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Dreaming Of Masculinity: The Middle English "Pearl" And The Masculine Space Of New Jerusalem

Kirby Lund

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DREAMING OF MASCULINITY: THE MIDDLE ENGLISH *PEARL* AND THE
MASCULINE SPACE OF NEW JERUSALEM

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of North Dakota, 2011

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

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This thesis, submitted by Kirby Lund in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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Kirby Lund
November 4, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.....	1
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	35
III. MASCULINE REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE IN <i>PEARL</i>	76
IV. MASCULINE SPATIAL PRACTICES OF <i>PEARL</i>	108
CONCLUSION.....	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	142

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the gendering of spaces, particularly the city of New Jerusalem in the fourteenth-century Middle English dream vision *Pearl*. Earlier scholars have gendered this space as feminine based on the appearance of the city landscape. Instead, I examine the city in terms of both form and function to argue that New Jerusalem is a masculine space. In doing so, I hope to recognize the patriarchal control in the poem to demonstrate the masculine construction of the space, not to reinscribe patriarchy as a construct. This analysis combines the spatial theories of Henri Lefebvre and Doreen Massey with performative gender construction concepts as defined by Judith Butler. Ultimately, this gendered analysis of *Pearl*'s city illuminates the Church's defense against the Lollard heresy of the fourteenth century on the topic of the sex of priests in the clergy, thereby demonstrating the danger of a feminine construction of the city space.

INTRODUCTION

Gender is an incredibly complex concept that is often and perhaps too simplistically broken down into a black-and-white dichotomy between what is feminine and what is masculine. To modern scholars, however, gender is based on an accumulation of a person's gender performances—activities to which a given culture has attributed a masculine or feminine gender. In this idea of gender construction, if a person enacts more masculine gender performances than feminine ones, we would say that the person's gender is masculine. I will be discussing masculinity at length in this academic project, but perhaps a more fitting term might be “masculinities,” as there can potentially be several types of masculinity within a given culture. What we understand as masculinity in modern American society is likely to be a great deal different than the idea of masculinity in a culture halfway around the world. Just as the meaning of masculinity shifts between two different cultures, this definition can also change across time periods.

The fluidity of masculinity can also be seen in the flexibility of space, making these two theories quite compatible. Gender scholars say that a person's gender is constructed when that person enacts certain gender performances, and in much the same way, the gender of a space is constructed by examining the gendered visual codes found within that space and the gender performances of that space's inhabitants. Gender and space complement each other so well that they can actually have a reflexive relationship: the gender of a person within a space can affect the gendering of a space, or the gender of

a space can affect the gender of a person within that space. This complex relationship can be seen in the Middle English dream vision, *Pearl*.

Feminist scholars have been examining *Pearl* for decades, and they all seem to come to the same conclusion: the space of New Jerusalem, the heavenly city in the poem, is gendered feminine. Jill Mann contends that the fortress of the heavenly city is a feminine space because of the city's resemblance to the Virgin Mary's female body. The wall of the city, she claims, acts as a metaphorical womb to offer protection to those within the space. Sarah Stanbury also asserts that the heavenly city is a feminine space, explaining that the city doesn't so much represent the Virgin Mary's body, but rather the female body of the Maiden in the text. Stanbury even goes so far as to say that the heavenly city *is* the Maiden's female body that has been formally ordered and preserved in stone. As we can see from these interpretations, these scholars primarily deal with the form of the heavenly city while neglecting the function of the city space.

An examination of *Pearl*'s New Jerusalem in terms of both form *and* function reveals that the city space is actually masculine, not feminine. While I find these interpretations very interesting, I consider these readings flawed, as they overlook the function of the heavenly city as a patriarchal space meant for the control of women. *Pearl* is a product of fourteenth-century England, which we know was a highly-patriarchal time period and culture. In simply looking past this important detail, I believe that these earlier interpretations of *Pearl*'s city space, especially Stanbury's, to be somewhat flawed. To construct a space's gender, we need to examine the visual gender codes of the space while also analyzing the gender performances happening within the space. By describing the form of the heavenly city and not the city space's function, Stanbury and her

predecessors only analyze half of the city's gender, making my project all the more important to *Pearl* studies.

CHAPTER I BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pearl is the first of four poems found in the Cotton Nero A.x manuscript now housed in the British Library. This manuscript measures approximately 180 x 155 mm and spans 180 folio pages, twelve of which display manuscript illuminations depicting scenes from the four poems contained in this manuscript: *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, *Patience*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.¹ Of these 180 folios, the first 38 folios of Cotton Nero A.x are devoted entirely to *Pearl*, starting with four illuminations showing various scenes from the poem. The first image shows the Dreamer² lying down to sleep next to a stream in an “erber grene.”³ The next depiction offers a similar scene to the first image, as the Dreamer stands in a beautiful garden next to a stream, yet we are to understand that this landscape appears to him within the dream. The third illumination displays the Dreamer’s dialogue with the Maiden, as he points across the river toward a pale woman clad entirely in white robes with a golden crown atop her head. In the final illustration, the Dreamer seems to call out to the Maiden, who now appears within a walled, fortified city, signifying New Jerusalem, and the divine quality of the city can be seen in the golden tower to the left of the Maiden and the golden door behind her that presumably leads into

¹ “Cotton Manuscript Nero A.x,” The British Library, accessed April 3, 2013, <http://www.bl.uk>.

² As I will be contextualizing *Pearl*’s dreamer-narrator into the genre of dream visions, each with its own dreamer-narrator, I will hereafter refer to *Pearl*’s dreamer-narrator simply as “the Dreamer.” The other major character of *Pearl* is often referred to as the *Pearl*-maiden, but for my purposes, I will simply refer to her as the Maiden throughout this project.

³ *Pearl: An Edition with Verse Translation*, ed. William Vantuono (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), l. 38. I will cite this edition of *Pearl* when referring to textual examples of the poem, citing only *Pearl*. All citations hereafter regarding the editor will be marked “Vantuono, *Pearl*.”

the city.⁴ A quick glance at the manuscript reveals that the actual text of the poem stretches over the 34 folios following these four depictions.

The Dialect and Author of *Pearl*

The text following these four illuminations provides telling information as to the location of *Pearl*'s composition due to the dialect of Middle English used by the manuscript's author. The groundwork of the dialectal studies of the Cotton Nero A.x manuscript lies with Robert J. Menner, who claimed that the form used throughout the manuscript's poems "may be considered characteristic of the Northwestern or perhaps the Central Midlands."⁵ E.V. Gordon states, "the dialect of *Pearl* and its three companion poems is now generally agreed, with few dissentients, to belong to the Northwest Midlands."⁶ He continues, "there can be little doubt, at least, that the language of the extant text belongs to that area, and the evidence of those linguistic elements—rhymes, alliteration, and vocabulary—which are least subject to scribal alteration indicates that that was the area of its original composition."⁷ Thus, it is almost universally accepted that Cotton Nero A.x is written in the Northwest Midlands dialect due to the numerous examples found amongst the poems of Middle English phonemic, graphemic, and semantic similarities.

Changes in spelling and consonants also show us that the manuscript comes from the Northwest Midlands. The Old English (OE) ending "-ǣnd" changes to "-and" or

⁴ "The Cotton Nero A.x. Project," University of Calgary Libraries and Cultural Resources, accessed April 3, 2013, <http://www.gawain.ucalgary.ca>.

⁵ Robert J. Menner, "Four Notes on the West Midland Dialect," *Modern Language Notes* 41.7 (1926): 454-458, 457.

⁶ E.V. Gordon, *Pearl* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), xlv. Hereafter cited as "Gordon, *Pearl*."

⁷ Gordon, *Pearl*, xlv-xlv.

“-*ond*” in the manuscript, and the “-ud” ending is apparently replaced by “-us.” The Middle English (ME) “-*ong*” is retracted to “-*ung*.” The OE *hw* appears as *wh*, *w*, or *qu*, and the OE *cw* and Old French *qu* appear as *wh* three times in the manuscript. There is no initial voicing of the phonemes *f* or *s*, and the OE “-*sc*-” never appears as “-*s*-” in unstressed positions. The “-*ʒt*” spelling of the spirant holds throughout the manuscript, with one exception where the spirant is spelled “-*ght*.”

The vowels and diphthongs used in this example of Middle English point us to the Northwest Midlands dialect, Oakden further explains. The OE *ǣ* + nasal is either *a* or *o* in all the poems, a similarity in the poems also noted by Vantuono.⁸ Whereas the OE *ǣ* + nasal appears as *a* or *o*, OE *ǣ* + *l* + a consonant mutated is normally *a* except in the common word *welle*, where we would normally expect *e*. The OE *ȝ* also changes to *i*, *ii*, or *e*, yet the OE *ō* does not become *u*. The OE *ā* appears as *o* with very few exceptions in the texts. The OE diphthongs *āw*, *āg*, and *āh* develop into *aw* and *ow*, and ME *ou* becomes *au*. Though we see development in these particular diphthongs, ME *ai*, *ei*, and *oi* are not used to express ME *ā*, *ē*, or *ō*. There is also a simplification in the diphthong use in the manuscript, as OE *æ* is simply *a*, and OE *ǣo* appears as *e* in the text. An OE *ǣa* + Cons. mutated becomes *e*, and OE *ēa* shortened is *ǣ*. Based on the rhymes in the text, OE *ē* becomes a tense *e*, and this tense *e* phoneme holds when placed before *d*, *t*, *s*, *n*, *l*, or *r*. The rhyme of the poem also shows us that the ME *ēʒ* is raised to *īʒ*, furthermore marking Cotton Nero A.x as a product of the Northwest Midlands dialect.

⁸ William Vantuono, *The Pearl Poems, an Omnibus Edition* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), 373.

The *Pearl*-poet's vocabulary furthermore tells us that the Cotton Nero A.x manuscript belongs to the Northwest Midlands dialect. The pronoun used for "they" is always *þay*, the form for "them" is normally *hem*, and the general form for "their" is *her*. We find no *thire* forms in the manuscript whatsoever, and the third person singular pronoun "she" appears as *ho* throughout the texts, though six exceptions of *scho* occur. Noun plurals formed with an *-en* suffix are also rare occurrences. The standard adjectival ending is *-ly*, and the suffix *-lych* appears in a few adjectives, but never in adverbs. We finally see the infinitive *-en* ending used only 24 times throughout the manuscript, and this *-en* was lost later in the North and Northwest Midlands dialects, once more showing us that the manuscript comes from the Northwest Midlands.

Finally, we see the Middle English of Cotton Nero A.x pointing us to the Northwest Midlands dialect through verb usage, specifically the endings of those verbs. The *-i-* in second-class OE weak verbs is retained 37 times throughout the manuscript, four of which occur in infinitive forms, and the *i-* verbal prefix is retained only twice throughout the four poems. We also see that present participles normally end in *-ande*. The endings *-es* or *-eȝ* appear on present indicative singular second- and third-person verbs, whereas the first-person singular simply ends with *-e*. The present plural of the verb "to be" is *ar(e)*, *arn*, or *ben*, while the present indicative plural generally ends in *-en* or *-yn*, though only when immediately preceded or followed by a personal pronoun. The imperative singular, except when without ending or simply with *-e*, ends in *-es*, and the second-person weak preterite singular ends in *-es*. Contracted forms of "take" and "make," such as *ta þe*, are common throughout the manuscripts, yet we find no traces of *quilke* or *swilke*. The *-d* ending drops from weak preterite verbs and past participles, and

the final unvoicing of consonants in Cotton Nero A.x was not confined to verbs of the weak class, further showing us the manuscript's Northwest Midlands origin.⁹

Though the Middle English dialect of Cotton Nero A.x is fairly conclusive as to the location of the poem's composition, the precise time period for the manuscript is unknown. *Pearl* scholars most often conclude that the poem was composed in the latter-half of the fourteenth century, and some argue that *Pearl* was written somewhere in the period between 1360 and 1400.¹⁰ John M. Bowers further narrows this search, claiming the poem as being written within the last two decades of the century during the reign of Richard II. (r. 1377-1399).¹¹ After 1400, however, the manuscript becomes almost entirely lost, though a condensed version of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, titled *The Grene Knight* appears about a century later. William Vantuono notes, "the earliest record of the manuscript is an entry in the catalogue of the library of Henry Savile (1568-1617) of Banke in Yorkshire."¹² The manuscript was later acquired by Sir Robert Cotton (1571-1631), probably from Savile, as Vantuono claims. Cotton added the manuscript to his immense library, and it was here that the manuscript actually received the title "Nero": Cotton's collection of texts was separated into fourteen sections, each one found with a bust of Cleopatra, Faustina, or one of twelve Roman emperors. Thus, the manuscript containing *Pearl* acquired the name "Cotton Nero." Cotton's library was handed over to the British state in 1700, and nearly a thousand manuscripts were moved to Ashburnham House, including the Cotton Nero manuscript. In 1731, however, a fire consumed 114

⁹ J. P. Oakden, *Alliterative Poetry in Middle English: The Dialectal and Metrical Survey* (USA: Archon Books, 1968), 72-89.

¹⁰ Stanley Perkins Chase, *The Pearl: The Fourteenth Century English Poem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), xviii. Hereafter cited as Chase, *The Pearl*.

¹¹ See John M. Bowers, *The Politics of Pearl: Courtly Poetry in the Age of Richard II* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001).

¹² Vantuono, *Pearl*, xiv.

books and damaged 98, but the *Pearl* manuscript survived the fire unscathed. In 1753, the Cotton collection was moved once more to the British Museum.¹³ The British Library Act of 1972 allowed the library department of the British Museum to form its own entity, so the manuscript was moved a final time to the British Library where it currently resides.¹⁴

Another mystery surrounding *Pearl* is the specific identity of the *Pearl*-poet.¹⁵

The earliest attributions of *Pearl*'s authorship point to the Scottish writer Huchown of the Awle Ryale (ca. 14th century) and the London-based Ralph Strode (ca. 14th century).

There were also tentative nominations of John Donne and John Prat, though, as Stanley Perkins Chase notes, these nominations were set upon "a series of precarious conjectures."¹⁶ C.O. Chapman also threw a name into the authorship debate, claiming that John de Erghome, an Augustinian friar of York, composed *Pearl*. H.L. Savage considered the *Pearl*-poet as either William or Robert Hornby, both members of a family in Lancashire connected with John of Gaunt and Coucy.¹⁷ E.V. Gordon puts it most succinctly, however, by stating that "attempts to identify [the poet] have been unconvincing."¹⁸ While all seemed like valid arguments at the time, little critical reception has been offered for any of these suggestions.

¹³ Vantuono, *Pearl*, xv.

¹⁴ "Governance," The British Library, accessed April 16, 2013, www.bl.uk.

¹⁵ I refer to the author of the text as "the *Pearl*-poet," yet it should be noted that this author has been attributed to the remaining poems in Cotton Nero A.x with little dissent. In his book *Alliterative Poetry in Middle English*, J. P. Oakden explains that the four poems in this manuscript are written in exactly the same dialect of Middle English, and he further notes that vocabulary, style, phraseology, and parallel passages align in each of these poems (72-73). The title of "the *Pearl*-poet" is thus interchangeable with "the *Gawain*-poet," yet I feel that an analysis of *Pearl* should attribute the poet to the work in question. C.J. Peterson argues so far as to say that the *Pearl*-poet is also responsible for the composition of *St. Erkenwald* in the article "*Pearl* and *St. Erkenwald*: Some Evidence for Authorship," *Review of English Studies* 25.97 (1974): 49-53. Because it is contested, I am not considering *St. Erkenwald* here.

¹⁶ Chase, *The Pearl*, xviii.

¹⁷ Vantuono, *Pearl*, xvii. This connection is further explored in Carter Revard's "Was the *Pearl* Poet in Aquitaine with Chaucer? A Note on *Fade*, L. 149 of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*."

¹⁸ Gordon, *Pearl*, xli.

The name “Mascey,” first put forth by Ormerod Greenwood, has received the most attention in *Pearl* scholarship. The Mascey family was a prominent household in the town of Sale, and Greenwood argued the *Pearl*-poet’s identity as Hugh Mascey, pointing to f. 95 of *Gawain* where “Hugo de” is written in a fifteenth-century hand. He further suggests that numerology in *Pearl* and the word *mascellez* in stanza-group XIII support Hugo de Mascey (ca. 14th century) as *Pearl*’s author. Barbara Nolan and David Farley-Hills agreed that a Mascey was the author, as well, noting that *mascellez* is a word unique to *Pearl*, contending that it is a pun on the name “Mascey.”¹⁹ Instead of Hugh Mascey, Nolan and Farley-Hills identified the *Pearl*-poet as John de Mascey (d. 1376), a rector of Stockport in Cheshire.²⁰ These scholars centered their argument around line 912: “Let my bone vayl, neuerþelese.” The number 912 can be broken into 9 and 12; in the medieval alphabet, 9 and 12 form *IM*, the initials for *Iohan Mascey*. Vantuono also supported John de Mascey as the author of the poem, noting that “this John fits the time and place better than any other presented so far.”²¹ He continues, however, “there are undoubtedly many who would consider the search pointless, for the hard fact is that a document naming John de Mascey as *Pearl*-poet probably does not exist, and only such a document would convince everyone.”²² As this document has never appeared, the attention paid to John de Mascey has also proved unconvincing in the search for the *Pearl*-poet.

Unfortunately, the most recent studies to uncover the identity of the *Pearl*-poet have also been unconvincing. In his 2001 article, Carter Revard suggests that the author’s extensive knowledge of French stemmed from his proximity to John of Gaunt (1340-

¹⁹ Barbara Nolan and David Farley-Hills, “The Authorship of *Pearl*: Two Notes,” *Review of English Studies* 22.87 (1971): 295-302, 295.

²⁰ Vantuono, *Pearl*, xviii.

²¹ William Vantuono, “John de Mascey of Sale and the *Pearl* Poems,” *Manuscripta* 25 (1981): 77-88, 81.

²² Vantuono, “John de Mascey,” 88.

1399), who led attacks in France from 1357-1370.²³ Revard's claim that the author was a clerical member of Gaunt's court lies unexplored, yet Ann R. Meyer's article tentatively mentions Sir John Stanley (d. 1414) as the *Pearl*-poet. Instead of trying to pinpoint the author, her article focuses more so on the Despencers, a Gloucestershire family favored by Richard II (1367-1400).²⁴ Meyer believes that the Despenser family's extensive libraries provided the *Pearl*-poet with his source material, as she offers historical context of both the text and the poet in relation to the aristocratic family. Andrew Breeze picks up this idea of Sir John Stanley as the *Pearl*-poet, noting especially Stanley's location in England and the similar location in which *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* transpires.²⁵ Breeze contends that Stanley is the *Pearl*-poet due to the setting of *Gawain*, explaining that Stanley must have set *Gawain* in a part of England that was familiar to him. Since the evidence remains inconclusive, however, the search for the elusive *Pearl*-poet's identity continues.

Though we cannot accurately attribute *Pearl* to a specific author of the late fourteenth century, we can construct a rough identity of the author based on the information presented by the poem. Stanley Perkins Chase states that the author "was plainly a highly educated person,"²⁶ but, as Gordon notes, "nothing is known of the author of *Pearl* beyond what can be inferred from internal evidence."²⁷ Luckily, the information that can be inferred from internal evidence in the poem is quite telling. The poem falls into the dream vision genre of medieval literature, which tells us that the poem

²³ Carter Revard, "Was the *Pearl* Poet in Aquitaine with Chaucer? A Note on *Fade*, L. 149 of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *SELIM* 11 (2001): 5-26, 20.

²⁴ Ann R. Meyer, "The Despencers and the *Gawain* Poet: A Gloucestershire Link to the Alliterative Master of the Northwest Midlands," *The Chaucer Review* 35.4 (2001): 413-429.

²⁵ Andrew Breeze, "Sir John Stanley (c. 1350-1414) and the 'Gawain'-Poet," *Arthuriana* 14.1 (2004): 15-30.

²⁶ Chase, *The Pearl*, xxi.

²⁷ Gordon, *Pearl*, xli.

was written in the later Middle Ages. The location of the poem's composition can be formed by a close examination of the dialect in which the poem is written, and we can also understand a general location of the poem's making by studying the alliterative qualities of *Pearl* which are compounded by the bob-and-wheel rhyme scheme of the poem. Also, by seating the poem in a literary movement of the later fourteenth century called the Alliterative Revival, we can show the general location of the poem's composition. The *Pearl*-poet's technical intricacies throughout *Pearl* are attested by the numerical composition of the text and the concatenation between stanzas.

Important Editions of *Pearl*

The story of *Pearl* follows a "joyleȝ juelere" who acts as the narrator of the poem.²⁸ The narrator, who many scholars simply name "the Dreamer," mourns the loss of his precious pearl, a reference to his young daughter, and, due to his bereft state, he falls asleep in a luscious garden. As he sleeps, his dream begins, and his dream is filled with wondrous images in another garden, yet this garden is more beautiful than he has ever seen. He wanders through the landscape until he finds a stream that separates the idyllic garden space from a great walled city on the other side of the stream that he believes is heaven. The Dreamer seeks a crossing to reach Paradise on the other side of the stream when he sees a young maiden clad in a dress made entirely of pearls with one large pearl set upon her breast. The Maiden welcomes him, and he identifies this maiden as his daughter, the lost pearl.

The bulk of *Pearl* focuses on the dialogue between the dreaming narrator and the Maiden. The Dreamer asks the Maiden if she is, indeed, the pearl that he has lost, yet she

²⁸ *Pearl*, l. 252.

explains to him that she was not lost when she died, but rather openly accepted into heaven. Though he wishes to cross to the other side of the stream to join her in Paradise, she says that he must submit himself to God's judgment. He further plies the Maiden with questions, asking about her position in heaven, to which she replies that she is the queen. The puzzled Dreamer then asks if she has replaced Mary as the queen of heaven, whereupon the Maiden explains that she is a bride of Christ, and that everyone shares in the body of Christ. To prove that everyone equally receives Christ, she recites the Parable of the Vineyard in which all the workers of the vineyard, no matter how many hours they have worked during the day, receive equal payment, just as salvation is equally attained through God's grace.²⁹ To end their dialogue, the Maiden offers instruction to the Dreamer on how to achieve salvation, and she implores him to be washed in Christ's blood so as to buy the Pearl of Great Price, signified by the large pearl set upon her breast.

The Dreamer becomes curious about the heavenly city that lies beyond his reach across the stream. The Maiden explains that the city is that of New Jerusalem, as she heavily cites John's apocalyptic vision of the City of God. The narrator wishes to see the heavenly city, and he is thus granted a sort of divine sight which allows him to see everything in the city, though he still stands on the far side of the stream. He watches as the Lamb walks through the streets of New Jerusalem with blood gushing endlessly from its side, and a procession of 144,000 virginal women follow the Lamb, each one of them marked with the sign of Christ, thereby signifying that they are his spiritual brides. The Dreamer, having seen the perfection of the divine city, becomes filled with desire and jumps into the stream, yet, upon hitting the water, he suddenly awakens in the same

²⁹ Matthew 20: 1-16, *Vulgate Bible*, <http://www.drbo.org>.

luscious garden where he fell asleep to begin the dream. Upon waking from the dream, however, he vows to live his life according to God's will.

In *Pearl* scholarship, there are several editions of *Pearl* in both the original Middle English and verse translations, five of which are predominantly used by academics. The first edition of *Pearl* was edited and published by Richard Morris in his 1869 *Early English Alliterative Poems in the West-Midland Dialect of the Fourteenth Century*, a text he composed for the Early English Text Society.³⁰ The text he presents contains the original yogh (ȝ) and thorn (þ) graphemes found in the Middle English manuscript, yet Morris adds a significant amount of modern punctuation into the text, including exclamation points after interjections as well as hyphenations. The next edition of importance is E.V. Gordon's *Pearl* from 1953, which includes a large amount of background information about the authorship, form, doctrinal theme, symbolism, sources, and style of the poem. In his edition, he retains the yogh and the thorn, yet he adds modern punctuation similarly to Morris; however, Gordon employs hyphenation in his edition far less than Morris' text. Tolkien also composes an edition of *Pearl* in 1975, including *Pearl* with translations of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Sir Orfeo*. In his edition, Tolkien lays aside the original Middle English to offer a verse translation of the text, thereby abandoning the yogh and thorn letters, while also incorporating modern punctuation. This translation, however, seems composed in an almost Early Modern style, as per his use of the *-th* or *-est* endings of verbs.³¹

³⁰ Richard Morris, *Early English Alliterative Poems in the West-Midland Dialect of the Fourteenth Century* (London: Trübner & Co., 1864).

³¹ J.R.R. Tolkien, trans., *Pearl in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, and Sir Orfeo* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975). I refer to "Pearl of delight that a prince *doth* please" in l. 1, which mirrors the usage of "-th" at the end of third person singular verbs, and "Thou *marrest* a lovely thing" in l. 26, in the tradition of the Early Modern English second-person singular present indicative ending *-est*.

The two most recent editions of importance come to us from William Vantuono and Sarah Stanbury. Vantuono's 1995 edition offers extensive background information on the poem, its manuscript, and its form and style, like Gordon's edition. Moreover, Vantuono offers a verse translation alongside the original Middle English text. Vantuono also adopts modern punctuation in both the Middle English text and the Present Day English translation and retains the yogh and thorn letters in the Middle English. Stanbury published an edition of *Pearl* in 2001 as part of the University of Rochester's "TEAMS Middle English Text Series." Stanbury utilizes the Middle English of the poem, though she does not provide a verse translation in Present Day English like Vantuono's edition. In the absence of a verse translation, however, Stanbury makes this text more accessible to a modern audience through her emendations to the Middle English of the poem: she outright abandons the yogh and thorn letters, and she also changes *u* to *v* in the text, as *u* can sometimes take the phonetic /v/ sound, such as "Ne proved I never her precios pere"³² or "Of that pryvy perle withouten spot."³³ Ad Putter and Myra Stokes note that "careful readers of the works of the *Gawain*-poet know only too well that the spelling of words in MS Cotton Nero A.x. is subject to bewildering variation," and Stanbury's emendations to the Middle English spellings further add to that "bewildering variation," as her emendations possibly skew the semantic meanings of passages compared to the original Middle English text.

³² Sarah Stanbury, ed., *Pearl* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), accessed June 28, 2012, <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/pearlfrm.htm>, l. 4.

³³ Stanbury, *Pearl*, l. 2 and l. 12.

Pearl and its Genre

Pearl's subject matter leads scholars to apply various terms to the poem in hopes of placing it within a single literary genre. The onset of the poem shows the jeweler mourning the loss of his precious pearl, commonly identified as his daughter: he laments, "Allas, I leste hyr in on erbere; / Purȝ gresse to grounde hit fro me yot."³⁴ Because of this lamentation, some scholars deem *Pearl* an elegiac poem,³⁵ while others place emphasis on the jeweler's transformation throughout the poem. Scholars more frequently claim that due to the jeweler's penitence and reform from his extreme lamentation over his daughter's death, *Pearl* represents the *consolatio*, a literary form that forefronts the Christian concepts of sin and forgiveness.³⁶ A. C. Spearing contends that the jeweler's "whole attitude expresses a sickness which needs to be cured, just as Boethius in the *De Consolatione* needs to be cured of his discontent with the misfortune that has come upon him."³⁷ *Pearl*'s subject matter is complex, as it blends several different literary forms, and this provides academics with several springboards for interpretation. The one literary genre that *Pearl* unmistakably fits, however, is the dream vision.

The dream vision form became popularized in the fourteenth century, yet did not originate then, as Constance B. Heatt explains: "the dream as a literary form is...not the creation of the Middle Ages, but a literary tradition going back at least to classical

³⁴ *Pearl*, ll. 9-10.

³⁵ See Angela Carson's "Aspects of Elegy in the Middle English *Pearl*," *Studies in Philology* 62 (1965): 17-27.

³⁶ See Lawrence Clopper, "*Pearl*: The Consolation of Scripture," *Viator* 23 (1992): 231-246; see also Jennifer Garrison, "Liturgy and Loss: *Pearl* and the Ritual Reform of the Aristocratic Subject," *The Chaucer Review* 44.3 (2010): 294-322.

³⁷ A. C. Spearing, *Medieval-Dream Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 121-122. Hereafter cited as "Spearing, *Medieval-Dream Poetry*."

times.”³⁸ In the Middle Ages, the primary authority on dreams was Macrobius, though little more than a chapter of Macrobius’ *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* actually deals specifically with dreams. Macrobius detailed that there were five types of dreams. The greatest of these was the *oraculum*, as he explains, “we call a dream oracular in which a parent, or a pious or revered man, or a priest, or even a god clearly reveals what will or will not transpire, and what action to take or to avoid.”³⁹ Macrobius further explains that the *oraculum* is the most divine of the five dream types, as they almost always come directly from the heavens, yet these dreams aren’t always so easily interpreted. This type of dream often “conceals with strange shapes and veils with ambiguity the true meaning of the information being offered, and requires an interpretation for its understanding.”⁴⁰ What Macrobius means here is that these dreams can appear largely allegorical, as these allegories act as “strange shapes and veils” that conceal the dream’s meaning, and a specialized dream interpreter must unpack the meaning of these particular dreams. Macrobius’ explanation of dreams shows us how these concepts were carried into the Middle English dream vision genre.

