

NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AS POWER: FEMALE SANCTITY IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

REMON BADAN

Doctoral Project: Medieval Female Icons



Supervisors:

Prof. Florence Bourgne (Sorbonne Université)

Prof. Jan Shaw (University of Sydney)



SCHOLARSHIP OVERVIEW

- Embodiment & Devotion — **Bynum · McAvoy · Barr**
- Hagiographic Archetypes & Politics — **Wogan-Browne · von Contzen · Ash**
- Affective Scripts & Communities — **McNamer · Rosenwein**
- Body–Text Entanglement & Mediation — **Lochrie · Staley · Minnis · Atkinson**
- Emotion as Practice / Stickiness — **Scheer · Ahmed**

TAKEAWAY: *Sanctity = embodied, affective, mediated, archetypal*

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do late-medieval texts about saintly women turn emotions designed to subjugate them into recognizable and repeatable signs of sanctity?



- I. How are negative emotions performed and reappropriated by the saintly woman herself?
- II. How do these affective patterns persist through mediation and transmission?

PROJECT STRUCTURE

CHAPTER 1 — HAGIOGRAPHY

Clemence of Barking · *Life of St. Catherine* · late 12th c.

Nicholas Trevet · *Chronicles* (Constance narrative) · early 14th c.

Geoffrey Chaucer · *The Man of Law's Tale* · late 14th c.

John Gower · *Confessio Amantis* · c. 1390

John Lydgate · *Lyfe of Seynte Margarete* · early 15th c.

CHAPTER 2 — MYSTICISM

Julian of Norwich · *Revelations of Divine Love* (late 14th c.)

Margery Kempe · *The Book of Margery Kempe* (c. 1438)

CHAPTER 3 — MEDIATION / AUTHORSHIP



CHAPTER 1

KEY FIGURES & TEXTS

- ***VIRGIN MARTYR*** : Spiritual eloquence framed through virginity and submission

Clemence of Barking, *Life of St. Catherine* (late 12th century)

- ***EXILED QUEEN*** : Holiness embodied through *moral constancy in displacement*

Nicholas Trevet, *Chronicles (Constance narrative)* (early 14th century)

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Man of Law's Tale* (late 14th century)

John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* (c. 1390)

- ***MATERNAL SAINT***: Spiritual authority grounded in *bodily suffering, femininity and redemptive care*.

John Lydgate, *The Lyfe of Seynte Margarete* (early 15th century)



CHAPTER 1 CASE STUDY

The Man of Law's Tale

PLOT RECAP

- I. □ *Daughter of a Roman Emperor*
- II. ♂ Marries Sultan of Syria (after his conversion)
- III. ✕ □ Massacre at wedding → Constance cast out to sea
- IV. ⚓ Washes ashore in Northumberland → converts others
- V. ⚖ □ Falsely accused of murder → divine vindication
- VI. 👑 Marries King Alla → betrayed → second exile
- VII. ⚓ Final return to Rome → reconciliation

NARRATIVE PASSIVITY

“Wommen are born to thraldom and penance” (286)

“To shippe is broght this woful faire mayde” (316)



CHAPTER 1 CASE STUDY

The Man of Law's Tale

I. THE COURT DEMANDS DEFENSE

“Allas! Custance, thou hast no champioun,
Ne fighte kanstow nocht, so weylaway!

...

For, but if Crist open myracle kithe,
Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swithe.” (ll. 631–7)

II. SILENT PRAYER REPLACES ARGUMENT

“She sette hire doun on knees, and thus she sayde:
Immortal God, that savedest Susanne

...

