Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

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"SHE YS DED!": LOSS AND TRANSFORMATION IN *PEARL*, *THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS* AND *ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE*

Seher AKTARER

Ph. D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2024

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ABSTRACT

AKTARER, Seher. *"She ys ded!": Loss and Transformation in* Pearl*,* The Book of the Duchess *and* Orpheus and Eurydice, Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, 2024.

This study argues that in three selected medieval poems, *Pearl* by the *Pearl*-poet, *The Book of the Duchess* by Geoffrey Chaucer, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* by Robert Henryson, the personae experience profound introspective and spiritual transformation catalysed by their encounter with loss. Collectively, these poems illustrate a diverse array of emotional, spiritual, and psychological responses to loss. These responses caused by loss serve as potential catalysts for an inward and turbulent process, in which the personae engage in practices of reflection on the nature of loss and life that ultimately result in various types of transformations. The term loss in this study encompasses not only the death of a loved one but also the experience of being separated from them. As a result, it also extends to any profound emotional, spiritual, and existential cuts that disrupt the nature of the bereaved persona. On the other hand, transformation is defined by a dynamic process of change which is precipitated by the inward reflections on the nature of loss within the narratives that are specifically designed to facilitate transformation. Not all the transformations examined in the study are fully comprehensive or uniform, but essential for spiritual growth and understanding. In *Pearl*, the Dreamer is transformed through his reflections on the devotional aspect of loss. In *The Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer illustrates two representations of loss and transformation through the dreamer and the Black Knight who are transformed from passivity to re-enactment. In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, the bereaved Orpheus begins to comprehend his human limitations. This study proposes that each poet uniquely portrays these various representations of loss and transformation through their distinct approaches in the narrative. Thus, the method of this study is based on the textual analyses of the themes of loss and transformation in *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

Keywords

Loss, Transformation, Medieval Poetry, *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

ÖZET

AKTARER, Seher. “O öldü!”: İnci, Düşes’in Kitabı ve Orpheus ve Eurydice’te Kayıp ve Dönüşüm, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2024.

Bu çalışma, seçilmiş üç Orta Çağ şiirinde, *İnci*-şairi tarafından yazılan *Pearl* (*İnci*), Geoffrey Chaucer tarafından yazılan *The Book of the Duchess* (*Düşes’in Kitabı*) ve Robert Henryson tarafından yazılan *Orpheus and Eurydice* (*Orpheus ve Eurydice*), karakterlerin kayıpla karşılaşmalarının harekete geçirdiği derin bir iç gözlemsel ve ruhsal dönüşüm yaşadıklarını öne sürmektedir. Toplu olarak bu şiirler, kayba verilen çeşitli duygusal, ruhsal ve psikolojik tepkileri göstermektedir. Kaybın neden olduğu bu tepkiler, kişilerin, sonuçta çeşitli dönüşümlerle sonuçlanan, kaybın ve yaşamın doğası üzerine derinlemesine düşünme uygulamalarına giriştiği, içe dönük ve çalkantılı bir süreç için potansiyel katalizör görevi görür. Bu çalışmada kayıp kavramı sadece sevilen birinin ölümünü değil aynı zamanda ondan ayrılma tecrübesini de kapsamaktadır. Sonuç olarak bu durum, yaslı kişinin doğal denge durumunu bozan her türlü derin duygusal, ruhsal ve varoluşsal kesintiye de uzanır. Öte yandan, dönüşüm, özellikle bunu kolaylaştırmak için tasarlanmış anlatılar içinde kaybın doğası üzerine içe dönük yansımalar tarafından hızlandırılan dinamik bir değişim süreci ile tanımlanır. Çalışmada incelenen dönüşümlerin tümü tamamen kapsamlı veya tek tip değildir ancak ruhsal gelişim ve anlayış için gereklidir. *İnci* şiirinde, rüya gören kişi, kaybın dini yönüne dair düşünceleriyle dönüşüme uğrar. *Düşesin Kitabı*’nda Chaucer, pasiflikten aktife hayata dönüşen yolda rüya gören kişi ve Kara Şövalye aracılığıyla kayıp ve dönüşümün iki farklı temsilini resmetmektedir. *Orpheus ve Eurydice*’te yaslı Orpheus insani sınırlarını kavramaya başlar. Bu çalışma, her şairin anlatılarındaki bu farklı kayıp ve dönüşüm temsillerini farklı yaklaşımlarla benzersiz bir şekilde tasvir ettiğini ileri sürmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmanın yöntemi, *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess* ve *Orpheus ve Eurydice*’teki kayıp ve dönüşüm temalarının metinsel analizlerine dayanmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Kayıp, Dönüşüm, Orta Çağ Şiiri, *İnci*, *Düşes’in Kitabı*, *Orpheus ve Eurydice*.

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines the intertwined themes of loss and transformation in three medieval poems: *Pearl* (c. 1390) by the *Pearl*-poet, *The Book of the Duchess* (1369) by Geoffrey Chaucer, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* (c. 1480) by Robert Henryson. The argument of this study is that the personae in these narratives undergo profound introspective and spiritual transformation due to a course of contemplative action that ensues the experience of loss. In the context of this study, the term "loss" not only refers to death, but also the state of being deprived of diverse emotional, psychological, or spiritual entities. This state includes not only the emotional distress of the death of a beloved person, but also the separation and absence of joy, energy, and involvement in life. The concept "transformation", however, refers to the continuous and evolving process that is initiated by the experience of loss. During the grieving process following the loss, the personae in the poems actively participate in deep spiritual introspections on life, loss, and its aftermath. At the end of these introspections, which take the shape of a spiritual journey, this mourning process leads to the acceptance of loss. By aligning with loss, the personae's experience culminates in a newly gained understanding. Transformation, thus, entails a spiritual step forward for the personae in accepting, understanding, and dealing with loss.

The selection of the works in this study is based on their unique and complementary depictions of loss and the changes it induces in the personae through their diverse reactions to the loss and subsequent mourning. Therefore, fundamental to this analysis is the notion that different representations of loss in these poems initiate diverse portrayals of transformation in the perspective of the personae. The study indicates that this multiple transforming power of loss as depicted through the personae's inner journeys, which include interactions with the dead or with other people throughout the narrative, are demonstrated by each poet in uniquely and meticulously designed narratives to offer means of change for the personae. In addition, the term "journey" used in this study refers specifically to the transformative experience that the personae undergo after experiencing loss. This experience is characterised by spiritual inquiries and is manifested as a changing and liminal process. It involves interactions

with others and leads to personal and spiritual growth. Based on an examination of such dynamics, the study highlights the textually and thematically diverse methods of the poets which foster significant personal growth and enhanced comprehension through the interactions of the personae. Thus, first of all, this chapter aims to present an exposition of the traditional understanding of death and loss in medieval English culture and literature before the distinctiveness of the three poems within this literary tradition is clarified in relation to their exploration of the themes of loss and transformation. The aim is to indicate that the bereaved experience a variety of emotional and psychological deprivations as a result of death. Consequently, they undergo introspective processes in order to alleviate this feeling of loss. Accordingly, although the poems examined in this study differ in their approach to these processes, all three of them suggest that submitting to a spiritual entity is necessary to surmount the feeling caused by deprivation.

In the same way, three poets show the ways their narratives go beyond the mere act of passive lament to exhibit ways toward understanding, acceptance, and aligning with a tangible truth. In the poems, death is the main cause of deprivation. However, in the depictions of death and the ways it affects other forms of loss, there is an obvious cause and effect relationship used by the poets. The poems not only examine the misery of losing a loved person, but also delve into other forms of deprivation, such as separation and the absence of joy, vitality, and activity in life. These further losses, arising from death, are strongly interrelated. In *Pearl*, for instance, the father mourns for his deceased daughter and cannot accept his loss. Equally he also losses his joy and direction of life. Further, he definitely loses his faith. His transformation is rendered after his reflections on the understanding of loss in a vision. He undergoes a change in his religious belief, transforming from a state of deep and inconsolable sorrow to a state of embracing and comprehending the divine structure of the universe within a narrative which introduces transformations of many kinds whether they are literal, symbolic, or semantic in nature to a certain extent. The Black Knight, similarly, grieves for his deceased lady and correspondingly loses all his interest in his professional and personal life. His transformation moves from being a mere mourner, indifferent to his worldly duties, to someone who admits that the basic reason behind his grief is his wife’s loss

and goes back to his castle, as though to resume his duties as a lord. Parallelly, the dreamer of *The Book of the Duchess*, who presents loss of many kinds such as sleeplessness and loss of enthusiasm, transforms from being a mere spectator to giving comfort and support in the dialogue with the Black Knight. In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Orpheus loses his wife, and this causes the loss of his will to live by deserting his kingdom and titles. After his celestial journey, he also gains deep insight into the meaning of the inability of human beings to confront death and what the true conduct of life should be. After acquiring a significant amount of knowledge on the ruling of the universe in his voyage and the final encounter with his wife, he undergoes a partial transformation. With strong moral undertones, the poem presents a persona who is enlightened in heavenly order only to accept his own personal failings and the impossibility of reversing his deeds.

Therefore, in the context of this study, loss is defined not only as the simple physical absence either of a person or an object but also as deep emotional, spiritual, and even existential disconnection that disrupts the natural balance of the personae following their experience of loss. These personae find themselves isolated and tormented by their extensive reflections on grief that are precipitated by loss. Their introspective and passive behaviour leads them to embark on spiritual journeys, during which they undergo a transformation in their view on life and loss. As Miranda Griffin puts forward, “transformation is a motif which brings together a wide range of concerns involving humanity” (1). She maintains that transformation presents “the postulated superiority of the human mind” and “the difficulty of envisaging a divine reality beyond human physicality” (1). Accordingly, by disclosing the depth of the characters’ mind, the three poets demonstrate the capacity of the mind to transform into a higher and divine power after experiencing loss and overcoming grief. The poets facilitate the ultimate transformation of the personae by reinforcing this multifaceted nature of loss via the use narrative methods such as shifting symbols, setting, and imagery, or incorporating diverse representations of loss and transformation.

Through this process of evolvement, the transformed mindset of the personae could show signs of being more understanding of self, others, and the universe. This symbolic and transformational journey within the narratives is characterised by occurrences of

enlightenment, acknowledgment, proactivity, and deliverance. For example, being in an inconsolable state and searching for solutions for it, the loss the grieving father in *Pearl* endures leads him to a vision where he comes across the transfigured portrayal of his daughter. Thus, his transformation is initiated from deep anguish that opposes God's decree to a sophisticated understanding of divine justice and salvation in Christian rules through his interaction with the Pearl Maiden. The dreamer of *The Book of the Duchess* suffers from an undefined sickness which also causes loss of sleep, loss of joy and loss of action. Correspondingly, the insomnia leads him to long for a sleep during which he engages in a philosophical dialogue with the Black Knight, who suffers from loss of another kind, which is death. The poem depicts a transition from inactivity to activity for both the dreamer, who is able to resume his reading and writing, and the Black Knight, who ultimately acknowledges death and resumes his courtly responsibilities. The dialogue between the two imparts a comprehension of the nature of mourning. Through the narrative of *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Orpheus's loss desperately leads him to look for his wife in celestial spheres almost in insanity after which his worldly desire turns out to teach him an understanding of the frailties of humanity. His partial enlightenment serves to underscore both his spiritual maturation and the enduring vulnerability of the human condition.

It is crucial to recognise that the depicted transformations resulting from the encounter with loss are not invariably positive or complete. Rather, they symbolise a variety of possible consequences for the sake of spiritual development on the way to acknowledge and accept persistent challenges of loss, which thereby results in transformation. The dynamic relationship between loss and transformation in these literary works functions not only as a thematic focal point, but also as a narrative structure that drives explorations of spiritual matters for the personae. Despite their thematic and generic disparities, *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* have comparable perspectives on loss and transformation exhibited in a variety of ways by the poets. Different strata of loss experienced in these poems lead to divergent representations of transformation which enable the personae "to think about issues relating to life problems- political, social, ethical, philosophical or existential" (Gilbert 1). Similarly, in each work, the process that encompasses loss as the beginning and

transformation as the end of the narrative serves more as strategic preparatory moves crafted by the poets that have various implications for the possible resolutions to loss. They illustrate divergent ways in which people react to grief as a process of discovering meaning and acknowledgement and continuity amidst enormous changes. As Ralph Houlbrooke puts it,

> [g]rief is the suffering caused by deprivation and loss, above all of friends and loved ones. Mourning embraces all grief's outward behavioural manifestations. The melancholy induced by bereavement has often taken extreme and dramatic forms. (220)

Such analysis of loss and grief unequivocally explains that every pathway following the experience of loss is unique. However, there are collective patterns of reactions to loss and the complex emotional changes that result from it. As proposed by Jan M. Ziolkowski, "[t]he status of lament is not uniform but varies greatly" (86). Likewise, the argument here claims that on the one hand, the grief caused by loss is unimaginable and unique in its way of destruction and possibly transforming; on the other hand, it serves a universal purpose. Hence, it could be argued that these narratives not only provide deeper insight into ways through which people gain fortitude and meaning even in the face of loss but help in informing a larger understanding about life and its processes, as well.

Of all medieval elegies and poems, which usually deal with death and loss with all their consequences, *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* stand out for their delicate and diverse depictions of the ways loss could trigger spiritual transformation in different ways. As a matter of fact, the Middle Ages were preoccupied with matters concerning death and its aftermath. As Éva Bús highlights, "no other era in European history is able to pride itself on proving so productive in respect of the representation of death as the Middle Ages" (83). Thus, the theme of death is readily discernible in medieval society, culture, and literature, and in actuality, it also shows the dark reality of living in this period, which was full of plagues, wars, and infant mortality. In the words of Korpiola and Lahtinen, "[e]pidemics, malnutrition and warfare took their toll of the human population and, in the mid-fourteenth century, the

Black Death spread terror that reinforced the images of death in art and folklore" (2). Similarly, Mark Bailey notes that the Black Death

> raged across Europe between 1347 and 1353, killing a far higher proportion of the population than any global epidemic or warfare in modern times, and then returned frequently over the next four centuries. Contemporaries named this terrifying and seemingly new disease 'pestilence', while generations of modern schoolchildren know it as bubonic and pneumonic plague. It coincided with a phase of momentous ecological, demographic, economic, and social changes across Europe. (1)

This pervasive influence of imminent death spread fear on the whole continent raising concerns on mortality, death, and afterlife. This reality of the period perpetually pointed the communal perspective toward death- a single and universal unit of the human experience. Moreover, the plague gave rise to the motif of *Danse Macabre*, or *Dance of Death*, in the Middle Ages in which the "emphasis was that no one- whether popes, kings, emperors, the old, the young, the rich or the poor- could escape" (Daniell 62) death. The *Danse Macabre* tradition had huge impact and reflections on society and literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. According to Pınar Taşdelen, the *Danse Macabre* poems necessitate redemption due to the approaching presence of death and, thus, "this triggered the fright of dying as a sinful person, and led people to indulge in philosophical discussions on death" (121). The perception of death during the medieval period was significantly impacted by this prevalent fear and subsequent philosophical reflections, which became an essential component of daily life.

More specifically, representation of loss and death in medieval literature has the potential to convey communal and instructional aspects of mourning. Loss is also used within medieval texts as a means of attempting to instruct the living and engage them in a process of societal values and spiritual lessons learned in life through the loss of these embodiments. Numerous representations of such an effect of death existed in the literary arena. For instance, morality plays were very often featured with Death as a central figure. In the morality play *Everyman*, Everyman is compelled by Death to recount his life and sins and he is directed towards a state of grace. Chaucer's "The Pardoner's Tale" in *The Canterbury Tales* is of three young men who meet Death in the guise of an old man that tells them that under a tree lies hidden a treasure. Through their greed, they kill each other as Death had foretold. Langland's *Piers Plowman* also

presents representations of death through Christ's harrowing of Hell defeating death. As an example of *Danse Macabre* motif, the *Dance of Death* by Lydgate "suggests the equalizing force of death to the individuals who are on the threshold of death and atonement, which is based on the medieval Christian ideology" (Taşdelen 130). There were also medieval elegies, which were poems of "lamenting the death of a friend or public figure, or reflecting seriously on a solemn subject" (Baldick 76). The primary theme in these elegies was not only mourning for a dead person but also was "a lament over lost happiness, i.e. either the loss of happy circumstances of life, or the passing of youth and, in those poems that are of a distinctly religious nature, the transitoriness of life on earth" (Timmer 3). According to these poems, separation was the main loss, and this does not only express a sense of deprivation "but of one's entire function in the world" (Klinck 225). The most renowned examples of Old English elegies are found in the *Exeter Book* which includes *Deor*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, *The Wife's Lament*, *The Husband's Message*, *Wanderer*, *Seafarer*, *Rain*, *Rhyming Song*, and *The Exile's Prayer*. In these poems, as in the medieval world, death was generally

> treated poetically as leveler, as uncertainty regarding the time of demise, as a shocking fact revealing visceral decomposition, as an elegiac reminder of transitoriness, the inevitable passage of life, of past greatness and beauty, and, finally, as an enemy. (DuBruck and Gusick 296)

Similarly, the common themes of mourning, exile, isolation, and the transience of life are abundantly present in these elegies. However, the primary emphasis of this study is distinguished with its focus on the loss-induced transformative journey that encompasses phases of liminality and reintegration, as well as interactions and metaphysical inquiry.

During the Middle Ages, there was a significant correlation between the depiction of death and the feeling of loss that accompanies it. As Rebecca Krug marks, "[t]his portrayal of emotional loss appears frequently in late medieval English literature" (230). Similar to the way it is perceived in the contemporary world "death stirred many feelings" (Korpiola and Lahtinen 3), one of which is a sense of loss. This sense of loss caused by death can be multifold, and by specifically focusing on these multilayered reflections of loss, the spiritual and psychological introspection of the bereaved

resulting from death can be observed. According to Mary Bradbury, "the study of death can be approached in many ways." (5). She maintains that,

> [w]e can describe the process of dying, reveal the inequalities in demographic patterns of mortality, discuss the ethical debates raging around the point of death, attempt to describe the feelings of the bereaved, examine the institutions that deal with the dying and the dead or analyse mortuary rituals. [. . .] [I]t is rarely possible or desirable to explore an aspect of death in isolation. If we are describing a death ritual we should also discuss the sentiments of the participants. (5-6)

Suggesting that studying death requires a multifaceted approach, Bradbury highlights that various aspects of death are all interconnected. Isolating one aspect from the others may not provide a complete understanding. This holistic view ensures a comprehensive understanding of death and its impact on both the bereaved and society. Given medieval society's close-knit nature and its adherence to Christianity in everyday matters, it could be argued that the introspections induced by death are closely linked to the religious aspects of the era. Even within the secular narratives,

> Christian teaching provided explanations for the losses which caused grief and guidance concerning appropriate conduct on the part of the bereaved. The advice of the greatest pre-Christian classical writers, especially those of the Stoic philosophers, also commanded widespread respect. Yet its role in helping people to come to terms with bereavement was ancillary to that of Christian belief. The fundamental principle of Christian explanation was that nothing can happen without God's will [. . .]. No single death was random or without purpose or significance. Each fitted into the divine plan. (Houlbrooke 221)

Caroline Walker Bynum emphasizes this influence of Christianity on the need to abide by spirituality in the midst of loss by stating that

> the medieval stress on personal death [. . .], developed with an attitude that was far older, even pre-Christian: a sense that death is familiar and near, an expected part of life, an experience of which persons are often forewarn. (590)

Even though some narratives dealing with loss may appear secular, as in the case of *The Book of* the *Duchess*, or pagan as in *Orpheus and Eurydice*, they often contain undertones of moral, spiritual, or devotional ideas in order to overcome the trauma of loss. As a result, the method of these works in their approach to loss, whether secular or devotional, can be classified under the general topic of spiritual matters. By embracing any means of spirituality that surpasses their present circumstances leads the personae

to take a step forward in accepting loss. As Winkler points out, during "the Middle Ages, many writers turned to the poetry of the Old Testament Book of Lamentations in order to write of sorrow, grief, despair, loss, and lamentation" (130). After all, experiencing a kind of healing which leads to the resuming of his duties and daily life after the recognition of a greater reality, namely death, rather than constantly fixating on his past losses, brings consolation to the Black Knight. Similarly, Orpheus becomes aware via personal experience of the fleeting nature of earthly pleasures and the supremacy of divine principles. These elements reflect the pervasive influence of spiritual introspection based on religious theology during the encounter with loss. In fact, the comfort driven from these spiritual values is portrayed as something to be praised in the face of loss in the poems.

Christian doctrine regarding loss, which raises more general spiritual concerns, was thereby dominant in medieval thought, presenting a theory in which earthly life is but transitory and the real immortal existence starts after death. According to Ufuk Ege, a rational man "could not but recognise death as an inexorable certainty and, in order to quell his impotent and futile revolt, he softens his dread and grief over his impending destruction by rationalising and finding ways of accepting it" ("The Imagery" 26). Similarly, the personae depicted in these poems strive to align (or are intended to align by the poets) their thinking in a logical manner by engaging with the deceased or the fact of death, in terms of spirituality, whether it be in Christian, pagan, or moral texts. By aligning their thoughts with the norms of the spiritual realm, the personae can navigate their loss- or be led to navigation by other parties like the Pearl Dreamer- more effectively during their journey towards transformation. This conformity provided, then, enables rational or spiritual thought required to manage the overcoming grief, transforming it into a more bearable and meaningful experience. Thus, as shown in the poems, medieval literature incorporates the prevalent themes of death and afterlife by putting the earthly feeling of loss within a broader heavenly and cosmic framework. Albeit tragic, such a framing allows for a perspective wherein death is seen as just one part of the passage rather than an ultimate end in heavenly understanding. The poems examined in this study either explicitly or implicitly promote this very concept. Considering the spiritual context of the period, this view is much necessary, as it

elucidates that loss and transformation are two processes that work in texts to effect spiritual growth.

Hence, unlike the most popular representations of death in the medieval world, death also possesses a transformative power for the bereaved. The process of loss, the spiritual introspection that ensues, and the subsequent personal growth it induces are frequently compared to a quest for spiritual enlightenment and an understanding. As put forward by Jane Gilbert,

> [d]ying is seen as ceasing to be one kind of person and becoming another, significantly altering but by no means destroying social roles and relations. The medieval dead and living had reciprocal obligations and complementary spheres of activity as members of a greater community [. . .]. Most dead persons remained quietly in their place. Those who rose from the grave in dreams, visions, apparitions or even vivid memories did so to intervene in the existence of the living and in this sense were troubled and troublesome even where their intervention was appreciated, and much more so when not. (2)

Thus, it could be put forward that in medieval understanding death was also viewed not just as the end of life as in most known literary representations, but as a means of transformation into a different state both for the living and the dead. This change does not end a person's roles and relationships but has the potential to alter them significantly. According to this view, the dead and the living are perceived as part of a larger community with mutual responsibilities. When they appeared in dreams, visions, or memories, the dead usually cause a significant change in the lives of the living. Thus, interaction with the dead- either through a dialogue with them or a supernatural encounter- bears a potential for transformative journeys of the living.

Further, it could be argued that the spiritual realm that the personae get engaged with in the poems can be interpreted as a spiritual pilgrimage which is not far from the mainstream tradition of the Middle Ages. As previously mentioned, the term "journey" in this dissertation denotes the process of spiritual introspection of the personae that occurs in the aftermath of loss. From this perspective, this journey of the personae is akin to the spiritual aspect of the pilgrimage motif that held great significance during the Middle Ages. Spiritualizing the notion of pilgrimage was common in medieval literature. Ufuk Ege states that, as shown in *Piers Plowman* "Langland understood this

pilgrimage to Truth" in a text where "[o]ne can never know whether or not the pilgrims actually embarked upon the journey" ("The West" 79). In essence, Ege explores how pilgrimages function as transformative experiences, moving pilgrims from their everyday lives into a space of spiritual reflection and change showing the spiritual aspect of the pilgrimage as a motif which "struggle towards illumination, on every level- moral, theological, mystical" ("The West" 80). In a similar vein, by emphasizing the spiritual pilgrimage motif and its potential for individual change, Victor and Edith Turner state that the

> (rites of transition) are marked by three phases: separation, limen or margin, and aggregation. The first phase comprises symbolic behavior signifying the *detachment of the individual or group, either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or from a relatively stable set of cultural conditions* (a cultural "state"); during the intervening liminal phase, the state of the ritual subject (the "passenger" or "liminar") becomes ambiguous, *he passes through a realm or dimension that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state*, he is betwixt and between all familiar lines of classification; in the third phase the passage is consummated, and *the subject returns to classified secular or mundane social life.* (emphasis added, 2)

Victor and Edith Turner's descriptions of the phases of separation, liminality, and aggregation in their approach to the spiritual aspects of pilgrimage are comparable to the spiritual journey motif in the poems put forward in this study. The personae's experiences of loss that leave them detached initiate a transformative process. This process, which is in the shape of a spiritual journey leads them through stages of introspection and ambiguity, ultimately resulting in a reintegration into their social or spiritual framework. A spiritual journey is initiated by loss, and the journey culminates in the transformation of the personae. By the same token, Bynum specifically analyses this transformative power of loss as she specifies that

> [t]he increased emphasis in the later Middle Ages on personal death was connected to a new representation of death in devotional literature. Dying became an intense physical and emotional experience, associated with suffering, affective response, and self-understanding. Death was the moment of self-knowledge in which one moved from one's own misery to identification with the misery of all humanity and hence to union with the glorious suffering of the dying Christ. More than a summing up, death was expiation. (592)

As indicated, the physical and emotional impact of loss prompts introspection on the nature of life and death, generating a heightened self-awareness and a feeling of solidarity with the collective pain of mankind.

At this juncture, the choice of the works *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* is significant in that each poem presents a distinct yet thematically interconnected viewpoint regarding the process of mourning and the subsequent spiritual and transformative journey that ensues from such a loss. *Pearl* is particularly poignant in its close depiction of the grief of a father over the loss of his daughter, illustrated through a vision of a heavenly realm. His concept of life and death undergoes a transformation as a result of his interaction with his deceased daughter in this domain. The poem moves beyond personal loss to take on broader theological inquiries into divine justice and salvation, indicating that achieving spiritual enlightenment and finding solace in faith may significantly assuage the pain of despair and loss. In like fashion, *The Book of the Duchess* is an exploration of transformation through the emotional recovery of the Black Knight following his wife's death. Within a dream vision, the Black Knight's conversation with the dreamer- who is also beset by another representation of loss - enables both to embark on a mutual exploration of loss, by which Chaucer highlights the therapeutic power of spiritual introspections and mutual comprehension in the process of transformation. In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Henryson retells a classic myth to underline the inevitability and permanency of loss, illustrating how the protagonist's futile attempt to reverse death ultimately results in a deep recognition of the constraints of life and the principles that govern existence within the celestial realm and the Underworld. This acknowledgment, though not a complete transformation, brings Orpheus a deeper comprehension of life's finite nature.

Contrary to other medieval works like *The Dream of the Rood* and *Piers Plowman*, which include the theme of loss and also explore themes of redemption, suffering, and societal awakening through allegorical and communal perspectives, *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* focus extensively on the emotional and spiritual turmoil which lead to a significant change experienced by the personae after personal losses. Their focus is on the introspective journey of the personae as they navigate through their contemplations after bereavement in order to achieve a personal

realisation or acceptance of loss. The different narrative methods employed in these texts enable a deep examination of existential and spiritual quandaries, presenting a range of reactions to sorrow that span from spiritual enlightenment to a sense of resignation. Collectively, these poems not only narrate the grieving process following loss, but also emphasize the potential for transformation by introducing a wide range of strategies and diverse extents of feasible resolutions. These poems become particularly significant for gaining a fresh understanding of the medieval perspective on loss and recovery. They achieve this by highlighting the connection between the experience of loss and its potential to provide enlightenment and personal development.

In this sense, this study diverges from the other medieval depictions of death and loss by focusing on the transformative elements of loss caused by death. While literature frequently portrayed death as an unavoidable ending and a moral equivalence, this study investigates the manner in which death stimulates personal and spiritual metamorphosis. This is maintained through the poets' techniques, specifically by exploring the personae's spiritual quests and their interactions with their environments more deeply. In the case of the selected poems, this very instructional role is one of the key actors within the different degrees of transformation actively undergone by the personae themselves. The personae pass from grief to acknowledgement as a result of the interaction they hold with the other characters, such as the Pearl Maiden, Black Knight, or mythological figures. This also highlights the empathetic and shared experience of loss between grieving individuals moving the poems to a universal level. These conversations function somewhat in the way of a softly led journey for the mourner through his loss, towards illumination and reconciliation, which would allow him to put his loss into some larger and often divine perspective. The entire process experienced after loss in these poems points to the fact that loss can be powerful as it eventually submits transformation and spiritual acknowledgement for the personae. In the same vein, the journey itself, in many medieval writings, to death and through loss is more of a spiritual one. The experience of loss and the transformation it brings about are figured as a journey toward spiritual enlightenment and knowledge.

