described as "bobaunce, booste and grete pride" when he and his men siege Rome) exceeding what he can prove in single combat, and he pursues the greatest worship in battle at every chance. When Ferumbras follows his father's charge to seek out the Twelve Peers, Charlemagne sends Oliver out to meet him, and the ensuing duel plays out as a proxy for the larger religious war of the poem, with each side attempting to persuade the other via force of

their cause's righteousness. The fighting is fierce, but familiar, and it is really the speech of each knight that is more telling of their respective worthiness. Because of the several reversals of fortune during the battle (each knight breaks a sword, each is stunned and grievously wounded repeatedly, each asks for mercy in some form), mixed in among the frequent gestures of chivalrous courtesy there are ample opportunities for the kind of boasting and showing of hyper-masculine feeling-emblems that is characteristic of such romance scenes. And while many of the knights' jibes seem to each other like irritating and instigating taunts, there also seems to be much of their speech lost in the exchange. This is particularly true of Oliver, as we see when Ferumbras first asks him for his name, and the Frankish knight gives him a false one:

> "My felowe," quod he, "what arte thou?
> Telle me thy name for Goddis grace."
> "Sir," he saide, "Generyse,
> A yonge knighte late dobbet newe."
> "By Mahounde," quod he, "thou arte not wyse,
> For thy comyng shaltowe sore rewe.
> I holde Charles but a foole
> To sende the hidere to me.
> [...]
> Of the may I no worshype wynne,
> Though I slough the and such five mo."
> "Howe longe," quod Olyvere, "wiltowe plete?
> Take thyn armes and come to me,
> And prove that thou saiest in dede,
> For boost thou blowest, as thenketh me."
> Whan Ferumbras herde him speke so wel,
> He caught his helme in grete ire [...].[336] (ll. 1133-1156)

Though Oliver proceeds to help Ferumbras put on his helmet after this exchange, there is a fundamental imbalance in the courtesy that each knight shows. Oliver asks how long Ferumbras will "plete" or blather, and yet Ferumbras takes this rebuke as a sign of Oliver's well-spoken manner. Moreover, throughout their fight, Ferumbras refers to Oliver by name, while Oliver calls

[336] "My fellow," he said, "who are you? Tell me your name, for God's grace." "Sir," he said, "I am Generyse, a newly dubbed young knight." "By Mahounde," he said, "you are unwise and you shall sorely regret your coming. I think Charlemagne to be a fool for sending you here to me… I may win no worship by killing you, even if I slew you and five more like you." "How long," said Oliver, "will you prattle? Take up your arms and come to me, and prove with deed what you claim, because I think you are just bragging loudly." When Ferumbras heard him speak so well, he took up his helmet with great anger… (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

Ferumbras variously "Sarasyne" (l. 1296, 1343), "this hethen man" (l. 1315), and "paynym" (l. 1320).[337]

Ferumbras's individual identity as a knight is flattened and perhaps even erased in this scene as he is effectively reduced to the more general category of "religious Other," while Oliver retains his name and individual chivalric status. This is a point worth stressing: it is not the actual prowess (or lack thereof) that creates the imbalance of courtesy between the two knights, it is the inequality between how each knight shows similar feeling-emblems of masculinist bravado and how each reads that feeling-emblem from the other. Ferumbras can easily recognize the bravado of Oliver for what it is—even before he knows Oliver's identity he can appreciate that he speaks very well, and when he learns Oliver's name, Ferumbras greets him as a worthy foe in precisely the model of chivalric manuals.[338] By contrast, Oliver perceives Ferumbras's bravado as mere prattle and is quick to reduce him to a generic "Saracen" Other at every opportunity of address. The depersonalization and racialization of Ferumbras's feeling-emblem relies heavily on the dissolution of speech into noise, because it allows Oliver to continually deny the validity of Ferumbras as a worthy opponent. He becomes a generic "hethen" who "shall be atamed" (subdued) and then assimilated into the Christian community.

Like his father Laban, Ferumbras swears several oaths "by Mahounde" concerning the ways he will kill Oliver and others among Charlemagne's retinue, and they mostly go unfulfilled. One oath that I wish to note is Ferumbras's promise to Oliver that he wil "breke both bake and crown / And sle the ther thou goist" (ll. 1201-1202), because it is a distinct (and alliterative) assertion which will return later in the poem. Lupack quite reasonably claims that the representation of Laban as a "study in frustration" is part of the poem's critique of his inconsistent faith,[339] but Ferumbras is a different case. The frustration of his promises to defeat

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[337] On occasion Oliver uses a more favorable term like "gentile man" (l. 1273), but only when asking for mercy. By the same token, Ferumbras does call Oliver a "traitour" (l. 1279), but this is a mild insult compared to the invective Oliver directs at him.

[338] "'O,' quod Ferumbras than to Olyvere, / 'Welcome thou arte into this place; / I have desyrede many a yere / To gyfe the harde grace'" (ll. 1255-1258).

[339] "The impetus for all the action of the romance is the robbing of the wealth on one of the Sultan's ships by the Romans, for which he vows to be avenged. But his life becomes a study in frustration. While his vow seems to be fulfilled by the sacking of Rome, he is ultimately thwarted in achieving his revenge by Charlemagne and his Peers, and, worse, by his own children. Laban vows to Mahound that Oliver and Roland will be slain, but is dissuaded by his daughter, whose betrayal assures that they never will be executed. And later he swears that he will hang Charlemagne unless he will return Ferumbras and leave his territory. Of course, Charlemagne is never hung. Even Laban's threats against his gods are never carried out" (Lupack 4-5).

Frankish knights is not owed either to the religious inconstancy or the exaggerated rhetoric displayed by his father; indeed, Ferumbras is as sincerely devout a knight as an audience could expect, considering that we are still dealing with a wildly distorted and fictionalized representation of Islam as a practicable faith.[340] He even makes a two-part spiritual and practical case to Oliver for converting while the two are dueling,[341] which is more than Laban ever attempts (Laban just plans to kill Oliver when he has the Frankish knight in captivity). If anything accounts for the frustration of Ferumbras's plans, it is the communication breakdown that I have already identified, in which Oliver continually perceives the boastful feeling-emblems of his Muslim foe as depersonalized noise, divorced from a specific chivalric identity and the authority which that identity confers. We have already seen that the shouts, boasts, battlecries, and other sonic feeling-emblems of the Scottish army have a real, material effect on the morale of their enemies, and both sides use such tactics in *Sultan* to successful ends at different points. As an example, when Oliver is praying for divine aid against Ferumbras, he asks, "graunte Thy man the victorye, / And the paynym skomfited to be, As Thou arte Almyghty God of glorye!" (ll. 1319-1321). "Skomfited," a contracted version of "discomfited," implies a far more serious emotional plight than the modern "discomfort;" it is most widely used to mean someone who is disheartened, deprived of consolation, or otherwise made sorrowful (akin to "demoralized"), but it has specific battlefield senses of totally annihilating one's opponent.[342] Oliver's prayer, then, is to destroy Ferumbras by annihilating him both corporeally and emotionally, and Ferumbras's feeling-emblem of bravado is his primary target.

Other cases of successfully deployed sonic feeling-emblems abound in the poem. Just as Charlemagne rallies his troops and intimidates Laban's forces with a cry of "Montjoie!,"

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[340] There are precedents in both chivalric and heroic literature for poems acknowledging respect to a devout religious Other. Sverrir Jakobsson discusses this trend in medieval Saga literature, claiming that despite "the emphasis on relinquishing false religions, there are examples in medieval Icelandic texts that seem to highlight the virtue of holding onto heathen beliefs, the respect for one's own tradition and family even leading noble heathens to consider it inappropriate to break with their ancient gods. This emphasis upon staying true to one's own heritage could even, on occasion, lead to a certain kind of tolerance and cultural relativism, in which pagans were perhaps considered not so different except that they simply used the name of Muhammad instead of Christ" ("Saracen Sensibilities" 237).

[341] "Nowe yelde the to me - / Thou maiste not longe endure - / And leve on Mahounde, that is so dere, / And thy life I shalle the ensure. / Thou shalt be a duke in my contré, / And men have at thyn owen wille. / To my sustir shaltowe wedded be - / It were pité the for to spille!" (ll. 1219-1226).

[342] *OED*, "discomfort" v.; *MED* "scomfiten" v.

Ferumbras calls his entire army to order with the blowing of his distinct brass horn[343] and encourages them to ride against the "ferefull sighte" of their enemies.[344] The key difference is that only Ferumbras's sonic feeling-emblem is rendered as noise by both the narrator and the Frankish knights like Oliver. Charlemagne is never referred to as just a "Cristen," and his battlecry is never reduced to "pleting." In fact, the only time that "Cristen" is used in reference to a specific figure is when Laban calls Ferumbras a "Cristen hounde" (l. 1756) after the latter converts. Time and again in *Sultan*, we see that individual chivalric identity and status is preserved among Christian knights (at least for the European ones), while the same identity for Muslim knights is desaturated by treating the feeling-emblems associated with that identity as generalized, incomprehensible noise.

It is a well-attested strategy of imperial and colonial nations to absorb (and, if necessary, to eradicate) elements of "otherness" by divorcing those elements from specific identities and social practices. Colonizers exterminate a language by dissolving the community that speaks that language, or they suppress religious belief by destroying places of worship, or they unravel kinship groups by replacing indigenous naming conventions with new ones that erase extant lines of ancestry. All of this is borne out time and again in the history of Western imperialism, and much of it is on display in *Sultan*, as the poem separates affects and emotional expressions from individual Muslim characters and generalizes them to signify only "otherness." Ferumbras's specific, identifiable feeling-emblems become, in the speech of Oliver, just the feeling-emblems of a "Sarasyne," a "hethen," a "paynym," and when they cease to signify his specific chivalric identity, they are easier for Oliver and the rest of Charlemagne's men to treat as noise. The Ferumbras who is severed from the feeling-emblems that identify him as a Muslim

[343] Michelle Warren discusses the multivalent symbolism of another famous horn, the oliphant, in *La Chanson de Roland*, arguing that the ivory horn wielded by Roland is a nexus of exchange in the poem (e.g. economic exchange, cultural exchange, information exchange). The horn's sparse description given in *Roland* references materials which were used in both European and Arab cultures, and so Warren says that the oliphant points to "shared histories" of exchange (via trade, diplomacy, and conquest) rather than "absolute difference" between Christian and Muslim communities ("The Noise of *Roland*" 278-279). Warren also draws upon information theory to show how the oliphant is an acoustic channel of exchange, producing loud sounds which are interpreted variously as intelligible messages or as pure noise depending on one's position in the battle. Considering how much *Sultan* owes to *Roland* and the tradition of Charlemagne romances, it is not surprising that many of Warren's claims about the use and symbolism of horns in *Roland* apply directly to my reading of *Sultan*.

[344] He blewe an horne, of bras it was; / The Sarsyns begon to wake. / 'Arise up,' he saide in a ras, / 'We bene elles alle i-take; / And armes anone, every wight! / To horse with spere and shelde! / Ye may se here a ferefull sighte / Of oure enemyes in the felde...' (ll. 487-494).

knight is also easier to assimilate to a Christian community, and this is precisely what happens at the conclusion of his fight with Oliver.

As Akbari notes, when Ferumbras converts to Christianity and gets baptized by Bishop Turpyn[345] at the behest of Charlemagne (very close to the midpoint in the poem's length), he almost completely drops out of the narrative.[346] In the nearly 1500 lines prior to being Christened "Floreyne,"[347] Ferumbras's name is mentioned over fifty times, and in the 1800 lines after his christening, his name is mentioned just fifteen times, many of which are given in the speech of other characters (meaning that he is being discussed, not actively participating in the narrative). Conversely, his sister Floripas (or "Floripe") is mentioned only five times in the first 1500 lines of the poem, and then her name explodes in frequency in the second half of the poem as she adopts a more active role as *saboteur*.

There is a simple narrative logic which accounts or this reversal of activity within the poem: with Ferumbras converted (and thus defeated), his usefulness—as stand-in representative of the larger Muslim army who needs to be conquered—is at its end. Floripas, however, representing the target of sexual conquest on the part of desirous Frankish knights, now steps into central position. But there is also a kind of sibling translation going on at this point in the poem. At precisely the moment that Ferumbras is stripped of his chivalric identity and his accompanying feeling-emblems, then redubbed "Floreyne," his sister emerges as a figure who can step into the newly vacated chivalric identity position. Even Ferumbras's Christian name suggests a greater alignment with his sister, and the possibility of all that is "charged" in him by Laban can flow into Floripas.

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[345] Tulpin, Bishop of Reims c. 748. His name is recorded as "Turpin" in a number of *chansons de geste*, and he is often listed as one of the Twelve Peers. He plays a prominent role in the Middle English *Siege of Milan*, another Charlemagne romance.

[346] As Akbari notes, Ferumbras seems feminized after his conversion (at least if masculinity in the poem is measured by aggressive chivalric performance on the battlefield). Akbari uses Galenic humoral theory to reinforce her reading of how Ferumbras softens physically and appears more feminine post-conversion: "Once he becomes a Christian, his acts are governed by compassion rather than aggression, and his body is shown bowed in supplication, his face covered with tears. Fierbras undergoes a bodily change—not anatomical, but physiological—in the course of his religious conversion. In terms of humoral physiology, he becomes cold and wet, a combination of qualities not normally found in males, but typical of females… His new, Christian name, 'Florien' or 'Florens,' echoes the name of his sister, 'Floripas,' perhaps underlining the demasculinization that is concomitant with Fierabras' assimilation into the Christian host" (*Idols* 168-169).

[347] It is telling that both Floripas and the poem's narrator continue to refer to Ferumbras by his Muslim given name, even after he is baptized and joins Charlemagne's forces at the end of the poem. Perhaps this suggests that Ferumbras's baptism is more superficial a conversion than we are led to believe, or it suggests that the poem has a difficult time re-imagining Ferumbras as a Christian rather than a Muslim knight.

Female Masculinity and Floripas as Knight in The Sultan of Babylon

If Ferumbras is a near-ideal representation of how the crusader romance imagines a Muslim knight, Floripas is a startlingly incongruous incarnation of the Muslim princess figure. Contrary to the character progression that scholars like Kinoshita and de Weever lay out, in which a recalcitrant Muslim princess is tamed through marriage and redescribed in the white Christian European beauty aesthetics typical of the *blason* form,[348] Floripas seems to grow more violent and resistant to men at precisely the moment she pledges to marry Sir Guy. As Akbari observes, multiple versions of the *Fierabras* narrative describe Floripas as "a dangerous combination of masculine and feminine qualities" whose "gender alterity" is constantly being renegotiated by the narrative as she is assimilated from a Muslim community into a Christian one (*Idols* 175). In some sense, Floripas's aggressive behavior is sanctioned because it's mostly put to the "good" use of betraying her father and the Muslim army, but because the narrative defers her actual conversion until the very end, there is an "extended period during which Floripas is neither wholly Saracen nor wholly Christian," which in turn creates "a liminal phase during which Floripas' identity is in flux" (175).