The dream vision genre is most aptly explained by the examination of one poem—the *Roman de la Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun.⁴¹ This poem follows the story of a man attempting to gain love in a garden space, yet the *Roman de la Rose* carries with it the traditional conventions of the dream vision form. Spearing notes

³⁸ Constance B. Heatt, *The Realism of Dream Visions: the Poetic Exploitation of the Dream Experience in Chaucer and His Contemporaries* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1967), 20. Hereafter cited as “Heatt, *The Realism of Dream Visions*.”

³⁹ Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 90, my emphasis. Hereafter cited as “Macrobius, *Commentary*.”

⁴⁰ Macrobius, *Commentary*, 90.

⁴¹ The *Roman de la Rose* was a medieval text of French origin that was written in two stages: Guillaume de Lorris initially wrote just over 4,000 lines of the poem ca. 1230, and Jean de Meun added almost 18,000 lines ca. 1275. Although this work was originally composed in French, it was translated to English by Geoffrey Chaucer as *The Romaunt of the Rose* toward the end of the fourteenth century.

that the dream vision form occurs in “an ideal and often symbolic landscape, in which the dreamer encounters an authoritative figure, from whom he learns some religious or secular doctrine, and so on.”⁴² The narrator in the *Roman de la Rose* falls asleep, only to find himself in one of these “ideal and often symbolic” landscapes. As he wanders this landscape, he finds a walled garden and searches for an entrance; once it’s found, he meets Idleness, who magically opens the entrance because of the narrator’s courteous words. Inside the garden, he meets numerous allegorical figures, such as Sir Mirth, Gladness, and Courtesy, but one character he finds here represents another staple of the dream vision genre—the God of Love. The God of Love acts as an authoritative figure who leads the narrator through the love experience and teaches him about the inner-workings of courtly love. Because of this doctrinal teaching, Spearing’s description of the dream vision genre seems to fit the *Roman de la Rose* perfectly.

Just as the *Roman de la Rose* follows Macrobius’ concepts of the *oraculum*, so, too, does *Pearl*’s main character, the Maiden. Spearing suggests that the dream vision genre, specifically the *oraculum*, represents a “culture-pattern dream” that is attached to “patriarchal, authoritarian societies, identifying the authoritative figure as an ancestor, an angel, or God, according to the predominant culture-pattern.”⁴³ The Maiden acts as the Dreamer’s authority figure, as she speaks as a bride of Christ. Her authority over the Dreamer comes directly from her divine husband, and she exerts that borrowed authority over the Dreamer several times throughout their dialogue: she derides him for attempting to understand heaven through earthly paradigms, saying, “Me þynk þe put in a mad

⁴² Spearing, *Medieval-Dream Poetry*, 4.

⁴³ Spearing, *Medieval-Dream Poetry*, 11.

purpose, / And busyeȝ þe aboute a raysoun bref.”⁴⁴ The Maiden verbally chastises the Dreamer, utilizing the authority over him that stems directly from Christ, her spiritual husband. Therefore, the Maiden contextualizes *Pearl* within the dream vision genre as the authority figure of Macrobius’ *oraculum*.

The garden space in the *Roman de la Rose* also marks a staple of the dream vision genre. Dream visions primarily take place in a garden setting, either with the dreamer-narrator falling asleep in some foliage-ridden place or entering into a dream vision in a place of natural growth, such as *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*,⁴⁵ Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess*,⁴⁶ or *The Floure and the Leafe*.⁴⁷ One image that typically appears in poems of the dream vision genre is the *hortus conclusus*, or the enclosed garden, which implies a private garden space surrounded by a wall, either natural or artificial. William Howard Adams explains that love experiences often occur in gardens because “a neutral setting free of confining traditions and associations had to be found, and the idealized garden composed of nature’s purest elements seemed the inevitable trysting place.”⁴⁸ The wall of the *hortus conclusus* provided the garden’s inhabitants with an amount of privacy that was hard to come by in the Middle Ages, representing “a place where romance itself, if not the Holy Spirit, might be welcomed.”⁴⁹ Here, again, the *hortus conclusus* offers a

⁴⁴ *Pearl*, ll. 267-268.

⁴⁵ The dreamer-narrator in this poem hunts for deer in a forest, grows weary after killing and butchering a deer, and falls asleep next to a river in the woods.

⁴⁶ Chaucer’s dreamer-narrator in *Book of the Duchess*, who is actually named “Chaucer,” falls asleep after eight years of lovesick sleeplessness to enter his dream vision. Upon finding himself in the dream vision, he awakens in a beautiful room and walks outside of the room into a lush, green forest.

⁴⁷ The female narrator of *The Floure and the Leafe* also lies in bed sleeplessly, and because of her insomnia, she goes for a walk in the forest. While there, she finds a hedge so thick that no one can see into the garden on the other side, but the hedge allows those on the inside of the hedge to see outside of it.

⁴⁸ William Howard Adams, *Nature Perfected: Gardens Through History* (University of Minnesota: Abbeville Press, 1991), 55. Hereafter cited as “Adams, *Nature Perfected*.”

⁴⁹ Adams, *Nature Perfected*, 55.

place for secular love, yet religious love is certainly not out of the question. The natural gardens of these poems thus directly correlate to conventions of the dream vision genre.

Dream vision genre imagery is not limited simply to the garden setting, however. This genre places emphasis on the visual sensations of the dreamer-narrator, and sight was directly tied to understanding in medieval conceptions. Heatt affirms that “the poem is to a very large extent an account of what the poet *sees* rather than of what he hears or thinks.”⁵⁰ In this regard, the dream vision form contains several stock images. Most dream visions contain a body of water, as the dreamer-narrator either falls asleep next to a stream to begin the dream vision or enters the dream vision and encounters a stream.⁵¹ Scholars often tie this use of water imagery to the sacrament of baptism, or, at the very least, they interpret the body of water as a symbol of purification. Another conventional image is glass, whether a room full of stained glass windows typically seen in a church,⁵² or even a towering spire of cliffs made of glass.⁵³ Heatt explains that the dream vision narrator’s sight of these conventional images “can be considered dreamlike, for dreams do tend to be largely visual.”⁵⁴ Dreams most often come to us in terms of images, and these particular images mark conventions of the dream vision genre.

Pearl is certainly no exception to these conventions of dream vision literature. As the dream opens, the Dreamer lies on the natural, foliage-filled ground of a cemetery, presumably where his two year old daughter is buried. He is quickly overcome with grief and falls asleep. He notes, “Fro spot my spyryt þer sprang in space; / My body on balke

⁵⁰ Heatt, *The Realism of Dream Visions*, 18, original emphasis.

⁵¹ The narrators of *Wynnere and Wastoure* and *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* both walk next to streams prior to the onset of their dream visions.

⁵² The narrator of Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess* enters his dream vision finding himself in a beautiful room full of stained glass windows.

⁵³ Chaucer’s *House of Fame* follows the narrator as he climbs to the top of a cliff made of crystal where the House of Fame is seated.

⁵⁴ Heatt, *The Realism of Dream Visions*, 18.

per bod in sweuen,” explaining here that while his body laid asleep, his spirit “þer sprang in space,” meaning that his spirit was whisked away into the dream landscape.⁵⁵ He finds himself in an idyllic place—he walks on the side of a flowing river “Swangeande swete, þe water con swepe / With a rownande rourde, raykande aryzt,”⁵⁶ yet he explicitly notes the appearance of those banks as “bene of beryl bryzt.”⁵⁷ In a mere four lines, we see two of the dream vision conventions: first, the narrator encounters the flowing, whirling river that most scholars interpret as a symbol of purification for the Dreamer; second, the narrator describes the river’s banks as “beryl bryzt,” making a reference to glass. These conventions solidly seat *Pearl* within the dream vision genre of the later Middle Ages.

The history surrounding *Pearl* further contextualizes it within the genre of Ricardian poetry. The term “Ricardian” serves more as a chronological marker than a literary marker, John Anthony Burrow explains: “Richard came to the throne inconveniently late for our purposes...and his tastes in literature seem to have run more to French than to English.” Burrow continues, “hence, [Richard II] does not represent, as Elizabeth does, a natural centre and symbol for the literature of his day.”⁵⁸ Placing the name “Ricardian” to a certain genre of poetry gives the impression that that poetry found its place directly with the king, but Bowers contends that

A more likely milieu would have been the Ricardian ‘court’—a complex network that embraced the king’s chamber, the royal household, the council, the offices of state, the chief law courts, even the Parliament, as well as the far-flung affinity of royal servants, lesser officials, church appointments, king’s knights, archers, and yeomen of the Crown.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *Pearl*, ll. 61-62.

⁵⁶ *Pearl*, ll. 111-112.

⁵⁷ *Pearl*, l. 110.

⁵⁸ John Anthony Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry: Chaucer, Gower, Langland, and the ‘Gawain’ Poet* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1971), 2. Hereafter cited as “Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry*.”

⁵⁹ John M. Bowers, “Pearl in its Royal Setting: Ricardian Poetry Revisited,” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 17 (1995): 111-155, 112. Hereafter cited as “Bowers, ‘Pearl in its Royal Setting.’”

To Bowers, there certainly seems to be a large audience for *Pearl*, although the king is not included in this list. He rather suggests that the poem's audience "would have likely included the Cheshire natives whose careers in military service and royal administration advanced them along these patronage networks toward the centers of national power, even the mobile household of Richard II himself."⁶⁰ Bowers implies that the text isn't so much meant for the king, himself, but rather for those people surrounding the king. Dieter Mehl claims that the audience for such literature was "addressed to [a] large number of well educated people," which suggests that *Pearl* was likely meant as entertainment for the nobility and, perhaps, the gentry class.⁶¹ Though Ricardian poetry is, itself, a narrow genre of medieval literature, *Pearl* still would have a wide audience.

Authors of the Ricardian period therefore played to an audience that was almost entirely aristocratic, which can be seen in the commonly-used tropes. Ricardian poets took on the role of a *scop* from Old English, or even perhaps a court jester or minstrel: "because they still wrote mainly for the ear rather than for the eye, 'literary' authors of romances continued to cultivate a minstrel manner, full of tags and formulas, appeals to the audience and heavily marked narrative transitions."⁶² Burrow further notes, "the poet speaks directly to an audience whose knowledge of alliterative diction he seems to be able to take for granted."⁶³ Along with taking the audience for granted, "the presence of a narrator inside the poem's fictional world is a very common feature of Ricardian work," not unlike the Dreamer in *Pearl*.⁶⁴ These features of Ricardian poetry are all tied together

⁶⁰ Bowers, "Pearl in its Royal Setting," 113.

⁶¹ Dieter Mehl, "Introduction," in *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 13.

⁶² Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry*, 13-14.

⁶³ Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry*, 33.

⁶⁴ Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry*, 38.

in “a loose-woven, open texture,” Burrow mentions.⁶⁵ These tropes together form the basis for Ricardian literature, but one of the most important characteristics of this literary era is alliterative style.

This alliterative style contextualizes *Pearl* within the scope of Ricardian poetry, but also within a movement called the Alliterative Revival. Spearing explains that “from about 1340-1350 onwards we find, alongside the rhyming, metrical poetry written in the South East by poets such as Chaucer and Gower, a considerable number of poems, mostly anonymous, written in largely unrhymed alliterative verse.”⁶⁶ Thorlac Turville-Petre believes that “there was satisfaction in the knowledge that the alliterative line was a uniquely English form, without parallel in French or Latin literature.”⁶⁷ This style of literature is something akin to a national literary style, making these alliterative pieces of Ricardian poetry very popular to the aristocracy. Spearing notes that “alliterative poems, too, were evidently among the luxury objects with which such fourteenth-century aristocrats brought beauty and entertainment to the lives of their families and courts.”⁶⁸ Because these poems were thought of as luxury objects, we see an abundance of them during the later-fourteenth century, such as: *Winner and Waster*, *The Parliament of the Three Ages* (mid-14th century), *William of Palerne* (mid-14th century), *The Wars of Alexander* (late-14th century), *The Destruction of Troy* (late-14th century), and the *Morte Arthure* (1470).⁶⁹ The *Pearl*-poet “is generally and rightly held to be the most technically

⁶⁵ Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry*, 43.

⁶⁶ A. C. Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 2. Hereafter cited as “Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet*.”

⁶⁷ Thorlac Turville-Petre, *The Alliterative Revival* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1977), 26. Hereafter cited as Turville-Petre, *The Alliterative Revival*.

⁶⁸ Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet*, 5.

⁶⁹ We don’t know specific dates for many of these poems, but we know that *Winner and Waster*, *The Parliament of the Three Ages*, and *William of Palerne* come from the middle of the fourteenth century,

proficient of all the poets of the Revival,” thus marking *Pearl* as both a member of the Alliterative Revival and Ricardian poetry.⁷⁰

The Literary Complexity of *Pearl*

Alliterative poetry originated in Anglo Saxon poetry, and poets of the late Middle Ages “owe their metrical forms and their themes to a sudden rediscovery of the past... a poetic tradition which had come down, probably by means of an unbroken oral tradition, with very few changes from Anglo Saxon times,”⁷¹ thereby lending credence to Turville-Petre’s claim that the alliterative form was a “purely-English form.” H.N. Duggan states that “the unrhymed alliterative long line in Middle English consists of two *verses* or *half-lines* divided by a *caesura*. The first of these is called variously the *a-verse* or *on-verse*, the second the *b-verse* or *off-verse*.”⁷² Moorman affirms this, noting that “the basic line is the familiar four-stress accentual line of alliterative verse,”⁷³ as alliteration must always fall on a metrically-stressed syllable, or ictus, in an alliterative verse.⁷⁴

Alliterative poetry thus relied on these metrically-stressed syllables, yet the patterns of stressed syllables allowed the poet to create more flexible lines. Duggan explains that alliterative lines are made up of “lifts” and “dips”: “a *lift*, also called a *stave*, is occupied by a single metrically prominent syllable, a *dip* by one to several unstressed

whereas *The Wars of Alexander* and *The Destruction of Troy* come near the end of the fourteenth century. The only piece in this list that has a definitive date is the *Morte Arthur*, written in 1470.

⁷⁰ Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry*, 27.

⁷¹ Charles Moorman, *The Works of the Gawain-Poet* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1977), 12. Hereafter cited as “Moorman, *The Works of the Gawain-Poet*.”

⁷² H.N. Duggan, “Meter, Stanza, Vocabulary, Dialect,” *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet*, ed. Derek Brewer and Jonathon Gibson (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 1997): 221-242, 223. Hereafter cited as “Duggan, ‘Meter, Stanza, Vocabulary, Dialect.’”

⁷³ Moorman, *The Works of the Gawain-Poet*, 32.

⁷⁴ Duggan, “Meter, Stanza, Vocabulary, Dialect,” 226.

syllables.”⁷⁵ Here, Duggan defines stressed and unstressed syllables in a line, yet by positioning these syllables in certain ways, the poet can create four distinct stress patterns in his poem’s lines—rising, falling, rising-falling, and falling-rising. A rising verse begins with a dip and ends with a lift, whereas a falling verse starts with a lift and falls into an unstressed dip syllable. A rising-falling verse begins and ends with unstressed dips, while a falling-rising verse starts and concludes with stressed lift syllables.

Although *Pearl* scholars generally agree that the poem is constructed using alliterative verse, Duggan contends that the poem is constructed in iambic tetrameter. He bases his conclusion on the poem’s meter, the function of schwa vowels, and the use of caesuras in the text. We generally view alliterative poetry as having lines containing four stressed alliterative syllables, and “alliterative poets rigorously avoided alternating rhythms, both iambic and anapestic, in their b-verses.”⁷⁶ *Pearl*’s lines, however, don’t follow the standard alliteration and metrical stress of the alliterative long line form. Rather, these lines are more often than not composed in iambs, Duggan claims, using the first line of the poem as an example:

/ ˘ / ˘ / ˘ /
 Perle, plesaunt to princes pay.

Here, Duggan suggests that the lines of *Pearl* tie a stressed syllable to an unstressed syllable to construct iambic feet. He furthermore presses the issue by looking toward the unstressed schwa vowel, otherwise known as the final *-e* that appears on some Middle English words. This schwa vowel is meant “to convey phonetic features of the preceding syllable rather than to express grammatical function or to designate syllabic schwa,”

⁷⁵ Duggan, “Meter, Stanza, Vocabulary, Dialect,” 223, original emphasis.

⁷⁶ Duggan, “Meter, Stanza, Vocabulary, Dialect,” 233.

meaning that the poet and the scribe's use of the schwa may have differed, thereby implying that some schwas count as part of the meter, whereas other usages were simply dropped to retain the iambic feet.⁷⁷ Finally, Duggan suggests that though *Pearl's* lines “superficially resemble the half-lines of alliterative verse—the metrical caesura corresponds to syntactic juncture, and each half-line is a metrical phrase—the resemblance is accidental,” thus implying that the caesuras appear similarly to those in alliterative verse, yet they don't hold the same metrical or syntactic functions of alliterative verses.⁷⁸

Though perhaps not as deeply alliterative as the other poems within Cotton Nero A.x, *Pearl's* subject matter also points to a placement in the Alliterative Revival. The chief features of Alliterative Revival poetry were “the alliterative accentual verse, the formulaic diction, the stern moral outlook, [and] the essentially pagan and pessimistic view of nature beneath the faint Christian coloration.”⁷⁹ A superficial look at the poem reveals the alliterative qualities of *Pearl*, and that formulaic diction in the poet's “large corpus of distinctively poetic words associated with alliterative verse.”⁸⁰ The Maiden provides both the “stern moral outlook” and the “pessimistic view of nature”: she belittles the Dreamer during their debate over her queen-status as a bride of Christ, and she also shows condescension toward the Dreamer because he believes everything he can see with his eyes.⁸¹ We furthermore see a pessimistic view of nature through the portrayal of dead characters, claims Christine Chism: poems of the Alliterative Revival “animate British history by reviving past bodies—the pagan judge, the giant of St. Michael's Mount, Sir

⁷⁷ Duggan, “Meter, Stanza, Vocabulary, Dialect,” 234.

⁷⁸ Duggan, “Meter, Stanza, Vocabulary, Dialect,” 230.

⁷⁹ Moorman, *The Works of the Gawain-Poet*, 12.

⁸⁰ Duggan, “Meter, Stanza, Vocabulary, Dialect,” 226.

⁸¹ *Pearl*, ll. 295-296. “Þou says þou trawe3 me in þis dene / Bycause þou may wyth y3en me se.”

Priamus, dead fathers and mothers, and the Green Knight himself—whose potentially threatening authority must be encountered and arbitrated.”⁸² The Maiden fills this role, since scholars generally agree that the Dreamer’s lost pearl, his young daughter, returns to him as the Maiden, and his encounter with this authoritative queen of heaven certainly seems to fit Chism’s claim.

Pearl’s position within the Alliterative Revival provides telling information about the location of the poem’s composition—along with the location of the mysterious, anonymous *Pearl*-poet. Turville-Petre notes that “any statement about the provenance of individual alliterative poems should...be treated with circumspection, but [it] is safe enough to say that the Revival was first and foremost established in the west midlands.”⁸³ Spearing confirms that the poems of the Alliterative Revival “seem to derive from the West-Midland area, and it is almost certain that the *Gawain*-poet also wrote in that area.”⁸⁴ The alliterative form is found predominantly in northern England, and Chaucer, a Londoner, “was likely enough to dismiss a town or village in this barbarian North as being ‘Fer in the north, I kan nat telle where’, and to look on an inability to compose alliterative verse as being a natural and indeed admirable characteristic in a southerner.” Chaucer’s Parson in the *Canterbury Tales* jests, “But trusteth wel, I am a Southren man, / I kan nat geeste ‘rum, ram, ruf,’ by lettre.”⁸⁵ We therefore see a delineation in northern and southern poetry because of the northern poets’ ability to use alliterative verse, and we can thus seat *Pearl* somewhere in a northern part of the West Midlands of England.

⁸² Christine Chism, *Alliterative Revivals* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 2.

⁸³ Turville-Petre, *The Alliterative Revival*, 30-31.

⁸⁴ Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet*, 3.

⁸⁵ Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet*, 4. Spearing references Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* in this quote. The first reference is spoken by the Reeve in l. 4015 of *The Reeve’s Tale*, and the second reference comes from the Parson at ll. 42-43 of *The Parson’s Prologue*.

Moorman suggests that the poems of the Alliterative Revival with “their insistence upon pre-invasion metrical forms and values may well be symptomatic of the growing breach between the increasingly nationalistic country barons and the culturally francophile London court in the period 1350-1400,” here referring to the court of Richard II.⁸⁶ In this way, we see a clear delineation between the alliterative poetry in the north of England, such as *Pearl*, and the London poets who viewed alliterative poetry as barbaric rusticity.

This supposed “barbaric rusticity” could not be further from the truth, however, especially when considering the literary sophistication used throughout the *Pearl*-poet’s work. The poet shows a great deal of literary sophistication through *Pearl* both in language and symbolism. Not only does he use heavy alliteration in the northern style of English poetry, but he uses an intricate rhyme scheme called “bob-and-wheel” rhyme throughout the 101 stanzas of the poem. Even the number of lines and stanzas of the poem show us how masterful the *Pearl*-poet is, as the numerological symbolism of these lines and stanzas gives us another layer of intricacy. The numerological significance in *Pearl* also exemplifies the poet’s mastery in writing by shaping this work into the poem’s main symbol, the pearl.

Pearl’s intricacy lies in its varied use of literary devices, one of which is bob-and-wheel rhyme. Joan Turville-Petre explains, “the ‘bob-and-wheel’ is used in rhyming stanzas from the late fourteenth century onwards,” putting this rhyme scheme in the same time period as the composition of *Pearl*.⁸⁷ Howell Chickering notes:

A typical later bob-and-wheel stanza is likely to be thirteen lines long, with the eight-line body of the stanza rhymed *abababab*, often with internal alliteration and falling into two grammatical units of one *abab* quatrain each. The bob and

⁸⁶ Moorman, *The Works of the Gawain-Poet*, 12.

⁸⁷ Joan Turville-Petre, “The Metre of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,” *English Studies* 57.4 (1976): 310-328, 313.

wheel will then be rhymed *c / dddc*, with the bob containing only one or two stresses and the wheel containing three stresses per line. Alternative rhyme-schemes in the wheel may be *c / bbbc* or *c / aaac* with two or three stresses per line.⁸⁸

A single stanza using bob-and-wheel rhyme is generally thirteen lines: the first eight lines, called the “bob,” appear in two *abab* rhymed quatrains; the “wheel” of the stanza comes in the last five lines, though there are more choices in the rhyming than the simple *ab* rhymes found in the bob. The lines of the bob have only one or two stresses, whereas the wheel holds three stresses in each line. Bob-and-wheel rhyme thus makes for intricate written work.

The *Pearl*-poet’s use of bob-and-wheel rhyme is slightly different than Chickering’s example. In *Pearl*, each of these bob-and-wheel stanzas is only twelve lines: the two *abab* quatrains remain the same as Chickering’s description, but one line has been dropped from each stanza’s wheel, leaving a four-line wheel. Instead of the *c / dddc*, *c / bbbc*, or *c / aaac* wheel rhymes, the wheel in a stanza of *Pearl* rhymes *b / bcbc*, leaving the rhyme of one stanza as *abababab / bcbc*, as seen in the example below:

Perle plesaunte to prynces paye,	a
To clanly clos in golde so clere,	b
Oute of Oryent, I hardyly saye,	a
Ne proued I neuer her precios pere.	b
So rounde, so reken in vche araye,	a
So smal, so smoþe her syde3 were.	b
Queresoeuer I jugged gemme3 gaye,	a
I sette hyr sengeley in synglure.	b
Allas, I leste hyr in on erbere;	b
pur3 gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.	c
I dewyne, fordolked of luf-daungere,	b
Of þat pryuy perle wythouten spot. ⁸⁹	c

⁸⁸ Howell Chickering, “Stanzaic Closure and Linkage in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,” *The Chaucer Review* 32.1 (1997) 1-31, 2.

⁸⁹ *Pearl*, ll. 1-12.

The *Pearl*-poet uses this bob-and-wheel rhyme to provide emphasis during each stanza, Larry Dean Benson asserts: “the sudden change from the long line to the short lends the bobs and wheels an emphasis that the [*Pearl*-poet] exploits to build narrative units in which ‘the sting is in the tail.’”⁹⁰ Benson means that the stanza’s wheel holds more meaning than the bob, “which is often meaningless in itself but which is always aurally significant in its abrupt shift in meter.”⁹¹ The intricate bob-and-wheel rhyme of *Pearl* most certainly marks it as something far greater than barbaric rusticity, and these twelve-line stanzas also add another level of meaning to the poem due to their numerological significance.

An examination of the numerological structure of *Pearl* alludes to masterful construction on behalf of the *Pearl*-poet rather than barbaric rusticity. Maren-Sofie Røstvig contends that “the poet was a careful craftsman who was fascinated by the use of formal devices with symbolic implications,” and the formal devices with symbolic implications appear as numbers throughout *Pearl*.⁹² Numerical composition “not only was employed by reputable theologians like St. Augustine of Hippo, but was taken to be the regular practice of the Holy Ghost.”⁹³ This numerical composition was therefore a widely-used technique by medieval authors, and audiences of the time period were quick to understand the numerical references in a text: “all symbolic meanings [of numbers] were so well known to both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as to be virtually the

⁹⁰ Larry Dean Benson, *Art and Tradition in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 116. Hereafter cited as Benson, *Art and Tradition*.

⁹¹ Benson, *Art and Tradition*, 116.

⁹² Maren-Sofie Røstvig, “Numerical Composition in *Pearl*: A Theory,” *English Studies* 48 (1967): 326-332, 328. Hereafter cited as Røstvig, “Numerical Composition.”

⁹³ Røstvig, “Numerical Composition,” 326.

common property of all educated people, and particularly those with a religious bent,” as most numbers used in medieval texts held religious significance.⁹⁴

Symbolic meanings were attached to certain numbers, and the numerals of particular importance in *Pearl* are five and twelve. Røstvig explains that the number five is a “round” number, meaning “those numbers that are circular by definition, to wit those that reproduce themselves in the last digit when multiplied by themselves.”⁹⁵ Ian Bishop affirms that medieval authors “had a predilection for ‘round’ numbers—that is, any number divisible by Five.”⁹⁶ The number twelve also holds religious and symbolic significance, as a medieval reader would likely think of the twelve tribes of Israel or even the twelve Disciples of Christ as biblical references to its numerical significance. As for its symbolic significance, Røstvig suggests that “it is possible that the twice-repeated 12 is supposed to convey the idea of squareness.”⁹⁷ Bishop comes to the conclusion that “the numerical structure of *Pearl* consists, therefore, of a marriage of two systems: one is based upon Five, the other upon Twelve—both of them numbers that carry a symbolic significance relevant to the content of the poem.”⁹⁸ The complex numerical symbolism throughout the poem therefore counters Chaucer’s claim that northern alliterative poetry was little more than barbaric rusticity.

The bulk of this numerical symbolism in the poem’s content occurs in the Dreamer’s vision of the heavenly city, dealing primarily with the number twelve: the Dreamer sees a city “With bantelez twelue in basing boun,” and the city is seated on

⁹⁴ Røstvig, “Numerical Composition,” 331.

⁹⁵ Røstvig, “Numerical Composition,” 327.

⁹⁶ Ian Bishop, *Pearl in its Setting* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 27. Hereafter cited as Bishop, *Pearl in its Setting*. On the next page of his book, he suggests, “In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* we are told that the pentangle is known in English as the ‘endeles knot’; as the device on the hero’s shield it symbolized *trawþe*, a comprehensive virtue which includes integrity, flawlessness and perfection.”

⁹⁷ Røstvig, “Numerical Composition,” 329.

⁹⁸ Bishop, *Pearl in its Setting*, 29.

“foundementez twelue of riche tenoun.”⁹⁹ Furthermore, the heavenly city’s “twelue degrés wern brode and stayre.” This use of twelve corroborates Røstvig’s claim that twelve is tied to squareness, as the “twelue degrés” led to the city above which was “ful sware.”¹⁰⁰ The number three also makes an appearance in the city’s walls as “Vch pane of þat place had þre ȝates,”¹⁰¹ noting here the three gates on each side of the city, and, as the city is “ful sware” with four sides to it, the Dreamer notes, “So twelue in poursent I con asspye.”¹⁰² Finally, the heavenly city is inhabited by 144,000 virgins who form a procession to follow the Lamb as brides of Christ. This final 144 suggests the number twelve multiplied by itself. The numerical significance of *Pearl* in the context of the poem is also reflected in the numerical structure of the poem, as well.

