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Picturing Narrative Voice
Communication and Displacement

This chapter shakes up critical understanding of narrative voice in text and image of Machaut's *dits*. It perceives narratorial activity as a function that, far from being proper to one party ("the narrator"), is inherently mobile, circulating around elements of a poem or miniature, whether human characters, animals or landscape features. Miniatures devised for the *jugement* poems are a particularly rich resource for analyzing this mobility being exploited by artists to draw attention to issues of narrative framing, communication and point of view – including, crucially, the point of view of the manuscript's reader/viewer.

> Au duc qu'ele encontra a dit
> Ce qu'ele a oï et veü
>
> Bumping into the duke, she told him
> what she had heard and seen
>
> (*Chastelaine*, lines 907–08)

Towards the end of the thirteenth-century courtly narrative poem *La Chastelaine de Vergy*, a young girl ("une puceleite," line 732) unwittingly eavesdrops on the deaths of the eponymous chatelaine and her lover: she overhears the lament of her lady, who mistakenly believes herself to have been betrayed, before witnessing her collapse and his grief-stricken suicide, and relaying these tragic events to the duke of Burgundy, the chatelaine's uncle. The *Chastelaine* has long been recognized as a tale in which acts of telling are of key dramatic and thematic importance (De Looze), mobilizing characters as so-called secondary narrators in a drama of communication: they see ("vi") and then speak ("dit"), to borrow Gérard Genette's formulation of narrative activity in terms of "qui voit" and "qui parle" (Genette 203). Of equal importance, though, is the question "qui écoute?" ("oi"). Listening is the founding act for framing a witness account and thereby defining a narrative voice, un-

derstanding "narrator" as the agency that frames point of view (visual or otherwise) on events. In the *Chastelaine* and elsewhere, this act has ramifications on all narrative levels, including, in an oral tale-telling culture, implication of the extratextual audience. The activity of narratorial framing circulates, a mobility evoked in Genette's specification that his terminologies of "niveaux narratifs" ("narrative levels") "désignent non des êtres, mais des situations relatives et des fonctions" ("designate not beings, but relative situations and functions" 239). Such functions, I extrapolate, are not confined to human beings, but may be exercised by other components in a tale, such as, in the *Chastelaine*, the lady's little dog, who is the only witness to the lovers' encounters. A poem telling a story from different points of view can become a poem telling a story *about* point of view.

Late-medievalists are very familiar with poets' sophisticated elaborations of multi-levelled narratorial activity through frameworks, embedded dialogue, or practices of continuation and citation: from the *Roman de la Rose* to the *querelle de "La Belle Dame sans Mercy,"* via Guillaume de Machaut's *jugement* poems and Jean Froissart's *dits*. There is still, however, a tendency to reify "the narrator" as a single being, to treat her/him as rooted in a single human consciousness. In the case of Machaut, even whilst attending to the multifarious roles enacted by his narrating *je* (as secretary, eavesdropper, guide, lyric poet, lover . . .), we tend still, at base, to posit the narrator as a kind of textual anchor, whence such statements as the narrator is X or Y. However, a narrating *je* isn't a state of being, so much as a doing; constructed, not preformed—an "I in formation" (Swift). Temptation to conceive of narrative voice as a specifically embodied, singularly coherent identity arises especially when we consider manuscript miniatures' visualizations of narratorial activity. For Machaut, we speak of the narrator when considering illustrations of his human body, such as in the opening half-page images heading up the first four *dits* in Paris, BnF, fr. 1586 (Leo 89). I propose a different approach that, put simply, argues for the narratorial role as a mobile entity, displacing attention from a fixed "narrator" (or even from any human body), and drawing attention to artists' interests in questions of communication and point of view which also engage the miniature's viewer as a further party in the multileveled development of narrative activity.

I begin with two spectacular, apparently contrasting examples of illustrators' amplification of issues of narratorial perspective raised by a poem's text. In the first stanza of Vaillant's *Le Debat des deux seurs* (c.

1450–70), a first-person character skulks in the shadows to eavesdrop undetected on two sisters' conversation:

> Hier, alors que chascun se part
> D'une feste pour se coucher,
> Pres de ma chambre ung pou a part
> Ouÿ deux seurs d'Amours toucher.
> Si m'en pris lors a approucher
> Sans avoir torches ne chandelles,
> Pour mieulx leur savoir reproucher
> Au lendemain tout le chant d'elles.
>
> Yesterday, when everyone was leaving the party to go to bed, I heard two sisters talking about love, on their own, near my bedroom. So I set about moving closer, without either torch or candle, in order to be better equipped to rib them the following day about their conversation. (*Debat,* lines 1–8)

The poem's opening (and only) miniature in Paris, BnF, fr. 2230[1] multiplies acts of visual and aural witness, complicating point of view and ultimately problematizing the text's assertion of the persona's narrative control over communication of the ladies' discourse.[2] An additional eavesdropper figure is inserted back right, spying on the spy who is, here, both hearing and seeing the conversation; but we as the image's viewer also see him seeing, mirroring the inserted spy—this questions the legitimacy of our access to "le chant d'elles," but a further visual device of the cut-away wall grants us direct audience, not just reception mediated by the persona. His discursive management of proceedings is less secure as a result of pictorial pluralization of point of view.