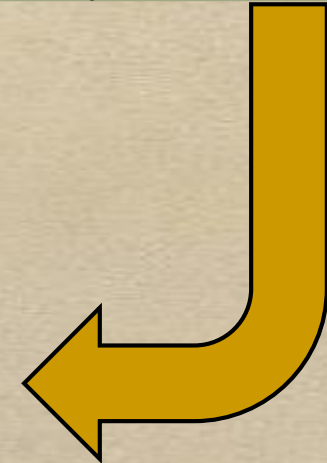
If I be giltlees of this felonye,
My socour be, for ellis shal I dye!” (ll. 638–644)



III. SILENCE AND ENDURANCE REORDER THE SCENE

“An hand hym smoot upon the nekke-boon,
That doun he fil atones as a stoon,
And bothe his eyen broste out of his face.” (ll. 669–672)

“...by Custances mediacioun,
*The kyng -- and many another in that place --
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!*” (ll. 684–686)



CHAPTER 2

Mystics and Embodied Authorship

INHERITED TRADITIONS

Mary Magdalene — affective devotion & penitence

St Margaret — bodily suffering & triumph

St Cecilia — chastity and visionary music

St Bridget of Sweden — revelation through dictation

TRANSFORMATION

Julian of Norwich → **Revelations of Divine Love**

Suffering becomes theological authorship


Margery Kempe → **The Book of Margery Kempe**

Shame and weeping become performative authority

Patriarchal/Hagiographical models → Mystical practice → Textual Agency

CHAPTER 2 CASE STUDY

Magdalenian Mimesis: A Four-Step Arc of Agency

- 
- I. **FRAME** — Aligns Kempe with Magdalene (sin → repentance → intimacy)
 - II. **INHABIT** — Embodies Magdalene's affective repertoire (tears, shame, exposure)
 - III. **AUTHENTICATE** — Recognition by Christ, clergy, and community
 - IV. **EXTEND** — Moves from imitation to public agency

CHAPTER 2 CASE STUDY

Step I. Framing the Scene

“Mary Mawdelyn was not aschamyd to cryen and wepyn for my sonys lofe. And therfor, dowtyr, yyf thu wylt be partabyl in owyr joye, thu must be partabil in owyr sorwe.” (ch. 29)

Sche stode in the same place ther Mary Mawdelyn stode whan Crist seyde to hir, "Mary, why wepyst thu?" (ch. 30)

- **The Narrative positions Kempe inside Magdalene's sanctity.**
- **Framing = authorizing imitation.**

CHAPTER 2 CASE STUDY

Step II. Inhabiting the Role

“Sche wept, sobbed, cryed so lowde that it wondyr was to heryn...and that grace sche myth not wythstonde.”(ch. 30)

“Sche was evyrmor strengthyd...and the mor bold to suffyr shamys and reprevys.”(ch. 30)

- **Tears = devotional technology → endurance.**

CHAPTER 2 CASE STUDY

Step III. Authentication

“I am above al Holy Chirch... I schal gon wyth the.”

(Christ to Kempe, ch. 29)

“Be not aschamyd... my sone schal flowyn so mech grace in the that al the world schal wondryn of the.”

(Virgin Mary, ch. 29)

- **Emotion → evidence of election → groundwork for later trials.**

CHAPTER 2 CASE STUDY

Step IV. Extending

“I schal weryn white clothys,
thow alle the world schuld wondyr on me.”

(ch. 30)

“Sche gaf hem mett of Cristys grave,
and they seyde, ‘Bone Cristian, prey pur me.’”

(ch. 31)

- **She acts: teaching, distributing relics, traveling, interceding.**
- **Emotion → vocation → self-directed agency.**

CHAPTER 3: Mediation and Authorship

Mediation = the making of sanctity through material form

KEY QUESTIONS

- I. What happens to female sanctity as it is shaped and transmitted through acts of textual and manuscript mediation?

- II. How do both women (Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe) and men (John Lydgate) write—and struggle to write—about female holiness?

