CHAPTER FOUR

"Present en sa personne"

Identity and Celebrity in Fifteenth-Century Franco-Burgundian Literature

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Remaniement—the practice of creative response to and reworking of existing works—is a staple feature of late medieval French literary culture, especially in relation to the thirteenth-century bestseller *Le Roman de la Rose*, extant in over 300 manuscripts and several incunables and early print editions.[1] In the fifteenth century, respondents took to tackling not only the text, but also its author. Late medieval writers dramatized in their works' imaginative fictions an embodied and personalized engagement with their vernacular heritage. Such animated genealogizing sometimes resurrected authors such as Jean de Meun or Boccaccio in "talking head" conversation, whether to invoke their authority or to call them to account. At other times, it commemorated them through first-person epitaphs in a cemetery fiction, making them live on through posthumous impersonation. It also fostered intertextually dense quarrels, launching the literary career of the Belle Dame sans merci. What emerges from these works' preoccupations with authority, lineage, and legacy is an increasing sense of celebrity identity, together with an interrogation of the nature of fame.

Concern with the *person* of an author rather than simply their *position* as an *auctoritas* affected in particular contemporary medieval writers (whether French or Italian) against a backdrop of the increasing literary treatment of fame as earthly renown, the increasingly publicly engaged role of writers,[2] and the significant developments in the processes of book production that shaped relations between poets, patrons, and printers.[3] Using words like "increasing" and

"development" risks mapping an unduly teleological trajectory on the fifteenth century—from the maximally author-involved manuscript production of Christine de Pizan,[4] to the publisher as king when compiling an anthology such as Antoine Vérard's *Le Jardin de plaisance et fleur de rethorique*.[5] It furthermore risks distorting our apprehension of the period by tacitly invoking an implied endpoint of a Renaissance culture of individual selfhood. One must not smooth out the creases nor, indeed, focus on only one center of literary production, such as the court, at the expense of university and juridical milieus.

In the interests of appreciating creases, I apply the concept of celebrity to fifteenth-century literature. I do not stake a claim for the invention of celebrity in that era; rather, I pursue the useful anachronism of conceiving of literary identity in terms of celebrity so as to privilege what does not fit those terms as much as what does, thereby valorizing the specificity of this period's promotional poetics and concepts of identity.[6] Celebrity is itself "a broad category which defines the contemporary state of being famous."[7] It is held to be distinct from the older concept of "renown," which was restricted to an elite hierarchy (socially as much as culturally), and "brought honour to the office, not the individual,"[8] while celebrity may concern notoriety as much as fame. As a phenomenon predicated on "urban democracy" and "the radical individualisation of modern sensibility,"[9] it seems ill suited to late medieval cultural life, though it may help us interrogate our understanding of poetic identity, which we have perhaps come to view rather tamely in our scholarly scrupulousness to distinguish "persona" from "author," textual from extratextual *je*. We might usefully invest our judicious juggling of narrative levels with insights from the emergent discipline of "persona studies," which has itself been considered as a method for studying celebrity.[10] "Persona describes the wider practice of constructing and constituting forms of public identity," with personas being "the material forms of public selfhood,"[11] such as, in a fifteenth-century context, the ways in which text and paratext interact in a medieval manuscript to project an authorial identity.[12] Celebrities provide "some of the most visible, performative and pedagogic examples of the practice."[13] An approach to celebrity through persona studies would privilege "the potential of celebrity as a model of public presentation that contributes to the explication of networks, mediation, communication, participation, agency, affect and identity performance,"[14] and would thereby shine the spotlight on process.

In the third section of this essay, I consider perhaps the most pungently performative literary case of public self-presentation, Villon's "je, François Villon," a

particularly richly networked and exuberantly communicated identity. Where that section highlights the implication of the celebrity themself in the process through which cultural identity is negotiated, my first section focuses on the representation processes employed by audiences in constituting celebrity, which "does not reside in the individual: it is constructed discursively."[15] The role of the public is not only generative; it also "productively consume[s]" the celebrity as a commodity,[16] which is demonstrated amply by the *remaniement* of Jean de Meun, the controversial continuator of the *Rose*. Celebrity figures "are transformed into what they are by the compulsions and fantasies" of others.[17] This applies to historical figures, such as de Meun when he positively embodies vernacular authority or negatively represents misogyny on account of some of the discourses included in his work.[18] But it may also apply to fictional characters, of which an especially striking fifteenth-century case is the Belle Dame sans merci, the focus of my second section: her fame was inaugurated by Alain Chartier's poem, but spread and endured to become "a name which . . . makes news by itself,"[19] carrying a range of meanings. It gets particularly densely networked in manuscript and early print compilations, demonstrating a kind of "micropublic" in action.[20] All of this leads to the function of celebrity, its role "as a location for the interrogation and elaboration of cultural identity."[21]