The dissertation consists of three chapters. The first chapter of this study focuses on *Pearl* by the *Pearl*-poet. This part of the study sets out to analyse and substantiate the

nature of loss and transformation in *Pearl*, considering certain significant aspects in use by the *Pearl*-poet. The spiritual journey during which the transformation is triggered includes three basic elements: First of them is a deep theological debate between the Dreamer and the Pearl Maiden about how divine wisdom and the promise of redemption serve as a trigger for the Dreamer's transformation. Second one is the narrative techniques and poetic devices that the *Pearl*-poet uses to convey minute transformative figures of speech within text to facilitate the ultimate transformation of the Dreamer. The third one is the internal conflict of the Dreamer in terms of his very own earthly desires and spiritual enlightenment offered by the Pearl Maiden in an extensive manner. The discussion developed in this chapter will establish the ways the resistance of the Dreamer and his subsequent realization symbolize not only his spiritual transformation but, to some extent, addresses broader concerns between the human condition and spiritual progress.

The second chapter of this study concentrates on *The Book of the Duchess* by Geoffrey Chaucer. Pursuing an analysis and substantiation of the many ways Chaucer depicts loss and transformation in *The Book of the Duchess*, the focus is on the specific method of Chaucer in adopting these themes. The emphasis on the conversation that takes place between the dreamer and the Black Knight serves to reveal the inner turmoil of the personae and their eventual acknowledgement of loss. Also, the dreamer's worldly loss is contrasted with the Black Knight's grief of losing his wife, adding complexity to the narrative, and emphasising the interplay between the dreamer's internal struggles and the Black Knight's overt mourning. Moreover, Chaucer's use of poetic devices is also examined, particularly in relation to their contribution to the themes of loss and transformation. Conducting a comprehensive examination of extant critical scholarship pertaining to *The Book of the Duchess*, this chapter contextualises its arguments within the wider academic research and analyses existing scholarly works in order to emphasise the poem's contributions to the discipline through a textual analysis. This method not only enhances the conventional interpretation of Chaucer's work but also introduces a fresh perspective on comprehending medieval themes about loss and transformation.

The third chapter of the study focuses on Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*. In the critical heritage, it is observed that the poem has been scrutinized from a standpoint which focuses on allegorical interpretations, the symbolism of love, the power of art, music, and recovery. This chapter will explore how Orpheus's journey and his ultimate transformation also reflect the broader human experience of dealing with loss. It analyses Henryson's approach to the theme of loss to depict the journey of Orpheus from earthly desire to spiritual enlightenment.

According to the argument of the study, each poem presents a unique narrative that intricately explores the emotional repercussions of losing a beloved- or the loss of deep emotional, spiritual, and even existential assets- and the subsequent transformative journey facilitated by the poets' various and divergent methods. The poets' approaches to these themes are manifested in textual analyses, which vary from poet to poet. However, all three poems have a similar framework in addressing the themes of loss and transformation: Loss prompts deep self-reflection, represented by a spiritual journey that ultimately results in a substantial transformation into a heightened state of being and an acceptance of death.

In the conclusion section, the study will highlight that loss not only challenges but also enriches the human spirit, driving personal development and insight. What is more, it could be argued that poets initiate transformations in the reader with a moral or devotional motive by engaging them in the process. To this end, these poems not only transform the personae but the intended audience, functioning as moral texts that guide readers to their own self-questioning and spiritual enlightenment. In addition, this study contributes to the already existing body of literary discourse about the issues of death and loss in medieval poetry from the vantage point of its potential of transformative effects on the personae.

CHAPTER 1

SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION IN *PEARL*: A HEAVENLY PEDAGOGY IN THE WAKE OF LOSS

In this chapter, the aim is to examine the spiritual transformation of the Dreamer subsequent to his introspection that is caused by the passing away of his daughter in the medieval dream poem *Pearl*. The Dreamer experiences a loss, not only of a beloved one but also of his faith and zest for life. However, through an enlightening vision which is prompted by his reflections on loss and grief, he comes to acknowledge death and regain his faith in his approach to loss caused by death. The poem moves from deep mourning to reconciliation, facilitated through a spiritual understanding of heavenly values. Initially, the bereaved Dreamer resists embracing the doctrines of Christianity to ease his pain, viewing the world through a worldly perspective. Although Christian decree commands to do the opposite, he does not submit himself to the consolation offered by this faith and persists in lamenting for his worldly loss and its worldly attachments. Notwithstanding the awareness of this unreasonable dilemma, he is somewhat resistant and slow to learn the true values of faith even after being taught by the Pearl Maiden. He requires guidance to overcome his overwhelming sorrow, and this guidance comes from the Pearl Maiden, a transfigured portrayal of his late daughter.

It is in this spiritual journey of the Dreamer that loss and transformation are so carefully woven together in *Pearl*. The Dreamer is taken through a series of symbolic landscapes and theological dialogues in each of which he is guided by the Pearl Maiden to forsake a worldly viewpoint that has kept him from spiritual enlightenment to reconcile with the fact of death. This course of progressive nature is punctuated and meticulously crafted by the *Pearl*-poet with the engagement of minor and major transformations throughout the narrative. The minor forms of transformations in the narrative lead the way to the major transformation of the Dreamer. These minor transformations range from the imagery to the setting in the poem. For example, the earthly connotation of pearl in the

first line of the poem, "[p]erle pleasaunte" (*Pearl* 1)[1], is transformed into a heavenly connotation, "precious perlez vnto His pay" (*Pearl* 1211), at the end of the poem. In addition, the garden of mourning on the earthly realm is transformed into the paradisiacal garden and a vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Likewise, the earthly Jerusalem is transformed into a new and bright Jerusalem in the vision:

> "Þat gloryous Gyltlez þat mon con quelle
> Withouten any sake of felonye,
> As a schep to þe slaȝt þer lad watz He,
> And, as lombe þat clypper in hande nem,
> So closed He Hys mouth fro vch query,
> Quen Juez Hym jugged in Jerusalem." (*Pearl* 799-804)

> Þe Lambes vyuez in blysse we bene,
> A hondred and forty þowsande flot,
> As in þe Apocalyppez hit is sene:
> Sant John hem syȝ al in a knot.
> On þe hyl of Syon, þat semly clot,
> Þe apostel hem segh in gostly drem,
> Arayed to þe weddyng in þat hyl-coppe,
> Þe nwe cyte o Jerusalem. (*Pearl* 785-792)

Furthermore, one of the other minor transformations can be observed in the theological debate between the Dreamer and the Pearl Maiden. In the poem, their roles are reversed in which the daughter becomes the guide figure in teaching his father the decrees of Christianity. In addition, Biblical references present another form of minor transformation as they introduce altered depictions of the stories. Likewise, the poem moves from the earthly to heavenly understanding in its approach to loss. All these minor forms of transformation are featured so as to trigger the Dreamer's spiritual introspection, ultimately leading to a significant alteration in his understanding of loss and life. The poem's minor transformations, such as the changing landscape, symbols, and imagery support the Dreamer's major spiritual development. Thus, with the employment of these changes in form and matter, the poem paves the way for the substantial and gradual change of the Dreamer throughout his interaction with the Pearl

[1] For the direct quotations of the poem, The *Pearl*-poet. *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Eds. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978 is used and hereafter references will be given as *Pearl* with line numbers.

Maiden, and points out that consolation and spiritual growth will only be gained by divine wisdom and transcending of earthly ties.

Pearl is the first of the four poems classified as the MS. Cotton Nero A.x, in the British Library. All four works are examples of fourteenth-century devotional poetry. The poet is anonymous and hence named as the *Pearl*-poet or the *Gawain*-poet. The dialect of the poems is determined as of West Midlands (Bond 5). Since *Pearl* is consistent with the other three poems in the manuscript as regards to its theme and style, the number of works not accrediting *Pearl* to the *Pearl*-poet is quite few in number.[2] The poem is rich in imagery and the style "is often elliptical, its thought sometimes elusive; its use of allegory and symbolism subtle; its structure complex" (Bishop 2). It consists of a hundred and one stanzas, all of which have twelve lines. With the exception of one, the stanzas are divided into twenty stanza groups. Twelve-line stanzas have interlocking rhymes (abababababcbc) and they are linked together in groups of five by a "key-word" which is presented as the final word of the final line in every stanza. Within all these stanza groups, there are recurring rhymes and consistent meters, resulting in a high level of form perfection. All a hundred and one stanzas in the poem are thus linked except for a break between stanzas sixty and sixty- one (Bond 35). This break between these stanzas divide the poem into two main parts and the beginning of the stanza in this new section ends with the same focus on the stainless nature of pearl as the first stanza: "perle withouten spot" (*Pearl* 12) in the first stanza of the whole poem and "perle watz mascellez" (*Pearl* 732) in the first stanza of the second section of the poem. Furthermore, the manner in which the setting is managed also engenders a sense of circularity inside the narrative. The form and content of the poem are interlinked.

The poem starts with the Dreamer in the garden and ends in the same setting. Affirming this circularity, the poem starts and ends with almost identical lines- "Perle plesaunte, to prynces paye" (*Pearl* 1) and "Ande precious perlez vnto His pay" (*Pearl* 1212). The poem builds a circular structure that mirrors the shape of a precious jewel, the pearl,

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[2] See, for example, Göran Kjellmer. *Did the "Pearl Poet" Write* Pearl. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1975. After an in-depth analysis of the poem, Kjellmer concludes that "the '*Pearl* poet' did not write *Pearl*" (98).

from its beginning to its end. However, multiple transformations occur throughout the poem until the circle is ultimately completed. Hence, as a result of these transformations occurring from the beginning until the end of the circle, the structure of the poem undergoes a progression in a three-dimensional form, resembling an actual pearl. Since the Dreamer ultimately attains the desired heavenly qualities in the end, it might be argued that this circularity allows the poet to achieve perfection, like the pearl image described in the poem which is described as "So rounde, so reken" (*Pearl* 5), that is, perfect.

From time to time, the poem has been considered to be a work of elegy, debate, exemplum, homily (Bishop 13-14-15), theology (Osgood xxviii), or a "lost tradition" in poetry, as put forward by John Conley, "a Christian *consolatio*" ("Pearl" 61), the function of which is "to mediate between natural human dispositions and the exigencies of the spirit" (Tristman 276). In addition to being a seminal example of dream poetry, *Pearl* is also definitely a form of elegy, which accounts for the deep mourning of a father for the loss of his daughter. This point is significant since the narrator's transformation in the conclusion arises from the consolation and the attainment of spiritual equilibrium. Oscar Cargill and Margaret Schlauch argue that it is "an elegy written on the death of Margaret, granddaughter III, not by her father" (108). Bond agrees with them when he argues that the "Pearl Maiden is not an ordinary girl, rather she is a real little girl of five, born to be a princess of England and rejected and thrust into a convent at the age of two, destroyed by sickness in childhood but raised in heaven to be a lovelier queen than any on earth" (i). According to Bishop, for the transformative effect of the poem, it is safe to state that "the transition" of the Dreamer from an inconsolable Christian to a well-known one "is effected by the vision" (14-15).

At the beginning of *Pearl*, the Dreamer walks into the same garden where he has lost his "pearl" in "Augoste, in a hyȝ seysoun" (*Pearl* 39). His pearl is most probably his daughter as he mentions that "[h]o watz me nerre pen aunte or nece" (*Pearl* 233). The Dreamer, who seems to have put all his bliss in life on his pearl, mourns for his loss in an inconsolable and traumatic state. By also employing courtly elements to depict her- "So smal, so smoþe her sydez were" (*Pearl* 6)- he mentions that his pearl was very precious when it dwelled on Earth, but now it is "clad in clot" (*Pearl* 22), entirely

disregarding its immortal value. Even though a pious Christian is expected to accept death with all its complications, the Dreamer recognizes that both reason and Christ are unable to provide him with relief. With this preoccupation and self-consciousness, he falls asleep and finds himself in a radiant and bright forest in his "gostly drem" (*Pearl* 790). After a detailed depiction of the landscape to which he is transported, he sees "[a] mayden of menske" (*Pearl* 162) all adorned with various precious gems. Upon asking her if she is the pearl that he has lost, she begins to reprimand him severely on account of his "mad porpose" (*Pearl* 267) and "raysoun bref" (*Pearl* 268). She declares herself to be one of the 144.000 brides of the Lamb who resides contentedly in New Jerusalem.

The conversation they adopt takes the form of a theological debate, a very similar one to a Boethian dialogue[3], and the Pearl Maiden aims to transform the Dreamer's whole mindset towards loss and Christian creed concerning bereavement, and direct him to a fuller appreciation of God's virtues. The nature and conduct of this debate is, as Herbert Pilch states, "a poetic example of a medieval genre" (165), that is, debate. Occasionally, the Dreamer's slow accumulation of knowledge and the rebukes of the Pearl Maiden make the tone of the poem humorous. In order to prove her point, the Pearl Maiden refers to a number of scriptural texts and endeavours to clarify God's mercy and merit to the Dreamer. As opposed to being warned not to do so, the Dreamer cannot resist his desire of uniting with the Pearl Maiden and tries to cross the stream that separates them (*Pearl* 1153-1164). Through this heedless endeavour, he is abruptly roused from his dream and discovers himself situated in the same garden as depicted at the onset of the poem. While the Dreamer completes the circular journey in the same garden, he is not the same as before. After all the teachings he has had and his failed attempt at the end, he realizes that his conduct was faulty before. He admits that he "haf founden" (*Pearl* 1203) God now. After his sojourn in a dream landscape, he is now ready to be reconciled with his loss by submitting himself to God's grace:

[3] Boethian dialogue refers to the method Boethius employs in *The Consolation of Philosophy* in which he talks to Lady Philosophy. The work is "presented as a dialogue; its structure is effectively dramatic." (Cherniss 16). The narrator, who functions as a consoled and Lady Philosophy, the guide figure who functions as a consoler, initiate a tradition in poetry known as Boethian dialogue where philosophical instruction is conveyed to the narrator to deal with the psychological, spiritual, or emotional confusion.

> Ouer þis hyul þis lote I laȝte,
> For pyty of my perle enclyin,
> And syþen to God I hit bytaȝte,
> In Krystez dere blessyng and myn,
> Þat in þe forme of bred and wyn
> Þe preste vus schewez vch a daye. (*Pearl* 1205-110)

As regards the poem's engagement with loss and transformation, textual analyses are used to illustrate the gradual changing of the Dreamer. As mentioned before, in order to facilitate the ultimate transformation of the Dreamer, the *Pearl*-poet introduces minor forms of transformation throughout the poem. The most notable one is the image of the pearl which is gradually changed from having a worldly connotation to a heavenly one. In a similar fashion, from the very beginning of the poem, the narrator, through whose eyes the story is told, introduces an earthly and material depiction of the pearl. His portrayal of the pearl relies on comments evoking ideas of worldly beauties and pleasures, the very problems which obstruct the Dreamer's consolation. After completing his journey in his dream and waking up to the facts of the real world, he realizes that these worldly attributes lack divine worth. To be able to analyse the paradigm shift in his perception, his subjective narration is crucial to analyse the poem since "it is a fiction presented from a clearly defined and wholly consistent point of view; we accompany the 'I' of the poem through his vision, and it is through his eyes that we see the magical landscapes and the girl" (Moorman "The Role" 104).

The utilisation of the Dreamer's own voice is advantageous at this point, as the methodology of this chapter involves an examination of the Dreamer's inner world as it undergoes transformation. As Lynn Staley Johnson also notes, the *Pearl*-poet "focuses upon the inward man, describing the process of spiritual expansion that allows a man to shift his desire from an earthly to a heavenly love" (144). All the themes are conveyed through the Dreamer, "so it is important to understand what he learns, how he learns, and where he begins his spiritual growth" (Lynn Johnson 161). The process of his transformation from an obstinate and misguided person to a divinely enlightened soul is conveyed through his personal account. As he is the "central intelligence" (Moorman "The Role" 105) in the poem, the poem effectively conveys the concept of loss through the carefully selected language employed by him (Nolan *The Gothic* 159). After all, his transformative journey is encapsulated by his own two lines which at the outset depict

his demeanour as “wreched wylle” (*Pearl* 56) and at the conclusion suggest his transformation of behaviour as “[f]or I haf founden Hym” (*Pearl* 1203). Thus, at the beginning of the poem, the Dreamer concentrates too much on his own pain over the loss of pearl, not mainly on her loss of her life which demonstrates his earthbound perception.

At the beginning of the poem, the Dreamer resembles a solitary lover in a courtly manner in the “luf-daungere” (*Pearl* 11) predicament. Particularly in the initial set of stanzas, the courtly tone is remarkable:

> Perle plesaunte, to prynces paye
> To clanly clos in golde so clere:
> Oute of oryent, I hardyly saye,
> Ne proued I neuer her precios pere.
> So rounde, so reken in vche araye,
> So smal, so smothe her sydez were;
> Queresoeuer I j ugged gemmez gaye
> I sette hyr sengeley in synglure.
> Allas! I leste hyr in on erbere. (*Pearl* 1-12)

While the jewellery imagery points to purity, rarity, and high status, the description of the perfect lady aligns with the idealization in the courtly love tradition. Correspondingly, Charlotte Gross asserts that the *Pearl*-poet excels in using the courtly language “in his exploitation of an ambiguous rhetoric already associated with two opposing realities, the earthly and heavenly” (80). According to the overtly religious undertones of the poem, the Dreamer’s choice of words is incorrect as it indicates his connection to the physical world. However, with the appearance of the Pearl Maiden, her choice of words depicts her heavenly mindset which condemns the Dreamer’s conduct as “a raysoun bref” (*Pearl* 268). This technique introduces an additional dimension to the comparison between earthly and worldly values in the poem. As a result, the Dreamer’s approach is problematized in the shape of “the fall of a courtly lover” (Beal 2). In the first stanza, the Dreamer extolls the physical perfection of the pearl. This perfect and unique pearl is indisputably an earthly gem. It is not a coincidence, then, that in the first group of stanzas, the Dreamer is introduced with a temporal nature.

Reinforcing the transformative nature of the image of the pearl, D. W. Robertson points out that the pearl symbol is not consistent throughout the poem ("The Pearl" 18). It constitutes one of the minor transformations of the poem employed for the sake of achieving the major transformation of the Dreamer. As the poem moves, the pearl image "develops in meaning" and "this development in meaning is coordinated with the developing human drama" (Spearing "Symbolic" 126). In the first stanza, the pearl is simply a material gem, symbolizing the Dreamer's earthly perspective. Through the development of his experience, his perspective towards the idea of the pearl changes, but at this stage he is portrayed as a man disregarding the heavenly connotation of it. As specified by A. C. Spearing, "his attitude toward the loss of a human being by death has been like that of a jeweller towards the loss of a precious stone" (*Medieval* 121), which implies that his transformation into a new mindset that may bring solace for him can solely be achieved by attaining a transcendent comprehension of the meanings of loss and life.

In addition, in the opening lines, the Dreamer reveals his clear stance of "turning away from the social world to dwell in his grief" (Barootes 746). From the beginning of his narration onwards, he focuses on his own spiritual condition. He, thus, makes his first mistake, in that, instead of finding any peace in God's commandment or "among the living", "he elects to call out to the absent, inanimate, and mute pearl, and so isolates himself further" (Barootes 746). Thus, the very "erber" (*Pearl* 9) where he has lost his beloved pearl becomes his sanctuary in which he mourns for his loss. Furthermore, in the first stanzas, there are detailed descriptions of earthly beauties of the garden: "Schadowed Jais wortez ful schyre and schene: / Gilofre, gyngure, and gromylyoun, / And pyonys powdered ay bytwene" (*Pearl* 42-44). Nevertheless, he is unable to find solace in the grandeur of this beauty, as he is fixated on the notion that his precious gem is now "clad in clot" (*Pearl* 22). In addition to the earthly connotation of the image of the pearl created by the Dreamer, these poignant details of nature unequivocally reveal the earthly perspective of the Dreamer at the beginning of the poem. According to him, he has lost her to the earth from where she can never be recovered. He articulates that all his bliss is buried there with her. He lingers there, on the same spot where he has lost her because he believes that, as pointed out by Katherine Terrell, "his pearl is still there,

under the ground, tantalizingly close, yet unreachable" (433), totally disregarding the immortality of the soul. Through his vantage point, this material world is a safe haven during his grieving process. He is "[d]esolate" and "emotion driven" in this "garden with no color and no detail but a grave mound" (Nolan *The Gothic* 165), which shows him the destructive power of nature. Even though the soil has a circulatory nature, his pearl cannot be retrieved from there like a plant which "mot grow of graynez dede" (*Pearl* 32). He seems to believe that his pearl "has been devalued by being dropped in the earth" (Barr 60). He reveals his trauma of loss by making a resemblance between plants which die and grow again and his pearl which can never be reclaimed, disclosing his material nature. The cycle of life does not work for him as all the plants will grow out of their seeds, but not his precious pearl. Thus, he believes that he has perpetually lost his pearl. It is exceptional that the shape of a seed and a pearl is similar, indicating that the Dreamer perceives them from an earthly perspective. Through his worldly perception, once his daughter is dead, there seems to be no means of cherishing her. According to Elizabeth Petroff, for the Dreamer,

> [t]his garden, the erber grene, cannot, in itself, provide consolation. As an earthly, finite place, its real value lies in its symbolizing a higher reality. It can suggest where to look for consolation, but it can do no more, since, as it exists in nature, it lacks the one thing needful- divine grace expressed in the living water of baptism. Yet the narrator is not to blame that there is no water here, that there is no immediate consolation, no more than the promise of a life to come. As a physical, natural garden, the erber grene contains plants which regenerate, but its earth cannot regenerate human bodies. The narrator is to blame, however, for his expectation of consolation in this place. The best that he can hope for is that the earthly garden points beyond itself to a true consolation, one that is a consolation for the loss of Eden as well as for the temporary loss of the pearl. (187)

This interpretation supports that the Dreamer's grief and search for comfort are misguided at the outset of the poem. This garden functions as a symbolic area that emphasises the constraints of material comfort and the essentiality of pursuing spiritual tranquilly. However, Thomas Norris Smith argues this very garden leads to his gradual transformation "since the garden was the conventional landscape of human love, loss, and fulfilment in medieval literature, it could reflect the transformations of the human heart" (180-181). With the Dreamer mourning there alone, there will be "a series of displacements and material transformations based on [the] image of the pearl and the

spot at which [The Pearl Maiden] was lost, with a complex play on spot, or withouten spot to signify her purity as well as the place of loss" (Stanbury "The Body" 39). Similar to the image of the pearl, thus, the garden is in parallel with the transformation of the Dreamer. As marked by David Aers, the

> *Pearl* poet shows the dreamer enjoying a delight which seems not at all directed to God [. . .]. The landscape apparently destroys his grief and offers him more bliss than he can tell: yet because of that ("Forby"), he begins to think of Paradise across the water, thought which begets new longing [. . .] the link-words in this section being "more and more." Bliss has generated a new sense of lack in the dreamer even though this has definitely not been in response to any theocentric yearnings, at least none that were conscious or identified by the poet. So much "loueloker" does the other side now become in his fantasy that he actually ceases to enjoy the blissful place he is in, and becomes restless and anxious. His desire has shifted from the lost object, detached from the missing pearl on whose grave his body still lies, and reattached itself to this unknown land across the water. (60)

Aers emphasises the transformation of the Dreamer's exploration in the garden, progressing from a pursuit of worldly pleasure to a yearning for spiritual fulfilment. The shift emphasises the symbolic aspect of the garden as a place that mirrors the Dreamer's changing attitude and the final understanding that genuine comfort exists outside the physical realm. Upon entering the garden, the Dreamer is so overwhelmed by the physical magnificence of it that he fails to grasp its transcendental value.

The dreamer cannot retrieve his pearl from the soil, however, he is on the verge of acquiring intellectual understanding during this particular period. In the medieval calendar, August marks the time for harvesting. Andrew et al. translate "in hyȝ seysoun" into modern English as "on a festival" (*Modern English* 2). Marie Padgett Hamilton asserts that "it probably was at the Feast of Our Lady in Harvest (the Assumption), a proper time for religious revelations" (813). Similarly, Lynn Staley Johnson claims that this specific time should be interpreted as "a medium for change and growth" (4) in *Pearl*. In addition, Elizabeth Petroff puts forward that the time refers to August 15, "the Assumption of the Virgin" and the divine significance of this holiday is that it explains "iconographically the relationship between the human and the divine, life and death" (181). In her *The Medieval Calender Year*, Bridget Ann Henisch exemplifies the significance of the harvest time by quoting *Pearl* and highlights the following:

> In wheat, the edible grains form in the ear at the top of the plant's stem. Before they can be ground into flour, they have to be detached from the husk, or chaff, that surrounds them. In medieval practice, this was done in two stages, by threshing and by winnowing. The ears were first thrashed with flails-or, in some Italian calendars, trampled by horses or other draft animals'- to make a coarse division, and then a fan of sieve was used to cause the fine chaff to float away from the heavier seed. This grain was the all-important harvest, the precious pearl found in the dust of the threshing-floor. The careful separation of grain from chaff was not only a familiar sight in everyday life; it was also a familiar image of *the separation of the saved souls from the damned*, because it had been used in the Bible as a metaphor for the Last Judgment. (emphasis added, 112)

Therefore, this temporality mentioned in the poem holds great importance in relation to the overarching issues it explores: the necessity to find comfort in the perception of the immortality of the soul and the necessity of divine comprehension to fully grasp it. In this context, innocence is a crucial determinant as only those who are innocent possess the entitlement to attain divinity. As Francis T. Palgrave emphasizes, "[t]he glory and dignity of innocence, [. . .], [has] never been set forth with more charm and persuasiveness" (117) than in *Pearl*.

Before falling asleep, the Dreamer is lost and in need of "a new kind of knowledge" (Stanbury *Seeing* 13) and indicates no signs of consolation as he acknowledges his sinful behaviour:

> Bifore þat spot my honde I spennd
> For care ful colde þat to me caȝt;
> A deuely dele in my hert denned,
> Paz resoun sette myseluen saȝt.
> I playned my perle pat der watz penned,
> Wyth fyrce skyllez pat faste faȝt.
> Paz kynde of Kryst me comfort kenned,
> My wreched wylle in wo ay wraȝteI
> I felle vpon þat floury flaȝt,
> Suche odour to my hernez schot;
> I slode vpon a slepyng-slaȝte
> On þat precios perle withouten spot. (*Pearl* 49-60)

He is totally aware that reason has the potential to console him, but he is unable to employ his reason to his behaviour. He is also aware that he is sinful since he does not abide by the rules of Christianity and does not search for comfort in God's decrees. He knows what his disorder is and thus refers to his will as "wreched" (*Pearl* 56). Covetousness is recognized as one of the Seven Deadly Sins, and as Sister Mary

Vincent Hillmann argues, the Dreamer is evidently conscious of possessing this characteristic (10). He perceives himself as sinful due to his lack of faith and his pride (Stern 77). In order to recuperate from his pain, he must cultivate the capacity to submit to God's will. In his spiritual journey, the Dreamer seeks "for a truth which will answer the where and the why of this specific death, the death of the infant child" (Hoffman 102).

The second section of the poem commences with his awakening in a forest where "auenture þer meruaylez meuen" (*Pearl* 64). For this landscape to which his soul has ascended, various adjectives with respect to its radiance and brightness are used. All the details of the first garden have "been transformed into something less languidly autumnal, something sharper, harder, brighter, even painfully bright" (Spearing *Medieval* 114). In this *locus amoenus* into which he is thrown, there is an extraordinary physical beauty. The allure of the place is reflected in the style of the poem. Throughout the five stanzas, the splendour of the forest is verbalized through the earthly eyes of the Dreamer:

> The adubbemente of þo downez dere
> Garten my goste al greffe forȝete.
> So frech flauorez of frytez were,
> As fode hit con me fayre refete.
> Fowlez þer flowen in fryth in fere,
> Of flaumbande hwez, boÞe smale and grete;
> Bot sytole-stryng and gyternere
> Her reken myrÞe moȝt not retrete,
> For quen Þose bryddez her wyngez bete,
> Þay songen wyth a swete asent.
> So gracios gle couÞe no mon gete
> As here and se her adubbement. (*Pearl* 85-96)

He marks that his worldly approach to it cannot describe its glory. He disregards divine order and believes that haphazard Fortune has brought him there. Given that the Dreamer has set off to a different realm and is still amazed by the physical beauty, it may be inferred that his perception still remains confined to his worldly outlook and is currently unprepared for spiritual transformation and his love is currently limited to worldly matters. The Dreamer states that, "[t]he adubbemente of þo downez dere /

Garten my goste al greffe forzete" (*Pearl* 85-86). This garden looks like a transfigured version of the *erber* at the beginning of the poem. As Petroff comments,

> [t]he natural beauty of the first garden is here transformed into a timeless beauty resembling, and repeatedly compared to, works of art. The sensual impression made by this place, the mood it produces, differs from the earlier garden both in degree and in kind. As a place of joy, its potential for consolation is explicit, and almost impossible for the narrator to ignore. The openness and expansiveness and all-inclusiveness of the place suggest the need (and possibility) for a similar spiritual expansion within the narrator. (187)

It is an infinite version of the first garden, yet it still exhibits a worldly beauty, with an emphasis on the innumerable mentions of precious gems. In the words of Gregory Roper, the Dreamer is "a little too caught up in the sensual beauty and expense of the place" (171) to understand beyond this external beauty. His lines indicate that finding solace in the beauty of the world would be enough for him. The beauty of this world, thus, gives him some temporal satisfaction and consolation, "drawing him away from the fixation on death and the dead" (Aers 59). However, according to the poem, without fully acknowledging the creator of all this beauty or the very nature of his grief, he cannot retain this feeling. He is paradoxically lost in this unfamiliar landscape. He proceeds with enumerating the beauties and is extremely enamoured with the location. The greater the abundance of material beauty presented to him, the more he desires to see this garden in his dream. Admitting his inadequate capacity in absorbing the transcendent side of this beauty, he claims that his mortal heart may be inadequate to portray it:

> More of wele watz in þat wyse
> þen I cowþe telle þagh I tom hade,
> For vrþely herte myght not suffyse
> To þe tenþe dole of þo gladnez glade.
> Forþy I thoght þat paradyse
> Watz þer ouer gayn þo bonkez brade;
> I hoped þe water were a deuyse
> Bytwene myrþes by merez made;
> Byyonde þe broke, by slente oþer slade,
> I hoped þat mote merked wore.
> Bot þe water watz depe, I dorst not wade,
> And euer me longed ay more and more. (*Pearl* 133-144)

Indeed, the depiction of this beautiful panorama is not very different from the image of the Garden of Eden. The difference is in that the Dreamer intentionally perceives it through his "earthly heart" and is unable to grasp the eternal worth of it. Hence, he constantly wishes to have more and more of it. Indeed, this landscape marks the beginning of his instructive journey in his vision. Rather than featuring a place where God intervenes into the world of humanity, the *Pearl*-poet casts a human being "thrust into the divine order, into the kingdom of heaven" (Spearing *The Gawain-poet* 105). Among this glory, he notices a child, "mayden of menske" (*Pearl* 162) whom he knew very well. As Spearing puts it, the Pearl Maiden is "represented as being a transfigured version of an object precious to him in his waking life" (*Medieval* 11). This change in the Pearl Maiden is highly significant since her transformation serves as an example of other minor transformations, all of which ultimately help the Dreamer's transformation.