This liminality and sustained flux regarding Floripas's identity as a Muslim woman ultimately leads Akbari to ask, "What precisely is Floripas? Is she pagan or Christian? Is she a passive object of desire or an aggressive agent? Is she feminine or is she masculine?" (181). Of course, these are rhetorical questions intended to highlight a logical contradiction which Akbari finds at the heart of the male Orientalist gaze of a medieval European audience—specifically in its insistence upon both sexualizing and rendering monstrous or otherwise dangerous the bodies of Muslim women—but these questions also point to a basic problem in trying to fit Floripas into a simplistic gender framework. She is not feminine *or* masculine, she is both simultaneously, showing the violent and assertive feeling-emblem of a male knight from the embodied identity

[348] Jacqueline de Weever outlines this process at the beginning of her first chapter in *Sheba's Daughters*: "The portraits of Saracen women who marry Frankish princes in the *chansons de geste* vividly exemplify the aesthetics and the power of artifice at work in poetry, especially the ability to erase alterity, all that makes for Otherness. When the conventional portrait is applied to the Saracen woman, the attributes of beauty acquire a different dimension. The representation of the Saracen woman in the conventional portrait of the French heroine becomes the eraser, rubbing out difference" (3-4). De Weever elaborates on this process and the rhetorical work it does toward making a "Saracen" woman appealing to a Christian European audience: "The whitening of the Saracen woman is intended to mask several anxieties. The texts present her in the classical garb of the heroine familiar through endless stories in different languages of the Latin West, appropriating her from her family through poetic praxis and thus bringing her into the Frankish court circle" (45).

position of a princess and demanding that both elements of her presentation be recognized equally. She represents the emergence of a distinct female masculinity in *Sultan*, and this alternative masculinity is articulated through the chivalric discourse which she inherits from her brother Ferumbras.

Shortly after Ferumbras converts to Christianity, Roland and Oliver are captured by Laban and held in his fortress. Floripas initially counsels Laban to put them in prison instead of killing them immediately (because Charlemagne has Ferumbras), but just one hundred lines after Ferumbras converts, Floripas has already developed sympathy for the Franks and pushed her governess Maragounde out a window so that she can save them. Floripas comes to sympathize with Roland and Oliver, at which point the narrator tells us she "herde grete lamentacion / In the prison that was ther nye." Then, while going near to hear more, she "supposed by ymagynacion / That it was the prisoners sory" (ll. 1555-1558). Already Floripas seems to be a more astute parser of sound than the Franks, in that she doesn't hear their cries as "noyis," despite the wailing and the "sory" sounds. Her imagination, as a creative faculty, is important here in allowing her to understand the Frankish knights' plight, and it is a crucial element of her character throughout the poem, particularly when it comes to her plans to sabotage her father's fortress (Lupack, referencing the classic topos of heroic poetry, calls Floripas's *sapientia* the complement to Ferumbras's *fortitudo*).[349] Floripas's "ymagynacion" is subsequently important in the poem as a source of agency which threatens the masculine authority of Charlemagne's men, and we see this threatening potential when Floripas promises to marry Sir Guy and uses her imagination to invoke the prowess and chivalric violence of her brother.

Although Floripas doesn't officially convert to Christianity until the end of the poem, she plights herself to Guy while the Frankish knights are still being held captive. She and Guy share a drink together, then embrace as a betrothed couple. Up until this point in her interaction with the Franks, Floripas has presented herself demurely as a lady prepared to "lefe Mahoundes laye" (l. 1896) and be Christened for the love of Guy. Immediately after their embrace, however, Floripas's tone changes dramatically as she enthusiastically tells the knights how best to dispatch her father's forces:

Thay clipped and kissed both in fere

[349] Lupack 3.

And made grete joye and game
And so did alle that were there:
Thai made ful mery alle in same.
Tho spake Floripas to the barons boolde
And saide, "I have armure i-nowe;
Therfore I tel you what I wolde
And that ye dide for your prowe.
Tomorue, whan my fadir is at his soupere,
Ye shalle come in alle attonys.
Loke ye spare for no fere;
Sle down and breke both bake and bones.
Kithe you knightis of hardynesse!
Ther is none helpe but in this wyse.
Then moste ye shewen your prowes
And wynne this castel in this guyse."[350] (ll. 1935-1950)

As a symbolic conversion before the actual baptism at the end of *Sultan*, this passage primarily serves to assure the audience that all of Floripas's subsequent treachery against her erstwhile community is done in service of supporting good Christian knights. But in doing so, the passage calls into question an arguably more important assurance, namely that of the conversion itself. In her eagerness to betray Laban and particularly in her pragmatic approach to the marriage, Floripas makes the process of conversion look like a mere formality or an irksome but necessary step on the way to the larger goal of emancipating herself from Laban's control and gaining her own social capital. This is clearest in the fact that the first words out of her mouth after celebrating her engagement are to say, in effect, "Now that my security is guaranteed, I can tell you what I want you to do." We can only guess at what precisely Floripas means in saying that now she has "armure" enough, but whatever the precise sense (safety given by Charlemagne's men, protection against violence as the bride of a Christian knight, membership within a new community, etc.), it is an unmistakably chivalric metaphor.

By her own assertion, Floripas's "armure" protects her agency, if not her subjectivity by allowing her to speak "what I wolde," and this is a radical shift from the relationship that female characters in chivalric romance typically have with armorial metaphors. The aforementioned

[350] They both embraced and kissed together, and made much sport and joy, as did everyone else present: they all made merry together. Then Floripas said to the bold barons, "I have enough armor now, so I will tell you what I want you to do for your prowess. Tomorrow, when my father is at supper, you will come in all at once. Spare nothing for the sake of fear; break the back and bones of everyone as you kill them. Take courage you hearty knights! There is no option but this. Thus, you must show your prowess and win the castle in this way (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

blason, for example, comes directly from the Old French term for a shield and for the coat of arms inscribed on that shield, but it is more generally used to describe the poetic convention in which a lover itemizes the features of his beloved as though he were reading a heraldic emblem. This poetic aesthetic of dissection and fragmentation, most famous in the Petrarchan tradition, objectifies the beloved by rendering them illegible as a totalized representation of a single subject.[351] Floripas resists the fragmentation of the male poetic gaze in this scene, instead girding herself with an armor that maintains both her bodily cohesion and her agency. From the moment she begins to speak to the Frankish knights, Floripas positions herself as a warrior capable of speaking in the same chivalric register as the members of her new crusader community, and it is a register she keeps up in her subsequent planning.

Among Floripas's various calls for violence in this passage—any of which rival the most incendiary rhetoric of Charlemagne and his knights—the one that stands out as a feeling-emblem worthy of particular remark is her use of the phrase "breke both bake and bones." This construction, which might appear countless times in a more consistently alliterative poem,[352] shows up only two other times in *Sultan*, both concerning Ferumbras. The first time it appears is when Ferumbras has just finished rallying his troops to attack Rome, and the narrator describes him (that "bolde man was in dede") as attacking the Romans both "bake and bon" (l. 508) with

[351] Nancy Vickers discusses this poetic fragmentation in her reading of Petrarch's version of the Actaeon narrative. In this narrative, which Petrarch adapts from Ovid's account of the myth, Actaeon is transformed into a stag and dismembered by his own hounds for the transgression of watching Diana bathe. As Vickers says, Petrarch uses the poetic dismemberment characteristic of the *blason* form as a kind of retributive counter-balance for the physical dismemberment which Actaeon endures: "The Actaeon-Diana encounter… re-enacts a scene fundamental to theorizing about fetishistic perversion: the troubling encounter of a male child with intolerable female nudity, with a body lacking parts present in his own, with a body that suggests the possibility of dismemberment. Woman's body, albeit divine, is displayed to Actaeon, and his body, as a consequence, is literally taken apart. Petrarch's Actaeon, having read his Ovid, realies what will ensue: his response to the threat of imminent dismemberment is the neutralization, through descriptive dismemberment, of the threat. He transforms the visible totality into scattered words, the body into signs; his description, at one remove from his experience, safely permits and perpetuates his fascination" ("Diana Described" 273).

[352] The phrase "bak and bone" has cultural currency in other literary works of the period, and it is universally used in the context of inflicting violence: it's used in the Prologue to the Monk's Tale ("She bryngeth me forth the grete clobbed staves, / And crieth, `Slee the dogges, everichoon, / And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon,'" ll. 10-12) and in the "Noah and the Ark" part of the *Towneley Plays Cycle* ("I shall make the still as stone / begynnar of blunder! / I shall bete the bak and bone / and breke all in sonder," ll. 406-407). The phrase also appears in *Piers Plowman* and in the *Northern Homily Cycle*, though the violence described is accidental in *Piers*. Of these texts, we can only be certain that the *Sultan* poet knows Chaucer, because of the poem's direct allusion to the General Prologue at ll. 45-46.

his forward guard.[353] The second time the phrase appears is in a slightly different form, when Ferumbras is boasting at Oliver how he'll defeat the Frankish knight, and he promises, "I shall breke both bake and crown / And sle the ther thou goist" (ll. 1201-1202). In both instances, Ferumbras has just invoked "Mahoud" when the phrase appears, and both times it is describing violence inflicted by Muslim knights against Christian enemies.

Now, I am not arguing that we can find a direct line of continuity between the alliterative phrase "bak and bone" as used about Ferumbras and as repeated by Floripas later in the poem. I do advance an argument along those lines in my Chapter 3 reading of *Awntyrs off Arthure* (I suggest that the repetition of key sound phrases across the two halves of the poem represents an affective "border-crossing" of feeling-emblems from one marginalized character to another), but that poem has a clear diptych structure which invites its audience to find connections between its two self-contained narrative parts. Here, in my discussion of the structurally looser *Sultan of Babylon*, it is not strictly important that Floripas echoes or inherits a phrase about anti-Christian violence associated with her brother. Rather, what I am arguing is that Floripas in this passage invokes battlefield and siege language exclusively associated with Laban's Saracen army elsewhere in the poem, and this suggests that she is adopting the language (and the rhetorical position) of a Muslim knight on the battlefield more than that of a princess.

It is not hard to find a similar masculine boastfulness in Floripas's speech to Guy as we saw earlier in the duel between Ferumbras and Oliver. Her speech is full of common terms regarding chivalric contest like "armure," "prowe/prowes," and "knightis of hardynesse," and there is a distinct goading tone in her insistence that the Frankish knights rush in all at once, spare nothing for fear, and win the castle according to her plan if they will "kithe" themselves among Charlemagne's Twelve Peers. She seems to be taunting them with her enthusiasm for violence in a way that questions their masculine bravado and asserts her own claim to chivalric prowess. I have already shown in my Chapter 3 reading of *Awntyrs* how Galeron's lady adopts chivalric rhetoric in her entreaties to Arthur and Guinevere (the lady has her own "armor" cataloged by the narrator and she conducts all business on behalf of Galeron, who himself seems too hot-headed to show proper chivalric courtesy to the court). The case with Floripas is even

[353] "The Romaynes aspied that thai were ware / Of here comynge than, / And therfore hade thay moche care. / Natheles on hem thai gon - / Seinte Petir be here socoure! - / And laiden on side, bake and bon. / There bigan a sturdy shoure. / Sire Ferumbras of Alisaundre oon, / That bolde man was in dede, / Uppon a steede Cassaundre gaye, / He roode in riche weede" (ll. 503-513).

more direct as an instance of a woman adopting a chivalric posture and its correlating social position. And we need only think of the titular Silence from *Le Roman de Silence* for a comprehensive example of a noblewoman adopting a masculine presentation and male gender identity through the armor (both figurative and literal) afforded by membership in a chivalric order. So it is not a great leap to imagine that Floripas—so often treated as an unconventional, even idiosyncratic, version of the crusader romance "Muslim princess" trope because of her aggressive and unruly behavior—is legible as a knight in *Sultan*. Nor is it a stretch to imagine her as a figure equally capable of signifying herself through feeling-emblems as any other (noble) character in the poem. Typically, the *topos* of donning a *devise* and other chivalric markers is the purview of aristocratic men in medieval romance (though there are more exceptions to this *topos* than earlier scholarship has suggested),[354] and so Floripas's self-positioning as a knight is all the more significant an act of resistance as it appropriates both a position and a power usually associated with maleness.

To better understand how Floripas presents and deploys her masculinity, it is useful to consider Jack Halberstam's work in *Female Masculinity*. Though less so in the several decades since Halberstam's book was published, both the popular and scholarly understandings of masculinity continue to emphasize maleness as a crucial component of masculinity, in particular a white, middle class, heterosexual maleness. But as Halberstam says, this dominant masculinity is a toxic, maladaptive version, and one primarily concerned with the acquisition of power and social privilege relative to non-white, non-masculine, non-heterosexual identities.[355] Instead,

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[354] Lorraine Kochanske Stock discusses scenes of armoring female warriors in medieval epic and romance, and her essay's introduction critiques scholars like Derek Brewer and Joan Ferrante for making overly definitive statements about what female warriors can and cannot do in such texts. Her primary examples are Silence in *Roman de Silence* and Camille in *Roman d'Eneas*, and as she shows, gender distinction in these texts has less to do with who is allowed to wear what armor and more with how gender is represented in the armor itself once the physical body is concealed: "What we learn from the representation of Camille, as juxtaposed against such male warriors as Eneas, Turnus, and Cloreus in the *Roman d'Eneas*, is that wearing '*vertu*oursly'-jeweled armor is a gendered privilege rooted in the very linguistic association between stones, jewels, and the Latin definition of masculinity itself, *virtus*" (75).

[355] See, for example, Halberstam's dismissal of the claim that masculinity is not exclusively a privilege-conferring gender performance for men and boys: "Some people have asked me during the writing of this book also to consider the toll that masculinity takes on boys and men and to recognize that masculinity is not simply a privilege, but that sometimes it may also be a burden. I think compulsory masculinity is a burden on many different kinds of men and boys, and it takes its toll in a variety of ways from extreme physical damage to the self within sports to extreme violence directed at others. It is hard to be very concerned about the burden of masculinity on males, however, if only because it so often expresses itself through the desire to destroy others, often women. Indeed, this dual mechanism of a lack of care for the self and a callous disregard for the care of others seems to characterize much that we take for granted about white male masculinity" (*Female Masculinity* 273-274).

Halberstam calls for a "masculinity without men," reasoning that we learn much more about "taking apart the patriarchal bonds between white maleness and privilege" (19) when we focus our attention on the ways that female (particularly queer female) masculinities destabilize gender binaries. For Halberstam, queer, non-white, gender-nonconforming assertions of masculinity are the most complex, subversive, and self-aware performances of masculinity, because they directly undercut the authority of normative masculine presentations (which itself tends to be constructed around racism, homophobia, and transphobia).[356] Indeed, *Female Masculinity* has little time for masculinities rooted in maleness or in heterosexual femaleness, because these tend to be versions of masculinity which emphasize hardness, callousness, and violence towards self and others (273-274). Accordingly, Halberstam's work is an awkward fit for a character like Floripas, who clearly represents a subversive female masculinity, but also embodies several of the qualities that Halberstam identifies as most threatening to the project of recuperating a queer female masculinity.

