10

War, tears, and corporeal response in Christine de Pizan

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Christine de Pizan's works are frequently understood to prioritise questions vital to reader-response theory, such as '[i]s it possible for a woman to initiate a literary genealogy, of "literary mothers", so to speak'.[1] Hence, many scholars regard Pizan primarily in terms of the light that she sheds on the authorial positionality of late medieval women authors, and the privilege she gives to women by foregrounding her commitment to women's education and her own authorial role.[2] These primacies are then frequently extrapolated to the lived experience of late medieval women, writ large.[3] Yet a pointed investment in ethics, state affairs and related political matters also characterises much of Pizan's work, prompting other scholars to direct their attention to her political message or her moral philosophies.[4] As this chapter will argue, since Pizan pointedly centres her body and her affective response to the political situation in all of her works, despite this frequent separation of Pizan's oeuvre into disparate camps, a clear line of continuity between her femicentric and political thought can and should be acknowledged.[5]

Studying the intersection of Pizan's protofeminist commitments and political engagements thus helps bridge the perceived distance between her works offering critical interpretations of women's status and agency and those identified as chiefly political in nature.[6] Not only does this approach evidence the continual imbrication of gender and politics for Pizan, it gives particular insight into her involved commentary on France's political situation and the Hundred Years War. As Josette Wisman synopsises, 'The Hundred Years War was still raging, and the English invaded France in 1415; a civil war broke out between the Houses of Orléans and Burgundy

while Charles VI went mad; there were peasant and bourgeois revolts; the Church was divided by the Great Schism; and finally, there were recurring epidemics and famines.'[7] Given this turbulence, it should come as no surprise that Pizan's political concerns informed her treatment of gender, and vice versa, particularly since many of her politically minded discussions of war concurrently explore questions of corporeal and affective response, gender, political bodies and authorial strategies for offering political critique.

As it explicitly brings together matters corporeal and political, Pizan's *Livre du corps de policie* (*c.*1406–07),[8] an educational manual commissioned by the Duke of Burgundy, likely for the son of Charles VI, the dauphin Louis of Guyenne, is often understood as Pizan's foremost text prioritising the body politic.[9] However, Pizan also makes use of the representational potential of the body as a civic metaphor in numerous other works. For instance, the *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V* (1404) offers a panegyric to the king,[10] identifying him as 'le souverain idéal' [the ideal sovereign],[11] and an 'exemplar of kingship and of chivalric behaviour'.[12] Pizan's 'military treatise', the *Livre des fais d'armes et de la chevalerie* (1404)[13] and the *Livre de paix* (1412–14), a sophisticated 'guidebook for the edification of the young prince'[14] evidencing Pizan's deep knowledge of political and legal traditions and composed shortly after the 1412 Treaty of Auxerre,[15] both directly take up the question of the physical, social, spiritual and political health of France.[16] This was a matter rendered all the more pressing given the political unrest of the period,[17] and an identified weakness in the body politic: the ill health of Charles VI, whose recurrent bouts of sickness frequently left France without an appropriate leader. However, even in works that pose as readerly critiques, such as Pizan's debate epistles on the *Roman de la Rose* (1402), the *Dit de la pastoure* (1403), and in works of hers that are far too summarily understood to be exclusively creative, autobiographical or protofeminist in nature – like the *Cent ballades* (1402), the *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune* (1402–3)[18] and the *Avision Cristine* (1405)[19] – Pizan is likewise deeply politically invested.

As a result of the arbitrary division of Pizan's works into political and apolitical, texts with a more flexible categorisation, such as her ballads, are still infrequently assessed for their political

content, although they directly engage with historical and contemporary political matters.[20] In addition to ballads admitting a staunch anti-English sentiment alongside a desire for either greater French might or peace that give militant expression to Christine's passionate attachment to France[21] – like the ballad for the Duke of Orléans, 'sur le Combat de Sept Français contre Sept Anglais', critiquing the 'sept Anglois' who attempt to harm ['nuire'] the 'good French'(v.13–14)[22] – a prime example of this political aperture can be found in Pizan's lyric treatment of Charles VI's illness, 'Nous devons bien, sur tout aultre dommage' [We must certainly, above any other hardship]:

> Nous devons bien, sur tout aultre dommage,
> Plaindre cellui du royaume de France,
> Qui fut et est le regne et heritage
> Des crestiens de plus haulte poissance;
> Mais Dieux le fiert adès de poignant lance,
> Par quoy de joye et de soulaz mendie;
> Pour noz pechiez si porte la penance
> Nostre bon Roy qui est en maladie. (Bal.XCV, vv.1–8)[23]
>
> [We must certainly, above any other hardship, lament that which afflicts the Kingdom of France, which was and is the kingdom and heritage of Christians most powerful, but God is striking it ceaselessly, with a piercing lance, for which reason I am begging for joy and solace; for our good King who is ailing is paying penance for our sins.]