The numerical structure of *Pearl* employs both numbers twelve and five to create a sense of roundness throughout the poem. At a glance, *Pearl* spans 1212 lines, all of which are grouped into 12-line stanzas, “denoting temporal cycles; thus the twelve signs of the zodiac encompass the vast circle of the heavens.”¹⁰³ These stanzas are further clustered into sections of five stanzas, and by seeing these stanza-groups using Røstvig’s “round” five, it therefore suggests that each stanza-group has a certain roundness similar to the central image of the poem—the pearl—though Bishop suggests that “the poem’s circular form may be intended to represent the perfect sphere of Heaven without any intermediary reference to the solitary pearl of great price.”¹⁰⁴ This roundness is further compounded by the fact that *Pearl* is made up of 20 stanza-groups, since the number 20

⁹⁹ *Pearl*, ll. 992-993.

¹⁰⁰ *Pearl*, ll. 1022-1023.

¹⁰¹ *Pearl*, l. 1034.

¹⁰² *Pearl*, l. 1035.

¹⁰³ Røstvig, “Numerical Composition,” 327.

¹⁰⁴ Bishop, *Pearl in its Setting*, 29.

is divisible by five. We might think that the total number of stanzas in *Pearl* would be 100, yet there is one stanza in Section XV of the poem that scholars sometimes deem anomalous to the piece. Because the final count is 101, “surely 101 suggests the completion of a cycle (100) and the beginning of another, an interpretation that suits the context both *Revelation* and of *Pearl*, where the end of all things is envisaged and a new Heaven and a new Earth, in fact a new beginning,” Røstvig claims.¹⁰⁵ The numerical structure of the poem is thus exemplified throughout the cyclical, circular nature of its structure, while the words that link the stanzas together make the poem appear as a single, round unit.

Moreover, the roundness of the poem is reinforced by the poet’s use of link-words between stanzas. Dorothy Everett explains that “a keyword or phrase in the refrain [the last line of a stanza] is always echoed in the first line of the following stanza,” meaning that a single word in the last line of the stanza appears again as an echo in the first line of the following stanza.¹⁰⁶ This technique is otherwise known as “concatenation” or “anadiplosis” according to Margaret Medary, who further notes that in the text of *Pearl*, “the repetition involves the refrain, but it is always only one word, never a full verse, or a phrase,” such as the linguistic link between the first and second stanzas:¹⁰⁷

Of þat pruy perle wythouten *spot*.
Syþen in þat *spote* hit fro me sprange.¹⁰⁸

Here, we see the author focusing on the word *spot* as the link-word between these two stanzas, and it is through these link-words that the poem’s stanzas are connected to form

¹⁰⁵ Røstvig, “Numerical Composition,” 328.

¹⁰⁶ Dorothy Everett, *Essays on Middle English Literature*, ed. Patricia Kean (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 87. Hereafter cited as Everett, *Essays*.

¹⁰⁷ Margaret Medary, “Stanza-Linking in Middle English Verse,” *Romanic Review* 7 (1916): 243-270, 265. Hereafter cited as Medary, “Stanza-Linking.”

¹⁰⁸ *Pearl*, ll. 12-13, my emphasis.

a single, continuous line. The link-word between the last and first lines of the poem, *paye*, is critical to Everett's interpretation of *Pearl*'s roundness:

Ande precious perlez vnto his *pay*. Amen. Amen.¹⁰⁹
Perle plesaunte to prynces *paye*...¹¹⁰

The *Pearl*-poet utilizes concatenation between stanzas, thereby linking them and creating a single chain, and Everett asserts that "the echo between the first and last lines of the poem gives the effect of a completed circle, intended perhaps to suggest the idea of the pearl, which in line 738 is called 'endelez rounde.'"¹¹¹ To Everett, the concatenation between stanzas links the end of the poem to the beginning of the poem again through the link-word *paye*, thereby closing that continuous stream of linked stanzas to form a circle evocative of the "endelez rounde" of the poem's central image, the pearl.

Everett's "endelez rounde" pattern created by the concatenating link-words in the poem also suggests a linguistic circularity as well as a thematic circularity. Dennis Casling and V.J. Scattergood note that "stanza-linking has been treated by most critics of Middle English literature as a simple decorative device," yet Osgar D. Macrae-Gibson argues that the stanza-linking in *Pearl* also provides the poem with a thematic structuring, especially around the motif of payment.¹¹² Macrae-Gibson explains that the link-word *paye* is the most important concatenation in the entire poem, as the theme of *paye* starts and ends the poem:

This theme is emphasised straightforwardly by the link-word 'paye,' used of God's displeasure when men oppose His will (1164-1165), and of the consequences, displeasing to man, of such opposition (1177), but chiefly, and crowningly, simply of the pleasure of God, which it should be man's part, prayer,

¹⁰⁹ *Pearl*, l. 1212, my emphasis.

¹¹⁰ *Pearl*, l. 1, my emphasis.

¹¹¹ Everett, *Essays*, 87-88.

¹¹² Dennis Casling and V.J. Scattergood, "One Aspect of Stanza-Linking," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 75 (1974): 79-91, 91.

and joy to incline himself to. The poem thus closes on the spiritual theme which was implicit in its very first line.¹¹³

The idea of *paye* and payment is used throughout the poem, as the Dreamer frequently questions the Maiden about the worth of salvation and how one can pay God to achieve it, and W. A. Davenport confirms this thematic linking via concatenation: “the end of the poem completes a pattern by providing the refrain which the first line has, in a sense, been seeking, and this refrain-word, *pay*, ‘satisfaction’, itself emphasizes the idea of completion.”¹¹⁴ The poet’s stanza-linking technique thus reinforces this idea of circularity in the poem by also showing the roundness of *Pearl*’s thematic structure.

Some scholars make this reading of *Pearl*’s roundness more complex, however, saying that the poem’s structure reflects the image of a complete necklace rather than a single gem. Davenport suggests that “the internal structure of the story is something like a road or a ladder, where the Dreamer cannot see the next step; he progresses until he looks differently upon the world,” thereby asserting that the Dreamer is on a spiritual journey, of sorts.¹¹⁵ Instead of viewing the stanza-linking as forming a single, circular entity, he further claims that each stanza and each stanza-group promotes its own theme: “each of the twenty groups has its characteristic leading motif and hence a separable identity.”¹¹⁶ In seeing each of the stanza-groups as having its own thematic identity, furthermore being concatenated by linking-words that reinforce that thematic identity, “the visual image that [the poem] suggests is not so much that of a single, solid and spherical pearl as of something that consists of a number of linked units—such as a

¹¹³ Osgar D. Macrae-Gibson, “*Pearl*: The Link-Words and the Thematic Structure,” in *The Middle English Pearl: Critical Essays*, ed. John Conley (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), 218. 203-219.

¹¹⁴ W. A. Davenport, *The Art of the Gawain-Poet* (London: The Athlone Press, 1978), 41. Hereafter cited as Davenport, *Art of the Gawain-Poet*.

¹¹⁵ Davenport, *Art of the Gawain-Poet*, 41.

¹¹⁶ Davenport, *Art of the Gawain-Poet*, 42.

necklace of pearls.”¹¹⁷ Bishop additionally claims that the linking of stanzas could perhaps evoke the imagery of the rosary: “rosaries of pearls are not unknown and it is no improbable conjecture that they would have been popular in the fourteenth century, which has been described as the pearl age *par excellence*.”¹¹⁸ *Pearl* is an obliquely-religious poem, not unlike the other works found in the Cotton Nero A.x manuscript, and the *Pearl*-poet’s careful work could be an attempt to manipulate the shape of the poem from a simple circle into a more complex string of ideas, whether a pearl necklace or a rosary, through these intricate stanza-linking devices.

By examining the stanza-linking through *Pearl*, we can furthermore show that the poem originated in northern England. Through dialectal evidence, we know that *Pearl* comes from the Northwest Midlands, and we further know that *Pearl* is considered both an alliterative poem and a part of the Alliterative Revival, though Duggan contends otherwise. Medary notes that “stanza-linking belongs almost exclusively to northern poetry; [and] it always occurs in connection with alliteration,” thereby suggesting *Pearl*’s northern location. Charles G. Osgood further remarks in his 1906 edition of the poem that “*concatenation* is a peculiarity of Northern verse...[which] occurs almost as a rule in poems employing the strophe of *The Pearl*.”¹¹⁹ The stanza-linking of *Pearl* furthermore allows us to place the *Pearl*-poet in the northern area of England, yet we still have no information to pinpoint the poet’s location, other than the dialectal evidence that suggests specific English towns.

¹¹⁷ Bishop, *Pearl in its Setting*, 30.

¹¹⁸ Bishop, *Pearl in its Setting*, 30.

¹¹⁹ Charles G. Osgood, *The Pearl: A Middle English Poem* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1906), xlv, original emphasis.

As we can see, *Pearl* scholarship is a broad field, but there are several promising avenues of research that have come up in the past few decades. Toward the beginning of *Pearl* studies, we see scholars attempting to figure out the concrete details of the poem, such as identifying the *Pearl*-poet's identity or by seating the poem in a specific genre. Moving into the future, we see less of a focus on the language and dialect of the poem and more analyses that deal with the text as a whole, which I will discuss in my next chapter. I will also discuss the position of my project in relation to *Pearl* scholarship, as a whole.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I set up my argument that the space of the heavenly city in *Pearl* is a masculine space, not a feminine one as previous scholars claim. First, I discuss both the nature of space and the nature of gender, and in doing so, I furthermore elaborate on how gender is applied to space and the role of space in gender construction. Because I contend that the city is a masculine space, I explain the concept of masculinity in the Middle Ages, including various types of masculinity and their relationship to one another. Finally, I examine my research in terms of *Pearl* scholarship as a whole by identifying significant trends in *Pearl* studies while explaining these trends in conjunction with my spatial and gendered reading of the text. By looking at trends in the great corpus of *Pearl* scholarship, I show how my project fills a large gap in *Pearl* studies: first, this analysis combines spatial and gendered interpretations of *Pearl*, an area of scholarship that is nearly untouched; second, there have been few masculine readings of the poem's city space, suggesting that my project will provide a challenging position to earlier analyses.

Space and Gender Construction

Spaces are all around us, whether we recognize them or not, and these spaces are constructed by two means. Lefebvre explains that space “contains a great diversity of objects, both natural and social,” meaning that spaces are produced by the natural

symbolism found in the space and by the social nature of the space.¹ Michel de Certeau also notes, “on the one hand, one is concerned with systems of signification, on the other, with systems of fabrication.”² The systems of signification de Certeau mentions here refer to the conceptualization of spaces and how the symbolism derived from a space, in part, constructs the space. De Certeau’s systems of fabrication denote the socially-constructed nature of space, as human actions in a space also, in part, construct the space. Therefore, a space’s construction happens due to the representation of space and due to the human spatial practices happening within the space.

An observer’s visual perception of a space leads into Lefebvre’s representation of space, utilizing the space’s imagery in order to partially construct it. The representation of space is the second part of Lefebvre’s spatial triad, and it is “tied to relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations.”³ To utilize de Certeau’s term, a “system of signification” is one that implies some sort of symbolism or signage taking place, quite similar to Lefebvre’s ideas about signs, codes, and “frontal” relations. “Frontal” here takes on the meaning of “visual,” and Ceri Watkins agrees that Lefebvre’s representation of space is “a conceptualized space constructed out of symbols, codifications, and abstract representations.”⁴ In short, this means that the representation of space constructs it through visual perception.

¹ Henri Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 77. Hereafter cited as Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.

² Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steve F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 19. Hereafter cited as de Certeau, *Practice*.

³ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 33.

⁴ Ceri Watkins, “Representations of Space, Spatial Practices, and Spaces of Representation: An Application of Lefebvre’s Spatial Triad,” *Culture and Organization* 11 (2005): 209-220, 209. Hereafter cited as Watkins, “Representations of Space.”

The representation of a space constructs it, in part, because this representation helps us perceive space. Maurice Hershenson explains that “the study of visual space perception begins with the assumptions that the physical world exists and that its existence is independent of the observer,” meaning that an observer first perceives a space through sight.⁵ This implies that a human being must be involved in spatial construction because there must be someone to perceive the space. Lefebvre notes that spaces now contain an “increasingly pronounced visual character,” suggesting the importance of the visual in spatial construction. He further explains that spaces “are made visible in the mind: the visibility of people and things, of spaces and of whatever is contained within them.”⁶ It is through vision that the observer can perceive the space and construct it through the representation of space.

The other half of spatial construction, in Lefebvre’s terminology, is spatial practice. Spatial practice represents the first piece of Lefebvre’s spatial triad theory in which the “terms of everyday discourse...serve to distinguish, but not to isolate, particular spaces,” meaning that human usage of a space aids in spatial construction.⁷ To Lefebvre, these terms of everyday discourse mean that any human action can be interpreted as a spatial practice, but this doesn’t mean a single human’s actions construct a space. De Certeau notes that “every ‘proper’ place is altered by the mark *others* have left on it,” implying that the actions of several human users on a space add to its spatial construction.⁸ In fact, Doreen Massey’s foremost stipulation for spatial construction is

⁵ Maurice Hershenson, *Visual Space Perception* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 1. Hereafter cited as Hershenson, *Visual Space Perception*.

⁶ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 75.

⁷ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 16.

⁸ De Certeau, *Practice*, 21, original emphasis. Here, I employ the term “users” to imply humans’ actions within a space and actions *on* a space, as humans do *use* spaces. Through that usage, we get spatial practices.

human input: “we recognise space as the production of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny,” meaning that interactions between human users in a space become the crux of spatial construction.⁹ We can thus conclude that space is constructed when one or more human users input spatial practices into that space.¹⁰

In a similar way to space being constructed through spatial practices, gender can be seen as a construction through gender performances. Judith Butler’s gender performativity has been most often used to explain gender as a complex relationship based on several factors, and Butler suggests that a person’s gender is constructed in two ways, much like space is constructed:

In the first instance, then, the performativity of gender revolves around this metalepsis, the way in which the anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits as outside itself. Secondly, performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration.¹¹

The first part of Butler’s explanation of gender construction reveals that there is an anticipation of some expression of gender that posits as *outside* itself, meaning that this gender construction would occur and would be readily visible either on the person’s body or as an action that the person performs. The second part of Butler’s explanation of gender construction reveals that a gendered activity “is not a singular act,” but rather a

⁹ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 9. Hereafter cited as Massey, *For Space*.

¹⁰ The final piece of Lefebvre’s spatial triad theory of spatial construction is called “representational space.” To Lefebvre, representational space entails “lived space,” which “[embodies] complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life...” simply meaning that representational space reflects the social impact of a space under construction, *Production of Space*, 45. This seems like an unnecessary category in spatial construction, however, because as we examine this “lived space,” we are examining little more than the spatial practices that occur between users in that space.

¹¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), xv. Hereafter cited as Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

repetition and ritualization of gender performances. Thus, gender construction relies on a multitude of gender performances working together. It is through these two criteria—that a “gendered essence” makes itself visible in a way external to the person’s body and that a person enacts repetitive, ritualistic gender performances—that we can understand gender construction in Butlerian terms.

Looking at both spatial and gender construction, therefore, reveals that space and gender are constructed in very similar ways. In terms of spatial construction, spatial practices affect the overall construction of a space, whereas gender performances, according to Butler, construct the overall gender of a person. Massey defines space as “the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of the contemporaneous plurality.”¹² She implies here that different identities inhabiting space will all produce varying spatial practices, and these varying spatial practices all serve to construct space, since, as Massey mentions, “there is no hermetically sealed discipline in geography.”¹³ In the same vein, Butler’s gender performance must be viewed as a whole to see a person’s overall gender. Lefebvre explains that “in terms of social space, and of each member of a given society’s relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*.”¹⁴ Here, Lefebvre notes that performance is included in spatial construction, much like gender construction, and a space’s construction depends on the competence of the performances happening within it. Therefore, space and gender are constructed in nearly identical ways because of

¹² Massey, *For Space*, 9.

¹³ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 22. Hereafter cited as Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*.

¹⁴ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 33, original emphasis.

this competence, so we can equate Lefebvre's spatial practices to Butler's gender performances, at least to some extent.

An important note for both spatial practices and gender performances, however, is that they are all produced by human bodies. In terms of spatial construction, "the body, and the movement of the body, can be understood only on the preconscious level of corporeality because, for Merleau-Ponty, it is the body that inhabits the space—which it therefore comes to know on a corporeal level—before the mind ever does," claims Chris Allen. Therefore, constructing a space relies on a specific body inhabiting that space, thus implying the human body produces the spatial practices. In this spatial construction, Allen continues, "the body *actively* appropriates space through its intentional activity so that its *experience of* space becomes manifest *within* the body," meaning that the body is an agent within a space, capable of affecting that space through spatial practices, while the body simultaneously experiences the space.¹⁵

We see a similar reflexive relationship between the body and bodily gender when describing gender construction. Butler examines the link between the body and the body's gender when she rhetorically asks, "the pleasures, the desires, the acts—do they not in some sense emanate from the biological body, and is there not some way of understanding that emanation as both causally necessitated by that body and expressive of its sex-specificity?"¹⁶ The body and its gender performances are thus linked, as it takes a body to make those actions, and the gender performances are enacted in a visible, outward way, "posited as outside" the body, *by* the body. "In other words," she explains,

¹⁵ Chris Allen, "Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology and the Body-in-Space encounters of Visually Impaired Children," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 719-735, 724, original emphasis. Hereafter cited as Allen, "Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology."

¹⁶ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 134.

“acts, gestures, and desires produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body.”¹⁷ The body exteriorizes the acts, gestures, and desires of a person which reflexively appear on the surface of the body, thus implying that the body and gender are forever linked in gender construction.

In modern gender construction, though the body and the body’s gender are linked, that does not mean that bodily sex affects gender. Butler explains that “the view that gender is performative sought to show that what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body.”¹⁸ Butler touches here on an earlier conception of gender that tied biological sex to a person’s gender, but as Candace West and Don. H. Zimmerman assert, “sex is a determination made through the application of socially agreed upon biological criteria for classifying persons as females or males.”¹⁹ Thus, a person who has a penis would be automatically categorized as masculine in an oversimplified way of explaining gender through biological sex. If we tie bodily sex to gender, then we attribute gender roles to both men and women in an essentialist system of marking certain bodies with certain actions. This implies a generalized view of gender, as a man would be treated as masculine only because of his biological difference from a woman, regardless of the man’s gender performances.

To resolve this concept of gender essentialism which fixes a person’s gender to bodily sex, we tend to think of gender as something that is always moving and never complete. R.W. Connell asserts that gender should be thought of in terms of “*gender*

¹⁷ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 185, original emphasis.

¹⁸ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, xv.

¹⁹ Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, “Doing Gender,” *Gender and Society* 1.2 (1987): 125-151, 127. Hereafter cited as West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender.”

projects,” meaning that “these are dynamic processes of configuring practice through time, which transform their starting points in gender structures.”²⁰ In short, Connell implies that a person’s gender is never “finished,” existing as a static or fixed attribute. A person’s every action could be seen as a gender performance, and those gender performances pile up, since we must view these gender performances as a whole—every subsequent gender performance adds to the mix of gendered activities already performed. Natalie Zemon Davis explains that “gender conventions are used and *manipulated* so that women and men can manage their lives, make do as best they can, or advance,” hinting here at the ever-changing project that is gender, since something that can be manipulated has the ability to change.²¹ Gender is therefore always in a state of flux, never fixed or confined as *only* masculine or *only* feminine. By viewing these individual gender performances as a whole, the full picture of a person’s gender appears.

Attributing gender to a space instead of a body is no exception to this rule that gender is always in flux, however, because of the competence of spatial practices that occur within a space. If we ascribe a certain gender to a specific spatial practice, that spatial practice acts as a gender performance for that space; because of both Lefebvre’s and Butler’s ideas that spatial practices and gender performances should be viewed as a whole, every gendered spatial practice happening in a space gets folded into this whole and continues to accumulate to form the space’s overall gender. Massey explains that “precisely because space...is a product of relations-between, relations which are

²⁰ Raewyn William Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 28, original emphasis. Hereafter cited as Connell, *Men and the Boys*.

²¹ Natalie Zemon Davis, “Introduction,” in *Worth and Repute: Valuing Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, Essays in Honour of Barbara Todd*, ed. Kim Kipper and Lori Woods (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2001), 27-36, 27, original emphasis. Hereafter cited as Davis, “Introduction.”

necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, [space] is always in the process of being made,” thereby negating the problem of essentialism in gendered space.²² Massey continues, “the spatial is social relations ‘stretched out,’” implying that the gendered spatial practices of many human users inside the same space all contribute equally to the overall gender of space, and because human users are endlessly enacting gendered spatial performances, the gender of a space, much like the gender of a body, is always in a state of flux.²³

Instead of seeing gender as being constantly constructed, society traditionally genders bodies into two static categories, masculine and feminine, as binary opposites, but this portrays gender in oversimplified terms. These gender categories, much like spaces, are socially constructed, since “virtually any activity can be assessed as to its womanly or manly nature.”²⁴ In this way, every human action can be considered either “masculine” or “feminine,” and each category is socially constructed as “the tacit agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions.”²⁵ Here, Butler elaborates on gender’s socially-constructed nature, saying that it is society’s “tacit collective agreement” on what is masculine or feminine, and because of these groups, society generally continues to perceive gender simply in terms of binaries.

Whereas the general public perceives gender in polarized terms between masculine and feminine, gender rather functions as a sort of continuum. Examining a person’s gender in terms of a continuum avoids the problem of gender essentialism, since the person’s biological sex wouldn’t automatically determine the person’s gender (e.g. a

²² Massey, *For Space*, 9.

²³ Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 2.

²⁴ West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender,” 136.

²⁵ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 190.

biologically-male person would not be considered masculine simply by virtue of the male body). This continuum concept furthermore implies the competence suggested by Lefebvre for Butler's repetitive, ritualistic gender performances. Viewing a body's gender performances holistically ensures that every gendered activity would slightly shift the person's gender on the continuum. Thus, a person who enacts more masculine gender performances than feminine performances would be considered masculine, though that categorization would remain unfixed, since the person could start performing femininity, instead. The same concept applies to spaces, as the gender of a space works in the same way as the gender of a body. We must therefore view a space's gender as an accumulation of gendered spatial practices on an unfixed gender continuum between masculinity and femininity.

Spaces can be masculine and feminine in the same way that gender is attributed to bodies, and a space's gender can actually have an effect on the gender of bodies inhabiting it, while bodies within the space can also alter the space's gender. Roberta Gilchrist explains:

Space is fundamental in the construction of gender, and in the social classification of the bodies of men and women. Social attitudes towards space establish contexts in which men and women meet, and the domains in which economic and social reproduction is enacted. It is particularly in the context of architectural and settlement space that gender is constituted, in other words, in the rooms and spaces which men and women frequent both within buildings and according to the layout of the wider settlement.²⁶

According to Gilchrist, space becomes integral in the formation of gender in the bodies inhabiting a space, and this is especially true in the Middle Ages: often, we find medieval spaces that allowed entrance only to men or only to women—a concept that holds

²⁶ Roberta Gilchrist, "Medieval Bodies in the Material World: Gender, Stigma, and the Body," in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 43-61, 49-50.

significance in the space of the Church. Gilchrist notes that a space as small as an individual room in a building can affect bodily gender, and at the same time, spatial layouts as large as entire cities can produce the same gendered effects, further marking the importance of viewing space and gender as inextricably linked.

Masculinity, Modern and Medieval

The earliest way of identifying the category of “men” has been through sexual difference from women. Connell claims that “in gender processes, the everyday conduct of life is organized in relation to a reproductive arena, defined by the bodily structures and processes of human production.”²⁷ Connell describes male and female bodies as “reproductive arenas,” since bodily structures dictate the processes of human production, simply meaning that sexual difference dictates what role a person’s body will have in sexual intercourse and childbirth. In terms of masculinity, however, Connell is quick to explain that “masculinity *refers* to male bodies (sometimes directly, sometimes symbolically and indirectly), but it is not *determined* by male biology,” thereby quelling any essentialist undertones.²⁸ In this way, looking at a biologically-male body does not automatically render that person’s gender as masculine.

The most common literary indication of maleness or masculinity is the image of the phallus. Arthur Flannigan-Saint-Aubin explains that “masculinity, in its psychologic and cultural manifestations and implications, is assumed to be the homologue of the phallic genitality of the male.”²⁹ Derek G. Neal also informs this reading: the phallus

²⁷ Connell, *Men and the Boys*, 26.

²⁸ Connell, *Men and the Boys*, 29, original emphasis.

²⁹ Arthur Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, “The Male Body and Literary Metaphors for Masculinity,” in *Theorizing Masculinities*, ed. Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1994), 239.

represents “the idea of extension or aggrandizement of self through the penetrative capacity of the erect penis.”³⁰ In his description of the phallus, Jacques Lacan notes that the phallus is the signifier that

is chosen as what stands out as most easily seized upon in the real of sexual copulation, and also as the most symbolic in the literal (typographical) sense of the term, since it is the equivalent in that relation of the (logical) copula. One might also say that by virtue of its turgidity, it is the image of the vital flow as it is transmitted in generation.³¹

What Lacan means here is that the phallus is a privileged signifier because “it juts out in sexual intercourse,” according to Toril Moi.³² The phallus is thus evocative of male genitalia, Lacan explains, because the image of the phallus is “the image of the vital flow,” as it is through the penis that the male ejaculates during copulation, and this ejaculate is a means to creating a family line which, in Western culture, is traditionally patrilineal, thus marking the phallus as a masculine symbol.³³

The masculine symbol of the phallus was extensively utilized throughout medieval literature to show male sex, masculine gender, and masculine power. The most notable example of this phallic symbol was in the image of the sword, a phallic symbol that occurs throughout the Arthurian legends. Neal observes that there is a “metaphorical association of ‘swords’ as phallic symbols” that results in swords acting as “extensions of the male body with penetrating and wounding potential.”³⁴ Again, we see the sword as a masculine phallic image that suggests male genitalia as a penetrating agent in copulation,

³⁰ Derek G. Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 134. Hereafter cited as Neal, *The Masculine Self*.

³¹ Jacques Lacan, “The Meaning of the Phallus,” *Feminine Sexuality*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, trans. Jacqueline Rose (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 82.

³² Toril Moi, “From Femininity to Finitude: Freud, Lacan, and Feminism, Again,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29.3 (2004): 841-878, 852. Hereafter cited as Moi, “From Femininity.”

³³ It should be noted, however, that “both men and women may seek to possess this phallus,” according to Neal in *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England*, 135.

³⁴ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, 2.

like Lacan's definition of the phallus. The image of the phallus, Neal further explains, means "that this is a *man*'s body: both male and masculine," meaning that the phallus acts as both a sign of biological sex in the male penis and as an indicator of masculine gender because of the gendered meanings the phallus carries.³⁵

The Middle Ages thus treat the male body as an indicator of both sex and gender, which modern scholars equate with an essentialist reading of gender. Neal explains that "the learned authorities [in the Middle Ages] saw both sex and gender as constitutionally determined," and in this way, "it predestined general sexual characteristics," meaning that gender relied first upon biological sex, and biological sex provided a framework for a person's overall gender.³⁶ Michelle M. Sauer terms medieval gender construction "performative essentialism," meaning medieval gender is a combination of *both* biological sex and gender performances.³⁷ We can thus gender a medieval person in two ways: first, we can look at biological sex, and second, we can see how the person's gender is constructed through gender performances. While biological sex is fixed, we can still say that medieval gender is in a state of flux due to gender performances: "if gender conventions are accepted, they are also on occasion defied, challenged, or simply ignored."³⁸ This "performative essentialism" thus takes both sex and gender into account and preserves the ever-changing nature of gender from an essentialist reading that posits all male bodies as masculine.

The medieval concept of physiognomy further sheds light on masculine gender performances of the Middle Ages. Physiognomy explains that the innermost parts of the

³⁵ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, 133, original emphasis.

³⁶ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, 127.

³⁷ Michelle M. Sauer, *Gender in Medieval Culture* (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming 2015).

³⁸ Davis, "Introduction," 27.

personality made themselves visible as outward reflections on the body's surface, just as Butler explained that gender entailed "the anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits as outside itself."³⁹ Thus, a person's soul appeared as an outward manifestation on the body: for a medieval man, "judgments on what is good or bad in particular body parts amount to judgments of masculinity," as that which appears on the physical body, according to physiognomy, implies that which lies within the man.⁴⁰ If a man's gender performances placed his gender somewhere in a more feminine position on the gender continuum, this femininity would appear outwardly on his physical body, and if his gender performances were primarily masculine, his physiognomy would reveal him to be all the more manly.

These masculine gender performances that influenced a man's physiognomy most often revolved around the concept of control. Where we might traditionally imagine this control as men's control over women, Ruth Mazo Karras explains that men's control over other men was just as important: "the subjection of women was always a part of masculinity, but not always its purpose or its central feature."⁴¹ While medieval masculinity *did* entail men's subjection of women, "medieval masculinity involved proving oneself superior to other men."⁴² For a man to show himself superior to other men, Neal mentions that "the social advantages enjoyed by many men gave them power not only over women but also over inferiors of other kinds: children, servants, and social inferiors."⁴³ A man's control was therefore fairly indiscriminate, since this control could

³⁹ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, xv.

⁴⁰ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, 129.

⁴¹ Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 11. Hereafter cited as Karras, *From Boys to Men*.