To be clear, I do not believe that Floripas is legible as a "queer" female masculine knight in any way beyond how I used the term in Chapter 2 to discuss a queer chivalric imagination in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*. When I used the term "queer chivalry" in Chapter 2, it was to identify a specific form of physically and emotionally intimate community of men which was organized around the mutual expression of vulnerable feelings and a shared chivalric identity. Floripas is queer in the sense that she is gender non-conforming to the crusader romance standards either of the European Christian noblewoman or the Muslim princess character types, but she is a far cry from the model of female masculinity "coupled with lesbian desire" which Halberstam takes as the focus of his book (28). Nonetheless, Floripas is a compelling example of how performing masculinity as a woman does not instantly grant one access to the kinds of power which men have when enacting the same performance. As Halberstam says, it is important "when thinking about gender variations such as male femininity and female masculinity not simply to create another binary in which masculinity always signifies power," because "female masculinity is not simply the opposite of female femininity, nor is it a female version of male masculinity" (28-29). What Halberstam's formulation of female masculinity helps us understand

[356] As I argued in my Chapter 2 discussion of *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, chivalric romances and chivalry manuals participate in a similar process of constructing an "ideal" masculinity through the rejection of traits and behaviors deemed inappropriate in a knight. Many of these traits and behaviors jar with a modern sensibility of normative masculinity (particularly as concerns the proper expression of affection in heterosexual and homosocial relationships), but the principle of constructing masculinity through rejection of queerness is the same.

about Floripas, then, is how the assertion of a chivalric identity by a woman can grant her membership within a community of knights and make available to her a specific discourse of chivalric feelings without necessarily granting her the power or privilege which male knights hold intrinsically. Floripas's female masculinity is as bold a performance as any other character negotiates in the poem, and it is one full of potential to subvert the authority of Charlemagne's men (an authority derived from maleness). In practice, however, that potential is circumscribed by the racial, religious, and cultural identity positions which Floripas holds, all of which limit her access to a resistant form of power against the Frankish crusaders.

We can thus add female masculinity to the list of traits that distinguish Floripas as a character whose underlying identity is difficult to parse. As a racially ambiguous[357] Muslim woman who performs chivalric masculinity publicly, she is marked several times over as "Other" or "subaltern," and yet she proves capable of assimilating to the European Christian community of Roland, Oliver, and the other Frankish knights. Even her initial speech in which she most fully performs that chivalric masculinity (after her engagement to Guy) is done in service of sabotaging her father's fortress. If, as I have argued, Floripas adopts a racialized feeling-emblem like that used by her brother on the battlefield and deploys it as part of a performance of chivalric masculinity, how are we to understand the fact that these actions are all ultimately for the profit of Christian crusaders? Is there anything actually subversive about Floripas as a masculine woman wielding racialized feeling-emblems that align her with Muslim knights, or is this masculine expression just a curious effect of the "liminal phase" of Floripas's fluctuating identity which she must endure as the Christian chivalric community converts her to their side? More broadly, do feeling-emblems offer a character like Floripas any meaningful resistance to the wholesale erasure of Muslim identity carried out in service of the crusader ideology, or is the

[357] *Sultan* says much less about Floripas's somatically marked race than other versions of the *Fierabras* narrative. The only word used in *Sultan* which could plausibly be taken to describe her body is "faire" (ll. 124, 1807), and this tells us little, because the full spectrum of meanings of "faire" is on display throughout the poem (e.g. the Sultan's forest is called "the fairest" at l. 55, a military contingent is described as a "faire ooste" at l. 200, and Rome is referred to as "this faire citee" at l. 656). During the crucial scene in which Laban's sorcerer Mapyne sneaks into Floripas's room to steal her magic belt, other versions of the *Fierabras* narrative depict Mapyne staring at Floripas's body, and the poem then comments on Floripas's skin color as white when contrasted against the darkness of Mapyne's (see Akbari 182-183 for differing descriptions in various versions of the narrative). However, in *Sultan*, not only does the poem avoid commenting on Floripas's body and skin color, but it reverses the direction of the gaze, so that it is Floripas who, by the light of a lamp, "gan him aspye, / Alle afrayed oute of hir slepe for fere" (ll. 2356-2357). Whether an intentional change on the part of the poet from earlier versions of the *Fierabras* narrative or not, this resistance to categorizing Floripas either as white or not-white in skin color speaks to her liminality in the poem.

fantasy of conquest so total in the romance imaginary of *Sultan* as to make that resistance impossible?

By asking these questions, I mean to call attention to a basic problem in the way that scholarship on crusader romances often discusses "the Other." Whether in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's reading of *Sultan* taking "joie" in the Other by inhabiting "the subject position of that foe to unground the fantasies sustaining his alterity" (208), or in collections with titles like *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages* (in which Albrecht Classen argues that individual feelings of religious tolerance arose even from the caricatured and imagined versions of Muslims in crusader romances), such studies tend to take for granted that we can actually "meet" the Other through these texts in any way that is more complex than as an objectified enemy. The issue is related to Gayatri Spivak's enduring question, "Can the subaltern speak?" but here it is perhaps even more removed from the very tenuous affirmative possibility Spivak finds at the end of that essay. As Spivak says, the female subaltern's status as a subject is "doubly effaced" by the coordinated oppressions of coloniality and patriarchy: "If, in the contest of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Spivak 41). Of course, Spivak is concerned with the silencing of subaltern populations—who are, by definition, disenfranchised by a colonial power—not with members of the ruling class in a religiously and culturally distinct society, as is the case with Floripas. In both instances, namely that of subaltern peoples under British colonialism and Muslim royalty in crusader romances, the representations of these groups by the dominant culture tie identity to difference. However, Spivak identifies forms of speaking available to real subaltern groups and ways of knowing subalterns as subjects which are obviously not available to a literary construction like Floripas, and this calls into question precisely what we can ever do to "meet" her or know her identity.

In a crusader romance like *Sultan*, Floripas is several degrees removed from representing an actual historical subjectivity because her identity position, her behaviors, and her very image are constructed by the Orientalizing gaze of Middle English (and Old French) romance writers. As a figure of "the Other" constructed by romance writers to be an object of conquest, Floripas is very closely aligned with the challenges that Spivak enumerates for the subaltern in speaking or in achieving hegemony, but we must continue to ask what actual identities Floripas stands in for as a representation of alterity. My suggestion, and the suggestion made by anyone attempting to

apply Edward Said's work in *Orientalism* to medieval romance, is that the Orientalizing gaze of crusader romance only ever tells us anything meaningful about the gaze itself, not about the target of that gaze and whether that target has subjectivity within a narrative totally constructed by Western onlookers. While Christian romance writers certainly construct their narratives from inside their own cultural context (and the context of their audience), they do so from outside the identity position and the cultural context of a Muslim Other, and their narrative gaze is always figured as looking on and imagining that Muslim Other through an outsider's Orientalist perspective. So it would seem that Floripas is not truly knowable as a Muslim woman through a text like *Sultan*, but she is perhaps knowable as a projection of racial/religious prejudices or as an embodiment of emotional resistance to conversion.

Said explains that Orientalism operates by constructing a non-empirical discourse of the East—a discourse disconnected from firsthand knowledge of the history, peoples, and culture of the East—and the West uses this discourse to reshape the East in whatever ways it deems useful (often in totally contradictory ways). This is not to say that the West has *no* empirical knowledge of the East, and we can point to abundant examples in medieval history of European Christians "meeting the foreign," even living with the foreign in a sustained multiracial, multicultural community. What Said means is that Orientalism as a worldview is not clarified or rendered more "accurate" with more firsthand encounters with the East because it is always about understanding the East through its imagined relationship as a contrast to the West.[358] Orientalism, then, tells us more about the West than it ever can about the East as viewed through such a reductive and objectifying Western gaze. Orientalism, as a "school of interpretation," always

[358] "One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away. I myself believe that Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is as a veridic discourse about the Orient (which is what, in its academic or scholarly form, it claims to be). Nevertheless, what we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted together strength of Orientalist discourse, its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability… Orientalism, therefore, is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment. Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplied—indeed, made truly productive—the statements proliferating out from Orientalism into the general culture." (*Orientalism* 14). See also Frakes (*Vernacular and Literary Discourses of the Muslim Other* 17) for his re-assertion of Said's point here, and Akbari (*Idols* 11-12). Akbari is focusing specifically on the "Islamic Orient," not East or Southeast Asia, saying that "medieval Orientalism was shaped by a very specific discourse of religious alterity centered on the relationship of Christianity to Islam." (*Idols* 11). She says that "the Orientalism that emerged in the late Middle Ages is constituted not only on the basis of bodily qualities associated with "Oriental" physiology, but also on the basis of religious orientation" associated with "fantastical devotion to pagan idols" (*Idols* 12).

serves to confirm whatever preconceived opinion Westerners hold about the East, meaning that "every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric" (*Orientalism* 204). Of particular importance to my work here is the way in which Said lays bare the construction of Eurocentric norms of both masculinity and femininity and how those norms are projected onto Eastern subjects.

As Said argues at length, the Orientalist worldview has historically been an "exclusively male province" in which Western male observers fixate on the East's "feminine penetrability, its supine malleability" and imagine its women only as "the creatures of a male power-fantasy" (*Orientalism* 206-207). As a direct consequence of this objectifying gaze which constructs Eastern women as hypersexualized "creatures" who exist purely for male consumption, Orientalism simultaneously renders Eastern men as either totally desexualized and emasculated or as a monstrous threat to the chastity of Western women. Both stereotypes apply to Ferumbras in different versions of the *Fierabras* narrative, though he is much more the former than the latter in *Sultan*. Ferumbras has no romantic interaction with Frankish women while Muslim, and he marries no one after converting. During the marriage ceremony between Guy and Floripas (marriage is a narrative convention which often wraps up the plots of *chansons de geste*), the narrator of *Sultan* says of Ferumbras only that he has become the "brethern" (l. 3200) of Guy. This means that the only new bonded relationship Ferumbras enters into is with another man, and this could reflect judgments about Ferumbras's sexuality or his deviation from a normative Western model of masculinity. As Louise Mirrer shows, this practice of casting aspersions on the masculinity of Muslim (and Jewish) men was also current in Castilian epics and ballads written between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, in that poetry from this period advanced the Christian conquest of al-Andalus by denying "Muslim men sexual and status identity" through their characterization as submissive, polite, or just "friendly."[359] The implication (or the outright assertion) here is that such non-Christian men are associated with feminine or maternal traits and

[359] "...it is almost always Muslim, not Christian, men who are 'friendly' in the texts. Muslim men console their Christian captives by offering them their sisters as concubines; they speak with great courtesy to Christians who seek to divest them of their holdings; they address their Christian opponents as *amigo*; and they weep sorrowfully when their Christian captors set them free. Christian men, on the other hand, threaten, insult, intimidate, and act violently toward Muslim men freely… To affirm and legitimate this militant Christian ideal, the epic and frontier ballads reproduced a system of social arrangements that had already generated (particularly in literary representation) the dominion of one group over another—that is, gender relations, a system whose structure guaranteed positions of power to men alone. Thus, the texts, which largely denied Muslim men masculine sexual and status identity… patently disqualified them from holding or attaining positions of power in Castile" ("Representing 'Other' Men" 170-171).

so are unfit to hold positions of power, even though "Muslims and Jews in fact shared the masculinist ideologies of Christians" ("Representing 'Other' Men" 182). It is unsurprising that *Sultan* ascribes an alternative masculinity to Ferumbras after conversion—for a medieval European audience, this submissive and vaguely feminine presentation legitimizes the male authority of the Frankish knights over him—but it is altogether less convention how the poem treats Floripas and her rejection of gendered behavioral norms.

In addition to contextualizing Ferumbras's development in *Sultan*, Said's theorization also provides my interpretive lens in understanding Floripas as a character and her resistance to the Orientalizing gaze. My aim with Floripas here is twofold: first, it is to identify how she defies norms of femininity as constructed by the Orientalist worldview through her affect and behavior, and second, to examine what ideological project the poem attempts to accomplish by eventually forcing her to conform to that gender norm. This is an interpretive lens which is compatible with how I've approached individual and community identity formation in earlier chapters. For example, I argued in Chapter 2 that the imagined possibility of a queer chivalric community in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* tells us more about the actual repressive history of normative masculinity in chivalric culture than it does about what that queer chivalric community might have really looked like.

With representations of Muslim women in crusader romances writ large, there is already a long scholarly history of unpacking the primacy of gender as a site for affixing cultural anxieties around race, religious belief, social status, and language. As scholars like Emily Houlik-Ritchey observe, the religious alterity of Muslim knights is regularly assimilated into a white, Chrisitan community in crusader romances by converting and re-describing them in the racial metaphor of whiteness (signifying purification), such that knights like Ferumbras are regarded as dangerously indistinguishable from European knights after their conversion.[360] In Houlik-Ritchey's argument, male Muslim characters can more easily assimilate into a Christian identity which is explicitly masculine (i.e. the identity of a knight), and this tends to create anxiety in the wider Christian community around the erasure of difference and hierarchy.

[360] Houlik-Ritchey's argument is actually that Ferumbras (not Floripas) poses the greatest "threat" to the unity of the Christian community: "Yet it is Ferumbras, for whom no legitimate barrier to conversion can be erected, whose conversion creates ripples of instability an anxiety throughout the text. He threatens Christian identity because there is no legitimate reason why he should not share it, a possibility that makes the text extremely nervous. Christian identity in *The Sultan of Babylon* is a specifically masculine, Frankish identity manufactured for an English audience. It is constructed specifically against the monstrous, religious, and gendered others in the text, and it finds this identity hard to maintain in the face of Ferumbras's conversion" ("Troubled Conversions" 502).

Now, the idea that a Muslim knight like Ferumbras could so smoothly assimilate into a Christian community that his Muslimness effectively disappears is a fiction of the genre. The seamlessness of such religious and cultural transitions is characteristic of conversion narratives, but it is not mirrored by the historical reality, in which converts to Christianity would still have very clearly been marked by difference in their newfound faith communities. There are many cultural forces which run counter to the idea of a "pure" conversion in medieval European society, particularly when concerning the conversion of medieval Jews. As scholars like Steven Kruger, Suzanne Akbari, and Frank Grady note, a great deal of medieval Christian identity was constructed around opposition to other faith practices (e.g. Islam, Judaism, various polytheisms, or simply heterodox/heretical strains of Christianity), such that being a Christian often comes to be defined by what one is not in terms of religious practice.[361] Entrenched prejudices like antisemitism and Islamophobia also engender skepticism about the legitimacy of converts to Christianity and confirm a sense of religious superiority for those who are already vested in the Christian community.[362] Put simply, making sure that converts to Christianity are still marked as other in some way is an effective technique for reifying societal hierarchies and ensuring that power stays consolidated in the hands of the extant authorities, whether that means European monarchs or the Church itself.[363]

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[361] Discussing the representation of Islam as a faith practice in *Sultan*, Akbari says, "the depiction of Muslims in western European texts is designed to hold up a mirror to medieval Christian practice, showing the readers of those texts what they are *not* so that they may understand what they *are*. It is a startling inversion: Muslims, whose devotion is centred on the unity of God, are represented as polytheists, while Christians, who venerate a triune God, are represented as monotheists; Muslims, who reject the use of images, are seen as idolaters, while Christians, who use images in worship, communicate with the divine more directly" ("Imagining Islam" 20).