With its refrain emphasising Charles VI's continual state 'en maladie', the ballad laments the destabilisation and grief born of his ailment,[24] which correlate to the precarity and 'poor health' reflected in the larger political situation. Beginning with the king's first recorded bout of sickness in 1392,[25] his infamous spells of what was deemed 'insanity' and 'madness' further contributed to the political instability of the French court, and metaphorically aligned with the 'sickness that so tears through the land'.[26] One of the primary concerns resulting from Charles's indisposition was, of course, who should rule in his stead,[27] particularly since governance by women – in this case, by Charles's wife, Isabeau of Bavaria[28] – was increasingly becoming both a possibility and a threat,[29] and all

the more so since agnatic succession and tensions between governance versus regency were likewise very fraught.[30]

Along with the groundbreaking work of scholars like Daisy Delogu, Kate Langdon Forhan, Earl Jeffrey Richards, Josette Wisman, Margaret Brabant, Karen Green and Constant Mews,[31] a key contribution acknowledging Pizan's political conscience is that of Roberta Krueger. Commenting on Pizan's works from 1399 to 1405, Krueger highlights transitional developments between Pizan's 'initial marginalization and the process of her intellectual emergence as she moves from being "poetess to historian" (Margolis, 'Poetess'), and increasingly enters the "champ politique" as a moral advisor (Blanchard, 'L'Entrée')'.[32] Marked by intense political instability, the early years of the fifteenth century also correlate to Pizan's greater usage of prose, and to her greater commitment to the political problems of France.[33] Finally, developing in tandem with her deepening political engagement was the specific attention she gave to the formation of the then Dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, the mirror-for-princes genre, and the larger political education and sociopolitical role of women.

Any perceived division between Pizan's works can therefore not be as great as it seems, for in her so-called political works, Pizan directly borrows the poetic and protofeminist anchors of her supposedly apolitical work, and uses this framework to inform her political messages. These political messages hinge upon a similar corporeally rooted argument as that which she pursues in her 'poetic' and 'autobiographic' works. By way of illustration, Pizan prominently situates a weeping autobiographical protagonist at the start of numerous texts.[34] In her *Cent balades*, for instance, she articulates her famous lament 'seulete suis' [Alone I am] in reference to the death of her husband,[35] and represents herself throughout as a 'veuve affligée' [suffering widow]. Fully afflicted by the phenomenological embrace of her loss and grief, Pizan's desire to be alone since she has been left alone ('sanz ami demourée' [left without my beloved]) reflexively reinforces her solitude: 'Seulete sui et seulete vueil estre / … / Seulete suy a huis ou a fenestre, / Seulete suy en un anglet muciée /… / Seulete suy en ma chambre enserrée' (XI.v.1, 8–9, 13 [Alone I am and alone I wish to be /… / Alone I am at the door or window, / Alone I am, hidden in a corner /… / Alone

I am closed away in my room]). Despite the references she makes to enclosure, ranging from the 'huis' and 'anglet' to her 'chambre', Pizan's experience with grief is also instructive and expansive – she is alone 'partout et en tout estre' (XI.v15 [everywhere and in every state]).

Certainly, the depth and pervasiveness of her grief directly inform the political commentaries she makes as a deft negotiator in her 1405 *Epistre a la Royne de France* (*Epistle to the Queen of France*); as an impassioned arbiter for peace of the 1410 *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile* (*Lament on the Evils of the Civil War*); and as a steadfast, consoling voice in the *Epistre de la prison de la vie humaine* (*Epistle of the Prison of Human Life*), completed around 1418. Even with a shift from grieving to celebratory moralising in her last work of record, the *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc* (*The Song of Joan of Arc*), written around 1429, Pizan evinces a political engagement that simultaneously probes the body's connection to war, grief and to spaces of mourning. As this chapter will demonstrate, by frequently situating tears as revelatory of corporeal investments in political matters, Pizan calls attention to the necessary transformations that the bereaved body mobilises as it grapples with political solvency and loss – as it cries, suffers and 'hungers' for a different future.