Jean de Meun "en personne"

One might believe the pervasive didacticism of late medieval literature would militate against any consideration of celebrity: didacticism privileges the type above the individual, the position above the person, in its rhetoric of exemplarity. However, moralizing is no stranger to celebrity, in how "these public lives embody key meanings of the day"[22]: emphasis falls on the representative value of the individual, and that value may, of course, be negative. A figure of long-standing prominence whose fame experiences variation in value is Jean de Meun (d. 1305), continuator of the *Roman de la Rose*, and translator from Latin into French of Boethius and the letters of Heloise and Abelard. It is his scholastic status as university *maître* that enables his writing and thus his reputation, but the position and the person interweave interestingly as his persona evolves posthumously into the fifteenth century. The text of the dual-authored *Rose* speaks of its two contributors' activity,[23] and their role receives significant audience attention: late medieval manuscript miniatures often pictured a suc-

cession scene (not present in the poem).[24] Such miniatures, whilst seeming to promote authorial identity—for example, by illustrating Guillaume de Lorris handing over the book to Jean de Meun—in fact promote the text itself: the book's composition is served by its authors, rather than vice versa; authorship rather than the author's person. But response to Jean de Meun's person develops beyond the *Rose*. Honorat Bovet's *Apparicion maistre Jean de Meun* (1398) imagines him appearing to a prior. In the garden of de Meun's former residence: "un grant clerc bien fouré de menu ver, sy me commença a tancer" ("a great cleric dressed in fur began to lecture me").[25] His scholarly stature is brought to bear on Bovet's narrator, whom he reproaches for not making profitable use of the place as a didactic writer. The shift from courtly *locus amoenus* to clerkly *demesne* expands the scope of de Meun's sway as social commentator: on the one hand, this generalizes his authority; on the other, it particularizes it in relation to a certain political moment at the turn of the fifteenth century—the *Apparicion* is dedicated to Louis, duke of Orleans, and addresses a range of contemporary controversies, such as the banishment of the Jews from France and the University of Paris's hostility to the Jacobins.

De Meun is not only petitioned for his renown, but also prosecuted for notoriety. His fifteenth-century reputation is far from stable, and it is ill repute that fosters appreciation of the person as well as his position. While Bovet is lauding his authority, Christine de Pizan is lambasting him as "felon mesdisant" ("vicious backbiter") in her *Epistre au dieu d'amours* (1398),[26] in which the god of Love alleges his misogyny. She develops her criticism in the so-called *Querelle du Roman de la Rose* ("Quarrel over the Romance of the Rose"), an epistolary exchange involving Christine de Pizan and certain Paris clerics: her letters amplify her ethical castigation of the *Rose* as text—"ains est exortacion de vice confortant vie dissolue" ("thus it preaches vice, encouraging a dissolute life")[27]—and of its continuator as human individual: "qui fu seul home" ("who was only a man").[28] A key point of debate is de Meun's authorial responsibility: the extent to which he is morally imputable for everything in his work. Christine personalizes the discussion by casting aspersions on his character: she wonders why a "moult grant clerc soubtil et bien parlant" ("very great cleric, intelligent and eloquent") should so misapply his skill, "mais je suppose que la grant charnalité, puet estre, dont il fu remply, le fist plus habonder a voulenté que a bien prouffitable" ("but I suppose that maybe he acted more in accordance with the great carnality, with which he is filled, than with utility").[29] De Meun's person

is also invoked when Jean Gerson, chancellor of Paris, weighs in against the *Rose*'s immorality. In the allegorical courtroom of his *Traité contre le Rommant de la Rose* (1402), an anti-*Rose* advocate imprecates Fol Amoureux, a figure collapsing together authorial and narratorial identities to identify the writer as liable for his text's contents. The prosecution wishes to resurrect him to face trial: "je vouldré bien . . . que l'aucteur que on accuse fust present en sa personne par retournant de mort a vie" ("I would like that the author whom we accuse be personally present, returning to life from the dead")[30] to repent his misdeeds. Christine and Gerson each strive to inflect de Meun's public image, but simultaneously risk propagating his celebrity, as Pierre Col points out: "Toy et aultre—qui s'eufforcent comme toy a impugner ce tres noble escripvain Meung—le loués plus en le cuidant blasmer que je ne pouroye le louer pour y user tous mes membres, fussent ilz ores tous convertis en langues" ("You and the others—who strive like you to impugn this very noble writer Meun—laud him more when you believe that you are criticizing him than I could manage with all of my faculties, even if they were turned into tongues").[31] Denunciation is doubly effective promotion. Such potential impact perturbs Christine since her primary concern is not so much "the man himself as . . . the significance of his actions for the society,"[32] as a corrupting influence "a metre cuer humain en dampnable herreur" ("to put the human heart in damnable error").[33] Christine applies the same principle to her own authorial self-representation, constructing a public identity through text and paratext in the manuscript presentation of her works to illustrious dedicatees.[34] Whatever celebrity status we imagine her cultivating—overseeing prominent depiction of her persona in miniatures or fashioning her œuvre by quoting previous compositions in subsequent works—it is yoked into the service of the public good. She defines her authority differently from other, contemporary writers, partly as a woman who calls out antifeminist aspects of certain established authorities' work, and partly as an Italian, favoring Dante as a forefather rather than de Meun.[35]