The Pearl Maiden's physical change functions as being "from a mere precious stone, and equally from the small child that we eventually learn the precious stone symbolized into a lady of daunting spiritual grandeur" (Spearing *Medieval* 115). Although the language of the poem renders its spiritual worth, her portrayal by the Dreamer is inexorably worldly. Adorned all with "araye ryalle" (*Pearl* 191), this courteous maiden is gracious and has an ivory white face, a fair forehead, and a shiny white mantle. She is embellished with a plentiful array of pearls of royal value. On her heart, there is an enormous pearl which represents "the archetype of innocence" as she "wears on her breast the symbol of eternal life which was placed there by Christ" (Robertson "The Pearl" 24). Her face is grave enough for "doc oþer erle" (*Pearl* 211). The Dreamer is simultaneously both captivated and appalled by the magnificence of the Pearl Maiden and continues to be in pursuit of witnessing more and more of this aesthetic splendour. In addition to all the precious pearls she is wearing, as Felicity Riddy emphasizes, she is depicted as a pearl (144) with her ivory white complexion. Until the Pearl Maiden makes her first verbal existence, the connotation of the pearl remains superficial through the Dreamer's perception. He employs the images of the physical realm. In the opening of the fifth set of stanzas, the Dreamer openly speaks to the Pearl Maiden:

> 'O perle,' quoþ? I, 'in perlez pyȝt,
> Art þou my perle þat I haf playned,

Regretted by myn one on ny3te?
Much longeyng haf I for þe layned,
Syþen into gresse þou me agalyȝte.
Pensyf, payred, I am forpayned,
And þou in a lyf of lykyng lyȝte,
In paradys erde, of stryf vnstrayned.
What Wyrde hatz hyder my juel vayned,
And don me in þys del and gret daunger?
Fro we in twynne wern towen and twayned,
I haf ben a *joylez juelere*.' (emphasis added, *Pearl* 241-252)

It is crucial here that the Dreamer designates himself as a "joyless jeweler". From the very beginning of the poem, the *Pearl*-poet makes abundant use of lapidary imagery. The Middle English word "juel" did not only mean a precious stone, but also "a highly wrought art-object" (Riddy 147). Up to this point, all the images with regard to the pearl are depicted through the vantage point of the Dreamer. As a corollary, all the attributions to pearl are mainly earthly, emphasizing its material value. Thus, the *Pearl*-poet deliberately casts the Dreamer as a "joyless jeweller". A literal jeweller deals with buying and selling material gems and this contradicts with the spiritual mode of the poem. As Helen Barr states, the poet "establishes a material consciousness right at the heart of the poem" (60) through this depiction of the jeweller. The Dreamer's first comments on the Pearl Maiden reveal his self-centred and worldly disposition, as he excessively fixates on his own anguish and distress. The Dreamer, visibly impressed by the transformed girl, unequivocally declares that what he has lost was of material worth and is presently submerged in the soil. As a result, he refers to himself as a "joyless jeweler" who is more concerned with the gem's material worth.

According to *A Medieval Book of Magical Stones: The Peterborough Lapidary*, pearl is determined as "the chief of all stones that are white and precious" (75). Certain pearls are known for distinctive names, "for only one is ever found and never together" and "they are best when white, clear and round" (75). The way in which the Dreamer describes his pearl, as "so reken" (*Pearl* 5) and "so smoþe" (*Pearl* 6), is in direct correspondence with this characterization of the gemstone. Analogous to the inherent qualities of the precious gemstone, his pearl is unique, flawless, and unblemished. Additionally, pearl is renowned for its help against cardiac swoon (Young 76). Correspondingly, the poem concludes with the grieving dreamer finding solace as his

beloved pearl leads him towards the transmission of sacred principles. Nevertheless, his comprehension of this exceptional gem at the outset of the poem impedes his perception. According to Hillman, his excessive preoccupation with material possessions (242) serves as an indication of greed, which is considered one of the Seven Deadly Sins. Stern concurs with Hillman's assessment that the Dreamer's attitude toward loss is "accompanied with pride" (73), given that he recognizes his "lack of faith" (73), but is not yet prepared to take appropriate action. His true necessity is a total abstinence from material possessions and, by extension, earthly criteria for prosperity (Moorman 117). Furthermore, the poem progressively transforms the visual representations and symbolic associations of pearl as a precious gem and related terms of jewellery from earthly connotations to celestial descriptions. Throughout the poem, the symbols of pearl and jewellery are used in a variety of ways, with conflicting interpretations, until ultimately having a transformation from ephemeral into everlasting connotation.[4] It is not surprising then that both himself and the Pearl Maiden refer to the dreamer as a joyless jeweller even though it has contrasting connotations for both.

The Dreamer's state on his first encounter with the Maiden is "a divided, disordered self, caught up so much in his covetousness, grief, and sorrow, that he cannot even see his own disorder" (Roper 168). A huge "gulf" (Moorman "The Role" 113) between the Dreamer and the Pearl Maiden becomes evident as soon as she initiates conversation. The Pearl Maiden mostly admonishes the Dreamer for his irrational understanding of loss. According to Christian doctrines, as Ege draws attention, "turning one's back on God who is the principle of life" ("The Imagery" 28) is sinful and the Pearl Maiden is the impeccable implementer of it. She states,

> "Sir, ye haf your tale mysetente
> To say your perle is al awaye

[4] To further accentuate the theme through the utilization of specific forms, the *Pearl*-poet employs a similar technique in *Sir Gawain in the Green Knight*. In addition to numerical, colour, and animal symbolism, *Sir Gawain in the Green Knight* features an emblem symbolism which is embodied through the pentangle. When Sir Gawain breaks his promise to Sir Bertilak, and destroys five codes of chivalry, the perfection symbol of pentangle is also broken. Thus, the perfection is not accomplished. Parallel to the romance, the *Pearl*-poet (im)perfectly constructs the form of the romance with bob and wheel stanza pattern which is composed of "a short sequence of rhymed lines that concludes the larger unrhymed" stanzas (Baldick 29). Thus, the *Pearl*-poet uses imperfection as a means to emphasize the theme of perfection. Similarly, in *Pearl*, the *Pearl*-poet aims to draw a perfect circle by starting and ending in the same setting while he is achieving a transformation for the Dreamer.

> That is in cofer so comly clente
> As in this gardyn gracios gaye,
> Hereinne to lenge forever and play
> Ther mys nee mornyng com never nere.
> Her were a forser for thee, in faye,
> If thou were a *gentyl jueler*." (emphasis added, *Pearl* 257-264)

By directly addressing the Dreamer, the Pearl Maiden suggests that he has been mistaken in his expression of loss. By condemning the Dreamer for not being a noble jeweller, the Pearl Maiden begins to change the connotation of the pearl image. Moreover, according to the Dreamer, the garden landscape was an earthly one with infinite beauties. However, the Pearl Maiden defines it as a garden where one can stay for ever and rejoice. It is a beautiful "cofer" and as the Dreamer is not a noble jeweller, he cannot find a "forser" for himself there. By using the metaphor of the coffer for the garden, the Pearl Maiden implicitly condemns the Dreamer's worldly mindset. She also states that if he were a noble jeweller, he would have a casket there. The choice of the word "casket" here is not accidental. The Pearl Maiden subtly expresses that the Dreamer has a limited perspective restricted only to the physical world and it is a sin. With the word play on "coffer" and "casket", the Pearl Maiden introduces a heavenly reading of the garden and the jewellery imagery. She develops her point by accusing the Dreamer of being set on "a mad porpose" (*Pearl* 267) on account of a "raysoun bref" (*Pearl* 268).

As noted before, one of the other minor forms of transformation employed in the poem is the dialogue between the Dreamer and the Pearl Maiden as regards its transformative effect on the Dreamer. The theological debate they maintain has a transformative nature since both of their roles are altered during the debate. During her lifetime, the father was the authoritative figure for the Pearl Maiden, but in the vision, she is superior to him "as a queen in the court of heaven" (Riddy 152). Moreover, the Biblical references in the poem present a transformation, as well, since these episodes constitute "a Biblical transfiguration narrative", as Allan Mitchell argues. (89). The fact that the Dreamer witnesses the life of the Lamb and the brides on a hill (Mitchell 89) as told by Matthew in his vision creates an alternative and altered depiction of the story. All these minor transformations together are interwoven into the ornate structure of the poem. These transformations proceed collaterally with the spiritual development of the Dreamer.

Thereby, as regards the engagement of the theme, the minor forms of transformation contribute to the major transformation of the poem: The Dreamer's spiritual transformation.

As stated, so as to signify the superiority of heavenly values over the worldly ones, the Pearl Maiden borrows from the medieval tradition of the flower and the leaf. She marks, "[f]or þat þou lestez watz bot a rose/ þat flowred and fayled as kynde hyt gef;" (*Pearl* 269-270). The image of the rose portrayed here is an object of love and desire as in a love poem. It is exemplified congruously with the perspective of the Dreamer, and the mortality of a worldly rose is presented. By disregarding the immortality of the soul even after death, "the Dreamer has underestimated her absolute value" (Spearing "Symbolic" 130). The Pearl Maiden harshly criticizes the Dreamer on the grounds that he is mourning for a pearl of material value and ends her words by calling him a "no kynde jueler" (*Pearl* 276). He is not a proper jeweller because he is too loyal to worldly desires and earthly love towards his pearl. He is also unnatural for her, as her conception of a jeweller is entirely distinct from that of the Dreamer. Although the Pearl Maiden's concept of a pearl is associated with the heavens, the Dreamer's perspective is undeniably earthly. Nolan states that,

> [h]e is preeminently a lover of artful beauty, of himself, and of another creature. He thinks he has understood the fullness of joy in union. And he suffers heavily under its loss. He is also a jeweller. His love has grown out of a capacity to appreciate what pleases his senses, as well as his sense of form. (*The Gothic* 159)

Due to his earthly conduct, the Pearl Maiden tries to alter his perception of the pearl which would contribute hugely to his understanding of loss. Her main aim is to create "a progression of images toward the fuller understanding of this symbolic picture, the contrasting impressions of earth and of another place associated with jewellery, brightness and royalty" (Wendell Stacey Johnson 39).

Only if the Dreamer could imagine a figure of a rose with all its heavenly attributions, could he attain an everlasting love of his pearl. Nevertheless, the Dreamer's penchant for worldly love obstructs his learning at this moment. He shows signs of a slow learner as he specifies that he has found his pearl now and is ready to reunite with her.

Regardless of all his deficiencies, he considers that he could be "a joyfol jueler" (*Pearl* 288) if he went beyond the water. This joy he refers to is a superficial and earthly joy which can only be of any good on material Earth. He still approaches the Pearl Maiden as a courtly lady and depends too much upon the object of love. Each time he endeavours to soften her manner, she resists since they are on divergent discourse levels. Upon her first disappointment with the Dreamer, the Pearl Maiden harshly criticises him:

> "Jueler," sayde þat gemme clene,
> "Wy borde þe men? so madde ȝe be!
> Þe wordez hatz þou spoken at ene;
> Vnavysed, forsoþe, wern alle þre.
> Þou ne woste in worlde quat on dos mene;
> Þy worde byfore þy wytte con fle.
> Þou says þou trawez me in þis dene
> Bycawse þou may wyth yȝen me se;
> Anoþer - þou says in þis countré
> Þyself schal won wyth me ryȝt here.
> Þe þrydde, to passe þys water fre:
> Þat may no joyfol jueler. (*Pearl* 289-300)

The Pearl Maiden, by reffering to him as "mad" and "thoughtless", suggests that he does not consider the consequences of his words and mocks her principles. She also blames him for three things he believes: the things only his eyes can see, that he can live with her there, and that he can cross the stream. The Dreamer simply perceives her life "as a kind of miraculous prolongation of her earthly life" (Spearing "Symbolic" 138). According to her, with these mistakes, he is not entitled to be a "joyful jeweller". These three obstacles to accept the heavenly rules, as Amber Dunai asserts, "characterize the Jeweler's disruptive behavior in his dream: his possessiveness of the Pearl Maiden, his rejection of her teaching in favor of his own understanding, and his firm adherence to earthly systems of justice and reward" (11).

The frustrated maiden realizes that he is not simply naïve or ignorant, but sinful. While she is blaming him for his faulty understanding, she is also willing to teach him to trust in God. Here, their points of view are juxtaposed by the poet again. His cognitive processing remains slow in comprehending this distinction. Thus, what the Pearl Maiden attempts to do is to take him, as Roper suggests,

> [. . .] through the process of self-discovery: she offers him pictures of himself, definitions of who he is, so that he may recover himself. But it is up to the dreamer to accept these portraits, to recognize his own failings, and to claim a new self in his own "I" statement; only when he does so can he come to terms with his loss and his proper place. (168)

After the Pearl Maiden states that believing with one's eyes is blasphemous and an expression of vanity, she asserts that a person should consistently adhere to the teachings of God. She warns the Dreamer that according to His decrees, a person must take "oþer counsayl" (*Pearl* 319). She explicitly conveys to him that he will be unable to cross the river unless he comprehends the concept of attaining immortality through death. The obtuse Dreamer does not understand the warning of the Pearl Maiden and calls her his "tresor" (*Pearl* 331), once more highlighting his worldliness. In addition, he expresses his utter sorrow over losing his pearl for the second time. The Pearl Maiden becomes highly enraged by his inadvertence and maintains that,

> "Thow demes noȝt bot doel-dystresse,"
> Þenne sayde ȝat wyȝt, "why dos þou so?
> For dyne of doel of lurez lesse
> Ofte mony mon forgos þe mo.
> Þee oȝte better þyseluen blesse
> And loue ay God, in wele and wo,
> For anger gaynez þe not a cresse.
> Who nedez schal þole, be not so þro;
> For þoȝ þou daunce as any do,
> Braundysch and bray þy braþes breme,
> When þou no fyrre may, to ne fro,
> Þou moste abyde þat He schal deme. (*Pearl* 337-348)

By extending the admonition to a universal level, the Pearl Maiden confirms that while dealing with loss in a false way, one could lose greater things. Anger does not benefit the Dreamer and he should let go himself of "braþes breme" (*Pearl* 346). He should abandon his anger and seek to assuage his pain under "Hys comforte" (*Pearl* 357). After finding his attitude reprehensible, the Dreamer asks for consolation to free himself from his misery: "Bot kyþez me kyndely your coumforde" (*Pearl* 369). Ironically, while seeking some relief, he addresses her as "my dear endorde" (*Pearl* 368). He does not realize that this is non-negotiable and has a distorted perception of God's mercy and merits. The seventh group of stanzas, all ending in "þe grounde of alle my blysse" indicates this specific ineptitude of the Dreamer. While objectifying his happiness with

the Pearl Maiden, he continues to dwell on his own absence of joy. However, the Maiden uses the same phrase for her bliss in a different context. Her bliss is all founded upon Christ. Moreover, the Dreamer draws a comparison between himself and the Maiden, highlighting her exuberant attitude in contrast to his own. She speaks of her new life as a wife to the Lamb. In spite of her repeated explanations, the Dreamer cannot comprehend her new status as an earthly man and questions it. He delivers his main argument to the Maiden, "Þou lyfed not two ȝer in oure þede" (*Pearl* 483) and concludes that "[b]ot a queen!- hit is to dere a date" (*Pearl* 492). Due to his sturdy bond to the earthly values, the Dreamer is constantly amazed by the teachings of the Maiden and he "undergoes a whole series of disturbing reversals of expectation" (Spearing *Medieval* 125).

In order to teach the generosity of God, the Pearl Maiden refers to a scriptural text, as told in Matthew 20:1-16. This gospel is "The Parable of the Vineyard" in which God's mercy and merit is exemplified. It is the beginning of the "well-defined and climactically arranged stages" (Moorman "The Role" 111) of the debates in the poem, which contributes to change the Dreamer. The debate starts with the parable and "culminates in a retelling of John's glorious vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem at the end of *Pearl*" (Turville-Petre 390). This section reveals one of the most pivotal moves of the Pearl Maiden on her aim of transforming the Dreamer. She makes use of "The Parable of the Vineyard", for the sake of familiarizing the Dreamer with the generosity and mercy of God. The poem effectively establishes scriptural allusions that generate stark contrasts between earthly and heavenly values in order to ultimately alter the Dreamer's worldly perspective. "The Parable of the Vineyard" basically tells the story of labourers in a vineyard. Right at the halfway of the poem, the poet "concentrates on the question of the quantitative evaluation of reward [. . .] with a direct confrontation between earthly and heavenly values" (Andrew et al. "Notes" 79).

In the parable, the labourers agree with the Lord for "a pene on a day" (*Pearl* 510) and start working. Later that day on different occasions, the Lord hires more men in exchange for a full pay. At the end of the day, the Lord gives each one "inlyche a peny" (*Pearl* 546). The first group of labourers begin to complain on the grounds of deserving

more. By underlining generosity, Christ ends the dispute declaring that, “Þe laste schal be þe first þat strykez, And þe fyrst þe laste, be he neuer so swyft,” (*Pearl* 570-572). Like the labourers in the parable, the Dreamer protests the idea that it is not fair to receive the same amount for unequal working hours. In God’s grace, his evaluation is faulty since “the penny paid for a day’s work in the vineyard becomes a metaphor for salvation, implying that even the humblest labourer can earn the ultimate reward” (Bahr 731). According to God’s mercy, there is no limit, but the Dreamer’s assessment is based on earthly limits. Thus, in the garden of the parable, it is limited, but in heaven it is not (Wendell Johnson 40). By referring to the parable, the Pearl Maiden aims at “telling the dreamer that work is a duty but never sufficient, and only grace rewards the laborer” (Smith 189). Informing that she has arrived in the vineyard in the evening, the Pearl Maiden intends to confute the Dreamer’s point. Thus, through the example of the parable, the poem shows that “God is knowable and indefinitely lovable and gracious beyond any conceivable merit of man himself” (Bond 27).

However, not comprehending the heavenly judgment, the obstinate Dreamer prolongs the debate when he finds her account “vnresounable” (*Pearl* 590). In these episodes, he “exposes himself with a comedy mixed with pathos” (Spearing *Medieval* 123). He is in need of more enlightenment; hence, the Pearl Maiden needs to integrate more references to heavenly orders to induce him. As put forward by Beaston, “since she repeatedly chastises him and urges him to change his attitude and actions, she clearly believes that the narrator must assume some responsibility for his redemption” (17). As a consequence, she exhibits patience and continues the discourse. As Hillman states, “as a whole, the poem surely attests the diligence of the author in gathering an abundance of material from Holy Scripture for the edification of his readers” (16). According to Hillman, the poet did not want to lose his material at hand to send out a certain message not only to the Dreamer but also to a community.

In the eleventh group of stanzas, the refrain line is “God is gret inoghe”. Accordingly, the unlimited power of God’s limit is emphasized by the Pearl Maiden. She attempts to transform the Dreamer’s perspective in this particular passage. In this approach, the poet demonstrates the Pearl Maiden’s aim of transforming the Dreamer’s mindset, guiding him to understand and accept the divine attributes of God. Being accused of being too

young to be a queen in heaven, the Pearl Maiden initiates the discussion of innocence here. She begins to describe the significance of the Original Sin and baptism. The Dreamer is still confused about the merits of God. As Kenneth Chong states, the mistake he makes is

> [. . .] to apply the same mode of equalization to everyone. For infants who have never sinned or wrought woe, an arithmetical calculation suffices. Loss and gain, Adam's sin and the water of Christ's wound, are balanced at a point determinable; equality is restored; the child is welcomed into heaven. But for the adult whose once-potential sin is actualized, and who incurs a personal excess of debt beyond the cover of baptism, such assurance is wanting. This is not only because debt is heaped up over a lifetime, but because life is changeable and subject to many factors. An adult's sins must be weighed against his spiritual condition, station and wealth, previous sins; these in turn are weighed against inner motives and thoughts, and the quality of his repentance. (240)

According to the Pearl Maiden, redemption is exclusively granted to the innocent, and this state of innocence is achieved via adherence to rationality. In giving examples of innocent men or the righteous men, the Pearl Maiden refers to the verses of David or Solomon in the Bible. In this instance,

> [. . .] the maiden teaches that the best hope of salvation for all men is through innocence; and she applies this to the particular case of the dreamer. The adult must be spiritually reborn and acquire the innocence and humility of a child if he would be admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven: the mourner's child is thus a 'type' or 'figure' of what he must himself become 'spiritually' in order to enter the Heavenly City. (Bishop 61)

Totally transforming the image of the pearl, the Pearl Maiden repeatedly uses the phrase "perle mascellez" as the refrain line in the thirteenth group of stanzas:

> þer is þe blys þat con not blynne
> þat þe jueler soȝte þurȝ perré pres
> And solde alle hys goud, boþe wolen and lynne,
> To bye hym a perle was mascellez. (*Pearl* 729-732)

The pearl image here symbolizes "the kingdom of heaven" (Hillman 12). This pearl is traded in exchange for innocence and salvation. Thus, it is precious in heavenly judgement, possessing a completely different connotation from the image of the pearl put by the Dreamer before. Here the pearl signifies, then, "both heaven and the personal freedom from sin which is salvation and heaven within, and which reflects the heavenly

nature" (Wendell Johnson 43). The Dreamer starts to exhibit some accumulation of divine insight as he asks, "[q]uo formed þe þy fayre fygure? / Þat wroȝt þy wede, He watz ful wys" (*Pearl* 747-748). She is crowned by the Lamb Himself and the Dreamer considers that her shape cannot be defined through an earthly understanding. Nonetheless, he is still baffled by the fact that she has been able to overthrow everybody else in heaven. She answers that she is not peerless there, being one of the 144.000 brides of the Lamb. She also mentions her dwelling place for the first time as Saint John has seen in the Apocalypse, in the form of a spiritual vision. Then, she talks about Jerusalem. At that moment, she refers to Christ as "my dere Juelle" (*Pearl* 795). It can be observed that at this point she has completely transformed the image of the jewel in the poem. At present, it symbolizes God Himself. She accounts for Christ's pain in Jerusalem for the sake of mankind and sighs, "[i]n Jerusalem watz my Lemman slayn" (*Pearl* 805). She extolls the fact that He is fair, spotless and unblemished. These adjectives are used before by the Dreamer to define his material pearl. However, the connotation here requires a heavenly understanding.

Paying particular heed to the one death from which all of humanity's hope is derived, the Pearl Maiden states,

> [a]lþaȝ oure corses in clottes clynge
> And ȝe remen for rauþe wythouten reste,
> We þurȝoutly haven cnawyng;
> Of on dethe ful oure hope is drest. (*Pearl* 857-860)

Recognising the significance of the sacrifice of Christ and the Pearl Maiden's succinct description of the celestial hierarchy, the Dreamer verbalizes his risky approach: "I am bot mokke and mul among, / And þou so ryche a reken rose" (*Pearl* 904-905). As for the comparison of the rose in line 270 and here, it is evident that the former image had an earthly connotation. Here, the Dreamer himself recapitulates it in the heavenly sense. Next, the Dreamer would also like to learn where she dwells. Despite her admission that she had previously resided in the celestial Jerusalem described in St. John's vision, he wonders about the "castel-walle" (*Pearl* 917) she lives in. At this juncture, his earthly perspective becomes dominant once more regarding the setting. E. V. Gordon marks, "the dreamer thinks of the heavenly city as a feudal town, consisting of a castle with a

cluster of buildings set within the castle wall" (77). Then, the Pearl Maiden gives an account of New Jerusalem, by entirely transforming the image of the known Jerusalem in the mind of the Dreamer. This section focuses on how the Pearl Maiden's descriptions and comparisons are employed to reshape the Dreamer's perception of divine realities:

> 'Of motez two to carpe clene,
> And Jerusalem hyȝt boþe nawþeles—
> Þat nys to yow no more to mene
> Bot "cete of God" oþer "syȝt of pes"—
> In þat on oure pes watz mad at ene;
> With payne to sufler þe Lombe hit chese;
> In þat oþer is noȝt bot pes to glene
> Þat ay schal laste withouten reles.
> Þat is þe borȝ þat we to pres
> Fro þat oure flesch be layd to rote,
> Þer glory and blysse schal euer encres
> To þe meyny þat is withouten mote.' (*Pearl* 949-960)

The Pearl Maiden compares the two Jerusalems "in the form of Christ's suffering in the old one and her new life in the new one" (Moorman "The Role" 118). The avid Dreamer desires to see this New Jerusalem himself but he is not allowed to do so. However, the Pearl Maiden promises to show him only a glimpse of it. The Dreamer, upon reaching the source of the stream, catches sight of the city extending towards a hill for the very first time. This is the third setting which the Dreamer witnesses from the very beginning of the poem onwards. For the next group of stanzas, the Dreamer describes this heavenly city "as deuysez hit þe apostel John" (*Pearl* 984). The city is described in such a splendid fashion that Sarah Stanbury sets forth that it "offers what may well be the finest and most graphically realized description of the heavenly city in medieval literature" ("The Body" 36). The poem

> [. . .] produces a city with multidimensional coordinates, an exterior surface and complex interior life. The dreamer first describes the city gleaming with gold; then the twelve walls, each composed of a different gem, rising from the foundation; then the three gates on each side adorned with pearls. His gaze then penetrates the walls to the inside (line 1049), where he describes the interior design of Paradise: the river flowing from the throne, the trees on its banks bearing twelve fruits, and the procession of the 144,000 virgins led by the Lamb (line 1107). The dreamer's gaze comes to rest on a chthonic tableau built around the bleeding Lamb, who is surrounded by elders worshipping at his feet, angels casting incense, and the

> retinue of virgins, including the dreamer's transformed pearl-maiden. (Stanbury "The Body" 36)

It is full of "gentyl gemmez" (*Pearl* 991) and there are twelve tiers of all different kinds of precious gems as seen by John the apostle. The imagery of brightness and radiance is extensively used by the Dreamer in a similar fashion with his depiction of the garden at the beginning of the poem. Nevertheless, the essence of these images emanates with celestial undertones. He confirms this with his repetitive lines of "sunne and mone" in this eighteenth group of stanzas. There is no need for sun or moon because "[þ]e Self God watz her lombe-lyȝt" (*Pearl* 1046) and "also þer ne is neurer nyȝt" (*Pearl* 1071).

The Peterborough Lapidary[5] provides explanations for all these gems. Jasper is the first and foundation of these gems, which provides "a pure life" and the skill of "expounding dreams" to the bearer" (Young 52). If jasper is green, as depicted by the *Pearl*- poet, it is "of value and virtue" (Young 53). Sapphire, the second gem, "inspires peace and harmony, purifies the mind, and compels devotion to God" (Lecouteux 419) which are the ultimate objectives of the poem. Calcedony "withouten wemme" (*Pearl* 1003) is found on the third tier. It provides great eloquence (Evans and Serjeantson 75) and "connotes meekness" (Ege "The Portrayals" 80). This is similar to the Dreamer who is to achieve a state of meekness as the Pearl Maiden guides him towards performing virtuous acts in accordance with Christian ethics. Emerald "so grene of scale" (*Pearl* 1005) is on the fourth level signifying "cleanness" (Evans and Serjeantson 85). The fifth gem is sardonyx which keeps a man away from vices (Evans and Serjeantson 104). The sixth tier is established on ruby which eases the heart of the beholder and provides comfort (Evans and Serjeantson 110). Chrysolite is on the seventh tier which lies in the heart of God's kingdom (Evans and Serjeantson 74). Beryl, "cler and quyt", (*Pearl* 1011) is on the eighth tier which "stands for resurrection" (Ege "The Portrayals" 80). Topaz is the ninth gem that is also similar to gold. It purifies men (Young 60) and symbolizes angels (Ege "The Portrayals" 81). The chrysoprase is the tenth which connotes the Second Coming (Evans and Serjeantson 75). The noble jacinth takes away

[5] Two different editions of *The Peterborough Lapidary* are used in this chapter. The citation is shown as (Young, p) for Francis Young. Ed. *A Medieval Book of Magical Stones: The Peterborough Lapidary*. Cambridge: Texts in Early Modern Magic, 2016. The citation (Evans and Serjeantson p.) is used for Joan Evans and Mary S. Serjeantson. "The Peterborough Lapidary" in *English Mediaeval Lapidaries*. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

the elegy and sorrow (Evans and Serjeantson 96). The twelfth and last gemstone is the amethyst, "þe tryeste in vch a plyt" (*Pearl* 1015), which provides "mych comfortable in all sorrow[s]" and it gives a man "gode beleive" and bestows him a strong soul (Evans and Serjeantson 69). Under the guidance of the Pearl Maiden, the Dreamer's instruction aims to achieve devotional objectives. As Robert Max Garrett states, "[t]he pearl is par excellence the precious stone of the New Testament. In the Old Testament we have lists of precious stones in various places testifying to the remnant of belief in the virtue of precious stones both natural and engraved" (8). As a symbol, the pearl possesses spiritual value that goes beyond its religious purposes. It also manifests itself in the transforming landscapes shown in the poem.