In the *Epistre a la Royne,* the *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*, the *Prison de la vie humaine* and the *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, Pizan prioritises grief, the body and political action to examine the thorny contrast between domestic and political spheres; between personal involvement and social duty; between nurturing and nature, particularly as related to the female body; and between natural and unnatural causes and events – an unnatural event being a civil war, for example, that one does not immediately strive to quell. Throughout these texts, Pizan gives sustained attention to the tears that are shed due to emotional upheaval. Yet unlike the crying that characterises the beginning of the *Livre de la cite des dames*, or the *Avision* and *Mutacion*, where private tears are only subsequently mobilised towards a collective, in texts in which Pizan critiques the devastating costs of the Hundred Years War, like the *Epistre a la royne*, the *Lamentacion*, the *Prison* and the *Ditié*, tears take on an explicitly public-facing, civic and even patriotic function.

Along with serving as barometer for political strife and appropriate or inappropriate reactions to it, by triggering what Pizan generally describes as an uncontrollable bodily or affective response, tears also encourage a collective response, which can subsequently be marshalled to inaugurate change. By emphasising the relational connection between her body and that of others, Pizan wields her tears strategically: not only are they intended to elicit the emotional response of those around her – Isabeau's, in the specific case of the *Epistre a la royne* – the civic action and movement they spark will necessarily bring about political transformation. Pizan's attention to corporeal investment both catalyses and informs her epistle, while centring the capacities and agency of the female body, which calls for political action and then must implement it.

Written in 1405, and directed to the 'très excellent, redoubtee et puissant princesse' (70) [excellent, revered and powerful princess] (71),[36] Isabeau de Baviere, the *Epistre* begins with Pizan's invocation of her own tears as she puts forth a sustained, sorrowful appeal to the queen. The opening lines of the letter and the affective position in which Pizan situates herself reprise the sombre key that constitutes the mournful sonoric backdrop of most of her other works.[37] Throughout the *Epistre*, tears and hunger stand as literal and metaphorical consequences of civil war – in this case, of the devastating clash between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians.[38] Not only does the act of crying weaken and destabilise the bodies of the 'povre peuple' [poor people] who are entirely dependent upon what should be national solidity, but internecine strife ravages the country, precipitating all towards famine. Deadly civil war then worsens the deprivation and hunger of the poor, leaving them to suffer physically as they desperately search for a 'remède' [remedy]. Describing the poor as gnawed by a 'desir familleux … de paix' (82) [a hungry desire for peace] (83), Pizan reformulates the reality of famine affectively in terms of what the poor crave. Thus adding to their desire for peace an absolute bodily necessity upon which their health, strength and life depend, Pizan maintains that the famished condition decimating France's citizens can only be rectified by the intervention of the queen.

Insisting on the consequences of famine and need throughout the *Epistre*, Pizan calques the eucharistic implications of body as

bread onto the figuration of the body politic and the sustenance that Isabeau should provide. As such, Pizan underscores the potential for arbitration that the queen should support and actively facilitate, describing Isabeau's body as the 'bread', 'nourishment' and 'remedy' that France so urgently needs.[39] Additionally, particularly since the traditional role of Mary is one of mediation and succour, Pizan's petition to Isabeau through Marian intercessory terminology is intended to appeal to the queen's sympathies and desire for virtue, thus impelling her to action. By citing qualities that are attributed to the Virgin and transferring them to Isabeau, Pizan reminds the queen of her critical positionality and privilege, which give her greater virtue and greater responsibility. Finally, Pizan evokes the sorrow she expects the queen to feel upon seeing her country ravaged, with lachrymal descriptors that frequently accompany the Virgin as mourning *mater dolorosa* and inform Pizan's own abundant tears.[40]

Yet the tears that Pizan cries also present a paradox in that they bolster and undermine the writing project: they are simultaneously productive of and deleterious to her writing, and even to the actual materiality of her written work. As she reiterates to the queen, she – and French citizens – are entirely dependent upon Isabeau's intervention: 'Mais comme ce soit de commun ordre que toute personne souffrant aucun mal naturellement affine au remede, si comme nous veons les maladies porchacier garrison et les famille ux courir a la viande, et ainsi toute chose a son remede' (70) [But just as it is a natural thing for anyone who suffers from an illness to find a remedy, so can we see the sick look for recovery and the hungry run for food, and thus all things seek a remedy] (71). Rather than couching this need for a remedy to put an end to gratuitous suffering as a question of political strife alone, Pizan emphasises war's physical and emotional ramifications, and the universality of the suffering that it occasions. She groups all forms of distress and destabilisation under the umbrella of *any* suffering pertinent to the human condition, specifying that just as anyone enduring physical illness seeks recuperation and healing, and anyone hungry seeks food, those who suffer sociopolitically, instinctively seek a remedy as well.