Fifteenth-century French writers frequently engaged in genealogizing: locating themselves in relation to others, tracking literary lineage and thereby constructing a kind of canon.[36] This was not as monolithic an enterprise of consolidating the renown of great men as it might at first seem. A pertinent context is the popularity of the catalogue as literary form, deriving in large part from the influence of Boccaccio, manifested, for instance, in the several fifteenth-century French translations of his *De casibus virorum illustrium* and *De mulieri-*

bus claris.[37] Neither Latin text concerns renown univocally: *De mulieribus* addresses women both "famous" and "infamous" (as meanings of *clara*) whilst *De casibus* addresses the vicissitudes of fate and Fortune's wheel, considering the unfortunate ends of great men (and a few women). French responses to these texts sometimes deploy an updating strategy to render topical their cast of characters: George Chastelain's *Temple de Bocace* (1463–65) and Oliver de La Marche's *Chevalier délibéré* (1483), for instance, are preoccupied with the recently dead. A cemetery fiction is often deployed to assemble a canon, most famously in René of Anjou's *Livre du coeur d'amour épris* (1457), whose tombs of unfortunate lovers include six specially honored writers of love, alternating between Latin/Italian and French figures: Ovid, Machaut, Boccaccio, Jean de Meun, Petrarch, Chartier. Octovien de Saint-Gelais revisits this list in his *Séjour d'honneur* (1494), whose cemetery reserves a precinct for scholars, dedicating an area specifically to medieval figures: Jean de Meun, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chartier, and Jacques Milet (the latter still being alive when René of Anjou compiled his canon). The cast list experiences limited change, buttressing thereby, one might say, the renown of each writer, but is flexible, responding to the particular context and agenda of the text at hand, which might, for instance, be a compositional manual rather than a literary fiction. The so-called *arts de seconde rhétorique*, vernacular treatises on versification, commended poets for their formal mastery. For example, the *Instructif de seconde rhétorique* (ca. 1470) enumerates admired practitioners of the *serventois* in "tres notable rethoricale stile" ("very notable rhetorical style"), "en la langue galicane fertile" ("in the fertile Gallican language"): Alain Chartier, Arnoul Greban, Christine de Pizan, Jean Castel (Christine's son), Pierre de Hurion, George Chastelain, and Vaillant. Its target audience was amateur poets in the law courts of Paris.[38]

These lists convey a strong impression of identity as a networked entity, whether general recognizability (situating the present writer in relation to established figures) or more specific targeting of a certain audience: for example, in a Burgundian milieu, when Jean Lemaire de Belges composes an *Epitaphe en maniere de dialogue* (1507–1508) in honor of his predecessors, Jean Molinet and George Chastelain, as court historiographer.[39] In a late medieval culture of localized textual performance and bespoke manuscript production, it is possible to speak of what twenty-first-century celebrity studies call "micropublics,"[40] and study how a certain collective—both audience to and consumer of a celebrity—is constituted through the development of a particular persona,

who may not even be real. Late medieval catalogues often blended together for their exemplary worth figures from history, myth, and legend (ancient and contemporary).

Naming the Belle Dame Sans Merci

One of the most striking figures of literary fame in the second and third quarters of the fifteenth century is a fiction: La Belle Dame sans merci—she is, in that sense, pure celebrity, as a discursive construct who is famous for being famous: "as much image as actuality,"[41] because *only* image, but an image treated as having impact on actuality. The Belle Dame acquires her name at the end of the eponymous poem by Alain Chartier (1424), which survives in forty-four manuscripts, together with numerous early printed editions and translations. Following a long dialogue in which a lady repeatedly spurns the advances of her suitor, she is baptized by an eavesdropping narrator:

> Celle que m'oyez nommer cy,
> Qu'on peut appeller, se me samble,
> La belle dame sans mercy.
>
> [This lady whom you will now hear me name,
> and who should be called, it seems to me,
> The Belle Dame Sans Mercy.][42]

