Mischief in Masculinity:
Gender in John Lydgate's *Troy Book*

Lindsey Simon-Jones

F OR MEDIEVAL AUTHORS, the Trojan War narrative offered a safe space within which the role of gender—and more specifically masculinity—might be explored. Christopher Baswell has suggested that the *Roman d'Eneas* (ca. 1160) "created a space in which its aristocratic readership could examine manhood and heroism for its own time and imagine the old dangers and new pressures under which its concept of manhood labored."[1] The complex representation of the masculine war hero in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (ca. 1385) has been much debated by recent scholars.[2] Although Chaucer's *Troilus* might be the most obvious and intricate consideration of medieval masculinity, the heroes of John Lydgate's *Troy Book* (1412-20) further complicate our understanding of that masculinity and its role in the perpetuation of patriarchal authority.[3] In *Troy Book*, Lydgate portrays stable gender performances as foundational to the structural stability of the Trojan world, emphasizing a rigid binary of gender performances. He then challenges that foundation by demonstrating the illusory nature of such performances by highlighting the frequent incursions of feminine characteristics on the gender performances of his many classic heroes. What results is the deconstruction of a hetero-normative gender binary in favor of a more fluid system of gendered performances.

Born, in many ways, out of Carolyn Walker Bynum's analyses of gender in medieval Christian texts, recent scholars have canvassed the many ways gender was constructed, idealized, imagined, and performed in the Middle Ages.[4] What may have begun on the margins has now become central to our understanding of medieval literature in the western world and beyond. This study would not have been possible without the work of scholars like those represented in Thelma S. Fenster and

Clare A. Lees's essay collection *Gender in Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, who have shown us that medieval constructions of gender identities were not so very different from our own, and that, as Fenster and Lees suggest, we can use modern theoretical debates to understand gender "in ways that make sense in both medieval and modern contexts."[5] While medieval thinkers might not have had the nuanced understanding of gender that modern readers will bring to a text, their understanding was, nevertheless, complex. Early writers did not limit their understanding of gender to physical or reproductive conditions; rather, they associated specific social behaviors and personality traits with each gender, effectively investing "'masculine' and 'feminine' with characteristics and properties having nothing to do with chromosomal sex per se."[6] As Joan Cadden's seminal work has shown, in addition to the biological, reproductive values that distinguish the sexes, "being feminine or masculine entailed, not as incidental effects, but as defining characteristics, dimensions of disposition, character, and habit, the variations had to do not only with the complexion and appearance but also with behavior, including sexual conduct."[7] We find that in the twelfth-century *Causae et curae*, for example, Hildegard of Bingen sets out a typology that "anticipates the flowering of physiognomy which occurred in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries" when she describes the qualities of women. Among other claims, Hildegard suggests that women with "large bones and thick blood" are also "chaste and faithful," while women with "bluish blood, a dark complexion and ample menstrual flow" tend to be "inconstant and tedious."[8] Three centuries later, the relationship between gender and behavior is further explored in the *Conciliator differentiarum philosophorum et precipue medicorum* (1476) where "Peter of Abano reports: 'The male's spirit is lively, given to violent impulse; it is slow getting angry and slower being calmed. He is long-suffering at the tasks of labor; in deeds eager, able, noble, magnanimous, fair, confident; less flighty and less assiduous and maleficent [than the female].'"[9] These early authors conceived of gender as simultaneously behavioral and biological, but medieval thinkers also understood that the behavioral aspects of gender were far more malleable than the biological markers.

This study also relies on modern theories of gender, like those put

forward by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, that see gender not as a biological imperative, but rather as a product of social systems wherein behaviors are sanctioned, perpetually reinforced, and ingrained in our collective consciousness.[10] However natural these gender performances may seem (or may have seemed), I agree with Carolyn Dinshaw, who suggests that medieval performances of gender might be understood as a "set of assumptions, a catalogue of postures" and who terms these performances as "impersonations" of gender.[11] Moreover, these "assumptions" and "catalogues" are heavily reliant on cultural norms and behaviors. As Susan Crane, in her *Gender and Romance in the Canterbury Tales*, has rightly noted, "gender emerges not as the fixed expression of binary sex difference but as a socially instituted construct that interacts with other constructs of class, faith, and so on."[12] We know, for example, that many medieval thinkers were fully aware of the performative nature of gender. In *De planctu naturae* (ca. 1202), Alan de Lille disparages men who do not act in the way he believes men should act, "using his favorite metaphor for the active masculine and the passive feminine role." Alan suggests that "hammers should not act as anvils,"[13] demonstrating that while many medieval thinkers believed the character traits associated with the male and female to be a static part of the natural world, others understood the potential agency of the subject in constructing their genders. Gender, at least for Alan, is a performance that might be altered or inverted and which must be sustained through reinforcement and performance. Given the performative fabrication of gender roles and the ever shifting social structure on which those constructions are based, it should come as no surprise that medieval authors struggled to define and clarify gender identities in a time when so many of the social structures upon which those identities were based were changing. It is within these paradigms of performativity, arbitrary cultural signification, and shifting social structures that I propose to investigate representations of gender (specifically masculinity) in Lydgate's *Troy Book*.

Defining the Masculine and Feminine

Lydgate's misogynist descriptions of Troy's women have been much studied and much maligned; however, their role in challenging masculine

gender performances requires further analysis.[14] Through the portrayals of Medea, Fate, and, most significantly, Cryseide, *Troy Book* provides readers with substantial, correlative definitions of the genders; these definitions set out the vocabulary through which Lydgate reconsiders medieval masculinity. In the Book 1 discussion of the relationship between Medea and Jason, for example, Lydgate makes clear the qualities of which Trojan female gender performances are composed:

> Þei ben so double & ful of brotilnessse,
> Þat it is harde in hem to assure;
> For vn-to hem it longeth of nature,
> From her birth to hauen alliaunce
> With doubilness and with variaunce.
> Her hertes ben so freel and vnstable,
> Namly in ȝouthe, so mevynge and mutable,
> Þat so as clerkis of hem liste endite
> (Al-be þat I am sori it to write)
> þei seyn þat chawng and mutabilite
> Appropred ben to femyn[yn]yte—
> (1.1859-60)[15]

Lydgate lampoons women, affirming and reaffirming their propensity for change, doubleness, mutability, and variance. In the first book, Lydgate rehearses, nearly to the point of absurdity (over 300 lines in Medea's introduction), a litany of examples demonstrating the ever-changing nature of the female gender. He goes so far as to suggest that Medea changed her mind or her feelings about the betrayal of her father "an hondrid sythe in a litel space" (1.1953). Lydgate's Medea is unable to accept her father's fate and incapable of formulating a clear, consistent response; she cannot settle on a prudent (and therefore masculine) plan of either acceptance or revenge. Her ever-changing emotional state is in clear contrast to the description of idealized masculine responses laid out later in the text. From this point on, women and womanhood in *Troy Book* will be closely associated with images and accusations of mutability, change, and variability.