Contrasting the unnaturalness of civil war to the naturalness of Isabeau's projected intermediary assistance, by stressing that it is

'de commun ordre' [a natural thing] for someone to seek help and 'pourchassier garrison' [look for recovery], Pizan justifies the need for assistance and relief.[41] Although the matter of queenly political intercession is often divided into scholars who believe it to be 'an important performative and political role' and those who view it as 'a marginalized role queens clung to after they lost "real" power',[42] Pizan's sustained petition establishes an imperative for political and collective healing by insisting that Isabeau's help is practical, natural and necessary for the ailing patient.

By forging significant parallels between herself and the greater populace that the *Epistre a la royne* continues to replicate as the missive unfolds, and by insisting upon a direct connection between her own words and body and the actions of the queen, Pizan reveals that the patient in question is not just herself, and not just the suffering individual, but 'toute personne souffrant aucun mal' [anyone who suffers from any illness]. This association of the individual to a collective, and to the help and relief that can be obtained through the queen, recalls Pizan's explicit interweaving of 'communal and individual autobiography'[43] showcased in all of her texts – whether autobiographical, poetic or political.

Abundant tears and the risk that her sorrow will truncate and frustrate her message are also at the core of Pizan's *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*, written in August of 1410, and thus, just five years after the composition of the *Epistre a la Royne*, when the political situation in France had become even more dire. Grounding her opening pleas for political action in the pervasive sense of loss particular to complaint literature and the biblical lamentation tradition,[44] Pizan wonders who can ensure France's safety. She cannot understand how 'grief, guerre, et bataille' (84) [grief, war, and battle] (85) have managed to create bitter enemies of those who should be united by 'doulz sang naturel' (84) [sweet natural blood] (85). Detailing how she is barely able to suppress the 'lermes qui ma veue troublent et comme fontaine affluent sur mon visage' (84) [tears which blur my sight and pour down my face like a fountain] (85), Pizan represents her sorrow strategically. Drawing attention to her Herculean and rather miraculous authorial efforts, she explains how her uncontrollable tears dramatically impede her vision. They also thwart her ability to communicate, which renders

the fact that she is even able to write – to 'escripre ceste lasse complainte, dont la pitié de l'eminent mischief me fait d'ameres goutes effacier l'escripture …' (84) [to write this weary lament, whose writing the pity for the coming disaster makes me erase with bitter tears …] (85) – even more remarkable. Simultaneously foregrounding the writerly difficulties that increase alongside intensifying political troubles and the affective response triggered by political strife, Pizan describes how she is barely able to suppress these tears that blur her sight. Indeed, given the continued clash between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs,[45] there is far less hope, so the tears being shed are even more copious.

In one of the *Lamentacion*'s more impassioned descriptions of the perilous political situation, Pizan aligns the physical manifestation of somatic discomfort and sorrow with necessary civic action. Although accusations of Pizan's royalism and obsequiousness towards the elite are justified considering her statements elsewhere critiquing the 'menu peuple' and the margin of latitude she commonly grants nobles,[46] the *Lamentacion*'s Pizan is full of rancour, and directly accuses the nobles of laziness and profligacy. Recalling her earlier injunction to Isabeau to take action in the *Epistre a la Royne*, Pizan insists on the greater responsibilities of those with royal privilege,[47] explaining that those with greater means have greater responsibility, and also a greater capacity and likelihood to bring about change:

> Pour Dieu! Pour Dieu! Princes trés haulx ouvrez les yeulx par tel savoir, que ja vous semble veoir comme chose advenue, ce que les apprestes de voz armes prises pourront conclurre, sy y appercevrez ruynes de citez, destruccions de villes et chasteaulx, forteresses ruees par terre. Et en quel part? Ou droit nombril de France! (86)
>
> [For God's sake! For God's sake! High Princes, let these facts open your eyes and may you see as already accomplished what the preparations for taking arms will do in the end; thus you will see ruined cities, towns and castles destroyed, and fortresses razed to the ground. And where? In the very heart of France!] (87)[48]

Emphasising the problematic nature of the princes' torpor, Pizan insists on the metaphoric association of 'blindness' and ignorance.[49] In this case, in distinction to the tears that actively blur Pizan's eyes,

rendering the completion of her various writings all the more challenging yet ultimately linked to the miraculous and extraordinary, the suggestion is that the princes *do not see* because they are wilfully opting to keep their eyes shut. Their inaction becomes even more incomprehensible since they are allowing such pervasive violence and devastation, while doing nothing to intervene and protect France.