What is remarkable about the Belle Dame's celebrity is how emphatically her identity as a commodity becomes fixed (i.e., that she *is* merciless), notwithstanding Chartier's narrator's caveats and qualifiers. Two prose letters follow the poem in over half its extant manuscripts, purportedly written by gentlemen and ladies of the court. They convey considerable consternation at Chartier's portrayal of a woman who "cruelly" denies a lover her favor, fearing, from the male courtiers' perspective, lest she serve as an example to spoil their suits. The letters enjoin "maistre Alain" to make amends, which prompts Chartier's *Excusacion de maistre Alain*, in which personified Love chastises the author for defaming women.[43] Such repeated expression of alarm—potentially all generated by Chartier himself to promote his subject as a cause célèbre—lends potency to the Belle Dame as image and incites a desire to negotiate with it. It duly gave rise to a whole series of engagements in the form of poetic responses. Mostly working through a fictional trial framework—the same scenario deployed to

take Jean de Meun to task "en personne"—they try and re-try the lady to determine her guilt in response to a question that Chartier left intriguingly unanswered: did the suitor die—his hedging narrator reports that someone told him so—and so did the lady, by her refusal, kill him? These "productive consumptions"[44] of the Belle Dame each generate more discourse around her: Baudet Herenc's *Accusation contre la Belle Dame sans mercy* brands her "crüelle et plaine de faulx tours" ("cruel and practiced at deceit")[45] and amplifies her infamy in inflammatory rhetoric: "la merveilleuse nature / De ceste femme" ("the astounding nature / Of this woman").[46] The anonymous *Dame lealle en amours* ("the Lady loyal in love") claims she already has a lover; Achille Caulier's *Cruelle femme en amours* ("the Cruel woman in love") refutes that as "fiction fainte" ("fake fiction")[47] and further escalates the charge: "Pour quoy la puis, sans surnonmer, / Appeller la Faulse Tirande" ("Which is why I might, without exaggeration, / Call her a 'false tyrant.'").[48] Each text innovates material to intensify the significance of her identity and the apparent urgency of resolving her fate—"apparent," since each intervention both carries the trial action forward and stalls it through some procedural disruption that enables debate to keep going intertextually. Even once she has been sentenced to death, her case is revived when her heirs seek redress in *Les Erreurs du jugement de la Belle Dame sans mercy*:

> Mais il leur souffisoit d'oster
> Le faulx nom, le bruit, et la note
> Tournant en malureuse sorte.
>
> [But it would have satisfied them to cast off
> the falsely attributed name, the scandal, and the gossip,
> which were causing their unhappy destiny.][49]

The Belle Dame's identity *is* her "nom," which, according to Herenc's court, "doit estre ditte infame" ("should be hailed as disgraceful").[50] Use of the qualifier "faulx" flags up ironically how far we are from dealing with a true/false binary, since there is no foundation of objective fact to the Belle Dame's existence. This is why I asserted before that she is pure celebrity: "a discursive effect; that is, those who have been subject to the representational regime of celebrity are reprocessed and reinvented by it"[51]; for the Belle Dame, that processing and invention are constitutive of her selfhood.

The reality of the Belle Dame's celebrity is affirmed in Martin Le Franc's mid-fifteenth-century defense of women debate poem, *Le Champion des dames* (ca. 1442), which features a cemetery of noble women including the grave of the Belle Dame (defended here as being "de tres leal propos" ["of very loyal intent"][52]) alongside those with contemporary historical pertinence: recently deceased ladies of the Burgundian court (Mary of Burgundy, the duchess of Savoy [d. 1422], and her daughter, Bonne, countess of Montfort [d. 1430]), to whose duke, Philip the Good, Le Franc dedicates the text. The Belle Dame's identity is also networked; her fame and that of her spurned lover of uncertain fate are intertwined, the one evoked through the other, as in Jacques Milet's allegorical poem *La Forest de Tristesse* (1459), whose first section narrates the persona's oneiric journey through a wasteland of amorous devastation in the demesne of Lady Melancholy: "Illec viz gesir lamoureux / De celle qu'on dit sans mercy" ("There I saw lying the lover / Of the one they say to be without mercy").[53] Minimal reference is required to prompt recognition: familiarity with this hypervisible "celle" (the one) and with her identity as allegation ("on dit" [they say] is assumed. The Belle Dame and Jean de Meun come together in the *Forest*: the "paragon of ladies," imprisoned in Melancholy's "forest of ennuy," impugns the author for his misogynistic text: "A toy lacteur qui lentrepris" ("to you, the author who undertook it"),[54] and the second section of the poem duly prosecutes her case in the court of Love against both Jean de Meun and Matheolus. Like the Belle Dame's trials, theirs, too, is unresolved—guilt is determined and sentence meted out, but commuted to banishment in de Meun's case. An uncertain but nonetheless insisted-on end fosters further productive consumption and production, fanning fame, and especially infamy.