The problem of women's ever-changing dispositions is not merely

their instability. For Lydgate (and many other medieval authors) female mutability is interminably linked to falseness, deceit, and untrustworthiness. Lydgate's discussion of the nature of Cryseide explicitly lays out the relationship between dishonesty and mutability, intensifying the criticism with an additional charge of doubleness:

> For vp-on chaunge and mutabilite
> Stant hool her trust and [her] surete,
> So þat þei ben sure in doubilnes,
> And alwey double in her sikerness,
> Semynge oon whan þei best can varie,
> Likest to acorde whan þei be contrarie;
> And þus þei ben variaunte in a-corde,
> And holest seme whan þer is discord.
> (3.4295-4302)

Here, Lydgate sarcastically suggests that the only sure and trustworthy elements of a woman's character are her mutability and doubleness: Women are "sure in doubilness," and they are "alwey double." Later, he compounds her faults, suggesting tripleness of the woman and going so far as to affirm that "þer is no fraude and fully equipollent / To þe fraude and slei3ty compassing / of a woman" (3.4332-34). As Lynn Shutters points out, "the charge in the *Troy Book* is duplicity, a crime that suggests some motive and scheming on the part of Criseyde and links her to both textual falsity and political treason."[16] Cryseide, the paragon of *Troy Book*'s womanly indecency, is more than merely fickle (as Fortune is described in Book 2); she is consciously conspiring against Troilus and, more generally, all men. For Lydgate, the frauds perpetuated by women are unrivaled; their "slei3ty compassing" is to be both admired and feared.

While attributed broadly to the nature of the female gender, these are primarily descriptions of performative (and often linguistic) acts. There is little discussion in these sections of the body or physical sex of Medea, Fortune, or Cryseide. Lydgate's concern, therefore, is not the biological status of womanhood, nor her sexuality; rather, her words, thoughts, and actions codify her femininity.[17] Both Holly Crocker and

Tara Williams have commented on the performative nature of femininity, and Williams is certainly right to note that Lydgate seems interested in "illustrating how womanhood itself can act as a social script that compels certain actions, some of which may be contrary to an individual woman's desires."[18] Moreover, the flaws at hand are not limited to these particular women. Lydgate expressly attributes Cryseide's character flaws to the entire female gender in Book 3: "as approprid is vn-to hir kynde / to be dyvers & double of nature, / Raþest deceyvynge whan men most assure" (3.4284-86). For Lydgate, it is natural and appropriate for a woman to act in these ways: the natural state of a woman's gender is to be duplicitous, cunning, and dishonest.

There are, of course, a few positive portrayals of women in *Troy Book*. Helen and Hecuba, for example, are presented in Book 3 as upstanding examples of femininity. Shutters's recent work has reclaimed the women of the text and reclassified some of its antifeminism; as such her arguments are foundational to our understanding of Lydgate's use of gender. However, none of these upstanding women occupy Lydgate's time or imagination as do the false women. While Shutters's reading of the importance of truth-telling, as it relates to the English distrust of the French (both politically, and linguistically), is quite fruitful, my interest in the "dishonest women" of the text is primarily in the service of understanding the presentation of the men in *Troy Book* who frequently adopt these duplicitous tendencies.[19]

Despite Lydgate's harsh portrayal of most women, we need not see these descriptions as mere ventriloquizations of sexist, medieval propaganda. Instead, these criticisms of femininity emphasize a rigid gender binary, effectively defining the masculine by juxtaposing the genders. As Crane has argued, the construction of medieval gender is primarily based on contrasting the binary genders: "from the perspective of gender difference, masculinity is a composite for traits that contrast to feminine ones, such as bravery in contrast to timidity, and traits that are identified as feminine but are absorbed into masculinity, such as pity."[20] Through these definitions, Lydgate establishes the vocabulary that allows him to later examine and criticize the gender performances of his heroes. In later sections, Lydgate manipulates the specific lexicons he uses to describe the womanliness of Medea, Cryseide, and Fortune to

signify a penetration of female gender traits into the masculine identities of the heroes.

Indeed, when Lydgate wants to belittle a male character, he frequently turns to accusations of femininity. As the great traitor of Lydgate's story, Antenor is rarely described without the damning attributes of falseness, doubleness, mutability, and all those destabilizing qualities that Lydgate—along with so many of his medieval contemporaries—so often equates with femininity. Antenor is "ful of trecchery, / Replet of falsehod and of doubleness" (4.5128-29); moreover, Lydgate suggests that Antenor's feminine attributes have entirely overtaken his masculinity when he notes that, "For trouþe and faiþe in þe be now dede, / Falshed hath slayn in þe stablines; / And in stede of þi sikernes / We fynde in þe, sothly, varyaunce" (4.4732-35). This is not a hasty slip brought on by desire or despair. Rather, Antenor's falsehood (and thus femininity) is deliberate and permanent. By later suggesting in Book 6 that Antenor has "feyned fals constance" (6.4740), Lydgate suggests Antenor has internalized duplicitous female gender characteristics and any outward display of masculinity is merely a deception. As we will see, constancy is one of the most significant and praiseworthy aspects of Lydgatian masculinity; but, according to Amphimachus, Antenor's constancy is both false and feigned.