The different depictions of the landscape in the poem also indicate different types of transformations. In the Old Jerusalem, the Lamb has suffered for the sake of humanity and there exist only a few remnants of pain and darkness. The Heavenly Jerusalem, however, presents a transfigured version of the Old Jerusalem in which brightness, radiance and bliss are frequently illustrated. A very bright river flows from the centre of the throne of the Lamb into the heart of the city, purifying all. It signifies baptism, innocence, and salvation. It also symbolizes "the outpowering of God's gifts" (Prior 61). God in a distant throne in this section is portrayed as an "anthropomorphic" (Beaston 21) figure. However, he is also "referred to in non-human terms as the Lamb, a metaphor which stresses his gentleness and his role as a sacrifice" (Beaston 21). The river serves as a boundary between Him and the domain of the Dreamer. It functions as both a physical and symbolic barrier. The land on the side of the Dreamer has a natural light and "resembles Earthly paradise of medieval accounts" (Wendell Johnson 35). However, the Pearl Maiden's side abounds in heavenly light and brightness. The very opposition at the heart of the poem, the opposition of heavenly and earthly values, is echoed here one more time. The river, thus, is "the separation of the divine from the human and thus a symbol of the distance of God" (Prior 63). Unless the Dreamer repents and attains complete innocence, he is prohibited from entering this divine realm.

The Dreamer is on the threshold of transforming his earthly understanding into a heavenly perception as exemplified by his use of images. Moreover, he acknowledges

that it is impossible for a human to endure such kind of pleasure, but he felt "nawþer reste ne trauayle" (*Pearl* 1087). The fact that he does not feel any troubles inside for a sight that no "fleschly hert" (*Pearl* 1082) endures, the Dreamer seems to be reconciled with the divine order. Then, he observes the entire group of brides of the Lamb, adorned with pearls, as well as the Lamb Himself. The poet entirely transforms the vision as told by St. John, by casting the Dreamer as a witness now in the New Jerusalem. All the brides were elated by the presence of "gay Juelle" (*Pearl* 1124). The image of the jewel has extended to the Lamb in this context and its perception has evidently undergone a transformation. There is a difference "between the Dreamer's observation of the New Jerusalem and of the heavenly procession" which is "rather like the difference between recognizing and experiencing" (Finlayson 337). His transformation will be fulfilled only if he could totally absorb these teachings.

The Dreamer also observes the fresh wounds on the Lamb among all His brightness. Having personally observed the sacrifice of Christ and the joy of his precious pearl in a celestial environment, he endeavours to make it across the river for the "luf-longyng" (*Pearl* 1152) in his heart. However, his act of crossing the river is considered a transgression. Although he has doubtlessly gained some insight into the heavenly values, he still acts like a worldly man with a worldly point of view. Before his final transformation, he needs to get one more instruction. Amber Dunai affirms that

> [t]his act is not an attempt to embrace the heavenly kingdom and its ruler; rather, the Jeweler admits to an overwhelming desire to force a reunion with the Maiden which he has been warned is impossible. He freely admits that he knows that his behavior is contrary to the Lamb's wishes, but he acts in a nearly suicidal state of mind, determined to follow through on his desire for the Maiden or perish in the attempt. While a good deal of willful behavior had been tolerated up to this point in the poem [. . .], the Jeweler's failed attempt to cross the river abruptly ends his dream sequence. He is forced out of the dream and into a state of waking regret and contemplation. He understands now that true reunion with the Pearl Maiden can only occur after death, and so he penitently prepares for the journey to his eternal home. (9)

Although he recognizes that it is an act driving his "manez mynde" (*Pearl* 1154) to madness, the Dreamer submits to his desire and attempts to cross the river. As he himself acknowledges, his mind works in a worldly way. Subsequently, he is unwillingly woken up from his sleep with this attempt. He is aware of the fact that he

has not gained his "Pryncez paye" (*Pearl* 1164). He wakes up in the same infertile garden at the beginning of the poem and it marks the moment when he undergoes a total transformation. He laments over his double separation from the Pearl Maiden. He remains sorrowful, albeit evidently transformed by his dream. He is "not converted with implausible completeness to a diametrically opposite frame of mind or mode of life, but certainly changed from the desperate anguish with which he was previously facing the loss of his pearl" (Spearing *Medieval* 128). He understands that going against God's wish is blasphemous and what he has done so far has been sinful. He accepts that all this experience was a teaching, and it was very precious. His final mistake is the last link in the chain of his spiritual quest. He also confirms that wanting more than what has been offered to him was an error:

> To þat Prynces paye hade I ay bente
> And ȝerned no more þen watz me geuen,
> And halden me þer in trwe entent
> As þe perle me prayed þat was so þryuen -
> As helde, drawen to Goddez present,
> To mo of His mysterys I hade ben dryuen.
> Bot ay wolde man of happe more hente
> Þen moȝten by ryȝt vpon hem clyuen.
> Þerfore my joye was sone toriuen
> And I kaste of kythez þat lastez aye.
> Lorde, mad hit arn þat agayn þee stryven
> Oþer proferen Þe oȝt agayn Þy paye. (*Pearl* 1189- 1200)

He regrets the wasted opportunities to witness other mysteries had he not disobeyed God's commandments. Extending the messeage to a universal level, the Dreamer talks about the mistakes of an everyman on earth. He condemns the people for their disobedience to God and calls them mad. Thus, the Dreamer has not only completed his course through his spiritual introspection, but he also has admonitions for humanity. In the last stanza, his transformation can be distinctly observed as he states, "[f]or I haf founden Hym" (*Pearl* 1203). His search was to reunite with his pearl and by finding God, the search is somehow completed. In the final stanza, he describes his experience and acknowledges his total commitment to God, ending his lines with "[h]e gef vus to be His homly hyne / Ande precious perlez vnto His pay. Amen. Amen" (*Pearl* 1211-1212). The concern in the use of the image of the pearl is not earthly here. The precious

pearl metaphor employed here is a Christian concept, signifying a true Christian. Therefore, the grievous error of the Dreamer "points beyond his own impatience or concupiscence [. . .] which is a general human condition" (Owen 411).

The poem begins and ends with the same words, like an image of closing a circle or "rounding it to the shape of a pearl" (Maring 6). Between these two episodes in the beginning and the ending, the transformation of the Dreamer is fulfilled. This unbroken circle is consistent with both the themes of loss and transformation and the narrative form. The circle is closed, but now it has gained a three-dimensional, spiral form with all the transformations it has encompassed. The experience of the Dreamer in *Pearl* is visualized through the display of "an intermediate plane of existence between earth and heaven" (Andrew et al. "Introduction" 33) and through the embodiment of the heavenly garden in the vision. On that setting, *Pearl* presents a journey of the Dreamer who endeavours to ease his pain and fill an order through the doctrines of the heavenly order. Additionally, *Pearl* reveals that earthly and celestial values are perpetually at odds, with the latter being preferable.

The poem's moral, both for the Dreamer and the audience, stems from the notion that death is unconquerable, however the grief that follows can be eased by surrendering to the decrees of God. With the help of the Pearl Maiden, the Dreamer surrenders himself to a new realm by changing his perspective towards God and life. The *Pearl*-poet renders the transformation of the Dreamer possible by integrating changing images, symbols, setting and retellings of Biblical stories. Ultimately, the Dreamer "has placed the suffering in a larger context, released his 'I' from its worries, and transferred the role of the mournful one to some better plane, to a newer role of one who understands the ways of nature" (Roper 169). Throughout the poem, the Dreamer's movement is upward which "is reflected in his movement through the landscape of his vision, for, both spatially and spiritually, he moves upward toward God" (Smith 197). Through his upward movement, he experiences a spiritual renewal and transformation in his understanding of how heavenly order can help him deal with the intolerable trauma of loss. Consequently, the Dreamer ventures into the heavenly realm and severs all his ties with the material world. In line with this, the closing of the poem "recalls what holds

the poem in living tension, such a balance of opposing forces, in the earthly and heavenly evaluations of pearl" (Luttrell 290).

At the end of the poem, he calls out to all mankind, and extends his unique experience to a universal message. This could be approached from the perspective that the poem may also have a transformative effect on the target audience who experience similar kinds of turmoil. Thus, while the poem explores the Dreamer's personal growth, it is also intended for "the few who enter deeply into his experience with him [and] may find [changes] therein revealed to them" (Osgood Lix). The Dreamer extends his experience on account of two principles. The first one is that death, mourning and grief are universal concerns. "[B]y omitting any biographical data about either the narrator or the maiden", the *Pearl*-poet "releases the situation from the limitations of time and place" (Lynn Johnson 161). The second principle which renders the poem universal is that only through adopting God's decree, can eternal bliss be obtained. Concluding the poem, the Dreamer "makes one last, radical transformation to the pearl: we become pearls, the very currency by which we are granted heaven and the form in which we inhabit it—to the prince's pleasure" (Chong 255). The readers are thereby advised to remain faithful in their pursuit of God's will. Enhancing this communal transformative effect, J. J. Anderson remarks that the interest of the poem lies "in relating Christian doctrine to universal life- experience, and particularly in the problem that some of the basic tenets of that doctrine fly in the face of basic human instincts and attitudes" (17). In a similar vein, Dennis Moran identifies one clear element in *Pearl* amidst the various uncertainties regarding the nature of the poem:

> [T]he author of *Pearl* wrote to instruct. At every turn of the poem the Dreamer - Narrator gains a knowledge that at the close of the poem helps to reconcile him to "the moral and spiritual orders of reality in which one good must give way to a higher good and one life must be lost that a higher life may be gained." (55)

Through the use of alterations of Scriptural passages, shifting representations of the pearl and rose, a paradisiacal setting, dialogue, and shifting representation of the Pearl Maiden, the poem enables the Dreamer to undergo gradual spiritual transformations for his ultimate metamorphosis. With each minor alteration, a progressive shift takes place within the Dreamer. The most significant transformation of that kind is the symbol of

the pearl. It exhibits a diversity of meanings going gradually from earthly to heavenly. D. W. Robertson explains that there are four levels of the symbol of the pearl. He says,

> [l]iterally, the Pearl is a gem. Allegorically, as the maiden of the poem, it represents those members of the Church who will be among the "hundred" in the celestial procession, the perfectly innocent. Tropologically, the Pearl is a symbol of the soul that attains innocence through true penance and all that such penance implies. Anagogically, it is the life of innocence in the Celestial City. The allegorical value presents a clear picture of the type of innocence; the tropological value shows how such innocence may be obtained; and the anagogical value explains the reward for innocence. To these meanings the literal value serves as a unifying focal point. ("The Pearl" 160)

Ultimately, the Dreamer has come to perceive an increasingly great significance in the symbol that initially manifested as a literal pearl in the poem. (Spearing "Symbolic" 146).

In addition, there are three different landscapes engaged in the poem, each of which is a transformed entity. The three main *loci* are not independent descriptions presented objectively by the poet; on the contrary, they are all created through the eyes of the Dreamer (Finlayson 314). The first garden where he has lost his pearl is depicted as a sort of cemetery and transformed into an infertile locus for him. The second landscape is a transfigured form of the first one, but this is a fertile garden which serves as a sanctuary for him. The New Jerusalem is an altered version of the Old Jerusalem. All these three *loci* are designed to direct him to heavenly understanding of loss and life. His lack of patience in the dream has prevented him from gaining a deep understanding of God's enigmas, but his realization of this truth results in an acquisition of patience in his everyday life. He surrenders to the divine will and now "accepts positively the loss of his pearl, as he was unable to do at the beginning of the poem" (Spearing "Symbolic" 147).

Edward Vasta encapsulates the essence of the poem and asserts that *Pearl* is

> [. . .] a religious poem in which the narrator becomes more than reconciled with the loss of a loved one. He becomes reconciled with himself, re-establishing the interior harmony of his soul's faculties [. . .] with the laws of physical universe, [. . .] with the mortality of earthly beauty, coming to see that the changeless beauty of Heaven is far more splendid [and] finally with the "kynde of Kryst", that is with

> the moral and spiritual orders of reality in which one good must give way to a higher good and one life must be lost that a higher life may be gained. (185)

The Dreamer undergoes a spiritual transformation as a result of a profound and enlightening "gostly drem" (*Pearl* 790). Being a meditation on grief, abandonment, and consolation, the experience of the Dreamer evokes a process that necessitates change in order to effectively deal with them. Consequently, by following the divine teachings received from the Pearl Maiden, the Dreamer successfully consoles himself by applying those principles to his own behaviour and attains a higher plane of existence. Therefore, the grieving father in the opening of the poem redirects his attention from his personal sorrow to the recognition of a celestial plan. As Michael H. Means suggests, the poem presents "a definite progression of changes" which "can be measured in the state of the narrator's soul" (51). These "definite changes" encompass various aspects, ranging from the imagery to the spiritual well-being of the Dreamer. Upon his re-entry into reality, he is expected to possess a reconfigured perception of existence. As John Gatta Jr. clarifies, "having been granted temporary commerce with the transcendent, he approaches his waking, voluntary commitment with a new, sacramental understanding of sense experience, human love, and the natural world" (255).

By embarking on a venture guided by religious convictions and principles, the Dreamer is instructed to be reconciled with his loss and acknowledge the superiority of heavenly values to his earthly understanding. As a result, the *Pearl*-poet presents "the transformation of the Dreamer's state of mind from anguished and rebellious mourning at the beginning to mourning no less intense but tempered by the ordering of a new metaphysic at the end" (Andrew et al. "Introduction" 30). Similarly, as Michael H. Means emphasizes, "he is consoled for the loss of his Pearl and raised to a higher state of spiritual perfection" (57). The transformation of the Dreamer, as depicted by the *Pearl*-poet, serves to emphasise the intricate nature of human emotions and the potential for solace via spiritual development. His admission that his worldly approach towards loss leads to his change as "the confessing individual's spiritual condition is changed" (Tracy 63). With the power of acknowledgement, the Dreamer is spiritually transformed into a new understanding of loss.

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the dynamic and contingent relationship between loss and transformation by the *Pearl*-poet. Within the existing critical heritage, the consolatory nature of the poem and the ultimate consolation the Dreamer attains have frequently been emphasized. However, this study has dealt with the various ways through which the inconsolable grief resulting from loss triggers an action of contemplative nature resulting in a spiritual transformation with an approach grounded in textual analysis. The *Pearl*-poet meticulously builds the narrative to demonstrate how the Dreamer's loss initiates a gradual process of spiritual revelation. In order to illustrate this change, the *Pearl*-poet constructs the story with exceptional care and attention to detail both in form and content.

The Dreamer's loss causes him to have a dream vision. In this dream vision, the Dreamer, with the assistance of the Pearl Maiden, ponders on the nature of loss and the process of mourning through a devotional perspective. The *Pearl*-poet presents a complex structure which includes an almost interlocking rhyme structure and linkages of keywords, both of which are employed to structurally emphasize the slow and well-designed nature of the Dreamer's path towards spiritual transformation. Furthermore, the transformation of the imagery and a variety of locations also serve as a reflection of the Dreamer's developing awareness and spiritual insight. These concerns regarding form and subject matter are interwoven throughout the transformation process in the exquisitely composed narrative of the poet. This chapter has aimed to supply detailed analyses of significant passages suggesting the significant ways each of those passages contribute to the Dreamer's progress towards achieving a greater level of spiritual consciousness. Thus, this study suggests that the poem goes beyond mere consolation and instead offers an investigation of spiritual growth and enlightenment of the Dreamer following the loss of his daughter. This method not only contributes to the understanding of *Pearl*'s complexity but also contributes to the broader discussion of medieval poetry's method of addressing fundamental human experiences such as loss, grief, and the spiritual transformation that ensues loss.

CHAPTER II

MULTI-LAYERED EXPLORATIONS OF LOSS AND TRANSFORMATION IN *THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS*

This chapter of the study deals with the themes of loss and transformation in Geoffrey Chaucer's first dream poem, *The Book of the Duchess*. The chapter approaches the poem through Chaucer's use of various narrative methods to address the themes in question, which indicates his multi-layered poetics. The text introduces representations of loss and transformation on a more introspective level and aims to investigate deeper layers of meaning through these representations, which can be intentionally ambiguous and obscure. Chaucer's multifaceted representation of the themes of loss and transformation reflects the complexity of human emotions in their diverse responses to loss by incorporating elements from various literary traditions, including classical mythology and contemporary French poetry. Furthermore, the poem explores the power of remembering as a catalyst for transformation through the Black Knight. The poem also proposes the dichotomy between Nature and Fortune in order to build a systematic approach to transformation, where Nature represents a state of harmony and Fortune represents a state of disorder.

In "The Prologue" to *The Legend of Good Women* (1385), Chaucer the poet states that he has written a poem about the late Duchess: "He made the book that hight the Hous of Fame/ And eke the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse" ("The Prologue" 417-418). It is generally accepted that *The Book of the Duchess* is written in honour of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, John of Gaunt's wife who died in 1368/9, possibly of the plague.[6] The title of the poem differed at the time of its writing as "'The Deethe of Blaunche the Duchesse', 'The Dreame of Chaucer', and, most commonly today, 'The Book of the Duchesse'" (Fumo 1).

[6] For the historical context of the poem, see Marjorie Anderson, "Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster." *Modern Philology* 45.3 (1948): 152-159. Edward I Conred, "The Historical Context of the *Book of the Duchess*: A New Hypothesis", *The Chaucer Review* 5.1 (1971): 195-212., and J. J. N. Palmer, "The Historical Context of the 'Book of the Duchess': A Revision", *The Chaucer Review* 8.4 (1974): 253-261.

The Book of the Duchess begins with a lamenting narrator depicting his loss of many kinds: loss of sleep, loss of joy, loss of feeling, loss of liveliness, loss of vigour and loss of direction- "That, by my trouthe, I take no kep/ Of nothing, how hyt cometh or goth" (*The Book of the Duchess* 6-7)[7], "For I have felynge in nothing" (*BD* 11). Lost in "sorwful ymagynacioun" (*BD* 14), he is suffering from a sickness which is the cause of all the other symptoms he suffers from. According to him, this sickness is against the laws of Nature. Lacking knowledge of any cures for this sickness, he focuses on books. He marks that it is a better practise than playing chess: "For me thoughte it better play/ Then playe either at ches or tables" (*BD* 50-51).

He starts reading the mythological story of Ceyx and Alcyone. In this romance, following his departure overseas, Ceyx tragically perishes, leaving Alcyone unaware of her husband's fate. In her most desperate moment, grieving Alcyone, ready to sacrifice everything "with good wille, body, herte and al" (*BD* 116), begs for a dream which reveals the fate of her husband, whether he is alive or dead. Juno, thus, gives her a deep sleep and summons Morpheus, the god of sleep, to help Alcyone. Morpheus finds the dead body of Ceyx and brings it to Alcyone. The body speaks and declares that there is no profit in mourning because he is already dead and wants his wife to bury his body:

> [. . .]. "My swete wyf,
> Awake! Let be your sorwful lyf,
> For in your sorwe there lyth no red;
> For, certes, swete, I am but ded. (*BD* 201-204)

The dreamer longs for a dream akin to Alcyone's, perceiving himself as equally tormented. Subsequently, he drifts into slumber on his book. Within his dream, he awakens in a bed in a chamber and is greeted by the melodious songs of the birds. The walls are adorned with a beautiful depiction of *The Romance of the Rose*, together with its accompanying commentary. The dreamer hears the outset of a hunt outside and mounts on a horse to follow the huntsmen. The huntsmen lose the hart that they have been chasing and the dreamer is left alone in the forest. Led by a whelp, he enters an exquisitely beautiful forest and encounters a man in black. This man in black is depicted

[7] Hereafter *The Book of the Duchess* is going to be referred to as *BD*, and references will be to the line numbers.

as a courtly man and the dreamer watches him as he sings a song of lament. Leaving his own grief aside, the dreamer develops curiosity over the man's sorrow. The dreamer begins politely to question him about the reason of his grief. The Black Knight declares that he has played a chess game with Fortune and lost. His declaration that he has fallen in love with a lady is accompanied by a detailed description of her as a courtly and noble woman. While listening to the lady's virtues and their love story, the dreamer inquiries about the cause of the Black Knight's loss, despite having previously heard his lament. The vision concludes immediately after the Black Knight declares that "[s]he ys ded!" (*BD* 1309), which also signifies the end of the hunt in the forest. The dreamer wakes up with the book still in his hand and decides to put all his dream account "in ryme" (*BD* 1332). In relation to its themes, the poem can be categorized into three sections: The dreamer's mention of his sickness in the prologue, the story of Ceyx and Alcyone, and the dreamer's encounter with the Black Knight, and his conversation with the dreamer.

The loss in this poem is not restricted to the loss caused by death as shown in the bereaved Black Knight's experience. Portrayals of loss also expand to the dreamer who goes through the sorrow of an unnamed sickness and loss which gradually mirrors the Black Knight's path of grieving in the development of the poem. Thus, with the Black Knight's journey from isolation, despair, and passivity to a state of renewed duty and the dreamer's willfulness to be able to return to books are effectuated by the dialogue Chaucer designs for his personae. Therefore, the poem does not adopt a singular viewpoint when addressing the concept of loss. Rather, Chaucer expands the scope to incorporate various aspects of loss, such as death of a loved one and the loss of specific attributes associated with somatic and mental well-being. The Black Knight declares that he suffers from the death of his wife (*BD* 1309) while the dreamer states that he is "[p]urely for defaute of slep" (*BD* 5), that he has "felynge in nothyng" (*BD* 11), and harbours no "joye or sorowe" (*BD* 10).

Chaucer's representation of transformation, on the other hand, is conveyed through the exchanges between the dreamer and the Black Knight. The Black Knight undergoes a gradual change as he opens up emotionally to the dreamer, transitioning from a state of

grieving alone to one where he may once again fulfil his courtly duties. The Black Knight's transformation is marked by his gradual acknowledgement and realisation that life must persist despite his grief, by commemorating the lady. In contrast, the dreamer experiences a more nuanced transformation through his encounter with the Black Knight, which results in empathy and contemplation over his own loss. His encounter with the Black Knight and the subsequent empathy he feels allows him to process his own unnamed grief. Thus, the dreamer's ability to listen and provide solace to the Black Knight also reflects his inner journey towards understanding and coping with his own loss. Ultimately, the book-devotee dreamer who could not find any comfort for his unnamed loss, can also return to books, and start writing. By the poem's end, both the Black Knight and the dreamer have experienced significant personal growth, demonstrating the transformative power of empathy, and sharing loss. Accordingly, Chaucer employs the themes of loss and transformation in the poem through an exploration of intricate emotional landscapes of both the dreamer and the Black Knight who are both suffering from different types of loss. The representations of transformation in this poem are caused by losses as experienced by the dreamer and the Black Knight, and their transformations are driven by the dialogue between them. In addition to the dreamer and the Black Knight, Chaucer also incorporates the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone as a new layer of the representation of loss and transformation. Ultimately, the poem presents distinct yet interconnected portrayals of both themes.

In creating his work, Chaucer benefits and borrows a lot from French sources[8], most notable ones of which are Guillaume de Machaut's *Le Dit de la Fonteinne Amoureuse* (1361), and Jean Frossiart's *Le Paradys d'Amours* (1362). Furthermore, Chaucer's multi-layered poetics in approaching the themes is also evident in his intertextual references to classical and contemporary works, such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. His use of a dreamer suffering from loss, insomnia, lovesickness, idealization of the lady, and the story of Ceyx and Alcyone are all borrowings from the French love vision tradition (Lynch *The Medieval* 32). Nonetheless, he incorporates new elements into his poem, which provides an abundant number of resources for its exploration of

[8] Regarding the sources of *The Book of the Duchess*, see primarily James I Wimsatt. *Chaucer and the French Love Poets: The Literary Background of the Book of the Duchess*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968., and B. A Windeatt. *Chaucer's Dream Poetry: Sources and* Analogues. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982.

transformation and loss. Chaucer's approach is highly artistic as his borrowings in the poem also suggest that Chaucer is not interested in only these poems, but also "for the range of aesthetic possibilities that these earlier works evoke" (Edwards 67). Evidently, Chaucer's writing implies that the existence of numerous direct borrowings and notable similarities in a poem does not inherently signify a lack of originality (Clemen 24). While he is translating and borrowing, Chaucer creates "a new kind of poetry, unbound by demands for polished, formulaic diction or elegant treatment of received matter or unequivocal assertions of truth and morality" (Nolan "The Art" 205-6). As put forward by John Livingston, Chaucer's poems "did not occupy one compartment of his brain and his knowledge and his ponderings another" (6). According to him, "the two coalesced" (6) in Chaucer's poetry. Piero Boitani asserts that the personal loss of the Black Knight is transformed "into public concern" and this "is effected by Chaucer through a series of operations basically centred on the fictionalization of certain motifs" (64). Thus, Chaucer transforms conventions and genres into a new literary creation. While Chaucer writes within a tradition, as Huriye Reis marks, he makes it obvious that the poet's role "is defined as interpreter and transformer of the past and its tradition" ("Icons of Art" iii). As also suggested by B. A. Windeatt, in most of his poems,

> Chaucer builds the old story into a new structure marked by his distinctive disposition of prologues, interpolated passages, and framing structures, which contain the narrative within a commentary that has transformed meaning by the time the poem reaches its resolution in the structure Chaucer has devised. ("Literary" 215)

In a similar fashion, Chaucer recreates the genres. Even though there are numerous claims on the genre of the poem[9], Jamie Fumo proposes that the poem possesses a hybridity blending "the memorializing rhetoric proper to elegy with a consolation for the widower, whose ordering and survival of grief form part of the poem's trajectory" (21). Similarly, Lynch contends that the poem has a double goal of consoling John of Gaunt and celebrating late Blanche's virtues (*Chaucer's* 34). In light of these notions, it can be inferred that Chaucer does not portray a world strictly from within the text. Due to the context of the poem, reading it necessitates an input beyond the scope of the work

[9] In addition to the genres of eulogy and dream vision, the poem has been claimed to be a work of love vision, in which "a discovery about love" is fulfilled (Stone 11-21), "a Boethian Apocalypse" (Cherniss *Boethian Apocalypse* 187), "dream of folly" (Zimbardo 329), "secular elegy" and "religious vision" (Wimsatt 113), and "debate, pastoral and commentary lyric or *chanson d'aventure*" (Fumo 33-34).

itself. Functioning from both outside and inside the text, as in *The Book of the Duchess*, while the aim of the text itself is to change the perception of the Black Knight, which would eventually influence the dreamer, the external context concerning the real life contributes to the transformation of the Duke, John of Gaunt. As a result of these properties, the poem has been considered to be "tedious, disconnected, and ill-proportioned, languid in its beginning and abrupt in its conclusion, frequently lapsing in taste and in meter, deficient both in humor and in self-fulfilment" (Bronson "The Book" 863). These verdicts apparently result from the multiplicity the poem involves both in terms of form and matter. As regards the form, the poem incorporates different genres. In terms of subject matter, Chaucer simultaneously works on different planes of loss and transformation. In addition, by integrating the tale of Ceyx and Alycone, which also features a story of loss and transformation, Chaucer adds another level to the poem's multiplicity. It is obvious that the poem engages "the meaning of love and loss in multiple and interweaving ways, and Chaucer (as the poet) employs classical mythology to prepare the reader for the presentation of these themes in the ensuing dream vision" (Pugh 10). Among all these plural representations of loss and transformation within the narrative, the only thing that is certain is that the poem is largely dominated by grief and "how to use grief constructively to face the fact of death" (Sklute 26). Jamie Fumo explains the essence of the poem and states that

> [a] study in melancholy, *The Book of the Duchess* features an artful narrative structure that interlaces a first-person narrator's semi-comic struggle with depressive insomnia, relieved by the soporific exercise of reading a book, with a poignant dream-plot concerning the death of a beloved lady and the despondency of her grieving husband. (2)

Accordingly, these intricate elements render the poem multi-layered, which blends humour and melancholy, personal loss and empathetic engagement, to explore the depths of human grief and the transformative power of mourning. This narrative structure, which incorporates the loss and transformation of the dreamer, the Black Knight, and Ceyx and Alcyone, enables a comprehensive examination of the personal transformation that can result from various forms of loss and emotional struggles. The personae demonstrate the capacity of mourning to create strength and a deeper comprehension of life through their interactions and interior journeys.