Contrary to the several bodies listening, seeing, and speaking ("qui écoute, qui voit, qui parle") in the *Debat* illustration, we encounter, in the opening miniature accompanying Machaut's *Dit dou lyon* in BnF fr. 1586 (f. 103r),[3] no human figure. This provokes, as Domenic Leo has shown, a rupture in the flow of visual narrative in the manuscript, given that the previous four *dits* each begin with a miniature featuring an individual identifiable with their first-person persona (Leo 137–50). There is no "mediating persona" to guide our audience relationship with the scene (Huot 277; Leo 142); or, at least, no human character, since there are a number of animals;[4] or, at least, no visible human character, since there are landscape and architectural features (shrubberies and a windowed castle) which may contain someone here concealed from our sight.[5] Disorientated, we work through this deliberate "visual

dilemma" (Leo 150) to question both our relationship with the poem/image's narration and the nature of narrative voice itself: its essential organizing role in determining point of view (even if multiple). The text's opening has been called a "disembodied . . . evocation of springtime" (Brownlee 172), but does not, in fact, lack a governing subjectivity: whilst the landscape described lacks human occupation, the description's determining viewpoint is established as *je* as early as line 6: "Car maint aimment – et j'aussi l'aim – / Trop plus le printemps que l'iver" ("Since many people – I included – / like spring far more than winter"; *Dit dou lyon*, lines 6–7). Do we, as viewers without the image, align our perspective with this commenting-I rather than any experiencing-I within the diegesis, meaning that we are sharing (creating?) narratorial viewpoint rather than trying, *Where's Waldo?*-like, to search out a narrator figure within the garden?[6] Whilst ostensibly different, both above images forcibly displace viewer interest in narration away from a single figure (through multiplication or apparent omission) and onto relations between elements in the pictorial situation (both within and without the image). In neither case does it make sense to ask "who is the narrator?"; we interrogate instead how point of view is being structured and how the narrating role is being effected.

The rest of this paper will concentrate on Machaut, partly owing to the richness of his illuminated textual tradition, but also given the challenge posed to my model of a "mobile narratorial role" by the edifice of Guillaume-narrator as a persona whose visual presentation is still most often caught up with notions of authorial presence.[7] I aim both to refresh our approach to narrative voice in single-author manuscripts, and to demonstrate this play with mobility operating in multi-author anthologies. My primary focus will be *Le Jugement dou roy de Behaigne* (pre-1346), Machaut's most popular narrative work (Earp 207). In the poem, a first-person persona overhears a Knight and Lady debating which of them suffers the greater grief for loss of love; he presents their case before the King of Bohemia whose court adjudicates in favour of the Knight. Two particular features make it a fruitful case study: first, the manner in which its plot hinges on acts of witness and framing: listening, telling, and retelling; second, the impact of its intertextual and codicological relationships with two other Machaut poems—the *Jugement de Navarre contre le jugement de Behaigne* (1349) and the *Lay de plour* ("Qui bien aimme")—on the status of the first-person persona, whose narratorial commentary choreographs and book-ends the *Jugement de Behaigne*. The *Jugement de Navarre* is cast as a response overturning the *Jugement de Behaigne*'s verdict and putting the

poet Machaut on trial for having authored a poem against women's cause;[8] the *Lay de plour* is commissioned in the *Jugement de Navarre*'s diegesis as Machaut's partial "amende" ("amending," line 4210) for the alleged antifeminism of the *Jugement de Behaigne*, though its actual composition may predate both *jugement* poems (Earp 187, 365–66). It could seem that the continuity between the *Jugement de Behaigne* and the *Jugement de Navarre* solders together Guillaume-persona and Machaut-poet, thereby fixing narrative voice monolithically. However, the material record offers a more varied, imaginative and flexible approach to the poems' interrelation. Interestingly, whilst modern critics may get more excited by the *Jugement de Navarre* for its metafictionality, manuscript illustrators generally seem to have found the possibilities for configuring communication between characters in the *Jugement de Behaigne* more inspiring of pictorial invention.[9] In Paris, BnF, fr. 22545, whose title rubric introduces the *Jugement de Navarre* explicitly as "contre" ("against," f. 19v) the previous *jugement*, whilst the *Jugement de Behaigne*'s first, two-column image (f. 9v)[10] engineers an intricate visual dialogue between persona, characters and landscape features, the *Jugement de Navarre*'s (f. 19v)[11] features only a clerkly figure (attired as on f. 9v) standing at the foot of a bed. A similar sense of paring down is shared by Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Ferrell 1 (f. 60v), where the *Jugement de Navarre* persona appears without any scenic support, as opposed to sitting looking up at birds in a tree in the *Jugement de Behaigne* (f. 47v), and by Paris, BnF, fr. 9221, where the *Jugement de Navarre*'s persona is seated indoors at a lectern (45r)[12] rather than lying outdoors in a thicket alongside other interacting characters (37r),[13] casting the clerkly *je* as a bookish figure detached from diegetic action rather than a skulking meddler.[14]