Olivier Driessens questions the time and space of celebrity, proposing plural, localized celebrity cultures.[55] A single poem, like Milet's *Forest*, is a snapshot of the intersecting celebrity of Jean de Meun, historical thirteenth-century author, and La Belle Dame, fifteenth-century fictional figure, in the middle of that later century. A single manuscript, such as Paris, Arsenal, manuscript 3523, from the late fifteenth century, offers a material cultural space for contemporary fame: its thirty-five items gather together many contributions to the Belle Dame debate, with a number of elegiac, epitaphic, and testamentary poems either by mid-fifteenth-century writers (Pierre de Hauteville, Michault Taillevent, and François Villon) or commemorating recent noble deaths, Charles VII (d. 1461) or Marguerite of Scotland (d. 1445).[56] The early print anthology of 1501, *Le*

Jardin de plaisance et fleur de rethorique, also materially discloses the celebrity of the Belle Dame, but through absence rather than presence. It encompasses many poems of the quarrel, and several related texts, mostly dating from 1425 to 1470, such as Milet's *Forest*; indeed, the overall narrative thread of the volume follows a lover through rejection by a lady to bereavement and death.[57] But Chartier's poem does not feature here; it is implicitly present as touchstone.[58]

Ambiguously answerable questions (was Jean de Meun misogynistic?) and unresolvable riddles (did the Belle Dame's lover die? Does she merit her title?) stimulate a sense of enigma, which captivates attention and thereby accords charisma to the persons being debated, further enhancing their celebrity. "Jean de Meun" and "La Belle Dame" are news-making names in fifteenth-century poetry; neither is simply a case of renown—of honor and devotion pertaining to the office rather than to the person as an individual—since the fame of both is fostered by aspects of notoriety and their intersecting quarrels get personal. Their lives—Christine's conjectures about de Meun's lust or the courts' condemnations of the lady's cruelty—are made "to embody key meanings of the day"[59] relating to the morality of poetic writing, authorial responsibility for allegory, courtly ethics, or the status of women. But is either properly a celebrity in the modern sense? Their attributed identity is not individuality, and both are the product of socially exclusive milieus—the university and the court as medieval sites of limited literary production and circulation.

Villon: "ne scet comment on me nomme"

My final case study offers the most compelling and curious case for conceiving of literary identity in the fifteenth century in terms of celebrity: François Villon—a figure whose very name (or, at least, the name by which we know him)[60] enmeshes history and fiction, cultivates enigma, and constitutes a remarkable publicity grab. The man behind the name, to whom we attribute the *Lais*, *Testament*, and various lyric poems across a range of literary registers, had a university education and frequented both princely courts and the judicial system, being imprisoned at least twice. The person projected through much of his poetry as "Villon" is an extraordinary ordinary man, at home in the underbelly of Parisian urban life between tavern and brothel, which he recollects with dazzling rhetorical dexterity and learned allusion, while apparently breathing his last on his deathbed. His work famously offers so little to

piece together of the persona's biographical identity that we are left not so much with an unfinished jigsaw, as one barely started, whose disparate pieces make us more conscious of its gaps, and of our inability, but also our thirst, to fill them coherently.[61] We have "too many Villons," and, at the same time, not enough: "Villon's exuberance . . . resists resolution while implying . . . that resolution is just within our readerly grasp."[62]

Villon's *Testament* (ca. 1463) is about the social construction of identity: that undertaken by a poet in respect of his persona, that enacted in multiple ways by the persona, that elicited of a contemporary audience (or, rather, audiences, if we assume different types of knowledge mobilized by different micropublics, such as those to whom the named beneficiaries are known), and that exercised by subsequent generations of readers. The persona postures a variety of pungent identities—a devastatingly poor person; a truant scholar; a bon viveur; a martyr for love; a pimp; a vagabond. Each is rhetorically, vigorously tailored and tinged with irony, revealing thereby the process of its construction. He self-promotes through self-deprecation: "de tous suis le plus imparfait" ("I am the most imperfect of all")[63] might read penitentially, but more likely cultivates the covert prestige of superlative slyness. Self-contradiction is similarly flamboyant: "de viel porte voix et le ton, / Et ne suis qu'un jeune cocquart" ("I have the voice and sound of an old man, / And yet I'm only a young gun").[64] When it comes to fixing posthumous reputation in his epitaph, he precisely *un*fixes it into evanescence by insisting that it be inscribed "de charbon ou de pierre noire, / Sans en rien entamer le plastre" ("in coal or black stone / without damaging the plaster at all").[65] Identity is vehemently affirmed and staunchly resisted in the same moment. The name "Villon" that he claims to have borrowed from his adoptive father is compellingly present materially (as a repeated acrostic) and sonically (as a frequent rich rhyme, especially intensively in the poem's concluding ballad), but the person whom it designates remains dislocated from this label. Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet takes a cue from the bedeviled executor whom the persona nominates, Jean de Calais, a man who has not seen him in thirty years (we recall that the opening lines of the poem posit his age as around thirty) and "ne scet comment on me nomme" ("does not know what I'm called"):[66] she proposes that "nous sommes tous des Jean de Calais" ("we are all Jean de Calais").[67] In a sense, we are, but we are also doubly bedeviled in that we have *a* name, but no one to whom to securely attach it.