Even though the noteworthy action of the poem ostensibly starts with the encounter with the Black Knight, the opening sequence of the poem and the story of Ceyx and Alcyone are critically important since all these intermingled representations of loss add up to the multiple representations of loss Chaucer creates. Chaucer first introduces the dreamer who is suffering from a seemingly worldly or idealized representation of loss:

> I have so many an ydel thought
> Purely for defaute of slep
> That, by my trouthe, I take no kep
> Of nothing, how hyt cometh or gooth,
> Ne me nys nothyng leef nor looth.
> Al is ylyche good to me—
> Joye or sorowe, wherso hyt be—
> For I have felynge in nothyng, (*BD* 4-11)

The first representation of loss is thus presented by the dreamer/ narrator. John Lawlor asserts that the poem begins with this "accepted role" (42) of the dreamer. Rather than being merely a tool to initiate a dialogue with the Black Knight, the dreamer's function in the poem, first of all, is to present worldly types of loss, which at the end of the poem serves as inferior to the magnitude of loss experienced over death by the Black Knight. After witnessing a portrayal of grief that seems to be greater than his, the dreamer's transformation is instigated. The dreamer's painful comments on his loss of sleep, joy, liveliness, direction, and peace take a lot of space in the prologue. That is why the prologue is rather long in comparison to the other poems in the study. The dreamer's second function is to talk to the Black Knight in assuaging his sorrow over the loss of his wife by encouraging him to express the admirable qualities of the White Lady and be consoled by commemorating her and accepting that death is unavoidable.

The dreamer's primary loss, which is left obscure, leads to lack of sleep. His insomnia, as indicated in his words, leads to new layers of loss, such as loss of contemplation, loss of joy of life, loss of desire and loss of senses. His state leads him to "sorwful ymagynacioun" (*BD* 14). This physical exhaustion caused by sleeplessness threatens his life (Winny 46) since it leads to a state of emotional numbness. In fact, this sickness itself is portrayed through the theme of loss due to its potential or actual cause of loss of life (Reis "Speaking" 8). The cause of the dreamer's grief is obscure, but the opening is very close to the secular French love poem tradition as it creates an atmosphere in

which the audience expect a love story. The narrator is mainly focusing on his bodily concerns:

> And wel ye woot, *agaynes kynde*
> Hyt were to lyven in thys wyse,
> For nature wolde nat suffyse
> To noon erthly creature
> Nat longe tyme to endure
> Withoute slep and be in sorwe. (emphasis added, *BD* 16-21)

The narrator makes it explicit that his long-lasting grief is against Nature. This is the first explicit mention of Nature by the narrator. Throughout the poem, particularly in his dialogue with the Black Knight, the dreamer's favouring of Nature as the true code of life is highlighted. In this study, the term "Nature" is used to denote a personified force or deity that has influence on the lives of the personae. It surpasses the ordinary interpretation of the term "nature", which belongs to the physical realm. In the context of this chapter, "Nature" symbolises a transcendent and sacred force that establishes and regulates order. Fortune, on the other hand, is the antithesis of Nature on the grounds of its association with randomness, unpredictability, and chance. While Nature reflects order and stability, Fortune is arbitrary.

According to the dreamer, truth is derived from the process of reading and aligning one's actions with the knowledge acquired from literary heritage. It is obvious in his first lines that his loss of many kinds obstructs order and harmony in life, and he candidly expresses it as being against the laws of Nature. He is surprised that he is still alive since being in an unnatural condition like his is a fair cause of death. He loses all his "lustyhede" (*BD* 27). He underscores Nature as a guiding force in life for him. Chaucer's narrative strategies for addressing loss and transformation also include the connection between personal transformation and Nature itself. Consequently, it could be contended that adhering to the laws of Nature has the potential to effect positive change. Returning to fundamental principles of Nature, it is possible to accomplish positive transformation. As Lisa J. Kiser remarks, the discourse of the dreamer is true, and he abundantly uses words related to "trewely" throughout the poem (14)[10]. Thereby, the

[10] Kiser detects all the direct and indirect lines of the words connected to "true" as follows; for the direct lines see, 670, 981, 985, 998, 1075, 1111, 1156, 1240, 1246, 1258, 1281, and for the indirect ones see

dreamer also establishes his own reliability in his upcoming reading of the Black Knight's "Nature". Despite the fact that it is not explicitly stated, through the vantage point of the dreamer, the Black Knight's fault is that he does not follow Nature and believes in the randomness of Fortune, which stands so totally against Nature that even the God of Nature would be furious:

> For he had wel nygh lost hys mynde,
> Thogh Pan, that men clepeth god of kynde,
> Were for hys sorwes never so wroth. (*BD* 511-513)

Through their conversation the superiority of Nature to Fortune is conveyed. When the dreamer corrects the behaviour of the Black Knight, which is far from the course of Nature, through their interaction, the Black Knight comes to terms with his loss. Being true to Nature is the most significant thing for both the dreamer and the Black Knight. When they cannot follow it, they lose order and harmony in life. The dreamer openly declares when being asked about the source of this restlessness, he cannot "trewly" (*BD* 35) tell the reason "the sothe" (*BD* 35). Yet, he refers to it as a sickness:

> I holde hit be a sicknesse —
> That I have suffred this eight yeer;
> And yet my boote is never the ner,
> For there is phisicien but oon
> That may me hele; but that is don. (*BD* 36-39)

There is a considerable body of literature concerning the characteristics of this illness, the physician, and the real nature of the dreamer's loss. The sole certainty regarding them is that Chaucer presents them in a manner that is both equivocal and intricate. From a secular perspective, the sickness can be presumed to be love-sickness or a kind of melancholia, and the physician to be the beloved herself. Huppé and Robertson, for example, suggest that it is a conventional way to present an image of the lady as the physician (33). They also maintain that a devotional reading would show the sickness as mourning and the physician as God, which brings about "an even earlier and more pervasive tradition" (33). R. M. Lumiansky compiles the theories about it as follows:

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also 687, 766, 817, 820, 843, 846, 853, 856, 882, 924, 929, 972, 989, 1002, 1020, 1037, 1046, 1073, 1090, 1096, 1109, 1117, 1144, 1148, 1149, 1181, 1189, 1194, 1221, 1239, 1267, 1272, 1274, 1277, 1292, and 1296.

> Chaucer in an effort to be conventional took the idea of eight years' sickness from a line in Machaut's *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*. But there is still some support for the theory of autobiographical connection: Margaret Galway asserts that this passage, like other similar passages in Chaucer's works, points to his unrequited love for Princess Joan. Finally, we have the view advanced fifteen years ago by M.W. Stearns that the mention of eight years' sickness is the poet Chaucer's courtly compliment to the dead Blanche of Lancaster, implying his own love-longing for that lady. (118)

Chaucer deliberately maintains an ambiguous tone for this discussion of the essence of the loss of the dreamer. One thing that is for certain is that he is experiencing an unnamed deprivation which is ideal or physical. However, since the poem borrows the first nine lines from Froissart's *Paradys d'amour* and assimilates certain properties from Machaut (Sklute 27), the *dits amoreux* poetry effect and its connotations render it to be perceived as love, thus an earthly concern. The dreamer mentions the sickness, barely talks about it, does not give any details at all and immediately after he says: "Passe we over" (*BD* 41) this topic.

Depicted as a devotee of books and a believer in finding the truth in books, he asks for one of his men to bring a book for him. He desires to relieve his pain and "drive the night away" (*BD* 49) by reading a book. From the beginning of the poem, the narrator has been depicted as a man of books. His knowledge is derived solely from books, and his understanding of truth and guidance in life also comes from books. For this reason, he turns to a book for solace rather than undertaking any alternative course of action. He is not a man of action, and in his understanding, it is reasonable for him to avoid participating in games:

> And in this bok were written fables
> That clerkes had in olde tyme,
> And other poetes, put in rime
> To rede and for to be in minde,
> While men loved the lawe of kinde.
> This bok ne spak but of such thinges, (*BD* 52-57)

Therefore, regarding the Nature of the dreamer, it could be observed that the source of truth is undoubtedly in the books.

If the sickness mentioned by the dreamer pertains to a condition of being lovesick, then an anticipation that he is going to be reading a story of love emerges. Nevertheless, he starts reading a story primarily focusing more on death, loss, and transformation, the story of Ceyx and Alcyone. The critical point here is that Chaucer changes the ending of the conventional Ceyx and Alcyone story and adds a transformation in the form of consolation. In the Ovidian telling of the myth, Alcyone transforms into a helicon and reunites with her late husband (410). As stated above, Chaucer transforms the story and employs the transformation of Alcyone by making the dead body of Ceyx talk to Alcyone, telling her to accept his death and to bury him. Refashioning a tale of loss, death and transformation, Chaucer sets the stage for a comparable narrative with the Black Knight. Therefore, the story serves as an appropriate means to explore the essence of loss and transformation in the poem. As A. C. Spearing claims, the aim of the poem "is not to offer the Black Knight the promise of a reunion beyond death, but to encourage him to adjust himself to the fact of the lady's death, and in doing so to celebrate her life" (*Dreaming* 58). The tale serves as a tactical tool for Chaucer to familiarize the dreamer, who is fond of books, with a similar story he is going to face soon.

The tale of Ceyx and Alcyone occupies the second part of the poem. Upon redirecting his focus towards the narrative, the dreamer's sorrow seems to remain more undefined and unsolved. His loss of sleep has caused him to read a book and the book causes him to have a dream in which he encounters the Black Knight. In this causality relationship triggered by loss, the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone is used as "a linking device" (Bowden 147), which creates a connection for the reader between the introduction and the main body of the poem where the Black Knight, who suffers from death as loss, is introduced. The tale of Ceyx and Alcyone introduces another portrait of loss to the reader. It begins with the death of Ceyx overseas. Not knowing the whereabouts of her husband, Alcyone mourns inconsolably "due to not to death itself, but to uncertainty to her ignorance of whether her husband is dead or alive" (Dillon 136). The ambiguity surrounding her husband's fate is the source of Alcyone's grief, which demonstrates how the unknown can multiply the pain of loss and prolong the mourning process. Due to the intensity of Alcyone's despair, the dreamer declares:

> Such sorowe this lady to her tok
> That trewly I, that made this book,
> Had such pittee and such rowthe
> To rede hir sorwe that, by my trowthe,
> I ferde the worse al the morwe
> Aftir to thenken on hir sorwe. (*BD* 95-100)

Chaucer adds one more complexity to the narrative as he casts the dreamer as a poet. At the end of the poem, it becomes clearer that the dreamer is going to write his account, which marks his transformation from a bereaved and passive reader into an active writer. From time to time, the dreamer as a poet makes such intrusions. Moreover, this story will allow the dreamer for his future dialogue with the Black Knight to have "sufficient material to support his role as instructor" (Boardman 576) in the way to transform the Black Knight's mindset on loss. The story, incorporating Chaucer's favoured conclusion, provides the dreamer the knowledge of how to achieve solace, which he would then immediately employ during his talk with the Black Knight.

In her most desperate moment, "Alcione like the Man in Black, is described as if transformed by grief into cold, lifeless stone" (Hardman 210). She prays to Juno to grant her a dream that will reveal information about Ceyx, expressing her willingness to make any sacrifices. Shortly after that, she falls into a "dede slep" (*BD* 127). To assist Alcyone, Juno sends her a messenger in search of Morpheus, the god of sleep. She orders:

> And shewe hir shortly, hit ys no nay,
> How hit was dreynt thys other day;
> And do the body speke ryght soo,
> Ryght as hyt was woned to doo
> The whiles that hit was alyve. (*BD* 147-151)

Juno desires to promptly inform Alcyone of her husband's death by enabling the dead body to communicate. Observing the profound grief experienced by Alcyone, it is imperative for Juno to ensure Alcyone's acceptance of Ceyx's death. The messenger leaves "never ne stente" (*BD* 154) and arrives at a desolate, sombre, and perilous location where he finds Morpheus. Morpheus swiftly and speedily brings the body to Alcyone. The dead body transforms into a half-dead, half- alive being and says:

> "My swete wyf,
> Awake! Let be your sorwful lyf,
> For in your sorwe there lyth no red;
> For, certes, swete, I am but ded.
> Ye shul me never on lyve yse.
> But, goode swete herte, that ye
> Bury my body, for such a tyde
> Ye mowe hyt fynde the see besyde;
> And farewel, swete, my worldes blysse!
> I praye God youre sorwe lysse.
> To lytel while oure blysse lasteth!" (*BD* 201-211)

This speech directly induces the transformation of Alcyone as it enables her to perceive and embrace a tangible reality. By stating unequivocally and unambiguously that he is deceased and there is no cause for sorrow, Ceyx extends the opportunity for closure to his wife by suggesting that she lay him to rest. His description of her as his "worldes blysse" suggests that worldly concerns are largely inconsequential. Three days after that, she dies, but as mentioned above, Chaucer does not use the Ovidian ending of the story where they are transformed into seabirds and unite. Through Alcyone's closure, the story as a whole has foreshadowed the upcoming representations of loss and transformation of the Black Knight. Although Alcyone remains reticent regarding acceptance and perishes inside a span of three days, the dreamer acquires knowledge concerning the purpose and benefit of acknowledging loss. Furthermore, after reading the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone, the dreamer desires to have a slumber like hers and falls asleep on the book he is reading. This story about loss, thus, serves as a connection between two other narratives of loss: the initial loss of the dreamer and the forthcoming revelation of the loss of the Black Knight. Benefiting from the tale, the dreamer is provided with "a forward movement [. . .] countering the poem's initial, melancholic circularities" (Kruger "Medical" 376). Desiring a sleep like Alcyone's and praying for it, the dreamer soon falls asleep and awakens to a vision that he explicitly states as surpassing all previously experienced dreams:

> Me mette so ynly swete a sweven,
> So wonderful that never yit
> Y trowe no man had the wyt
> To konne wel my sweven rede; (*BD* 276-279)

The dreamer wakes up to the heavenly songs of birds, in a room with glass-walls. It is morning time in May, and he depicts his joy in this exuberant atmosphere. It is full of harmony and bliss. On the windows, he recognizes the renowned figures of the Trojan War and illustrations of *The Romance of the Rose*. As an avid reader, he knows them well "with the help of his courtly persona" (Winny 53) who had a combination of intellectual sophistication and cultural literacy. As he is lying on the bed, he hears a huntsman blow a horn. Despite previously stating that he lacks proactive behaviour and only deals with reading, he abandons his passivity and engages in the activity upon discovering the hunt. He sees men, horses, and hounds all over the place in search for a hart and he leaves the room on a horse. He learns that Octavian the Emperor leads the hunt. He reaches the forest side where all the huntsmen are diligently carrying out their duties. However, they lose the hart, and it runs away. The hunt is futile for the huntsmen as they lose the hart:

> This *hert* rused and staal away
> Fro alle the houndes a privy way.
> The houndes had overshote hym alle
> And were on a defaute yfalle.
> Therwyth the hunte wonder faste
> Blew a forloyn at the laste. (emphasis added, *BD* 381-386)

However, it is not futile for the dreamer who is about to discover the heart of the Black Knight. Chaucer deliberately employs such a metaphor by connecting the aftermath of the hart hunting event to the encounter with a courtly knight. The literal hunting scene, thus, foreshadows the metaphorical hunting of the dreamer in search of the heart of the Black Knight:

> Hym thoughte hys sorwes were so smerte
> And lay so colde upon hys *herte*.
> So, throgh hys sorwe and hevy thoght, (emphasis added, *BD* 506-508)

In that case, Chaucer's interest in the latter hunting is "in the personal feeling, not physical excitement" (Brewer *The World* 10). R. A. Shoaf reads this scene from the vantage point of bestiary studies and asserts that the escape of the hart symbolizes "the sorrowing heart of the Black Knight [that] is now deeply secreted in the dark wood" (319). As the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone prepares him for the encounter with the Black

Knight, this hunting scene emphasizes the dreamer's future role as a hunter of the Black Knight's heart. As pointed out by Fumo, there is a pun on the word hart (heart),

> [. . .] as simultaneously the hart pursued by the hunting party, the heart as locus of emotion and the physical 'hurt' associated with the poem's hearts – is a supreme instance of dreams' play on linguistic polysemousness, with the first 'hert' leading, through an associative chain of narrative events, to the second and third. (39)

The hart in the literal hunt manages to escape, but the dreamer, having gained insight from this experience, will not allow the "heart" of the Black Knight to elude him in his quest to unveil it and comfort the Black Knight. After that, the dreamer catches sight of a whelp and proceeds to pursue it down an infrequently crossed, luscious and blossoming path, which is "gayer than the heven" (*BD* 407). In that place he mentions that "many an hert and many an hynde/ Was both before me and behynde" (*BD* 428). Regarding the discussion of harts and hinds, the dreamer restates the claim that a physical hunt has taken place.

Wolfgang Clemen states that hunting scenes are commonly found in chivalric poetry, particularly in fourteenth century poetry (41). Edwin J. Howard states that being an esquire of the King, Chaucer must have been quite aware of the activity (58). According to John Cummins, "the female lover is often symbolized by a hind or doe" (78) in courtly love tradition. Chaucer blends chivalric elements and courtly love tradition in his poem which tells the love story of the Black Knight and his wife in the next part of the poem. As mentioned, in the literal hunt, a hart has been overlooked, but now another symbolic hunt is about to commence. Accordingly, the dreamer notices the Black Knight reclining against an oak tree. The whelp that brings the dreamer to the Black Knight serves as a literal mechanism employed by Chaucer to unite the dreamer and the Black Knight.

Dogs play a significant role in hunting, and the specific dog mentioned here serves a comparable function.[11] As Friedman puts it, the whelp "is not only directly responsible

[11] In fact, Chaucer's intent to use a whelp and its function has been a topic of discussion for the critics. Similar to Friedman, Kemp Malone emphasizes its functional use in bringing the dreamer and the Black Knight together in a tradition which is "very familiar in medieval story: animals which flee before the hero and entice him to follow" (33). Huppé and Robertson approach the healing power of the whelp

for getting the Narrator from one place to another in the story, it is also indirectly responsible for the Narrator's sympathetic communication with an other person, for the dialogue which ultimately can bring him some measure of spiritual and physical well being" ("The Dreamer" 146). While Juno assigns his messenger to locate Morpheus with the intention of easing Alcyone's anguish, Chaucer employs the whelp to bring the dreamer closer to the Black Knight in order to comfort him. The whelp that leads the dreamer to the Black Knight's heart search is not a traditional hunting dog, which is significant in light of the repeated pun on the words "heart" and "hart". Although a genuine hunting dog is employed to facilitate the search for the hart, Chaucer employs a dog that is not typically used for hunting to conduct the hunt for the Black Knight's heart. Chaucer's transformation of a hunting dog into a puppy that possesses no hunting abilities represents the dreamer's amicable approach in his pursuit of the Black Knight's heart, signifying the metaphorical hunt of the poem.

An additional notable aspect emerges with the scene that precedes the confrontation with the Black Knight. Thus far, everything the narrator has observed regarding his vision aligns perfectly with his Nature. As Michael G. Cherniss proposes,

> [t]he narrator, as he appears in his dream, scarcely seems the same person who read the story of Ceyx and Alcyone; he is no longer in an "unnatural" state of mind. Indeed, the "natural" behavior of everything in this prologue to his meeting with the Black Knight underscores his own "natural" behavior. Birds sing; men pursue one of their customary peacetime recreations, the hunt; dogs chase the hart; the hart attempts to elude his pursuers; even the puppy behaves in a puppyish manner. Vegetable nature, accordingly, reacts as it always does to the spring season. (*Boethian Apocalypse* 176)

In contrast to his sorrow which is depicted as a violation against Nature in the prologue and the unnatural sorrow of the Black Knight that the dreamer is about to witness, the advent of the vision has a description in straight line with Nature. The congruency of the setting implies that the dreamer's gradual metamorphosis has already begun and will be finalized once he triggers the transition in the Black Knight. This fact is well expressed in the dreamer's words when he observes the sorrow of the Black Knight during their initial encounter:

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through an allegorical analysis by stating that "[w]helps represent priests in their function of curing both by word and by example sins unwittingly retained in the mind and thus not confessed" (54).

That ever I herde; for, by my trowthe,
Hit was gret wonder that Nature
Myght suffre any creature
To have such sorwe and be not ded. (*BD* 466-469)

The dreamer explicitly repeats that such a sorrow is against Nature. In hindsight, the dreamer has employed the identical phrase to convey his own sorrow in the prologue. The dreamer expresses amazement (in lines 18-21) on his continued existence despite his overwhelming sorrow, which is mirrored in the depiction of the Black Knight (in lines 466-469). In addition, the dreamer states that he has lost all his physical energy due to lack of sleep (in lines 25-26). A similar tone is echoed where "[the Black Knight's] sorwful hert gan faste faynte/ And his spirites wexen dede" (lines 488- 499). In fact, what they have in common is that they are both experiencing similar symptoms of loss, albeit the specific cause of their deprivation varies. The Black Knight at first encounter is depicted in a courtly manner:

A wonder wel-farynge knyght—
By the maner me thoghte so—
Of good mochel, and ryght yong therto,
Of the age of foure and twenty yer,
Upon hys berd but lytel her,
And he was clothed al in blak. (*BD* 452- 457)

An image of a courtly lover is thus presented which does not contradict the context of the poem. Through this poem, Chaucer presents the Black Knight as a poetic equivalent of John of Gaunt and celebrates "the duke as a courtly lover" (Baum 201). It is apparent that the dreamer comprehends the profoundness of the Black Knight's "dedly" (*BD* 462) sorrow. The dreamer also overhears the Black Knight's complaint which is replete with loss, death, and sorrow:

"I have of sorwe so gret won
That joye gete I never non,
Now that I see my lady bryght,
Which I have loved with al my myght,
Is fro me ded and ys agoon.
"Allas, deth, what ayleth the,
That thou noldest have taken me,
Whan thou toke my lady swete,
That was so fair, so fresh, so fre,
So good that men may wel se
Of al goodnesse she had no mete!" (*BD* 475- 486)

This courtly man, the Black Knight, does not notice the dreamer at first when he hears his complaint. However, the fact that the dreamer does not seem to know the cause of his loss in their future conversation may be attributed to the Black Knight's intention of keeping it personal. He was lamenting in isolation. Not wanting to break the privacy of the Black Knight, the dreamer seemingly feigns ignorance about the cause of his grief and attempts to console him by making him talk. In the Black Knight's complaint, where he mentions Lady White for the first time, it can be observed that the virtue of the lady is in the foreground. She is depicted as a courtly lady, unparalleled in terms of virtue. This serves as a good tool for the dreamer as he uses it as a leverage to comfort the Black Knight. He encourages the Black Knight to talk more about the lady:

> [. . .] "Sire, so do I;
> I leve yow wel, that trewely
> Yow thoghte that she was the beste
> And to beholde the alderfayreste,
> Whoso had loked hir with your eyen." (*BD* 1047-1051)

At the end of the Black Knight's complaint, the dreamer observes a physical change in the Black Knight whose "blood was fled for pure drede" (*BD* 490). The grievances of the Black Knight are marked corporeally, running parallel to the sorrowful portrayal of the dreamer in the prologue. Heart is the "member principal" (*BD* 495) which may threaten not only the Black Knight's life but also his sanity (Morse 205).

Seeing this, the dreamer takes action and abiding by the laws of Nature he desires to cheer the Black Knight's chief organ, the heart, considering that an outpouring eases it:

> By *kynde*, and for to make hyt glad,
> For hit ys membre principal
> Of the body; and that made al (emphasis added, *BD* 494-496)

Having observed a grief very similar to Alcyone and remembering the escaped hart (the devices employed intentionally by Chaucer to prepare the dreamer and the audience for the ultimate encounter with the Black Knight and its function), the dreamer does not let another "heart" escape and prepares to find out the cause of the Black Knight's distress.

In fact, in the words of Kean, the dreamer plays the role of a "sympathetic confidant" (60) through which the Black Knight is enabled to talk about his loss. The dreamer candidly declares that he will be helping the Black Knight "[t]o wite eke why hyt was adrad/ By Kynde[12], and for to make hyt glad" (*BD* 493- 494). Thus, he states that his approach to the Black Knight adopts the laws of Nature that he has learnt as a book devotee. This is further supported by his recognition that Pan, the god of Nature, would be enraged at the sight of such an unnatural grief: "Thogh Pan, that men clepeth god of kynde, / Were for hys sorwes never so wroth" (*BD* 512-513). In fact, the Black Knight is a symbol of "aristocratic dysfunction, an unnatural entity who must be resocialized" (Knight 12). The Black Knight's transformation is realized through his resocialization. The dreamer's sympathetic approach to him provides this resocialization and transforms him.

Throughout their conversation, as Clemen observes, Chaucer follows "diverse indirect paths, pursuing several aims at once" (43) so as to dig more into the reason of loss. Although the aim of the dreamer is not explicitly revealed, it seems to serve the purpose of comforting the Black Knight and making him reconciled with his loss. The dreamer salutes the Black Knight and apologizes for interrupting his train of thoughts. The Black Knight's speech amazes the dreamer in that it is incredibly kind and frank. The Black Knight is "adept in courtly conventions, which have become a part of his manner of thought and speech" (Kittredge 48). Observing this, the dreamer states that he

> [. . .] fond hym so *tretable*,
> Ryght wonder skylful and resonable,
> As me thoghte, for al hys bale.
> Anoon ryght I gan fynde a tale
> To hym, to loke wher I myght ought
> Have more knowynge of hys thought. (emphasis added, *BD* 531- 536)

There is a pun on the word of "treatable". In Middle English, it does not only mean "workable or manipulated" and "negociation" (Stratmann and Bradley 620) but when it

[12] In Middle English, the word "kynde" means natural (Mayhew and Skeat 128) or native (Stratmann and Bradley 145). This aligns with the behaviour of the dreamer, who adopts the laws of Nature that he has acquired from reading as his guiding principles.

is used with the word "heart", it figuratively means "made ready to be worked".[13] Considering the pun on "hart", the aim of the dreamer seems to fix the heart of the Black Knight. Even before the proper conversation begins, a sincere ambiance is readily apparent. Both characters are depicted as benevolent, genuine, and truthful. Correspondingly, the dreamer starts the conversation by announcing the end of the hunt and says, "this hery be goon" (*BD* 540). In his deep sorrow, the Black Knight expresses his indifference to the hunt. Seeing that the hunt does not interest him, the dreamer, thus, directly mentions that he would like to learn about the cause of his distress and ease his heart:

> Me thynketh in gret sorowe I yow see;
> But certes, sire, yif that yee
> Wolde ought discure me youre woo (*BD* 547-549)

The Black Knight is also indifferent to the metaphorical hunt of the dreamer as he does not want to speak at first. Not wanting to engage in a conversation and tell the reason for his loss from the very beginning serves two purposes. Initially, he is able to recollect the memories he shared with his wife and prepare for his transformation by delaying the revelation that his wife is dead. Secondly, by refusing to confess from the very beginning, "the Knight is certainly also rejecting the idea of change. [. . .]. He knows what the process entails, that it ends in transformation, and he is unwilling to engage in it" (Tracy 76).

Thus, at the very beginning of their conversation it is implied that he is not emotionally ready for the transformation. His predicament requires a very long and commemorative introspection. When being asked about his sorrow, the Black Knight answers that his grief has tilted his balance of life, and it is impossible to fix it now. Hence, the Black Knight asserts that his state, akin to the dreamer in the prologue, opposes the laws of Nature. He mentions numerous mythological and historical figures who cannot help him heal his inconsolable grief:

> No man may my sorwe glade,

[13] "tretable." *Middle English Compendium Dictionary*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_field=hnf&q=tretable. Accessed 21 Sep. 2023.

That maketh my hewe to falle and fade,
And hath myn understondynge lorn
That me ys wo that I was born!
May noght make my sorwes slyde,
Nought al the remedyes of Ovyde,
Ne Orpheus, god of melodye,
Ne Dedalus with his playes slye;
Ne hele me may no phisicien,
Noght Ypocras ne Galyen; (*BD* 563- 572)

According to Spearing, the use of these figures distracts the Black Knight from accepting the literal truth (*Readings* 102) of loss. He cannot yet come to terms with his loss, and this postpones his acknowledgement and transformation. He makes it clear that death is his enemy, and he desires to die: "The pure deth ys so ful my foo/ That I wolde deye, hyt wolde not soo" (*BD* 583-584). He explicitly specifies that "[f]or y am sorwe, / and sorwe ys y" (*BD* 597). This depiction of sorrow implies that the encounter with loss has significantly reduced his enthusiasm for life. He looks alive but feels dead inside, which is against the rules of Nature. His transformation into the very embodiment of sorrow is not presented as something natural within the poem. Such a big sorrow means being dead in life, "a state in which no natural creature can long continue" (Dillon 137). The Black Knight's life has been turned upside down, from order to disorder, from natural to unnatural. In the same manner, he proceeds to enumerate the transformations he has undergone in his life so far:

My song ys turned to pleynynge,
And al my laughtre to wepynge,
My glade thoghtes to hevynesse;
In travayle ys myn ydelnesse
And eke my reste; my wele is woo,
My good ys harm, and evermoo
In wrathe ys turned my pleynge
And my delyt into sorwynge.
Myn hele ys turned into seknesse,
In drede ys al my sykernesse;
To derke ys turned al my lyght,
My wyt ys foly, my day ys nyght,
My love ys hate, my slep wakynge,
My myrthe and meles ys fastynge,
My countenaunce ys nycete
And al abaved, where so I be;
My pees in pledynge and in werre.
Allas, how myghte I fare werre?
My boldnesse ys turned to shame, (*BD* 599- 617)

The Black Knight precisely specifies a range of transformations that have led to his current predicament. Despite his denial of being able to receive assistance, he behaves in a manner, as Judith Ferster observes, that satisfies the dreamer by initiating a complaint in which he articulates his sorrows (80). The Black Knight blames fickle Fortune for his loss: "Therwith Fortune seyde 'Chek her! / And mat in the myd poynt of the chekker, With a poun errant!'" (*BD* 659-661). However, he must acknowledge that death is an inherent part of the Natural order, not that of haphazard Fortune.