[362] On these points, see Kruger's work in *The Spectral Jew* regarding the "impossibility" of Jewish conversion and the "double bind" it creates for Jews: "Within medieval Christian Europe, staying Jewish is always for Jews a problem, and not just because of Christian pressure on Jews to convert; that pressure of course exists, at various times and places more or less strongly, but there is also intense Christian ideological pressure… to make Jewish conversion an impossibility, a contradiction in terms. As a consequence, staying Jewish, insisting on one's unchangeable Jewishness, is not only a positive self-assertion but also a reconfirmation of the anti-Semitic view that Jews are a people trapped by their own stubbornness in the past, a people incapable by their very nature of embracing change, the truth, the future. But of course staying Jewish is also the only possible route for medieval Jews *as Jews* to resist the pressures of a Christian anti-Semitism" (168). As Grady notes throughout *Representing Righteous Heathens*, Christianity simultaneously needs to practice conversion of "righteous" heathens and needs illustrative examples of a morally corrupt heathen who refuses conversion in order for conversion narratives to work in the first place.

[363] There are abundant examples throughout the long history of Christian conversion in which converts rise to the highest level of Church authority, and we need look no further than the Patristic Era and the Early Church Fathers for such cases. But in late medieval Europe, at a time of intense religious persecution and religiously motivated warfare, conversion was a high stakes negotiation which came with a great deal of suspicion and anxiety from the wider Christian community. Though fourteenth and fifteenth century Spain saw Jewish converts to Christianity rise

All of this is to say that, in a historical reality which approximates that of *Sultan*, Ferumbras would have endured a great deal of skepticism around his conversion and his identity as a Christian knight. However, for the imagined community of *Sultan*, Ferumbras is an ideal convert,[364] and the poem seems to treat him as such most of the time (although it does insist on using his pre-conversion name, which suggests a desire to mark him as different from the Frankish knights). Gender, however, often emerges as a more fixed category of alterity in romances like *Sultan*, because the presence of a character's gendered distinction assures audiences that they can still identify difference even when religious or racial markers of otherness have been transmuted. Female characters are integrated into the Christian chivalric community through marriage, but the function of this marriage is more often a commodity exchange (the wealth of a given Sultan character is transferred via his daughter's marriage to a Christian knight) than it is an integration of the woman as equal partner in the community. And so for Floripas to adopt a masculine presentation and to appropriate the chivalric bravado and speech of her brother looks almost like an attempt to assimilate even her gender into the community of Frankish knights. But her masculine presentation is more precisely a gendered rhetorical mode for expressing aggressive, ugly feelings which would be disallowed to her in her role as princess, and these feelings prove throughout the rest of the poem to be demonstrably more resistant to assimilation or conversion.

After Floripas's betrothal to Guy, the tide of fighting turns decisively in Charlemagne's favor. Much of the remainder of the poem concerns Laban's foiled pledges to kill the Frankish knights and his ensuing outrage when he is betrayed or his men are bested on the battlefield. Floripas is the direct target of much of this outrage, and her behavior for the last thousand lines of the poem is characterized by a kind of gleeful vindictiveness. The poem notes her laughter in

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to significant posts in the Church, The Inquisition fed off of already extant anti-Semitic and Islamophobic sentiments and then in turn exacerbated them. The atmosphere of suspicion and terror which the Inquisition cultivated gradually gave rise to a more "modern" idea of racial and religious different, one which is fixed in biology and not susceptible to change through conversion.

[364] The figure of the ideal convert is itself potentially a method of maintaining societal hierarchy and marking difference, because it casts suspicion on the commitment of actual religious converts. In other words, Ferumbras is seemingly so perfect a convert to Christianity as to be inimitable in the real world, and in practice all converts fall short of his perfect example. In this case, as elsewhere, Ferumbras is treated as the exception among his Muslim knight peers, and granted special status by the Franks (and by the poem) due to his exemplary character, a status which is categorically disallowed to others.

particular, and the strength of her "steven," or voice.[365] Floripas's laughter merits mention alongside other kinds of "noyis" and sonic alterity in *Sultan* because it is an emotional expression almost totally distinctive to her in the poem and because it is so threatening to the possibility of Laban's success. "Steven," for one, has many meanings beyond just "voice": it can refer to sounds and outcries more generally (e.g. the voice of God, the calls of birds, a prayer or promise), and it is often used in reference to the sound of trumpets in battle,[366] suggesting that her voice has the same discordant intonation and intimidating impact on others as the horns of brass mentioned elsewhere in the poem. On the subject of her laughter, the Middle English past tense "lough" closely resembles a much more frequently used verb in the poem, namely the past tense of "slay," or "slough." Without over-emphasizing the similarity between the two verb forms, we can still see how Floripas's laughter is adjacent to one of the most commonly used words for chivalric violence in *Sultan*, and her laughter tends to be directed at said violence, as when she laughingly commends Guy for killing the Barbary king Marsedage with a spear, then jokes that he "shall make no booste in his contré" (l. 2261). In this way, Floripas continues to show a boastful, aggressive feeling-emblem that identifies her as an agentive figure in the poem, but her laughter—both its "noyis" and its proximity to violence—further isolates her from the community of Muslim believers even before she has formally converted to Christianity.

As Martha Bayless says of medieval laughter in dramatic literary contexts, it is a "distinctly singular and isolating" emotion, and both laughter and humor "operate against a backdrop of one of the most serious matters of all: death" ("Laughter in a Deadly Context" 153-154). Laughter in these dramatic texts, she argues, tends to signal a fearlessness towards death which comes with a separation from one's community as death approaches, and so the individual "laughs alone, not in a group, not communally, as laughter evolved to be experienced" (162). We can imagine that there is a certain vicarious, mean-spirited enjoyment of Floripas's behavior on the part of a medieval English audience (Laban and his Muslim army are the butt of the poem's "jokes," after all), but there is also a profound unease which comes with watching Floripas's delight in destruction. Her laughter, its force and "loude steven," align her precisely

[365] "Dame Floripe lough with loude steven / And saide, 'Sir Gye, my love so free, / Thou kanste welle hit the prikke'" (ll. 2258-2260).

[366] e.g. Layamon's *Brut*: "To þere mid-nihte; Arður aras forð-riht, / hornes me gon blawen; mid hahȝere stafnen" (ll. 10830-10831).

with the delight in destruction of Muslim bodies which Cohen finds to be undergirding some (but not all) of "Saracen enjoyment" in *Sultan*.[367] This inversion of Floripas from being a figure of resistance against Charlemagne's crusader project into the foremost champion of that project, all rendered through the deployment of aggressive sonic feeling-emblems, means that the poem places responsibility for its final acts of violence upon one of the most obvious victims of that violence.

Floripas's behavior as discussed above is a prime example of what Sianne Ngai refers to as "animatedness" during her discussion of racialized affect in stop-motion animation.[368] As Ngai says, the agitated emotional state of animatedness simultaneously suggests both being active and being controlled like a puppet, hence her attention to the racialized use of "ugly" animation in media like claymation. To be animated in a political context means both to pursue change and to be powerless in accomplishing that change due to the fact that one's socio-political power is curtailed by some other agent. Ngai's formulation helps us understand how, in her words, "the seemingly neutral state of 'being moved' becomes twisted into the image of the overemotional racialized subject, abetting his or her construction as unusually receptive to external control" (*Ugly Feelings* 91). For the most part, animatedness is an ugly category of feeling which mainly reinforces "the historically tenacious construction of racialized subjects as excessively

[367] In his discussion of *Sultan*, Cohen points to the narrative enthusiasm for describing the death of Estragote, a giant fighting for Laban, as an example of the typical ways in which crusader romances derive grotesque enjoyment from "consuming" the bodies of Muslim enemies: "The visualization of Estragote's opened body, its viscera impossibly visible, is followed by a lingering narrative stare at the dying Saracen's body. The scene conjoins anxiety at the monster's excess to a deflationary amusement at the spectacle that it has engineered… The somatic rebuke to the giant's identity is staged as laughable (at least for the Christians), and in order to work depends upon a perverse enjoyment being located in the smashing of the Saracen's flesh. So far nothing unusual: battles against Muslims, written from a Christian viewpoint, always invest their enjoyment in this way, so that readers are never permitted to identity with or humanize the enemy" (*Medieval Identity Machines* 213). Of course, Cohen's larger argument about *Sultan* actually contradicts this reading, as he finds a great deal of sympathetic (or at least genuinely curious) "joie" in how the poem depicts Muslim subjectivity.

[368] Ngai spends a great deal of time in this chapter focusing on the ways that claymation in particular takes inanimate matter and renders it movable and seemingly lifelike. One work she addresses substantially in her discussion of animatedness and racialized affect is the stop motion film *Animated Putty*, noting variously how the film's "lump of earthy matter" and "lumpen protagonist" (*Ugly Feelings* 89; 90) become imbued with human behaviors and characteristics. Her discussion of how a lump of clay becomes lifelike and seemingly human applies with startling ease to another crusader romance, *The King of Tars*. In this poem, a Christian princess and a Muslim king conceive a child who is born as "a rond of flesche" (l. 577), which is often glossed as a "lump of flesh" or as the "lump-child" in scholarship. The child transforms into a human infant only after being baptized by a Christian priest, and it is not hard to see how the Christian authority in the poem could function as an animator responsible for turning the racialized "lump-child" into a full human once its association with a Muslim king is washed away. *Tars* celebrates "that child ycristned was / With limes al hole and fere" (ll. 701-702), but its transformation from a lump into a full child is clearly just a narrative device for motivating the king's conversion. In Ngai's terms, this process represents the "technologization of the racialized body" (*Ugly Feelings* 125) in service of a larger ideological purpose.

emotional, bodily subjects (125), but it is also a category of feeling which can function diagnostically by calling attention to the ways that racialized bodies are instrumentalized to serve the ideological ends of the "animator."

If we think of Floripas's laughter and her gleeful enthusiasm for violence as a kind of animation on the part of the *Sultan* author (as well as all authors who contribute to the *Fierabras* narrative tradition), and an animation orchestrated for the benefit of a predominantly white, Christian, European audience, then we are better suited to reconcile her seemingly conflicting impulses as a character. She carries and presents a feeling-emblem very similar to the one shown by her brother as a form of resistance to crusader conquest, but the agency of that resistance is hollowed out by the poem in an enacted fantasy of total control over the poem's Muslim Other. By the poem's climax, that initially aggressive feeling-emblem has become merely the performance of resistance, and in fact Floripas's actions are all animated toward aiding the Frankish cause. This is particularly clear at the end of the poem, when she, along with Ferumbras, pass final judgment on Laban.

In the final stage of the plot, as Charlemagne is securing his victory against Laban, committing some of his most heinous acts of battlefield violence,[369] and bringing justice against the traitor Ganelon, both of Laban's children have final opportunities to reject their father. Ferumbras has the last word on Laban, telling Charlemagne to let Laban "take his endynge / For he loveth not Cristyanté" (ll. 3181-3182) after the Sultan spits in the baptismal font, but Floripas gets an earlier, and in some ways more total, opportunity for rejection of her father. While she is still residing in Laban's castle, watching Charlemagne's men lay siege to it, Floripas reproaches and effectively disowns Laban to his face:

[369] Perhaps the most horrific is Charlemagne's fight against Dame Barrok (Amyote in the Middle English *Ferumbras*), a giantess and wife of the giant Astrogote of Ethiopia. Charlemagne kills Barrok, and shortly thereafter Richard (Duke of Normandy) finds her two seven month old children and brings them to the king. Charlemagne baptizes them and names them Roland and Oliver, fixing to keep them as "myghty men of honde," only to watch them die for wont of their mother's milk: "Thai wolde neyther ete butter nere brede, / Ner no men was to hem worthe. / Here dammes mylke they lakked there; / Thay deyden for defaute of here dam" (ll. 3033-3036). Heng claims that the presence of "these black infants in a *family* of giants intimates that the giants which are so common in medieval European romances are perhaps not singular aberrations *contra naturam*… but may represent whole *races* of giants, raecs more fully attested in Arabic than in European romance (where giants usually materialize as singular émigrés)" (*The Invention of Race* 219). See also Sylvia Huot (*Outsiders*) for her monograph on the symbolic and allegorical uses of giants in medieval French romance. She does not discuss *Sultan* directly or the larger *Fierabras* narrative tradition, but, like Heng, she explores at length the coding of giants with markers of race, class, and cultural difference.

Tho spake Florip to the Sowdon
And sayde, "Thou fals tyraunte,
Were Charles come, thy pride were done
Nowe, cursede myscreaunte.
Alas that thou ascapediste soo
By the wyndowe uppon the stronde.
That thy nek hade broke a-twoo!
God sende the shame and shonde!"[370] (ll. 2215-2222)

At this point, we are still several hundred lines before Floripas is actually baptized a Christian, so her use of terms like "fals tyraunte" and "myscreaunte" are a prime example of the ways in which Muslim characters are prefigured for conversion in crusader romances. Calling Laban a miscreant (literally, a "mis-believer," also a heathen or non-Christian more generally) before she has converted shows just how much the poem places the heft of its crusader rhetoric directly into the speech of Muslim characters like Floripas, even while it tries to maintain their alterity. In point of this fact, we can note that a full five hundred lines after Floripas has called Laban a miscreant, Roland tells her that it would be "myscheve" for him (or any other Christian knight) to "play" with any of Floripas's maidens—all of whom she assures him are "white as swan"—before they have converted to the Christian faith.[371] This is the final thrust of the poem's racialization of feeling-emblems and it racialization of affects more broadly: a character like Floripas can readily deploy aggressive, masculine feeling-emblems in order to assert a transgressive *individual* identity, but even when that aggressive feeling-emblem is used to alienate herself from the Muslim community, she is still treated by the Christian chivalric community as an outsider, as a potential source of contamination (mischief). Even being aligned with whiteness, regardless of whether the phrase "white as swan" implies somatic whiteness or metaphorical whiteness, is not enough to legitimize Floripas or her maidens as subjects in *Sultan* or to grant them a social status free from their proximity to sin and corruption.

[370] Then Floripas said to the Sultan, "You false tyrant, if Charlemagne were here your pride would be undone now, you cursed miscreant. It is a shame that you escaped by the window to the beach. If only your neck had broken in two! May God send you shame and disgrace! (modernization is mine, derived mostly from the TEAMS gloss).

[371] "Quod Rouland, 'That were myscheve; / Our lay wole not that we with youe dele / Tille that ye Cristyn be made, / Ner of your play we wole not fele / For than were we cursed indede'" (ll. 2750-2754).