⁴² Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 10.

⁴³ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, 2.

be exerted over nearly anyone. The goal of this exertion of control was to show oneself as superior to other men, and the people being controlled became merely a means to an end—that end being the display of masculinity through the controlling of women, dependents, and other men.

When speaking specifically about men controlling other men, medieval masculinity was performed in several different ways. Karras explains that there are three distinct types of medieval masculinity: knightly masculinity, scholarly masculinity, and artisanal masculinity. Knightly masculinity is probably the most well-known in the Middle Ages, as it is found throughout the popular Arthurian legends. Karras notes two key points: “these knights performed for the sake of other men. Their battles were with and before men.”⁴⁴ The control exerted in knightly masculinity was primarily *by* men and *for* men, thus marking knightly masculinity as a male-dominated arena, and “violence was the fundamental measure of a man because it was a way of exerting dominance over men of one’s own social stratum as well as over women and other social inferiors.”⁴⁵ Here, Karras explains that knightly masculinity dwelled on the idea of violence as a means of exerting dominance over other men, though a knight could also exert that same dominance over women and social inferiors, as well.

Whereas knightly masculinity uses violence as a means of control, scholarly masculinity uses logic, reason, and language to show control over one’s adversaries. Karras claims that “if the acquisition of masculinity in the European Middle Ages was primarily a matter of proving oneself against others, nowhere was this more true than in the single-sex environment of the university,” since the medieval university was strictly a

⁴⁴ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 65.

⁴⁵ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 21.

place for men, and the teachings a man received at the university afforded him control over his colleagues through mental prowess as opposed to the martial prowess of knightly masculinity.⁴⁶ Karras furthermore explains that university debates between men became the perfect place to exert this control:

[The] academic structure of attack and defense provided a forum for the demonstration of masculinity. In medieval culture, warfare—with its vocabulary of attack and defense of a position—was considered the proper task of the aristocracy, and single combat was considered the most honorable activity of a man. Some academics, from the twelfth century on... certainly considered their own scholarly activity in this context.⁴⁷

Even in university debate, the idea of martial prowess—though fought with words, not swords—still appears as a form of control. These debates were one-on-one conflicts between aristocratic men—the most honorable combat in which a man could find himself—and yet again, we see that medieval masculinity revolves around the control of other men as a display for men.

Artisanal masculinity marks a clear divergence from knightly or scholarly masculinity in that artisanal masculinity was less so about proving oneself against other men, but rather proving oneself as an adult. “The goal of artisanal masculinity was domination of others (including women but mainly men) economically through ownership of an independent workshop,”⁴⁸ Karras explains, but this masculinity “required the assumption of a particular position in society.”⁴⁹ Here, the acquisition of money or goods entails masculinity, and this domination and control isn’t fixed on violence or intellect, but rather on economics; with that economic prowess, a man could show his artisanal masculinity by the social rank accorded to him through his financial

⁴⁶ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 67.

⁴⁷ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 91.

⁴⁸ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 109.

⁴⁹ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 110.

success. Neal claims that “being a man meant being present, visible, accepted among and interacting with a community of other males in the formal and informal structures of a man’s immediate community,” simply meaning that medieval masculinity was a public performance of social rank to be enacted throughout one’s community through economic domination and control.⁵⁰ This shows that artisanal masculinity is another variation of medieval masculinity through dominance and control in the public sphere.

In these versions of masculinity, women and social inferiors become little more than instruments with which to show masculinity. This especially holds true for women: “women were often tools used in [the] demonstration [of masculinity],” Karras claims. “Men might demonstrate their gender conformity by ostentatiously pursuing women and declaring love for them, as well as by oppressing them. But they did not define themselves in relation to women as much as by their relation to other men.”⁵¹ Women were little more than a means with which to perform masculinity, either by showing romantic affection for women or by controlling them. The importance of these acts wasn’t simply to do them, however, since this was all a performance of masculinity for other male observers in an attempt to show oneself as superior to them.

One of the most common ways in which men exerted control over women was through the gaze. What seems like the simple act of looking at another person is wrapped in structures of power, since the gazing person holds a privileged position over the object of the gaze. Alison M. Heru explains that “becoming objectified by the gaze is a recognized feeling for those people who live at the margins of society and well recognized by women,” suggesting that those marginal people and women are most often

⁵⁰ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, 7.

⁵¹ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 11.

the objects of the gaze, whereas men represent the privileged viewers exerting the gaze over others.⁵² The gaze is “seen as aggressive or permissive, and above all sexual in nature,” explains Heru, meaning that this is primarily a masculine gender performance to ensure control over another person.⁵³ “The privileging of the man and his gaze in a patriarchal society leads the woman to accept objectification and relative powerlessness,” suggesting that this control through vision acts as a masculine gender performance within a patriarchal society—not unlike late medieval England—and through the power of the gaze, men could ensure their control over social inferiors, specifically women.⁵⁴

Gaining control over a woman could furthermore show one’s masculinity through marriage to and reproduction with that woman. Vern L. Bullough describes that “the most simplistic way of defining [medieval masculinity] is as a triad: impregnating women, protecting dependents, and serving as provider for one’s family.”⁵⁵ By marrying a woman, a man could thus start a family and show control over his wife and any dependents (children, servants, etc.) he claimed, thereby starting a patriarchal lineage if he bore sons, and in being the head of the household, the man would furthermore perform masculinity in the public sphere, according to Neal: “a household identity showed how a man would behave among his peers: whether he would respect them and what was theirs and deal with them fairly.”⁵⁶ Through marriage and (potentially) producing male offspring, medieval masculinity is furthermore a performance for other men, as the

⁵² Alison M. Heru, “Gender and the Gaze: A Cultural and Psychological Review,” *International Journal of Psychotherapy* 8.2 (2003): 109-116, 110. Hereafter cited as Heru, “Gender and the Gaze.”

⁵³ Heru, “Gender and the Gaze,” 111.

⁵⁴ Heru, “Gender and the Gaze,” 113.

⁵⁵ Vern L. Bullough, “On Being Male in the Middle Ages,” in *Medieval Masculinity*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 31-45, 31.

⁵⁶ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, 7.

“husbandry” showed in the good management of his household would reflect his masculinity to his peers.

Religion also found its way into medieval masculinity, since masculinity was tied to Christian status, especially in terms of martial prowess. Although early knights were often seen as mercenaries, they were folded into the medieval Church through the code of chivalry. Leo Braudy explains: “the knight became a figure whose violence was sanctioned by higher considerations than his personal prowess or lineage.” He continues to describe knights as “participants in a higher realm of morality and service,” as these masculine warriors were not simply fighting for monetary gain or personal glory, but rather fighting for the cause of Christianity.⁵⁷ Karras confirms, “knights could and did understand knighthood as part of the service of God, in which they could fulfill religious obligations without abandoning the masculine ideal of prowess.”⁵⁸ Knightly masculinity thus hinges on Christian status, and without that Christian status, a man would be considered a religious other, according to Steven F. Kruger: “Western European Christian discourses tended to construct Muslim and Jewish men as failing to live up to ‘masculine’ ideals in the public realm, specifically in the realm of warfare.”⁵⁹ Any non-Christian man is almost automatically considered effeminate when compared to a Christian man, especially in terms of combat. Christian status is therefore a medieval masculine performance, since this Christian status revolved around the idea of righteous combat as a means of controlling others.

⁵⁷ Leo Braudy, *From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 74.

⁵⁸ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 42.

⁵⁹ Steven F. Kruger, “Becoming Christian, Becoming Male?,” in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie G. Wheeler (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 21-41, 22.

This idea of control in terms of Christian status can also be seen in a man's control over his own body. Controlling oneself in the Middle Ages meant taking control over the body's urges, and this was typically a masculine performance of monks, Katherine J. Lewis explains: "episodes in which monk saints fight against sexual desires allowed them to demonstrate both mental and physical fortitude in order to suppress illicit urges." The monks' control over their bodies and their bodies' urges was couched in terms of an internal combat against sin, Lewis continues, since "monks were expected to be in combat against temptations sent by the devil, which could take various forms and involve surmounting the desire for food and physical comforts, or riches and renown, as well as other kinds of passion such as anger."⁶⁰ Control over one's body is once more explained in terms of martial prowess against the devil, and this battle was waged internally to control the body's. Furthermore, it was suggested that a non-Christian man in the Middle Ages menstruated, thereby "emasculating him entirely and defining him as other."⁶¹ A woman has no control over her menstrual bleeding, and by placing a non-Christian man in the same position as having no control over his body, his emasculation would stem from the idea of his male body performing female functions. Christian status is therefore important to masculinity in the Middle Ages by controlling oneself.

Medieval masculinity, as with gender in and of itself, is a complex subject, but this is obviously only one of numerous lenses that we can apply to *Pearl*. Critics have studied this text since its first edition from Richard Morris, and for the rest of this chapter, I will explain some of the major trends in *Pearl* scholarship. In doing so, I will

⁶⁰ Katherine J. Lewis, "Male Saints and Devotional Masculinity in Late Medieval England," *Gender and History* 24.1 (2012): 112-133, 114.

⁶¹ Sharon Faye Koren, "The Menstruant as 'Other' in Medieval Judaism and Christianity," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues* 17 (2009): 33-59, 45.

contextualize my project in this research field while demonstrating my project's importance in relation to existing scholarship.

Literary Genre and *Pearl*

My reading of the heavenly city's space as masculine is reinforced by several discussions of *Pearl*'s literary genre, and the most prominent genre attributed to this text is the dream vision genre. *Pearl*'s seating in the dream vision genre offers little contention among *Pearl* scholars, and this particular genre fits very well with my spatial reading of the masculine-gendered city space in the poem. The title of "dream vision" alone marks this literary genre as one that is meant for spatial studies, since Constance B. Hieatt explains that "dreams tend to be largely visual."⁶² This means that dreams and dream visions like *Pearl* put an emphasis on vision and sight, and Hieatt explicitly notes that "the poem was, [the Dreamer] suggests, a vision sent to comfort and instruct him."⁶³ Hieatt notes here that the primary means of comforting and instructing the Dreamer is through *vision*, which suggests the importance of visual perception in the dream. Sarah Stanbury elaborates, that positing throughout the poem, "the reader is regularly reminded that the vision is being recorded by an eyewitness, a human eye of the beholder who stands at a remove from what he sees,"⁶⁴ thus implying Hershenson's claim that the observer of a space views the perceptual world as "*externalized*, i.e., it is usually experienced as 'out there.'"⁶⁵ What Stanbury means here is that the Dreamer of *Pearl*

⁶² Constance B. Hieatt, "*Pearl* and the Dream-Vision Tradition," *Studia Neophilologica* 37 (1965): 139-145, 141. Hereafter cited as Hieatt, "*Pearl* and the Dream-Vision Tradition."

⁶³ Hieatt, "*Pearl* and the Dream-Vision Tradition," 140.

⁶⁴ Sarah Stanbury, "Visions of Space: Acts of Perception in *Pearl* and in Some Late Medieval Illustrated Apocalypses," *Mediaevalia* 10 (1984): 133-158, 134. Hereafter cited as Stanbury, "Visions of Space."

⁶⁵ Hershenson, *Visual Space Perception*, 1, original emphasis.

acts as an eyewitness and records the imagery and visually perceives the spaces he encounters throughout the dream vision, carefully surveying the landscape of the dream. The visual qualities of the dream vision genre therefore allow spatial construction to take place through the Dreamer's visual perception of the dream.

The study of *Pearl's* dream vision qualities further fits my project in terms of both spatial and gender construction. Where Hieatt's examination of *Pearl* focuses primarily on the visual qualities of the dream vision genre, A.C. Spearing's discussion of the text places importance on the location of the Dreamer throughout the poem, suggesting a potential spatial reading. In Spearing's *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, Spearing notes that the Dreamer's position changes between the reality of the waking world and the dream vision in which he finds himself, which means that the Dreamer finds himself in a space not his own.⁶⁶ Stephen J. Russell also notes this change in space for the Dreamer in terms of eschatology, saying that the Dreamer's attempt to use earthly language and discourse fails in the heavenly space in which he finds himself.⁶⁷ Russell believes that the Dreamer clings to his own earthly concepts of eschatology, meaning that the Maiden's teachings fall on his deaf ears as he attempts to understand the Maiden's heavenly language in the heavenly space. The Dreamer's spatial location is therefore important in *Pearl* studies, including my own study of the masculine-gendered space of the heavenly city.

My reading of *Pearl's* gendered city space is also supported by studies of the dream vision genre when looking at the Maiden's role in the text. The Middle English dream vision was most often classified as an *oraculum*: "we call a dream oracular in which a parent, or pious man, or a priest, or even a god clearly reveals what will or will

⁶⁶ A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

⁶⁷ Stephen J. Russell, *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988).

not transpire, or what action to take or avoid.”⁶⁸ While Spearing doesn’t directly talk about the gendered relationship between the Dreamer and the Maiden, he does explain that the Maiden acts as a didactic authority figure in the poem, thus fulfilling Macrobius’ teacher from the oracular dream vision. We see an interesting relationship at play, however, in that the didactic and authoritative role normally reserved for pious *man* or priest (who, according to the orthodox Church in the Middle Ages, would also be a *man*) is filled by a woman in *Pearl*. Because of the seemingly gender-bending nature of the Maiden performing masculinity as a didactic authority throughout the poem, studies in the dream vision genre add further depth to my examination of gendered space of the heavenly city in *Pearl*.

Though *Pearl* is very much seated in the dream vision genre, the poem also functions as an elegy, and this elegiac interpretation also provides us with context for a masculine reading of *Pearl*’s spaces. According to Spearing, this elegiac reading shows the Dreamer lamenting the loss of his two year old daughter, and his immense grief is what makes the Dreamer fall asleep and begin the dream encounter. There is some contestation in this reading, however, as both Angela Carson⁶⁹ and René Wellek⁷⁰ assert that the Dreamer is not so much lamenting the loss of a daughter so much as he is mourning for a dead lover who is closer to the Dreamer than aunt or niece.⁷¹ Though the interpretation of the lost daughter is more common, both of these readings reinforce a masculine reading of the poem: in either case, *Pearl* tells the story of a man who loses

⁶⁸ Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 90.

⁶⁹ Angela Carson, “Aspects of Elegy in the Middle English *Pearl*,” *Studies in Philology* 62.1 (1965): 17-27.

⁷⁰ René Wellek, “*The Pearl*: An Interpretation of the Middle English Poem,” in *Sir Gawain and Pearl: Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Blanch (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1966), 3-36.

⁷¹ Line 233 of *Pearl* notes the Dreamer speaking of the Maiden: “Ho watȝ me nerre þen aunte or nece.” *Pearl* scholars generally accept that the relationship between the Dreamer and the Maiden is father-daughter, however, as is described in Malcolm Andrew’s “*Pearl*, Line 161,” *Explicator* 40.1 (1981): 4-5.

control of a woman, whether she is a romantic lover or a dependent child, and this loss of control initiates the dream vision in the text. In this way, we can see that an elegiac reading of *Pearl* revolves around the Dreamer's masculinity, thereby fitting my project.

My reading of *Pearl*'s city space as masculine is further reinforced by the allegorical readings of the text. An allegorical analysis sets up a Christian reading of the text, and, as noted earlier, medieval masculinity hinged on Christian status. This implies that an allegorical reading, such as Marie Padgett Hamilton's study of the pearl image in the text, lends itself to a masculine interpretation.⁷² Hamilton claims that the image of the pearl is an allegory for the human soul, which seems to echo Jefferson B. Fletcher's assertion that the pearl image is an allegory for a human soul that has attained innocence through the merit of one's good works on earth.⁷³ In each of these readings, the pearl represents an object that is meant to be obtained and controlled: the Dreamer often refers to his lost daughter as "My priuy perle"⁷⁴ or "My precious perle,"⁷⁵ thus supporting the idea that the pearl is something to be owned because of the possessive pronoun "my." Hamilton suggests, however, that if the pearl image is an allegory for the soul, the true owner of all pearls and all souls in the heavenly city is Christ. The pearl, or rather the *ownership* of the pearl, hints at the masculine gender performance of control, since the pearl is something to be possessed and controlled. This reading of the pearl image therefore reinforces my project in that Christ's control of the pearls/souls within the heavenly city's space acts as a masculine spatial practice.

⁷² Marie Padgett Hamilton, "The Meaning of the Middle English *Pearl*," in *Sir Gawain and Pearl: Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Blanch (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), 37-59.

⁷³ Jefferson B. Fletcher, "The Allegory of the Pearl," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 20.1 (1921): 1-21.

⁷⁴ *Pearl*, l. 24, my emphasis.

⁷⁵ *Pearl*, l. 48, my emphasis.

When viewing the Dreamer's daughter as a pearl, we can furthermore see the masculine spatial practices involved in possessing and controlling pearls. Elizabeth Harper discusses *Pearl* in terms of earthly and heavenly payment through an examination of the historical gift economy of the fourteenth century. She explains that the Dreamer attempts to reclaim his relationship to the Maiden as her father, showing his possessiveness over her in his use of the possessive pronoun "my" when speaking of his "precious pearl." Harper argues that the Dreamer is envious of Christ, who now claims ownership over the Maiden as his bride. We see both spatial and masculine implications here, as the Maiden explains to the Dreamer that he is in a heavenly space where the laws of earthly possession do not apply, while at the same time, the envy the Dreamer feels suggests that both he and Christ are contending for the Maiden's affection, thereby forming a courtly love triangle, of sorts, marking these spatial practices as masculine.

This masculine and allegorical reading furthermore marks the pearl symbol as an object of monetary exchange, specifically the penny. Robert W. Ackerman claims that the pearl is an allegorical symbol of payment and salvation, noting the Maiden's description of the Parable of the Vineyard from Matthew 20 where all the workers receive a penny at the end of the day's work to symbolize the gift of their salvation.⁷⁶ Ian Bishop also notes this correlation between the pearl and monetary exchange when he claims that the pearl is an allegory for the Pearl of Great Price.⁷⁷ Ackerman explains that the Dreamer comes to understand salvation with the help of the Maiden's teachings, and he furthermore draws the comparison between the pearl image and the penny of everlasting life, since the citizens of the heavenly city, including the Maiden, all wear

⁷⁶ Robert W. Ackerman, "The *Pearl*-Maiden and the Penny," in *The Middle English Pearl: Critical Essays*, ed. John Conley (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), 149-162.

⁷⁷ Ian Bishop, *Pearl in its Setting* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968).

pearls to symbolize that they have already achieved salvation. Salvation is thus paid by the penny of everlasting life—a fee that is paid by Christ—and, in this way, we can see Christ as the masculine master of the vineyard due to his immense wealth and the fact that he has control over the workers all day. The pearl image and the penny therefore suggest this reading to be a masculine one, since Christ becomes the ultimate control over who enters heaven, hinting at Karras' concept of artisanal masculinity through control over workers and the accumulation of goods and wealth.

The allegorical readings of *Pearl's* central image also show it as a dynamic and transformative symbol, and this implies that a change occurs within the Dreamer throughout the text, a change I believe to be the masculinization of the Dreamer.⁷⁸ Dream vision literature, along with a great deal of medieval literature, performs a didactic role for both the dreamer-narrator and the audience of the text, and Spearing warns that we should not view the pearl image as a static allegorical symbol, but rather as a dynamic symbol whose qualities stem from the interactions in the poem between the Dreamer and the Maiden.⁷⁹ The Dreamer and the pearl symbol are linked, Spearing claims, because they develop together as the poem transpires: the Dreamer moves closer to understanding Christian values through the Maiden's teachings while the pearl symbol accumulates more and more meaning. We can interpret the pearl image as an allegory for the Dreamer's soul, therefore, keeping the pearl/soul allegory from both Hamilton and Fletcher intact. This allegorical reading would thus fit my project, because the Dreamer's Christian growth throughout the poem directly correlates to the dynamic image of the

⁷⁸ By "masculinization," I simply mean that the Dreamer's gender is shifting toward a more masculine position on the gender continuum I discussed earlier.

⁷⁹ A.C. Spearing, "Symbolic and Dramatic Development in *Pearl*," in *Sir Gawain and Pearl: Critical Essays*, ed. Robert J. Blanch (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), 98-119.

pearl, and if the Dreamer is gaining an education in Christianity from the Maiden, the Dreamer is becoming more masculine in the process, as Christianity and masculinity are linked in the Middle Ages.

The Eucharist and *Pearl*

Ackerman's study of *Pearl*, which marks the similarities between the pearl image and the penny, further draws a comparison between the pearl and the Eucharist due to their identical shapes, and this interpretation of the pearl as an allegory for the communion wafer also adds to my reading of *Pearl*'s masculine city space. One of the first scholars to address the pearl as an allegory for the Eucharist is Robert Max Garrett, who claims that the pearl symbolism throughout the poem unites the Dreamer to the Lamb. At the end of the poem, the Dreamer awakens from the dream vision to immediately go to the Church and take communion, and, in taking communion, Garrett explains, the Dreamer imbibes the communion wafer in the sacrament of communion. Medieval communion practices were believed to unite the imbiber of the body and blood of Christ with the mystical body of Christ, a body which is *male*. Thinking in terms of medieval gender, the male body of Christ would provide the foundation of Christ's masculinity—a masculinity that would be reinforced through Christ's masculine gender performances. This speaks volumes to my project with *Pearl* in that the Dreamer's first goal in awakening from the dream vision is to unite himself with the male and masculine body of Christ through the Eucharist.

The pearl image as an allegory for the Eucharist is further reinforced in the idea of visibility, which presents both spatial and gendered implications that coincide with my

project. As earlier noted, vision is the primary means by which we understand space, since the concept of the representation of space depends on those visual signs, codes, and “frontal relations” Lefebvre described. Medieval masculinity deals with vision, as well, since gazing is a masculine gender performance and because medieval masculinity is often a public, and therefore visible, performance. In the dream vision, the Dreamer sees pearls everywhere he goes, from the beginning where he sees pearls ground into the earth he walks upon, to the Maiden bedecked in pearls, to the heavenly city which is further adorned with pearls. Just before the sudden collapse of the dream, the Dreamer is overcome with desire as he stares at the city space, a space that is set with pearls, and upon the termination of the dream, he immediately goes to Church. Throughout the dream vision, therefore, the pearl acts as an allegorical symbol for the Eucharist, and as soon as he enters the space of the real world upon awakening, his journey to the Church for communion marks the Dreamer’s desire to be united with the male body of Christ through the sight of the Eucharist.

In the medieval Church, the most common way for the laity to receive the Eucharist was through a practice called “ocular communion,” which again points both to spatial construction through sight and to the masculine gender performance of the gaze. “Ocular communion is the idea that viewing the elevated host at the exact moment of consecration—at the moment of the miracle of transformation—is congruent with consuming the host itself,” Sauer explains, and this was the primary means by which the laity received the Eucharist after 1200 C.E.⁸⁰ Heather Phillips relates the idea of ocular communion to the Dreamer in *Pearl*, suggesting that his sight of the pearl image

⁸⁰ Michelle M. Sauer, “Architecture of Desire: Mediating the Female Gaze in the Medieval English Anchorhold,” *Gender & History* 25.3 (2013): 545-564, 552.

throughout the poem is what sparks his journey to the Church for communion once the dream vision has ended.⁸¹ The visual relationship between the Dreamer and the pearl is correlative to the visual relationship between a medieval layperson and the Eucharist, thus marking the pearl as an allegorical symbol for the communion wafer. This idea of ocular communion in *Pearl* therefore fits my project very well, since space is constructed through vision and because the visual act of gazing is a masculine performance.

My interpretation of *Pearl*'s city space as masculine is further reinforced by the Eucharistic allusions in the text, since the entire poem points to a Eucharistic reading, according to John Gatta, Jr.⁸² Gatta's analysis further portrays the pearl as an allegory for the Eucharist, and he even goes so far as to claim that the poem performs a similar role to a communion mass. The consecrated host, according to Aquinas, was a sense-object that lead to spiritual truths, and again, the elevation of the consecrated host was a proxy of communion for the laity. The control of the Eucharist, however, is important here, as only men were allowed to handle the materials of the sacrament of communion. Aquinas is quite clear on the subject of priesthood and who can control the sacraments: "moreover, the sacraments of the Church are dispensed by the ministers of Christ, according to the word of St. Paul, *Let a man so account us as of the ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God.*"⁸³ Aquinas strictly claims that men and *only* men can be ministers of Christ and, especially, dispensers of the sacrament, which suggests another level of gender analysis for my project. Medieval masculinity is very much tied to control, and placing the control of Church sacraments only in the hands of men marks this and all

⁸¹ Heather Phillips, "The Eucharistic Allusions of *Pearl*," *Mediaeval Studies* 47 (1985): 474-486.

⁸² John Gatta, Jr., "Transformation Symbolism and the Liturgy of Mass in *Pearl*," *Modern Philology* 71.3 (1974): 234-256.

⁸³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Latin Text and English Translation, Introductions, Notes, Appendices and Glossaries*. (New York: Blackfriars; McGraw-Hill, 1964), 5, original emphasis.

other sacraments as male-controlled practices within the Church, suggesting that the running of the Church, as a whole, was controlled by men. This further reinforces my interpretation of the heavenly city in *Pearl* as a masculine space.

The Dreamer's Desire in *Pearl*

My reading of the city space as masculine in *Pearl* is further supported by the Dreamer's desire, which marks another popular area of study in *Pearl* scholarship. David Aers explores the concept of suffering in the poem by examining *Pearl's* relationship between the Dreamer and the Maiden through the suffering and loss found in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.⁸⁴ Aers claims that the Dreamer views the Maiden as a feminine life-giver, much like Troilus sees Criseyde, and the Dreamer's desire for the Maiden hinges on the Maiden's acknowledgement of his fatherly relation to her. Once she confirms their relationship, the Dreamer sees himself in a space of "pseudoimmortality" where his desire for the Maiden is preserved and eternal. The whole point of the Maiden's teachings, however, is that his proper place isn't in the heavenly realm of the dream vision, but rather in the waking world, outside this space of pseudoimmortality. This provides context for my project in terms of both space and gender, as Aers references the fact that there is a changing of space for the Dreamer, and this space varies greatly from his own proper space in the real world; furthermore, Aers hints at that the Dreamer's desire to regain his father-daughter relationship with the Maiden, suggesting that the Dreamer wishes to reestablish his masculinity by regaining the Maiden as his daughter and dependent.

⁸⁴ David Aers, "The Self Mourning: Reflections on *Pearl*," *Speculum* 68.1 (1993): 54-73.

The Dreamer's desire further points to my reading of *Pearl's* city space as masculine because of his courtly manners toward the Maiden. Whereas Aers' article focuses on the father-daughter relationship between the Dreamer and the Maiden, María Bullón-Fernández discusses the romantic relationship implied by the Dreamer's actions.⁸⁵ The Dreamer takes two "falls" throughout the poem, Bullón-Fernández claims: a courtly fall and an Adamic fall, though the important one for my study of *Pearl* is the courtly fall. The Dreamer sees the Maiden in the dream vision and attempts to woo her using courtly love epithets, such as when he refers to her as "my lyttel quene."⁸⁶ By referring to her with the possessive "my," the Dreamer's desire here centers on taking the Maiden as his bride and bringing her under his control through matrimony. The Dreamer's courtly fall here comes when she explains that she is not an unmarried virgin, but rather wedded to Christ, thereby rejecting the Dreamer's desire for her. In acting on his desire for the Maiden, the Dreamer is attempting to perform masculinity, perhaps knightly masculinity, specifically, by utilizing courtly courtesy to woo the Maiden and take her as his bride in hopes of gaining control over her as a performance of masculinity. This performance of masculinity due to the Dreamer's courtly desire for the Maiden furthermore adds to my reading of the text's city space as masculine.

The Dreamer's desire for an amorous relationship with the Maiden is pushed into the realm of the erotic in Piotr Spyra's analysis of *Pearl*, once more hinting at the gendered implications of previous *Pearl* studies in relation to my own project.⁸⁷ Spyra

⁸⁵ María Bullón-Fernández, "By3onde þe water": Courtly and Religious Desire in *Pearl*," *Studies in Philology* 91.1 (1994): 34-49. The word "romantic" in Bullón-Fernández' work implies the modern sense of the word, highlighting what she sees as a loving relationship between the Dreamer and the Maiden.

⁸⁶ *Pearl*, l. 1147.

⁸⁷ Piotr Spyra, "Beyond the Garden: On the Erotic in the Vision of the Middle English *Pearl*," *Text Matters* 3.3 (2013): 13-26.

suggests that the Dreamer's desire for the Maiden manifests itself throughout the poem as an erotic longing, which Spyra calls a "foundational principle" in the text. The erotic longing the Dreamer feels for the Maiden creates tension between the characters, and it is this tension that sustains the dramatic quality of *Pearl*. Spyra claims that the Maiden does not follow conventional dream vision characteristics as the vision's guide because she is topographically and emotionally distanced from the Dreamer: the Dreamer and the Maiden are spatially separated by the river separating the earthly paradise from the heavenly city, and despite the Dreamer's desire for the Maiden, she displays a certain coldness and objectivity toward the Dreamer. Again, we see the Dreamer's desire for the Maiden in a loving context here, furthermore suggesting that the Dreamer wishes to take the Maiden as his bride to perform masculinity through his control of the Maiden. Spyra's suggestion of erotic longing implies a sexual interpretation of the Dreamer's relationship to the Maiden, and medieval marriage "channels male sexual urges into a legitimate and reproductive forum," meaning that the Dreamer's sexual relationship with the Maiden would be sanctioned by the Church.⁸⁸ This sexual relationship would thus allow the Dreamer to perform masculinity by controlling the Maiden as his wife and by using her female body to produce a son to carry on his patrilineal genealogy. The Dreamer's desire for the Maiden that manifests in this erotic longing thus fits my project in hinting at the Dreamer's masculine performance.