He makes use of the game of chess as an extended metaphor and declares that he has been defeated by Fortune, "the dispitouse debonaire" (*BD* 624), in this game. In the prologue, the dreamer has stated that he lacks interest in the game of chess, due to his inclination towards intellectual pursuits rather than physical endeavours. Ironically, he finds himself in a metaphorical chess game. In the Black Knight's long speech disdaining Fortune, his faulty approach is subtly emphasized. The rules of Nature necessitate to accept death and find solace. However, disregarding Nature and occupying himself with the principles of Fortune (and having an intense fixation on it), the Black Knight is lamenting inconsolably. Despite being aware that he is not complying with the rules of Nature, he thinks Fortune is false, and the Black Knight has acquired this knowledge through a painful ordeal:

> "At the ches with me she gan to pleye;
> With hir false draughtes dyvers
> She staal on me and tok my fers. (*BD* 652- 654)
> [. . .].
> I shulde have pleyd the bet at ches
> And kept my fers the bet therby. (*BD* 668- 669)

He concedes that he is unable to change fate. When the queen is captured during a chess game, the player becomes susceptible to defeat, and in like manner the Black Knight "sees no hope for his future happiness without his beloved" (Pugh 12). Indeed, attributing excessive significance to something that lacks veracity results in its loss.

Jenny Adams points to the gambling factor in medieval chess literature and practise. She states that while chess is an honourable game, "it could easily slip into a match with priceless stake leading to irreparable loss" (133). According to the poem, taking this risk

by trusting the haphazard nature of Fortune is false and the Black Knight should be restored to the inherent harmony of the natural world. Thus, the extended metaphor of chess "is used to emphasize the element of Fortune in the Knight's loss and his own lack of reason" (Huppé and Robertson 60).

The Black Knight regrets being born again and repeats that all his bliss is gone. The dreamer, who sympathizes with the grief of the Black Knight, highlights the significance of being true to Nature and cites an example from Socrates to illustrate his point. With his equanimity, Socrates could endure hardships and he disregarded a life controlled by Fortune:

> "A, goode sir," quod I, ''say not soo!
> Have som pitee on your nature
> That formed yow to creature.
> Remembre yow of Socrates,
> For he ne counted nat thre strees
> Of noght that Fortune koude doo." (*BD* 714- 719)

The dreamer continues to give examples from mythological and antique heritage, endeavouring to encourage the Black Knight to give up his sorrow. In order to diminish the pain of the Black Knight, the dreamer "gently offers philosophical counsel" (David 12). Nevertheless, he appears to respond literally to the chess game metaphor, as he comments: "But ther is no man alive her/ Wolde for a fers make this woo!" (*BD* 740-741). The dreamer presumes that it is irrational to grieve over a chess game that has been lost. Consequently, the Black Knight is compelled to provide a thorough explanation of his loss to him. The dreamer's naivety, whether it is genuine or feigned, persists throughout their conversation. A. C. Spearing asserts that

> [. . .] the knight continues to speak figuratively, while the dreamer, for all his ready sympathy, continues to understand him literally. The knight's figurative eloquence defines his superior social status, and the dreamer's misunderstandings motivate the knight's continuing amplification; but, more important, we gradually come to see that the effect of the knight's eloquence is to conceal his cause of grief from himself. (*Readings* 101)

The more the Black Knight speaks, the closer he gets to his reconciliation as the dreamer's literal understanding of the chess metaphor forces the Black Knight to confess more. Similarly, Deanne Williams remarks that,

> [t]he Dreamer's inability to understand the Man in Black's chess metaphors forces the Man in Black to say more than he intended: had his interlocutor been less obtuse he could have left it at the chess pieces, with an unspoken understanding. However, the Dreamer forces the Man in Black to move out of the realm of literary allusion, and into vivid autobiographical detail. (154)

It is with the dreamer's insistent questions that, the heart of the Black Knight is revealed. The dreamer confirms this by stating

> As me thoghte, for al hys bale.
> Anoon right I gan fynde a tale
> To hym, to loke wher I might ought
> Have more knowynge of hys thought. (*BD* 535- 538)

Accordingly, the dreamer does not give up forcing the Black Knight to say more. The Black Knight seems offended by the slow wit of the dreamer: "Why so?" quod he, "hyt nat soo/ Thou wost ful lytel what thou menest:" (*BD* 742- 743). Subsequently, the Black Knight is convinced and proceeds to recount his story from the very beginning. In a very detailed explanation, he talks about the first time he saw the White Lady. He is enabled to honour the deceased lady and how they loved each other. Every statement he makes regarding her or their relationship contributes an additional dimension to his recognition of her loss, thus gradually establishing his transformation. As Kisha G. Tracy puts it,

> [a]s a result of memory's traditional connection to confession in addition to the recurring awareness of confession's ability to transform the soul, the most dynamic reason that memory or recollection is written by authors into their narratives is to emphasize the reinvention of identity. Thus, through the catalyst of memory authors can represent *transformation in emotional or intellectual understanding that lead, or are intended to lead, to transformations in attitudes or behavior*. (emphasis added, 2)

The Black Knight looks back on the past and recalls the memories with his wife, he comes to a position of altering his perspective. When discussing his own experience and service prior to his loss, the Black Knight highlights that his heart served "kyndely" (*BD* 778). Therefore, he admits that he previously depended on Nature to experience happiness. Reinforcing this fact, he states that, "I was able to have lerned tho, / And to have kend as wel or better, / Paraunter, other art or letre; (*BD* 786- 788)

He states that one day, he notices the lady among other women, and Fortune, the "false trayteresse pervers!" (*BD* 813) is responsible for this encounter, which will eventually bring him torture. The lady is presented as the fairest, brightest and the most virtuous of all ladies. Regarding her beauty, he states:

> Hyt was hir owne pure lokyng
> That the goddesse, dame Nature,
> Had mad hem opene by mesure
> And close; (*BD* 870- 873)

Then, he mentions the involvement of Nature in her creation one more time:

> For certes Nature had swich lest
> To make that fair that trewly she
> Was hir chef patron of beaute,
> And chef ensample of al hir werk (*BD* 908- 911)

The lady is a creation of Nature, which emphasizes her beauties and virtues. Ironically, although the Black Knight emphasizes the significance of Nature in depicting the lady, he disregards the necessity to submit himself to the rule of Nature while dealing with fickle Fortune. If he recognizes that death is a consequence of natural processes rather than luck, he will be able to accept and reconcile with it. Thus, what the dreamer attempts to do is to show him the natural order of death and life. Against the forces of grief, as Boitani puts forward, "Nature and Love fight" (66).

Next, the Black Knight mentions that he lacks the wit to depict the beauty of the lady. All the physical beauty, nobility, innocence, chastity, and honour of the lady, which he refers to as Blanche the Fair, are highly praised. In addition to these traditional depictions of the courtly lady, "Chaucer's Blanche displays less dignity and hauteur, but more natural, friendly serenity and kindliness" (Clemen 55). All these qualities recounted for dozens of lines serve as a significant commemoration. It is noteworthy that in the depiction of the lady, the influence of Nature dominates. As Muriel Bowden states:

> Blanche has been a light for all her world and her own brilliance was never dimmed through the light she gave to others; she was a crown set with gems; her

> wit was totally without malice for she never wronged or deceived any creature; always she kept her word (a virtue which Chaucer praises over and over again in later works); she was the peer of all the noble women of song and story. (146)

The poem thus makes it certain that despite the lady's death, her essence vividly endures in the recollections of not only the Black Knight but also all the people. By making the Black Knight recall her virtues, the dreamer suggests that "death, although it is grievous, is not a cause for despair" (Huppé and Robertson 88). The virtues the lady possesses are eternal. The main recuperative impact on the Black Knight also stems from preserving this remembrance and commemorating her. Accordingly, the Black Knight confirms,

> "But wherfore that y telle my tale?
> Ryght on thys same, as I have seyd,
> Was hooly al my love leyd;
> For certes she was, that swete wif,
> My suffisaunce, my lust, my lyf,
> Myn hap, myn hele, and al my blesse,
> My worldes welfare, and my goddesse,
> And I hooly hires and everydel." (*BD* 1034- 1041)

In order to ensure that the naïve dreamer understand his point, the Black Knight emphasizes the rationale behind the significance of his lady to him. She was life, joy, and the source of good for him. With the dreamer's reply to this explanation, a humorous interaction takes place:

> "By oure Lord," quod I, "y trowe yow well
> Hardely, your love was wel beset;
> I not how ye myghte have do bet."
> "Bet? Ne no wyght so wel," quod he.
> "Y trowe hyt wel, sir," quod I, "parde!"
> "Nay, leve hyt wel!" "Sire, so do I; (*BD* 1042- 1047)

The Black Knight reaffirms the distinctiveness of the lady, explicitly stating that it is not a subjective observation and that she was the best. This explains why his responses to the dreamer have a slightly aggressive tone. He continues to support his argument in this manner by stating: "But wherfore that I telle thee/ Whan I first my lady say?" (*BD* 1088). By revisiting their story from the very beginning, he signals his progression towards the source of his grief. Whether his attitude is feigned or not, the dreamer

continues to serve the aim of learning the heart of the Black Knight. Assuming that the Black Knight is attempting self-purification, the dreamer interjects:

> "Now, by my trouthe, sir," quod I,
> "Me thynketh ye have such a chaunce
> As shryfte wythoute repentaunce."
> "Repentaunce? Nay, fy!" quod he,
> "Shulde y now repente me
> To love? Nay, certes, than were I wel (*BD* 1112- 1117)

Despite the Black Knight's previous explanations, the dreamer continues to hold false assumptions, to which the Black Knight responds with patience. After extensively hearing the Black Knight express his admiration for the lady's beauty and virtues, as well as his deep affection for her, the dreamer concedes that he does not have to tell him more: "Ye han wel told me herebefore; / Hyt ys no nede to reherse it more" (*BD* 1127-1128). He believes it is time for the Black Knight to confess unequivocally the true cause of his loss. The dreamer directly expresses that instead of praising the lady, the Black Knight should tell him what loss he has experienced. The dreamer desires to hear it in its purest form. Nevertheless, the Black Knight once again refrains from providing a straightforward answer, and points out that the dreamer lacks understanding of his loss, almost rebuking him. The dreamer persists in his pursuit of truth, never yielding:

> "What los ys that?" quod I thoo;
> "Nyl she not love yow? Ys hyt soo?
> Or have ye oght doon amys,
> That she hath left yow? Ys hyt this?
> For Goddes love, telle me al." (*BD* 1139- 1143)

Seeking a more precise reaction, the dreamer insistently urges the Black Knight to confess his loss. Nonetheless, he fails again in this attempt since the Black Knight responds by once again expressing his affection for his "fair and bright" (*BD* 1180). The Black Knight recounts the story of how the lady initially declined him, but eventually they became a couple. He emphasizes that the lady realized his well-intentioned wishes and thus agreed to take him "in hir governaunce" (*BD* 1286). Subsequently, they lived many years in unison. The dreamer attempts again and asks: "where is she now?" (*BD* 1288). Upon this question, the Black Knight commences a new complaint. It can be

deduced from the Black Knight's reaction to the dreamer at this point that the dreamer cannot comprehend the magnitude of his loss:

> "Allas, that I was bore!
> That was the los that here-before
> I tolde the that I hadde lorn.
> Bethenke how I seyde here-beforn,
> 'Thow wost ful lytel what thow menest;
> I have lost more than thow wenest.'
> God wot, alias! Ryght that was she!" (*BD* 1301- 1307)

It is the first time here that the Black Knight directly connects his loss to the lady. When he acknowledges that she was the loss, he has also reached the stage of aaccepting his loss. Noticing this, the dreamer inquires one final time: "Allas, sir, how? What may that be?" / "She ys ded!" "Nay!" "Yis, be my trouthe!" / "Is that youre los? Be God, hyt ys routhe!" (*BD* 1308- 1310)

Despite the dreamer's prior knowledge of the Black Knight's complaint, he responds as if he is hearing it for the first time that his lady is dead. If he had understood the loss of the Black Knight from the very beginning despite the Black Knight's indirect references, the dreamer would not have needed to talk more and make the Black Knight understand. The dreamer succeeds in making him talk in order to "draw forth happy memories of the loved one now dead" (Stone 11) with an intent of consoling and changing the perception of the Black Knight. The aim of the poem is fulfilled "when the Black Knight seems to realize the wisdom in philosophical acceptance of his bereavement" (Lumiansky 120). When the Black Knight gains the epistemology that he lacked before, there are no words left to say. As Clemen puts it, even Chaucer "can find no direct words of consolation" (47). However, the dreamer has succeeded in making the Black Knight talk, confess, and contemplate about the lady in a retrospective manner which has initiated the transformation of the Black Knight.

As soon as the sound of the huntsmen's call is heard, it marks the end of the hunt. Parallelly, the conversation ends as the Black Knight confesses the very nature of his loss: "She ys ded!" (*BD* 1309). The conversation between the Black Knight and the dreamer starts with a hunt and ends with the ending of the hunt. Here, indeed, both the literal and metaphorical hunts are over. Since their initial meeting, the dreamer has

wanted to learn about the heart of the Black Knight. In pursuit of this, he has made multiple attempts to acquire the knowledge both directly and indirectly. It was only at the conclusion that he manages to ascertain the reason of the Black Knight's sorrow and capture the "heart" of the Black Knight. There is not a single exchange after the blow and the Black Knight goes back to his "long castel with walles white" (*BD* 1318).

The Black Knight who was lamenting in isolation and avoiding interaction with society comes to the point of confessing his loss and returning to his castle. It is obviously observed in the Black Knight's situation that he was tormenting himself in a socially isolated place. He can only move on after acknowledging his loss, and confronting the emotional weight it carries. That he does not stay there and returns to his castle signals a significant change in him. Hence, acknowledging his loss brings consolation and transformation. Here, with all its magnitude, his castle stands for a metaphor of his social and political duties. Thus, the Black Knight is evidently transformed into an individual who has accepted and reconciled with his loss. From a man who has escaped into the forest and cannot endure being in the company of other people, he turns into a man who is capable of engaging in lengthy discussions about his recollections and returning to his castle, which stands for his community.

The transformation of the Black Knight is "in its emphasis on a movement from passivity to activity and from the 'agaynes kyne' to the 'natural', is not purely somatic, but also has a certain ideological, moralizing force" (Kruger "The Medical" 378). The dreamer has unquestionably contributed to his change with his insistent questions. Thus, through the commemoration of the dead "a consolation" is "offered to the living" (Brewer *The World* 112). As suggested by Boitani,

> [t]he transformation of private occasion into public concern is effected by Chaucer through a series of operations basically centred on the fictionalization of certain motifs. The fundamental 'private' nucleus – the relationship between Gaunt and Blanche and her death – becomes the second, and longest, section of the dream, in which the protagonist meets a knight in black mourning his loss and complaining against Fortune, and forces him to tell the story of his love for White and finally reveal her death. (64)

Likewise, Chaucer achieves another kind of transformation by extending a personal matter to the communal towards the end of the poem. As put forward by Fein, the poem also presents a universal portrait of the bereaved by indicating

> [. . .] how impossible it is to understand death – the demise of another but, most intimately, the unshakeable foreign dose of mortality we hold in ourselves – and this mystery, this void within, is expounded but not explained in an astounding web of paradoxical life-and-death images: waking/sleeping, health/disease, companionship/ solitude, verdant forest/barren cave, hunter/hunted, then/now, and so on. (286)

Chaucer transforms the conventional role of the guide figure as in the poem the interaction between the dreamer and the Black Knight is similar, yet very distinct from that of a traditional dream. The dreamer seems to perform the role of the guide for the Black Knight. However, he does not seem to be the wiser party in the conversation and manages to make the Black Knight pour out his sorrow.

The Black Knight, with the magnitude of his deep sorrow, also indirectly guides the dreamer, who is transformed into a man of action now by deciding to put his experience into rhyme. This interaction leads to transformation for both of them, and indicates that as regards its use of loss and transformation, "understanding of the poem is done in unconventional ways" (Lynch *Chaucer's* 46). This method that Chaucer employs is referred to as the "Chaucerian circle of understanding" by Koff (80), through which different representations of personal loss are dealt with.

When the Black Knight goes back to his castle, the dreamer wakes up and affirms that it was a dream: "As me mette; but thus hyt fil" (*BD* 1320). He finds himself lying in bed, with the same book he had been reading. Thinking that it was a strange dream, the dreamer decides to "put this sweven in ryme" (*BD* 1332). As mentioned above, the dreamer is described as a man of books, not a man of action. As a sufferer who could not sleep and find any joy in life, he decides to write his dream. This is the ultimate action for a book enthusiast. As a result of his dream, he finds a purpose in life and it can be imagined that writing the dream account will help him eliminate "ydel thought" (*BD* 4) and "sorwful ymagynacioun" (*BD* 14) he has had before.

Thus, the interaction between the dreamer and the Black Knight "give[s] the poem an element of tension, for although the dreamer sympathises with the Knight's abject misery, he also recognises the danger of his self- abandoning grief" (Winny 57) and thus, reacts against the presence of such a strong grief. Thus, the "exchange" between them "is held to be cathartic" (Lawton 54) not only for the Black Knight but also for the dreamer. The dreamer observes that his unnamed sickness and melancholy is not comparable to the death of a beloved one. He witnesses the suffering of the Black Knight and endeavours to find different plans to make him speak. This also becomes a kind of motivation for his transformation. Beginning from the prologue until his conversation with the Black Knight, the "mediation becomes transformation" (Minnis et al. 116) for him. What the poem provides, then, is

> [. . .] an offering from one human being to another, within the strict framework of agreed manners and of an accepted social scale, of sympathetic understanding of an unhappy situation. It also provides a means of return to human contacts, and to life which continues as nature intends it to do, in spite of loss, for one whom the intensity of grief has temporarily cut off. (Kean 66)

There is a pattern shared in the stories in the poem. In the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone, loss causes Alcyone to act upon it and pray to Juno. Then, Juno sends Morpheus to make Alcyone accept the death of her husband by using a transfigured form of his husband's body as a mediator. The dialogue with this somehow transformed body provides a closure and change of mind for Alcyone. Likewise, in a parallel fashion, loss causes the dreamer to pray for a dream in which he is sent to provide a closure and change of mind for another figure who also suffers from death by using the couple's memories in their dialogue as a mediatory tool. Above all these causality and parallelism, the dreamer is reciprocally transformed.

By borrowing from several literary traditions, genres, and mythology, Chaucer recreates a poem on loss, death, grief, and transformation they entail in his own unique and multi-faceted way. In an attempt to analyse the obscure sections in the poem, Lauro Howes puts it that "Chaucer purposefully made his poem incoherent and disjointed in order to explore the relationship between literary convention and an individual poet's attempts to forge a new poem" (36).

The main components dealing with the theme of loss- the sickness of the dreamer, his vision, his intention throughout his interaction with the Black Knight- all have ambiguous details. However, if the parallelism between Alcyone's and the Black Knight's story is taken into account, it is quite certain that Chaucer prepares the reader with a story about loss, death and consolation for an upcoming story about loss, death and consolation. The abrupt ending suggests that death is still a big mystery, yet, a "sense of malaise has been lifted" (Pugh 14) within the Black Knight and the dreamer.

The Book of the Duchess contains both worldly and divine concerns. The worldly concerns are reflected through the dreamer, who seemingly suffer from lovesickness, and the divine ones are through the Black Knight who cannot overcome the grief loss causes. What is significant for the focal point of this study is that both concerns share loss and transformation. In achieving these, Chaucer employs an unorthodox way by conflating the traditional and the contemporary, secular and devotional, in his dealing with the themes of loss and transformation. Thus, "[m]ultifold and shifting meanings" (Hieatt 13) can be drawn from Chaucer's approach to his poem. In presenting a psychoanalytical reading of the poem, Ferster suggests that Chaucer presents two contrasting notions throughout the poem where the interaction between the self and the other are presented. According to her:

> [t]he self may be alone because it does not know whether the other exists, or it may partially determine and be determined by the other as they interact. The poem may describe either a replicating series of characters who are shadows of each other-the narrator, Alcyone, the narrator's dreamed self, the Black Knight, Chaucer- or powerful encounters between the narrator and his book and the two figures of his dream. There seems to be no easy way to decide. (74)

In conclusion, in *The Book of the Duchess*, the dreamer primarily deals with someone else's loss- specifically, the Black Knight's mourning over the death of his beloved. However, the dreamer himself also appears to suffer from an unnamed type of loss. This dual (even triple with the inclusion of the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone) representation of loss facilitates a transformation that occurs through the dreamer's interaction with the Black Knight. The transformation in this poem is twofold: the dreamer, through the process of conversing with the Black Knight, undergoes a personal change, while the Black Knight transforms from being a solitary mourner to a figure capable of returning

to his courtly duties. Although *The Book of the Duchess* appears to be centred on secular concerns, Chaucer subtly infuses the narrative with messages about the superiority of eternal life and truth. The poem's recursive use of the word "true" further enhances its capacity for devotional interpretations.

In *The Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer exemplifies the transformative power of loss as the personae transform beyond their emotional condition to include their intellectual and spiritual development. The Black Knight's process of grieving is characterised by recollection, facilitated by the dreamer's questions, which acts as a potent instrument for his transformation. Furthermore, Chaucer incorporates the dichotomy of Nature and Fortune to emphasise the process of acknowledging and managing grief. Within this particular framework, Nature symbolises order and recuperation, while Fortune symbolises chaos and unpredictability.

Ultimately, Chaucer's thematic and textual elements not only underscore the transformative power of loss but also highlight his poetic creativity. Thus, Chaucer's poetics, characterized by their dual representations and integration of various literary traditions, effectively illustrates the multifaceted nature of loss and its transformative potential. The Black Knight's journey from isolation and despair to renewed duty, facilitated by the dreamer's empathetic engagement, underscores the impact of grief on the human psyche and highlights the dual transformations that occur within the narrative. The poem also has a commemorative nature in which Chaucer celebrates the Duke's love and praises the Duchess' virtues. Thus, he not only allows a similarly suffering person, whose anguish appears relatively laconic, to console a lamenting Knight but also implicitly addresses everybody whose idyllic sufferings are no reason to be in pain and to rebel. Thereby, the poem also functions as an elegy for the sorrowful duke and a moral message for the reader.

CHAPTER III

MORAL INSIGHT AND HUMAN LIMITATION: LOSS AND THE COMPLEX TRANSFORMATION IN HENRYSON'S *ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE*

Henryson's retelling of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is distinguished by a meditation on the spiritual and moral aspects of loss, as Orpheus embarks on a celestial journey. Orpheus's journey into the celestial realm to recover Eurydice makes a poignant tale of love and loss. The approach of this chapter to this celestial realm is realized in a broader sense of spiritual entity. The purpose of this journey is to bestow Orpheus with a spiritual insight on the essence of loss and life. Even though the poem is replete with all the details that facilitate his acquisition of epistemology he has lacked before, Orpheus does not seem to benefit from this transformative journey as indicated in his mistake of looking back at Eurydice at the end of the poem. Nonetheless, his final words "I am expert" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 411)[14], suggest that he recognises his erroneous decision, and reconciles himself to the reality of his wife's death by acquiring a deeper understanding of life, loss, and his own limitations.

Upon re-entering the real world, although he continues to grieve for his wife, Orpheus shows signs of having gained some understanding of his human limits when he confronts the experience of loss. Although Henryson designs the narrative with many transforming elements, such as the didactic journey in the celestial realm for Orpheus to undergo a complete transformation, Orpheus is subject to a partial change through which he becomes able to accept the fact that Eurydice is lost, and that his previous response to loss was flawed. By partial and incomplete transformation, (due to the fact that he breaks his promise), it is meant that after all his journey full of challenges and reminder of his nobility, Orpheus is expected to act in a reasonable manner when he reunites with Eurydice. On the contrary, he breaks his promise. However, as he returns to the real world without his wife, he understands what dangers submitting to earthly

[14] For the direct quotations of the poem, Denton Fox. Ed. *The Poems of Robert Henryson*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980 is used; hereafter it is given as *Orpheus and Eurydice* with reference to the line numbers.

love may bring about. Via the *moralitas* section he includes, Henryson examines Orpheus's shortcomings as a human and expands the transformation to include his audience.

Although the ending renders Orpheus as a failure, it serves as a final lesson for him, complementing the experience he has acquired in the celestial realm. It emphasizes that despite going through an educative spiritual journey, it may still be difficult to forsake all the worldly attachments. Nevertheless, the circle of transformation for Orpheus, which has been opened with the onset of his voyage, is closed after his error. Similar to *Pearl* and *The Book of the Duchess*, the lamenting persona suffers not only from the loss of his beloved wife but also the loss of his joy in life. Orpheus loses his kingdom, all the attending duties. In addition, with grave concerns for morality, in Henryson's adaptation of the myth, Orpheus is also portrayed as a significant warning figure who exemplifies the possible risks associated with not abiding by the heavenly principles.

Henryson starts his poem by praising the genealogy and nobility of Orpheus who is not expected "to be degenerate" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 9) under any circumstance on account of his lineal descent. After nine stanzas extolling the wisdom and eloquence of his lineage, Orpheus is introduced as a "fair and wyse" person (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 64) who is precisely defined as "gentill and full of liberalite" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 65). Furthermore, the fact that his mother is the "fyndar of all ermonye" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 67) and he is breastfed with "all musike parfyte" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 70) renders him a maintainer of these traits. Hence, both of his parents have raised him to be a man of erudition maintaining his life in wisdom and harmony.

Drawing an analogy between a flower and love, Henryson defines the love of Orpheus and his wife Eurydice as a "wardlie joye" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 89). This worldly pleasure of theirs is brought to a halt when Arystyus attempts to abduct Eurydice. Terrorized by his evil attack, Eurydice steps on a venomous snake when she is trying to run away and dies. Seeing this, Proserpyne brings her to the Underworld. Soon after learning her death, Orpheus initially feels anger and rage, then, his heart bursts with grief and woe. Going "[h]alf out of mynd" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 129), he sits on a stone in the woods and sings his song of complaint in a similar fashion to the Black

Knight in *The Book of the Duchess*. The subsequent three stanzas are dedicated to the mourning of Orpheus, all three of which end in the refrain: "Quhair art thou gone, my luf Eruidices?" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 143, 153, 163). With these musical and repetitive lines, the trauma of Orpheus is emphasized. Orpheus surrenders to his emotions and his response is "dramatic" and extremely "human" (Gray 222). After praying to his father Phebus and grandfather Jupiter, he embarks upon his journey which is both physical and spiritual. The term "physical journey" refers to his departure in search of his wife, while "spiritual" journey denotes the starting point of his transformative process. He visits Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Pheubus, Venus, Mercury, Moon, and Earth in a futile search for his wife. He wanders around the spheres,

> narratively reflecting the familiar image of the medieval perception of the cosmos as a series of concentric circles with the prime mover at its outer edge, most frequently followed by the spheres of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury followed by the Sun and Moon with Earth at the center. (Brown 151)

After twenty days, he reaches the gate of Hell where he is challenged with various tasks. First of these is the three headed dog Cerberus, whom he puts to sleep by playing his harp. Then, he encounters the Furies – the three sisters also known as the Erinyes- for whom he plays a dance tune and puts them to sleep. After that, he makes his "suete melody" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 301) for Ticius who is spreadeagled on the wheel of the three sisters. Next, he enters a terrifying street where he finds sorrowful kings and queens and several men of religion.

Struggling against all these obstacles he encounters, he is supposed to display his musical talent. His musical talent and his harp symbolize the harmony of life he has. As the son of a Muse, the goddess of harmony, he is expected to exhibit his harmony through his reason and skill. Finally, he goes lower down and sees Eurydice there with Pluto and Proserpine. He, once again, plays his "suete proporcion" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 368) and charms them with his music. He rejoices over a temporary reunion with his wife. Much the same in the original versions of the myth where he fails to keep his word of not looking back at Eurydice, he throws a glance at Eurydice in a light-hearted manner, blinded with mortal passion. He, then, bemoans his double loss of losing her again as he leaves the Underworld:

> ‘Quhat art thou lufe? How sail I the dyffyne.
> Bitter and suete, cruel and merciable;
> Plesand to sum, til othir playnt and pyne;
> To sum constant, till othir variabil;
> Hard is thy law, thi bandis vnbrekable;
> Quha seruis the, thouch he be newir sa trewe.
> Perchance sum tyme he sail haue cause to rewe. (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 401- 407)

He, only after this bitter experience regrets making this mistake. The painful story of Orpheus ends here and between the lines 415 and 633 the *moralitas* section takes place, throughout which the supremacy of wisdom, intellect, harmony, and morality over lust, fantasy, affection, and appetite is emphasized. Since Orpheus “ponders on the dangers of earthly love” (Friedman *Orpheus* 386), in the *moralitas* Henryson depicts a disillusioned yet a more mature figure. In the *moralitas* section, Henryson accentuates the magnitude of intellect while degrading mortal and earthly values by providing moral interpretations to the myths and figures appearing in the poem.