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter began with an examination of John Barbour's *The Bruce* as an in-road to discussing racialized feeling-emblems in chivalric romance. By all accounts, *The Bruce* is a difficult text to situate generically, and yet it is almost never placed within the category of crusader romances, despite dedicating the majority of a book to James Douglas's campaign against the North African army in Spain and featuring a passage in which Robert himself recites a version of the *Fierabras* narrative. In several ways, Barbour's poem is a convenient work off of which to pivot my argument: *The Bruce* is the apotheosis of the Scottish nationalism which was only suggested in the borderlands Gawain romances I discussed in Chapter 3, and it borrows heavily from the genre conventions of crusader texts like *Sultan*, which becomes my main focus in this chapter. But *The Bruce* is also an exemplary work when it comes to showing how emotional expression, perhaps more than any other embodied aspect of identity, is codified into existing medieval thinking about race and alterity.

As Barbour wrestles with the awkward task of crafting a purely heroic narrative of the Scottish case from the often murky, inglorious history of the wars between England and Scotland, his characterization of the Scots and English shifts repeatedly throughout the poem, even on a stanza-by-stanza basis. Depending on the rhetorical needs of the moment, Barbour paints the English as cravenly fleeing battle for fear of the Scots or as solemnly recognizing the divine righteousness of the Scottish cause and facing their deaths with that knowledge. Likewise, sometimes the Scots are ardent followers of chivalric rules of combat, refusing even to aid their own compatriots in need (lest they lose worship on the battlefield), and sometimes the Scots are "wode" warriors shouting down their English foes with the sheer force of their "noyis." There is an obvious political expediency to Barbour's fluctuating characterizations of each side (all favorability and honor accrues to the Scots, whatever the precise circumstances), but we can also find in this a telling representation of how race is marked and unmarked in such poems in order to emphasize or de-emphasize otherness. For example, when Robert regales his men with the story of "worthi Ferambrace," he (or Barbour's narrator) completely ignores Ferumbras's racial identity and skips over any mention of the religious difference between the warring members of Charlemagne's and Laban's armies. This immensely popular crusader narrative is seamlessly assimilated into a Scottish cultural context through the erasure of Muslimness and Middle

Eastern/Arab ethnicity from Ferumbras's chivalric identity. And yet elsewhere, *The Bruce* is highly attentive to the racial and emotional coding of its characters, even when those characters are nominally white.

At different times, both the Scottish and English sides display feeling-emblems which align them with the behavior and representation of Muslim knights in the genre of crusader romances. The Scots shout battle cries like "Sla! Sla!" which hover at the boundary between intelligible speech and pure expression of sonic alterity; some knights among the English army, like Giles d'Argentan, embody the "righteous heathen" character type by acknowledging the moral superiority of their Scottish enemy and rushing headlong into battle anyway instead of fleeing. The poem makes its most concrete assertion of racialized feeling-emblems when Douglas is on campaign against the "Moors" in Spain, and the narrator remarks that the North African king brought with him "mony a mudy Sarasyne." This is the only adjective appended to a noun which identifies an actual, historical Muslim figure of color in the poem, and it is a homograph which signifies both "muddy" and "moody" (more precisely, brave, proud, or haughty) in Middle Scots. Taken together, these individual instances point to a sustained discourse of emotions in *The Bruce* which marks race by affixing it to feelings first and foremost. Knights change political allegiances, beliefs, social statuses, and fortunes in the poem, but it is the feeling-emblems they display in battle which remain consistently identifiable according to the racial logic of crusader romance tropes. It is only in an ostensible reference work for Barbour's poem, *The Sultan of Babylon*, that we see this racialization of feeling-emblems destabilized and restructured as the category of gender is considered.

In previous chapters, I examined romances which used visual shorthands for the encoding of feelings. Visual description is the intuitive choice for a romance writer seeking to represent vivid feelings, because the discourse of heraldry itself is intensely visual in nature and often makes pointed mention of reading or seeing the identifying signs that knights "show" to one another in battle. But heraldry is a medium with a sonic dimension too, and poems like *The Bruce* constantly remark on the intelligibility of an army's emotional disposition based on their shouts, chants, and rallying cries amid the larger "noyis" of battle. Noise, as scholars like Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, Michelle Warren, and Michael Uebel observe, marks a boundary of perception and inclusion, designating that which is not understood and is thus treated as Other. Noise is also indicative of violence: chivalric romance writers often distinguish the bloodiest battles as those

which create the greatest "din" (caused, naturally, by the great "dint" of sword blows), and the act of labeling another's speech as noise is itself a kind of linguistic violence, a dismembering by way of disdaining to listen.

The violence of "noyis" is on high display in *Sultan*, particularly when Oliver repeatedly ignores Ferumbras's speech as the two face each other in single combat. Ferumbras, in many ways the very picture of a knight, goes disregarded as an individual with chivalric prowess, and Oliver discounts his masculine bravado as mere prattle. Then, in addressing his opponent, Oliver subsequently reduces Ferumbras to the more general category of Saracen, heathen, and pagan. The poem rejects the possibility that Ferumbras can simultaneously be a heroic, "worthi" knight *and* a Muslim man of color outraged at the injustices inflicted upon his people by Chrisitan aggressors, and so this scene between him and Oliver ends with his assimilation into the Christian chivalric community and a near total dissipation of his feeling-emblem of masculine bravado. That feeling-emblem and its associated masculine presentation flows over as a "charge" to his sister, Floripas.

Floripas is an exceptional character in the poem, in the larger tradition of *Fierabras* narratives, and in the genre of crusader romance as a whole. She emerges as a central figure at precisely the same time that her brother converts to Christianity, and she appears to adopt much of the aggressive chivalric rhetoric that Ferumbras loses in his pacifying conversion. For the remainder of the poem, she transgresses religious categories and gender norms, spending much of the poem in a threshold state between religious ideologies while also frequently adopting the speech patterns and actions of more conventionally masculine figures. Like in *The Bruce*, Floripas's feeling-emblems are the affective site upon which her racial identity is constructed, and her assertion of an aggressive, hyper-violent emotional disposition seems to characterize her as racially and religiously contaminated ("myscheve," as Roland says) in the eyes of the Frankish knights, even after Floripas speaks and acts as a Christian. In the end, *Sultan* wrests away the possibility that Floripas's masculine feeling-emblem could actually be the source of a meaningful subjectivity or resistance to the crusaders' project, and she is turned into the most ardent proponent of that project, calling for further crusader violence against her former community. Here *Sultan* reaches its most fantastical and delusional heights, imagining for its Northern European Christian audience that the very victims of crusader antagonism are its most vocal champions. By making Floripas present the same feeling-emblems that her brother

displayed when he rode out against Christian adversaries, the poem allows its audience to believe that some kind of religious or racial contamination lives on in a figure like Floripas even after she has converted to Christianity. She behaves erratically, defiantly, and with a threatening masculinity, all of which is enough to engender in the audience a skepticism about her status as Christian and to motivate their skepticism of Muslim converts as a whole.

The obvious historical context for his hyper-attention on contamination and on the permanence of conversion is the Christian conquest of al-Andalus. For all that we can learn from *Sultan* and *The Bruce* by reading them through the lens of Said's *Orientalism*, we should note that the cultural anxiety expressed by both poems concerns a North/South divide as much as an East/West divide. It is not an accident that both *The Bruce* and *Sultan* set their crusader narratives in Spain and imagine the Iberian peninsula to be the most active geographic region for one to encounter a religious or racial Other. In *The Bruce*, Douglas is not waging a war of conversion against the North African army of the Marinid Sultanate, but Barbour's emphasis on him as the leader of the vanguard of the King of Spain's army handily recasts the historical reality as chivalric wish fulfillment fantasy. Douglas appears as the chief hero of the battle—driving back the North African forces and then dying a noble death in service of Christendom—rather than as a vain interloper whose eagerness to memorialize Robert brought about his own downfall. As elsewhere in the poem, the scene of Douglas's battle in Spain plays fast and loose with characterizations of battle-bold knights, even when they are demonstrating very similar impulsive behaviors. For knights like Douglas and Giles d'Argentan, their enthusiasm to charge headlong into battle (and to certain death) is a rejection of the hesitancy they see among men on their own side. Their eagerness is a show of chivalric purity where the more calculated actions of other knights who flee the fight looks like spiritual contamination. And yet Barbour calls the King of Balmeryne's knights "mudy Sarasyne[s]" for showing the same eagerness. He claims that it is merely their numbers and their "mony fell fachoune" (XX.423), not their emotional enthusiasm, that explains their success in battle. So, in the poem's understanding of emotion, a feeling-emblem of battle-eagerness signifies bravery and chivalric purity when shown by a Scottish or Northern European knight, but the very same feeling-emblem is reduced to mere haughtiness when shown by North African knights. Furthermore, this battle-eagerness *helps* distinguish individuals among the European knights (Douglas is unique among the assembled Spanish crusaders, d'Argentan is the one knight of worth among the English army of Edward),

while the same battle-eagerness *erases* individual distinction among the North African knights, such that they are treated as a collective horde with any one individual replaceable by another.

What this suggests ultimately about Barbour's (and his Scottish audience's) understanding of chivalric emotions is that specific feeling-emblems like battle-eagerness and masculine bravado are recognizable as symbols of individual valor between knights in the Scottish and English armies, in the sense that a Scottish knight can "read" the chivalric purity of a knight like d'Argentan, even though he fights on the wrong side. This legibility of feeling-emblems holds even when Douglas travels to Spain, but it becomes increasingly unreliable, such that the only knights whom Douglas notes in battle are fellow Northern Europeans (William de St. Clair, Walter Logan, Robert). And finally, such feeling-emblems only communicate noise to Douglas when they are expressed by knights among the North African army (not a single one is given a name besides the King of Balmeryne). This degradation in the communicability of feeling-emblems is a symptom of moral suspicion regarding chivalric purity, and it implies that the feeling-emblems of Christian knights in Southern Europe are somehow less valid because of their proximity to Muslim knights of color. We might remember here too that according to the legend of Scota, the Scottish people themselves had Middle Eastern ancestors who traveled through Spain to reach Scotland. According to this foundation myth (which Barbour would have well-known in his own historical moment), Scottishness itself is defined by a geographic orientation away from Spain and away from Muslim majority countries. There is little, if anything, that the showing of specific feeling-emblems in *The Bruce* can tell us about the actual history of emotions among late medieval European aristocracy, because the depiction of those feeling-emblems has much more to do with the identities of those expressing them and where those identities fit in a medieval European racial hierarchy.

In the racially-oriented battlefield context of the crusader narratives in both *The Bruce* and *Sultan*, feeling-emblems cease to do the signifying work for which they exist as a romance trope. Instead of using emotional expressions to identify specific individuals and groups among the knightly class, feeling-emblems are reduced largely to "noyis," functional only as identity markers of racial and religious otherness when expressed by a non-white character or one of dubious Christian conviction. Floripas resists this flattening, using clear feeling-emblems of masculine aggression and raucous laughter to distinguish herself and assert a concrete form of agency, but her resistance is temporary and it requires that she sever any connection to her family

or wider community. I asked earlier if feeling-emblems offer a character like Floripas any meaningful resistance to conversion's erasure of Muslim identity, and the answer appears to be a resounding "no."

Whatever else we can learn from her character, Floripas mainly tells us about medieval English cultural anxieties and fears of Muslims, Middle Easterners, and women of color. This is not to say that Floripas is less subversive, less complex, or less compelling a character for being constructed by the Orientalizing gaze of Middle English romance, only that these resistant character traits are unlikely to be those which a late medieval English audience appreciated about her. More likely, Floripas's feeling-emblems are the poem's final way of insisting on her alterity and an encouragement to the audience to treat as suspect her membership in a European Christian community. We see this suspicion even in the wedding gift Charlemagne bestows upon her and Guy. She and Ferumbras are given all of Spain to divide between themselves, and Charlemagne retires to France, saying that they can visit when they'd like.[372] Charlemagne stops short of saying outright that he wants to keep Floripas and Ferumbras at arm's length, but the sentiment remains clear: "you're welcome to visit, but don't get comfortable in France." Several times at key junctures, Christian characters explicitly say that Floripas is a risk of spiritual or racial contamination, but more often *Sultan* simply uses feeling-emblems to signify otherness because, as José Esteban Muñoz argues persuasively, affect is a crucial part of how cultural, racial, and religious identities are expressed.[373]

We may very well wish that a medieval Northern European audience for *Sultan* could read in Floripas an indictment of its own cultural anxieties, fears of miscegenation, and Islamophobia, but we must also recognize that what Floripas actually did for that audience was

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[372] "Alle the londe of Spayne / Kinge Charles gyfe hem two / To departe bitwyxt hem twayne, / Ferumbras and Gy also / …He saide, 'Farewell, Sir Ferumbras, / Ye and Gye, my dere frende, / And thy wyf Dame Floripas. / For to Fraunce nowe wole I wende. / Vysityth me whan ye have space; / Into Fraunce makith your disporte'" (ll. 3195-3220).

[373] José Esteban Muñoz focuses specifically on how affect expresses ethnic identity and difference in the second chapter of his book, *The Sense of Brown*. Muñoz begins the chapter, titled "Feeling Brown: Ethnicity and Affect in Ricardo Bracho's *The Sweetest Hangover (and Other STDs)*," by arguing that one cannot arrive at a meaningful understanding of *latinidad* without considering the "structures of feeling" which distinguish Latinx identities and communities from the majoritarian norm of a white "national affect." As Muñoz says, building on Raymond Williams's concept, what "unites and consolidates oppositional groups is not simply the fact of identity but the way in which they perform affect, especially in relation to an official national affect that is aligned with a hegemonic class. Latina/o (and other minoritarian) theater and performance set out to specify and describe ethnic difference and resistance not in terms of simple being, but through the more nuanced route of feeling. More specifically, I am interested in plotting the way in which Latina/o theater and performance theatricalize a certain mode of feeling brown in a world painted white and organized by cultural mandates to feel white" (9-10).

validate such antipathies and give them new excuses to propagate. Whatever else one could conclude about *The Bruce* and *Sultan*, we can say with certainty that each text finds complex and convoluted ways to mark racial and religious otherness in the emotional expressions of its characters. At a historical moment when the popular imagination of Northern Europe was highly concerned with distinguishing between "pure" and "impure" Christian belief and between white bodies and black and brown ones, affect becomes a highly visible (and audible) site for the construction of religious and racial otherness. This process is, in many ways, fundamentally distinct from modern racial logics and technologies of race-making, but it is not so far removed as to be totally irrelevant. The belief that certain affects, feelings, and emotional registers are invalid because they don't comport with a white, masculine, Western normativity is alive and well in contemporary politics and popular culture, and it continues to function as a means of silencing the voices of women, people of color, and anyone existing outside of a Western European cultural framework. Identifying similarly prejudiced beliefs in late medieval crusader romance will not bring a stop to such practices today, but it can give the lie to their legitimacy. With continued attention to the racialization of emotion in both a medieval and modern context, we can hopefully reveal these biases for the covert attempts that they are to reify hierarchies of race, gender, religion, and culture through a discourse of feelings.