Comparison of the openings of the *Jugement de Behaigne* and the *Jugement de Navarre* in two other manuscripts (Paris, BnF, fr. 1584 and 1587) in which the poems follow one another directly starts to loosen up our conception of narrative voice. In BnF fr. 1584, pictorial interrelations are contrived between the initial, identically positioned miniatures of its first three *dits* (the *Dit dou Vergier*, *Jugement de Behaigne*, and *Jugement de Navarre*). The *Jugement de Behaigne* opens, not with a configuration of several characters, but with a singer and a single listener: the persona attends to the sweet song of one bird (f. 9v),[15] precisely as described in the poem (lines 28–29). There is graphic continuity with the *Dit dou vergier*, most obviously the garden setting, as the persona moves from outside an enclosure (f. 1r)[16] to within its walls (f. 9v). It may also anticipate the *Jugement de Navarre*: on folio 22v,[17] the persona is simi-

larly enclosed, but here within his tower-chamber; on the one hand, in the context of the *Jugement de Navarre*, looking at the plague-stricken land, but in addition, looking back in the direction of the *Jugement de Behaigne,* and also up at a Cupid figure perched in the margin, recalling the *Jugement de Behaigne* persona's service of Love. This intervisual sequence exhibits a certain porousness of narrative voice defined mutually, collectively almost, rather than as singular points of view listening, seeing, and speaking. Narratorial continuity is also fostered paratextually in BnF fr. 1587, here by way of scribal notation. The *Jugement de Behaigne* opens: "Ci commence le jugement du roy de behanie comme l'acteur est en .i. jardin et d'une autre part .i. chevalier, et d'autre une dame et une pucelle et .i. petit chien" ("Here begins the *Judgment of the King of Bohemia*: how the persona is in a garden, with, on one side, a knight, and, on another, a lady and a girl and a little dog," f. 58v).[18] At the transition to the *Jugement de Navarre*, there is no title heading or inserted space; its opening is signaled simply as a fresh wave of activity by the persona: "Comment l'acteur se meict a merencolier pour le temps qui se change" ("How the persona becomes melancholy on account of the changing times/season," f. 74v),[19] which one may understand as the *Jugement de Navarre* persona's lament of contemporary troubles in 1349 ("changing times") and/or as an indication of chronological progression ("changing season") from the *Jugement de Behaigne*'s springtime "au temps pascour ou toute riens s'esgaie" ("in the Easter season, when every creature takes heart," line 1)[20] to the *Jugement de Navarre*'s autumnal setting "au departir dou bel esté" ("at the passing of a beautiful summer," line 1). A scribal error in BnF fr. 1587 extends narrative voice intertextually, as all rubrication identifying author name mentions "Guillaume de Loris," which Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet sees to indicate perception of the Machaut poem—and, I would add, its functioning of narrative voice—lying "dans la tradition du *Roman de la rose*" ("in the tradition of the *Romance of the Rose*"; "*Un engin*" 127).

Two further cases of interconnection, in manuscripts featuring only the *Jugement de Behaigne* and the *Lay de plour*, foster a sense of spread subjectivity and interacting point of view. In Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 5203, the *Lay de plour* follows directly the *Jugement de Behaigne* and opens with a striking miniature (f. 45r)[21] showing a black-hooded figure beside a coffin, which illustrates the *Lay de plour*'s scenario of mourning as voiced by its female speaker:

> Dous ami, seur ton sarcueil
> Sont mi plaint
> Et mi complaint.

> Sweet lover, on your bier
> lie my laments,
> and all my weeping. (*Lay de plour*, lines 129–31)

