

I. A GUIDE TO RESEARCH: 'JE VOUS TIENS POUR MA GUIDE'

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With the publication of *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research* in 1995, Larry Earp was affirmed as an indispensable guide for scholars researching Machaut across a range of disciplines: musicology, art history, literature, codicology. *A Guide*, in turn, confirmed the multidisciplinary breadth of interest in the fourteenth-century composer and encouraged the kinds of interdisciplinary collaborations on which Machaut scholarship has thrived in recent decades. It documented the past and facilitated the future, constituting a fittingly Machaldian gesture of *matière* and *manière*, furnishing both information and methodological reflection. Returning to *A Guide* has brought me to think afresh about the role and significance of guides in contemporary academia as well as late-medieval poetry, focusing on *dits*.¹ What exactly do we mean by 'guide', and who are the 'we' who are meaning it? My subheading quotation is taken from Burgundian court writer Jean Molinet's *Oroison de St Ipolite*: 'I take you as my guide.'² It reflects how 'guide' is not an objectively acquired title, but the result of an investment (whether of esteem or interest or both) by the follower who ascribes the term, whether implicitly as a twenty-first-century 'follower' of an individual or entity on #MedievalTwitter or explicitly as the persona of a fifteenth-century poem. Furthermore, in a medieval literary context, neither 'je' nor 'vous' is singular: Molinet's persona-I within the text implores the purported addressee, the saint, for intercessory guidance towards spiritual salvation; the authorial-I without seeks to secure the favor of sponsorship from the poem's dedicatee, the financier Hyppolite de Bertholz.³ In addition to their narrative structure, several specificities of late-medieval literary guidance scenarios require careful consideration, not least didacticism:⁴ are we too apt to apply indiscriminately the term 'guide' to the authority figures of didactic literature, merging together unreflectively Boethius's *Philosophy*, Dante's *Virgil*, and Machaut's *Esperance* in the *Remede de Fortune*, for example? Does this, in consequence, risk too polarizing a distinction between guided and guiding parties? How sensitive should we be to the varied vocabulary deployed to designate the latter role: the nouns 'guide', 'ducteur', 'conduit', 'gaité', and their cognate verbs?⁵ And what might we in twenty-first-century academia usefully learn from the situations of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century guidance-seeking-protagonists from whom we might otherwise wish to imagine ourselves utterly distinct?

Whom we take to be our guides plays a determining role in defining epistemologically not only the field of research with which we engage, but also the whole imaginary of our

1 • By *dit*, I mean a French fourteenth- or fifteenth-century first-person narrative in verse (or prosimetricum). This furnishes a vast corpus (see, for instance, Swift 2021, 264–70); in the present context, I combine the subject of *A Guide*, Machaut, with a cluster of mid-late-fifteenth-century texts, my research into which has been much indebted to scholarship on fourteenth-century *dits*.

2 • Dupire 1937a, 522 (line 289).

3 • Santucci 1981.



4 • Kay 2007.

5 • For example, Molinet's *Oroison* addresses St Hippolytus as both 'guide' and 'ducteur'; Dupire 1937a, 513 (line 8).

roles and expectations and how they are performed.⁶ This has been for some considerable time an urgent axiom in efforts to decolonize Western institutions of knowledge including the academy. Indeed, as Vandana Shiva affirms: 'colonialism has from the very beginning been a contest over the mind and the intellect. What will count as knowledge? And who will count as expert or as innovator?'⁷ In the 'dominant academic model based on a Eurocentric epistemic canon', boundaries and hierarchies of knowledge have been presented as self-evident by scholars of the Global North: 'Western epistemic traditions are traditions that claim detachment of the known from the knower';⁸ Achille Joseph Mbembe counterpoints these with 'relationality' as a prominent trope in Black thought.⁹ He and others argue, in place of the university, for a 'pluriversity': a process of knowledge production working through 'a horizontal strategy of openness to dialogue among different epistemic traditions.'¹⁰ A Northern scholar such as myself expressing commitment to intellectual decolonization must recognize how I am privileged by coloniality and 'implicated in its enduring structures of inequality':¹¹ how I may take up more space than I deserve and fail to amplify the voices of 'decolonial scholars from the Global South who [...] should arguably be at the forefront'¹² of the project, as our guides to research. Critiques of institutional structures of power and knowledge have also drawn attention to institutions' indebtedness, in their commitment to decolonization, to predominantly student-led movements (such as Rhodes Must Fall).¹³ More generally, through valorizing teaching-led research and reverse mentoring practices, we as established scholars may interrogate the whole enterprise of guidance, not only challenging but also reimagining the structures through which different voices are granted space and authority: 'what are the spaces, political positions, textual locations, discourses, and moments from which particular voices speak? When and how do they speak? Whose voice is assigned legitimacy or illegitimacy?'¹⁴

Principles of self-scrutiny, porosity, and collaboration underpin *A Guide* – a title whose indefinite article itself registers the work's openness to possible alternative approaches. It feels only fitting to give space here to Larry's voice, in excerpts from the Preface, beginning with his concession to experts in fields into which he forays outside musicology:

I nevertheless hope that the book will be of some service to scholars in these fields, even if only to spur on scholarship that will revise the views presented here. Too much specialization sometimes hinders our understanding of Machaut's achievements.¹⁵

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- 6 • I am much indebted to the Worcester College Decolonisation Course reading group convened by Rea Duxbury and Marchella Ward (April–June 2021); see <<https://www.worc.ox.ac.uk/equalities/decolonisation-course>>.
 - 7 • Shiva 2000, vii.
 - 8 • Mbembe 2016, 32.
 - 9 • Mbembe 2016, 35.
 - 10 • Mbembe 2016, 37 (his emphasis).
 - 11 • Moosavi 2020, 333.
 - 12 • Moosavi 2020, 341.
 - 13 • Or to initiatives dependent on the labor of early career scholars, such as, locally to me, the Worcester College Decolonisation Course (see above, n. 6). < >
 - 14 • Dei and Doyle-Wood 2006, 155, ref. < > Spivak 1988.
 - 15 • Earp 1995a, xii.