• Dictation • Correction • Rubrication • Annotation • Layout • Paragraphing

CHAPTER 3

THE **RED INK** ANNOTATOR

CONTEXT

- Copied in **East Anglia (mid-15th c.)** → later housed at **Mount Grace Priory** (Carthusian, Yorkshire).
- Annotated extensively **before the Dissolution** by a Mount Grace monk.
- The red ink — hearts, flames, and marginal notes — became integral to the text.
 - Annotator known as “**The Red Ink Annotator.**”

MANUSCRIPT

merciful eye is evr upon y/dolbe y mayst boldly seyn to me
 of amor me^{is} is to seyn that is my lofe y/dolbe
 here me be al thy lofe/ al ye joy of thyn hert. Dolbe yf
 y wilt bethynk y/wel y/ haue rith gret cawse to lofe me a
 bovyn al thyng/ for ye gret zyft y/ q haue zowyn y be fy
 zyme/ e yet y/ haue an oyr gret cawse to lovyn me/ for y/
 haue ye wil of chastite. no y/ wyl a wedow thyn husbond
 leuyng in good hele. Dolbe q haue drawe y/ lofe of yn hert
 fro alle mennys hertys in to myn hert. On anue dole y/
 thowtyst it had ben in a maner vnpossybyl for to ben so
 e y/ tyme suffyrdyst y/ ful gret peyne in ym hert w/ fleschly
 affrayons. y/ ad colddyst y/ wyl agen to me/ seynng. lord
 for alle ye widdows smert. drawe al y/ lofe of myn hert
 in to thyn hert. Dolbe for alle yed cawse y/ mayn over
 cawse y/ e benefact abhach q haue schuld for y/ on y/ half
 y/ see e on zow half y/ see y/ haue gret cawse to lovyn me.
Now dolbe q wyl y/ y/ ete flesch a zow as y/ wyl wyl
 to don. y/ y/ be buxom e bonow to my wyl e to
 my byddyng. I leue thyn owyn wyl. And bydde
 thy gostly fadyrs y/ ye letyn ye don afc my wyl. y/ y/ wylt
 haue need y/ lesse grace. but so meche y/ moyt for y/ xalt
 han y/ same mede in hevyn as yow y/ fastydyst stille afc
 ym owyn wyl. Dolbe q badde y/ fyrst y/ y/ yuldyst leevyn
 flesch mete e non etyn. y/ y/ haue obeyd my wyl many
 zerys e absteynd y/ afc my counsel y/ y/ wylt y/ bydde y/
 y/ y/ report a zeyn to flesch mete. the fynd accour abay
 wiento grede seyde. blissful lord y/ pepyl y/ haue knowyn
 of myn abstynens so many zerys e sech me wylt accour
 e etyn flesch mete. ye wyl haue gret muert. and as y/

no Chap.



56.