It is noteworthy that Henryson’s Orpheus is not in the foreground as a lover but instead he is depicted as a bereaved widower who “reveals a misplaced sense of values” (Friedman *Orpheus* 204), which is being too attached to a worldly mindset. Nonetheless, he has raised an awareness over what really matters in life. However, his transformation begins with his realization that “sensual love” is “deceptive” (MacQueen *The Narrative* 255) after experiencing the double loss of his wife. Consequently, he acknowledges his “foule derisioun” (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 14).

As in *Pearl* and *The Book of the Duchess*, Orpheus experiences the loss of a beloved and gains insight on how a reasonable man should deal with loss. Notwithstanding the fact that he loses his wife for the second time, he comes to acknowledge the dangers of mortal desires and that his judgement was faulty. This awareness causes a change in his perception of the real nature of loss. He is developed and partially transformed, which is reinforced through Henryson’s comments in the *moralitas* section. The *moralitas*, thus, introduces moral messages into the poem and suggests that pursuing worldly pleasures are futile, and Orpheus should have been aware of this.

Accordingly, unlike the classical or medieval versions to the myth of Orpheus, which feature journeys to the supernatural forest, Henryson prefers to send Orpheus on a

journey to the planets first. On a May morning, Orpheus ascents to the heavenly realm, since in Friedman's words "the wisdom is sought in heavens" (*Orpheus* 204-205). In addition, as MacQueen states, heaven represents reason and rational soul in ancient and medieval understanding (*Narrative* 255). Henryson's choice to send Orpheus on a heavenly journey throughout the planets highlights the universal and cosmic order of divine principles. At the end of this physical journey in the celestial realm and his final mistake of looking back at his wife, Orpheus reaches a new understanding of the true ways to deal with loss.

The woods in the Orpheus myth are maintained for the sake of singing his song of complaint. Thus, the woods are not directly related to his transformation in Henryson's adaptation. However, forsaking the corporeal world and visiting the heavenly realms is designed to enable Orpheus to grasp the epistemology he has lacked before, that is, the significance of reason, harmony, and morality. Thus, the whole spiritual journey, which also incorporates the physical journey, allows a space for him to change. From this perspective, the description of Orpheus's transformation is not only one of personal development but a synchronization with the general orderly scheme of the cosmos. This change of setting also emphasizes the idea of change, where Orpheus goes from the common to the extraordinary, from ignorance to enlightenment, and from his disordered life caused by loss to celestial harmony. This series of transformations in his journey elevates his spiritual perception in a similar fashion with those experiences which the dreamer and the Black Knight go through in *Pearl* and *The Book of the Duchess*. The fact that Henryson gives prime importance to moral teaching, allegoric content, and acceptance, increases the poem's proximity to the other two poems.

The historical development of the Orpheus myth forms a critical basis for understanding the transformation of Orpheus by Robert Henryson. Although the myth of Orpheus stands out with the charming music of Orpheus which could make "wild beasts", "trees and plants", and "the wildest of men" "bow to him" (Grimal 315) and his journey to the Underworld for Eurydice in the Western world, there are ample changes and adaptations of the myth. Throughout history, the myth does not possess a monolithic and original version until the Middle Ages, but just fragments dating back to Greek art and literature, it has been defined as "elusive" or "protean" from time to time (Friedman *Orpheus* 5).

As a result, the tragic story of Orpheus has constantly been presented in diverse forms. From the decline of the Roman Empire until the period of Henryson's poem, the depiction of Orpheus undergoes continuous transformation. From the early stories of the myth, it is known that born in Thrace, Orpheus is the son of a Muse and Apollo or the King of Thrace.[15] Orpheus is mainly depicted as a poet, writing songs of earth, sky, ocean, and order of the heavens (Friedman *Orpheus* 7-8). During the classical period, "he is not only the archetypal poet but also the founder of a mystical religion known as Orphism, with a well-developed theology, cosmogony, and eschatology of which much survives in hymns and short epics" (Segal 1). While some people treat him as a religious figure, "others, at all times, have seen in the magic of his playing, in his gentleness and tragic death a rich material for the exercise of their artistic skills" (Guthrie 25).

While *Orpheus and Eurydice* originates from a pagan story based on Greek mythology, it has also been reinterpreted from a Christian perspective, enabling it to carry spiritual and moral teachings. Henryson adopts similar viewpoint when approaching the narrative, using it as an allegory to investigate Christian themes of sin, salvation, and the quest for divine harmony. In the words of Himmet Umunç, "once understood allegorically, pagan literature and philosophy contained vestiges of the Christian truth and had therefore to be interpreted accordingly" (114). By the same token, the celestial realm where Orpheus initially searches for his wife can be seen as a metaphor of spiritual domain which embodies universal themes of redemption and loss, transcending the religious doctrines of a specific faith. Orpheus's journey is characterized by reflection on a spiritual and psychological level, through which, he is expected to attain a deep understanding of the essential nature of life and love. While doing so, Orpheus puts his earthly perspectives on life and love to question. Yet, in the resolution of the poem when he looks back at Eurydice, it reveals the fragility of human nature and the difficulty of transcending the earthly understanding, even in the face of supernatural

[15] In canonical sources, the parentage of Orpheus differs. In certain sources, he has a mortal father (Oeagrus) and a Muse mother. In Henryson's adaptation, Apollo is the father and Orpheus prays to Apollo in his most desperate moment. Henryson chooses to use the second version for his poem in which he employs a noble lineage. However, it makes no significant change in the aim of the poem. Even though Orpheus is introduced with his noble lineage, he is depicted as everyman who errs by surrendering to his emotions (Hamilton 138, Coleman 788, March 358).

power. Eurydice is lost to him eternally as a result of this lapse. By examining Orpheus's journey through this perspective, the chapter explores how Henryson parallels loss and transformation in *Pearl* and *The Book of the Duchess*, while also highlighting the unique aspects of Orpheus's journey. With an emphasis on the broader moral and spiritual teachings that can be acquired from the reading of *Orpheus and Eurydice*, this chapter allegorically interprets the poem on Orpheus's way to spiritual transformation.

Since the beginning of Christianity, "Orpheus had been compared to David, the magical musician who played in the wilderness, and to the Christ [sic], the Good Shepherd, whose words drew all mankind" (Louis 644). Alexandrians knew him as "capable of great eloquence" and playing "beautiful songs on his lyre" (Friedman *Orpheus* 55-56). For the Greeks, in addition to his renowned sojourn in the Underworld, he was an eminent poet conscious of his religious responsibilities who charmed everybody with the harmony of his music. As also retold by Euripides and Socrates, Orpheus happily unites with his wife in these ancient versions of the story where Orpheus is known as a venerated figure bearing the traits of reason, harmony, eloquence, talent, and perfection. The poets of the medieval world, likewise, contextualized the myth within the framework of romance or allegory. Thereby, the myth is recreated in the Middle Ages by adopting these "dual mediaevel traditions" (Louis 643) of romance and allegory. Initially, the classic myth allowed poets of the Middle Ages to portray Orpheus, in Douglas Gray's words, "in courtly grab as an 'amans fins', as a lover of exemplary faithfulness, a 'loyal amoureux'" (212).

The Middle Ages witnessed a portrait of Orpheus mostly as a lover, conflated with the themes of courtly love tradition and adventure. Orpheus is highlighted mostly with his love for Eurydice and his loss. *Sir Orfeo* (14th c.) and *Orpheus and Eurydice* are the two medieval retellings of the myth, both of which are not totally different from the traditional Orpheus story, but rather unfold details from medieval envisaging of it. They fulfil it by borrowing extensively from romance and medieval allegory. Even though

both are classified as romance, *Sir Orfeo*, makes more use of the romance elements and *Orpheus and Eurydice* those of the allegorical tradition.[16]

Henryson takes a distinctive approach in his retelling of the myth of Orpheus. His approach to the aim of the myth is similar to the formulative approaches of Fulgentius and Boethius, both of whom are the key figures in shaping the allegorical versions of the myth in the Middle Ages. Boethius uses the myth as a cautionary tale for those who should avoid worldly concerns:

> Alas, alas! At the very
> verge of the dark kingdom,
> Orpheus had his moment
> of doubt, and turned and saw,
> and lost the woman forever.
> This old and familiar tale
> is yours, as you make your ascent
> leading your mind to the light,
> for if, in a moment of weakness,
> you should look back on the darkness,
> the excellence you have achieved
> you will lose, looking back, looking down. (Boethius 105)

Moreover, *Sir Orfeo* and *Orpheus and Eurydice* both have allegorical elements and communicate religious themes in dealing with loss. Similar to romance, *Sir Orfeo* "puts love and loyalty to the test in a way that portrays the importance of these virtues to the author's society as a whole" (Robinson 98). As Kenneth Louis asserts, *Sir Orfeo* exemplifies "mediaeval secular literature" (645). The narrative of *Sir Orfeo* is rich in allegorical symbolism, as it portrays King Orfeo's quest to save his wife from the Fairy King. This journey serves as a powerful metaphor for the victory of love and fidelity in the face of obstacles. The narrative culminates in a happy resolution, fortifying the merits of affection and faithfulness inside a societal framework.

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[16] In the popular romance *Sir Orfeo*, Orpheus is a talented musician and a king. He is married to Herodis. One day in May, the King of Fairies kidnaps his wife. Orpheus, then, leaves his kingdom and desperately sets off to the woods. Seeing Herodis along with some fairies, he pursues them until they reach a castle. In the castle, he is disguised as a minstrel and charms the Fairy King with his sweet music. Upon his performance, the king offers him an award, upon which he requests to take his wife back. He manages to get his wife back. Still in disguise, he returns to his kingdom. However, his steward recognises him through his music and Orpheus reveals his identity. He is crowned again, and the romance is written in his honour.

However, Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* offers a narrative that is both intricate and melancholic. Orpheus undertakes a physical journey over the planets and finally descends to the Underworld. Orpheus is only taken through such a journey so that he can come to realize and understand the order of the cosmos while he is mourning for his wife. While in *Sir Orfeo* all ends well in a happy situation, Henryson's tale aims to teach Orpheus the ways that point towards the limitations of human desire and the presence of heavenly order. Orpheus, in his ultimate act of looking back at Eurydice, illustrates how the human state is weak and vulnerable. The last instruction following his twenty-day instruction in the spheres raises Orpheus to a stage of spiritual awareness and to the point where he must accept the power of the heavenly decree in coping with loss. Therefore, while both poems explore themes of love and loss, Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* provides a more extensive spiritual metamorphosis.

The ending of both poems has great significance at this juncture. In *Sir Orfeo*, Sir Orfeo also confronts his human limits, culminating in his reunification with his wife. Nevertheless, the ultimate tragedy of *Orpheus and Eurydice*'s double loss leads to this epiphany in Henryson's poetry. That is why, Henryson's depiction of Orpheus is characterized as "new" (Gray 209) or "unique" (MacQueen *The Narrativ*e 255) because this Orpheus serves as a foreboding reminder to humanity about the perils of pride and passion (Louis 646). In addition, Henryson's reinterpretation of the narrative portrays Eurydice as a representation of worldly desire and temptation. In a similar vein with the medieval play *Everyman*, *Orpheus and Eurydice* emphasizes a universal theme of human experience, that is the inescapable nature of death and the pursuit of salvation. Like Everyman, Orpheus becomes the symbol of the mistakes mankind makes and the lessons to be learned from them. Both of their stories are not only about physical journeys, but a general human experience of love, loss, grief and the pursuit of spirituality, as well.

What distinguishes Henryson's interpretation of the myth of Orpheus is also the incorporation of specific elements from the works of Ovid, Virgil, and Boethius (Löf 5), and the fourteenth century romance version. With a distinct approach, Henryson uses the myth to enable a spiritual transformation in the midst of loss. Orpheus gets to transform his approach to death from a resistance to an acknowledgement when he loses

his wife for the second time. All didacticism that he goes through in the celestial journey makes sense for him after this double loss. In addition to the *moralitas* section which encompasses allegory, Henryson's choice of a celestial journey through which bereaved Orpheus acquires knowledge and spiritual recognition, an episode of epiphany, is a determinant in this acquisition. Orpheus emerges with a sharper perception of divine order and the limits of human will. He is faced with the fact that the divine laws are supreme and he has to settle down to the loss, since this journey brought him closer to spiritual wisdom. Similar to the narrative methods employed in *Pearl* and *The Book of the Duchess*, Henryson meticulously weaves the narrative to enable this transformation for Orpheus by providing and necessitating moral resolutions as the poem develops.

At the outset of the poem, Henryson presents a persona whose heritage and high nobility is in the foreground. Henryson employs this to foreshadow the upcoming change in Orpheus after his didactic experience:

> It is contrair the lawis of nature
> A gentill man to be degenerat,
> Nocht following of his progenitour
> The worthe rewll and the lordly estait.
> A ryall rynk for to be rusticat
> Is bot a monsture in comparesoun,
> Had in dispyt and foule derisioun. (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 8-14)

According to Henryson, forasmuch as Orpheus has a noble background, which is highly praised at the very of the poem, he is expected to possess an imitative conduct of his ancestors in his approach to leading a life under the guidance of reason or harmony. Orpheus's ancestors and royal rank have paved the way for him to be a man of reason and harmony. In the visions of Plato's Er or Cicero's Scipio who are taught to act in erudition and always follow the true manner and heavenly order, Henryson explicitly attaches great importance to Orpheus's high lineage and his adoption of this "vertu excellent" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 21). The poem juxtoposes the portrait of the noble Orpheus at the beginning, and the fallen Orpheus at the end of the poem. Jupiter and Memoria are Orpheus's grandparents, and all their children are recounted in the story, laying a particular emphasis on their good virtues with phrases such as "gude

dilectacioun" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 37), "gude instruction" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 40), "maidyn meruailus" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 43), "profound wit" (Orpheus and Eurydice 55) and "armony celestiall" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 59). Contradictorily, he does not fully understand that he needs to adopt these values in his life until he realizes his error of not abiding by the truth and comes to terms with it at the very end. Even though he should inherently possess each of these qualities, harmony is something that must be sought for and achieved through effort. Accomplishing perfection is not arbitrarily fulfilled. However, he is unable to accomplish it, as it becomes apparent to him in the end.

Before delving into the tragic story of Orpheus and Eurydice, Henryson makes one more comment to accentuate Orpheus's exceptional state:

> No wounder is thocht he was fair and wyse,
> Gentill and full of liberalite,
> Hs fader god, and his progenitrys
> Agoddess, fyndar of all ermonye. (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 64-67).

Attracted by this reputation of Orpheus, Eurydice is the one who sends a message to Orpheus, asking him to marry her. She is depicted as an excellent fair lady who welcomes Orpheus to her kingdom as the King with sweet words and kisses.

> Erudices, that lady had to name;
> Quhen that scho saw this prince so glorius,
> Hir erand to propone scho thocht no schame;
> With wordis sweit and blenkis amorus.
> Said, 'Welcome, lord and luf, schir Orpheus;
> In this province ȝe sail be king and lord!'
> Thai kissit syne, and thus war at accord. (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 78-84).

With a strong emphasis on her portrayal of being a carnal temptation, she functions as a symbol of enticement for Orpheus. She is depicted as being captivated by Orpheus's fame and attractiveness. Compared to reason and intellect Orpheus has, she represents appetite. Henryson meticulously narrates the love story between the couple from the beginning of their marriage with vivid and detailed worldly connotations:

> The lowe of luf couth kendill and encres,
> With myrth, blythnes, great plesans, and gret play.

> Off *wardlie joy*e, allace, quhat sall we say?
> Lyk till a flour that plesandly will spring,
> *Quhilk fadis sone, and endis with murnyng*. (emphasis added, *Orpheus and Eurydice* 87-91)

The bliss Orpheus enjoys with Eurydice is likened to a flower's short span of life and is identified as a worldly one. By putting all the happiness in worldly pleasure- here symbolized by Eurydice- Orpheus will eventually end up in "murnyng" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 91). In this context, Eurydice represents carnal desires and pleasure, to which he succumbs (MacQueen *Robert Henryson* 265). In the *moralitas*, Eurydice is clearly labelled as "oure affection" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 431). Thus, in the poem Henryson employs Eurydice's proposal as a sensual enticement for Orpheus, who finds great pleasure in it. As Jennifer N. Brown puts it,

> Eurydice is increasingly defined by her sexual nature until her death. The marriage between Orpheus and his queen is described by Henryson in terms that call up the heat of a physical passion, rather than a courtly romantic attachment. After their marriage, Henryson tells us, "the low of lufe cowthe kyndill and incres / with mirth and blythnes, solace and with play" (lines 87–88). The love is described as a "low," or flame, drawing attention to the physicality of and heat between the lovers, and their romance is characterized by "play," another eroticized term that focuses on physical sexuality rather than any kind of emotional love or affection. (149)

Thus, with Eurydice symbolizing earthly desire, their love is depicted as passionate rather than pure. As in Virgilian version of the myth (*Georgics* 90-93), in her attempt to run away from Arystyus' rape, Eurydice gets bitten by a venomous snake. Upon learning that his wife is lost, Orpheus frantically sets off to the woods with his harp and plays his complaint song, comprising three stanzas, each concluding with the refrain "Quhair art thou gone, my luf Eruidices?" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 143-153-163). Throughout his complaint, it is revealed that not only is his "lust queen" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 149) lost to him, but also his delight and joy of life. With extreme grief over his loss, he takes leave of his "pleasance and play" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 154) and "rob ryall" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 157). The consequences of his suffer from his loss is vividly displayed here by the use of words like "full sore" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 127), "werray dule and wo" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 128), "his mone" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 133), "carefull king" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 137) and "in gule and greit" (*Orpheus and*

Eurydice 139). He saliently states his loneliness and desperateness. He welcomes a "wilsum way" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 155), which is an unfamiliar path for him.

With emphasis on loneliness and search for a solution to unite with his wife, Orpheus initially looks for guidance from his father Phebus and grandfather Jupiter. He needs them to "direct" him (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 168), "len" him "thi licht" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 171) and put his "hert in pes" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 181). He is doubtlessly in pursuit of a guide figure. As Newman states, he is "in need of direction, light, and correction" (266). Both the process and aftermath of this journey is of utmost importance for Orpheus to obtain awareness. Friedman suggests that the fact that Orpheus visits the heavens for twenty days and cannot gain his wife back shows that Orpheus naturally cannot find Eurydice in the heavens since the very nature of his love still bears the traces of "material desire" (*Orpheus* 205). Nevertheless, during this journey he acquires the secret of the harmony of the heavens: "Yit be the way sum melody he lerde. / In his passage amang the planitis all, / He herd a hevynly melody and sound" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 218-220).

Orpheus learns about the celestial music, which is the sound made by the spheres when they turn. Alessandra Petrina marks that "Henryson is underlining the equation between music and celestial experience, extending the scope of the former well beyond its traditional power to charm nature or even stop the motion of hell" (209). This understanding, however, requires Orpheus to undergo a personal transformation. Nevertheless, these teachings will only become comprehensible and return to him after he acknowledges his mistake in the end. Consequently, the celestial bodies guide Orpheus towards the pursuit of wisdom, harmony, and perfection. These interactions guide Orpheus towards a comprehension of the cosmic order and moral perfection. The journey through this realm is designed to instruct Orpheus to perform reason, harmony, and perfection, and prepare him in the line with the true conduct of life.

In the poem, the harp represents not merely a musical instrument, but it also embodies the inherent characteristics of reason and harmony that define Orpheus's character. By playing the harp, Orpheus enters the harmonious structure of the world, reflecting the wisdom and moral values passed down from his predecessors. The correlation between

the harp and his ancestral wisdom emphasises the influence of music and its function in leading Orpheus towards enlightenment and spiritual development. The music produced by the harp serves as a channel for celestial harmony, harmonising Orpheus's deeds with the cosmic arrangement and assisting his quest for comprehension and embrace of spiritual virtues. Orpheus is supposed to acquire this knowledge through his journey in the cosmos, "for this melody lingering there is the ordered harmony of the universe" (Gray 232). Harmony is one of the focal points of the Orpheus myth and Henryson adapts this harmony in his poem as regards the ordering of the universe. The poem suggests that the universe, with all the order it possesses, provides harmony. According to MacQueen, the seven planets refer "to the seven strings of the classical cithara", it produces "this music, the *musica mundane*, which Plato called 'the Soul of the World'" (MacQueen *The Narrative* 256).

This concept of cosmic harmony is further explored by Macrobius in the second book of his *Commentary*. Macrobius mentions numerical ratios of the "fundamental musical concords" (19). He analyses that in creating the soul of the universe, God has applied these ratios. This harmony is utterly crucial to the understanding of how one should lead his life. Similarly, in Henryson's poem, the harmonious nature of the universe is echoed as a significant point:

> Thare lerit he tonys proportionate
> As duplar, triplar, and epetritus;
> Emoleus, and eke the quadruplate;
> Epogdyus, rycht hard and curious;
> And of their sex, suete and dilicius,
> Ryght consonant, five hevynly symphonyis (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 226-231)

The cosmos is structured in a manner that is consistent with logic and harmony, and this is shown by the music that the spheres make. Orpheus searches for Eurydice not only in his song of complaint but in "tonys proportionate" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 226) as well. This reflects his gradual understanding that retrieving his wife requires more than mere lamentation. It demands an alignment with the universal harmony. In order to take his wife back, he gradually gets to learn that he has to reconcile with the fact of death through embracing a spiritual understanding and "a complex articulation of intervals, modes, symmetries, and proportions" (Marvin 60). Henryson emphasizes that these

heavenly rules operate on principles of harmony on universe and that human beings must strive to incorporate this harmony into their lives. Through Orpheus's journey and ultimate realization, the poem underscores the theme that true understanding and balance are achieved by embracing the cosmic order and divine principles. In Henryson's work, the universe is in harmony and human beings should seek this harmony in their everyday lives.

Thus, Orpheus observes the structure and organization of the celestial realm which is based on logic. As a result of this, there is a harmonious arrangement in the universe. This harmony is opposed to the chaotic condition of the fallen figures that Orpheus comes across when he descends into Hell. All of them are fallen figures who succumbed to their earthly desires during their lifetime:

> Thare fand he mony pape and cardinall.
> In haly kirk quhilk dois abusion;
> And archbischopis in thair pontificall
> Be symony and wrang intrusioun;
> Abbotis and men of all religion.
> For euill disponyng of thair placis rent.
> In fiambe of fyre were bitterly turment. (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 338-344)

In addition to them and the mythical figures, Henryson crafts allegorical depictions of these characters, which he interprets in the *moralitas*. This allegorical retelling of the myth also reflects Christian ideas of descent, temptation, and salvation, both in his journey and in his subsequent return. Ultimately, he did not follow the directions that he had received from heavenly order, which could be symbolizing a deity. Thus, Henryson's poem conveys a moral lesson on the need of Orpheus's aligning his behaviour with heavenly ideals. When perceived from a spiritual perspective, interpreting the poem allegorically reveals spiritual insights that are relevant to both pagan and Christian traditions, despite its foundation in pagan mythology. The narrative of Orpheus's quest to recover Eurydice may be seen as more than just a story of love and loss. It can also be viewed as an examination of the soul's progression through several planes of existence, finally striving for reunification and spiritual transcendence. As Umunç analyses,

> [i]t was originally from the Alexandrian Philo Judaeus in the first century A.D. that this patristic attitude to adopt pagan learning into Christianity had its inspiration. By collating the doctrines in the Old Testament with the philosophical ideas in the works of ancient authors, Philo Judaeus had pointed out to the various similarities and made most use of allegory in his exegeses. Especially his interpretations of the Old Testament became examples to the Church Fathers in their exegesis of the Bible. Origen (c. 185- ca.255), who was much indebted to him, asserted that the Bible embodied three levels of meaning, which were the somatic, the psychic, and the pneumatic, and which corresponded to the three parts of man: the body, the soul, the spirit. In suggesting such a correspondence Origen may have been the first among the patristic exegetes of the Bible, and his influence was undoubtedly great upon the patristic tradition of allegorical interpretation through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. (115)

Thereby, building upon this symbolic point of view, the poem transcends its pagan roots to provide insights into broader spiritual matters.

Following the encounters with mythological figures, Orpheus gradually approaches to his wife. Orpheus's reaction is ultimately tested by his reaction when he sees Eurydice. As Friedman points out, whether he is acting with reason or affection constitutes, "the crux of the story" (*Orpheus* 89) and Orpheus's fate. This final test of Orpheus is basically imposed by himself which is fuelled by the internal turmoil he experiences between reason and his affection. This is a test to determine his ability to conform to the divine order and assess the information he has acquired throughout his journey and via his inherited characteristics.

As soon as Orpheus sees his wife in the Underworld, his conduct quickly becomes unpromising as they come upon each other:

> Till at the last Eurydices he knewe,
> Lene and dedelike, pitouse and pail of hewe,
> Rycht warsch and wan and walowir as the wede,
> Hir lily lyre was lyke vnto the lede.
>
> Quod he, "My lady lele and my delyte,
> Full wa is me till se yow changit thus.
> Quhare is thy rude as rose with chekis quhite,
> Your cristall eyne with blenkis amorouse,
> Your lippis reid to kis diliciouse?" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 345-356)

Orpheus's observation of his wife upon their union focuses primarily on her physical appearance. She looks pale, sick, and "walowit as the wede" (*Orpheus and Eurydice*

350). Similar to the flower and love metaphor at the beginning of the poem, Henryson makes a physical analogy between Eurydice's appearance and a weed. Flower and weed metaphors refer to the temporary nature of these plants despite the fact that they have contrasting connotations. Although it is aesthetically very beautiful, the flower suggests transitoriness. Nevertheless, with its unfavourable and detrimental nature, the metaphor of the weed possesses a negative connotation. While the flowers are favourable, weeds are mostly eradicated and removed, which emphasises its disturbing potential. The presence of two conflicting images in the poem highlights the issues of transience and the differing views on beauty and deterioration. Without having a conversation or deeply comprehending her state of mind, Orpheus's concern remains centred on Eurydice's outward appearance. Orpheus looks obsessed with worldly, thus temporary, concerns.

Orpheus plays his harp to charm Pluto and Proserpina once more and gains his love back on condition that he must not look back at Eurydice before leaving Hell. However, unlike what is expected of his noble lineage and instructive journey, Orpheus, "so blyndit [. . .] in great affection" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 387) focuses only on his love, "lady suete", (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 388), forgets his promise, "blenkt backward" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 392) and loses Eurydice forever. Lamenting over the double loss of his wife in the concluding lines of the poem, Orpheus acknowledges and confesses his error in a similar way to the Dreamer in *Pearl*:

> 'Now fynd I wele this prouerbe trew,' quod he,
> ' "Hert on the hurd, and hands on the sore;
> Quhare lufe gois, on forse mone turne the ee".
> *I am expert*, and wo is me thar-fore;
> Bot for a luke my lady is forlore."
> Thus chydand on with lufe, our burn and bent,
> A wofull wedow hame-wart is he went. (emphasis added, *Orpheus and Eurydice* 408-414)

Orpheus makes it clear that he has become very experienced in the realities of life now after the double loss of his wife. This experience pertains to his awareness of his errors in not adhering to the principles of reason. That is why he refers to himself as an "expert" now. He is still an inconsolable widower. He acknowledges that he should not have submitted himself to his carnal desires and pleasure. According to Corey J.

Marvin, in Middle English the word expert "had the double meaning of being experienced" and also "of being devoid of" (64-65). Sarah Nell Summers specifies that "[c]ontrair [to] the laws of nature" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 8) Orpheus behaves self-indulgently and does not behave appropriately to his upbringing (23). In the poem, Henryson implies that, unlike Orpheus's erroneous behaviour, reason and pleasure could be balanced on the condition that reason always dominates over the latter.

Similar to the dreamer in *Pearl* and the Black Knight in *The Book of the Duchess*, Orpheus is not completely freed of his grief, but rather is instructed in the order of a new understanding. Henryson makes it obvious in the *moralitas* section where he reveals his personal interpretation of the myth:

> [a]s a wise man, when he sees his desire and delight fixed in temporalia, and although his music overcomes all, it cannot overcome his grief for his lost wife, because however much a wise man overcomes the vices of others by his wisdom and eloquence, he cannot withdraw his desire from earthly things. (Gray 217)

Through his mistake, "he has come to see the danger of earthly affection, and so complements the advice offered in the *moralitas*, that we should turn our thoughts heavenward" (Friedman *Orpheus* 208). Orpheus underlines this statement with his final words:

> "now fynd I wele this prouerbe trew," quod he,
> " 'Hert on the hurd, and hand is on the sore'
> Quhare lufe gois, on forse turnis the ee" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 408-410)

Thus, it is obvious that the physical search for Eurydice ending with his mistake has a transformative power for Orpheus. These final words establish that this experience has served as a teaching to Orpheus, and he has come to perceive his former approach to life as a faulty one. Orpheus's former approach to life was flawed because it was driven by his earthly desires and a focus on appearances, as seen when he observes Eurydice looking "pale, sick, and walowit as the wede" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 350). His journey through the celestial realms is expected to teach him that true harmony and wisdom lie in aligning with divine order and embracing deeper spiritual values. Ultimately, this experience reveals to Orpheus that his previous understanding of love and life was limited, and he must now adopt a more profound, spiritually enlightened perspective. In

Duncan's words, this spiritual journey has become an "intellectual pilgrimage from the physical world to the spiritual" (63). Even though "[b]orn with all the advantages of high birth and nobleness of mind" Orpheus lets himself "be led stray by his passions" (Duncan 85) contradicting the laws of nature. Returning from Hell, he is a wiser man as evidently indicated in his line "I am expert" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 411). The transformation of Orpheus is evident through his recognition that "wisdom and philosophy can save man from all wicked deeds and thoughts, and that the world's values are meaningless in comparison to the values of the contemplative spirit" (Louis 653).