A good guide checks their epistemic limits; beyond simple modesty, though, we may discern more fundamentally an embrace of contingency and provisionality in the invitation to be superseded, as well as, methodologically, an evocation of the benefits of post-disciplinary thinking. Such future-oriented openness that yields rather than arrogates authority recurs when Larry articulates how Chapter 1's biography of Machaut 'attempts to organize the documentary material from many sources in a fashion that will facilitate further research.'¹⁶ I shall consider later the guiding role of narratorial organization and the 'ordenance' attributed to Machaut in the opening rubric of MS A. I note here how Larry refers to *A Guide* as being 'organized [...] as a companion to Machaut research',¹⁷ and wish to reflect briefly on 'companion'. Beyond our appreciation as scholars of carrying the volume with us (whether physically or electronically) to accompany our studies of Machaut and the familiar use of 'companion' for collected volumes of essays designed 'to structure and guide the reader towards future as much as existing work'¹⁸ in a given field, the term may also be seen to gesture towards the importance of dialogue and cooperation. In late-medieval *dits*, the protagonist's epistemological development is the fruit of company and conversation credited along the way or retrospectively by the narrating-I; in the modern academic book, the guidance of traveling companions is typically recognized on its threshold, in the acknowledgments. Fittingly in *A Guide*, Larry thanks by individual name a noteworthy range of his own guides, not only academic peers but also librarians, archivists, and graduate students, thereby guiding us into similarly collaborative paths.

There is certainly much to be gleaned from careful reading of *A Guide's* Preface, and one may readily counter any allegation of over-reading by referring back, via Molinet's *Oroison*, to the follower's investment in defining their guide. This situates any activity of guidance—whether primarily practical (organizational, ordering) or overtly moral or spiritual (solicited through prayer to a saint)—in the general sphere of didacticism. But how, without getting terminologically preoccupied, might we most usefully distinguish activities of guidance from instruction? As we shall see, it is more a question of emphasis and perspective than of difference, and one that privileges the role and responsibility of the guided party as self-guide: the user of *A Guide*, as well as the audience and the willful protagonist of a *dit*. Indeed, it is perhaps simply nuancing further our appreciation of late-medieval poetic didacticism itself. It thus seems appropriate to start with the *dit* commonly hailed as Machaut's most 'deeply didactic',¹⁹ the *Remede*. Its opening passage, often seen to strike the instructional keynote, is certainly pregnant with didactic topoi, presenting itself immediately as a manual for education:

Cils qui vuet aucun art aprendre
A .xij. choses doit entendre.


The man who thinks to master any art | Must attend to twelve matters.²⁰

16 • Earp 1995a, xii.

17 • Earp 1995a, xii.

18 • Gaunt and Kay 2008, 4.

19 • Palmer 2019, 517 (note to lines 1–25); also online: <<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/palmer-machaut-the-boethian-poems-remede>>. In their edition, Wimsatt and Kibler (1988, 37) remark that the *Remede's* most salient characteristic [...] is its didacticism.

 is complemented by repeated imperatives ('aime son mestre et son mestier | seur tout [let him love his master as well as his craft | above all else]; lines 9–10), exhortation ('doctrine reçoive humblement' [let him receive instruction humbly]; line 16), obligation ('ce li est mestier' [and he is called upon]; line 10), categorical declaration ('car chose ne puet si forte estre' [now nothing can be too difficult]; line 41), and explicit logical direction ('einsi est il certainement | de vray humein entendement' [and surely it is just the same | with the true form of human understanding]; lines 35–36). However, beneath the clarity of this didactic surface rhetoric bubble questions and uncertainties: what are the proclaimed twelve matters (for which no source has been located)? Enumeration seems to stop after the first ('la premiere'; line 3); in the generic context of a *dit*, with its horizon of expectation of tricky circumstance and ironic twist, does not straightforward assertion of certitude and coherence incite anticipation of complication, incongruity, even bathos? And in whose voice is this all uttered? It remains impersonal until line 44 when it is claimed ('ce que j'ay dit ci desseure' [what I have described here above]) by the retrospective narrating-I: what subjective agenda may thereby be informing his presentation of this didactic template – is it to legitimize the personal amorous experience that he will proceed to recount, or to critique it? Comic disjuncture is evident as early as line 95:

S'avoie bien mestier d'aprendre,
 Quant tel fais voloie entreprendre.
 Que di je? Ains l'avoie entrepris,
 Qu'einc congié ne conseil n'en pris. (lines 93–96)

For there was much I needed to learn | Should I decide to follow this course. | What am I saying?
 I'd already decided | Before asking leave or advice.

The narrator recognizes the heedlessness of his youth, admitting that, instead of first having dutifully followed a course of instruction in the art of love (matters one through twelve, we infer), he dived straight in.

As Sylvia Huot and Sarah Kay have both demonstrated, the didactic texture of the *Remede* as a whole is bumpy as regards the fruits of the lover's education and the extent to which his 'humein entendement' develops much at all.²¹ Rather than passing 'from suffering to consolation,'²² by following the guidance of Esperance to persevere in desire for his lady, anticipating positive change in her favor which could thus just as easily change again, he remains in epistemological uncertainty, unsure in the end whether she has now withdrawn her affections:

Que je ne pos onques le voir
 De la mansonge concevoir. (lines 4170–71)
 I could not tell whether it was | Some false front or her true feelings.

20 • Palmer 2019, 90–91 (lines 1–2). Subsequent references to the *Remede* will be incorporated in the text and will be identified by line numbers only; the *Remede* appears on pp. 90–323 of Palmer 2019.