Perhaps the most eloquent definition of masculinity can be found in Agamemnon's advice to Menelaus, when the king has fallen into a deep despair after the plundering of the Greek temple and the kidnapping of Helen. Agamemnon's counsel is as much a statement of how a man should behave as it is a statement concerning the best ways to deal with grief and gain revenge (this is precisely the situation to which Medea has such vacillating and broadly feminine reactions). When Agamemnon comes to Menelaus, he first asks, "What dedly sorwe þus inly may oppress / ʒour knyʒtly hert or trouble ʒoure manhede?" (2.4338-39). Here, Lydgate immediately equates overwhelming sorrow with an oppression of the king's manhood: a theme he will further develop through Agamemnon, suggesting that it is unmanly to despair in such an active and open way. Rather than becoming overwhelmed and rendered inert by grief, Agamemnon urges Menelaus that, "And tyme is now, to speke in wordes fewe, / O broþir myn, manhood for to schewe,

/ To pluk vp herte & ȝou to make strong" (2.4409-11). Agamemnon argues that the way to "show" manhood is to smile through sorrow and rage, to let friends see a man's strength, and to deny his enemies the joy of seeing his suffering; in short, to perform as a man. In fact, "Men seyn how he þat can dissymble a wrong, / How he is sliȝe and of herte stronge; / and who can ben peisible in his smerte, / it is a tokene he hath a manly herte, / nat to wepen as wommen in her rage, / whiche is contrarie to an hiȝe corage" (2.4373-78). By contrasting female reactions to pain and suffering with those he identifies with masculinity, Lydgate outlines the nature of manhood while acknowledging the performative nature of those gender identities. Menelaus must act like a man in his situation in order to contain his feminine desire to "wepen" and to "rage" because an outward display of those types of emotions, for Lydgate, "is contrarie to an hiȝe corage" and to his masculinity.

Lydgate expands upon his definition of manhood late in Agamemnon's speech, in the form of a ventriloquized proverb. Here, in addition to the expected definitions of strength and courage, Agamemnon praises the assurance and steadfast nature of the man:

> Þat þe prowes of a manly knyȝt
> Is preued most in meschef, and his myȝt:
> To ben assured in aduersite,
> Strongly sustene what wo þat it be,
> Nat cowardly his corage to submitte
> In euery pereil, not his honour flitte
> Þoruȝ no dispeire, but hopen al-wey wel,
> And haue a trust, trewe as any stel,
> T'acheven ay what he take on honde.
> (2.4393-4401)

According to this ardent definition, a man's honor should not flit away, and he should have confidence in his every endeavor. Moreover, a man should not display his emotions outwardly, but should appear constant at all times. Agamemnon emphasizes again the necessity for Menelaus to hide his pain "and schewe in cher as thou roughtist nought / of thing that is most grievous in thi thought. / And wher thou hast most

mater to compleyne, / make ther good face and glad in port the feine" (2.4363-66). Each of these passages demands a stable performance of the gender; Agamemnon insists that a true performance of manhood is one that is not changing, not mutable, and not variant. The underlying construct is one of surety, steadfastness, and prudence: a masculinity as "trewe as any stel."[21]

Despite Agamemnon's convictions, implicit in this proverb is an acknowledgment of the possibility and ease with which manhood can be subverted. Lydgate admits that a man's "prowes" is proved both in mischief and in his might. By presenting these two possible performances of masculinity as contrasting, alliterative components, Lydgate indicates that such gender performances of "might" are delicate and easily subverted by the "meschef" inherent in gender.[22] Lydgate's description of manhood is as much about how the man should act as it is about how he *should not* act; however, while unwavering adherence to strict gender binaries are touted *par excellence*, much of the text suggests that such gender performances might prove untenable in society.

Agamemnon's speech outlines an ideal masculinity, but the reader is hard-pressed to find unwavering or unmitigated examples of the manliness exhorted by his counsel. *Troy Book* consistently undermines exemplary models of masculinity by demonstrating the weakness inherent in a performative gender construct. Jason, for example, is criticized for "his fraude with flaterie y-cured" (1.2870), "Doublines so sliȝly" (1.2876), "feynyng fallas" (1.2879). Thus Jason, whose quests and conquests may seem tangential to the narrative of the Trojan War, sets a precedent of feminine gender traits infiltrating the performance of the hero's masculinity. In Book 4, Achilles, the man responsible for the deaths of Troy's two most valued heroes—Hector and Troilus—is reproached for his "fals deceit" (4.2814), "trecherie" (4.2814), "tresoun" (4. 2820), "vntrouþe" (4.2885), "vngentilnes" (4.2891), being "withoute pite" (4. 2886), and "vnknyghtly" (4.2886). In his diatribe, Lydgate goes so far as to criticize Homer for his praise of such a lowly man: "Take hede, Omer, & deme in þi resound / þe false *fraude and þe sleiȝti* gyle, / þe tresoun caste to-forn with many wyle / Of Achilles" (4.2974-77; emphasis added). Here we find a precise echo of the language Lydgate used to describe Cryseide in Book 3: "To þe *fraude and sleiȝty* compassing / of a woman" (3.4333-34;

emphasis added). Each condemnation implies that Achilles's sins are not merely immoral, but many are perniciously feminine. The failures of masculinity demonstrated by these heroes lead to disaster, not only for the hero himself but also for the larger community as a whole.[23]

Even Hector—the celebrity-hero of the Trojan War—who ostensibly embodies idealized, masculine attributes, serves as a warning to the medieval reader about the likely failures of this rigid system of masculinity. As Marcia Smith Marzec's work has shown, Lydgate deviates from the traditional depiction of Hector by presenting a significantly flawed hero, while contemporary texts like Guido's *Historia destructionis Troiae* (Lydgate's direct source), Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*, Guido delle Colonne's *"Gest Hystoriale" of the Destruction of Troye*, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*, and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* "without exception . . . identify Hector as the perfect knight."[24] Medieval readers familiar with the Troy story would have expected a flawed and feminized Troilus and a more consummate and masculine Hector, but *Troy Book* inverts these characterizations. In fact, C. David Benson posits that Lydgate's Troilus (in stark contrast to Chaucer's Troilus) is the "purest hero" in *Troy Book* while Hector is depicted in a less-than-perfect light.[25] Despite his hyper-masculinization, the Hector presented in Book 3 is unable to uphold the rigorous standards of masculinity set forth in *Troy Book*; he too falls victim to a type of feminization.