Juxtaposition of the two poems generates interesting intersections of narrative voice. First, one could see a merging across genders of heartache rhetoric, with the plangent complaint of the persona (as unrequited lover) at the end of the *Jugement de Behaigne* (f. 44v) bleeding into the opening lament of the *Lay de plour* (before we reach the specified scenario of mourning). Second, whilst the *Jugement de Navarre* is missing from Arsenal 5203,[22] one could see the *Lay de plour* lady's discourse on its own to refute the Bohemia court's verdict: she revalidates the *Jugement de Behaigne* lady's assertion of mourning as the greater grief—"qui bien aimme tart oublie" ("whoever loves well forgets slowly," line 1)—affirming the rightness—"einsi le convient" ("it must be so," line 179)—of recollection perpetuating memory ("le bon recort," line 95), and counters thereby the *Jugement de Behaigne* courtiers' responses that she should forget and love another. Slippery interaction between characters and persona is also discernible in BnF fr. 1586, in which the *Lay de plour* features separately from the *Jugement de Behaigne*, in the *lai* section of the manuscript, accompanied by a miniature showing a man and woman conversing (f. 187r).[23] Sylvia Huot has considered some potential resonances of this illustrated dialogue and between whom it may be understood to take place (Huot 265–66). Additionally, if it is informed by knowledge of the *Jugement de Navarre*,[24] could we see it depicting a man representing the personae of the *Jugement de Behaigne* and the *Jugement de Navarre* issuing an apology to the *Jugement de Behaigne* Lady, before Machaut ventriloquizes the *Lay de plour* lady's voice in the lyric that follows? Alternatively, the image may body forth the discursive situation of the *Lay de plour* itself, wherein the lady apostrophizes her deceased lover, imagines his appearance in her mind's eye—"Et vis a vis / Te voy, ce m'est vis" ("And I see you / Face to face, so I think," lines 180–81)—and finally exhorts God "qu'en livre soiens de vie" ("that in a book we'll find life," line 210). The *Lay de plour*'s miniature thus materially gives life to the couple within the "livre" that is BnF fr. 1586.

Intervisuality plays a significant role in the framing of events and communication between figures in miniatures heading up the *Jugement de Behaigne* and Jehan Acart de Hesdin's *Prise amoureuse* (1322) when they appear juxtaposed in Arras, Bibliothèque municipale, 897, a fourteenth-century anthology that opens with the *Roman de la Rose*. The images' artistic execution is not refined, but a carefully defined point of

view (both visual and ideological) is established, centering on questions of narrative voice. The *Prise* allegorizes through a sustained hunting metaphor the process of falling in love: a persona, initially hidden in a bush, sees the god of Love out hunting in the Bois de Jeunesse (Wood of Youth) with a pack of dogs (representing his lady's virtues) which savagely attack him. Beyond the obvious situational echo of eavesdropping and a common thematic of amorous misadventure, there are lexical and narrative parallels between the *Prise* and the *Jugement de Behaigne*. The opening of the *Prise*'s narrative proper both recalls Guillaume de Lorris's *Rose* and anticipates (chronologically and in terms of position in the manuscript) the opening of the *Jugement de Behaigne*: "En avril, en la saison gaie, / El temps que toute rien s'esgaie" ("In April, in the merry season, at the time when every creature takes heart," *Prise*, lines 78–79). In both *dits*, there is slippage between narrative levels in the portrayal of the persona, as "he" shifts between his role as diegetic protagonist and retrospective narrator. In the former capacity, his authority is constrained: in the *Jugement de Behaigne*, his influence over proceedings terminates on arrival at the King's castle; in the *Prise*, his body disintegrates as he is mauled to death (but does not die). Both presentations of diminished status are misleading, however, in that the persona's role as poet ultimately reasserts its governance of events *as text*: the *Jugement de Behaigne*'s persona peremptorily breaks off to compose other verse—"Car autre part assez a rimer ay" ("I have yet another part to rhyme", line 2054)—while the *Prise*'s account of the persona's corporeal destruction by his lady simultaneously composes her body through description and constructs the lyric vehicle by which he aims to seduce her; as Nadine Bordessoule remarks: "de proie devient chasseur . . . dépouillé de son être physique, [il] accède à son être poétique" ("from being the prey he becomes the hunter . . . dispossessed of his physical being, [he] gains access to his poetic being," 7, 10). The miniatures evoke this "problématique de la parole et du corps" ("problem of the word and the body," 9): each persona protagonist appears physically disadvantaged and excluded: trapped behind bar-like shrubbery and diminished in size in relation to other characters (*Prise*, f. 141v),[25] and maximally (implausibly) distanced from the encounter that he should overhear (*Jugement de Behaigne*, f. 152v),[26] body partially concealed and turned away from other characters. There is irony in both portrayals that we as viewers deduce by relating image to text and ascertaining a triumph of poetic witness: the superiority of *parole* over *corps*. Visual intersection between the two images is highlighted not only by parallel positioning on the page and use of the same red border, but also by the

duplicated female figures in the *Prise*: in the poem, the hounds represent the qualities of a single lady "par cui chiens la prise fu faite" ("by whose dogs the catch was accomplished," line 1867); in the miniature, "she" is spread across two women (and, indeed, across the animals, as one dog bears a female face). This creates a pictorial, formal link with the *Jugement de Behaigne*'s two females (the Lady and her maid), connected stylistically by the repetition of dress color.