Pizan makes similar bodily-oriented complaints when critiquing, instead of inertia, the futile actions of knights who engage in what she terms an 'honteuse bataille' [shameful battle] that reduces and debases any of the heroic implications of the corporeal investment of these dishonourable, destructive fighters for France. Rather than promoting unity, these knights, who should have been 'toute d'une nature' [all of one nature], 'comme un droit ame et corps' [like one single soul and body] and the bulwark, or 'deffense de la couronne et la chose publique' [defense of the crown and the public good], precipitate the fracture of the body political, and as such, the fracture of the kingdom. Consequently, their actions only further contribute to the internecine conflicts hastening France's degradation:

> Sera elle [la très dehonnoree victoire] donc de lorier couronnee? Hé! Lasse my, maiz devra estre de très noires espines honteusement bendee, soy voiant non pas vainquerresse, mais homicide de son mesmes sang, dont noirs habiz porter lui appartient comme a mort de parent. (86)
>
> [Will it [a very dishonourable victory] be crowned with laurels? Ah me, it will have to be shamefully bound with black thorns when it sees itself, not as a victor, but as the very killer of its own blood, for whom it is appropriate to wear black, as in the death of kin.] (87)[50]

More than efforts vainly squandered, instead of any type of success the knights' corporeal labour for France amounts to a directly harmful enterprise. Not only does it constitute familial homicide or fratricide that sunders France's metaphorical political body, since civil war can only result in devastating losses, dishonour, mutiny and more grief, the killing of brethren conveys with it a certain national suicidality that further obviates the inanity of civil war.

Pizan then details how Famine will further ravage France 'pour la cause du dicipement et gast des biens' (86) [because of the wasting and ruining of things], and the lack of cultivation, from which will spring revolts by the people who have been too often robbed, deprived and oppressed (87). After explaining how the starvation and oppression of the people will result in 'oultrageuse charge' [outrageous taxes] and strife that only fosters the English advantage 'et ensurquetout les Angloiz qui parferont l'eschec et mat' (86) [and above all, the English will obtain checkmate on the side] (87), thus fuelling even greater internecine division, via 'discencions et morteles haynes' (86) [dissensions and mortal hatreds] (87), Pizan then turns her attentions directly to the women of France, reprising her association of tears, mourning, and the female body:

> Plourez doncques, plourez, batant les paulmes a grans criz – si que fist en cas pareil jadiz la dolente Argine avec les dames d'Arges – dames, damoiselles et femes du royaume de France! Car ja sont aguisiez les glaives qui vous rendront veufves et desnuees d'enfans et de parens! (86)

> So, cry cry, beat your hands and cry – as once the sad Argia did in such a case, along with the ladies of Argos – you ladies, damsels, and women of the kingdom of France! Because the swords that will make you widows and deprive you of your children and kin have already been sharpened. (87)

While this might seem a standard invocation of mourning that recalls Pizan's continual prioritisation of the sorrowing female figure, especially as regards marital and maternal grief,[51] her deft management of multiple temporalities grants the French women she interpellates even greater agency. Particularly given the citation of the exemplary Argive women who are traditionally commended for their extraordinary sorrow and virtuous deeds during the aftermath of war,[52] the brave political action of women in contrast to the problematic inaction of others is metaphorised through the corpses shamefully left unburied until the Argive women intercede and resist the unjust orders of the state.

Yet, where the classical women were unable to save their spouses from death and could only work towards restoring their honour

post-mortem, the women of France still have the time and ability to catalyse change. Undoubtedly, they have already lost too much and are suffering, and certainly the menace they continue to face is great. Nonetheless, since the 'swords that will make [them] widows' and that obliterate children and relatives are sharpened but have not yet fallen, the women still have the opportunity to intervene. By reprising the epic gesture of a weapon suspended at the height of action, Pizan not only fuels the sense of urgency around the women's necessary intervention, but she further inscribes the actions the women must take as heroic, militaristic efforts that will actively save lives and re-establish France's political health.

As a way to cultivate momentum around the need for intervention while giving more attention to the active role that women play in state affairs, Pizan showcases her deft rhetorical strategising by delaying her reader's understanding that this is indeed an address to the 'ladies, damsels, and women'. By beginning with '[s]o, cry cry', before announcing her appeal to women, the syntactical structure that Pizan chooses emphasises actions over gender. Indeed, the prescribed affective response is foregrounded, and the identity of her addressee(s) consigned to a secondary step, which suggests syntactically that her male readers would also initially feel interpellated by the command to cry. With this rhetorical strategy, Pizan is in no way minimising the necessity of female agency or relegating it to a secondary status; rather, she is situating the exhortation to cry as a means by which to conjure up the affective response of any concerned French citizen. Only once all are ostensibly mobilised by the command does she specify her precise target in her pointed address to women, her greater appeal to female bodily response, and her direct citation of the exemplary legacy surrounding women's agency even in mourning. With her emphasis on the salvific capacities of the female body, Pizan recodifies, through juxtaposition, the lack of action of the 'Princes trés haulx' and the improper actions of the knights vainly murdering their own.