Villon is the star, and we pursue his identity by creating it through productive consumption. The history of Villon reception demonstrates in abun-

dance "the commonplace of celebrity that its figures are transformed into what they are by the compulsions and fantasies of those who throng to see them."[68] "Every age creates its own Villon" and "we construct our particular Villons . . . by reading very selectively."[69] Hence our having too many. While we tend to construe the *Testament*'s Villon as in all senses a singular figure, the poem itself was never transmitted alone; identity is always networked, and among its company were, for example, the testamentary and epitaphic pieces in Arsenal manuscript 3523 mentioned above. In the twenty-first century, as a celebrity for our age, Villon has appeared in democratic forms of modern popular culture, and across languages: a multivolume French comic book (2011–2016); a young adult autofiction entitled *Testament* (2012) by Canadian writer Vickie Gendreau; or a song on a U.S. Billboard top five album, Regina Spektor's "Prayer of François Villon" (2012),[70] which is available to download as a ringtone.

Productive Consumption and Fifteenth-Century Poetics

"Most celebrities just come and go."[71] Literary controversy in the fifteenth century revisited afresh an already-established author (Jean de Meun), generated an instantly famous icon through debate (La Belle Dame), and was consciously cultivated to promote a scandalous, enigmatic identity (Villon). All three figures were productively consumed in a variety of incarnations over several centuries; alongside Villon, the Belle Dame sans merci found echo in diverse cultural contexts—from John Keats's eighteenth-century poem, to pre-Raphaelite painting, Flanders and Swann's 1950s comic radio mention of "the beautiful lady who never says thank you," and a current gothic horror comic book series.[72] Their fame endures, but perhaps this is more pertinently viewed in terms of celebrity, given the diverse, localized subcultures involved in the "process of individual and collective remembering and forgetting of celebrities" (indeed, most often forgetting Chartier when remembering the Belle Dame).[73] Each figure's revisitation is a fresh ephemerality, specific to and evanescently hypervisible in a particular moment and milieu. In the preface to his critical edition of Villon in 1533, Clément Marot plays up the cultural specificity of the *Testament*, remarking that, in order to understand its bequests, "il faudroit avoir esté de son temps à Paris, & avoir congneu les lieux, les choses, & les hommes dont il parle" ("you would have to have been in Paris during his time and known the places, things, and people he speaks of").[74]

The fifteenth century's literary life was driven by a "participatory, social poetics—a poetics of dialectic and debate."[75] As participants in this community, its writers and editor-publishers engaged in both competition and collaboration, self-promotion and negotiation.[76] Reflecting on their own position in the constant awareness of others, they dramatized through their work—individual compositions, responses to their own or others' works, or the compilation of an anthology—the processes through which authorial identity is negotiated. Turner speaks of celebrity's role as a location for the interrogation and elaboration of cultural identity;[77] celebrity as a perspective for critical enquiry helps us to articulate an acute fifteenth-century consciousness of the importance of persona, of playing an identity effectively (whether a projection of oneself or of a third party, or both in dialogue) through productive consumption to serve a range of ends: to perform a social function—for Christine de Pizan, exercising authorial responsibility in the moral interests of the public good; to experiment ideologically with courtly discourse, in the Belle Dame quarrel; or to virtuosically stage the composition of identity through death (if this *is* one of Villon the poet's impossible to discern motives).