flesh

TRANSLATION



Nota semper



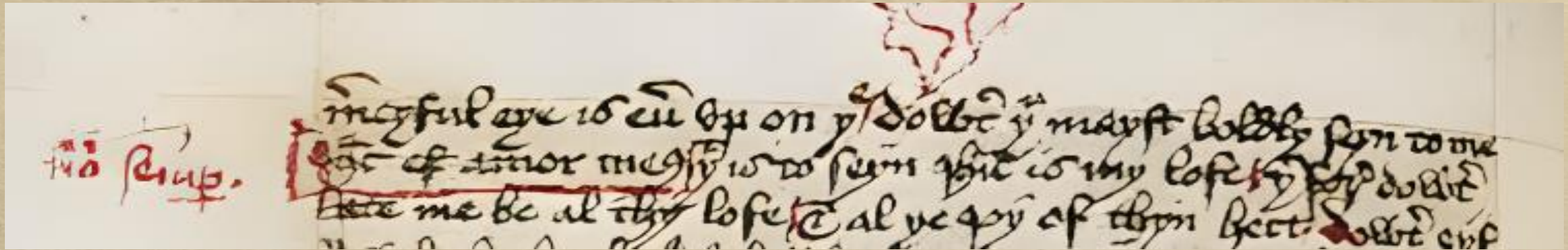
Flesh

merciful eye is evyr upon the. Dowtyr, thu mayst boldly
 seyn to me 'Ihesus est amor meus,' that is to seyn, 'Ihesu is
 my lofe.' Therfor, dowtyr, late me be al thy lofe and al the
 joy of thyn hert. Dowtyr, yf thu wilt bethynk the wel, thu
 hast rith gret cawse to lofe me abovyn al thyng for the gret
 gyftys that I have govyn the beforytyme. And yet thu hast an
 other gret cawse to lovyn me, for thu hast thi wil of chastite
 as thu wer a wedow, thyn husbond leuyng in good hele.
 Dowtyr, I have drawe the lofe of thin hert
 fro alle mennys hertys into myn hert. Sumtyme, dowtyr,
 thu thowtyst it had ben in a maner unpossybyl for to ben
 so, and [...]
 Now, dowtyr, I wyl that thu ete flesch agen as thu wer
 won to don, and that thu be buxom and bonowr to my wil
 and to my byddyng and leve thyn owyn wyl and bydde thy
 gostly fadyrs that thei latyn the don aftyr my wyl. And thu
 schalt have nevyrthesse grace, but so meche the mor, for
 thu schalt han the same mede in hevyn as thow thu
 fastydyst stille aftyr thin owyn wyl. Dowtyr, I badde the
 fyrst that thu schuldist leevyn flesch mete and non etyn,
 and thu hast obeyd my wyl many yerys and absteynd the
 aftyr my counsel.

CHAPTER 3

Reading the Marks (1)

MANUSCRIPT



MODERN MIDDLE ENGLISH

Nota semper

merciful eye is evyr upon the.  Dowtyr, thu mayst boldly seyn to me
'Ihesus est amor meus,' that is to seyn, 'Jhesu is my lofe...'

CHAPTER 3


Reading the Marks (2)

MANUSCRIPT



MODERN MIDDLE ENGLISH

as thou wer a wedow, thyne husband levynge in good heale.

 Dowtyr, I have drawe the love of thyne hert
fro alle mennys hertys into myne hert. Sumtyme, dowtyr,
thou thowtyst it had ben in a maner unpossybyl for to ben
so, and [...]

GG Flesh Now, dowtyr, I wyl that thou ete flesch agene as thou wer
wone to don, and that thou be buxome and bonowr to my wil
and to my byddyng and leve thyne owyn wil and bydde thy
gostly fadyrs that thei latyn the don aftyr my wil. And thou

DIGITAL AND CONTEMPORARY EXTENSIONS

DIGITAL

- Index of Medieval rhetorical & emotional features (built as I annotate)
- Searchable, retrievable: affect as structure & voice
- Open-source archive with collaborative potential

CONTEMPORARY

- *Robert Glück, Margery Kempe (1994)*
- *Ffiona Perigrinor, Reluctant Pilgrim (2021)*
- *Victoria MacKenzie, For Thy Great Pain... (2023)*

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a digital manuscript viewer. The browser's address bar shows 'about:blank'. The page title is 'HTML preview'. The main content area is titled 'THE BOOK OF MARGERY KEMPE' and 'Chapter 44'. A search bar at the top of the page contains the text 'Search keywords, phrases, or tags (e.g. schame, meknesse, sorwe)'. Below the search bar, there is a section titled 'INDEXED EMOTIONS' with a list of emotions: Shame, Humility, Lament, Fear, and More... The main text of the manuscript is displayed in a large font, with several words highlighted in color: 'howseylde al in white', 'sithen hath sche sufferyd meche despyte and meche schame', 'suffyr mor schame', 'suffyrd sche schamys and reprevys', and 'weryng of hir white clothys'. The text is in Middle English and describes the life of Margery Kempe.

Medieval affect → encoded in XML → traced into contemporary literature



Ovphono

Thank you so much!



Ovphono

Wyl nobw
This Ovp
To husboud
To synch ac

And may G
yiff he Des
On this se
And to his e
seyde his e
at the ffoop
They ffyl
And ffov all
They sloosh
Off his ha
The god d
Among the
Whovof men
But ffoptin
Donyed hyn
Whan he wa
N Gyt O
Off Amazon
wavyposya
Which in fo
And trust e



Ovphono

Wyl nobw
This Ovp
To husboud
To synch ac

Don hells 10
And Whoon
And may G
yiff he Des
On this se
And to his e
seyde his e
at the ffoop
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Ovphono

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