CODA

PALOMIDES, "WORSHYP," AND THE EXPLOITATION OF VULNERABILITY

Malory and Arthurian Enthusiasm

Long before the other parts of this project had taken shape, I knew that I would end with Sir Thomas Malory's *The Morte Darthur*. In some sense, it is the inevitable endpoint for a project which focuses on how late medieval romance represents and responds to the emotions of a changing aristocratic class because *The Morte Darthur* absorbs so many of the texts I've discussed in the earlier chapters and packages them for the dawn of the printing age in England. Of course, Malory is an equally enticing and frustrating subject because his work amplifies all of the usual challenges which critics face in trying to talk about a given romance without somehow talking past it (by focusing on its source texts, its comparators, its manuscript variations, its analogs in other languages, and so on). *The Morte Darthur* is a work compiled almost entirely from pre-existing Arthuriana by a knight self-consciously imitating the chivalric posturing of his subjects and compulsively citing his "Freynshe booke" (though often disingenuously), and it is also a work heavily edited and re-compiled by William Caxton for an early print market. The cumulative effect of these elements of the book's production mean that as one begins to look more closely at the text *The Morte Darthur*, the work itself seems to slip further and further away.

Malory's book purports to be a comprehensive retelling of the Arthurian arc while at the same time everywhere calling attention to the ways it is enmeshed with other texts, and it brims with historical references and plots and characters which seem to dangle threads from where they were cut out of other narrative traditions and sewn into Malory's opus. We can brush these threads away as distractions when we read Malory—the enduring popularity of *The Morte Darthur* as a stand-alone source text for modern fantasy adaptations across all media suggest this is a perfectly serviceable approach—or we can see them like the Bejaminian trace, giving the appearance of nearness to countless other texts cited directly or indirectly in Malory's work.[374]

[374] See Benjamin's theorization of both trace and aura in *The Arcades Project*: "Trace and aura. The trace is appearance of a nearness, however far removed the thing that left it behind may be. The aura is appearance of a

Indeed, one can feel when reading Malory as though they have read half a dozen other romances by sheer osmosis, filtering out and processing a text like the Prose *Tristan* or *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* through Malory's retelling and direct copying. But then sometimes a spark of originality flares up in the book, maybe in the form of a candid glimpse into the grim battlefield reality of corpse-looting or maybe in the form of Malory's description of imprisonment, drawn from his own first-hand experience.[375] These moments lend a uniqueness to Malory's work which challenges its classification as merely a compilation or anthology, but it would be hard to argue that such moments outweigh *The Morte Darthur*'s many limitations: its pacing is awkward in places and jarring in others, its episodes are repetitive, its narrator seems to know of no other descriptive mode than hyperbole, and in general it falls far short of the seamless, totalizing version of the Arthurian project which Malory sets as his aim. It is not that I think the creative moments in *The Morte Darthur* make the work "great" in any critical sense of the word. Rather, these moments of creativity which flare up in an otherwise largely plodding text make it curiously affective for me, such that Malory's version of characters and plots are the ones which stick in my mind more than any other.

If ever I think of Galahad and the Grail, I think of Malory's Galahad cautioning that Lancelot must "remembir of this worlde unstable" before ascending to Heaven, or of the Tristan saga, I think of Tristan asking Malory's Dinadan to promise his support in combat and Dinadan responding cynically that he promises "to looke uppon and to doo what I may to saue myselff."[376] Even Malory's asides to the audience are somehow more memorable than narratorial insertions in other romances; when *The Morte Darthur* finishes a catalog of all the hunting terms

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distance, however close the thing that calls it forth. In the trace, we gain possession of the thing; in the aura, it takes possession of us" (447).

[375] During "The Deth of Arthur," Arthur lies dying from combat with Mordred and his forces, and bids his knight Sir Lucan to go and find out "what betokyns that noyse in the fylde." Lucan leaves Arthur's side and sees the battlefield populated only by bodies and robbers: "...and so as he yode he saw and harkened by the moonelyght how that pyllours and robbers were com into the fylde to pylle and to robbe many a full noble knyght of brochys and bees and of many a good rynge and many a ryche juell. And who that were nat dede all oute, there they slewe them for their harneys and their ryches" (686.20-24). This scene is original to Malory.

Malory makes several mentions of his time in prison in *The Morte Darthur*. One occasion concerns the passage in which Sir Darras puts Tristan, Palomides, and Dinadan in prison. As Malory says, Tristan endured "grete payne, for syknes had undirtake hym—and that ys the grettist payne a presoner may have, for all the whyle a presonere may have hys helth of body, he may endure undir the mercy of God and in hope of good delyveraunce; but whan syknes towchith a presoners body, than may a presonere say all welth ys hym berauffte, and than hath he cause to wayle and wepe…" (327.29-35).

[376] Malory 586.35-6 and 307.41-2 respectively.

we supposedly owe to Tristan with "all maner jantylmen hath cause to the worldes ende to prayse Sir Trystram and to pray for his soule—'Amen,' sayde Sir Thomas Malleorré," or explains why sometimes the weaker knight beats the "byggar" one,[377] it feels like reading the work not of a self-serious romance writer, translator, and compiler but of a fan. Some of *The Morte Darthur*'s appeal to me is surely owed to the allure of "authorship," whatever that means in Malory's case (almost every other text I treat in this project has an unknown author), but I am mainly drawn to its enthusiasm, its sincerity, and its willingness to be embarrassing in both those things.

Sometimes Malory's narrator is fairly harmless in his enthusiasm and sincerity, as when he explains the honorable legal customs "used in tho dayes" to his debased modern audience,[378] but other times his narrator uncritically reinforces whatever prejudice he has inherited from his source material or adds a fresh splash of misogyny, Islamophobia, or classism all Malory's own. I am drawn to these moments of uncritical enthusiasm because it feels like Malory is tipping his hand to me or like I am overhearing something shared in secret to a like-minded confidant. So much of my work on this project has been spent drawing out social and political discourses which are subtly written into romances through the language of feeling-emblems, and by comparison, when I read Malory, it is as though he's saying the quiet part out loud. I've argued already that works like *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* and *The Sultan of Babylon* are more subversive of dominant cultural prejudices about race and queerness than they seem at first, but what I want to suggest here is that *The Morte Darthur*, for all the time it spends critiquing the perceived shortcomings of Malory's own contemporary moment, is mostly interested in the preservation of the status quo.

Preoccupation with social status, prestige, and power is baked into the genre of medieval romance, but Malory turns this preoccupation into an all-consuming obsession. Some version of the word "worship" (e.g. "worshipful," "disworship," "worshipped") shows up around 385 times in *The Morte Darthur*, which doesn't come close to touching the frequency with which Malory mentions figures like Arthur, Lancelot, or Gawain, but it does drastically outnumber how often

[377] 405.35-7 and 293.32-5 respectively.

[378] "For such custom was used in tho dayes, for favoure, love, nother affinité there sholde be none other but ryghtuous jugemente, as well uppon a Kynge as uppon a knyght, and as well uppon a quene as uppon another poure lady" (595.5-8).

Guenevere is mentioned and—perhaps more tellingly—any mentions of "prowess."[379] There is some semantic overlap between the concept of "worship" and "prowess," but the former more specifically refers to one's honor, esteem, and worthiness, while the latter refers to actual bravery in combat (the "grete dedes of armes" which Malory so often invokes). We can see then that Malory is more interested in the feelings and the reputation attained through chivalric deeds than he is with the unglamorous reality of military engagement, and this is borne out again and again by the way which Malory gives pride of place in *The Morte Darthur* to tournament fighting over actual battles. Such a decision contradicts the received teaching in chivalry manuals of the age, which consistently rank tournament fighting as the least worshipful chivalric deed and the one which earns the least renown for knights.[380] However, Malory knows his audience, and for the late fifteenth century English readers of *The Morte Darthur*, chivalry was outmoded as a code of conduct, battlefield technology had largely made the armored knight irrelevant, and the conventions of heraldry were more often used in social and economic designation than in actual military capacities. What the substitution of "worship" for "prowess" does, then, is allow Malory's aristocratic and emergent bourgeois audiences (who have access to their own heraldic signifiers and titles gained through economic status) to identify with the honorable feelings of Arthur and the Round Table knights without having to actually do any work of chivalry. For the most part, this transmutation of aristocratic pretension into real chivalric worshipfulness seems to succeed in *The Morte Darthur*, because Malory creates ample room for his audience to imagine that they are the inheritors of the Arthurian project. Where things get complicated is in the transmutation of dishonorable or ugly feelings, particularly those expressed by the figure of Palomides, because these negative affective energies resist without being able to fully dismantle the framework of "worship" upon which all of *The Morte Darthur* is built.

Malory's adaptation of the Tristan narrative from his French sources is arguably most faithful in the way it preserves the episodic, often cyclical pattern of that narrative in which Tristan repeatedly crosses paths with the same figures and repeats similar conflicts with

[379] Arthur is mentioned roughly 1500 times, Lancelot over 2000, Gawain 664, and Guenevere only 158. "Prowess" is mentioned 91 times in total.

[380] Geoffroi de Charny follows a conventional scale of prowess which ranks men-at-arms who are "engaged in war more highly than any other men-at-arms" (89.10-11), because he views tournament fighting as distracting from the earning of worship in actual battle ("for in the practice or arms in jousts some are pleased enough with what they do without undertaking any other deeds of arms"). Geoffroi's constant refrain is *qui plus fait, meix vault* ("he who does more is of greater worth").

characters like King Mark. Because Palomides is the chief chivalric foil for Tristan and rival suitor of Isolde but also a faithful friend and defender of Tristan's honor, the two engage each other often in moments of sustained frustration which can never fully tip over into lethal violence. There are at least a dozen discrete interactions between Tristan and Palomides recorded in the Tristan books of *The Morte Darthur*, and they tend to take one of two forms: either Tristan and Palomides meet each other in a tournament fight when access to Isolde is offered to the victor or one stumbles upon the other in the forest during a moment of private anguish and the two attempt to resolve their dispute away from the public gaze. Sometimes one of them is disguised or eavesdropping on the soliloquies of the other, such that each is prone to a kind of unintentional emotional vulnerability with the other. These are moments when a character's private feelings are involuntarily rendered legible to another, which is to say that they are turned into feeling-emblems by an onlooker without the consent of the knight who is showing them, and this is largely to the detriment of the knight being observed.

I want to end this project on feeling-emblems with a few close readings of passages concerning Tristan and Palomides because these passages underscore issues I've identified in the earlier chapters with how feeling-emblems get used to suppress characters' identities rather than to promote them. Because feeling-emblems are social technologies in romance and need to be comprehensible to others to be effective markers of identity, they can also make a character vulnerable to being totally consumed by the chivalric community with which they interact. This is true for the Scottish knight Galeron in *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, who only regained his rightful lands after being integrated into the Round Table brotherhood and losing his autonomy, and it is true for Floripas in *The Sultan of Babylon*, whose racialized anger and gender non-conforming presentation shift from being subversive expressions of a Muslim Other into emphatic calls for the continuation of crusader violence. Palomides's treatment in *The Morte Darthur* is an even starker example of the hegemonic use of feeling-emblems, and I have selected three passages which move us through how Palomides is assimilated by the book into the Christian chivalric community: first Palomides's feelings are racialized by the narrator and he is made involuntarily vulnerable, then Tristan turns Palomides's private complaint into a public feeling-emblem denoting treason, and then after the two fight to resolve the dispute Tristan takes Palomides to be baptized and serves as his godfather. In each of these passages, the base narrative is borrowed

mainly from the Prose *Tristan*, but the details I will focus on are original to Malory and represent an understanding of feeling-emblems specific to his work.

Three Palomides Readings

After the first day of the Tournament of the Castle Maidens, in which Palomides performed admirably (on the side of King Arthur) but was defeated by Tristan, Palomides is left bound up in the woods by Bors and Ector. Tristan, disguising himself, comes to his rescue, only to find that Palomides has already freed himself and is in complete disarray at having lost the tournament match to Tristan:

> ...Than Sir Trystram toke hys horse and hys swerde, and rode thyder; and there he harde how the knyght complayned unto hymselff and sayde, "I, wofull knyght, Sir Palomydes, what mysseadventure befallith me that thus am defoyled with falsehed and treson, thorow Sir Bors and Sir Ector? Alas!" he seyde, "why lyve I so longe?" And than he gate his swerde in hys honde and made many straunge sygnes and tokyns; and so thorow the rageynge he threw hys swerd in that fountayne. Than Sir Palomydes wayled and wrange hys hondys—and at the laste, for pure sorow, he ran into that fountayne and sought aftir hys swerde.
>
> Than Sir Trystram saw that, and ran uppon Sir Palomydes and hylde hym in hys armys faste. "What art thou," seyde Sir Palomydes, "that holdith me so?" "I am a man of thys foreyste that wold the none harme." "Alas" seyde Sir Palomydes, "I may never wyn worship where Sir Trystram ys; for ever where he ys and I be, there gete I no worshyp; and yf he be away, for the moste party I have the gré—onles that Sir Launcelot be there, other ellis Sir Lamerok." Than Sir Palomydes sayde, "Onys in Irelonde Sir Trystram put me to the wors, and anothir tyme in Cornwayle, and in other placis in thys londe." "What wolde ye do," seyde Sir Trystram, "and ye had Sir Trystram?" "I wolde fyght with him," seyde Sir Palmoydes," "and ease my harte uppon hym—and yet, to say the sothe, Sir Trystram ys the jantyllyste knyght in thys worlde lyvynge." (319.31-320.7)

Language fails Palomides here as he tries to speak his woe. The narrator records that he make strange signs and "tokyns" (visible indicators of an inward state),[381] and then proceeds to wail, wring his hands, and throw his weapon in despair. Dorsey Armstrong says of this passage that the "inability of Palomides to articulate what he is feeling… paired with the more striking inability of the narrator to describe exactly the 'straunge sygnes and tokyns' that he makes indicates that Palomides's position and behavior is radically different from that of any other

[381] *MED* "token" n. 3a

knight encountered in the *Morte Darthur* thus far" ("Postcolonial Palomides" 176). Armstrong is right to put the emphasis here on the narrator's failure of expression rather than on that of Palomides, because gestures like hand-wringing are common (particularly in Malory, but they are abundant throughout Middle English examples of the genre) while the mention of strange signs and tokens is rare. In fact, chivalric tokens are mentioned several times in Malory, but they are always described either as conventional material objects (a ring, an olive branch, a holly branch) or as symbolic interpretations of dreams (e.g. the King with the Hundred Knights dreams of a great destructive wind which betokens a great battle). Furthermore, the Middle English "straunge" means not just the unfamiliar but the foreign or the alien, so it is rather explicit in the text that Palomides's affect (his token) is being represented by the narrator as racially, ethnically, or religiously othered. Precisely which of these categories of strangeness the narrator means when referring to Palomides's tokens is unclear, but all are addressed at various points in the *Morte Darthur*. Here I am mainly concerned with how Palomides's signs and tokens speak to his racial othering in the eyes of Tristan and the narrator.