As my comments above on manuscript compilation indicated, Jean de Meun, the Belle Dame, and Villon were far from discrete concerns in the courtroom drama of late medieval French literature. More generally, the *Rose* runs through its verse like a stick of rock, intertextually informing both poetics and content of Chartier's poem and the *Testament*, constantly being refreshed through *remaniement*, and demanding "a highly knowing audience" in the literary cultures of princely court, law court, and university.[78] This essential interconnectedness—the sophisticated intertextual expertise presupposed of a fifteenth-century audience and the intersubjectivity of authorship as a process of exchange and networked self-definition—boosted "celebrity capital" or "recognizability": "accumulated media visibility that results from recurrent media representations."[79] Writers sought both cooperatively and competitively to benefit from and further fuel the "attention-getting, interest-riveting, profit-generating value"[80] of key figures of reference, for fame or infamy (Jean de Meun and the Belle Dame), or to produce this capacity by self-identifying as such a figure (Villon). Figures become so recognizable that they no longer need actual presence: in 1501 and beyond, in the eight editions of the *Jardin de plaisance*, a highly knowing audience was still expected. Its lynchpin texts—the *Rose*, *Belle Dame*, and *Testament*—are absent from the compilation, because they are presumed already present in the anthology of the audience's mind.[81]

Notes

1. Pierre-Yves Badel, Le Roman de la Rose *au quatorzième siècle: étude de la réception de l'œuvre* (Geneva, Switzerland: Droz, 1980); Adrian Armstrong and Sarah Kay, ed., *Knowing Poetry: Verse in Medieval France from the "Rose" to the Rhétoriqueurs* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

2. Joël Blanchard, "L'Entrée du poète dans le champ politique au XVe siècle," *Annales HSS* 41, no. 1 (1986): 43–61.

3. Cynthia J. Brown, *Poets, Patrons, and Printers: Crisis of Authority in Late Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

4. Olivier Delsaux, *Manuscrits et pratiques autographes chez les écrivains français de la fin du moyen âge. L'exemple de Christine de Pizan* (Geneva, Switzerland: Droz, 2013).

5. Jane H. M. Taylor, *The Making of Poetry: Late-Medieval French Poetic Anthologies* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007), 229–291.

6. Fred Inglis proposes that celebrity as a phenomenon is no more than 250 years old in *A Short History of Celebrity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 12; most scholars see print culture as a prerequisite for its applicability. For consideration of celebrity in relation to the early modern period, see, for example, Antoine Lilti, *Figures publiques. L'Invention de la célébrité (1750–1850)* (Paris: Fayard, 2014).

7. Su Holmes and Sean Redmond, "A Journal in Celebrity Studies," *Celebrity Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 4.

8. Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity*, 10.

9. Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity*, 10.

10. David P. Marshall, Christopher Moore, and Kim Barbour, "Persona as Method: Exploring Celebrity and the Public Self through Persona Studies," *Celebrity Studies* 6, no. 3 (2015): 288–305.

11. Marshall, Moore, and Barbour, "Persona as Method," 289, 290.

12. Charlotte Cooper, "A Re-Assessment of Text-Image Relations in Christine de Pizan's Didactic Works" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2017).

13. Marshall, Moore, and Barbour, "Persona as Method," 289.

14. Marshall, Moore, and Barbour, "Persona as Method," 289.

15. Holmes and Redmond, "A Journal in Celebrity Studies," 4.

16. Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (London: Sage, 2004), 20.

17. Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity*, 20.

18. Helen Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance: Men Defending Women in Late Medieval France, 1440–1538* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

19. Cited in Irving J. Rein, Philip Kotler, and Martin R. Stoller, *High Visibility* (London: Heinemann, 1987), 15.

20. Marshall, Moore, and Barbour, "Persona as Method," 291.

21. Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 24.

22. Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity*, 19.

23. Notably in the midpoint speech by Amor, Lorris, and de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Armand Strubel (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1992), lines 10497–10682.

24. See David F. Hult, *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: Readership and Authority in the First* Roman de la Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 77–89.

25. Honorat Bovet, *"L'apparicion maistre Jehan de Meun" et le "Somnium super materia scimatis,"* ed. Ivor Arnold (Paris: Les Belles, 1926), 5.

26. Christine de Pizan, *Poems of Cupid, God of Love*, ed. and trans. Mary Carpenter Erler and Thelma S. Fenster (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1990), 54, line 423.

27. *Le Débat sur le* Roman de la Rose, ed. Eric Hicks (Paris: Champion, 1977), 56.

28. *Le Débat sur le* Roman de la Rose, 57.

29. *Le Débat sur le* Roman de la Rose, 20, 21.

30. *Le Débat sur le* Roman de la Rose, 66.

31. *Le Débat sur le* Roman de la Rose, 89.

32. Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity*, 10.

33. *Le Débat sur le* Roman de la Rose, 146.

34. On single-author manuscript collections, see Taylor, *The Making of Poetry*, 13–81.

35. Christine is first to articulate these, but is not alone in this objection and preference; see Swift, *Gender, Writing, and Performance*.

36. See Kevin Brownlee, "Christine de Pizan: Gender and the New Vernacular Canon," in *Strong Voices, Weak History: Early Women Writers and Canons in England, France and Italy*, ed. Pamela Joseph Benson and Victoria Kirkham (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 99–120.