21 • Kay 2008, 33: 'At the very end of the *Remede de Fortune*, the lover seems to be living in a fool's paradise where his lady is concerned'; Huot 1987a, 258.


22 • Palmer 2019, 517 (note to lines 1–25).

Does that mean that Esperance was a bad guide? She promised him, ‘et tu yes en la droite senté’ (for the path you follow is the right one; line 3180): was she leading him down the wrong path, in deficient imitation of Boethius’s Philosophy? Or did she lead him down the right path but not do so effectively – she did, after all, having undertaken to stay with him, pop off, pleading pressure of work?²³ I would argue for neither, and propose instead that what is at issue is the persona’s implementation of guidance which is neither sound nor unsound in and of itself: it helps him (only) temporarily as a lover, and/(but) enduringly as a poet of love who continues hopefully to sing ‘the vagaries of fortune [rather than] remed[y] them.’²⁴ We as audience, thus guided, can thereby reframe our reading of the opening passage’s program of education: the persona’s underlying devotion is to the ‘art’ and ‘mestier’ of composition.²⁵

The complexity of the *Remede*’s didacticism and the questions about agency and responsibility that it raises bring us to interrogate further the role of a protagonist’s self in the activity of guidance. Individual will is expressed as a compelling driving force. On the one hand, this is a necessary initial impulsion, as when the persona of the *Vergier* plucks up courage to approach the company whom he encounters without a guide: ‘pour ce que savoir de leur estre | voloie’ (for I was eager to learn | who they were).²⁶ On the other, it risks becoming obstinate resistance to alternative points of view, as when, in Jacques Milet’s *Forest de Tristesse* (1459), the wandering lover-persona declines Sapiencie’s offer of guidance out of its wretched forest of amorous desolation and she rejoins: ‘mais ta volente voy lancee | a faire ce qui t’est contraire’ (but I see your will is set on | acting against your best interests).²⁷ The Esperance of Alain Chartier’s *Livre de l’Esperance* rehearses a familiar maxim when she counsels: ‘celuy qui suyt son propre conseil se prive d’altruy suyte, et seul doit fourvoier qui tout seul se guide’ (someone who follows his own advice deprives himself of others’ assistance, and the person who guides himself alone will lose his solitary way).²⁸ For Milet’s lover, this risks being fulfilled when, having opted to follow Espoir rather than Sapiencie, he finds himself in danger of abandonment when Espoir then wants to leave him wandering alone ‘dedans la lande solitaire | ou mon gentil cueur se douloit’ (in the deserted plain | where my gentle heart felt pain; lines 1755–56).²⁹ But we need to be careful when thinking about the ‘self’ and ‘individual’ will of *dit* protagonists as guided parties, for a number of reasons.

23 • Esperance’s plea of busyness (Palmer 2019, 264–65; lines 3174–76), noting that she has to divide herself in more than a thousand parts to meet the needs of lovers, is also a delightfully reflexive moment of intertextual humor, given the prevalence of her personification across late-medieval *dits*.

24 • Kay 2008, 34.

25 • In terms of compositional guidance, the *Remede* has of course also been seen as a *summa* of lyric techniques (Hoepffner 1908–21, 2: xiv), whereby  within the poetic fiction, pedagogically guides the persona by teaching him newer styles at the same time that extratextual Machaut guides the reader through an evolution of compositional styles. As Tamsyn Mahoney-Steel (2021a) has explored, the soundscape informing the persona’s education is not limited to music.

26 • Palmer 1993a, 32–33 (lines 203–04).

27 • Droz and Piaget 1910, lines 1484–85 (my translation). Subsequent references to the *Forest* will be incorporated in the text.

28 • Rouy 1989, 131–32 (my translation). For the maxim, see Di Stefano 2015, 1: 826.

29 • I explain further below the context for, and identities involved in, the *Forest*’s scenario of guide selection.

Firstly, it is sometimes the persona themselves who acts as guide, whether requested by a third party or by self-appointment. In the *Confort d'ami*, he sets out to 'donner confort' (offer [...] consolation)³⁰ to Charles of Navarre along the same lines as Esperance's advice in the *Remede* to hope for change in circumstance; it yields a similarly temporary benefit, since, by the end of the *Confort*, the king is already requesting fresh consolation.³¹ In the *Jugement Bebaingne*, the guidance that the persona provides to the debating knight and lady is primarily procedural and narrative: he eagerly intercedes to remedy their impasse by supplying a judge to move their situation forward. Being accosted by the lady's little dog gives him his entrée to join their company and lead them to Durbuy:

Pour avoir voie
Et achoison d'aler ou je vouloie. (lines 1216–17)

For it gave me the opportunity and occasion to go where I wished.³²

Secondly, let us recall that a fundamental principle of *dit* personification allegory is to dramatize the internal workings of the persona's mind, in the same way that Boethius's Lady Philosophy 'is not an external agency or discipline but the protagonist's capacity for it'.³³ Selfhood, insofar as it represents an individual human consciousness, is thus relationally constituted, with the 'I' as one part of a dialogue between more or less rational and emotional impulses that find expression in personified guise—such as Sapience (prudential wisdom) and Espoir (hopeful desire) in the *Forest*—and a part that is continually, sometimes messily in a process of formation.³⁴ A particularly striking example of the self in disjuncture, a kind of dysphoria, occurs in Achille Caulier's *La Cruelle femme en amours* (1430), one of the poetic responses to Chartier's *La Belle Dame sans Mercy* (1424), which develops significantly the narrative preamble to debate and the psychological state of the persona. He finds himself in 'oubly' (apathy), a 'fantasieux estat' (bizarre state of mind) defined as an absence of perception and consciousness: 'sans memoire, sens, ou advis' (without memory, mind, or reason).³⁵ This is not a consciously guidable state: he has been transported by Imagination to a palace, though seems not to have known it at the time (simply stating passively 'fuz sy ravis' [I was swept away]) and lacked the capacity to control his senses: 'n'y pos mon regard arrester | Sur une chose' (I could not fix my eye | on a single thing).³⁶ He thus, for a while, is deprived of all will and capacity to participate actively in the narrative as an I/eye.