⁸⁸ Isabel Davis, *Writing Masculinity in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 27.

Space, Gender, and *Pearl*

My analysis of *Pearl* through a lens of gender and spatial theory is important for two main reasons. First, my scholarship fills a significant gap in *Pearl* studies as a whole, since there are few examples of gendered or spatial analyses of the text. Most of these examples of spatial or gendered interpretations of *Pearl* treat gender and space as entirely separate ideas, though as I discussed earlier, space and gender are quite relevant to one another and should be studied more thoroughly together. Second, my interpretation of *Pearl*'s city space as masculine challenges every other reading I've found that deals with *Pearl* and gender. To some, my scholarship might seem like a mere reinscription of patriarchy in which I simply discredit feminist readings of the text, but I believe that this masculine gendering of *Pearl*'s heavenly city hints at the social milieu surrounding the poem's composition. In the later Middle Ages, we see a conflict arising between the Church and the Lollard heresy, and the Lollards posed a significant threat to the Church due to the numerous reforms they proposed, one of these reforms being that both men and women could be priests. I believe that the masculine gendering of *Pearl*'s heavenly city speaks specifically to oppose this proposed Lollard reform by reinforcing the orthodox Church doctrines stating that men and *only* men could join the priesthood. To my knowledge, this connection remains unexplored with the exception of my project.

Pearl scholarship that highlights the role of space in the poem is fairly sparse with the exception of studies by Linda Tarte Holley and Sarah Stanbury, making my own spatial and gendered analysis of *Pearl* all the more important. Holley's *Reason and Imagination in Chaucer, the Perle-poet, and the Cloud-Author* does not deal with *Pearl*

alone, but it still takes on a spatial analysis of the text.⁸⁹ She discusses the idea that the Dreamer cannot even hope to understand his surroundings inside the dream vision, since the Dreamer is removed from the space he normally inhabits. While in the space of the dream vision, he continually attempts to understand the divine, which by rights should be impossible, Holley claims, as the Dreamer is far removed from the real world. The Dreamer cannot simply transcend his earthly understanding to know the divine, and he thus finds himself in a space beyond his comprehension, so much so that he even has difficulty in relating what he sees to his audience. Though his descriptions of the dream vision are limited by his earthly understanding, the Dreamer can still see everything around him, suggesting that the Dreamer's visual perception is totally unimpeded, Holley concludes. Though I agree that the Dreamer is removed from his normal space and dropped into the space of the dream vision, I cannot agree that he does not undergo some sort of transformation throughout the dream vision encounter.

Stanbury's 1984 study of *Pearl* also takes the idea of space into account, though again, this article does not deal with *Pearl* on its own, once more showing that my scholarship will fill a significant gap in criticism, as I deal with *Pearl* and *Pearl* alone.⁹⁰ Stanbury's spatial examination of the text discusses *Pearl* and several other examples of medieval literature in terms of vision and how the space of the dream vision enlarges the Dreamer's field of vision. While obliquely dealing with the spatial aspects of the poem by treating vision in *Pearl*, Stanbury's work further suggests a gendered reading of the text because of the role of vision in medieval masculinity. Vision, specifically the act of

⁸⁹ Linda Tarte Holley, *Reason and Imagination in Chaucer, the Perle-poet, and the Cloud-Author: Seeing from the Center* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

⁹⁰ Stanbury, "Visions of Space."

gazing, was seen as a masculine gender performance in the Middle Ages, so this article proves to be important to my project for my analysis of both space and gender in *Pearl*.

Stanbury's article further adds to my project because of her discussion of movement in the text. She explains that the physical movement of the Dreamer in the poem, both in the waking world and in the earthly paradise, indicates the level of his spiritual journey and salvation. In the garden of the real world, he doesn't move at all, and the only movement he notices is downward: shadows fall, grain is cut down, and his lost pearl fell to the ground and was lost. As he enters the dream vision, however, the movements of both his body and his vision suggests that he is becoming more and more understanding of his spiritual situation, marking a stark diversion from Holley's claim that the Dreamer tries and fails to understand his heavenly surroundings. Instead, Stanbury believes that the Dreamer's horizontal progress through the dream vision's space implies his pilgrimage to salvation, and his sight also takes on a vertical axis as he looks up toward the crystal cliffs and gazes into the heavenly city. His visual perception in the dream thus acts as a movement through understanding, as his field of vision is broadened from looking downward at the earth to looking upward toward heaven and God.

This spatial study proves vital for my own research for several reasons. First off, we again see a clear delineation of spaces in terms of the Dreamer's spirituality: in the worldly garden, the Dreamer lies on the ground, fixed and immobile, and the only movement he sees in this space is downward; in the space of the dream vision, however, the Dreamer moves throughout the space while his eyes now move upward toward heaven. The Dreamer's vision is broadened in the space of the dream vision, Stanbury

claims, suggesting that the Dreamer's ability to perform masculinity is also broadened through the act of gazing, and it further marks a masculinization of the Dreamer, as well. If the Dreamer's movement implies his pilgrimage toward an understanding of Christian ideals, as Stanbury suggests, the Dreamer would therefore be taking a pilgrimage toward Christian ideals and masculinity, since Christian status and masculinity are linked in the Middle Ages. My project therefore expands on Stanbury's work here to incorporate the idea of gender into her project.

Surprisingly, very little has been written specifically in terms of gender in *Pearl*, though several critics hint at a gendered reading of the poem, and this lack of gender studies in *Pearl* scholarship further suggests the importance of my work. One of the few of these gendered readings comes in Catherine Cox's article, "*Pearl's* 'Precios Pere': Gender, Language, and Difference."⁹¹ Cox's argument centers around the gendered implications of language exchanged between the Dreamer and the Maiden, claiming that these exchanges form a transgressive construction of language that calls attention to a "valorization of the feminine."⁹² The transgressive qualities of language in the poem come from a lack of boundaries between the literal and the figurative: the Maiden's language of usurpation and transgressions gives her language a feminine polysemy. In contrast, the Dreamer brings eros into their discussions, as he is visually drawn to the Maiden, and he uses specific epithets of courtly language to describe her in desirable terms to thus recognize her as a *woman*, as he assumes she should be recognized. She understands that he relies on his vision for understanding, but tells him that he needs to first see, and then explore those interpretations more fully, thereby suggesting that the

⁹¹ Catherine Cox, "*Pearl's* 'Precios Pere': Gender, Language, and Difference," *The Chaucer Review* 32.4 (1998): 377-390. Hereafter cited as Cox, "Gender, Language, and Difference."

⁹² Cox, "Gender, Language, and Difference," 390.

Maiden's didacticism in the poem should be aural rather than visual. Cox concludes that the Dreamer's rush across the river from masculine literalness into the Maiden's feminine metaphoricity marks the termination of the dream.

In several ways, Cox's study of *Pearl* is very important to my own scholarship, though I both agree and disagree with her claims. I agree with Cox in that the Dreamer brings eros into his conversation with the Maiden, as he sees her as an object of desire, whether that desire is founded in his fatherly relationship to her or in a romantic relationship to her. Cox's claim that the Dreamer uses erotic language mirrors Spyra's discussion of desire in the poem, but the important thing here is that Cox claims that the Dreamer sees the Maiden as a *woman* like he thinks she should be seen. Here, we can see the gendered implications of the Dreamer's vision in that he performs masculinity through his gazing at the Maiden, thus objectifying her as his social inferior, and his desire for her further marks this as a masculine performance. His desire for the Maiden could also be construed as his wish to control the Maiden as his social inferior and use her to perform his masculinity through sexuality. This article is therefore very important to my argument about *Pearl's* masculine city space, since the Dreamer becomes masculinized when in proximity to the heavenly city.

When it comes to Cox's scholarship, I do have a few areas of contention in terms of space and the gendered implications space holds in *Pearl*. From the start, I disagree with Cox's idea that there is a lack of boundaries within the poem, since there are very clear boundaries between spaces: there is a boundary between the waking world the Dreamer normally inhabits when compared to the heavenly space of the dream vision, and there *is* a boundary within the dream vision—the river separating the earthly paradise

from the heavenly city. Moreover, Cox genders the earthly paradise and even the earth, by extension, as the realm of “masculine literalness” that the Dreamer attempts to escape by sprinting across the river to enter the Maiden’s space of metaphoricity. In making this claim, Cox is obliquely marking the delineation between spaces here, suggesting that the “lack of boundaries” in the dream is a nonissue. Instead, I argue that the space of the heavenly city in *Pearl* is a masculine space, because again, the Dreamer becomes masculinized during the dream vision due to his proximity to the masculine space heavenly city, as though his closeness to the heavenly city allows his gender to shift to a more masculine position. Cox’s interpretation therefore shows that my research is important to the field of *Pearl* scholarship to add further gendered analyses to the existing criticism.

Thus far in *Pearl* criticism, spatial theory and gender theory have existed entirely apart from one another with the exception of Sarah Stanbury’s “The Body and the City in *Pearl*.”⁹³ Stanbury’s overarching claim here is that the heavenly city is a feminine space, since New Jerusalem is indicative of the female body. The heavenly city, Stanbury claims, often appears in the backgrounds of visual representations in the medieval period and has an “intimate relation to the human body.”⁹⁴ Stanbury further argues that the city and the female body are twin images, explaining that the city is like a castle, a place of defense that is likened by medieval writers to the womb of the Virgin Mary. She also mentions Augustine’s view of dualist semiotics, saying that the masculine-gendered worldly city is a brutal and authoritarian presence, whereas dreaming the feminine heavenly city produces a home-like quality. The desire the Dreamer feels for the

⁹³ Sarah Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*,” *Representations* 48 (1994): 30-47. Hereafter cited as Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*.”

⁹⁴ Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*,” 31.

heavenly city at the end of the poem, Stanbury contends, is little more than leftover desire he feels for the Maiden, but her body is now transformed into the unchanging and decorated stone edifice of the heavenly city. By combining gender and space in her argument, Stanbury provides material to which I can directly speak in my own project.

While Stanbury's analysis of *Pearl's* heavenly city is quite interesting, I cannot help but think that her argument is flawed, and her work brings up several points of contention I have against her gendering of the city space as feminine. From the start of her argument, I do agree that the city's representation of space does provide an "intimate relation to the human body," but I believe that human body to be *male*, not female, as she claims. In placing so much emphasis on the wall surrounding the city to support her claim that the city represents a female/feminine womb, she totally neglects the phallic tower in the center of the city that is marked as Christ's tower. The tower's phallic construction that seemingly dominates the skyline of the heavenly city becomes the focal point of this apocalyptic scene, and the *Pearl*-poet certainly focuses more attention to the phallic tower in the text in comparison to the walls surrounding the city space. In shifting the focus of earlier *Pearl* studies from the city's walls to the city's tower, I believe that Christ's tower thus constructs the city space in *Pearl* as masculine.

This focus on Christ's tower and its phallic qualities marks only one part of my argument in the following chapter. In the third chapter of my thesis, I examine the heavenly city's representation of space by looking at the imagery of the city space. By looking at the phallic portrayal of the city, the city's castle-like construction, and the city's panoptic structure, we can see that the heavenly city is a masculine space, not a feminine space as Stanbury claims. The fourth chapter of my thesis discusses the

masculine spatial practices happening within the space of the heavenly city, such as the strict limitations of women's mobility in comparison to men's mobility in the city space. These masculine spatial practices further construct the heavenly city as a masculine space.

Again, my project is not simply a reinscription of patriarchy onto a poem that has been studied by feminists for decades, but rather, I believe that my reading of *Pearl's* heavenly city as a masculine space hints at the religious conflict between the pre-reformation Church and the Lollard heresy. Scholars such as Cox and Stanbury have made valuable contributions to *Pearl* scholarship throughout the years by applying feminist lenses to the text, such as Stanbury's claim that the heavenly city represents the Maiden's female body. That being said, I feel that their readings of the text place too much importance on the Maiden and grant the Maiden far more agency than a woman in the Middle Ages most likely had. Moreover, I think Stanbury's work calls more attention to the form of the city space rather than its function, meaning that the heavenly city's form perhaps points toward a feminine gender, whereas an analysis of the city space's form *and* function reveals that the heavenly city of *Pearl* is actually a masculine and patriarchal space. We can't simply deny that medieval England operated under patriarchal domination by closely regulating the activities of women while privileging men in every facet of society. My work is therefore not a reinscription of patriarchy in *Pearl*, but perhaps more of a recognition that *Pearl* is the product of a time period and of a culture founded on patriarchal dominance. Instead of applying "feminist masterplots" to

Pearl as Stanbury does, I look at the poem through a lens that is likely more culturally accurate to the time period from which *Pearl* comes.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Sarah Stanbury, "Feminist Masterplots: The Gaze on the Body of *Pearl*'s Dead Girl," in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

CHAPTER III MASCULINE REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE IN *PEARL*

As I noted in the previous chapter, earlier *Pearl* scholars have examined the form of the heavenly city in the text while overlooking the function of its space. My examination reveals that both the form *and* the function of New Jerusalem's space are gendered masculine. The primary way that we can understand this space is through visual perception, according to Maurice Hershenson: "The perceived world of the ground and sky is the space within which we as observers exist."¹ Hershenson specifically notes here that we are *observers* in space, since vision is the fundamental human sense by which we can understand space. Henri Lefebvre confirms this idea, claiming that spaces now contain an "increasingly pronounced visual character."²

Lefebvre addresses this visual nature of space in what he calls the "representation of space." This concept is "tied to relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations."³ These visual cues—signs and codes—with which space is constructed then show how that space is ordered—that is, how a space is to be used, thereby folding the form of a space and its function into one idea. To borrow Michel de Certeau's term, the representation of space acts as a "system of signification," once more relying on those visual signs to construct a space in question.

¹ Maurice Hershenson, *Visual Space Perception: A Primer* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 2.

² Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 75. Hereafter cited as Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.

³ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 33.

Instead of stressing only the form of the heavenly city's space, both the form and the function of New Jerusalem construct this space as masculine, not feminine. The following illumination from the Cotton Nero A.x manuscript shows the protecting walls that earlier scholars have been so quick to deem feminine, but the tower structure in the center of the city marks this space as masculine.⁴



While the wall is a prominent feature of the heavenly city in this manuscript illumination, the tower structure in the center of this space acts as a phallic extension of Christ's masculinity. That phallic tower dominating the scene of this space further represents Christ's masculine potency due to the erectness of the tower compared to the image of

⁴ © British Library Board, Cotton Nero A.x manuscript.

the erect phallus. My analysis doesn't simply end with the city's form, however, as I also examine the function of the city as a space for martial masculine performances, since this space is constructed as a castle. This militaristic description of the city depicts the city space as a medieval fortress rather than a civic city surrounded by protecting walls, and this construction of the heavenly city is further reinforced by the illumination of New Jerusalem found in the Cotton Nero A.x manuscript. The suggestion that the heavenly city is a seat of phallic military power thus marks the city's representation of space, both in form and function, as masculine.

The representation of space for *Pearl's* heavenly city also shows this space as a seat of panoptic power, resulting in a public and masculine city space. Michel Foucault's concept of panopticism shows how controlling a great many people is possible through both vision and light, and that panoptic control constructs the city's function as masculine. The tower of the heavenly city promotes panoptic vision over this space, and we can see the seat of this panoptic power in the golden tower to the left of the Maiden in the manuscript illumination. The city's luminous qualities also appear in the manuscript folio, since the city's side of the river is far brighter than the earthly paradise where the Dreamer stands. The idea behind this brightness is to enhance vision, and the panoptic vision and illumination in the heavenly city suggest that this is a public space, which is gendered masculine in the Middle Ages.

The city's masculine representation of space evoked by the martial imagery of the medieval castle along with the suggestion of New Jerusalem's panoptic power is further compounded by masculine forces inside and outside the poem. The Dreamer pays close attention to the form of the city, noting the twelve gates of the city marked with

patrilineal genealogies. Within the poem, the Dreamer also cites another masculine influence, that of St. John, the biblical viewer of the apocalypse. From outside the text, however, we can furthermore interpret the *Pearl*-poet himself as a masculine influence on the poem.

Previous scholars have argued that the heavenly city in *Pearl* is a feminine space, mostly because they analyze the city's form while neglecting its function, placing most of their attention on the wall surrounding the city space. The surrounding wall of New Jerusalem is a prominent feature of the manuscript illumination, and Sarah Stanbury claims that the walled medieval city "bears an intimate relation to the human body."⁵ This intimate relation between the body and the city plays an important role in previous analyses of *Pearl* because the protecting wall supposedly constructs this space as feminine. Jill Mann explains, "the body of the Virgin Mary is metaphorically represented as a castle," utilizing the castle as a symbol of protection for Mary's virginity.⁶ This feminine construction of the city's space is seen "as an allegory of Jesus' entry into Mary's womb; she is the beautiful 'castellum' [fort/fortlet] in which God takes up residence."⁷ In this way, the Virgin's body becomes a castle in which Christ makes his home within the womb, and the womb marks itself as a protecting wall to protect a woman's virginity.

This representation of space is furthermore gendered feminine in earlier scholarship because of the wall's symbolic protection of virginity. This wall appears in

⁵ Sarah Stanbury, "The Body and the City in *Pearl*," *Representations* 48 (1994): 30-47, 31. Hereafter cited as Stanbury, "The Body and the City in *Pearl*."

⁶ Jill Mann, "Allegorical Buildings in Mediaeval Literature," *Medium Aevum* 63.2 (1994): 191-211. Hereafter cited as Mann, "Allegorical Buildings." This image of the Virgin Mary's body is found in Robert Grosseteste's *Chateau d'Amour*, written ca. 1230 CE. From the Latin, *castellum* can mean "fort" or "fortress," which I believe conveys the same ideas as a castle. I'll discuss this castle metaphor further in this chapter.

⁷ Mann, "Allegorical Buildings."

the image of the *hortus conclusus*, a common image in dream vision literature, popularized by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun in the *Roman de la Rose*.⁸ Griffiths sees the encircling wall of the *hortus conclusus* as a mark of “inaccessibility, remoteness, and seclusion,”⁹ but she notes that the “hermetically sealed garden, with its protective wall, revitalizing fountain, and lush vegetation, was a natural metaphor for the integrity of the virgin’s body.”¹⁰ The wall surrounding the *hortus conclusus* metaphorically protects a woman’s virgin purity, therefore, and the color white in the manuscript illumination, both in the walls and the Maiden’s clothing, symbolize purity. The impenetrability of the garden wall is echoed in the impenetrability of the heavenly city’s walls, traditionally marking the space of New Jerusalem as feminine.

Along with the implications of feminine virginity tied to the *hortus conclusus* image, scholars also see this wall as a promotion of private, feminine space. The *hortus conclusus* marked “a gesture of turning away from the outer wilderness” of the world, removing the garden space from the public space of the city.¹¹ As William Howard Adams explains, “the garden wall created necessary retreats for privacy—an island in the chaotic, cramped existence of family, friends, servants, dogs, and children—a place where romance itself, if not the Holy Spirit, might be welcomed.”¹² The wall thus separates the public life of the street from the private garden space of Christian meditation or passionate romance. Michael Camille confirms that “sacred and enclosed

⁸ This text was started by Guillaume de Loris ca. 1230 CE, and Jean de Meun later expanded the poem by almost 18,000 lines ca. 1275 CE.

⁹ Fiona J. Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 137-138. Hereafter cited as Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*.

¹⁰ Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 137.

¹¹ Catherine Alexander, “The Garden as Occasional Domestic Space,” *Signs* 27.3 (2002): 857-871, 589.

¹² William Howard Adams, *Nature Perfected: Gardens Through History* (University of Minnesota: Abbeville Press, 1991), 55.

space was coded feminine” in the Middle Ages.¹³ The encircling wall of the *hortus conclusus* constructs the garden space as private and therefore feminine, and previous studies have claimed that the city wall constructs this space as feminine, relying primarily on the space’s form, but not its function.

In *Pearl*, specifically, earlier scholars have marked the city as feminine, as well. Sarah Stanbury explains the city is constructed feminine to represent the Maiden’s female body, once more dwelling on the city’s form while neglecting its function. She notes that the Maiden’s transformation into a bride of Christ “allows the girl to be formally ordered and contained in a material structure,” showing that the Maiden may exist only within the walls of New Jerusalem. Stanbury continues, “the city becomes an imagistic crypt in which [the Maiden’s] body is transposed and preserved in stone.”¹⁴ Stanbury claims that the Dreamer portrays the Maiden as “preserved in stone,” marking this space as feminine. Stanbury emphasizes that “the body *is* the city; the city *is* the body,” thereby intrinsically linking the female body of the Maiden to the city space.¹⁵ The manuscript illumination’s depiction of the Maiden and the city wall share similar colors to show their purity, and the Maiden’s proximity to the wall also suggests that they are one and the same. This link, Stanbury contends, marks New Jerusalem as feminine, as the Maiden’s female body *is* the representation of space in this context. Stanbury is again putting her emphasis on the city’s form—not its function

The depiction of New Jerusalem in the Cotton Nero A.x manuscript is the only visual representation of this space, and it should be noted that this illumination is *not* the

¹³ Michael Camille, “Signs of the City: Place, Power, and Public Fantasy in Medieval Paris,” in *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michael Kobiak (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2000), 27. Hereafter cited as Camille, “Signs of the City.”

¹⁴ Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*,” 39.

¹⁵ Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*,” 33, original emphasis.

interpretation of the heavenly city as given by the *Pearl*-poet himself, but rather as created by the illustrator well after *Pearl* was composed. The illustrator's interpretation of the city is somewhat different than the city described in the text, however, such as the portrayal of the central structure of New Jerusalem: the illumination depicts a manor house, whereas the text refers to a tower or stronghold. In William Vantuono's edition of *Pearl*, he explains the illumination as a "feudal manor, with a tower and a hall depicted behind the wall."¹⁶ In line 1029, the Dreamer uses the word *manayre*, and the Middle English Dictionary (MED) translates *manayre* as "a manorial estate, consisting of a manor house, service buildings, land, etc.," portraying this as a civilian structure.¹⁷ This definition of *manayre* is problematized by Vantuono's verse translation of the text where he defines this building as a "stronghold." E. V. Gordon claims, "the dreamer thinks of the Heavenly City as a feudal town, consisting of a castle with a cluster of buildings set within a castle wall"; he continues, "[the Dreamer] actually sees the City as... a castle."¹⁸ Although these interpretations all seem slightly different, the implications of my argument—that the heavenly city is a masculine space—can be seen in this manuscript illumination in the idea of separation.

My argument may seem like little more than a reinscription of patriarchy in light of decades of feminist scholarship, but it suggests a separation of the sexes, both spatially and socially, in the pre-Reformation Church in late-medieval England. The manuscript illumination shows multiple levels of separation between the Dreamer and the Maiden:

¹⁶ *Pearl: An Edition with Verse Translation*, ed. William Vantuono (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 6. I will cite this edition of *Pearl* when referring to textual examples of the poem, citing only *Pearl*.

¹⁷ Middle English Dictionary, s.v. "Manēr."

¹⁸ Gordon, *Pearl*, 77.

first, a river runs between the characters, separating both them and the spaces they inhabit; second, the wall of the city further separates the Dreamer from the Maiden while she is confined within the stone walls.

What the manuscript illumination and *Pearl* suggest is that men and women were, and must remain, separate from one another in terms of their roles in the Church. The masculine construction of the city correlates to the masculine Church in order to oppose the Lollard heresy's view that both men and women could become priests. John Wycliffe (ca. 1330-1384) believed that the Church needed restructuring in several areas, such as the desire for a vernacular bible for laypeople, and Wycliffe's followers came to be known as Lollards. This Lollard heresy represents the first homegrown heretical movement against the pre-Reformation Church in England, marking it as a significant threat to the Church as both a religious and political entity. Employing the reforms put forth by the Lollards meant that the Church would have far less power over the laity. Anthony Low notes that "the concept of social control assumes that the purpose of religion is to manipulate people by internalizing the rules that support leaders in power."¹⁹ The Lollards' proposed removal of the clergy means that the support of those leaders in power would be lost, whether those leaders were the heads of the Church or even England's major political entities, because the priesthood would no longer sway the opinions of the laity in favor of said leaders. Lollardy therefore posed a significant threat to the Church, and the Church responded to this Lollard threat by internalizing Church doctrines into the English population.

¹⁹ Anthony Low, "Privacy, Community, and Society: Confession as a Cultural Indicator in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Religion and Literature* 30.2 (1998): 1-20, 2.

The Lollards' wish for a vernacular bible was all the more threatening to the Church on the basis of the biological sex of priests. As Shannon McSheffrey explains, "one of the most striking elements of Lollard thought was the tenet held by some that all believers living holy lives, male or female, could be priests."²⁰ With a vernacular bible, the clergy would have less power over the laity, since the laity—both men and women—would be able to read the holy text and interpret its meaning for themselves. If women could read the vernacular bible, they could take the role of priests in the Church, leading to a destabilization of the clergy, since orthodox Church doctrine allowed men and *only* men to join the priesthood. The Church sprang from a culture founded on patriarchal values, meaning that men controlled women in almost every part of medieval society, and the priesthood is no exception. To the leaders of the medieval Church, Margaret Aston notes,

Women should not preach, and no ministry could belong to them. Such rights as they had to instruct were strictly limited to private occasions and the hearing of women and children. The teaching of *men* in *public* was utterly forbidden to them. Woman, imperfect in nature, physically impure, formed for subjection and unfit for authority, was totally debarred from priestly orders.²¹

The threat of female priests to the Church was significant, and Aston notes several physical markers of women's supposed inferiority. The important thing here is that the Church is reinforcing the idea that women could not teach men, especially in public, since masculinity and manhood were most often seen as a public displays. If a woman were to take a position of authority over a man—a position that this Lollard reform to the priesthood offered—it would emasculate the man and upset the patriarchal power held by

²⁰ Shannon McSheffrey, "Women and Lollardy: A Reassessment," *Canadian Journal of History* 26.2 (1991): 199-223, 204.

²¹ Margaret Aston, "Lollard Women Priests?", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31.4 (1980): 441-461, 450-451, original emphasis.

the Church authorities. To oppose the Lollards contentions that both men and women could join the priesthood, the Church responded by portraying the space of the heavenly city in *Pearl* as masculine. Furthermore, the manuscript illumination offers a visual representation of the masculine gendering of this space to the illiterate laity. The Church's response to the Lollards portrays the heavenly city—and, ergo, the Church—as a masculine space meant for the masculine roles of priests.

My biggest concern with previous readings is their insistence on dealing solely with form while neglecting function. Their attention is laid on the *castellum* of the Virgin Mary's body, the encircling city wall as metaphorical womb, or even the idea that the Maiden's body and the city space are one and the same. While these interpretations of the city space's form may be feminine, the space of the heavenly city is actually masculine when both the form *and* the function of the city work in conjunction. New Jerusalem is constructed as a fortress, a stronghold, or a castle, suggesting that it is a place of martial prowess and warfare, pointing toward masculinity. Furthermore, the Dreamer's account of New Jerusalem doesn't focus on the womb-like wall, but rather, his attention falls to Christ's phallic tower in the center of the city and several examples of masculine control within this space. I do agree with Stanbury when she claims that the Maiden may only exist within the walls of New Jerusalem, but I agree for a different reason than Stanbury: where she sees the city as the Maiden's body preserved in stone, I see this space as a prison for the Maiden and her fellow brides of Christ—a space in which Christ can exert masculine control over his brides in an eternal performance of masculinity. Stanbury's reading seems to neglect the function of this space—a space that implies women were to

be controlled at all times—*by men*. *Pearl*'s time period is highly patriarchal, and earlier interpretations of the text seem to pass over this important historical detail.

A Phallic Tower and Martial Descriptions of New Jerusalem

In earlier studies of *Pearl*, scholars have been quick to place emphasis on the heavenly city's form by suggesting that the space is gendered feminine due to the womb-like walls surrounding the city. In the manuscript illumination, it would appear that the Maiden and the city wall are almost one and the same due to their close proximity and even their white color. Roberta Gilchrist explains that space sometimes "acts as a metaphorical extension of the body," meaning that a person's gender in a space can influence that space's gender.²² Whereas the manuscript illumination highlights the Maiden's importance to the Dreamer's vision as a whole, the key character in the heavenly city is Christ—not the Maiden—so it seems more fitting that the space of the heavenly city would act as a metaphorical extension of Christ's gender, which is specifically masculine throughout the text.²³ His masculine gender in the text affects the gender of the space in question, since "Christ...*is* Jerusalem," according to S. L. Clark and Julian N. Wasserman.²⁴ Christ and the heavenly city are therefore inextricably linked, implying that the gender of New Jerusalem directly correlates to the gender of Christ.