37. Carlo Pellegrini, ed., *Il Boccaccio nella cultura francese* (Florence: Olschki, 1971).

38. Taylor, *The Making of Poetry*, 41–45, 252–253.

39. Jean Lemaire de Belges, *Œuvres de Jean Lemaire de Belges*, ed. Jean Auguste Stecher, 4 vols. (Geneva, Switzerland: Slatkine Reprints, 1969), 4:32.

40. Marshall, Moore, and Barbour, "Persona as Method," 291.

41. Richard Howells, "Heroes, Saints and Celebrities: The Photograph as Holy Relic," *Celebrity Studies* 2, no. 2 (2011): 113.

42. Alain Chartier, *Alain Chartier: The Quarrel of the Belle Dame sans mercy*, ed. and trans. Joan E. McRae (New York: Routledge, 2004), 92–93, lines 798–800. All quotations and translations from the Quarrel texts refer to this edition, page, and line, where cited.

43. Chartier, *Alain Chartier*, 111–117, lines 15–112.

44. Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 20.

45. Chartier, *Alain Chartier*, 156–57, line 472.

46. Chartier, *Alain Chartier*, 148–49, lines 329–330.

47. Chartier, *Alain Chartier*, 266–67, line 577.

48. Chartier, *Alain Chartier*, 270–72, lines 671–672.

49. Chartier, *Alain Chartier*, 344–45, lines 795–797.

50. Chartier, *Alain Chartier*, 156–57, line 475.

51. Turner, "Approaching Celebrity Studies," 13.

52. Martin Le Franc, *Champion des dames*, ed. Robert Deschaux, 5 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1999), line 1910.

53. Antoine Vérard, *Le Jardin de plaisance et fleur de rethorique: reproduction en fac-similé de l'édition publiée par Antoine Vérard vers 1501*, ed. Eugénie Droz and Arthur Piaget, 2 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1910–24), 1: fols. 203v–224v, vv. 1614–1615.

54. Vérard, *Le Jardin de plaisance*, 1: fols. 203v–224v, line 639.

55. Olivier Driessens, "Theorizing Celebrity Cultures: Thickenings of Celebrity Cultures and the Role of Cultural (Working) Memory," *Communications* 39, no. 2 (2014): 109–127.

56. Emma Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Appendix A; Taylor, *The Making of Poetry*, 25–26.

57. Taylor, *The Making of Poetry*, 236.

58. Helen Swift, *Representing the Dead: Epitaph Fictions in Late-Medieval France* (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2016), 140.

59. Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity*, 19.

60. François Villon, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet with Laëtitia Tabard (Paris: Gallimard, 2014), *Testament*, ix–xi.

61. Archival documents on Villon constitute a mere thirty-six pages of the *Œuvres complètes*.

62. Jane H. M. Taylor, *The Poetry of François Villon: Text and Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 173, 176.

63. Citations from the *Testament* refer to *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Cerquiglini-Toulet and Tabard. I cite page, along with the line. *Testament*, 47, line 261.

64. Villon, *Œuvres complètes*, *Testament*, 79, lines 735–36.

65. Villon, *Œuvres complètes*, *Testament*, 157, lines 1880–1881.

66. Villon, *Œuvres complètes*, *Testament*, line 155, 1847.

67. Villon, *Œuvres complètes*, *Testament*, x.

68. Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity*, 20.

69. Taylor, *The Making of Poetry*, 1.

70. Spektor is a Russian-born American; the song, originally written by the Russian poet Bulat Okudzhava, is the bonus track on the deluxe edition of *Welcome to the Cheap Seats*.

71. Driessens, "Theorizing Celebrity Cultures," 121.

72. P. M. Buchan and Karen Yumi Lusted, *La Belle Dame sans merci*, self-published in four chapters: https://www.pmbuchan.com/la-belle-dame-sans-merci.

73. Driessens, "Theorizing Celebrity Cultures," 121.

74. Clément Marot, *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, ed. Gérard Defaux, 2 vols. (Paris: Bordas, 1990–1993), 2:777.

75. Taylor, *The Making of Poetry*, 3.

76. Adrian Armstrong, *The Virtuoso Circle: Competition, Collaboration, and Complexity in Late Medieval French Poetry* (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2012).

77. Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 24.

78. Armstrong and Kay, *Knowing Poetry*, 176.

79. Olivier Driessens, "Celebrity Capital: Redefining Celebrity Using Field Theory," Theory and Society 42, no. 5 (2013): 543–560, 552.

80. Rein, Kotler, and Stoller, *High Visibility*, 15.

81. See Taylor, *The Making of Poetry*, 243, 273–281.