A third reason for exercising caution when thinking about the guided self is that a given 'I' does not necessarily denote a discrete human consciousness. In *dits*, subjectivity is a

30 • Palmer 2019, 324–25 (line 1); also online: <<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/palmer-machaut-the-boethian-poems-confort>>

31 • Palmer 2019, 514–15 (lines 3999–4000). Kay 2008, 33.

32 • Wimsatt and Kibler 1988, 120–21.

33 • Kay 2008, 23; this principle obtains especially in pilgrimage allegories, on which, see Kamath 2012, esp. p. 32. Cf. Delogu 2017.

34 • On the 'I in formation', see Swift 2012.

35 • McRae 2004, lines 69, 73, 76.

36 • McRae 2004, lines 79, 118–19.

non-unitary entity: being continually in formation, it is likewise porous and may be shared between figures in the narrative – for example, in the *Behaingne*, when the clerkly persona-guide spies from outside the King's court another clerk inside ('S'i ot .i. clerq que nommer ne saroye' [and a clerk, whom I cannot name]),³⁷ this second figure may be read as sharing the narratorial vantage-point function of our protagonist, in a kind of relay that does not require each character to be a separate being. The illustrations in MS C devised for the *Behaingne* seem to encourage such a reading of the text by using its human figures (as well as the lady's little dog) as markers of shifting narrative point of view.³⁸ The human body can operate pictorially as a visual convention that fosters a mobile perspective on character relationality. I believe we encounter something similar in MS C's *Remede*, especially its opening miniature on fol. 23^r which, in respect of the text's cast of characters, includes an unknown additional figure to the left of the persona as he looks towards his lady ascending the steps of her residence (Figure 1.1). Such intersubjectivity preoccupies me here because I think the figure is inserted as a kind of guide (by, thereby, the guiding hand of the illustrator or compiler – potentially Machaut himself as supervisor of MS C), or, at least, as a cue for reflection on guidance and point of view. Who is he and what is his relation to the persona? Earp refers to him as 'a young manservant',³⁹ which is perfectly plausible if we want to ascribe to this companion a particular identity; the lady is, after all, accompanied by maidservants in a parallel position. Using *A Guide's* manuscript listing to consider persona and companion in the context of other, later opening miniatures for the *Remede* is interesting in respect of guidance: several show an older and a younger male in a hierarchical didactic relationship. In MS Vg, a clerk stands instructing a somewhat wriggling, inattentive boy whom a woman tries to hold still (fol. 90^r); MS A has an elderly bearded man sitting instructing a youth (fol. 49^v), while in MS Pm, 'an old man holding a rod for discipline sits instructing a young man' (fol. 47^r).⁴⁰ As Huot notes, 'these figures do not correspond to any personages within the *dit*: they illustrate the prologue discussion of the process of learning',⁴¹ and may thereby represent older and younger versions of the persona.

Is this what we see in MS C? I think what we have here is rather different, and is consonant within the manuscript with the pictorial program of the *Behaingne* immediately preceding it,⁴² insofar as the maidservant (the 'pucelete' [young girl])⁴³ of passing mention in that text) was used extensively in its miniatures to prompt the viewer to think about framing and point of view. The 'manservant' figure on fol. 23^r operates as a kind of pivot who invites us to focus on the activity of seeing: positioned within the image, physically aligned with the

37 • Wimsatt and Kibler 1988, 134–35 (line 1474).

38 • Swift 2016a, 37–40.

39 • Earp 1995a, 152. Huot (1987a, 250) likewise refers to him as 'his manservant'.

40 • Earp 1995a, 152.

41 • Huot 1987a, 279.

42 • Huot (1987a, 257 n. 15) notes an intervisual link, as the *Remede's* lady wears (almost) throughout the same pink hat worn by the persona of the *Behaingne* in its opening miniature.

43 • Wimsatt and Kibler 1988, 62–63 (line 46).



Figure 1.1: MS C, fol. 23', detail (BnF)

persona, but with the feather of his cap protruding without the frame of the miniature and his back turned somewhat towards the viewer of the page, aligning him with our vantage point.⁴⁴ Huot refers to the scene as a 'classic representation of dous regart';⁴⁵ as such, within a *dit*, it is fraught with perils of misinterpretation. From one point of view, the image shows the lady exactly as described by the retrospective narrating persona in the text:

[Ses yex] en riant m'ont en mains lieux
Prié que par amour l'amasse. (lines 98–99)

[Her eyes] as they smiled unceasingly | Begged me to love her.

Her intention is underscored by the pointed finger that she gestures in his direction. This is a scene, therefore, of the persona consenting to being seduced by the lady's gaze:

Et mes cuers voloit que je fusse
Tous siens, et je aussi le voloie,

44 • On the feathered cap, see Kathleen Wilson Ruffo's chapter in this volume.

45 • Huot 1987a, 250.

Et pour ce a eaus m'en consilloie.
Si qu'einsi fui, se Diex me gart,
Pris par Dous Ris et Dous Regart. (lines 102–06)

And my heart wished that I were | Completely hers, which was my wish too, | And so I followed
what those eyes advised. | The result was, God keep me, that right then | Sweet Laughter and
Sweet Look took me prisoner.