We can call Palomides's behavior a racialized feeling-emblem because the emotional expressions Palomides displays are highly conventional for the genre (and thus should be easy to parse) but they are labeled "straunge" and kept at a distance by the narrator due to Palomides's racial identity, much the way that Palomides's black and white coat of arms[382] signifies his ambivalent place relative to the Christian Arthurian community. Much of Palomides's behavior here comports with Hong's theorization of minor feelings, including their untelegenic, negative, and non-cathartic qualities. And yet, it would be missing much to say that the passage above only represents Palomides's racial reality being dismissed or questioned, because it also contains a great deal of intimacy between knights which at least suggests the possibility of catharsis.

When Tristan arrives to aid Palomides, he does so in disguise, and this puts him in an awkward position to help. To be sure, his rush to embrace Palomides is emotionally arresting (it stops what appears to be Palomides's attempt to throw himself on his sword), but Palomides proceeds to explain that all he wants is to get worship of Tristan and to "ease my harte uppon hym" in combat. The expression is idiomatic,[383] but it suggests that the only obstacle preventing

[382] See 324.41-46: "'What bare he in hys shylde?' seyde Sir Trystram? 'Sir, hit was endented with whyght and blacke,' seyde the damesell. 'A' seyde Sir Trystram, 'that was Palamydes, the good knyght. For well I know hym,' seyde Sir Trystram, 'for one of the beste knyghtes lyvyng in thys realme.'"

[383] *MED* "herte" 3a.

Palomides from achieving freedom from anxiety and emotional disturbance is Tristan's vulnerability and honesty about his own identity. By denying Palomides that satisfaction and that opportunity to gain worship, Tristan maintains a power imbalance in which he is "the jantyllyste knyght in thys worlde lyvynge" and Palomides is left grappling with an existential anguish which makes him question why he is even alive. There is, then, a potential reckoning of identity in this scene which the white character refuses to initiate, choosing instead to let the marginalized character[384] suffer the emotional burden, the trauma, and social alienation of expressing feelings both ugly and minor to an audience that insists on reading him as "straunge."

Both Hong and Ngai remark on the ongoing, sustained quality of minor/ugly feelings[385] and suggest that such feelings are most apparent in serialized or episodic genres because these genres tend to accumulate iterations of moods or sustain feelings across narrative arcs. There are few genres past or present with a better claim to serialization than chivalric romance, and Malory's work is a prime example of how largely discrete romance narratives can be woven together to form the trajectory of a larger story. The Tristan narrative, both in Malory and in his French sources, is particularly interested in repetition, and reading through it one cannot help but feel a creeping *deja vu* as Tristan, Iseult, Mark (and recurrent figures like Palomides, Dinadan, and Brangaine) seem to replay the same plot movements time and again. The heaviness which Palomides wrestles with after the first day of the tournament, for example, is far from an isolated incident, and just a few lines later he is again lost in "woodnes," crying like "a man oute of hys mynde" (324.20-30).[386] However, the passage I turn to next concerns a much later section of the Tristan books, when Palomides grows "hevyar" because of his proximity to Isolde.

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[384] Neither Malory's text nor the Prose *Tristan* ever give a physical description of Palomides which addresses somatic race, so any speculation about Palomedes' racial identity must rest on his Babylonian ancestry as reported in the romance *Palamedes*.

[385] Ngai says that the ugly feelings in her study "have managed to endure in a way that other feelings once widely in circulation (like the nineteenth-century feelings of 'neurasthenia' and 'amativeness') have not," and says that moods such as "irritation and anxiety, for instance, are defined by a flatness or ongoingness entirely opposed to the 'suddenness' on which Aristotle's aesthetics of fear depends" (*Ugly Feelings* 7). Hong is in agreement: "There is no immediate emotional release in the literature of minor feelings. They are cumulative. Change is measured in the internal 'waverings of the mind' or in shape-shifting personae. Because minor feelings are ongoing they lend themselves more readily to forms and genres that are themselves serial…" (*Minor Feelings* 57).

[386] And a lityll we woll turne unto Sir Palomydes, that aftir he had a falle of Sir Trystram, he was nyghehonde araged oute of hys wytte for despite of Sir Trystram, and so he followed hym by adventure. And as he cam by a ryver, in hys woodnes he wolde have made hys horse to have lopyn over the watir; and the horse fayled footyng and felle in the ryver, wherefore Sir Palomydes was adrad leste he shulde have bene drowned. And than he avoyded hys horse and swam to the londe, and lete hys horse go downe by adventure. And whan he cam to the londe, he toke of hys harnys and sate romynge and cryynge as a man oute of hys mynde. (324.20-30)

After Lancelot saves Palomides from being carted off to be killed for slaying another knight during a tournament battle, the two travel with Tristan back to Joyus Garde, the castle held by Lancelot where Tristan and Isolde often hide out together. Fittingly, the narrator tells us that there was "grete joy amonge them" at Joyus Garde, and Lancelot heaps praise on Palomides as a renowned knight of worship, but Palomides grows heavier day by day because he is in the company of Isolde but cannot love her openly. After enduring what he can, Palomides flees Joyus Garde and runs into the woods, where his emotional complaint is overheard by Tristan:

> But ever Sir Palomydes faded and mourned, that all men had merveyle wherefore he faded so away. So uppon a day, in the dawnynge, Sir Palomydes wente into the foreste by hymselff alone; and there he founde a welle, and anone he loked into the well and in the watir he sawe his owne vysayge, how he was discolowred and defaded, a nothynge lyke as he was.
>
> "Lorde Jesu, what may this meane?" seyde Sir Palomydes. And thus he seyde to hymselff: "A, Palomydes, Palomydes! Why arte thou thus defaded, and ever was wonte to be called one of the fayrest knyghtes of the worlde? Forsothe, I woll no more lyve this lyff, for I love that I may never gete nor recover. And therewythall he leyde hym downe by the welle, and so began to make a ryme of La Beall Isode and [hym]. And so in the meanewhyle Sir Trystram was ryddyn into the same foreyste to chace an harte of grece (but Sir Trystram wolde nat ryde an huntynge nevermore unarmed bycause of Sir Brewnys Saunze Pité).
>
> And so Sir Trystram rode into the foreyste up and downe, and as he rode he harde one synge mervaylowsly lowde; and that was Sir Palomydes whyche lay by the welle. And than Sir Trystram rode sofftly thydir, for he demed that there was som knyght arraunte whyche was at the welle.
>
> And whan Sir Trystram cam nyghe, he descended downe frome hys horse and tyed his horse faste tyll a tre; and so he cam nere on foote, and sone aftir he was ware where lay Sir Palomydes by the welle, and sange lowde and myryly. And ever the complayntys were of La Beall Isode—whyche was mervaylously well seyde, and pyteuously and full dolefully made—and all the hole songe Sir Trystram harde, worde by worde; and whan he had herde all Sir Palomydes complaynte, he was wrothe oute of mesure, and thought for to sle hym there as he lay.
>
> Than Sir Trystram remembyrde hymselff that Sir Palomydes was unarmed, and of so noble a name that Sir Palomydes had, and also the noble name that hymselff had. Than he made a restraynte of his angir; and so he wente unto Sir Palomydes a soffte pace and seyde, "Sir Palomydes, I have harde youre complaynte, and of youre treson that ye have owed me longe, and wyte you well, therefore ye shall dye. And yf hit were nat for shame of knyghthode, thou sholdyst nat ascape my hondys, for now I know well thou haste awayted me wyth treson--and therefore," seyde Sir Trystram, "tell me how thou wolt acquyte the." (458.26-459.21)

We can appreciate that Palomides is again lamenting next to a water source, now a well rather than a fountain. This is, of course, a convenient way for Palomides to see his "owne vysayge" and be alarmed at the way he has become "discolowred and defaded, a nothynge lyke as he was," but it is also foreshadowing his eventual baptism. In these passages, Palomides is struggling with self-perception, with articulating his feelings, and with a crisis of identity, and he is doing so next to a stand-in for perhaps the most culturally pervasive symbol of medieval Christian initiation, the baptismal font. In the first passage, Palomides's interaction with the fountain is organized around frustration and self-destruction (he throws his sword into the fountain in desperation and retrieves it only to throw himself on it), but the well in the second passage is a genuine mirror, serving to externalize and reflect back to Palomides feelings which had only been internal to him until that point.

We should also note here that this second passage lacks any of the first passage's references to racialized affects or appearances: there is no mention of " straunge sygnes and tokyns," and though both the narrator and Palomides refer to his complexion, they are doing so in the language of humoral theory, where words like "discolowred" and "defaded" and "fayrest" denote a character's vitality and emotional disposition, not markers of somatic race. Indeed, there is little here to indicate the struggle of articulation we saw in the first passage, either on the part of Palomides or the narrator; when overcome with heaviness, Palomides sits down by the well and composes a rhyme about Isolde. Extemporaneous poetry as a form of processing grief or lovesickness is a hallmark for the genre (the mournful knight dressed in black from Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess* is a memorable example), and it is a comparatively lucid and organized way to process one's ugly feelings, but not one free from its own dangers.

If, in the first passage, Palomides is at a disadvantage by being "straunge" to the reader and alienated from other knights, in the second passage he is at a disadvantage by being too well known, or known in ways he did not invite. In composing a poem about his unrequited love, Palomides codifies his feelings into a sign system which is comprehensible to others, unintentionally turning his grief and love and heaviness into a feeling-emblem which Tristan can read and hold against him as evidence of "treson." Even the poetic form itself seems to have betrayed Palomides. Throughout the French romance tradition, Palomides is the principal representation of a Muslim Other whom Christian characters consider to be part of their community, and so he is always at the mercy of chivalric rules and customs which were not made

for him, rebuffed as an outsider whenever he gets too close to Isolde yet welcomed back into the fold when he earns worship for the Round Table brotherhood. In this passage, Palomides eschews the signs and tokens which the narrator earlier calls "straunge" and expresses himself in the culturally dominant French poetic mode; one might imagine that this would protect him from some degree of recrimination, but the opposite is true. Such is the twice fraught position of a racialized subject like Palomides in *The Morte Darthur*: he is alienated from the chivalric community when his feelings are not understandable to the audience, to the narrator, or to other characters, and he is exploited when his feelings are translated into the established romance conventions of European poetic forms. Between the first and second passages, Palomides's autonomy and control over his affective expressions are gradually eroded as Tristan draws out his feelings, turning what are at first private sentiments into consumable feeling-emblems. This process reaches its conclusion at the end of the Tristan books, when the two fight to near-death, and Palomides asks for baptism rather than continuing to fight for Isolde.

When Tristan and Palomides finally meet again near Joyus Garde, Palomides returns the favor Tristan showed him earlier and refuses to attack him while he's unarmed (or "naked"). The scene itself is a startling moment of mutual recognition and respect, with each saying that they understand the strength and prowess of the other and trying to consider the conflict from the other person's perspective. Palomides asks Tristan, "that ye were armed at all ryghtes as well as I am, and I naked as ye be, what wolde ye do to me now, be youre trewe knyghthode?" and Tristan says he would not fight in such a situation, to which Palomides responds, "No more woll I… therefore ryde furth on thy way" (492.5-15). As elsewhere in the Tristan books, the two knights show a great deal of concern for each other here and a level of emotional honesty which perhaps only comes from sustaining a chivalric rivalry over hundreds of pages. They are, at this moment in *The Morte Darthur*, as close to equals as they ever get, because each imagines what it would feel like to occupy the position of the other, and they come to the same conclusion based on a shared chivalric code. However, immediately after Palomides says that he won't fight Tristan unarmed, Tristan asks why Palomides "wolt nat be crystynde" when his brother Sir Safir[387] has

[387] Sir Safir's name recalls the Arabic word *Safar,* referring to the second month of the lunar Islamic calendar. By contrast, Palomedes's namesake appears to be the Greek figure of Palamedes, mentioned by Ovid and other writers (but not Homer) as playing a role in the siege of Troy. This is perhaps a counterintuitive coding of the brothers, because *The Morte Darthur* (and the Prose *Tristan* to a lesser extent) represents Safir as a more enthusiastic convert to Christianity and and Western cultural norms. The two knights have another brother, Segwarides, whose name possibly suggests a Romance language version of "security" (particularly in the version Segurades, which is used in the Prose *Tristan*), such as French *sécurité(s)* or Spanish *seguridad(es)*.

been for "many a day." This simple question re-establishes the social hierarchy between the two and puts Palomides in a position of subordination to Tristan.

As Palomides explains several times throughout *The Morte Darthur*, he has "had many a day a good beleve in Jesu Cryste and hys mylde modir Mary" in his heart and soul, and is only waiting to convert until he has proved himself against the knights of the Round Table. Specifically, he says that he has one battle left to do before converting, and at this Tristan replies, "as for one batayle, thou shalt nat seke hyt longe—for God deffende… that thorow my defaute thou sholdyste lengar lyve thus a Sarazyn!" (492.24-29). Malory's creative intervention here is subtle but important: in the French sources like The *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* and the later Prose *Tristan*, Palomides does express a similar desire to defer his conversion until he has tested (*éprouvé*) all of the Round Table knights in combat, and Tristan does push him toward conversion, but it is Palomides himself who seeks out Camelot so that he can be baptized of his own volition. In each of Malory's key French sources, the conversion happens after the completion of the Grail quest, and in the the longer version of the Prose *Tristan*, it happens after Tristan has been killed by King Mark.[388] By contrast, *The Morte Darthur* has Tristan play out a kind of one man crusader fantasy, picking up the armor of a nearby knight and donning it so that he can beat Palomides into submission and then personally preside over his baptism. After a brief but harrowing fight, Tristan has Palomides at a disadvantage, and the two pause to revisit their conversation from earlier:

> "How now? sayde Sir Trystram. "For now I have the at avauntayge," seyde Sir Trystram, "as thou haddist me thys day. But hyt shall never be seyde in no courte nor amonge no good knyghtes that Sir Trystram shall sle ony knyght that ys wepynles; and therefore take thou thy swerde, and lat us make an ende of thys batayle."
>
> "As for to do thys batayle," seyde Sir Palomydes, "I dare ryght well ende hyt. But I have no grete luste to fyght no more—and for thys cause," seyde Sir Palomydes: "myne offence ys to you nat so grete but that we may be freyndys, for all that I have offended ys and was for the love of La Beall Isode…
>
> And as for the offence that I have done, hyt was ayenste youre owne persone; and for that offence ye have gyvyn me thys day many sad strokys—and som I have gyffyn you agayne—and now I dare sey I felte never man of youre myght nothir so well-brethed, but yf hit were Sir Launcelot du Laake. Wherefore I requyre you, my lorde, forgyff me all that I have offended unto you:

[388] See Loseth p. 218-ff fn. 293a and p. 396 for different versions of the baptism in the Prose *Tristan* and discussion of their differences.

> "And thys same day have me to the nexte churche, and fyrste late me be clene conffessed, and aftir that se youreselff that I be truly baptysed. And than woll we all ryde togydyrs unto the courte of Kynge Arthure, that we may be there at the nexte hyghe feste folowynge." (494.7-31).