Finally, by addressing the women of France, Pizan also establishes parallels linking the restorative intercessory role of the Argive-cum-French women to the salvific intercessory role that is the queen's even greater responsibility. Not only has Pizan already heightened intensity by delaying the referent of her 'plourez

doncques, plourez', thus drawing attention to women's implication in the 'kingdom of France', but she interpellates the queen without any laudatory preambles. Rather, in a bold rhetorical move that greatly contrasts with the register of her *Epistre a la Royne*, Pizan critiques her acerbically:

> Hé! Royne couronnee de France, dors-tu adés? Et qui te tient que tantost celle part n'affinz tenir la bride et arrester ceste mortel emprise? Ne vois-tu en balance l'eritage de tes nobles enfans? Tu, mere des nobles hoirs de France, redoubtee princesse, qui y puet que toy, ne qui erá-ce, qui a ta seigneurie et auctorité desobeira, se a droit te veulx de la paiz entremettre? (88)

> [Oh, crowned Queen of France, are you still sleeping? Who prevents you from restraining now this side of your kin and putting an end to this deadly enterprise? Do you not see the heritage of your noble children at stake? You, the mother of the noble heirs of France, Reverend Princess, who but you can do anything, and who will disobey your sovereignty and authority, if you rightly want to mediate a peace?] (89)

While the dramatic alteration of tone that Pizan adopts in the *Lamentacion* mirrors the heightened gravity of the political situation increasingly devastating France during the five years that transpired since she penned the *Epistre a la Royne*, another point of continuity between the two works is the sustained centrality of female bodily agency. In the *Lamentacion*, however, Pizan is furious that her *Epistre* did not suffice to incite the queen to what she deems appropriate action.[53] While underscoring Isabeau's centrality to any peacemaking project ('who but you can do anything?'), Pizan upbraids her for her lack of movement and corporeal response.

Pizan uses somnolence as an especially caustic metaphor for the Queen's problematic negligence. In addition to the exclamation 'Hé!', which performatively stages how Pizan must rouse Isabeau from her metaphorical slumber and thus stands as a scathing critique of the queen's unfathomable lassitude, Pizan's use of the adjective 'adés' in 'dors-tu adès?' [are you still sleeping?] is an even pricklier critique of the queen's inaction.[54] Given its various temporal, quantitative and qualitative implications – the queen is 'immediately' and 'recently' sleeping, 'still' sleeping, and even 'incessantly'

sleeping[55] – Pizan decries what she presents as Isabeau's absolute irresponsibility. Isabeau has preferred repose over rescuing those who depend upon her; she has abandoned and starved those who rely on her body for vital 'nourishment'.[56]

The corporeal critique that Pizan proffers also uses blindness to stand for the queen's shameful inertia.[57] Rather than asking Isabeau 'if' she is able to see the dangers attacking France's security, Pizan tenders instead the negative question 'Ne vois-tu …?' [Do you not see …?] which casts Isabeau's inaction as even more astonishing. Intensifying the perspectival concerns that Pizan voiced in the *Epistre* when she worried that perhaps Isabeau's phenomenological positionality prevented her from seeing fully and accurately,[58] the charge in the *Lamentacion* is chiefly one of disregard. That is, Isabeau is either unable to perceive what others, like Pizan can; or, in light of her indolence, she simply does not wish to see. Finally, as 'mere des nobles hoirs' [mother of the noble heirs of France], Isabeau's unwillingness or inability to see the inauspicious situation threatening the 'heritage of [her] noble children' has a doubly corporeal ramification: her 'blindness' will lead to barrenness by occasioning the ruin of her corporeal, maternal labour of bearing children and producing heirs for France.[59]

Even given the multiple instances in which Isabeau needed to stand in for Charles VI,[60] her centrality to the figuration of the body politic and necessity for the success of the French cause are further reiterated when Pizan enjoins the Queen's counsellors to come to her assistance: 'Venez, venez, vous touz saiges de ce royaume avec vostre royne! De quoy servez-vous, neiz conseil du roy? Et tous chacun la main y mette' (88) [Come, all you wise men of this realm, come with your queen! What use are you if not for the royal council? Everyone should offer his hand] (89). Not only should they move alongside Isabeau, accompanying her in both thought and action and reinforcing the sense of unity that could be achieved through 'tant de sages testes' (88) [so many wise men] (89), they should adopt an involved, participatory role, actively offering her assistance.