Hector's feminization differs from that of Lydgate's other heroes. Hector is not the wavering, mutable, false, and feminized hero we see in Jason, Antenor, and Achilles; instead, his feminization is similar to that which Elaine Tuttle Hansen suggests in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*. That is, male lovers who are at the mercy of "internal and external forces beyond their rational control" that position them as "victims and pawns," a role Hansen rightly aligns with stereotypical, medieval representations of the feminine.[26] Moreover, the external force Hector falls victim to is a particular type of feminization; it is an uncontrolled desire, like unto the description of Fortune's ever shifting desire in Book 1: "For as þe blase whirleth of a fire, / So to and fro þei fleen in her desire, / Til þei acomplische fulli her delite (1.1873-75). In the first third of the book, we see Hector attempting to "spoil" the fallen Greeks on three different occasions. First, he desires to spoil Patroclus, then Merioun

for interrupting the spoiling of Patroclus, and, most catastrophically, an unidentified Greek king. Hector is driven, ultimately to his death, by an intense fixation on spoiling the bodies of his victims. Specifically, after Hector kills Patroclus, Lydgate tells us that "whan he first gan se / þe multitude of stonys and perre" (2.805-6), he had "in hert inly gret desire / to spoilen hym of his armvure anoon" (3.798-99). Thus, Hector is desirous, not of the usual war booty of weapons, but of the precious jewels on Patroclus's armor. [27] When that spoiling is forestalled by Merioun, Hector becomes enraged and chastises Merioun for interrupting the spoiling, threatening "Þat for cause þou were presumptuous / Me to distourbe, þou schalt anon be ded" (3.1902-3). Later, Lydgate laments Hector's uncontrolled desire to spoil, saying, "To hiȝe noblesse sothly longeth nouȝt, /No[r] swiche pelfre, spoillynge, nor robberie / Apartene to worþi chiualrye" (3.5362-64). And finally, he blames Hector's death entirely on this desire, noting that Hector was "brouȝt to his endynge / *Only* for spoillynge of þis riche kyng" (3.5371-72; emphasis added).

Like so many of Lydgate's descriptions, the terms in which he couches Hector's failures are multivalent. In *Troy Book*, the most common use of "spoiling" implies the taking of objects as the booty of war and is synonymous with plunder; both the Greeks and the Trojans are seen looting temples, ships, and war tents of precious goods. However, the term also implies the act of disrobing or of being disrobed. Paris, for example, uses the transitive verb form "despoil" when he demands that Juno, Venus, and Pallas (Minerva) be stripped so that he may "haue ful[ly] liberte / Eueryche of hem avisely to se, / And consyderen euery circumstaunce / Who fairest wer vn-to my plesaunce, / And goodliest, to speke of womonhede" (2.2747-52) before he awards Venus the apple. Likewise, in Book 2 Lydgate uses "despoil" to describe the forced removal of Iphigenia's clothing before her near-sacrifice. Outside of *Troy Book*, Lydgate uses the term as a synonym for disrobing in *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (13545), and the Middle English Dictionary notes similar uses in the Wycliffite Bible, the *Pricking of Love*, *Richard Coeur de Lion*, and the *Gesta Romanorum*. Thus Hector's spoiling of the Greeks calls forth not only images of wartime raiding, but also of (often forced) nudity and, perhaps, sexualized voyeurism.

Lydgate later identifies Hector's momentary lapse of character and

his uncontrolled desire to spoil as a "confusion" (3.876), a term Lydgate uses frequently to signify a hero's uncharacteristic falling into the performance of gender traits normally identified as female. Although Lydgate most frequently uses "confusion" as a synonym for "destruction," or "defeat," he also uses the term to signify the downfall of men who have, like Hector, fallen under the power of an external female force.[28] For example, in Book 1, "confusion" is used to describe the effects of Fortune: "þis lady of transmvtacioun" (1.2256) who "Enhasteth þinges to foolis ful greable, / Whiche in þe ende, to her [their] confisioun, / Can vnder sugre schrowden her poysoun" (1.2258-60); while, in Book 2 Fortune (who is described again as a lady of transmutation) is said to have brought Lamadon to "confusion" (2.74). The machinations of the female fortune are further characterized as confusions at 2.2296 and 2.4267. Lydgate also employs this use of the term near the end of the work where he describes the fate of those who have fallen to the lure of the Sirens who, with the "swetnes of her heuenly soun / Bringeth a man to confusioun" (6.2076). Furthermore, the ill-fated Ulysses dreams of a heavenly woman (perhaps Fortune) who warns him that "þin affeccioun / Wolde fully turne to confusioun / Of vs boþe" (6.3005). The vision of this woman spurs Ulysses's reclusion and eventually death at the hand of his unknowing son. Mortal women, too, can have confusing effects on Lydgate's heroes. Paris, under the spell of Helen and unable to control his desire for her, brings the entire city "to confusioun" (2.2831) when he his "kny3thod hath forsake" (2.2832) in choosing "only a womman, and holden hym þer-to" (2.2833-34) rather than cleaving to "prudence and gold" (2.2833). Finally, Menelaus, who falls into an effeminate swoon and deep depression, terms his loss of Eleyne a "confusion" at 2.4309.

Importantly, Lydgate closely associates "confusion" with the idea of mischief (briefly examined earlier). While "meschef" is used most commonly to suggest any number of unpleasant or unseemly situations, it is frequently paired with Lydgate's ideas of confusion. "Meschef" occurs within ten lines of "confusion" more than a quarter of the seventy times Lydgate uses "confusion" (27 percent to be exact). If the parameters are expanded to within twenty lines, the occurrences increase to nearly a third. On more than one occasion, Lydgate combines the terms in a single line, as in Book 3 where Paris must be protected "From al meschef

and confusioun" (3.3081) or in Book 5 where Naulus avenges his son and causes the Greeks "gret mischef and confusioun" (5.945). Like "confusion," Lydgate uses "meschef" to signify destruction brought on by female forces. For example, in Book 5, Ulysses laments his plight and blames Fortune whom he says "lad me on her daunce" (5.2097) to his "meschef and pouert" (5. 2100). Moreover, the association between "meschef" and "confusion" seems to strengthen as the text develops. There are only four uses within ten lines in Book 1, none in Book 2, but a substantial number in Books 3, 4, and 5 (five, six, and four respectively). Thus, fifteen of the nineteen pairings occur in or after Book 3.