But is the 'dous regart' in question definitely proceeding from her gaze and not his? Might we construe it as a wish-fulfillment projection from *his* 'eaus', through force of desiring will (the repeated 'voloi[t/e]'), such that he in fact entraps himself by his own eyes?⁴⁶ An alternative point of view on the miniature thus has him seeing what he *wants* to see: this is consonant with what he recounts in the text, but can anyone vouch for the reliability of that account when he ultimately finds (lines 4170–71 above) that he cannot interpret (or, perhaps, chooses not to understand) his lady's gaze? I contend that the presence and positioning of the additional viewer-figure encourages this sort of scrutiny and prompts a second look at how the content of the scene may be examined, opening it up as a question, and intersecting thereby with the questionable didacticism of the poem's opening passage. Unlike the later manuscripts' illustrations mentioned above, MS C does not portray the relationship between the two men as one of hierarchy: the manservant looks at the persona while he looks and sees what he observes, though not quite from the same angle, at one remove, set back at a slight distance; he offers, through my interpretation above, an implied commentary on the persona's activity of seeing, guiding our view as audience of both text and image.

Guides in late-medieval *dits* show the way physically (like the *Behaingne's* bumptious conductor-persona) and verbally (as in Esperance's speech and song in the *Remede*), but also visually: they are figures with whom to look, like the added figure in MS C's *Remede* miniature, in order to enrich or clarify sight literally or figuratively for gain in knowledge, especially self-knowledge. The process of accompanied looking – and, for the reader/viewer, of seeing through plural eye-views – further underscores the porosity of selfhood in the *dit* by demonstrating 'the intersubjectivity constitutive of what is recognizable as knowledge.'⁴⁷ Going back to Boethius, it is the protagonist's sight that Philosophy first targets by gazing keenly and directly at him as she strives to 'clear his eyes of the mist of mortal affairs that clouds them.'⁴⁸ She exhorts him repeatedly to see better: to view the shape of false happiness 'properly and thoroughly (*perspicaciter*)' and 'direct your gaze (*oculos deducis*) more watchfully to discern the truth.'⁴⁹ In effect, she is guiding him into becoming his own guide through *informed* self-guiding that looks forward with good judgment, since 'it is never enough for a man to contemplate what is before his eyes: prudence must measure up how things will

46 • On such imaginative projections of amorous wish-fulfillment in Froissart, see Swift 2008, 147–53; Swift 2014, 203–08.

47 • Kay 2013, 197.

48 • Tester 1973, I.ii.2.15–16.

49 • Tester 1973, III.ix.1–3, III.xii.45–46.

work out in future.⁵⁰ We find a similar approach to guidance in late-medieval *dits*.⁵¹ Burgundian chronicler and poet Olivier de La Marche's widely disseminated and translated stanzaic allegorical dream-narrative in the *ars moriendi* tradition, *Le Chevalier délibéré* (1483), traces the education of an aging persona in how to prepare himself to face death and achieve salvation. Notwithstanding the guidance of various personified entities including Pensee and Entendement, he drifts off down the path of Abuz, who deludes him with the illusion of reliving his youth:

Je fuz de cuyder si tres plain
Que je ne me recougnissoie.
Ou j'aloys, je ne le sçavoie.
Abuz me mascha celle oublie:
Ainsi chemine qui s'oublye.

I was so filled with thought | That I lost my bearings | And knew not where I was going. |
Delusion prepared this oblivion for me: | Thus rides one who forgets himself.⁵²

Souvenir intervenes to redress his view: 'Et me bouta devant mes yeulx | Le Miroir de choses passees' (And [Remembrance] thrust before my eyes | The Mirror of Things Past; strophe 115) and the protagonist gradually begins to assume direction of his thoughts and perspective:

Ainsi je me resjouÿsoie
En la Viellesse ou je me vy
Et en mes faiz passés pensoie. (strophe 133)

Thus I cheered myself | In Old Age when I saw myself | And thought of my past deeds.

He then encounters Fresche Memoire who guides him around a cemetery to help him better put on 'the spectacles of death'⁵³ and understand that the key factor determining his fate will not be worldly status, but the state of his conscience when he dies. Fresche Memoire, picking up the relay from Souvenir, thereby holds up a mirror to his present and future: 'Liz et retiens et cy te mire' (read and remember and reflect; strophe 165). The formula '[je/la] viz' (I saw), used by the protagonist throughout in response to his guides' 'tu voi[s/z]' (you see), thus evolves in epistemological purport, increasingly complemented by greater discernment in 'je recougnuz' (I recognized), 'j'apperceux' (I perceived). Delighted by the help of Fresche Memoire – 'Heureux fuz que tel guide avoye' (I was happy to have such a guide; strophe 214) – he nonetheless recognizes both that this is a collaborative relationship – 'Je la menay et elle moy' (I escorted her and she me; strophe 214) – and that, accordingly, he must invest effort in response to her guidance:

Ce qu'elle dist c'estoit raison,
Combien que ce fust fort a faire
[...]

50 • Tester 1973, II.i.45–47.

51 • The similarity lies in the approach; for marked difference in the guidance's content, see Kay 2008, 30–33.

52 • Carroll and Wilson 1999, strophe 108. Subsequent references will be incorporated in the text.

53 • See Taylor 1984, 40.

Les choses qu'elle me monstra
Me firent penser a loisir. (strophes 212, 213)

What she said was right, | However hard to do. | [...] | The things that she showed me | Made
me muse a while.

In a richly illustrated incunable of the *Chevalier*, known today as the Gouda edition,⁵⁴ a woodcut image of the cemetery scene (Figure 1.2) seems to underscore both the importance of interaction between persona and personification and the process of seeing as discernment – of moving, in Boethius-persona's terms, from glimpse (III.ix.8) to clear view with the eye of intelligence (V.iv.89) to inward understanding (*me interius animadvertisse*; III.ix.83).⁵⁵ It also recalls to some extent the pairing of persona and companion in MS C's *Remede* miniature, insofar as it prompts us to relate the content of the scene to the points of view of those shown seeing it. In the foreground of the Gouda woodcut, Fresche Memoire has her back to us, turning to face the protagonist who stands at left facing outwards, whilst she also gestures forwards with her right arm – that is, gestures away from the reader/viewer towards graves that we see beyond them. This spatial arrangement places the reader/viewer in a position in parallel with the protagonist, watching him being guided by Fresche Memoire's eye-view: she is shown displaying the cemetery's contents to her ward, as if at a stage before he has turned to view them himself. Whence, I would argue, the heterogeneity of what is illustrated – the cemetery's tremendously diverse mix of representations of the deceased exceeds in variety the text's description of the graves. It is presented as material awaiting digestion – reflection and hard thought – that will process into orderly narrative his understanding of what he sees.