In *Jugement de Behaigne* illustrations in single-author manuscripts, we find similar pictorial games at play, with attention to relations between narrative control and bodily presence (BnF fr. 1584; Morgan M.396; Arsenal 5203), and emphasis on spatial positioning of characters to elaborate the slipperiness of the narratorial role (BnF fr. 1586). I use the term *play* advisedly: in a postmodernist sense of play jamming conceptual machinery that we might otherwise use to distinguish a discrete "narrator," as well as a more general, ludic aspect. Both are evident in the visual jokes around *corps* vs. *parole*—or, I would add, *oreille* (ear)—created by miniatures in BnF fr. 1584; Morgan M.396; and Arsenal 5203, which show the persona at his most corporeally reduced in their rendering of his textual self-presentation: "Lors me boutay par dedens la fueillie / Si embrunchiez qu'il ne me virent mie" ("Then I pushed myself inside the leaves, / So hidden I was that they could not see me at all," *Jugement de Behaigne*, lines 54–55). He appears as a small face set in a profusely leaved, exaggeratedly large bush/hedge (Arsenal 5203, f. 30v);[27] as head and neck only protruding from the shrubbery (Morgan M.396, f. 11v); and with head and shoulders barely visible, crouched low to the ground, blended in maximally with the surrounding foliage through dexterous use of grisaille (BnF fr. 1584, f. 9v).[28] There is an irony in each image, revealing, instead of diminished status, the centrality of the role of hearing and speaking as vital spokes in the tale's telling—to the King and to the text's audience. "Qui écoute, qui parle, qui voit" ("Listening, speaking, seeing") only require, after all, selected body parts: ears, eyes, and mouth. In addition, there are (at least) two different points of view on the persona enabled by a manuscript miniature: that/those of other characters within the image, and that of the page's viewers. Drawing on the quotation above (lines 54–55), whilst the persona remains wholly hidden from characters ("il" being the Knight and Lady, as well as her maid and dog), we still see him and thereby appreciate the playful effect of his (concealed) presence. On BnF fr. 1584, f. 9v, the importance of his narrative role—his true stature in the tale rather than the image of his constricted circumstances—is evoked by having all four other figures face towards the persona, effec-

tively addressing him before they have been made aware of his existence (by his emergence from the bush), thereby conflating two stages of the narrative. There are, in fact, two miniatures on f. 9v, and parallelism in character placement and angle of inclination foregrounds the act of listening: in the first, the persona focuses on birdsong;[29] in the second, he attends to the discourse he overhears, to which end only his head is needed.[30] The clerkly witness is, to quote Cerquiglini-Toulet, "le maître du point de vue" ("the master of point of view"; "L'Écriture" 30), and it will be to his role as "maître de l'écriture" ("master of writing") that the other characters—including the Knight, for all his fine attire, noble bearing, and abundant speech—will be subject.[31]

Visual conflation of narrative episodes also affects perception of authority on Arsenal 5203, f. 30v: the bush-disguised persona is "erroneously" pictured in the presence of the King of Bohemia, looking at him from behind the other characters who are similarly orientated towards their diegetic judge. This fusion of distinct moments has potentially interesting consequences for our understanding of narrative voice as a mobile, flexible entity. On the one hand, the visual conjunction of persona and King could be seen to gesture extratextually to Machaut's actual relationship with John of Luxembourg that subtends the poem. On the other, the eavesdropper role in which he is shown could remind us that, narratologically, we need a witness to recount the scene at court, even when the persona himself is no longer in attendance (having, we deduce, been held at the entrance when the Knight and Lady were escorted inside), and the poem furnishes a candidate onto whom this role can be passed in sort of narrative relay—a clerk whom the persona sees across the room: "Et ot .i. clerc que nommer ne saroie / Qui li lisoit la bataille de Troie" ("And some clerk whom I cannot name / Was reading him the battle of Troy" (*Jugement de Behaigne*, lines 1474–75).

The apparent nonchalance with which he admits not to know the other fellow's name is surely provocative in the context of self-naming in Machaut's work, where anagrams, including in the *Jugement de Behaigne*, often supply a refracted permutation of authorial identity (McGrady 19). The espied clerk could be viewed, therefore, as "another Machaut persona," but, in terms of the activity performed by the figure and the action of reading (framing a tale) that defines his role, we would more helpfully see narratorial identity here to be displaced from any individual and "spread" across the two clercs: neither is a discrete self.