Dramatically, after her impassioned appeal to the queen and her counsellors, Pizan wonders how and if she can continue to speak out about the damages done to her 'jadiz … Glorieux royaume'

[once … glorious kingdom]. It is both her affective response culminating in the shedding of tears, and her physical labour cited in the arduous task of writing that so fatigues her body, that Pizan situates as obstacles she must overcome:

> Helas, comment diray-je plus? Car trés amers plours et lermes incessables dechieent comme ruisseaux sur mon papier, si qu'il n'y a place seiche ou puisse continuer l'escripture de la complainte trés douloureuse, que l'abondance de mon cuer par grant pitié de toy vault getter hors. Si que assez sont occuppes les lasses mains laissent souvent la penne de quoy je escripz, pour rendre la veue a mes yeulx troublez en torchant les lermes dont l'abondance me moille piz et giron, quant je pense ce que diront de troy desoremaiz les Renommees' (88)

> [Alas, what more can I say? Because bitter and endless tears flow like streams on my paper, there is not a dry spot where I can pursue the writing of the very painful lament that my heavy heart, for the love of you, wishes to express. Although they are very busy, my tired hands often drop the pen with which I write to restore the sight to my eyes, and wipe the many tears which wet my breast and lap, whenever I think of what Fame will henceforth say of you.] (89)

The parallelism between tears, writing and the political situation of France that Pizan has charted throughout her works becomes even more significant because of the urgency and enormity of her message; it is so physically, psychically and emotionally taxing that it fatigues her hands, making her struggle to communicate. In this case, however, Pizan's 'unending tears' fall so plentifully from her eyes that they become streams that dampen and damage the very paper on which she attempts to write. Additionally, her inability to liberate herself from the burden that her heart 'vault getter hors' [wishes to express][61] intensifies her grief while adding an affective valence to the curtailment of her authorial abilities, as her message is hindered by the very gravity of the situation she is attempting to communicate. Likewise, the cumbersome weariness of her body conspires against her. Her 'lasses mains', her 'yeulx troublez' and her burdened heart make it even more difficult to relay her fears about the dangers that will likely imperil France's political health and future reputation, should no one intervene.

Despite the depth of the fissures created by civil war, Pizan still harbours a ray of hope, believing that 'encores y a il remède' (90) [there is still a remedy] (91). The dire situation can be remedied, for the factions battling one another are not intentional enemies, but rather, accidental ones – 'ennemis par accident'. In explaining that her faint hope is predicated upon God's mercy – 'Dieu est miséricors. Tout n'est pas mort, quant que gist en peril' (90) [God is merciful. All is not dead, although it is in danger of dying] (91) – Pizan turns her attentions to a final interlocutor, the duke of Berry. Underscoring a similar corporeal potential as that which she charts earlier with Isabeau, Pizan cites the duke's important role and foundational lineage. He is a 'noble prince, excellent souche et estoc des enfans royaulx, filz de roy de France, frère et oncle, père d'antiquité de la fleur de liz toute!' [noble prince, excellent father and scion of royal children, son of a king of France, brother and uncle, father of all the antiquity of the lily!] (91).[62] However, differing from her scathing 'Dors-tu adès?' that reveals her frustration with Isabeau due to her 'disregarded' plea that the Queen arbitrate for peace in the *Epistre*,[63] Pizan is incredulous in her comments to the duke. Diminishing his corporeal responsibility by making his body parts the sole agents of his actions – again differing from the 'Ne vois-tu en balance …?' with which she criticises the queen – Pizan struggles to understand how his 'très bénigne cuer' [very benign heart] can endure seeing him 'en assemblée de bataille mortèle' (91) [assembled in deadly battle] (91) and 'en asemblee mortele contre sa propre chair' (90) [in a mortal confrontation against his own flesh] (91). Citing the duke's political legacy and familial bonds, once again Pizan melds her own affective response and authorial project with the response that she imagines others to have. She expects that tears must 'flow like a fountain down [his] face':

> Je ne croy pas que la souvenance de la très grant amour naturèle de leurs pères et mères, tes très amez frères et seurs trespassez, souffrist à nature que lermes et pleurs ne décourussent comme fontaine tout au long de ta face, et que ton noble cuer ne feust de pitié si comme touz fonduz qu'à paines te soustendroies. (90)
>
> I do not believe that the memory of the great natural love of their fathers and mothers, your much beloved deceased brothers and sisters, will not naturally allow tears to flow like a fountain down