²² Roberta Gilchrist, "Medieval Bodies in the Material World: Gender, Stigma, and the Body," in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994): 43-61, 45.

²³ It should be noted here that Christ isn't always gendered masculine in the Middle Ages. Because of Christ's bleeding side wound, some scholars have gendered him as nurturing and maternal, ergo feminine. For more on this, see Leo Steinberg's *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* or Carolyn Walker Bynum's "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg," *Renaissance Quarterly* 39.3 (1986): 399-439. For the purposes of my project, however, Christ is specifically gendered masculine in *Pearl*.

²⁴ S. L. Clark and Julian N. Wasserman, "The Pearl Poet's City Imagery," *The Southern Quarterly* 16 (1978): 297-309, 299, original emphasis.

Because Christ is gendered masculine in the text, the city space is gendered masculine, in turn.

Christ's masculinity partly revolves around his title of "Prince," as this title suggests masculinity through immense wealth and political control. Christ is referred to as a prince throughout *Pearl*: "Perle plesaunte to *prynces* paye, / To clanly clos in golde so clere."²⁵ The Dreamer begins the poem by talking about his lost pearl, specifically noting here that the jewel would be fit for a prince. He also notes that the pearl would be most beautiful when seated in "golde so clere," suggesting the seating of the pearl in a crown fit for a prince. The Dreamer's description of the pearl as being the fare of a prince here foreshadows the ending of the poem where the Dreamer awakens from the dream vision "To pay þe Prince."²⁶ Ruth Mazo Karras explains that medieval masculinity was a public display of "wealth, nobility, and prowess," and by having the title of "prince," Christ is gendered masculine in the text because of his princely riches.²⁷

Christ's masculinity is furthermore exerted by his title of "prince" through political control over others. Knightly masculinity, according to Karras, was a public performance by those who "wield[ed] substantial economic, and in some places political, power."²⁸ Christ displays both substantial economic wealth and his political position, as described by the Dreamer as he expresses his joy in finding the Maiden: "Now haf I fonde hyt, I scal ma feste... And loue my *Lorde* and al his *lawez*."²⁹ The Dreamer doesn't reference Christ by the title "prince" here, but rather as his *Lorde*, suggesting that Christ

²⁵ *Pearl: An Edition with Verse Translation*, ed. William Vantuono (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), ll. 1-2, my emphasis. I will cite this edition of *Pearl* when referring to textual examples of the poem, citing only *Pearl*.

²⁶ *Pearl*, l. 1201.

²⁷ Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 48. Hereafter cited as Karras, *From Boys to Men*.

²⁸ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 24.

²⁹ *Pearl*, l. 283 and 285, my emphasis.

acts as a feudal lord with political control over his subjects. The Dreamer notes that he will follow the laws that his lord has created, which also implies that Christ holds political control in the city space. Christ's political power as a feudal lord and his judicial power as a maker a laws therefore reinforce his title of "prince," suggesting that Christ is gendered masculine in *Pearl*.³⁰

Christ's masculinity here aids in constructing New Jerusalem as masculine through the phallic image of the city's tower. Stanbury contends that New Jerusalem bears an intimate relation to the human body, and I would agree with her—except for the fact that that human body is *male*, not female. The illustrator depicts the heavenly city's central structure as a manor house, though the *Pearl*-poet constructs this structure as a phallic tower that dominates the skyline of the scene. Far before the Dreamer's vision of the heavenly city even begins in Section XVII of the poem, the Dreamer pleads with the Maiden to let him enter Christ's city: "Bryng me to þat bygly bylde, / And let me se þy blysfyl bor."³¹ In response, the Maiden exclaims, "Þat God wyl schylde. / Þou may not enter wythinne hys *tor*."³² The MED simply defines a *tor* as a building "characterized by height, often free-standing."³³ The *tor* in the text is therefore a tower, and that tower structure marks the heavenly city as a masculine space due to the phallic implications of its construction.

New Jerusalem's phallic *tor* further acts as an extension of Christ's masculinity as a symbol of masculine potency. Vern L. Bullough explains that a man in the Middle Ages

³⁰ Christ is shown to be specifically masculine throughout the text, I believe, and I will further explain this masculine character in the next chapter which deals more closely with masculine spatial practices within the space of the heavenly city.

³¹ *Pearl*, ll. 963-964.

³² *Pearl*, ll. 965-966, my emphasis.

³³ Middle English Dictionary, 2nd ed., s.v. "tōur."

was “defined in terms of sexual performance, measured rather simply as his ability get an erection,” and in getting an erection, a man therefore performed masculinity by showing that his genitals were potent and ready to have sex in hopes of creating patrilineal genealogy.³⁴ This makes the phallic quality of the city’s tower a mark of Christ’s masculinity; therefore, Lefebvre explains, “the prestigious Phallus, symbol of power and fecundity, forces its way into view by becoming erect,” thereby suggesting that New Jerusalem’s tower represents Christ’s erect, potent penis.³⁵ Since the tower *forces* its way into view by becoming erect, it thus symbolizes the erect penis, ready for carrying forward a patrilineal genealogy. The masculine potency of the city’s phallic tower further marks this representation of space as a masculine one.

This masculine representation of space in New Jerusalem doesn’t simply end with the phallic tower, however, since the city is described in terms of a medieval castle. In the Middle Ages, Karras explains, “violence was the fundamental measure of man because it was a way of exerting dominance over men of one’s own social stratum as well as over women and other social inferiors.”³⁶ Karras asserts here that medieval masculinity is linked to martial violence, much like the image of the masculine knight of the Middle Ages. Leo Braudy confirms, “the medieval literature of chivalry and masculine violence depicted battles and single combats with particular attention to the psychology and ethics of knighthood—how men ought to behave.”³⁷ Knightly masculinity is founded upon violence and military prowess, and Derek G. Neal further supports this idea of masculine

³⁴ Vern L. Bullough, “On Being Male in the Middle Ages,” in *Medieval Masculinities*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1994), 31–45, 43.

³⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 262.

³⁶ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 21.

³⁷ Leo Braudy, *From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 58.

violence by providing the example of the two competing knights in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, noting that “their relationship is structured by violent acts.”³⁸ Both Gawain and Bercilak perform masculinity through violence in this poem, marking their competition as a public display of exchanging blows. A knight exerted masculine control over those of his own social class, such as Gawain or Bercilak, or over his social inferiors through military prowess, and in the same way, the medieval castle is a common image of military control, and, therefore of masculinity.

The castle’s symbolization as a seat of power in the medieval world marks this space as one of masculine control. The power suggested by the castle could be interpreted in several ways, whether that was political, economic, or social power, all of which construct the castle as masculine, but the castle was primarily seen in terms of authoritarian military power:

Castle construction had a profound effect on the European political scene. Not only could a castle block invasion of a region, but it could also provide effective control over the local population. Both aspects of the castle were well understood in Continental Europe where the owners of castles were soon unchallenged owners of power.³⁹

Frances Gies and Joseph Gies note here that the castle served two important roles, both of which revolve around the idea of control. The castle first performs the duty of martial control by blocking enemy invasions through masculine military prowess, implying the defensive strength of the castle. In addition to the martial control over its foes, the castle provides political control over the domestic population. Because control is a mark of

³⁸ Derek G. Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 234. Hereafter cited as Neal, *The Masculine Self*.

³⁹ Frances and Joseph Gies, *Daily Life in Medieval Times* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1990), 13. Hereafter cited as Gies and Gies, *Daily Life*.

medieval masculinity in both ideas of military prowess and public, political power, the castle acts as a masculine space in the Middle Ages.

Scholars often define the castle strictly in terms of defense, whereas castles provided both offensive and defensive capabilities. As we understand Mann's claim, the Virgin Mary's body is described as a *castellum*, meaning a fort or fortress in Latin, and this definition of *castellum* further describes it as "a shelter, stronghold, defence, [or] refuge," suggesting that a *castellum* is a space meant for protection.⁴⁰ By applying this interpretation to the castle-like construction of *Pearl's* heavenly city, the city would likely be gendered feminine, since New Jerusalem would thus act as the defensive and protective womb of the Virgin Mary. Gies and Gies explain, however, that the "defensive strength of a castle permitted an offensive counterstroke to be launched."⁴¹ We can therefore see that the castle isn't strictly a space of defense, and the martial usage of the castle, whether that usage is defensive or offensive, constructs this space as a masculine one. The martial violence suggested by the castle image could refer to defenders of the castle staving off a siege or launching an offensive assault from the stronghold. Each of these situations implies masculinity through martial prowess and military performance, and, therefore, through violence is gendered masculine.

The castle's functions mark it as a masculine space, but the shape of the castle is also important to *Pearl's* heavenly city. When the castle first came to England, "most were of timber, but over the next century, nearly all were converted to masonry as a revolution of engineering construction swept Europe."⁴² With this technological

⁴⁰ Charlton T. Lewis, "Castellum," *An Elementary Latin Dictionary* (New York: American Book Company, 1890), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.

⁴¹ Gies and Gies, *Daily Life*, 103.

⁴² Gies and Gies, *Daily Life*, 15.

advancement in castle building, “engineers experimented with keeps that were circular on the outside and square on the inside.”⁴³ This construction mirrors the Dreamer’s description of New Jerusalem: “Þe cyté stod abof, ful sware, / As longe, as brode, as hyȝe, ful fayre.”⁴⁴ Here, the Dreamer explains that the city stands above the landscape, again suggesting the city tower’s phallic quality, but the important part here is that the city is “ful sware,” shaped like a square with equal sides. The city within its walls is thus shaped like a medieval castle, but the *Pearl*-poet pushes this square shape even further to imply the geometric perfection of heaven: the square castle structure of the heavenly city “Twelue forlonge space er ever hit fon / of heȝt, of brede, of lenȝe to cayre.”⁴⁵ The city’s shape is therefore a perfect cube, having each side equal in height, breadth, and length, further suggesting that the heavenly city in *Pearl* evokes a masculine castle.

The manuscript illumination of the heavenly city in Cotton Nero A.x links this space to the martial, masculine castle. James of St. George, a great medieval engineer, improved the construction of the castle by keeping “the outworks of his castles strong, but concentrated the main defense on a square castle enclosed by two concentric lines of walls with a stout tower at each corner of the inner line.”⁴⁶ These two concentric lines of walls had a distinguishing feature, however:

The old wood palisades [of earlier castles] were now replaced by a heavy stone ‘curtain wall,’ made up of cut stone courses enclosing a rubble core and ‘crenelated,’ that is, crowned with battlements of alternating solid parts (merlons) and spaces (crenels), creating a characteristic square-toothed pattern. The curtain wall was further strengthened with towers.⁴⁷

⁴³ Gies and Gies, *Daily Life*, 17.

⁴⁴ *Pearl*, ll. 1023-1024.

⁴⁵ *Pearl*, ll.1030-1031.

⁴⁶ Gies and Gies, *Daily Life*, 18.

⁴⁷ Gies and Gies, *Daily Life*, 16.

As castle construction advanced in the Middle Ages, stone became the medium of choice for castle engineers, and the crenelated, square-toothed pattern at the top of the castle's curtain wall became a staple for many of these medieval structures. The manuscript illumination shows the Maiden standing at the top of a curved wall, much like the circular, surrounding wall of a medieval castle. Furthermore, in Stanbury's edition of *Pearl*, she notes that the Dreamer sees an "encircling wall" in the text of the poem, and the manuscript illumination shows that the wall has a curve to it, implying that New Jerusalem's walls evoke the same circular walls of the castle.⁴⁸ This characteristic square-toothed pattern is depicted on top of the walls and the tower to the left of the Maiden in the manuscript illumination. E.V. Gordon asserts that this illustration "medievalizes the City even more completely" than the text into the likeness of a castle.⁴⁹ Although the manuscript illumination presents the *manayre* of line 1029 as more of a manor house, I believe that *manayre*'s definition as a "castle" or "stronghold" is the most apt description of the heavenly city. It is evident, then, that New Jerusalem's space is more so like the martial, masculine castle of the Middle Ages than a mere city surrounded by a defensive wall.

A medieval castle's location was also highly important, as it acted as a space of attack and defense. As is expected with such a highly-militaristic structure, "when war broke out, it inevitably revolved around castles." Gies and Gies further explain, "typically the castle stood on the high ground commanding a river crossing, a river confluence...or some other strategically important feature."⁵⁰ This description of a castle's general location is important, but what is equally important is the castle's description as

⁴⁸ Sarah Stanbury, ed., *Pearl* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2011), l. 1035.

⁴⁹ E.V. Gordon, *Pearl* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 77.

⁵⁰ Gies, *Daily Life*, 97.

“commanding,” meaning that the castle isn’t a space *only* of defense because of the sturdy outer walls surrounding the keep, but also is a space of attack. A medieval castle often had a garrison of soldiers within:

The mobility of the garrison—nearly always supplied with horses—conferred a large strategic radius for many purposes: raiding across a border, furnishing a supply base for an army on the offensive, interrupting road or river traffic at a distance. For all these reasons, medieval military science was the science of the attack and defense.⁵¹

The medieval castle thus symbolizes a space of both attack and defense: it is situated in a strategically-valuable position, and it can both withstand attack from invading enemies and launch attacks against those same invaders. Because medieval masculinity is reinforced by performances such as the martial prowess exerted by attack and defense, the castle represents a masculine space.

This description of the castle’s location is echoed in the construction of *Pearl*’s New Jerusalem, as it is also situated next to a river. Again, much of a medieval castle’s strength was derived from its strategic location at a river crossing or a river confluence, and that same location can be seen in the manuscript illumination. As the Dreamer wanders through the landscape of the dream vision, he comes across “ryche reuere3; / As fyldor fyn her bukes brent.”⁵² These rivers glow like “fine gold filament,” Vantuono translates, and the Dreamer decides to leave the rivers’ confluence and follow one of them, walking along its banks. After walking along the stream awhile, he sees the heavenly city: “I þo3t þat Paradyse / Wat3 þer oþer gayn þo bonke3 brade.”⁵³ Here, the Dreamer sees New Jerusalem on the other side of the river’s bank, specifically noting how broad the river seems. This is significant for two reasons. First, the location of New

⁵¹ Gies, *Daily Life*, 97-98.

⁵² *Pearl*, ll. 106-107.

⁵³ *Pearl*, ll. 137-138.

Jerusalem echoes the location of a medieval castle situated on a river for strategic military purposes. Second, this river marks an important boundary in the dream vision, as we can see from the manuscript illumination—the boundary between the earthly paradise and the heavenly city. The gleaming river therefore takes the function of a castle moat as a further defensive structure to keep out those who don't belong in the city space. New Jerusalem's location thereby suggests the masculine castle, once more implying that this space is gendered masculine.

By constructing this space as a castle—a seat of political and military power—the *Pearl*-poet draws a comparison to the pre-Reformation Church of fourteenth-century England. Because the Church is locked in this struggle against the Lollard heresy, the Church needed to solidify its position against the social upheaval caused by the heretical movement, and what better symbol of defense could there be in the Middle Ages but a castle? With the image of the castle in *Pearl*, the Church defended its position against the Lollards' proposed reforms to the priesthood by showing that the heavenly city—and, ergo, the Church—was a bastion for masculinity, reinforcing the orthodox Church doctrine that men and *only* men could perform the role of priests.

New Jerusalem and Panoptic Power

Because I am concerned with function alongside form, I believe that the space of the heavenly city is masculine because of its patriarchal function as a prison for the Maiden and her fellow brides of Christ. The manuscript illumination demonstrates the prison-like quality of the Maiden, who appears trapped behind the city walls. In turn, this masculine construction of New Jerusalem suggests an attempt by the pre-Reformation

Church to reinforce orthodox doctrine in opposition to the Lollards' claims that both men and women could fulfill the role of priests. Once more, my goal here isn't simply to reinscribe patriarchy to a text that has been examined by feminists for decades, but rather to show the heavenly city as a masculine space by recognizing that *Pearl* comes from a patriarchal culture and time period. Rather than ignoring the possibility of a feminist reading, however, I will instead demonstrate why such a reading might be apparent on the surface, not as a revolution, but rather for underlying reasons of reinscription of gender norms.

Gender norms are commonly maintained through a process of internalization, which was as readily apparent in medieval society as it is in modern times. The city's structures, however, as well as the functions of those structures, lend themselves to a particular manner of internalization processes. Although it predates the physical structure of Jeremy Bentham's panoptic prison by hundreds of years, *Pearl* shows a "panoptic impulse," which is something like a predecessor to panopticism, and it is through this impulse that the patriarchal function of the heavenly city's space in *Pearl* is primarily deployed. Michel Foucault defines the panopticon's prison structure as such:

At the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows light to cross the cell from one end to the other.⁵⁴

Foucault's explanation of the panopticon figures the prison structure as a ring-shaped building surrounding a tower. From the tower, a single guard may view any cell in the

⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," in *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 195-228, 200. Hereafter cited as Foucault, "Panopticism." For Bentham's original ideas on the panopticon, see Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, ed. Miran Bozovic (London: Verso, 1995), 29-95.

ring of the building, and this observer's vision into any cell is unimpeded by darkness due to the windows on the inner and outer sides of the prison's ring. The panopticon represents "the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form," meaning that the panopticon can enhance control over a given population in the most efficient way possible by separating people into individual cells while also monitoring them at all times.⁵⁵ Obviously, the actual panoptic prison is a *modern* invention; however, the governing impulse behind such motivation existed within human nature prior to the structure.

What I mean here is that even though the physical panopticon doesn't appear until Jeremy Bentham's work in the eighteenth century, we still see the effects of the panopticon in *Pearl*. Foucault explains that the panopticon was "a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power," meaning that the panopticon's effects could be felt by anyone.⁵⁶ These effects are normally created by the physical panopticon to instill in the prison's inmates a sense of being watched, since "full lighting and the eye of the supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected."⁵⁷ This feeling of being on display leaves those observed people with a sense that they *must* comply with the rules and regulations set by those in power.⁵⁸ This observation leads to the "normalization" of society by branding those who go against these rules and regulations as "abnormal," and this normalization occurs in the heavenly city by putting all people on display through visibility and

⁵⁵ Foucault, "Panopticism," 205.

⁵⁶ Foucault, "Panopticism," 202.

⁵⁷ Foucault, "Panopticism," 200.

⁵⁸ This seems almost like the precursor to an internalization of those disciplines set by those in power, and I'll discuss the ideas of internalization more fully in the following chapter about spatial practices in the space of *Pearl*'s New Jerusalem.

illumination. The utilization of the panoptic impulse in New Jerusalem allows Christ to extend his control over the city's population while performing masculinity, which genders the space as masculine, in turn.

The heavenly city's form and function revolves around Christ's *tor* in line 966, which acts as an extension of his vision to fuel this panoptic impulse. The tower structure even does double-duty to reinforce this panoptic impulse: first, the tower provides enhanced vision over the entire city, meaning that Christ's control over the population is amplified: second, the phallic *tor* dominates the landscape of the city visually, being the focal point at the center of the space. Foucault explains that the panopticon dissociates the see/being seen dyad: "in the peripheric ring [of the panopticon], one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen."⁵⁹ What Foucault means here is that the dissociation of the see/being seen dyad lead to the effects of panopticism where those being observed believe they are *always* being observed, simply because the fear of being observed is constant because of the tower at the center of the panoptic prison. The citizens of New Jerusalem would continually be fearful of being observed because of this tower structure, simply because the tower would always be in view. It is therefore the panoptic impulse in *Pearl* that produces the effects of panopticism without the physical structure of the panopticon.

This panoptic impulse transforms the heavenly city into a masculine space when we find that Christ is the owner of this tower. Again, the tower in the center of New Jerusalem acts as a metaphorical extension of Christ's masculinity because of its phallic symbolism and as a sign of his manly potency, but this tower also represents an enhancement of his control over this space as the owner of the heavenly city. The Maiden

⁵⁹ Foucault, "Panopticism," 202.

explicitly tells the Dreamer that he may not enter *hys tor*, once more using the masculine pronoun *hys* to refer to Christ. Moreover, Christ's title of "prince" seems to warrant the politically-charged image of a tower to represent his masculinity. By utilizing the tower as a panoptic impulse, Christ's exertion of control over the city's inhabitants stems directly from the effects of panopticism which make those inhabitants feel always on display to make them conform to the normality he enforces. This panoptic visibility also shows Christ's ownership over the city, since "visual access to a space is, of course, a way of laying claim to that space."⁶⁰ The heavenly city's tower allows Christ to perform masculinity through his visual control over this space, marking this space as masculine.

This panoptic impulse is furthermore strengthened due to the luminous qualities of the city, since illumination allows Christ to enforce even more visual control over the space. Foucault explains that the panopticon's effects guarantee the automatic functioning of power, because "[one] who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power."⁶¹ Foucault means that a person who is observed and knows of said observation will be held accountable for every action, and this person will more than likely conform to the rules and regulations prescribed by the observer, lest this person be labelled as abnormal. The illumination of the panopticon prevents inmates from hiding from the gaze of the observer, and these same effects appear in the panoptic impulse of the heavenly city. The entire space of the heavenly city is illuminated, thus amplifying Christ's masculine control over the city's inhabitants. The Maiden leads the Dreamer to a hill where he looks toward the heavenly city, which beams with light: "Byzonde þe brok fro me warde keued; / Ðat schyrrer þen

⁶⁰ Sarah Stanbury and Virginia Chieffo Raguin, eds., introduction to *Women's Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 1-21, 8.

⁶¹ Foucault, "Panopticism," 202.

sunne wyth schafte3 schone.”⁶² Here, the Dreamer stares out from the hill and over the glittering river toward the city—that city which is so luminous that it makes the sun’s rays seem pale. The city is so bright, in fact, that the Dreamer repeatedly says that “Of sunne ne mone had þay no nede.”⁶³ Needing neither the sun nor the moon for illumination implies that the city is under Christ’s masculine and panoptic control, since the light exuding from this space allows Christ to constantly monitor the citizens of New Jerusalem. Much like the inmates of the panoptic prison, the inhabitants of the heavenly city cannot hide from Christ’s gaze, suggesting that he has complete visual control over each and every citizen. In turn, Christ’s exertion of visual control through the city’s illumination acts as a masculine performance, gendering the heavenly city as masculine.

This panoptic impulse enhances Christ’s control through visibility and illumination, effectively turning the city into one large space, open and public, implying that the representation of space for the city is masculine. Previous scholars have argued that the heavenly city is gendered feminine, since the enclosing walls of this space suggest privacy, and privacy was linked to femininity in the Middle Ages. *Pearl*, however, portrays New Jerusalem as an open and public space, and, “if sacred and enclosed space was coded feminine..., the unexplored area of the street... was masculine,” Camille contends. The street is considered a public and masculine space “because it was where public men went out to do business leaving wives and daughters alone.”⁶⁴ “Full manhood required the assumption of a particular position in society,” and to attain that position in society and prove oneself as masculine, a man had to publicly compete with other men and gain control over them, whether that competition was

⁶² *Pearl*, ll. 981-982.

⁶³ *Pearl*, ll. 1045.

⁶⁴ Camille, “Signs of the City,” 27.

violent, martial prowess or economic superiority.⁶⁵ Public space in the Middle Ages was therefore a proving ground of masculinity and a space for masculine interactions, and, in terms of this panoptic impulse, the city's construction as an open and public space furthermore reinforces the effects of panopticism over the population, since an open and public space allows for visual control over everyone in that space. Because Christ is enforcing his visual control over New Jerusalem by utilizing this panoptic impulse, he is therefore performing masculinity that genders the city space as masculine, in turn

This amplification of Christ's visual control presents New Jerusalem as an entirely open and public space due to the numerous gates within the city. Whereas the encircling wall of the heavenly city marks a strict barrier between that which lies outside the city and that which lies within, the space within New Jerusalem's walls is entirely permeable. The Dreamer's vision dwells on the square tower at the city's center from which light emanates, and he explicitly notes that each side of the tower is gated: "Vch pane of þat place had þre zatez; / So twelue in poursent I con asspye."⁶⁶ Here, the Dreamer notices that each side of the square tower holds three gates, making twelve gates in all. The Dreamer later notes that "Þe zatez stoken watz neuer zet, / Bot euermore vpen at vche a lone."⁶⁷ New Jerusalem's gates are therefore never closed, but rather *euermore ypen*, suggesting the permeability of the gates inside the city. Graham Ward explains that the city's gates announce this space "to be an open light-filled, transparent and eternal cube."⁶⁸ The open gates, compounded by the visibility and illumination provided by the

⁶⁵ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 110.

⁶⁶ *Pearl*, ll. 1034-1035.

⁶⁷ *Pearl*, ll. 1065-1066.

⁶⁸ Graham Ward, "The Secular City and the Christian Corpus," *Cultural Values* 3.2 (1999): 140-163, 150. Hereafter cited as Ward, "The Secular City."

panoptic impulse of the city, portray New Jerusalem as an open and public domain, marking the heavenly city as masculine.

Pearl's New Jerusalem once more draws a comparison to the pre-Reformation Church as an open, public, and masculine space due to this panoptic impulse. If the space of the heavenly city in *Pearl* is a direct correlation to the space of the Church, this presents the idea that the same panoptic impulse that exists in New Jerusalem also exists in the Church. This implies that the members of the congregation were under the observation of the Church authorities—and they knew they were under observation—leading to the effects of panopticism. As such, that congregation would be more willing to conform to the rules and regulations set by those in power in the Church. Moreover, this feeling of observation would be compounded by the congregation's belief in God's omnipresent vision, furthermore suggesting that this panoptic impulse of being watched forced members of the Church to conform to those disciplines set forth by the Church. In forcing these disciplines on the congregation, the Church would instill a sense of normality in the congregation in opposition to the abnormality of the Lollards.

Masculine Influences Inside and Outside *Pearl*

The representation of space of the heavenly city also constructs this space as masculine due to the privileging of patrilineal genealogies within the text. Karras explains that medieval masculinity greatly privileges patrilineal genealogies: “Having a father whose honor you could live up to or a son whose deeds you could be proud of is an important theme in chivalric literature.”⁶⁹ The Middle Ages prized a family lineage full of men, and the heavenly city also shows this patrilineal privilege. As the Dreamer surveys

⁶⁹ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 57.

the city in his vision, he pays close attention to the twelve gates of New Jerusalem's square castle structure:

Be portalez pyked of rych platez,
And vch gate of a margyrye,
A parfyt perle þat neuer fatez.
Vch on in Scrypture a name con plye
Of Israel barnez, folewande her datez,
þat is to say, as her byrþ-whatez;
Be aldest first þeron wat3 done.⁷⁰

The twelve gates of the heavenly city are all richly adorned here, each one set with a *margyrye*, or pearl, above it. This pearl provides a list of names from the Scripture, describing in detail the lineage of the children of Israel; the list, the Dreamer notes, contains the names of the people in the lineage along with the dates of their lives, starting with the *aldest*. Stanbury explains, “the pearl has now become a single, if highly visible, feature on a walled or fortified structure...[to signify]...the patriarchal territories owned by ‘Israel barnez,’ the ‘names of the sons of Israel’ in Exodus 28 and Ezekiel 48.”⁷¹ What Stanbury means here is that these twelve pearls set above the twelve gates of the heavenly city privilege a patriarchal, patrilineal genealogy. This promotion of patrilineal genealogy across the twelve gates thus acts as an internal masculine force in the poem, constructing the space of the heavenly city as masculine.

Another masculine force that affects New Jerusalem's representation of space in *Pearl* is the character of St. John. The *Pearl*-poet, like many medieval authors, uses John as an *auctoritee* in his writing, meaning that John is used as a “written authority,” a writing technique utilized throughout the Middle Ages to add credibility to an author's

⁷⁰ *Pearl*, ll. 1039-1043.

⁷¹ Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*,” 40.

work by citing a well-known source.⁷² The apostle John is the most cited biblical viewer of the apocalypse, and John's revelation of the heavenly city becomes "enormously popular in the thirteenth century," according to Stanbury. John appears in the marginalia of several apocalypse manuscripts, Stanbury continues, "holding his one hand, fulfilling the mandate of the text: the open door [to heaven] is literally set before him."⁷³ Since John is the most famous *auctoritee* when it comes to visions of the heavenly city and because of his role as an *auctoritee* to lend credibility to the imagery we see in *Pearl's* New Jerusalem, the imagery of the heavenly city "takes its structure from a male authority—the apostle John."⁷⁴ Stanbury explicitly notes here that the description of the heavenly city draws heavily from a male authority, St. John, and this male authority acts as a masculine force to affect the imagery of the city space, marking it as a masculine one.