The most richly developed instance of narrative voice's framing function being spread across characters arises in my final case study, BnF fr. 1586, which also brings us back to the *Chastelaine*. We have

seen, through echoes of the *Rose*, how intertextuality already situates narratorial agency in a continuity, as a plurality. In BnF fr. 1586's illustrations of the *Jugement de Behaigne*, echoes of the witness roles played by the dog and girl are brought to bear, in combination with a dexterous manipulation of spatial relations between characters, to foreground issues of communication and point of view. The dog and girl appear passingly in the text of the *Jugement de Behaigne*: the dog, toddling over to the bush, provides the pretext for the persona's emergence, in a citation of his communication function at the start of the *Chastelaine*, while the girl is mentioned only once, as attendant to the Lady, who meets the Knight unaccompanied "fors d'un chiennet et d'une pucelete" ("save for a little dog and a serving girl," line 46). Their incidental textual status is, however, belied by their prominence in illustrations of the poem: they are clearly held to be useful spatial markers for constructing communication situations. As we saw above, BnF fr. 1587 all but renders this explicit in its scene-setting rubric, which names both and specifies ("d'autre [part]") the relative positioning of characters. That they nearly always feature together in *Jugement de Behaigne* miniatures, that the dog is already a borrowed motif from the *Chastelaine*, and that the *pucelete* shares a witness function with it in that poem, suggests to me that the girl also has intertextual resonance as a narrative device in *Jugement de Behaigne* illustrations.[32] For instance, on BnF fr. 22545, f. 9v, the persona and the maid face each other as a witness frame for the Lady's and Knight's debate.

In BnF fr. 1586, the *Jugement de Behaigne*'s opening miniature (f. 1r)[33] pictures just the three principal characters, with the clerkly persona in quite an authoritative pose: eavesdropping from behind the bush, but standing, shown the same size as the nobles he overhears, and dressed in courtly garb.[34] It might come as a shock, then, that he disappears from the following four images of the debate in process (ff. 1v, 3r, 9r, 10r). Without him shown left, the Lady and the Knight look unequivocally to be addressing each other as a self-contained unit. Interestingly, whilst he is gone, the maid and dog have appeared, as if what has happened between ff. 1r and 1v[35] is that the frame of the image has "tracked" right to include what was there all along, behind the interlocutors; if that is the case, then the persona is still there "off" left, and the maid's pointing "off" right could be seen as a trigger to consider what lies outside the picture's frame, whilst she has taken over the narrative relay, as overhearer, from the persona: "the narrator," understood as a mobile role, has not disappeared at all. On folio 3r,[36] however, she is playing with the dog and so appears disengaged from the nobles' debate. I interpret

this, though, as a provocative gesture by the artist, similar to the maximally distanced persona in Arras 897: its disqualification of her from an aurally attentive role is overplayed to incite us to reflect upon narrative framing—who here has the potential to see/speak/listen? Thinking about the shifted frame between ff. 1r and 1v, one could still see the persona to be there, "off" left. Alternatively, we could see the role of witness to have been further passed on: from the persona (f. 1r) to the maid (f. 1v) to us as audience (f. 3r) following their example. In either case, the viewer is aware of a narratorial level of engagement with the action, which would be sustained into the following two miniatures (ff. 9r and 10r) showing just the Knight and the Lady in conversation.

On folio 12v,[37] they are still at it, but the persona reappears for the first time since f. 1r, and has moved: he is now right, and our view has tracked further right than before, revealing a landscape area from which he emerges. The little dog is yapping, just as in f. 1v when the maid was pointing "off" right to where we now know the persona to have been concealed. The maid has gone: the persona has visually and functionally taken her place. By f. 16r,[38] he has gone again, when the Knight and Lady are led into the castle by Honneur and Courtoisie, with Honneur performing a further narratorial function, as can be seen on ff. 17v[39] and 21r,[40] in the King of Bohemia's court: the couple kneel, with a figure standing behind them, redolent in posture of the persona on f. 1r.[41] But there is also some gesturing "off" again, as there was by the maid: on f. 17v, a courtier points "off" right; on f. 21r, a corresponding figure looks "off" in the same direction.[42] Our awareness is maintained of what is going on outside the scene: what is framing the frame and how we position ourselves as audience in relation to it. Huot remarks that BnF fr. 1586's opening *Jugement de Behaigne* miniature "announces the role that the narrator-protagonist is to play in the poem: he is the witness through whose eyes we see the events of the narrative" (Huot 244). Studying f. 1r, however, in relation to the distribution amongst other figures of the narratorial role on subsequent folios, reveals that whilst there *is* a witness eye-view, it is not tied to any one identity, but circulates, is constituted collectively as an amalgam of character components, exceeding the boundaries of any single body.