Thus, Hector is confused, or brought under the spell of a force that may be associated with the feminine, when he loses control of his prudence and gives in to his uncontrolled desire to spoil, unarm, and undress the Greeks—an undertaking similarly associated with femininity. Moreover, Lydgate recognizes a clear lapse or undoing of Hector's masculinity when he admits that after the attempts to spoil Patroclus, Hector "his kny3thod his hert[e] he reswmeth" (3.881). This moment of weakness consequently requires Hector to resume his knighthood—to resume his masculine gender performance—suggesting a momentary failure of that masculinity. In the dichotomous gender system Lydgate has presented in *Troy Book*, a loss of masculinity necessarily indicates a slippage into the feminine. Although he regains his "knighthood" quickly, this habitual move towards the feminine marks Hector as a flawed hero and sets in motion not only his demise, but also the imminent fall of Troy.

Destabilizing Gender

On the surface, *Troy Book* upholds the familiar good/bad or male/female binaries, suggesting that men who fail to contain their feminine qualities are bound to failure; time and again, both the Greek and Trojan heroes are lauded for their masculinity while the women are chided for those behaviors aligned and maligned with femininity.[29] However, recent scholarship on gender and masculinity has demonstrated that these supposed binaries were and are far more complex in the Middle Ages than we might have previously assumed. Isabel Davis, for example, notes Gower's "special interest in the imperfections of aristocratic

manhood" which she aligns with changes in the ideas of masculine labor and "the demilitarization of the gentle-born."[30] These changes, she argues, resulted in "an authoritative voice within the vernacular which pits iconic masculine models against a new-found and psychologically complex, masculine *urbanitas*."[31] On the question of challenges to foundational assumptions about gender and gender roles, Crocker argues that in Chaucer's "Merchant's Tale," "May's femininity exposes the fictionality of gender distinctions based on displays of agency or passivity."[32] In addition, recent studies have shown convincingly that Lydgate, too, was interested in the complexities of gender paradigms. Wendy Hennequin, for example, has convincingly depicted the ways that "Lydgate blurs and violates his rigidly gendered characterizations in one case: the Amazon Queen Pantysyllya," while Tara Williams has shown how Lydgate's *Temple of Glas* "develops his own idea of womanhood" and exposes the possibilities of conflict and discontent that might exist between expected gender behaviors and personal desires.[33] In *Troy Book*, Lydgate takes up the question of gender binaries in Book 3, where he effectively dismantles those binaries and suggests that much might be gained from a more open definition of gender roles. More than merely theorizing about gender performances, Lydgate's presentation of the relationship between Hector and Achilles marks the rigidity of those binaries as the underlying flaw that might bring about the downfall of any great man, or even a great civilization.

In Book 3, Hector goes to Achilles to propose a duel by which they will spare the men from battle; to forestall more bloodshed, the winner of the duel will be the symbolic winner of the war. However, what begins as a martial pact quickly (d)evolves into a marital arrangement between the two heroes. Hector and Achilles act out a marriage ceremony that closely resembles marriage rites common in western Christianity and those most clearly set out in the Sarum Missal (in use from the early eleventh century through the sixteenth century).[34] Although the scene does not strictly follow any nuptial ceremony, nearly all of the elements significant in western nuptial agreements appear in the exchange between Hector and Achilles. Even Hector's act of traveling to Achilles's tent (which we might imagine substitutes for a home in this

context), mirrors the earliest extant marriage customs, wherein the bride was transferred to her husband's home. As Thomas Kuehn notes, this practice had developed into "the most public moment of celebration of marriage" in Renaissance Florence, and the act commonly solidified the marriage. It was "only after a woman had been handed over (*tradita*) to her husband or led (*ducta*) by him [that she was] deemed married."[35] In his description of Hector's journey to Achilles's tent, Lydgate is careful to note that Hector went, "Ful wel beseyn and wounder richely / With many worthi in his company, / Of swiche as he for the nonys ches" (3.3765-67). Although Hector's trip has an entirely different purpose, the manner of his travel nevertheless recalls the pomp and circumstance of the bridal procession.

Upon meeting, Hector and Achilles enact another crucial element of the medieval marriage process. Consent had been seen as an integral part of a nuptial arrangement from the time of Roman Law (consent of the father or family later developed into consent of the individual).[36] In many circumstances, all that was required to make a marriage pact binding was an open (witnessed) statement of consent. Moreover, consent might take two forms: the consent given in the future tense acted as a betrothal while consent given in the present tense, *verba de praesenti*, established a legally binding marriage. According to Christopher Brooke, "the definition [of *verba de praesenti*] first appears in a papal ruling or decretal of about 1140; it was elaborated by Peter the Lombard in his *Sentences* in the 1150s; it was firmly established by Pope Alexander III (1159-81) in a series of decretals of the 1160s."[37] In the tent, and before witnesses, Achilles speaks first and vows, "I the ensure, withouten other bond; / Yif I may lyve, with myn owne hond / I shal of deth don execucioun" (3.3849-51). Achilles announces his intent to kill Hector in the future tense; he speaks at length of his desire to avenge previous wounds suffered at the hands of Hector, particularly the death of Patroclus, which he terms his greatest grievance. Later, Hector responds, in kind, with his own avowal in the future tense: "I seie the pleinly, hennes or two yere. . . . I shal your pride and surquedie adaunte / In swiche a wyse with myn hondis two" (3.3923; 3930-31). With this public declaration of intent, in the future tense, the men are now betrothed; this ceremony is unique only in

that it carries with it the promise of marital combat rather than marital bliss. Later, the present-tense consent (a key moment in many western customs) is described by Lydgate in the third person. At the end of the scene, news of the contract has reached Agamemnon who, along with all the men of his parliament, goes to hear the present-tense assent of both parties to the agreement (3.4040-47). Admittedly, neither Hector nor Achilles gives a verbal assent (there is no dialogue in this section of the text). Rather, their public and present tense consent is implied when Lydgate tells us that the men desired "To wit her wille as in this matere" (3.4044), and a debate breaks out among the Greeks regarding the prudence of this decision. The passage makes clear a promised betrothal between the men and implies present-tense consent, thus cementing the contract between them.