What La Marche is relaying through his persona's account are both the experiences of the dreaming protagonist at the time and their narrative digestion thereafter: for instance, in the above quotation from strophe 212, the experiencing-I's sense was 'what Fresche Memoire is telling me is hard to do', which the retrospective narrating-I glosses with the matured understanding that 'it was right even though it was hard'. A striking example of the *dit's* characteristically multi-leveled narrative structure being mobilized to relay the relationship between guided and self-guiding parties occurs in French court writer Octovien de Saint-Gelais's *Sejour d'honneur* (1489–94). This allegorical dream narrative traces a grief-stricken persona's journey of moral and spiritual education through a varied landscape, on land and at sea, arriving ultimately at the Hermitage d'Entendement before he awakes and writes up his peregrination. Like the *Chevalier*, the text is permeated with the formula 'la vy' that invites interrogation of the epistemological import of acts of ocular witness. I focus here on the persona's first voyage aboard the Nef d'Abus across the Mer Mondaine.⁵⁶ What guides

54 • Sutch 2006, 345, 346 n. 45.

55 • The Gouda woodcuts are reproduced in Messerli 2010, and the cemetery illustration is discussed in Swift 2016b, 269–77. I thank Jean Bonna for kind permission to reproduce this image from his private collection.

56 • Duval 2002, II.vi. Subsequent references (my translation) are incorporated in the text. See also Swift 2016b, 241–45.

Cy monstre fresche memoire a lacteur les sepultures des anciēa
trepassēz. et par les elcriptures voit ceulc qui ont este desconfiz
par debile ou par accidēt. Et cōmence la tierce partie de ce liure.



Figure 1.2: Olivier de La Marche, *Le Chevalier délibéré*. Gouda: Collaciebroeders, c. 1489 (Geneva, Bibliothèque Jean Bonna)

his view is the motion of the waves, which are wild and disorderly:

Puys ça, puys la, l'ung contre l'autre hurtans,
Selon que l'eau et les undes les maintent. (II.vi.26–27)

Hither and thither, one thing colliding with another | as the movement of the water and the waves carries them.

In consequence, what he cannot see becomes at times more pertinent, and dominant, than what he is able to distinguish:

Et toutesfoys assés peu j'en congneuz,
Car les vagues de Mondaine Plaisance
M'en osterent pour lors la congnoissance. (II.vi.46–48)

But I could make out very little, | because the waves of Worldly Pleasure | denied me knowledge of them for the time being.

Saint-Gelais renders his persona's chaotic vision stylistically through disrupted syntax and interjections to convey disarray, as well as the repeated construction 'Et maintenant (And now) + [present tense verb]' (for example, II.vi.75, 204) to introduce his observations without clear chronological progression. The dreaming experiencing-I thus has no capacity to direct events according to his will, as he laments: 'Au sien [=Abus] vouloir, non au mien, suis souzbmys' (I am guided by his [=Delusion's] will, not my own; II.vi.190). There is didactic import to this narrative disorder, since what are floating scattered on the sea are the corpses of people who dedicated themselves to worldly affairs and suffered for it.⁵⁷ The awoken writing-I is able to impose his compositional will on disrupted experience and perform thereby a kind of retrospective rescue of the identities of the dead whose bodies were irrevocably cast 'à la mercy | Des grans undes [...] | Comme chose gectee a l'avanture' (at the mercy of the great waves [...] like a thing tossed haphazardly; II.vi.76–78). He does so by inserting intercessory prayer, but also by adding commentary, extrapolating the deceased's biography as in the case of Louis XI: he presents the story of his life and the sources of his renown in a series of rhyming couplets (II.vi.61–74), whereby each couplet constitutes a complete syntactic unit and has as its incipit the subject relative pronoun referring back to Louis; for example:

Qui tant conquist, qui tant fut plain d'honneur,
Si liberal et tant large donneur. (II.vi.61–62)

Who conquered so much, who was so full of honour, | such a liberal and generous donor.

This formulaic presentation imposes order and regularity through its structural pattern, as well as, regarding content, establishing Louis as the active subject of verbs instead of the passive object of the waves. The recuperation effected by the persona's deployment of versification and syntax is thus multifaceted: textual and narrative, but also moral – emphatically

57 • See Swift 2016b, 241–43.

commending Louis's contribution to worldly life – and spiritual in its prayerful commemoration. He thus acts as guide in multiple ways: in relation to his dreaming counterpart, he imposes the structure and order that the experiencing-I lacked; in organizing the material, he also intervenes interpretively to offer the reader an alternative perspective on the corpses of the Mer Mondaine.

One risk emerging from the above discussion of two texts whose protagonists overcome Abuz and conclude their dreams in the company – literal and figurative – of Entendement,⁵⁸ is that guidance comes across as a tidy, teleological process. In this final section I want instead to underline the contingencies, incompleteness, and potential messiness of guiding as a fundamentally imperfect phenomenon. Indeed, we might already point to how, whilst they ended their dreams in a mature state of self-knowledge, there is no guarantee that La Marche's and Saint-Gelais's personae went on to live out in waking life their enhanced understanding; the *Chevalier's* protagonist already reports feeling adrift after Entendement's departure: 'je me trouvoy tout esperdu' (I felt completely lost; strophe 335).

Having recourse to a guide is prompted by perception of lack or fear of drift. Molinet advises, echoing the maxim cited by Chartier's Esperance:

A cop est on fourvoyé qui n'a guide:
Tousjours bon droit a bon mestier d'ayde.⁵⁹

Someone who has no guide immediately loses their way: | good reason is always in good need of help.