As we discovered with the *Dit dou lyon* in BnF fr. 1586, and as we have seen throughout regarding dogs and bushes, the character components of narrative voice need not be human; deployment of landscape features as framing devices often relates to the extratextual viewer's implication in matters of point of view, and the absence of a human subject from illustrations of poems narrated by quite pungent personae may be

construed as a provocative gesture, inviting audience reflection on point of view. On BnF fr. 22545, f. 9v,[43] the framing effected by spatial arrangement of human figures is complemented by the positioning of birds and trees: each character stands in front of a bird-topped tree/thicket, with one "spare" at far left, perhaps to denote where we, as audience, the remaining human actor, should be inserting ourselves within the picture's frame, mirroring the position of the persona whose knowledge of the poem's debate structure we share. On Morgan M.396, f. 11r, the *Jugement de Behaigne* opens with an aerial view of a walled garden traversed by a stream running towards a castle; there is no visible human (or animal) occupation. What understanding of point of view do we apply to the miniature? Are we being called to bring our intertextual knowledge to bear, with the landscape components of the image recalling the scenario of the *Rose*? Should we consider the manuscript's opening miniatures in a continuous, intervisual sequence, since at the start of the previous poem in the Morgan manuscript, the *Dit dou vergier* (f. 3r), we have a profile view of a persona at the gate of a walled garden? Or is f. 11r functioning as an "establishing shot" for the action to follow in the *Jugement de Behaigne*, since subsequent miniatures trace a gradually visible persona, partially concealed in a bush (f. 11v) before standing erect, emerged, and speaking (ff. 17v, 19v)?

Whilst the *Jugement de Behaigne*, given its prominent dramatization and thematization of acts of listening and telling, is especially apt to be visualized in ways that provoke reflection on questions of witness, framing, and point of view, and how these narratorial acts are not fixed in an individual figure of "the narrator," this reflection itself is by no means unique to this poem or to Machaut, as our later illustration of Vaillant indicated, taken from an anthology of *dits* which includes the *Jugement de Behaigne* (ff. 27v–61r) together with poems by Alain Chartier and other contributions to the *querelle de "La Belle Dame sans Mercy."* Late-medieval *dits* as a genre inscribe at least one first-person narrating figure bearing witness (to the story of others or of her/himself) and feature a great number and variety of speech situations that must be framed in order to be relayed (Cayley 28–31). To facilitate wider application of this approach to narrative voice, one might conceptualize it in relation to existing theoretical discourses. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has fruitfully considered how many genres of early medieval literature furnish examples of bodies—albeit not specifically of narrator figures—that do not "respect the boundaries that are supposed to limit their form and to emplace agency within a controlling and singular subjectivity" (Cohen xviii). As Cohen points out, the notion of an unbounded bodily identity

chimes in with contemporary cybernetics and its theorizing of the posthuman, a perspective on identity that, according to N. Katherine Hayles, posits a collectivity of agents operating together such that the "subject is an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" (*How We Became* 3). Subjectivity, in this model, is emergent and constructed; cognition is distributed across its component parts.[44] Alongside Hayles's digital model, Rosi Braidotti has articulated a "critical posthumanism" (49) that is particularly concerned with the relationship between posthumanism and subjectivity, cultivating an affirmative vision of a non-unitary, nomadic subject located "in the flow of relations with multiple others" (50), including the nonhuman (190–94). Hayles's and Braidotti's descriptions of a posthuman subject help us to formulate ways in which we have seen, in text and image, narratorial point of view spread across characters through how the figures in each miniature are configured, in relation to each other and their environment. Cohen's, Hayles's, and Braidotti's views, alongside others'—such as Spearing's insistence on medieval texts' subjectivity being "broadly and variously diffused" (*Medieval Autographies* 5), constructed through deixis that does not refer back to, is not anchored in, a pragmatic center of single human consciousness—can be useful for re-setting our critical frame when approaching acts of listening and telling in late-medieval *dits*. With specific regard to narratorial point of view, I propose my own metaphor: narrative voice operates like a wire brush to tousle the texture of narrative rather than smooth it over. It scuffs up the surface and opens seams, both textually and materially. It thereby draws attention to how a given scene is framed, competing points of view (and attendant ideological charge), and the structures of narrative agency relaying information. What it comprises may be a human body (or part thereof), or equally, a topographical feature (shrubbery, bird, castle . . .). It exists not as a singular entity, but one that communicates with and is defined relationally to other figures, both within a given work and without (intertextually, intervisually, in relation to the viewer). It focuses attention less on itself as subject, and more on forms of interaction it is set up to explore: it concerns "situations" and "functions," to re-quote Genette; *doing* rather than *being*. Is it, then, classifiable as a voice, or as a point of view? Paul Ricoeur comments: "Le point de vue répond à la question: *d'où* perçoit-on ce qui est montré par le fait d'être raconté? donc: d'où parle-t-on? La voix répond à la question: *qui* parle ici?" ("Point of view responds to the question: *from where* does one perceive what is shown by being recounted? And so: from where does one speak? Voice responds to the question: *who* is speaking here?" 2: 148).