Furthermore, much of the conversation between the two heroes alludes to wording common in medieval Christian ceremonies. For example, following his lengthy oath to injure and kill Achilles, Hector pronounces a homily on the societal role of both love and hate that is reminiscent of many marriage blessings and focuses closely on the positive attributes of a union made in love:

> For, sothly, loue, moste in special,
> Of feithfulnes hath his original,
> In hertis Iouned by convenience
> Of oon accorde, whom no difference
> Of doubliness may in no degree,
> Nouþer in ioye nor aduersite
> (3.3901-6)

This passage reiterates some of the familiar dialogic vows of the western tradition.[38] Specifically, readers might hear an echo of the lines requiring marital faithfulness "for better for wurs, / for rycher for porer, / in syckenes and in helthe"[39] when Hector describes love as having no doubleness "nouþer in ioye nor aduersite"; they might also be reminded of a nuptial ceremony by the images of the two hearts joined together and necessity of faithfulness in love. This passage ends with a particularly

key phrase. Over the next forty lines or so, Hector proclaims his hate for Achilles and continues to delineate his plan for the proposed duel:

> For to darreyne here betwene vs two
> Þilke quarrel, ho-so þat be-falle,
> For þe which þat we striuen alle,
> Wil assent, plainly, to Iuparte,
> *Til þat þe death oon of vs departe*—
> (3.3958-61; emphasis added)

The proposal that they will fight to the death is clear; but, more significant is the suggestion that they will fight "Til þat þe death oon of vs departe." Here, Lydgate replicates common marriage vows wherein each partner vows to uphold the marriage until the death of one spouse.

Although there are few descriptions of the exact phrasing of marriage vows surviving from fifteenth-century England, this phrasing seems to have been common to the ceremony. We find evidence of its use in the fourteenth-century ritual recorded in the *Liber pontificalis of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter* and it was sustained through the sixteenth-century Sarum Rite.[40] Depositions from the Armagh Registers (Ireland) provided by Art Cosgrove provide further documentary evidence that the phrasing was widely used. In one example, John McCann and Anisia FitzJohn exchanged vows in 1521 that included an interrogatory declaration very similar to that which Lydgate employs: "*until death do us part*" [emphasis added].[41] This phrase became standard in western Christian marriage rituals and boldly announces Lydgate's intention that the interaction between these two men signifies a complex social contract.

Lydgate alludes to the possibility that the pact between the men was more than just another military engagement when he identifies it as a sacrament. As Philip Reynolds notes, "while its meaning may be unclear and controvertible . . . at the very least, saying that something is a sacrament implies that the thing is holy and special and that there is more to it than meets the eye."[42] Thus, when Hector claims "To-fore þe goddis be oþe & *sacramente* / We shal be swore, in ful good entent; / And ouermore, oure faith also to saue / T assure ȝou, in plegge ȝe shall haue" (3.3985-88; emphasis added), he is suggesting more than merely

a wartime pact. Hector signals that this arrangement is somehow "holy and special." Although marriage was not officially sanctioned as a sacrament until the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, Augustine and other theologians used the term "sacrament" in their considerations of marriage far earlier.[43] Lydgate seems aware of the sacramental nature of marriage and terms it so on two previous occasions: the marriages of Jason to Medea and Paris to Helen are identified as sacraments in Books 1 and 2, respectively. Through this series of subtle, and not so subtle, verbal cues, Lydgate implies a nuptial arrangement between the two heroes.

In addition to mirroring conventional wedding ceremonies, this mock wedding is highly sexualized; Lydgate playfully employs a series of double entendres, which allude to the consummation of this pseudo-marriage and consequently challenge the heteronormativity emphasized in the earlier books. The scene begins with Hector arriving in Achilles's tent unarmed. Lydgate notes the "gret affeccioun" (3.3771) Achilles had to see Hector unarmed, and Achilles even comments on this delight, admitting, "ful plesyng is to me / þat I at leiser naked may þe se" (3.3785-86). "Naked" here simply denotes that he is unarmed and out of his armor, but coupled with the leisurely pleasure this ogling provides Achilles, Hector's "nakedness" suggests an erotic, if not homoerotic tension. Furthermore, Lydgate characterizes their conversation as a sexualized interlude: "And at the laste þei fille in dalyaunce" (3.3782).[44] According to the MED "daliaunce," often simply denotes a casual conversation, but can also imply a sense of flirtation and amorousness. (Chaucer, for example uses the term to suggest amorous play in both the prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* and the *Wife of Bath's Tale*.)

Moreover, Lydgate embeds phallic symbols of penetration, both sexualizing and feminizing, in Achilles's declaration of his hatred for Hector. When Achilles, having admitted to envying the naked Hector, channels his frustration into rage against the Trojan—vowing to bring death and destruction to him and his people—he recalls previous abuses suffered at Hector's hands: "þat þi swerd wolde kerue & bite / In-to my fleshe, ful depe & ful profounde / as shewiþ ʒit be many mortal wounde / On my body, large, longe and wyde" (3.3810-13). The image of the large, long, and wide body of Achilles along with the description of

Hector's sword biting into his flesh is martial, heroic, and masculine, but it is also homoerotic. Later in the passage, Achilles vows, "I þe ensure, with-outen oþer bond; / if I may lyue, with myn owne hond / I shal of deth don execucion, / With-oute abood or [long] *dylacion*" (3.3849-52; emphasis added). The MED demonstrates that the most frequent use for "dilation" in the fifteenth century was a lengthening or delay. However, the term is closely associated with the verb "dilaten," which the MED asserts is used in the fifteenth-century *The Middle English Translation of Guy de Chauliac's Grande Chirurgie* to mean the expansion of arteries or other parts of the body due to increased blood flow, and which can also denote an instrument used to open bodily cavities.[45] The *Grande Chirurgie* specifically mentions the "towelle" (anus), but such an instrument was also used to open the vagina. Although "dilation" is an incorrect noun form for "dilate" (the correct formation being "dilatation") other forms of "dilaten" also signify an opening or spreading out of things, including: "dilatable," "dilatal," "dilatif," "dilating," and "dilatorie." Further, there is evidence that "dilation" was used (if mistakenly) as the noun form of "dilate" in John Florio's 1589 *Worlde of Words*. The term was corrected to "dilatation" in the 1611 version of the text.[46] This single term, then, denotes the male erection but also a female and/or homoerotic opening of the body. Coupled with Achilles's pleasure at the sight of the naked Hector and his recollection of aforementioned penetrations endured from Hector, the use of the terms "dalliance" and "dilation" implies an eroticism reminiscent of the wedding night. This pseudo-marriage thus includes a bridal procession, witnessed consent by both parties, a statement on love, an echo of the marriage vows, and the identification of those vows as a sacrament, until finally Hector solemnizes their mock wedding, proclaiming, "But lat þe day atwen vs two be Ioyned" (3.4010). They are joined on this day in a nuptial contract as they will be joined in martial combat on the day of their duel. This marriage is, then, solemnized by the speech act and solidified by an implied consummation.