Because St. John is little more than a fictional character, however, it might be better to explain that this masculine control of New Jerusalem's imagery belongs to the *Pearl*-poet rather than to St. John. In the text, the Dreamer repeatedly utilizes St. John to describe the heavenly city in his vision, and the name *Johan* actually forms a concatenating link-word for the *Pearl*-poet throughout Section XVII in the text: "As deuyse3 hit, þe apostel Jhoan / As Johan þe apostel hit sy3 with sy3t."⁷⁵ The poet specifically and frequently notes that *Johan þe apostel* is the *auctoritee* from which he draws the imagery of the heavenly city, though both St. John and the Dreamer here act as

⁷² "Auctorite, Auctoritee," Literature Dictionary, accessed May 15, 2014, <http://literature-dictionary.org/>.

⁷³ Sarah Stanbury, "Space and Visual Hermeneutics in the *Gawain*-Poet," *The Chaucer Review* 21.4 (1987): 476-489, 479. Stanbury specifically discusses the marginalia of the Cloisters Apocalypse here, though she explains that a more in-depth analysis of St. John in medieval apocalypse literature is found in Barbara Nolan's *The Gothic Visionary Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

⁷⁴ Stanbury, "The Body and the City in *Pearl*," 39.

⁷⁵ *Pearl*, ll. 984-985.

mouthpieces for the poet's creative description of the city. The male poet thus utilizes male characters to describe the scenery of the dream, suggesting a further level of masculine control over the poem. The *Pearl*-poet also uses St. John and the Dreamer to meticulously control the details of the dream vision experience, thereby limiting the interpretability of the apocalyptic vision for the reader. The poet's control over the imagery of the dream vision via St. John and the Dreamer therefore exerts a masculine influence over *Pearl* and constructs the space of the heavenly city as masculine.

The poet's masculine control over the heavenly city's representation of space from outside the poem further marks this as a masculine space. From the onset of the poem, the Dreamer refers to himself in the first person, describing his experience in the initial garden, his traversal of the dream vision's landscape, and finally his reawakening and immediate journey to the Church to receive the Eucharist. Because of this usage of the first person from the Dreamer, we can therefore link the consciousness of the Dreamer to the *Pearl*-poet who "...offers what may well be the finest and most graphically realized description of the heavenly city in medieval literature."⁷⁶ The description of the heavenly city provided by the Dreamer/*Pearl*-poet is highly detailed, and with that "sensory, highly detailed, and complex composition," Stanbury continues, the *Pearl*-poet therefore leaves less room for interpretation on behalf of the reader. The Dreamer's account of the heavenly city, written apparently from the *Pearl*-poet's perspective, is meticulously ordered and controlled, suggesting that the author of the poem is exerting a masculine influence on the poem due to his control over the imagery that the reader encounters.

⁷⁶ Stanbury, "The Body and the City in *Pearl*," 36.

The poet controls the imagery of the poem by showing only the imagery that he wants to show the reader and by focusing the reader's attention more closely on one part of the city's imagery than on others, and "the concept of an author as all-controlling locus of meaning promotes patriarchal values of final authority, fidelity, and legitimacy," claims Carolyn Dinshaw.⁷⁷ In explicitly controlling the details of *Pearl*, this "graphically realized description" of New Jerusalem therefore strips the reader's imagination of details to show the heavenly city exactly how the Dreamer/*Pearl*-poet conceives it. Dinshaw's assertion that the poet's exertion of control over the text implies patriarchal values seems quite fitting for *Pearl*, since the *Pearl*-poet's masculine influence further marks New Jerusalem's representation of space as masculine.

* * *

The physical representation of space in *Pearl* is, overall, decidedly masculine. In turn, the masculine construction of the heavenly city in the text correlates to the space of the pre-Reformation Church and demonstrates opposition to the Lollards' claims that virtuous people, male or female, could perform the role of the clergy when orthodox Church doctrine insisted that men and *only* men could fulfill the role of priests. The opposition to this Lollard reform can be seen in the masculine construction of the heavenly city through its traditionally-masculine imagery. The masculine community of the heavenly city is furthermore shown in the city's description, since that description evokes the parameters of the medieval castle, a square tower surrounded by a circular wall. Moreover, the enhancement of Christ's masculine control through the panoptic

⁷⁷ Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 37.

impulse of the heavenly city suggests that the space of the medieval Church should also be monitored by a masculine authority—that of the all-male priesthood, thus protecting the Church from the Lollard heresy’s reform of the clergy. By applying Lefebvre’s representation of space to *Pearl*’s New Jerusalem, we can see that the heavenly city and ergo the medieval Church are masculine communities, and I detail the spatial practices of these masculine communities in the following chapter to compound the heavenly city’s masculine gendering.

CHAPTER IV MASCULINE SPATIAL PRACTICES OF *PEARL*

In the previous chapter, I applied Lefebvre's representation of space concept to *Pearl's* heavenly city, and in this chapter, I will explore Lefebvre's ideas of spatial practice. Spatial practice explains space by the happenings that occur within it, or what Michel de Certeau would describe as the ways in which users manipulate it. These spatial practices attribute gender to a space by making their mark on it: just as gender performances determine a person's gender when viewed holistically, gendered spatial practice construct a space's gender.

The space of *Pearl's* New Jerusalem is specifically gendered masculine by these spatial practices. Christ's actions in this space primarily serve to construct the city's gender, since Christ is the key figure here. Sarah Stanbury contends, "Womblike in its interiorized structure, domestic in its function as a kind of living room in the heavenly city where the saved will all live together, the feminized gash in Christ's side offers memorial image," here suggesting that the side wound is a "feminized gash" because of its relation to female genitalia.¹ Stanbury notes both form and function here, but the function of the side wound is an example of Christ's control over the brides of Christ. The eternally-bleeding side wound offers control over the brides in two ways: first, the brides must walk through the blood spraying from the side wound, adding another level of masculine control to the maidens' walking path; second, the blood that the maidens

¹ Sarah Stanbury, "The Body and the City in *Pearl*," *Representations* 48 (1994): 30-47, 35. Hereafter cited as Stanbury, "The Body and the City in *Pearl*."

must tread upon cleanses the pollution of the maidens' female bodies—a precaution not taken against the men of the heavenly city. *Pearl* therefore portrays Christ's side wound specifically as a masculine mechanism of control, marking the spatial practices of the heavenly city as masculine.

That masculine control is furthermore exerted by Christ over the brides with the help of panopticism. In the previous chapter, I explained how the heavenly city was panoptic, implying that Christ could more quickly and readily exert control over the city's inhabitants. By utilizing panopticism's ideas of internalization, Christ's control becomes instilled in the maidens, and through internalization, they understand—and completely accept—their subordinate position to him. The brides demonstrate their conscious and willing submission to Christ in the city space, since their good actions reflect glory onto Christ, their husband. Moreover, their submission appears in their clothing, suggesting a visual representation of their biological difference from the men of New Jerusalem. This close regulation of women in *Pearl* suggests the city is a patriarchal and masculine space.²

New Jerusalem is also a masculine space because of issues of mobility. Men's movement in the city is privileged, meaning that Christ and the aldermen can walk where they please, whereas women's mobility is carefully controlled. Stanbury draws from Augustine's description of the heavenly city, contending that this portrayal of New Jerusalem, as with much of medieval literature, "feminized the heavenly city and

² Here, I set the terms "masculine" and "patriarchal" up as almost synonymous, and I believe these terms complement each other in the Middle Ages. Medieval masculinity was bound up in the idea of a man proving himself *not a woman*, meaning that a man needs to prove himself as masculine lest someone think he is stricken with the weakness of femininity. In portraying masculinity as such, it paints an essentialist picture that privileges men and masculinity—the mark of a patriarchal culture. By saying that the heavenly city is masculine, then, I also mean that it's a patriarchal space.

masculinized the earthly one, figuring the male human city as a brutal authoritarian presence and dreaming the female heavenly city as home.”³ I completely disagree with Stanbury’s claim here, since the heavenly city takes on that brutal authoritarian presence in *Pearl* by explicitly promoting patriarchal dominance over women’s mobility within the city space, thereby suggesting that the heavenly city is a masculine space.

Finally, the Maiden and the brides of Christ represent silenced women in the city, thus gendering the space as masculine through a patriarchal removal of women. The Middle English dream vision genre would posit the Maiden as the authority figure in the poem, but in the context of the heavenly city, she is anything but authoritative: she is marked as Christ’s property, traded between men, and has no agency or voice of her own—rather she acts as little more than a mouthpiece through which men may speak. Catherine S. Cox claims that the metaphoricity of the Maiden’s language shows a “valorization of the ‘feminine,’” though the Maiden’s total lack of agency points to the contrary.⁴ The Maiden’s silencing shows the patriarchal influences of *Pearl* and suggests the heavenly city is a space of total control over women, gendering the city as masculine.

Stanbury has been at the forefront of earlier critics who gender the heavenly city as feminine due to the spatial practices happening here. She argues that New Jerusalem “a feminized and maternal residence” for the Maiden and the other brides of Christ.⁵ In Stanbury’s examination, the heavenly city is a nurturing and maternal space, much like her description of the bleeding gash in Christ’s side, acting as a home for Christian souls, and she even claims that the city “becomes an imagistic crypt in which [the Maiden’s]

³ Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*,” 33.

⁴ Catherine S. Cox, “*Pearl*’s ‘Precios Pere’: Gender, Language, and Difference,” *The Chaucer Review* 32.4 (1998): 377-390, 377. Hereafter cited as Cox, “*Pearl*’s ‘Precios Precios Pere.’”

⁵ Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*,” 33.

body is transposed and preserved in stone.”⁶ What she means here is that the Maiden’s body has been transformed into the city, itself, suggesting that the Maiden may only exist in this space. This is where I would agree with Stanbury, although I would agree for a different reason: instead of seeing the heavenly city as the Maiden’s body preserved in stone, I would argue that the masculine controls exerting patriarchal influence over the city space makes it more like a prison for the brides of Christ. Because the women are dominated totally in the heavenly city, it is gendered masculine as a space of patriarchal domination.

My intention here isn’t to reinscribe patriarchy onto *Pearl* in light of numerous feminist examinations of the text, but rather to recognize the patriarchal influences surrounding the text and how those patriarchal influences manifest themselves. This patriarchal space actually sheds light on the religious and political climate of fourteenth-century England in the conflict between the pre-Reformation Church and the Lollard heresy. The Church prescribed that men and *only* men could join the priesthood, whereas the Lollards contended that both men and women could fulfill the role of the priest. In the conclusion of *Pearl*, the Dreamer states, “Lorde, mad hit arn þat agayn þe stryuen, / Oþer proferen þe oʒt agayn þy paye,” expounding here that those people who strive to oppose or displease the Lord are utterly mad.⁷ In this context, the Lollard threat against the medieval Church seems relevant to *Pearl*, as the Lollards represent those mad individuals who stand against God and the Church. The link between the heavenly city and the space of the Church is strengthened by extending Lefebvre’s ideas of spatial practice in New

⁶ Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*,” 39.

⁷ *Pearl: An Edition with Verse Translation*, ed. William Vantuono (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), ll. 1199-1200. I will cite this edition of *Pearl* when referring to textual examples of the poem, citing only *Pearl*.

Jerusalem. The poet portrays the heavenly city as a masculine space meant for masculine spatial practices, and by applying this same view to the Church, it becomes a space meant for masculine roles, as well. By examining the time period of *Pearl's* composition, it appears more fitting to acknowledge the patriarchal influences surrounding the poem and the patriarchal influences emanating from the poem itself that so strictly limit women's mobility and power in the text. The restriction of women's movement in the heavenly city suggests that women's mobility in the Church, both spatially and socially, was heavily restricted as well, including the roles women could perform within the Church. The limitation of women's roles in the Church therefore opposed the Lollard reforms to the clergy suggesting both men and women could be priests.

Christ's Bleeding Side Wound as Masculine Control

Whereas the last chapter detailed the form and the function of the city's landscape, I now turn directly to Christ, specifically to the bleeding wound in Christ's side. Before venturing into an analysis that constructs the heavenly city as masculine, it seems important to first show Christ as masculine. Though the manuscript illumination highlights the important relationship between the Dreamer and the Maiden, Christ is the key figure of New Jerusalem in the text, since "Christ...*is* Jerusalem," according to S. L. Clark and Julian N. Wasserman.⁸ Caroline Walker Bynum, along with several other scholars, contends that the side wound constructs Christ as feminine because of the wound's resemblance to female genitalia. Leo Steinberg also notices this link between the wound and the image of a vagina in medieval and Renaissance artwork, explaining

⁸ S. L. Clark and Julian N. Wasserman, "The Pearl Poet's City Imagery," *The Southern Quarterly* 16 (1978): 297-309, 299, original emphasis.

that “the neutering of the corpus in 14th-century *Crucifixions* (blank loins exposed through transparent loincloths) was meant to facilitate, or even induce, the perception of a womanly, therefore life-giving Christ.”⁹ The blank loins Steinberg describes here suggest that Christ’s male member has been removed, giving the impression of female genitalia. These readings treat the wound only in terms of its form, however, until Bynum seemingly confirms this feminine construction of Christ’s wound in terms of both its form *and* function: “a number of scholars have emphasized the eroticizing of the side wound, calling attention to the visual parallel between wound...and vagina, and citing the many devotional texts that refer to a gestating, birthing, and lactating Jesus.”¹⁰ Christ’s side wound was also seen by medieval people as “an organ capable...of giving birth to the Church.”¹¹ Luce Irigaray refers to Christ’s wound as “that glorious slit where she curls up as if in her nest, where she rests as if she had found her home,” once more describing the wound in terms of its ability to gestate and give birth.¹² Because the side wound is treated in terms of its form as resembling female genitalia and its functions—functions that only women could enact—Christ is therefore constructed as feminine by earlier scholars.

Critics further suggest that the function of Christ’s bleeding side wound is maternal and nurturing, once more constructing Christ as feminine. Bynum contends that “theologians saw the wound in Christ’s side as a breast and emphasized his bleeding-

⁹ Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 247. Hereafter cited as Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ*.

¹⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum, “Violence Occluded: The Wound in Christ’s Side in Late Medieval Devotion,” in *Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Medieval Studies in Honor of Stephen D. White*, ed. Belle S. Tuten and Tracey L. Billado (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 97.

¹¹ Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ*, 247.

¹² Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 200. Hereafter cited as Irigaray, *Speculum*.

lactating flesh.”¹³ The blood coming from the wound was therefore seen as a nurturing excretion to feed humankind, and, moreover, medieval physicians saw a woman’s blood as having the same effect inside and outside the womb:

The mother was the oven or vessel in which the foetus cooked, and her body fed the growing child, providing its matter as it matured. Moreover, all ancient biologists thought that the mother’s blood fed the child in the womb and then, transmuted into breast milk, fed the baby outside the womb as well. Thus blood was the basic body fluid and female blood was the fundamental support of life.¹⁴

Here, Bynum draws from the teachings of Galen, an ancient physician who provided the foundation for much of medieval physiology. Blood was seen as the fundamental support of life, since it was the foundational stuff from which all other bodily excretions transmuted, meaning that Christ’s blood represented both blood escaping from the body and milk lactating from the side wound “breast” to feed humanity. Bynum’s description here constructs Christ and his side wound as feminine due to their form and function.

Instead of this, Christ’s side wound represents a masculine performance of control in *Pearl*. The Dreamer watches a parade of 144,000 brides of Christ led by the Lamb in the heavenly city, and he specifically notes the gaping wound at Christ’s side: “Bot a wounde, ful wyde and weete, con wyse / Anende hys hert, þurȝ hyde torente. / Of his quite syde his blod out sprent.”¹⁵ Here, the gash in the Lamb’s hide is both wide and wet, and the *Pearl*-poet uses the stark contrast of the Lamb’s white side against the crimson blood coming from the open wound to add emphasis to the scene. Bynum’s description of Christ’s side wound doesn’t hold here, however, because it is neither maternal nor nurturing. Christ is actively shedding his blood, thereby performing masculinity by

¹³ Caroline Walker Bynum, “The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 39.3 (1986): 399-439, 403. Hereafter cited as Bynum, “The Body of Christ.”

¹⁴ Bynum, “The Body of Christ,” 421.

¹⁵ *Pearl*, l. ll. 1135-1137.

controlling his own body. The blood he sheds adds a further level of control over his brides to mediate the pollution caused by the brides' female bodies in the city space.¹⁶

The side wound's function as a mechanism of control over Christ's own body and over the brides constructs Christ as masculine.

The act of bleeding in this case is specifically masculine, as Christ is not passively leaking blood from his side wound in *Pearl*, but rather, actively allowing blood to come forth. In doing so, he is exerting control over his own body, which is a mark of masculinity in the Middle Ages. Neal asserts that medieval masculinity formed around "the well-ruled body...its gestures are controlled, its motions moderated."¹⁷ Masculinity in fourteenth-century England was not just about controlling other men, women, and those of social inferiority—it was about controlling one's own body as well. Bloodletting therefore allowed a man to control his body even further, explains Leanne Groeneveld:

Menstruation was an essential female bodily process that male bodies only sometimes imitated or were forced to perform. When they did either, it was almost always *their choice*: to be cut or to live a lifestyle that made their bodies spontaneously bleed. They suffered under no physiological imperative or supernatural curse, as did women and Jews."¹⁸

Groeneveld claims that women's bleeding through menstruation was a physiological imperative or supernatural curse, implying that women can't control their bleeding. For men, bleeding was almost always their choice, suggesting that men had control over their bodies and actively chose to bleed.

¹⁶ I will discuss Christ's bleeding side wound further into this chapter as another mechanism of masculine control over the brides' mobility within the space of New Jerusalem, as well.

¹⁷ Derek G. Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 153. Hereafter cited as Neal, *The Masculine Self*.

¹⁸ Leanne Groeneveld, "Letting or Leaking? Christ's Wounded Masculinity," *Tessera* 33 (2003): 136-151, 140, y emphasis. Hereafter cited as Groeneveld, "Letting."

Christ very deliberately chooses to shed his blood in the space of the heavenly city, suggesting that his control over his body is a masculine performance. Peggy McCracken explains that the blood of sacrifice “is blood that is shed deliberately and with intention.”¹⁹ Shedding one’s blood deliberately and intentionally, as Christ does in the city space, would demonstrate control over his body, and the Maiden reminds us in *Pearl* that Christ’s suffering and bleeding was *his choice*: New Jerusalem “is þe cyté þat þe Lombe con *fonde* / To soffer inne sor for maneȝ sake.”²⁰ The Maiden here notes that the Lamb *con fonde to soffer*, explicitly using the word *fonde*, meaning “desire,” suggesting that Christ’s sacrifice and suffering for humankind was a choice.²¹ Christ exerts masculinity, thereby, by actively shedding his blood from the side wound by demonstrating control over his own body, but the blood also purifies the pollution of the brides’ female bodies.

Bynum’s reading posits the side wound’s blood as maternal, nurturing, and feminine, but this blood takes on a cleansing role in *Pearl*. The blood acts to mediate the pollution caused by the brides’ female bodies, thereby allowing Christ to perform masculinity by controlling the brides which, in turn, genders the space as masculine. Bynum explains that blood was typically seen as cleansing: “since medieval physiological theory saw all body fluids as reducible to blood and saw bleeding basically as purging, bleeding was an obvious symbol for cleansing or expiation, and all Christ’s bleedings were assimilated.”²² This description of Christ’s blood explains its purifying function, and specifically in *Pearl*, the Dreamer explicitly notes in line 1137 that Christ’s

¹⁹ Peggy McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, The Wound of the Hero* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2003), 58. Hereafter cited as McCracken, *The Curse of Eve*.

²⁰ *Pearl*, ll. 939-940, my emphasis.

²¹ Middle English Dictionary, s.v. “fōnd.”

²² Bynum, “The Body of Christ,” 407.

blood *out sprent* from his side wound, leaving the maidens to walk through Christ's blood as it fell onto the streets of New Jerusalem. According to the Middle English Dictionary (MED), a *sprent* is "a sprinkler for holy water," and the Dreamer's specific use of the word *sprent* to describe the blood from the wound suggests its cleansing function by drawing a correlation between holy water and Christ's blood.²³ This act on Christ's behalf, or rather on behalf of Christ's side wound, suggests a masculine performance of control and purification, not a maternal, nurturing, and feminine quality, as Bynum contends.

Christ's bleeding side wound is necessary for the women to even *be* in the space of *Pearl's* New Jerusalem, simply because the female body was seen as unclean or polluting in the Middle Ages. Irigaray explains that women have "so often been humiliated, and every particle in [their] being seems but decay and infection," also referring to the female body as "*waste, refuse, matter.*"²⁴ Irigaray's modern description of the female body here paints the portrait of a body that needs purification, and this same idea of the female body as polluting can be seen in Middle Ages in terms of women's menstruation: "Menstrual blood, like other bodily wastes (urine or feces, for example) is anomalous...because it escapes the natural boundaries of the body by which it is normally contained."²⁵ Due to women's uncontrollable menstrual bleeding, women's bodies were considered unclean: "further, menstruum, even if only regarded as a superfluity of blood and not an impurity, was considered harmful and polluting, at very least to the body that produced it, but more commonly as well to other bodies with which

²³ Middle English Dictionary, 2nd ed., s.v. "sprent."

²⁴ Irigaray, *Speculum*, 199, original emphasis.

²⁵ McCracken, *The Curse of Eve*, 5.

it might come into contact.”²⁶ A woman had no control over her menstruation, since “menstruation... occurred without the individual’s consent.”²⁷ Woman’s lack of control of this bleeding was sense as harmful and polluting, thereby suggesting that Christ’s bleeding side wound in *Pearl* purifies this polluting essence as a spatial practice of control which genders the heavenly city as masculine, in turn.

In the Middle Ages, it was possible for a woman to gain the status of a man, but this change was not a physical one—the woman’s female body was still considered unclean. St. Jerome explains, “long as woman is for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman and will be called man.”²⁸ If a woman truly devotes herself to Christ, she is actively choosing to deny those maternal and nurturing performances associated with the female body, and she would thus be exerting control over herself. In doing so, “the woman who could control her sexuality, even go so far as to denying her sex, could enter on a higher plane of rationality equal to that of the male.”²⁹ The devout woman could transcend her gender spiritually to become the equivalent of a man, but she could not do so biologically, meaning that while her spirit may be on this higher plane of rationality, her female body was still unclean and polluting. Christ’s bleeding side wound in *Pearl* is therefore necessary to cleanse the potential danger of pollution from the female bodies in the space of the heavenly city.

Christ’s cleansing blood acts as a form of mimesis in the context of *Pearl* and is closely linked to anchoresses. An anchoress was a woman who devoted her life to

²⁶Groeneveld, “Letting,” 140.

²⁷Groeneveld, “Letting,” 144.

²⁸Jerome, *Commentary on Ephesians III*, Chapter 5, <http://ccel.org/>.

²⁹Vern L. Bullough, “Sex Education in Medieval Christianity,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 13.3 (1977): 185-196, 189.

Christ—and even became attached to Christ, explains Michelle M. Sauer: the anchoress lived her whole life in a cell that was built directly adjacent to the church, and “by being attached to the church itself, the anchoress was metaphorically attached to Christ, as his presence infused the sacred space.”³⁰ It was a dangerous situation, however, to have the anchoress and her cell attached to the space of the church because of the pollution of her female body, but it was Christ that cleansed her body and mediated that danger. Sauer details,

the anchoress’s body threatened the purity of the church, while Christ’s stainless, bleeding body neutralized potential harm. When the two merge, his body becomes a stand in for hers, able to withstand sin and temptation, and able to overcome pollution and corruption through his saving blood.³¹

In this action of mimesis, Christ takes on the impurity of the anchoress’s menstruation to mediate the pollution caused by her bleeding and bleeds through the side wound to neutralize the danger with the purity of his body. Christ’s bleeding side wound is therefore necessary for the anchoress—specifically her female body—to take up residence in the church through mimesis.

The same could be said of the brides of Christ who follow the Lamb through the heavenly city, thus marking Christ’s bleeding side wound in *Pearl* as a form of masculine control over the brides’ bodies. Stanbury claims that the Maiden’s transformation into a bride of Christ “allows the girl to be formally ordered and contained in a material structure,”³² suggesting the same relationship that anchoresses had to their cells: “The physical structure of the anchorhold becomes, in essence, the physical structure of the

³⁰ Michelle M. Sauer, “‘Þe blod þ[at] boht’: The Wooing Group Christ as Pierced, Pricked, and Penetrated Body,” in *The Milieu and Context of the Wooing Group*, ed. Susannah Mary Chewning (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2009), 128. Hereafter cited as Sauer, “‘Þe blod þ[at] boht.’”

³¹ Sauer, “‘Þe blod þ[at] boht,’” 123-124.

³² Stanbury, “The Body and the City in *Pearl*,” 39.

anchoress' body."³³ The brides of Christ in *Pearl*, Stanbury contends, may exist only within the walls of the city space, implying that they are like anchoresses, and their cell is the space of New Jerusalem. By leaving this interpretation as it stands, Stanbury is looking at the form of the city space instead of its form *and* function, and this perhaps explains how she reached her conclusion that the heavenly city in *Pearl* is gendered feminine. Through mimesis, however, the bleeding side wound becomes a mechanism of masculine control which genders the city space as masculine, in turn. The only reason that the brides and their female bodies are even *allowed* into the city is because of Christ's mimetic bleeding that neutralizes the danger of their polluting bodies in the sacred space of New Jerusalem.

The masculine bleeding of Christ's side wound here genders the space of the heavenly city, in turn, and this points to the problem of the Lollards of fourteenth-century England. The Lollards believed that restructuring the clergy was necessary for the pre-Reformation Church, and in this restructuring, "all believers living holy lives, male or female, could be priests."³⁴ The idea of women as taking authoritative and instructive roles over men—specifically, in public—was unheard of because of the supposed pollution of women's bodies as compared to men's bodies. An anchoress required the mimesis of Christ's bleeding to even be allowed to live in her cell attached to the Church, and the cells were carefully constructed in order to mediate the supposed pollution of her body. Even her gaze was carefully controlled by cruciform squints, Sauer explains: "not only did this purify her gaze, but also it regulated her perception of the external world—

³³ Sauer, "'De blod þ[at] boht,'" 128.

³⁴ Shannon McSheffrey, "Women and Lollardy: A Reassessment," *Canadian Journal of History* 26.2 (1991): 199-223, 204.

everything was viewed through Christ and his body.”³⁵ The woman’s body had to be treated with special care because of the threat of her female body polluting the sacred space of the Church. Because men required no such mimetic precautions, orthodox Church doctrine deemed that men and only men could be priests. The Church therefore required priests to be male because Christ was male, implying that this masculine construction of New Jerusalem in *Pearl* defends the Church against the Lollard heretics.

New Jerusalem and Internalization

As I discussed in my previous chapter, Foucault’s idea of panopticism works in a figurative way as well as a physical one. The physical panopticon allows an observer to exert control over an inmate due to the tangible architecture of the prison space, but the primary function of the panopticon is “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.”³⁶ This state of conscious and permanent visibility doesn’t necessarily have to be monitored by an external force, such as a guard or prison warden, however—the inmates can monitor *themselves* through internalization. Edward L. Deci et al. explain internalization through self-determination: “the self-determination approach views internalization as the process of transforming external regulations into internal regulations and, when the process functions optimally, integrating those regulations into one’s sense of self.”³⁷ Integration “refers to internalization in which the person identifies with the value of an activity and accepts full responsibility for doing it,” and, “as such, one’s behavior emanates from

³⁵ Sauer, ““De blod þ[at] boht,”” 129.

³⁶ Foucault, “Panopticism,” 201.

³⁷ Edward L. Deci et al., “Facilitating Internalization: The Self-Determination Theory,” *Journal of Personality* 62.1 (1994): 119-142, 120. Hereafter cited as Deci et al., “Facilitating Internalization.”

one's self; it is self-determined.”³⁸ In this model of control, no external force is required to impose regulations on a person, because that person has already instilled those regulations into his or her sense of self. The person will therefore see the regulations as second nature—something he or she does willfully because of the value of the activity. In *Pearl*, the Maiden and the other women in New Jerusalem have been instilled by the patriarchal ideals of what it means to be a woman—to be silenced and to be under a man's control at all times. Christ therefore utilizes internalization as a form of control over the women in *Pearl*, thereby performing masculinity and gendering the city space as masculine, in turn.

The integration mode of internalization happening in *Pearl* is based around the idea of self-identification. Integration, once more, is the idea that a person accepts a set of regulations but ultimately sees the value in those regulations, tying them to that person's sense of self, almost like second nature. The person willingly enacts these regulations, and in doing so, the person will actually self-identify *with* the oppressive structure that prescribed the rules. This is the case for the Maiden and the brides of Christ in New Jerusalem. When the Dreamer asks the Maiden what her status is in heaven, she explains, “my dere Destyné, / Me ches to hys make,” specifically noting here that Christ, her “destiny,” chose her as his bride.³⁹ The Maiden further notes that she is but one bride of many: “Þe Lambes vyue3 in blysse we bene, / A hondred and forty þowsande flot, / As in þe Apocalyppe3 is sene.”⁴⁰ The Maiden here describes that Christ has 144,000 brides in

³⁸ Deci et al., “Facilitating Internalization,” 121. The self-determination approach breaks internalization into two different types, introjection and integration. Whereas Deci et al. examine both of these terms in depth, I believe that integration is the only relevant form of internalization in *Pearl*'s New Jerusalem

³⁹ *Pearl*, ll. 768-769.