He counsels need for guidance as default, ongoing best practice. In the dramatic and self-dramatizing world of late-medieval *dit* personae, however, recourse is more often an emergency measure – the situation of need already at crisis point, the protagonist well astray physically and/or psychologically. They are stuck, like the *Remede's* lover having shut down in response to his lady's request to know the composer of the lay: shame, love, beauty and fear

Me tollirent si le memoire
Et les .v. sens que ne puis croire
Qu'onques amans fust en tel point;
Ne de parler si mal a point. (lines 711–14)

So robbed me of memory, | As well as of my five senses, I couldn't believe | A lover had ever found himself this distressed | Or so utterly unable to speak.

Or like Milet's lover lost in the wood 

Tout seul cheminant me trouvoye
En paine desplaisant et dure. (lines 142–43)

I found myself travelling all alone | in painful and grievous sorrow.

58 • La Marche's persona receives bedside counsel from Entendement (strophes 282–334) on how to enter the lists against death.

59 • Dupire 1937b, 770, lines 71–72 (my translation).

Unfortunately and ironically, this is a poor state in which to come by guidance as it does not lend itself to sound judgment: we recall the persona of the *Remede's* prologue recalling how, whilst recognizing himself to have 'bien mestier d'apprendre' nevertheless pressed on with loving without taking 'conseil'. In such a precarious moment, human inclination, especially one amorously disposed, is apt to pursue the readiest remedy: from 'an appetite and impulse towards pleasure', the soul 'willingly turns to that which delights it'.⁶⁰ So it is in the *Forest*, when the lover refuses rescue by Sapience, preferring to throw in his lot with Espoir so as to remain on the path of desire, however painful.

Like Boethius's *Philosophy* (I.ii.13–14), Milet's Sapience identifies herself as appearing to her ward because she has been lost by him – he formerly did not lack guidance, but has himself created the need by drifting from it/her:⁶¹

Mais depuis Fualte de Sagesse
Te fist de moy tant eslongner
Qu'on peut congnoistre a ta simplese
Que tu en as a besongner. (lines 923–26)

But then Lack of Good Sense | made you stray so far from me | that one can tell by your ignorance | how much you need it.

Clueless, he tried to steer his own path, with the inevitable outcome:

Et pource que tu ne sçais pas,
Y es tu seul sans moy venu
Tant qu'il t'en est mal advenu. (lines 838–40)

And it's because you go about in ignorance | that you've come here alone without me | such that things have gone badly for you.

The lover initially implores her help to guide him out of the wood:

Je vous requier: soyez ma guide
Affin que de ce vil boys vuyde. (lines 1031–36)

I beg you: be my guide | so that I can leave this terrible wood.

But, unwilling to give up his devotion to amorous desire, he does not care for her diagnosis of the cause of his divagation:

Tu es par amours esgaré
En ceste meschante forest. (lines 1222–23)
You are led astray by love | into this wretched forest.

60 • Robin Kirkpatrick (1987, 38) signals the ambivalence of Marco Lombardo's observation in Dante's *Purgatorio* (xvi.90) that the innocent soul when first created 'volontier torna a ciò che la trastulla'.

61 • Absence is also pertinent to Molinet's statement about ongoing need for good guidance in *Gaiges retrenchiés* (Dupire 1937b, 770), which he subtends with threat of strike action in response to a wage cut. 'Toujours' is thus itself contingent: here, an appeal to one Bauduin de Lannoy to intercede on Molinet's behalf with Archduke Philip the Handsome (Brown 1995, 220–24).

Stuck, he settles down to listen to Sapience and Espoir debate their alternative remedies for his misfortune:

Lors m'assiz au milieu d'eux
Pour mieulx leurs questions entendre
Affin que j'apparceusse d'eulx
Remede pour mon cas deffendre. (lines 1518–21)

And so I sat down between them, | the better to hear their debate, | so that I might glean from them | a solution to my situation.

Which should he choose as his guide? He has, echoing Machaut's *Remede*, a familiar dilemma: a lady who has not yet returned his favor – does he persist in devotion in the hope of change or quit from fear of woe? Sapience is trenchant, advising him to be guided by previous examples of unhappy lovers:

Il pert son temps a se defaire:
Aux preudhoms doit prendre exemplaire,
Je luy conseille. (lines 1463–65)

He wastes his time destroying himself: | he should learn from the example of honorable men, | is what I advise.

Seeing that he inclines towards Espoir, she lays her epistemic cards on the table:

J'ay toute la science aprinse
D'amours, sans en faillir d'ung point;
Mais plus la congnois, moins la prise –
Se tu me crois ne t'y metz point. (lines 1562–65)

I have acquired all knowledge | of love, completely and flawlessly; | but the more you learn, the less you value it – | if you believe me, you don't show it.

The lover decides to disregard her knowledge and incline towards promise of pleasure. As her parting shot, Sapience identifies his blinkered willfulness in guiding himself by self-interested desire:

Adieu, pensez a vostre affaire:
Tel remede en voz faitz donrés
Qu'il vous semblera bon a faire. (lines 1572–74)

Farewell, reflect on your situation: | you will assign the remedy for your ills | that seems to you the right one.

Unsurprisingly, he comes unstuck; or, rather, he and Espoir get mired in a swamp and the latter wants to leave. Espoir then starts to sound uncannily like Sapience, advising that, to improve his prospects, the lover look to learn self-governance:


Mon serment, a ce que je sens:
Tu auras encores du bien
Mais que tu soyes congnoissans
Et que tu te gouvernes bien. (lines 1745–48)

My promise, from what I can see: | you will have happiness again | if only you keep learning | and govern yourself well.

Espoir's change of heart seems to summon a savior, Subtilité, who rides up to offer them escape, which both now accept under her guidance ('presentement guider te vueil' [I wish to guide you now]; line 1802).