It is not hard to understand why *The Morte Darthur* version of Palomides's conversion proceeds as it does: having Tristan disarm Palomides establishes symmetry from earlier in the scene when Tristan was the "naked" one, and having Tristan be the one to initiate the conversion tidily wraps up their long-standing feud just a few dozen lines before the end of the Tristan books and the beginning of the Grail Quest. But Malory's version also completely displaces the thoughts and motivations of Palomides as he articulates them elsewhere in the book so that Tristan can graduate from his status as a wily adulterer into paternalistic crusader knight. There is no reciprocation from Tristan of the ways he has "done offense" to Palomides, even though he has deliberately concealed his identity and manipulated Palomides in the past; there is just the promise that he forgives Palomides for all the "evyll wyll" done by him (494.32). This scene of promised conversion, as with the others I have examined before it, exploits the emotional vulnerability of a marginalized, non-Christian, non-white character for the aggrandizement of a white European protagonist, and Malory literally rewrites the narrative to insert that protagonist and give his development center stage. In converting, Palomides gains membership in the Arthurian community, but he loses a significant amount of the agency and self-determination which made him so worshipful a knight originally. Of the more than 700 times that Malory mentions Palomides by name, 704 of those times occur in the Tristan books or earlier; after he converts, Palomides only shows up in *The Morte Darthur* as part of the catalogs of names involved in the final conflicts between Arthur and Mordred and Arthur and Lancelot. In effect, he is relegated to the background once he's assimilated into the Round Table brotherhood, much like another outsider knight who happens to attend his baptism.

For reasons that are not immediately clear, Malory chooses Sir Galeron of Galwey as the knight from whom Tristan borrows a suit of armor and a sword in his duel against Palomides. There is no obvious reason for this choice, because Galeron is basically a non-entity elsewhere in *The Morte Darthur*[389] and he has no prior relationship to either Palomides or Tristan. Galeron is

[389] The scene of the duel is the only time that Galeron speaks in Malory, and he is just a name in the battlefield catalogs at the climactic end of *The Morte Darthur*. In total, his name is mentioned only ten times.

not even a known interloper of the Tristan narrative cycle, appearing only in *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, meaning that Malory had to pull him from a source totally unrelated to his "Freynshe booke" and insert him at the conclusion of the Tristan books. In still a more bizarre decision, Malory has Galeron accompany Palomides and Tristan on their voyage to the church where Palomides will "be clene conffessed," and Galeron serves as one of Palomides's two godfathers when he is baptized (the other is Tristan). It is worth remembering the relevant events from *The Awntyrs off Arthure*: Galeron, a knight of the Scottish borderlands, seeks justice from Arthur for wrongfully appropriating his lands, and after losing a duel to Gawain, Galeron's life is spared by Guenevere and his lands returned to him, as long as he accepts membership in the Round Table brotherhood and swears fealty to Arthur. The "conversion" in *Awntyrs* is one of landholdings and territorial power rather than religious belief, but the end result is the same. Both Palomides and Galeron lose their agency when they lose their duels, and if each is given a second life by being spared the sword, it is on the Round Table's terms, with the explicit understanding that all worship accrues to Arthur, not themselves.

Perhaps this parallelism is Malory's intention when he drafts Galeron into service for the conclusion of the Tristan books. It certainly is in keeping with his enthusiast's approach to his project, in that he often collects pieces from his sources and rearranges them in *The Morte Darthur* to create symmetry (e.g. shifting the campaign on the Continent against Emperor Lucius to one of the earliest episodes, so that it more strongly contrasts with Arthur's fight against Mordred at the end of the book; making Tristan the one who christens Sir Priamus at the end of the work, so that he has one final "noble deed" before being killed by Mark).[390] Even the division of the Tristan section into two books has less to do with some important break in the narrative (the "secunde boke" of Tristan effectively starts in the middle of a quote from Arthur) than it does with Malory trying to translate a manuscript division from his source into his version of the the story.[391] In a sense, including Galeron as one of the knights who ushers Palomides into the

[390] Of course, the textual history of *The Morte Darthur* includes many more editorial decisions than Malory's; one of Caxton's most well-documented interventions in the printing of the book is his recategorization of the manuscript copy into new divisions. As Lotte Hellinga argues, Caxton adheres fairly close to the order of the Winchester Manuscript in many ways, but "Caxton's version differs from the text of the manuscript also in places where there is no cause to suspect an error," and this could suggest that Caxton consulted French sources for *The Morte Darthur* "when he was in doubt about the clarity of the text and his own capacity to emend it" (111).

[391] See Shepherd p. 337 fn. 9: "...this rather awkward transition between 'books' could represent Malory's interpretation of a notation in his source text made by a scribe who has come to the end of the first physical volume of his copy text."

Round Table community is a kind of authorial flourish from Malory, a way of showing his command of the Arthurian corpus, but it has the curious side effect of making Galeron an accomplice to precisely the same process of disempowering assimilation that he undergoes at the hands of Gawain in *The Awntyrs off Arthure*.

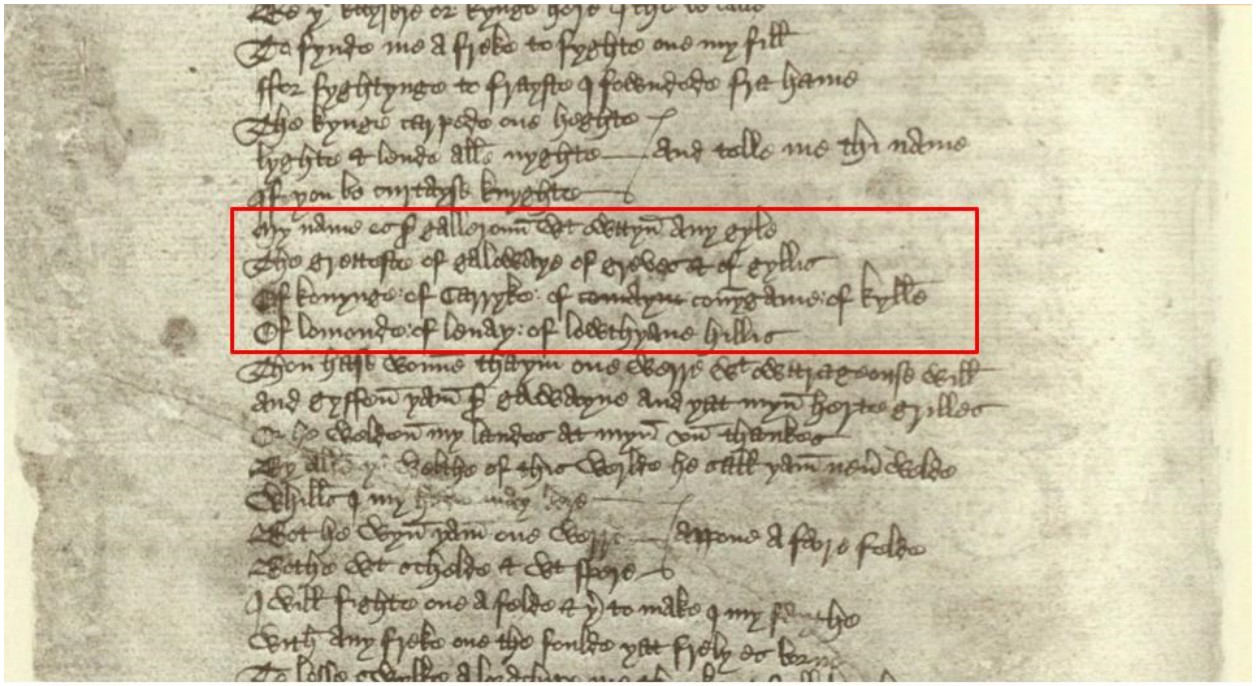
Galeron, once the voice of critique against the relentless territorial acquisitiveness of Arthur's rule, is now responsible for bringing one more knight into the fold, both through providing the weapons and armor for Tristan to fight Palomides and through serving as a sponsor of the ritual baptism. This kind of transition from periphery to center of the court is common in Arthurian romance, and it is often accompanied by increasingly dubious actions as one has more access to power (Lancelot, Gareth, and Gawain all have such trajectories, and Malory comments upon them critically at different points), but the dynamic here between Palomides, Tristan, and Galeron is notable for the stark difference between how Malory presents the conclusion and what actually happens. In his telling, Palomides's conversion is universally a cause for celebration, such that "the Kynge and all the courte were ryght glad that Sir Palomydes was crystynde" (494.44-5). Read as I have presented it, however, the conversion is the culmination of a long process of emotional exploitation and an imbalance of power sustained largely through Tristan's insistence on turning Palomides's private grief into a public feeling-emblem and his resistance to identify himself through his own feeling-emblems. Malory's last word on Palomides (before he reappears briefly in the conclusion of *The Morte Darthur*) is just to say that he returned to chasing the Questing Beast, that perfectly pointless quarry which Palomides himself seems to understand exists more to keep him occupied than to earn him any worship.

"Here is the ende"

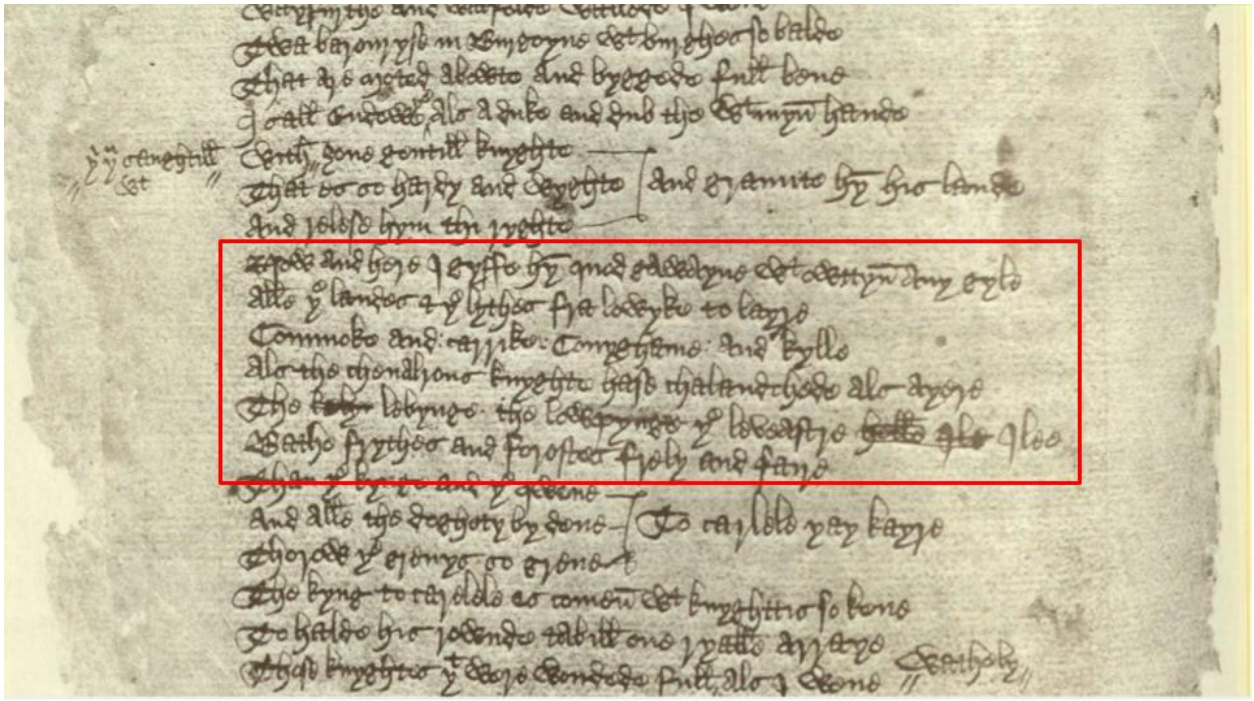
Palomides will always be the most compelling character which Malory adapts for *The Morte Darthur* because he is at once the most maligned among the top tier of Round Table knights and the most aware of his predicament. There is a knowingness in his constant frustration and "hevynesse" that draws our attention to all the ways in which the chivalric ethos that Malory lauds is fundamentally unfair and opportunistic. Palomides is "worshypful" when he falls in line with the expectations of the Christian chivalric brotherhood, and he is "recreante" whenever he challenges those expectations, but more to the point, his feelings and expressions are the target of

countless attacks on the part of Tristan and the like as they try to resolve his identity as a noble Muslim knight into something which puts them more at ease. The refrain about Palomides is best said by Galeron, only a few lines before he steps into the role of godfather: "Alas… that ys grete pyté that so good a knyght and so noble a man off armys sholde be uncrystynde" (493.8-9). What Malory and his version of the Tristan narrative reveal better than any other text I have treated in this project is that feeling-emblems as a social technology can only go so far to subvert a power system while still operating inside of it. Palomides can critique his treatment by Tristan and can attempt to mediate the boundaries of his own emotional expression in private and public, but he remains vulnerable to social pressures enacted upon him by knights seeking aristocratic prestige or the fulfillment of crusader fantasies. If there is a final consolation to the arc of Palomides's life in *The Morte Darthur*, it's that the last we ever hear of him comes in the moments leading up to Arthur's death. As Lancelot prepares to face his king in combat, he divvies up his land holdings in France, giving a territory and title to each knight who has stayed with him. Palomides is made "Deuke of Provynce" (672.16), and that's it. If Malory had access to the *Post-Vulgate Cycle* version of Palomides's death, in which he's killed by Gawain, he chooses not to include it (or forgets), and so Palomides gets to live out the rest of his life as a duke in the south of France, free both from the rule of Arthur and from the machinations of Tristan.

Here is the ende of *Feelings as Heraldic Devices in Late Middle English Chivalric Romance*. I praye you all, jentylmen and jentylwymmen and otheir jentylpeple that redeth this book of passiouns, felinges, and modes and of thir expressioun throughe signes of chevalerie from the begynnyng to the endynge, praye for me whyle I am on lyve that God sende me good delyveraunce, and whan I am deed, I praye you all praye for my soule.



Selection from Thornton Manuscript Facsimile (*Lincoln Cathedral MS. 91, 158v*). Boxed portion reads, with editorial supplement from other manuscripts, "Mi name is Sir Galaron, withouten eny gile, / The grettest of Galwey of greves and gyllis, / Of Connok, of Conyngham, and also Kyle, / Of Lomond, of Losex, of Loyan hilles" (ll. 417-420). Note the crossing out of "Conyngham" in the third line within the box. Only Cumnock (Cannock, possibly) and Kyle are repeated in the following passage, and while some places like Lomond (fourth line) is identifiably Scottish, many other place names given here are not.



Selection from Thornton Manuscript Facsimile (*Lincoln Cathedral MS. 91, 160v*). Boxed portion reads, with editorial supplement from other manuscripts, ""Here I gif Sir Galeron," quod Gawayn, "withouten any gile, / Al the londes and the lithes fro Lauer to Layre, / Connoke and Carlele, Conyngham and Kile; / Yet, if he of chevalry chalange ham for aire, / The Lother, the Lemmok, the Loynak, the Lile, / With frethis and forestes and fosses so faire" (ll. 677-682). Note the heavy crossing out of place names suggesting scribal error in transcription. Only the place names Cumnock (Cannock, possibly) and Kyle are repeated from the earlier passage, and other names appear to blend elements from place names in the earlier passage, like “Losex” and “Loyan” becoming “Loynak” here.

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