Given Hector's role as hyper-masculine hero, along with the image of Hector's penetration of Achilles, we might view Achilles as the feminized character in this scene.[47] However, it is Hector who is delivered (or travels to) to the tent of Achilles, and his vows come second, the customary position of the bride's vows. In addition, in the battle that

follows, as we have seen, Hector is sometimes predisposed towards feminine gender traits. What this mock wedding might suggest then is a "confusion" of sorts wherein neither character seems entirely masculine, but neither seems entirely feminine. Lydgate dramatizes the two greatest warrior-heroes of the Trojan narrative in a ritual that skews their gender performances. They are both bride and both groom.

For all its heroic glorification of masculinity and war, the Troy narrative is, at its heart, the story of the limits of social pacts. Heterosexual marriage pacts not only fail to forestall the warfare they are designed to prevent, they are often the cause of continued military strife; the political pacts between the men are just as unreliable. Although, the Greek and Trojan leaders refuse to accept the arrangement enacted between Hector and Achilles, *Troy Book* suggests that such a pact may be the only viable solution.[48] The marriage Lydgate proposes between Hector and Achilles would bind the men both socially and spiritually, perhaps stemming the tide of dishonesty and infidelity so rampant in the narrative of the destruction of Troy. Unfortunately, the failure of this amorphously gendered marriage immediately necessitates a return to combat and leads directly to the deaths of both these heroes. Nevertheless, what this examination of gender hopes to suggest is that, in its extremist definitions of gender, its presentation of the frailty of the gendered performances, and its unique portrayals of Hector and Achilles, *Troy Book* calls for an opening-up of the gender paradigm and a reevaluation of any ardent devotion to the heteronormative.

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❧ END NOTES

1. Christopher Baswell, "Men in the *Roman d'Eneas*: The Construction of Empire," in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare E. Lees et al., Medieval Cultures 7 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 149.

2. Studies of note include Peter G. Beidler, ed., *Masculinities in Chaucer: Approaches to Maleness in the Canterbury Tales and Troilus and Criseyde*,

Chaucer Studies 25 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998); Catherine S. Cox, *Gender and Language in Chaucer* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997); Susan Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec eds., *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde,* Chaucer Studies 38 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008).

3. Jacqueline Murray has suggested close ties between the perpetuation of masculinity and the perpetuation of the patriarchy, arguing that "masculinities naturalize and normalize patriarchy and patriarchy imbued masculinity with the power and privilege that underscore male experience and identity through much of human history." *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities : Men in the Medieval West*, ed. Jacqueline Murray (New York : Garland, 1999), xi.

4. Particularly important pieces include *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) and *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

5. Thelma S. Fenster and Clare A. Lees, eds. *Gender in Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 2.

6. Cox, *Gender and Language in Chaucer*, 5.

7. Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 202.

8. Hildegard of Bingen, *Causae et curae* [=*Liber cosmositae medicinae*], ed. Paul Kaiser, Bibliotheca Teuberneriana (Leipzig: B. G. Teuber, 1903) quoted in Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 186.

9. Petrus de Abano Pativinus, *Conciliator differentiarum philosophorum et precipue medicorum* (Venice: Babriele de Tarvisio for Thomas Tarvisio, 1476) quoted in Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference,* 188.

10. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 27.

11. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 30.

12. Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, 6.

13. Nicolaus M. Haring, ed., "Alan of Lille, *De planctu naturae*,: *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser. 19 (1978): 797-879, quoted in Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 223.

14. Important studies focusing on Lydgate's portrayal of women include Julia Boffey, "Lydgate's Lyrics and Women Readers," in *Women, the Book*

and the Worldly: Selected Proceedings of the Saint Hilda's Conference 1993, vol. 2, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995); A. S. G. Edwards, "Lydgate's Attitudes to Women," *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 51 (1971): 436-37; Heather Hill-Vásquez, "Chaucer's Wife of Bath, Hoccleve's Arguing Women, and Lydgate's Hertford Wives: Lay Interpretation and the Figure of the Spinning Woman in Late Medieval England," *Florilegium* 23 (2006): 169-95; Alain Renoir, "Attitudes Toward Women in Lydgate's Poetry*," English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 42 (1961): 1-14; Lynn Shutters, "Truth, Translation, and the *Troy Book* Women," *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 32 (2001): 69-98; and Tara Williams, *Inventing Womanhood: Gender and Language in Later Middle English Writing* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2011).

15. John Lydgate, *Lydgate's Troy Book,* ed. Henry Bergen, 4 vols., EETS ES 97, 103, 106, 126 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1906-35). Text references are to book and line numbers.

16. Shutters, "Truth, Translation, and the *Troy Book* Women," 80.

17. The description of Venus in Book 2 is a notable exception.

18. Williams, *Inventing Womanhood,* 87. See also Holly A. Crocker, "Performative Passivity and Fantasies of Masculinity in the 'Merchant's Tale,'" *Chaucer Review* 38 (2003): 178-98.

19. Shutters, "Truth, Translation, and the *Troy Book* Women," 69-98.

20. Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, 18.

21. Robert R. Edwards argues that "Lydgate thus offers a paradigm and program for understanding the Troy story as a narrative of human judgments that alternately realize and fail the goals of practical wisdom, discretion, foresight, and good governance." "Lydgate's *Troy Book* and the Confusion of Prudence," in *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages: Studies in the Cultural History of North-Western Europe*, ed. Thomas R. Liszka and Lorna E.M. Walker (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 59. Picking up on Edwards's attention to prudence, Colin Fewer argues that "prudence acquires, in other words, an ideological dimension: in an ideal society—an ideal illustrated largely by negative example in the *Troy Book*—social order is not produced or imposed by the sovereign or even by the law; it emerges locally, through the inculcation of prudence in the multitudes of individuals constituting a society." "John Lydgate's Troy Book and the Ideology of Prudence," *Chaucer Review* 38 (2004): 229-45; 230. While critics like Edwards and Fewer see Lydgate's portrayal of the Trojan fall as centered on a failure of prudence,

their readings fail to account for attention paid to gender in *Troy Book*. As I see it, the ideology of prudence, which both critics argue attempts to forestall the collapse, is closely tied to Lydgate's ideas of masculinity and where prudence fails, feminine gender traits prevail. In this way, the penetration of feminized gender performances into the male gender identity acts as a catalyst to the downfall of Lydgate's Troy.