Subtilité's discourse picks up where Espoir's 'serment' left off, reframing hope in a repositioned remedy beyond worldly fortune, echoing thereby Boethius's *Esperance*:

A bien faire te fault penser
Affin que congnoisses ton fait.
[...]
Et Dieu nous a mis entre mains
De son bon vouloir charitable:
Remede seur et veritable
Pour nous y gouverner [...] bien. (lines 1981–82, 1993–96)

You must think about doing good | in order to understand your situation. | [...] |And God has placed us in the hands of his charitable benevolence: a certain and true answer for how to lead a good life. 

'Guider', 'congnoistre' and '[se] gouverner' are keywords for Subtilité, and their interrelation highlights guidance as a cooperative act, with either party, guide and guided, contingent upon the other to achieve progress:

Nous guideray sans nulle faulte
Mais ne m'esloignez ung seul pas. (lines 2024–25)

I will guide us unfailingly | but don't drift a single step away from me.

Forward movement also matters because of the narrative context of the *dit* – that is to say that it is, in its overall framework (whether or not it features intercalated *formes fixes*), narrative rather than lyric. That does not mean, however, that guidance always results in linear progression – indeed, part of Milet's lover's problem in following Espoir rather than Sapience was that further movement disabled rather than enabled progress:

Cheminoye parmy la sente
Mais plus exploictoye ma voye
Et plus de desplaisir avoye. (lines 1714–16)

I travelled along the path, | but the further on I went | the more unhappy I felt.

Why did the lover decline to follow Sapience but accept to follow Subtilité? Was it a matter of timing: earlier on he was content to stick with the path of suffering for love, but later had enough when the prospect of being a martyr for love (Espoir's prediction: 'Demourrons mors d'ung grief soucy' [We shall be stuck here dead from grievous woe]; line 1727) became more proximate and literalized? Or was it a case of keeping company: fine as long as Espoir stuck around, but the last straw when he wanted to leave? Or does the reason lie in the differing approaches to guidance adopted by the two personifications who otherwise appear very similar in their mastery of 'science' (line 1828)? Sapience counsels fear of the future based on knowledge of past and present; Subtilité steps epistemologically outside the

contingencies of temporality and pitches her promise of remedy in a universal context of divine guidance by the one truly 'feable guide' (trustworthy guide),⁶² which nonetheless still requires the collaboration of human will.

Are we called to be critical of Sapience for failing to secure the lover's adherence: do we see her as having failed? Should we be classifying guides as 'good' or 'bad', like Boethius's Philosophy condemning the poetic Muses ('they accustom a man's mind to his ills, not rid him of them', I.i.33–34)?⁶³ I think not in the *dits*, and this is where my insistence on the inherent imperfection of guidance comes to the fore, and I mean 'imperfection' without value judgment attached: it is of its nature incomplete and partial, because it is intersubjective and the fruit of distributed responsibility between guiding and guided parties (themselves not necessarily clearly separate or distinct);⁶⁴ guides are also more often plural than singular – Boethius's Philosophy is an outlier rather than a model in this regard. Full knowledge or total self-knowledge will never be the fruits of late-medieval *dit* personae – nor modern scholars – who will never surrender the partiality of their 'vouloir', and will at best sit (poetically) productively with the discomfort of (amorous) uncertainty,⁶⁵ compositionally revisiting their painful experience, guiding themselves and their readers towards the present through a mapping of the past, like the *Remede* persona never knowing for sure what his lady meant. A scenario of guidance is an exhortation to think critically and together, in companionship, with openness to the future: whence the prominence of 'vouloir', a wish whose fulfillment depends on its application, as when, at the start of the *Fonteinne amoureuse*, the persona submits:

Or pri a ceuls qui le lironr,
Qui le bien dou mal eslironr,
S'il y est, qu'il vueillent au lire
Laissier le mal, le bien eslire. (lines 13–16)

Now I ask those about to read | To separate the good from the mediocre, | If there's any, to please
as they read | Forget the bad and choose the good.⁶⁶

His will exhorts the reader's to discern guidance. The audiences, present and future, of a given *dit* and its manuscript presentation are part of that cooperative pact. How does this all relate to the overall framework of didacticism: is guidance a particular didactic orientation, or are the two synonymous? Thinking about didacticism from the point of view of guidance, and specifically of *A Guide*, can helpfully loosen any rigid sense of a master-pupil instruction dynamic, arrest hasty value judgment, valorize the role of an organizing gaze, and foreground the importance of collaboration and contingency: 'je vous tiens pour ma guide'. As scholars of Machaut, we often want to take *him* as our guide; we point, as evidence of his guiding hand, to the stamp of supervisory authority in the rubric heading MS A's index: 'Vesci l'ordenance

62 • Rouy 1989, 155.

63 • Cf. Entendement's self-reproach for not having better guided the protagonist in Rouy 1989, 22.

64 • Cf. Kirkpatrick (1987, 10) on how the *Inferno* is 'at one and the same time, a celebration and a critique of Virgil's authority. But this critique also bears upon Dante's own choice of Virgil as guide'.

65 • Swift 2014, 209–10.

66 • Palmer 1993a, 90–91.

que G de Machau wet qu'il ait en son livre' (Here is the order that G. de Machaut wants his book to have; fol. A^v). But it, too, is only an expression of wish, taking the subjective mood. Interpretation of editorial organization lies with the reader in response to that wish, itself scribed from or attributed to Machaut-as-editor. And the onus is in fact *placed* on the reader in the (far less frequently cited) rubric at the end of the index that refers to a following list of lyrics: 'Ces choses qui s'ensuivent trouverez en Remede de Fortune' (You will find the following items in the *Remede de Fortune*; fol. B^v). We may be organized, accompanied, and facilitated in our (re)search, but it is up to us what, and how, we find.