To thoroughly understand the moral and thematic implications of the work, it is essential to revisit the poem, as the *moralitas* continually draws upon and elucidates the events and lessons depicted in the narrative (Manning 267). As stated by Ian Johnson,

> [o]n one hand, the *narratio* is a humanely sentimental, romance-inflected tragedy, but on the other, the *moralitas* is a didactic, scholastic, moralizing allegoresis drawn from Nicholas Trevet's Latin commentary, and often (but not always) at counter-intuitive odds with the affective purchase, thematic grain, and narrative trajectory of what it purports to interpret. Incommensurabilities between *narratio* and *moralitas*- of character, genre, tone, sources, emotion, point-of-view, and "message"- are commonly treated by modern criticism and scholarship with an eye to the business of textual production, in other words Henryson's choices in the mechanics of how he made this bipartite work. (175)

The interplay between the poem and the *moralitas*, thus, enriches the moral interpretation of the work by making the interaction between the human emotion and moral instruction stronger.

Henryson prefers the Orpheus myth to be told in the same vein as Virgil (90–93) or Ovid (341-344), who give Orpheus a tragic ending. Plato was the first who considered Orpheus's art, as a "warning against faith in all artists' work as dangerous and self-seductive" (Summers 13) and showed his story as a cautionary tale and Orpheus as a negative example. Orpheus represents failure as he is unable to overcome his human weaknesses, despite his exceptional musical abilities, passion, and heavenly voyage. Henryson particularly follows the path of Boethius. While Henryson portrays a "wofull

wedow" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 414) towards the end, the *moralitas* opens by enunciating the moral impact of the myth formerly put by Boethius and Trevit:

> Lo**,** worthy folk, Boece, that senature,
> To wryte this feynit fable tuke in cure,
> In his gay buke of Consolacion
> For oure doctryne and *gude instructioun;*
> Quhilk in the self, suppose it fenyeit be,
> And hid vndir the cloke of poesie,
> Yit maister Trewit, doctour Nicholas,
> Quhilk in his tyme a noble theolog was,
> Applyis it to *gud moralitee*,
> Rycht full of frute and seriositee. (emphasis added, *Orpheus and Eurydice* 415-424)

By appreciating the approach of Boethius towards the myth, Henryson mentions that though fictitious, along with the commentary of Trivet, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (524) is a didactic poem which should be taken seriously, for it is a monitory tale serving as an exemplum for the sake of didacticism. Born into a family of eloquence, Orpheus is called "part intellectiue" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 429) in the *moralitas*, while Eurydice is portrayed as the source of carnal temptation and depicted as worldly pleasure in the poem:

> Erudices is oure affection,
> Be fantasy oft movst vp and doun;
> Quhile to reason it castis the delyte,
> Quhile to the flesch settis the appetite. (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 431-434)

Henryson is implying that there should be a balance governed by reason when there is a matter of reason or appetite. Eurydice symbolizes worldly appetite and affection in the story, and she is despised in the *moralitas* section:

> Eurideces, is noucht bot gude vertewe,
> Quhilk besy is ay to keep oure myndis clene;
> Bot quhen we flee out throu the medow grene,
> Fra vertu to this warldis wayn pleasance (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 436-439)

With the benefit of allegory, Henryson refashions the myths in the poem in his attempt to instruct Orpheus. Henryson focuses more on the intellectual and spiritual growth of Orpheus through a celestial journey, emphasizing the pursuit of harmony and reason.

All these details are employed by Henryson in order to ensure a transformative journey for Orpheus. However, Orpheus is unable to utilize as indicated in his final attitude. In the *moralitas*, Orpheus represents the intellect while Eurydice stands for affection, and the serpent's sting is resembled to sin. Cerberus guards Hell and his three heads "permits all spirits to enter, but none to return" (Hamilton 43). The three heads in Henryson's poem symbolize the three stages of human life: childhood, middle age, and old age, expanding the myth to the natural condition of all mankind. This interpretation of the myth indicates his didactic purpose. The dog "has no power to byte" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 474) in these three periods of life as long as "our mynd" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 469) remains merged with intellect and harmony:

> To draw oure will and oure affection
> In ewiry erde, fra syn and foule delyte,
> This dog oure saule has no power to byte (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 472-474)

Henryson reveals that Orpheus is daunted by this "hund of hell" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 253) and feels "agast" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 254). By prioritizing his emotions over rationality and wisdom, Orpheus displays characteristics of a human being who is prone to error. However, his harp, which is the incarnation of his wisdom, then helps him overcome this uphill struggle. The next obstacle he faces is encountering the three Furies from the Underworld, whose purpose is to "punish evildoers" (Hamilton 44). In the *moralitas*, they are portrayed as evil thought, evil word and perverse deed, respectively. Ixion is perpetually trapped on their whirling wheel. In Greek mythology, Ixion is infamous for being "one of the great sinners in Hades" (Hamilton 468) as a result of his attempt to rape Hera. Henryson also presents him as a lustful figure in his work. Upon encountering him, Orpheus creates a "jolly spring" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 268) with his harp and is able to overcome this predicament. In the *moralitas*, by drawing attention to the magnitude of the operation of reason, Henryson maintains that

> [b]ot quhen reason and perfyte sapience
> Playis apon the harp of eloquens
> And persuades our fleschly appetite
> To leif the thocht of this worldly delyte,
> Than seisis of our hert the wicket will (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 507-511)

The power of Orpheus's harp helps him overcome this challenge. Being punished with constant thirst and hunger, Tantalus is highlighted with his disposition for greed here. Once again, Orpheus can show wisdom through his music. This mythical figure serves as a cautionary example of the perils of yielding to primal urges. But with the wisdom he learned and with the melodious music he could play on his harp, Orpheus can transcend these worldly temptations. In Orpheus's ability to use music for pacifying the insatiable desire of Tantalus, not only his personal development but also the didactic theme is underlined. This signifies an inner struggle within Orpheus himself between his worldly appetites and final realisation of transcendent, spiritual principles. To construe this struggle, Henryson points out the importance of intelligence:

> Bot quhen that reason and intelligence
> Playis apon the harp of eloquence,
> Schawand to ws quhat perrell on ilk syd
> That thai incur quhay will trest or confyd
> Into this warldis vane prosperitie,
> Quhilk hes thir sory properties thre (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 545-560)

The next mythical figure, Ticius, who attempts to rape Artemis or Leto (Coleman 1022) and performs false prophecy, is the subject for critical comment for Henryson:

> Ilk man that heiris this conclusioun
> Suld dreid to sers be constillatioun
> Thingis to fall vnder the firmament,
> Till ye or na quhilk ar indifferent (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 571-574)

Henryson approaches Ticius's story from a different perspective and judges him for his "fenzeid prophecy" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 586). According to Henryson, as suggested in the moralitas, this skill of Ticius is beyond human control and disregards God:

> And drawis vpwart our affectioun
> Fra wichcraft, spaying, and sorsery,
> And superstitioun of astrology (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 587-589)

These mythological figures are included in the poem and the *moralitas* so as to exemplify the true path of life, that is, following reason and divine teaching.

During his vision in the heavens, Orpheus has witnessed the harmony that ruled the universe. Everything is organised and operates in accordance with logic. In his following steps, he is expected to perform in the same manner by adhering to his reason. Orpheus is equipped with all the insight he needs. Nevertheless, he fails to put this insight into action. Henryson, thus, reconstructs the myth to accomplish the superior aim of spiritual awareness for Orpheus. He directly addresses Orpheus; "Sir Orpheus, thou sekis all in vayn /Thy wyf so hie, thar-for cum doun again," (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 459-460), openly judging him for embracing worldly desires. The challenges he had to overcome at the gate of Hell are all signifiers of how a decent life dedicated to heavenly order should be. Orpheus, "[fl]eyis the spreit of fenzeid prophecy" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 586) by performing "perfyte wisdom with his melody" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 585). Following this, he reaches a "myrk and dully streit" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 600), which is described as "bissiness of temporalite" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 604*)* and "vane pleasance" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 439*)*. Orpheus displays his musical talent and as he represents "our ressoun" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 610), he forsakes the "warldis full delyte" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 613) and "fulich appetite" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 612). However, he fails to follow and articulate his reasoning in the end. From the very beginning of the *moralitas*, Orpheus's deeds have been praised as he gradually overcomes the obstacles. It is stated that when Orpheus and Eurydice are united, worldly desire and reason create a balance, which is symbolized by the "suete proporcion" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 368) of his harp:

> Than Orpheus before Pluto sat doun,
> And in his handis quhite his harp can ta,
> And playit mony suete proporcion,
> With base tonys in ypodorica,
> With gemilling in ypolerica;
> Till ath the last, for reuth and grete pitee,
> Thay wepit sore that coud hym here and see. (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 366-372)

Using "his myndis ee" while looking back at Eurydice (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 621) in worldly passion and desire, Orpheus surrenders to desire and thus tilts the balance of divine reason and harmony. If he had refrained from looking back, he would have showed his comprehension of the role of reason in his life, which is the most effective method of achieving perfection in the poem. It is only after making a mistake that he

can comprehend this reality, and Orpheus undergoes a transformation as a result of gazing back at Eurydice. While his journey has prepared him for change, his transformation is ultimately realised via one last mistake.

In the last stanza of the *moralitas*, Henryson addresses all mankind through the example of Orpheus, warning that every man has proclivity for falling at any time: "Now pray we God, sen oure affection / Is always prompt and redy to fall doun" (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 628-629). This warning is a reflection on change, an emphasis on struggle between human frailty and the struggle for spiritual growth. Henryson stresses the need to recognize and overcome worldly weaknesses to achieve a higher moral understanding, much like Orpheus's journey and eventual acceptance of divine order. In the *moralitas*, thus, Henryson thoroughly disapproves certain worldly passions, most predominantly lust as represented by Orpheus. Moreover, Henryson puts a strong emphasis on the importance of wisdom and intellect. Orpheus is destined to suffer from loss as long as he is guided by his appetite, and not reason. He should have a perfect understanding of immortal values. Neglecting the insight he has acquired in his sojourn in the heavens, he is unable to control his desire. In order to fully comprehend this, he has had to go through this experience:

> This ugly way, this myrk and dully streit
> Is nocht ellis bot blinding of the spreit
> With myrk cluddis and myst of ignorance,
> Affetterrit in this warldis vane plesance
> And bissines of temporalite. (*Orpheus and Eurydice* 600-604)

According to Ian Johnson, this condition of this "streit" "may now be thought and felt not only as the perilous blinding of spiritual ignorance but also as the binding of the soul to false temporal pleasures" (187). This duality points out the moral conflict that is at the heart of the poem in which human frailty results in a diversion from spiritual truths. In this context, "Moral" Henryson uses Orpheus's story as a cautionary one for those who fail to follow their reason and are overcome by their worldly desires. While doing so, he decides to use allegory for didactic aims. Henryson's work uses the myth to impart clear moral lessons and guide the reader towards spiritual enlightenment, making it more aligned with allegorical tradition. He both implicitly and explicitly shows that what matters in life is reason and harmony.

According to the poem, love can be deceptive as it may lure mankind away from possessing and performing reason. Love and other feelings are acceptable only if they are in harmony with reason. Despite he is born into nobility and taught about the significance of reason in the celestial journey, Orpheus is unable to use his rationality when faced with the challenge of love. Henryson, thus, creates a story in which Orpheus is prepared for a transformative journey through an allegorical reading. Although Orpheus is not completely transformed in the end, he comes to terms with his erroneous approach. In Henryson's use of the myth, it seems clear that "he wished to use the romance as a vehicle for moral lesson" (Friedman *Orpheus* 196). Following the heritage of Boethius, Henryson's Orpheus "symbolizes the union of philosophical wisdom (sapiential) and rhetoric (eloquentia)" (Segal 167). *Orpheus and Eurydice* puts Orpheus's judgement to test which changes his fate.

The poem blends allegorical and romance traditions of the Middle Ages and "the romance conventions in *Orpheus and Eurydice* presumably support the allegorical interpretation, interweaving the allegorical and courtly love tradition" (Löf 29). Even though Löf argues that the courtly love tradition is interwoven with the allegorical tradition, it is evident that the love story inserted here does not operate in the same way with the courtly love convention. As can be inferred from the *moralitas*, surrendering to his love and pleasure has been the reason of Orpheus's tragedy. Thus, although the theme of love is immersed in it, courtly love is not employed in Henryson's work. Albeit involving both romance and allegory traditions, the focal point of the work is not the love and loyalty test between the lovers, but the test of Orpheus and his heightened awareness during his heavenly journey and his change afterwards. Henryson "skilfully and poetically" combines "the ethical and romantic traditions" (Duncan 65) and as a result of these properties established in the poem, Fiona Duncan asserts that the poem "is not intended as a romance and it would be a mistake to see it as such" (65).

Although he could overcome the challenges during his celestial journey, Orpheus fails in his last challenge and is "unable to bring his soul up out of the concupiscent realms" (Friedman *Orpheus* 208). In Henryson's approach, "nature is inextricably linked with morality and harmony in man must echo harmony in nature" (Duncan 66). In a similar way, Jennifer Brown suggests that,

> [a]s Orpheus is the gifted musician that he is, he internalizes this music, he embodies it, and learns to play it. The body in its microcosm mimics the macrocosm of the universe, but this is the nonearthly unsexualized body- only when he is free of Eurydice is Orpheus able to achieve this feat. (154)

Although the narrative possesses the potential of transformation for Orpheus during his celestial journey as he witnesses the harmonious music of the universe, Orpheus ends up not comprehending it when he looks back at Eurydice. Thus, until the very end it seems that he has not undergone a major transformation. However, when he loses his wife for the second time and understands the significance of the circumstance, he comes to realize that he had a faulty viewpoint before and understands the true significance of life.

After this enlightening experience, he has begun to understand the dangers of earthly affection. Orpheus is tested with immeasurable pain after he loses his wife. This loss results in his alienation from life as well. During this tortuous experience, Orpheus grasps the knowledge of the harmony of the universe. This harmony in the poem reflects the metaphysical balance of the universe, as well as the rational and philosophical understanding of the interconnectedness and arrangement of all things. In this challenging journey, Orpheus gains insight into the universe's order and the divine rules that are responsible for governing it in a logical way. The journey of Orpheus extents to a significant period, which would allow Orpheus to comprehend the complex balance and melody that maintain the universe. Through this celestial journey, Orpheus witnesses the significance of abiding by the rules of divine harmony and the pursuit of reason. This marks the beginning of his transformation, which would be completed after his mistake.

Henryson prioritizes an allegorical reading to portray the figure of Orpheus as a bereaved widower who fails to follow his reason and yields to his worldly desires even though he was taught to disregard them in his vision. He sets off to the real world with a changed, but not fully developed perspective, showing a deeper but not completely transcending comprehension of his human constraints and the essence of love and grief. As John MacQueen states,

> [e]very man naturally desires the highest good which by the exercise of reason he can attain. At the same time, as a temporal fallen creature, man is subject to illusion. As one who desired the highest good, Orpheus rescued Eurydice. As one subject to illusion, he made a mistake by which he lost her again. (*Robert Henryson* 30)

Unlike the Dreamer in *Pearl*, and the dreamer and the Black Knight in *The Book of the Duchess*, Orpheus moves through a more complicated passage in the narrative. In the celestial journey, he is taught the intellectual and spiritual order in the cosmos; yet he cannot bring himself to apply what he knows at that moment when he is confronted with his deepest desire. That moment of weakness, of looking back at Eurydice, becomes the last, most important lesson. With this final failure, Orpheus internalizes the teaching of his journey: the realization of the futility of human desire and that one should follow divine order. This last realization would mark the end of his transformation because he would emerge enlightened or would have learned to live under divine order. Thus, he self-announces that he is an expert. Yet, with this enlightenment, he ultimately is unable to take his wife back, demonstrating one of the most critical aspects of human frailty and the difficulty of transcending earthly attachments.

In this light, Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* emerges as a powerful contribution to the treatment of loss and transformation in medieval writing. By making his protagonist travel through celestial dimensions, rather than the usual underworld locations and forests, Henryson provides fresh impetus and significance to the whole background of his story of Orpheus's intellectual and spiritual coming of age. This allegorically charged journey, led by celestial bodies, throws light on the divine order and harmony that frames the universe. Orpheus may not, on his very first attempt, take it seriously that he will be given that knowledge. However, his realization that, under the divine principles, his knowledge is certainly incomplete provides spiritual acknowledgement for him.

Compared to both *Pearl* and *The Book of the Duchess*, where the dreamer is granted their enlightenment, though that be under the mask of classical myth and moral instructions, through human frailty and divine wisdom, Orpheus enacts a personal story of struggle through loss. The thematic similarities make it appropriate to position this poem within the same thematic lineage of *Pearl* and *The Book of the Duchess*.

Orpheus's final surrender to his wife's loss and his acknowledgment of divine order underpin a major but still partial transformation that echoes strongly through loss, enlightenment, and spiritual transformation.

CONCLUSION

With the pervasive influence of death on medieval period, the theme of loss provides a rich literary backdrop for the exploration of many depictions and perceptions of it in medieval literature. As stated by Johan Huizinga in his *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, "No other age has so forcefully and continuously impressed the idea of death on the whole population" (156). Naturally, deep introspections into the essence of loss were also reflected in many texts of the period. The different depictions of loss in *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* are direct consequences of death. Death is depicted as the primary catalyst for several types of loss, including the loss of bliss, enthusiasm, and energy. It also extends to the loss of active behaviour, obligations, and duties of the personae.

Pearl, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* are remarkable for their thematic explorations of loss. They offer distinct yet complementary approaches to loss and the way it catalyses many forms of transformation. Reflecting an extensive range of psychological, spiritual, and emotional reactions, these works contain numerous representations of loss and transformation that are complicated in nature. The personae in these poems are driven to engage in introspective behaviour by their experience of loss. The term "introspective behaviour" denotes the deep meditative process during which the bereaved personae contemplate over the ideas of loss, life, and their reactions to it. By extensively analysing the meaning and function of their loss and grief, the personae in the poems think about the repercussions of their loss. By contemplating on the meaning and purpose of their grief, the personae in the poems explore the repercussions of their loss. This contemplation is maintained through an exploration into their inner worlds in which they endeavour to overcome loss. This contemplation prompts a deep investigation into their inner worlds, where they strive to comprehend and discover strategies to manage their sorrow. While in this meditative state, they have a dream- or desire of a dream-, as in the case of the Pearl Dreamer, and the dreamer in *The Book of the Duchess*, or embark on a journey during which they are granted multiple epiphanies or enlightenments about the nature of their loss, as in the case of Orpheus, in an attempt to reconcile them with the spiritual meaning of it. Thus,

for the bereaved personae, the encounter with loss acts as a catalyst in their attempt to overcome the grief resulting from death and loss, finally working into a constructive outcome.

Despite not being explicitly religious, all three poems have underlying elements related to morality, spirituality, or devotion, functioning as a mechanism to deal with the pain resulting from loss. *Pearl* is definitely an overtly religious and Christian text, introducing a clear spirituality. Likewise, *The Book of the Duchess* is secular, but a close reading of it reveals messages that incorporate spirituality in the midst of loss. By the same token, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, despite its origins in a pagan myth, conveys a comparable message that emphasises the importance of spiritual values in the presence of loss. Consequently, all three works emphasise the transcendence of spiritual values despite their various devotional doctrines. They embrace spirituality as a central theme.

Within the development of the poems, each poet employs distinct methods to accomplish these themes. The *Pearl*-poet's use of theological discourse and incorporating many minor transformative elements, Chaucer's engagement with many traditions and achieving a double representation of transformation (even triple with the inclusion of the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone) in a complex narrative, and Henryson's mythic and allegorical storytelling with highly moral undertones concerning loss and its aftermath all make unique contributions to the intricate web of literary approaches that investigate the complexities of the human experience of loss. While not all of the works overtly and comprehensively exhibit transition, they do possess varying degrees of alteration resulting from loss. Whether fully actualized or only partly articulated, these transformations emphasise the intricate dynamics of loss and the many ways in which it may affect human development and comprehension. After all, as David Aers aptly puts it,

> [d]eath is a massive challenge to human identity, the disclosure of an utter powerlessness framing our will to control others, our environments, and our selves. Death shatters networks in which human identity is created and sustained: we mourn, inevitably, for our selves and the unwelcome reminder of the contingency of all that gives us a sense of identity, the reminder of the precariousness of all that we habitually take for granted. (56)

Similarly, this recognition of the impact of death on human identity becomes an essential basis for the literary explorations in *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and* Eurydice. The personae's encounters with loss not only function as personal challenges but also provide opportunities for existential and spiritual contemplation. It is not only the themes of loss and transformation that are at the heart of these narratives, but they also function as structural elements that are the driving force behind the spiritual analyses of the personae. Their several encounters with the dead or other figures and inward experiences found in these poems show the different ways loss can manifest, and very often, results in personal growth. By emphasizing this affective response that loss causes, McNamara and McIlvenna mark, "[t]he dead were categorized differently" in the Middle Ages where some types of death were perceived as 'good' and noteworthy- and this affected responses to the dead and their surviving families and communities" (2). Similarly, the representations of death in the poems lead to encounters with the dead and their related ones for the sake of providing encouraging and positive spiritual change in the bereaved.

As previously mentioned, these transformations are commonly achieved through discourse and teaching. This might involve receiving theological guidance from the Pearl Maiden, engaging in introspective conversations with the Black Knight, or attaining divine insights in the harmonious celestial realm, as experienced by Orpheus. Emily A. Winkler conducts an analysis of the method of loss and the potential transformations it can induce as she evaluates the poets of the Middle Ages who chooses to explore loss as a central theme:

> Grieving, they [writers] thought, had three key qualities: it impelled a desire to act; it could not be meaningfully measured; and it persisted in time. In prioritizing the experience of grief over its function, meaning, or morality, these writers considered the emotion rational, natural, and honest. The value these writers placed on human family or family-like relationships provides the context for understanding their priorities in thinking about responses to loss. (129)

According to Winkler, grief caused by the loss of loved ones encourages people to take action, most possibly to honour the deceased, to seek consolation, or to address the cause of the loss and naturally a change takes place following this action. Accordingly,

in all the three poems examined in this study, it has been indicated that loss possesses a significant capacity to bring about change, compelling individuals to take action. Transformation, thus, serves as the process of reinterpreting and recontextualizing established ideas about the approach to the loss and its aftermath in order to align the personae with present needs and concerns. If he had not been experiencing an inconsolable trauma looking for his pearl in the very garden he has lost her, this preoccupation of the Pearl Maiden would not have let him have a dream in which he receives instruction in *Pearl*. In the same way, in *The Book of the Duchess*, the dreamer, who is devoid of sleep and happiness, would not have experienced a dream about bringing solace to another person who is also grieving if he had not himself endured many forms of loss. Ultimately, Orpheus in *Orpheus and Eurydice* would not have taken action and ventured out to the heavens if he had not lost his wife. Furthermore, it has been found that each poet skilfully interweaves these intricate layers of loss and transformation in their narratives in a distinctive fashion. As noted by Winkler, the impact of grief is extremely personal and subject to variation. The manner in which each poet addresses the themes of loss and transformation is similarly diverse, mirroring the inherent nature of loss and highlighting the belief that spiritual understanding of it is more significant.

Pearl, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* have comparable elements but differ in their representation of the themes of loss and transformation. The Dreamer in *Pearl* and Orpheus in *Orpheus and Eurydice* are exposed to abundant teaching and make significant progress during their respective journeys, however, they are ultimately defeated by their worldly desires. Their defeats at the end of the narratives symbolize the moment of their recognition of the inevitability of death and their obligation to align with their loss. Therefore, despite these tragic endings, they are considerably edified in line with the principles of spirituality. While the spiritual transformation of the Dreamer in *Pearl* can be detected more evidently, Orpheus's change is more prominently highlighted when Henryson makes authorial appearance as a moral poet in the *moralitas*. Henryson seeks to arouse moral concerns in the audience by demonstrating Orpheus's failure. As regards the narrative methods of the poems, it is observed that there are transforming images or symbols in the poem that facilitate the transformation

for the Dreamer. Henryson, on the other hand, makes abundant use of allegory to pinpoint moral concerns for the transformative journey of Orpheus and the audience. *The Book of the Duchess* portrays a more secular approach in dealing with loss which regards the need to return to their duties both for the dreamer and the Black Knight. When the Black Knight returns to his castle, it marks his return to his duties in the social hierarchy of his time. Similarly, the dreamer's active return to his duty as a writer indicates that he has reconciled with his loss. Chaucerian poetics presents three interrelated circles of the representations of loss and transformation through the dreamer, the Black Knight, and the mythological tale of Ceyx and Alcyone in *The Book of the Duchess*. Chaucer extensively draws from literary heritage to construct a new narrative that endeavours to transform the personae who are experiencing loss.

In all of the three poems, loss is consequential to death. Each of them delves into the intimate realm of the personas that not only confront death but also many types of loss that are caused by death. Consequently, they are bound to go through a spiritual transformation taking place as they attempt to deal with these many forms of loss. *Orpheus and Eurydice* particularly mirrors *Pearl* in exploration of the themes of acceptance of loss and committing a final irreversible mistake. Both works have a persona, who after an odyssey, commits a mistake that shows their worldly mindsets again. These moments when Orpheus turns to look back at Eurydice and the Dreamer fights his way across the river towards his daughter in *Pearl* expose their fundamental human susceptibilities and discontentment with their current mortal lives in lamentation. These last failures, however, do not cancel out the great spiritual and psychological advancement they have made throughout their journey. As clearly seen in their last words, the two personae recognize that there is a higher power in life in their own ways. *Orpheus and Eurydice* is also thematically relevant to *The Book of the Duchess* in terms of loss and coming to terms with it. Both works hold personae in deep conversation, in which the person is able to articulate his grief and gradually move towards its acceptance. It is this process by which the dreamer leads the Black Knight to find the assistance to convey his deep sadness at the death of his lady and to initiate the healing of his own soul, finding solace and support in the process. Similarly, in *Orpheus and Eurydice*, it is through Orpheus's quest and ultimate acceptance of loss that the

transformative power of establishing a place of peace and understanding regarding grief becomes evident. Both stories underline the importance of letting sorrow be seen and heard as a means of emotional and spiritual evolution.

The thematic and stylistic similarities place *Orpheus and Eurydice* in a suitable position within the same thematic approach as *Pearl* and *The Book of the Duchess*, since all three works explore the theme of loss and its role in driving changes through distinct and unique methods. Furthermore, on the topic of loss, Henryson, like in *Pearl* and in *The Book of the Duchess*, features a lamenting protagonist who must not only suffer the loss of his beloved wife's life but also the loss of his joy in life. Ultimately, Orpheus changes the entire outlook on life and the transformation that it brings about. By the final lines of the poem, it is observed in his words that he will not be the same figure in pursuit of his worldly desires; instead, he exhibits hints of a man who has learned to see the true conduct of the world.

This study offers a comparative analysis of three poems, *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice*, and focuses on the ways each text explores loss and transformation. Loss causes strong emotions that defy quantification or standardization and grief caused by loss is not a fleeting emotion, rather it endures over time. The pain and memories associated with loss linger, influencing a person's life long after the event. For the context of this work, through an analysis of the dynamic relationship among personal loss, artistic manifestation, and spiritual introspection in these literary texts, a fresh vantage point is gained that underscores the wider literary and cultural importance of these motifs in the Middle Ages. The method these poems include illustrates that the transformative effect is predominantly experienced through introspective reflections, interpersonal communication, instruction, or dialogue.

In addition, these transformations are posited by the study as being non-monolithic, in so far as they might be either spiritual reflections or personal growth in acknowledging a higher truth. This view contrasts markedly with earlier scholarship that may have focused more on symbolic or semiotic aspects of mourning and consolation and speaks more in providing a holistic understanding the ways these changes occur on the way from worldly grief to celestial understanding. In addition, the comparative approach of

the study suggests the broader literary and cultural significance of these motifs during the Middle Ages. It exemplifies the diverse methods by which medieval poets utilised their narrative techniques to investigate existential questions. Through literary texts, these questions reflect the medieval era's diverse responses towards death, loss, grief, enlightenment, and spiritual growth. This comprehensive approach facilitates a more profound comprehension of the manner in which three poets articulate the universal human experience of loss and the journey to transformation. Thus, through the catalyst of loss, poets signify transformation in spiritual, emotional, or intellectual introspection that results in, or are narratively designed to result in changes in behaviour.

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Tarih: 23/07/2024

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