22. The Middle English Dictionary provides numerous definitions for "meschef" including "Misfortune, affliction, trouble; a grievous situation, distressing state of affairs; problem, plight; consequence or effect of sin;" "The hardship, havoc, or stress of war; distress or duress of battle; assault, pillage, or destruction of war;" "A calamity, disaster; mishap, unfortunate or untimely event; unhappy accident;" and "Wickedness, wrongdoing; evil, vice; also, a misdeed, sin; an offense." *Middle English Dictionary*, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/ (University of Michigan Digital Library Production Service, 2001).

23. Following his betrayal of Medea, Jason and Hercules set off to attack Troy for wrongs they received on their journey, thus fueling the enmity between Greece and Troy; Achilles and Antenor are integral to the destruction of Troy.

24. Marcia Smith Marzec, "What Makes a Man? Troilus, Hector, and the Masculinities of Courtly Love," in *Men and Masculinities in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. Tison Pugh and Marcia Smith Marzec, Chaucer Studies 38 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 59.

25. C. David Benson, "Critic and Poet: What Lydgate and Henryson did to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde,*" *Modern Language Quarterly* 53:1 (1992): 23-40; 31.

26. Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 6.

27. The eroticism of this particular "spoiling" is heightened by the fact that Hector's victim is Patroclus, the bosom friend and sometimes-pederast of Achilles.

28. Robert R. Edwards, "Lydgate's *Troy Book* and the Confusion of Prudence," 53, suggests that the term confusion can mean both misunderstanding and undoing.

29   Wendy Hennequin "Not Quite One of the Guys: Pantysyllya as Virgin Warrior," *Medieval Feminist Forum* 34:1 (2002): 8-24 (http://ir.uiowa.edu/mff/vol34/iss1/6/).

30. Isabel Davis, *Writing Masculinity in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 78, 107.

31. Ibid., 107. Davis defines urbanitas as "a city-based and middling mas-culinity," 93.

32. Crocker, "Performative Passivity," 179.

33. Hennequin, "Not Quite One of the Guys," 8; Williams, *Inventing Womanhood*, 100. Of particular interest to the study was chapter 3: "Lydgate's Lady and Henryson's Whore," 86-113.

34. Mark Searle and Kenneth W. Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 163-78. The Sarum ceremony consisted of two avowals, one more passive and one an active set of vows performed by the couple. The first set of oaths involves a declaration of intent wherein the officiant asks if each has come with the intention of mar-rying the other. Both participants answer with an affirmative "I will." The second avowal requires the betrothed to repeat a set of oaths similar to those still used in Christian marriage ceremonies:

> N., take the, N.,
> to my weddyd wife,
> to haue and to holde
> (from this day forward),
> for better or wurs,
> for rycher for porer,
> in syckenes and in helthe
> tyll deth us departe
> (yf holy Chyrche will it ordeyn),
> and therto I plight the my trouth.

(Quoted in Searle and Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy*, 166.)

The fullest text of the Sarum Rite dates from a printing in 1543, admit-tedly 100 years after Lydgate's work; however, given the long history of the missal, its broad influence, and the close linguistic ties we will see in the fol-lowing passage, it is likely this ceremony (or one very similar) that Lydgate simulates in Book 3 of *Troy Book*.

35. Thoman Kuehn, "Contracting Marriage in Renaissance Florence," in *To Have and To Hold: Marrying and Its Documentation in Western Christendom, 400-1600,* ed. Philip L. Reynolds and John Witte (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 400-401.

36. For foundational research on western marriage customs see Jean-Baptist Molin and Protais Mutembe, *Le rituel du mariage en France du XII au XVI siécle,* Theologie Historique 26 (Paris, 1974); more recent work

includes, in addition to *To Have and To Hold: Marrying and Its Documents in Western Christendom, 400-1600,* Philip Lydon Reynolds, *Marriage in the Western Church: The Christianization of Marriage During the Patristic and Early Medieval Periods* (New York: Brill, 1994) and Michael M. Sheehan, "The Formation and Stability of Marriage in Fourteenth-Century England: Evidence of an Ely Register," *Mediaeval Studies* 33 (1971): 228-63.

37. Christopher N. L. Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 138.

38. According to Philip Reynolds, "Molin and Mutembe's evidence suggests that the full-fledged dialogical form, wherein each partner (following the priest) states that he or she accepts the other" developed from the fourteenth century and takes its fullest shape in the sixteenth century. *To Have and to Hold*, 27.

39. Sarum Rite, quoted in Searle and Stevenson, *Documents*, 166.

40. *Liber Pontificalis of Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter: A Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century,* ed. Ralph Barnes (Exeter, 1849), 258. The full avowal reads: "Here Ich N. take ye N. to my weddud wife, to haven and to holden fro yys day forward, for betre, for wors, for richer, for porer, in syknesse, and in helthe, tyl deth us departe, yf holy chyrch hyt wol ordeyne, and thereto I plyzth my treuthe."

41. Art Cosgrove, "Marrying and Marriage Litigation in Medieval Ireland," in *To Have and To Hold*, 352.

42. Reynolds, *Marriage in the Western Church*, 280.

43. Ibid. Of particular interest is his chapter on "Augustine on the Sacrament in Marriage," 280-314.

44. To be fair, the preceding line declares them "And riȝt manly in her countenaunce" (3.3781). Lydgate vacillates here, unwilling to fully emasculate the heroes of the Trojan War narrative.

45. "Dilaten," *Middle English Dictionary.*

46. *OED Online*, "dilation, n.2," accessed 12 August 2012, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/52757?rskey=1nGPEI&result=2&isAdvanced=false.

47. Achilles's close (and, some argue, homoerotic) relationship with Patroclus might also strengthen the expectation that he would be feminized more so than Hector. Moreover, given England's supposed descendance from Troy, it may not be surprising to find the Trojan heroes shown in a more positive (and—perhaps—more masculine) light.

48. Achilles later tries to establish peace through a heterosexual marriage to Polyxena. This relationship turns out to be ineffective in *Troy Book* as well as in Lydgate's source materials.