⁴⁰ *Pearl*, ll. 785-788. Though the text here says that the brides' number as being only “a hondred and forty þowsande,” the Maiden explains in lines 869-870 that St. John sees “maydennes an hundrethe thowsande / And fowre and forty thoswande mo,” making the total number 144,000 brides of Christ.

the city, and she is self-identifying with Christ because of her integrated internalization. Her self-identification means that she is consciously and willingly aligning herself with Christ, and, more specifically, aligning herself and all the other brides as submissive to Christ. In the Middle Ages, a man's wife was considered his property, so when the Maiden self-identifies as a bride of Christ, she self-identifies as Christ's property, thereby demonstrating the integration internalization, which in this case serves to strengthen Christ's control over the women. Because of Christ's control over the women, his masculine spatial practices gender the space of the heavenly city as masculine as well.

The brides' self-identification as Christ's wives allows Christ to exert control over them as his dependents which is signified by the brides' demeanor in the city space. The brides have internalized the idea that they should bring glory to their husband, as was fitting for their position to Christ: "a wife's identity was subsumed in her husband's; hence her actions, good or bad, regardless of legal definitions, reflected directly on him."⁴¹ A wife's actions can glorify or tarnish the reputation of her husband, and the brides of Christ understand this relation between wife and husband. The Dreamer watches the scene of the heavenly city, and he is amazed by the brides' organization, since the city becomes "sodanly ful" of brides who form up behind Christ in the city streets "wythouten summoun."⁴² The brides automatically fall into line behind the Lamb with no command from him, and the Dreamer further notes their demeanor in the procession: "mylde as maydeneȝ seme at mas, / So droȝ þay forth wyth gret delyt."⁴³ Here, the Dreamer specifically describes that the brides behave so mildly that he would guess they were at a Church mass, and they walked forth with "great delight" in the

⁴¹ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, 82.

⁴² *Pearl*, l. 1098.

⁴³ *Pearl*, ll. 1115-1116.

procession. Because these women have self-identified with Christ as his subordinate brides, they understand and internalize the important link between their actions and their husband's reputation. In being the best wives possible in the public sphere of the heavenly city's streets, Christ is exerting a masculine influence over the women through this integrated internalization of his brides, thereby constructing the space of the heavenly city as a masculine space, in turn.

This link between the brides' actions and their husband's reputation can be seen in their attire, which is also carefully controlled to reflect glory to Christ. Again, "because wives formed part of their husbands' symbolic substance," the way that the brides appear in the heavenly city has a direct influence on Christ's reputation and masculinity.⁴⁴ His control over the brides through internalization therefore acts as a masculine performance, and, as Barbara Hanawalt describes, "dress codes...are another way of confining women—in this case, within an outer layer of cloth."⁴⁵ The brides of Christ line up in their parade to follow the Lamb throughout the city, and the Dreamer describes their apparel as such:

Of such vergyneȝ, in þe same gyse,
Pat watȝ my blyful anvunder croun;
And coronde wern alle of þe same fasoun,
Depaynt in perleȝ and wedeȝ qwyte.
In vch oneȝ breste watȝ bounden boun
Þe blyful perle wythouten delyt.⁴⁶

The Dreamer here says that the virgins all appear "in the same guise," specifically noting that the brides all appear exactly the same: the maidens are all dressed in white robes and bedecked with pearls, and on each bride's breast is set a large pearl. Were we to describe

⁴⁴ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, 82.

⁴⁵ Barbara Hanawalt, *'Of Good and Ill Repute': Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 75. Hereafter cited as Hanawalt, *'Of Good and Ill Repute.'*

⁴⁶ *Pearl*, ll. 1099-1104.

each of these brides in turn, we would most likely get a description much like the Maiden's appearance that the Dreamer recounts in Section IV of *Pearl*, thereby suggesting the brides' internalization of the link between their reputation and the reputation of their husband. The clothing of the maidens is therefore meant not to adorn them for the sake of vanity, but rather to bring glory to their husband in the public sphere and amplify his masculinity through their adornment. This internalization of the brides' attire acts as a form of masculine control for Christ, gendering the space of the heavenly city as masculine.

We can see a distinction here between men's and women's spatial practices within the city space—a distinction that suggests that women *must* be controlled at all times. In the last chapter, I argued that the *Pearl*-poet acted as an external masculine force over the poem by extraneously controlling the details of New Jerusalem's landscape, and this is the same case when looking at the clothing in this space. The *Pearl*-poet spends almost all of Section IV of the poem describing the attire of the Maiden, and that same attire can be attributed to the rest of the brides during the Dreamer's vision of the heavenly city. In contrast, there is an explicit *lack* of detail regarding the dress of the aldermen, since the only reference we get to them in the text explains that they fall to Christ's feet as he walks past them.⁴⁷ We have no clear scene in *Pearl* where the aldermen self-identify with Christ as the brides do, thereby cementing their subordinate position to the Lamb to explain their internalization. Furthermore, the aldermen as groveling at Christ's feet doesn't particularly smack of internalized behavior, since it was simply understood that everyone is subordinate to Christ and that everyone would grovel

⁴⁷ *Pearl*, ll. 1119-1120. "Þise aldermen, quen he [the Lamb] aproched, / Grouelyng to his fete þay felle."

at Christ's feet should he walk past. This all amounts to a clear division of gendered spatial practices in *Pearl* where it is imperative that women are controlled, both internally and externally, while men can carry on with their daily business. The clothing worn by the brides of Christ therefore signals their social difference from the aldermen in the city space, and the strict control over the women's dress suggests the patriarchal spatial practices of the city which construct the space as masculine.

These patriarchal influences in *Pearl* point to the pre-Reformation Church as a defense against the Lollards' contention that women could take the role of the priest. Internalization isn't a new idea for the Church, Foucault explains: "religious groups and charity organizations have long played this role of 'disciplining' the population."⁴⁸ The Church was able to control the population through this discipline, but the biggest threat within the Church's walls was women due to the pollution of their female bodies as I discussed in the last section and due to their supposed inferiority to men. By internalizing controls in the brides of Christ in *Pearl*, the brides function "not as an assembled crowd, but as a unity that derives from this very unity an increase in its forces," meaning that the threat of the brides' pollution in the city could be mitigated by internalizing them with doctrines meant to keep them in check.⁴⁹ Again, there is no push for internalization with the men in this space, suggesting that men understood their position within New Jerusalem—they didn't need to be controlled, simply because they were men. The threat of women's supposed mental, moral, and biological inferiority would be therefore

⁴⁸ Foucault, "Panopticism," 212.

⁴⁹ Foucault, "Panopticism," 210. Foucault here explains this concept in terms of an army, where every individual soldier is trained and dressed in the same manner to increase the army's functionality, though the brides really have no "force" to speak of in *Pearl*'s New Jerusalem.

mitigated in the space of the medieval Church by keeping women under control at all times through internalization.

Movement in the Heavenly City

Ideally, modern cities are designed to enhance the spatial mobility of their citizens by allowing those citizens the freedom to move from place to place with little impediment. David Pinder notes that the city “embodied a shift away from the static, rooted and monumental towards *movement*, flexibility, transitoriness and indeterminacy.”⁵⁰ Where a modern earthly city promotes movement and mobility, the heavenly city in *Pearl* presents a hierarchical view of mobility in the city space—one that privileges men’s freedom of movement while limiting the physical mobility of women. The text presents a city that specifically and more strictly exerts control over women’s ability to move freely, marking this space as patriarchal and masculine. This concept is called “space syntax,” referring to how people spatially move through the layout of a space and how that layout affects mobility of certain individuals. Sonit Bafna explains that “giving selected members control of movement to and from particular spaces and limiting the freedom of movement of others...creates...hierarchies of status that help maintain social organization with some degree of complexity.”⁵¹ In short, the layout of a space affects the freedom of movement of those people within a space, and a person with higher mobility has more power. *Pearl*’s heavenly city shows a stark contrast between the

⁵⁰ David Pinder, “Cities: Moving, Plugging in, Floating, Dissolving,” in *Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, Space, Subjects*, ed. Tim Cresswell and Peter Merriman (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 169, my emphasis.

⁵¹ Sonit Bafna, “Space Syntax: A Brief Introduction to its Logic and Analytical Techniques,” *Environment and Behavior* 35 (2003): 17-29, 18.

high mobility granted to men versus the explicit control over women's movement, suggesting that this space is masculine and patriarchal.

The person with the highest mobility of all in the space of New Jerusalem is the Lamb, the allegorical figure of Christ, thereby suggesting that Christ holds control over the entire space and may wander where he pleases. The Dreamer watches in wonder and notes, "I watȝ war of a prosessyoun," saying here that he notices a procession forming.⁵² M. Cecilia Gaposchkin explains that medieval processions "constituted a structural inversion of pilgrimage"⁵³ and "provided a public, focused opportunity for contact between the faithful and their local saints."⁵⁴ The traditional idea of pilgrimage often depicts a pilgrim travelling to the saint's shrine in hopes that the saint will offer a miraculous cure for an affliction; in a procession, a saint entered the public sphere to be among the faithful for the same reason—they "provided an opportunity for (and produced the expectation of) the performance of miracles."⁵⁵ Gaposchkin points out that "the publicly-oriented character of...processions...served to promote the existence and power of the saints," and if this is true, the procession the Dreamer sees in the heavenly city could be construed as a massive display of Christ's masculinity.⁵⁶ "If sacred and enclosed space was coded feminine...the unexplored area of the street...was masculine," and because processions were communal and public events, the procession led by Christ in

⁵² *Pearl*, l. 1096.

⁵³ M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, "Portals, Processions, Pilgrimage, and Piety: Saints Firmin and Honoré at Amiens," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles Texts*, ed. Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe (Boston: Brill, 2005), 219. Hereafter cited as Gaposchkin, "Portals, Processions."

⁵⁴ Gaposchkin, "Portals, Processions," 237.

⁵⁵ Gaposchkin, "Portals, Processions," 218.

⁵⁶ Gaposchkin, "Portals, Processions," 219.

Pearl's heavenly city represents a masculine spatial practice, thereby gendering the space of the city as masculine, as well.⁵⁷

Christ's procession through the city acts as a masculine spatial practice both as a display of his wealth and as a show of his high mobility in the city space. The Dreamer explains that Christ begins the procession with the 144,000 brides behind him, and the Dreamer takes careful note of the Lamb's appearance here: "Þe Lombe byfore con proudly passe, / Wyth hornez seuen of red golde cler. / As praysed perlez his wedez wasse."⁵⁸ Here, the Dreamer explains that the Lamb leads the parade adorned with red gold horns and clothing as white as precious pearls, implying that the Lamb is utilizing the procession as a masculine performance of his wealth. Ruth Ellis Messenger explains that the later Middle Ages were marked by pageantry, reminding us that "crusades and pilgrimages were accompanied by banners and armorial display," and Christ uses this procession to show his vast riches in a public display of masculinity.⁵⁹ Furthermore, it is important to note that it's the Lamb who leads the procession route through the streets of New Jerusalem, thereby suggesting that Christ is the wielder of ultimate control in the city because of his high mobility within this space. Christ dictates the path of the procession throughout New Jerusalem as a masculine performance of control over the parade route, marking the heavenly city as a masculine space meant for masculine privilege of mobility.

⁵⁷ Michael Camille, "Signs of the City: Place, Power, and Public Fantasy in Medieval Paris," in *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michael Kobialka (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2000), 27.

⁵⁸ *Pearl*, ll. 1110-1112.

⁵⁹ Ruth Ellis Messenger, "Processional Hymnody in the Later Middle Ages," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 81 (1950): 185-199, 189.

The heavenly city is furthermore gendered masculine by specifically looking at the privileging of male mobility in the city space. The Dreamer watches as the Lamb walks at the head of a column of brides, but the members of the procession are not the only inhabitants of the heavenly city, however. Throughout this space, aldermen roam through the streets, and the Dreamer gives no mention to any impediments to their freedom of movement, save one: “Þise aldermen, quen [the Lamb] aproched, / Grouelyng to his fete þay felle.”⁶⁰ Due to the omission of more detail from the Dreamer, the mobility of the aldermen in the city seems generally unimpeded until Christ approaches them. Christ exudes an aura of control around himself, and those aldermen who find themselves within his control immediately cease their activities to bow down to the owner of the heavenly city and their Lord and savior. Save for these moments of praising the Lamb as he passes, New Jerusalem’s aldermen are totally uninhibited in their spatial movement, further marking the heavenly city as masculine because of men’s high mobility.

Whereas the mobility of men is almost totally unimpeded, women’s ability to move is heavily controlled. As the Lamb begins his procession, the Dreamer exclaims, “Þis noble cité of ryche enpresse / Wat3 sodaynly ful,” here noting that the city’s streets are filled with brides. Again, in this procession, the Lamb leads these virginal ladies and exerts control over the procession’s route through the heavenly city. In leading his brides in the procession, Christ is stripping them of their agency—they cannot dictate their own paths, but must follow the Lamb, and wherever he goes, so, too, must the brides. Moreover, their path is controlled by Christ because of his bleeding side wound, since the brides must walk across Christ’s shed blood in order to neutralize the pollution of the city space caused by their impure female bodies. This parade of the virginal brides strictly

⁶⁰ *Pearl*, ll. 1119-1120.

limits their movement within New Jerusalem, implying that Christ uses this control over the brides' mobility as a masculine spatial practice in two ways, each of which genders the city as a masculine space.

Christ's parade of the virgins through the heavenly city first suggests that he's exerting control over the women, and it further implies that he is performing masculinity by publicly displaying the brides as his dependents and, specifically, his property. "In the later Middle Ages the primary way by which a boy established his adult masculinity was by testing himself and proving himself against other men," Ruth Mazo Karras explains. She continues, "women were often tools used in that demonstration... Men might demonstrate their gender conformity by ostentatiously pursuing women and declaring love for them, as well as by oppressing them."⁶¹ If presenting one's pursuit of women and oppression of women was a masculine performance, Christ achieves this masculine performance through the parade of virginal brides in the heavenly city; he very explicitly shows that these are *his* brides and *his* property, since each of the brides carries his mark. As the Maiden tells the Dreamer of the apocalyptic vision of St. John, she makes specific mention of these marked brides:

And wyth hym [the Lamb] maydennez, an hundreþe þowsande,
And fowre and forty þowsande mo.
On alle her forhede3 written I fande
þe Lombe3 nome, hys Fadere3 also.⁶²

The Maiden's description of St. John's vision shows that the parade is comprised of 144,000 maidens—all of whom bear the names of Christ and his Father on their foreheads. In the Middle Ages, a woman's forehead was considered one of the most

⁶¹ Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 11. Hereafter cited as Karras, *From Boys to Men*.

⁶² *Pearl*, ll. 869-872.

beautiful parts of a woman, and Christ places his name here as a form of masculine dominance, thus claiming each woman's beauty for himself and marking them as property. By parading the brides through New Jerusalem, Christ is ostentatiously showing his virility to the city's inhabitants while furthermore oppressing the women by treating them as property branded with his name. The procession therefore functions as a masculine spatial practice meant to show Christ's masculinity through control over and ownership of the brides, which genders this space as masculine, in turn.

In another way, the procession functions as a display of Christ's masculinity because he is escorting the women through a public space, suggesting that the brides need Christ's protection. In the medieval world, a woman's "ideal of total virginity was described in terms of a space with walls and physical boundaries, a sacred vessel enclosing an object—a jewel or treasure," a description which seems apt for a poem named *Pearl*.⁶³ In this way, private or domestic spaces were deemed feminine, whereas the public sphere on the street was gendered masculine as "an arena for a variety of spatial contacts."⁶⁴ The public street therefore posed a significant risk to women's virginity, so "when women did move out of their space, they had to do so with proper escort or risk humiliation or even rape."⁶⁵ Vern L. Bullough describes medieval masculinity as a triad, and one of his criteria for masculinity is the protection of dependents, a performance that Christ enacts as he leads the women through the streets of the city.⁶⁶ The procession of virginal brides suggests that Christ is both controlling his

⁶³ Hanawalt, 'Of Good and Ill Repute', 76.

⁶⁴ Hanawalt, 'Of Good and Ill Repute', 82.

⁶⁵ Hanawalt, 'Of Good and Ill Repute', 84.

⁶⁶ Vern L. Bullough, "On Being Male in the Middle Ages," in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1994), 34. Hereafter cited as Bullough, "On Being Male."

dependents as their escort through the public streets while simultaneously protecting his dependents, both of which imply that he is performing masculinity and that these masculine spatial practices further gender the heavenly city as masculine, too.

This hierarchy of mobility in the heavenly city is entirely wrapped up in patriarchal influences which further point to the state of the Church in fourteenth-century England. Again, my point here isn't to reinscribe patriarchy to *Pearl* as a construct, but rather to recognize the patriarchal influences surrounding the poem. With the Lollards' contention that women could fulfill the role of priests, *Pearl* acts as a defense against this proposed reform to the Church by showing that women—and women's mobility—needed to be strictly regulated, simply because a woman in the Middle Ages was “a creature who needed to be kept under control.”⁶⁷ Orthodox Church doctrine explained that men and *only* men could be members of the clergy, and by showing Christ and the aldermen of *Pearl's* heavenly city as having unimpeded mobility, that high mobility translates to the space of the Church, marking it as a patriarchal space where men could come and go freely.

The Maiden's “Authority”

Throughout this chapter, I've discussed the closely-controlled position of women in *Pearl's* patriarchal city space in terms of their bodies, noting the patriarchal influences in the poem that exert masculine control over their spatial practices, their attire, and their mobility in the city space. I now turn my attention specifically to the Maiden to examine her supposed authority in the dream vision encounter. In terms of Macrobius' definitions

⁶⁷ Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 20. Hereafter cited as Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*.

of dreams, we would likely call *Pearl* an *oraculum*, a dream “in which a parent, or a pious or revered man, or a priest, or even a god clearly reveals what will or will not transpire, and what action to take or to avoid.”⁶⁸ To Macrobius, the oracular dream is one when a dreamer-narrator enters a dream space and meets an authority figure, and, through that authority figure’s guidance, awakens to lead an improved life. In the case of *Pearl*, the Maiden seems the most likely candidate to fill this position of authority, simply because she is the only person that *Pearl*’s dreamer-narrator encounters. Seeing the Maiden as the authority figure here could explain why *Pearl* constitutes “a valorization of the ‘feminine,’” according to Catherine S. Cox.⁶⁹ Whereas Cox sees the Maiden in a position of authority and valorization, the Maiden actually represents a silenced woman in the patriarchal social structure of the heavenly city, and because of her silence, New Jerusalem is constructed as masculine. This masculine construction of *Pearl*’s city also points to the pre-Reformation Church in fourteenth-century England as a defense against the Lollards’ contention that women could fulfill the role of priests.

The patriarchal social structure of the heavenly city actually facilitates the Maiden’s silence by treating her and the other brides of Christ as little more than property to be traded between men. Elaine Tuttle Hansen explains that “patriarchy devalues the culturally feminine and insists on the difference between men and women as well as the power of men over women,” and we have already seen that throughout the course of this chapter: the women adhere to a strict dress code that marks them as different from men

⁶⁸ Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 90, my emphasis. Hereafter cited as “Macrobius, *Commentary*.”

⁶⁹ Catherine S. Cox, “*Pearl*’s ‘Precios Pere,’” 377.

while they are furthermore controlled through their limited mobility in the city space.⁷⁰ Dinshaw further explains that patriarchal society hinges on “the exchange of women between groups of men...and [on the idea] that women function therein, as do empty linguistic signs.”⁷¹ What Dinshaw means here is the women function with patriarchal structure as little more than property to be traded between men, and this treatment of women as property can be seen in this space with the brides of Christ. The Maiden describes that all 144,000 brides of Christ are branded: “On alle her forhedeȝ wryten I fande / Þe Lombeȝ nome.”⁷² Each and every bride of Christ in the city bears the Lamb’s name on her forehead, and by branding the women with his name, Christ is therefore exerting his control over them to treat them as his property. Moreover, if the Maiden is to be considered as Christ’s property because of his mark on her forehead, we see her treated as property as she is exchanged between two men—the Dreamer and Christ. The Maiden changes hands, as it were, from the Dreamer in the waking world to Christ inside the heavenly city upon her worldly death.⁷³ The treatment of women in New Jerusalem facilitates patriarchal society, implying that this space is masculine.

The patriarchal influences in the heavenly city are even internalized in the Maiden—and presumably all the brides of Christ—furthermore showing that the city landscape is gendered masculine. Women’s treatment as property and their utilization as tools for forming bonds between men is what founds patriarchal society, since that

⁷⁰ Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 7. Hereafter cited as Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender*.

⁷¹ Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics*, 16.

⁷² *Pearl*, ll. 871-872.

⁷³ *Pearl* scholars traditionally explain the relationship between the Dreamer and the Maiden as father-daughter. For alternative interpretations of their relationship, see María Bullón-Fernández’ article, “Byzonde þe water’: Courtly and Religious Desire in *Pearl*,” *Studies in Philology* 91.1 (1994): 34-49.

society calls for the “passivity, blankness, or absence of woman.”⁷⁴ Medieval culture was one that “insists on the inherent and necessary inferiority and absence, both materially and symbolically, of women,” and by silencing the Maiden in *Pearl*, that blankness and absence of woman is achieved.⁷⁵ Earlier in this chapter, I argued that the Maiden and the brides of Christ have no agency during Christ’s procession since they passively follow him and rely on Christ, a man, to guide them. In the same vein, the Maiden’s lessons to the Dreamer don’t come directly from her, but rather, she acts as a conduit through which men may speak: “Of courtaysye, *as sayt3 Saynt Poule*, / Al arn we membre3 of Jhesu Kryst.”⁷⁶ She very specifically cites the words of St. Paul here—not words of her own. Just as St. John acts as a masculine force outside of *Pearl* to control the imagery of the heavenly city in the previous chapter, St. Paul acts as a masculine force to control the spatial practices occurring within the city’s space. The Maiden’s citation of St. Paul suggests that she represents the silenced woman of patriarchal society, and she shows her silence further when the Dreamer requests access to New Jerusalem: the Dreamer pleads that she take him to her bower, and she replies, “Pou may not enter wythinne hys tor. / Bot, *of þe Lombe I haue þe aquylde* / For a sy3t therof.”⁷⁷ The Maiden explains that the Dreamer may not enter the heavenly city, but she has spoken to Christ, and *Christ* has granted him a vision of the city, implying that the Maiden has no agency or authority of her own to allow the Dreamer entrance to this space. Again, she acts as little more than a mouthpiece here to relay Christ’s allowance for the Dreamer to see the city landscape, and because of this lack of agency and authority, the Maiden represents the silenced

⁷⁴ Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics*, 16.

⁷⁵ Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender*, 14.

⁷⁶ *Pearl*, ll. 457-458, my emphasis.

⁷⁷ *Pearl*, ll. 966-968, my emphasis.

woman in a patriarchal society—that of New Jerusalem in *Pearl*—thereby gendering this space as masculine.

The Maiden's presentation here as a silenced woman and not the authority figure prescribed by the dream vision genre has tremendous implications when thinking of *Pearl* in terms of the Lollard heresy of fourteenth-century England. Whereas the Lollards believed that righteous people, male or female, could join the priesthood, orthodox Church doctrine explained that men and *only* men could join the clergy, barring women from the role entirely. St. Paul takes a very clear position on women in teaching positions: "Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man: but to be in silence."⁷⁸ The irony here is that the Maiden actually quotes St. Paul, who explains here that a woman's role should always be subordinate to men, explicitly noting that women should not take teaching roles or exercise authority over men in any way. Moreover, St. Paul demands that "women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted them to speak, but to be subject, as also the law saith. But if they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home."⁷⁹ The idea of women speaking and, especially, teaching is expressly forbidden by law, St. Paul details, and, moreover, women shouldn't do so in public. As I argued in the last chapter, the city streets of New Jerusalem are public and masculine spaces, and the Church also functions as a public and masculine space, according to St. Paul. The silencing of the Maiden in *Pearl* is therefore an indication that women in sacred spaces should also be silenced, suggesting that *Pearl* reinforces orthodox Church doctrine to defend against the Lollards' views on female priests.

⁷⁸ 1 Timothy 2: 11-12, *Latin Vulgate Bible*, <http://drbo.org>.

⁷⁹ 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, *Latin Vulgate Bible*, <http://drbo.org>.

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The spatial practices occurring within the space of *Pearl's* New Jerusalem gender the heavenly city as definitively masculine, and this masculine construction of the space reflects back to the space of the pre-Reformation Church in fourteenth-century England to oppose the Lollard heresy's contention that both men and women could be priests. By presenting Christ's bleeding side wound as a form of masculine control over the brides of Christ, the poet is specifically marking this space as one meant for the subordination of women. Moreover, the internalization of masculine controls in the brides and the strict regulation of their mobility in the city space mark this space as masculine because of the patriarchal dominance of the heavenly city. This patriarchal social structure is compounded by the silencing of the women in New Jerusalem, showing the totality of patriarchal dominance in the city. The strict control over women in the space of the heavenly city is echoed in the space of the Church, barring women from joining the all-male priesthood and thereby demonstrating opposition to the Lollard heresy.

CONCLUSION

Pearl's New Jerusalem is definitively gendered masculine, not feminine, and this masculine construction of the city space points to the Lollard heresy of fourteenth-century England. The city's representation of space allows a medieval reader to visualize this space as masculine: the skyline of the city is dominated by a phallic tower, and the entire city is constructed to evoke the image of a medieval castle, a site of masculine military prowess. The spatial practices happening within the city space also gender this space as masculine, not feminine, due to the control exerted by Christ and the other men of New Jerusalem—a control that specifically targets women. The gendering of this space would have been apparent to a medieval audience: the heavenly city is a masculine community—a space that doesn't allow for any feminine weakness.

That being said, I believe this points to the Lollard heresy to reinforce Church doctrines. Lollardy represents the first homegrown heretical movement in England, and this posed a significant threat to the medieval Church as both a political and religious entity. The control of the Church over the English population would have likely wavered had the Lollards been able to spread their supposed reforms to Church doctrine, such as translating the Bible into English vernacular or their restructuring of the clergy. According to the Lollards, the clergy needed restructuring in the Church, and their rethinking of the priest's role would allow both men and women to become members of the clergy. *Pearl's* masculine construction of the heavenly city acts as a reinforcement of

Church doctrine against this concept. The Church allowed men and only men to fulfill the priest's duties, since femininity is considered weak in the medieval frame of gender, and by presenting *Pearl's* heavenly city as a masculine space, it reinforces the idea that New Jerusalem is a masculine space—a space that shows no room for the supposed weakness of femininity. This implies that the medieval Church is also a space meant for masculine control. My research connecting *Pearl's* masculine city space to the threat of the Lollard heresy in fourteenth-century England marks a significant contribution to *Pearl* studies, I believe, since I've come across no such conclusion in my research of *Pearl*.

Moreover, my thesis is important to the field because it fills large gaps in scholarship in terms of gender and space. While gender theory *has* been applied to *Pearl* in a handful of studies, the bulk of these projects focus their attention on the Maiden and her femininity, whereas very little has been said about the Dreamer's masculinity—or masculinity, in general. My project takes up this analysis of masculinity while simultaneously adding the component of space. The spatial theory that has been previously applied to *Pearl* rests almost solely on the shoulders of Sarah Stanbury, implying that spatial studies of this text are few and far between. The idea of coupling gender theory with spatial theory and applying them to *Pearl* begins and ends with Stanbury's "The Body and the City in *Pearl*," showing how little attention has been given to the gendering of the spaces involved in this Middle English dream vision. My project therefore fills a significant gap in scholarship by analyzing *Pearl* through a seldom-used lens while at the same time providing an opposing view to the lone piece of criticism that utilizes that lens.

The future of this project is rife with research opportunities in terms of applying both gender theory and spatial theory to *Pearl*. Again, *Pearl* has been studied primarily in terms of the Maiden and her femininity, and I find there are several avenues to study in terms of masculine readings of the poem, such as a more in-depth study of the Dreamer's masculinization throughout the dream vision and how he takes that newly-learned masculinity into the waking world when the dream vision terminates. By pairing gender theory and spatial theory again, the spaces of the poem are still problematized: I have argued here that the space of the city is gendered masculine, but I also believe that the garden space outside the city's walls could also be considered masculine space, which seems contradictory to the medieval garden's typical gendering as feminine. We could even go so far as to gender the space of the entire dream vision as masculine space and the space of the waking world as feminine, but this would be a far longer analysis than I have provided here.

These ideas of gender and space can and should be further applied to other Middle English dream visions—or perhaps other examples of medieval literature, in general. The gender of a space's inhabitants can influence that space's gender, and the gender of a space can also influence the inhabitants of a space. This reflexive relationship between gender and space could therefore inform countless pieces of medieval literature, and, furthermore, give us a deeper understanding of how social space was utilized in the Middle Ages. Certain spaces in medieval buildings were reserved only for women or only for men, and it would be an interesting project to analyze more medieval literature in terms of gendered space to add another layer of complexity to the already-complex understanding of medieval gender construction.

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