The mobility of narratorial function in images is more a question of *where* than of *who* (or, indeed, *what*), not least because the act of speaking is less at issue (the girl, dog, and landscape features do not talk), and because our focus is on the spatialization of character relations. Within texts, we are dealing with speaking subjects (the persona, the lady of the *Lay de plour*, etc.), but I would be hesitant to swing wholly towards *qui*, precisely since we should avoid conceiving of the anchoring of narrator-hood in a fixed, individual entity. The question of *where* permits a spreading and pluralizing of our understanding of *who*. My title offers displacement as a helpful notion for diverting our attention away from "the narrator" as a single identity, and for conceiving of the role as inherently mobile. In the latter application, it could appear a problematic term, since the very prefix *dis-* evokes movement away from or out of an established place, an unseating, whereas my understanding is of narrative voice as positional in a portable sense, having no fixed location. In that sense, *dis-* has less a directional meaning: "apart, away" (e.g., disembark), and more a privative purport, "not, lack of" (e.g. disingenuous). There is no proper place, except insofar as this position marks an intersection of vantage points, acting as the wire brush to make the narrative properly bristle.

Notes

1. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84511129/f432.

2. In Paris, BnF, fr. 2230, the poem carries its alternative title *L'Embusche Vaillant* ("Vaillant's Ambush"), which throws attention onto the act of witness rather than the encounter being overheard.

3. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f212.

4. Note that in the plot of the *Dit dou lyon*, a lion, a non-human agent, serves as guide to the persona.

5. Indeed, Avril (90) proposes that this miniature "may be one of the oldest independent landscapes in European painting."

6. Cf. Leo 142, 150.

7. I resist using *narrator* as a default term for the first-person persona in order to support this paper's aim of shaking up our understanding of the narrating role as something that can circulate in late-medieval *dits*, underscoring its status as a mobile function not reserved for a specific character (whether the first-person persona or anyone else). For a broader interrogation of "the narrator theory of narration", see Spearing, "What is a Narrator?".

8. R. Barton Palmer contends that the *Jugement de Navarre* is not properly a "sequel" to the *Jugement de Behaigne* ("Metafictional Machaut" 83; "Transtextuality" 300).

9. Nearly all manuscripts featuring illustrations for both poems accord a greater number of scenes to the former.

10. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60007997/f26. For the composition of this image, see below, p. 40.

11. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60007997/f46.

12. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000795k/f113.

13. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000795k/f97.

14. One might see this as an inevitable consequence of differences in plot circumstance: the bush-concealed debate witness vs. the confined individual in retreat from the plague, but both poems' personae start off solitary, with interaction following later (albeit more imminently in the *Jugement de Behaigne*, whereas the *Jugement de Navarre* has its extended opening melancholic reflection).

15. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f40.

16. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f23.

17. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f66.

18. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8451101h/f124.

19. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8451101h/f156.

20. Echoing *Le Roman de la Rose*, line 49.

21. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b550058905/f95.

22. For the political circumstances of this omission, see Earp 99.

23. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f380.

24. For chronological factors affecting this, see Earp 210; Huot 247.

25. http://romandelarose.org/#read;Arras897.141v.

26. http://romandelarose.org/#read;Arras897.152v. This image was originally drafted as two separate frames, which would have detached the persona even further from the debate.

27. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b550058905/f66.

28. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490444/f40.

29. See above, p. 32.

30. Cf. Cerquiglini-Toulet's discussion of how a clerk's apparent inferiority (shown iconographically through his being seen in profile, or through textual motifs of physical infirmity) "énonce en fait doublement. Il dit l'humilité du témoin, du serviteur, mais dans le même mouvement l'orgueil du juge, du créateur" ("carries a double meaning. It bespeaks the humility of the witness, the servant, but in the same gesture the pride of the judge, the creator," "L'Écriture" 31).

31. The remaining two images for the *Jugement de Behaigne* in BnF fr. 1584 (ff. 16v, 18v) show the Knight in full flow before the King; he talks at length, but his speech will not have the last word: the persona is absent, as he did not enter castle, but the role in which he was set up by the opening pair on f. 9v arguably "compensates" for this, such that the narrative agency that he represents underpins the whole tale.

32. The *Chastelaine* is mentioned in the *Jugement de Navarre*'s debate (lines 2836–40) to illustrate exemplary devotion in love.

33. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f7.

34. For the persona's varying costume (courtly or clerkly) across single-author manuscripts, see Leo 95–109.

35. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f8.

36. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f11.

37. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f30.

38. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f38.

39. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f41.

40. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q/f48.

41. Earp (150) states that this figure in 17v and 21r is the persona; Leo (103) asserts that the persona wears a short beard throughout BnF fr. 1586, which would disqualify this figure from being him.

42. Is this a re-integrated persona, further pluralising narratorial voice? He is bearded and costumed quite like him (see above, notes 34, 41).

43. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60007997/f26.

44. Hayles provides a response essay on the subject to the first issue of *Postmedieval*, in which she identifies, based on the volume's essays, particular pertinence to medieval studies of issues of futurity, nonhuman others, and distributed cognition.

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