> your face, and your noble heart not to break with pity so much so that it will barely support you. (91)

However, establishing another point of comparison between her longstanding personal experiences of mourning and the duke's projected reaction, the affective response Pizan expects of him is predicated not upon his progeny, but upon what he has already lost. While his immense grief should produce an abundance of tears, a flagging heart and a corporeal fragility that menaces his physical integrity, the duke's empirical experience with loss and his deep love for his 'très amez frères et seurs trespasses' [much beloved deceased brothers and sisters] (91), should nonetheless heighten his promise and commitment to rescue France, modelling this moral authority for everyone.

Reprising her insistence to Isabeau in the *Epistre a la royne* that successful arbitration will ensure Isabeau's heavenly favour and legendary exemplarity while reinforcing her maternal connection to France, Pizan advises the duke de Berry that he will be recognised as the 'père du règne, conserveur de la couronne et du très noble liz, custode du hault lignage, réserveur de l'occision des nobles, confort du peuple, garde des nobles dames, des veufves et orphelins' (94) [father of this kingdom, keeper of the Crown and of the very noble lily, guardian of the high lineage, protector of noble men against death, comfort of the people, guardian of the noble ladies, widows and orphans] (95) if he is able to bring safety and security to France once again. Situating herself as something of a clarion – as a 'povre voix criant en ce royaume, désireuse de paix et du bien de vous touz' (94) [poor voice crying in this kingdom, wanting peace and welfare for all] (95) – Pizan insists that the duke's intervention is what she most desires, and what France, in its desperation, most needs.

Just as the changed register and heightened sense of urgency differentiating the *Epistre a la Royne* and the *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile* paint a clear picture of the increasingly degraded political situation of France during the five-year interval between the texts, the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, dedicated to the duchess of Bourbonnais, Marie de Berry, renders France's political weakness even more bleakly.[64] Completed, per

the envoy, on 20 January 1418, the *Prison* was composed not long after the brief and very deadly Battle of Agincourt. Given the enormous losses that France suffered,[65] tears are more profuse than ever before, yet Pizan, who describes herself and her addressee as crying women, encourages the duchess to stop crying if she can. Through her references to Marie's suffering – Marie's father had recently passed away; her husband and son had been taken prisoners by the English; many of her cousins were imprisoned or killed at Agincourt[66] – Pizan recalls her own widowhood and again highlights the authorial stamp of her personal tears.[67] Given her empirical experience with grief, she is thereby better situated to offer herself as Marie's sage adviser, and thus, she encourages Marie to dry her tears and focus her attentions elsewhere:

> Et pour tant en ta personne qui bien en a eue sa part, je parleray a toutes semblablement, en faisant mon devoir, par moien d'escripture, selon mon petit savoir et cognoissance, de te ramentevoir aucunes raisons …, qui te pevent et doivent mouvoir a restraindre et delaissier l'effusion de lermes qui par grant douleur souvent habandonent sur ta face, a cause de la perte de la chevalerie françoise et pour la grant quantité des trés nobles et dignes princes royaulx de France, si prouchains et affins de ton sang, que mors ou pris comme mary, filz, père, cousins germains, que ducs, que contes, et tant haute gent, t'en trouver seule et desnuee ... (4)

> [And yet through you, who have had to bear your share [of grief], I shall speak to all ladies alike, in doing my duty by means of the written word, in so far as my meager wisdom and knowledge are able, in calling to mind the reasons culled, … these can and should restrain and stop the effusion of tears which, in your great grief flow often on your face, because of the loss of French chivalry, and for the great number of very worthy noble and worthy royal princes of France, so close and akin to your blood, dead or captive, such as husbands, sons, fathers, first cousins, or dukes, counts, and so many high persons of whom you find yourself deprived and devoid …](5)

Reiterating the important connection between personal and political loss, and acknowledging the disruptive effect that tears have – particularly given their specific authorial implications – Pizan suggests that trading tears for affective reorientation will help Marie

focus on the political and spiritual gains that even unsuccessful military enterprises put into motion.[68] Furthermore, by citing this imbrication of grief and memory, and woman's dependence on relational bonds to 'husbands, sons, fathers, first cousins', and so forth, Pizan is not only detailing the reality of Marie's situation, but that of her own, as grief simultaneously threatens and gives cause to her decision to compose the epistle, and to her attempts to bring comfort. Like Pizan, Marie has had her 'fair share' of hardships – she has 'bien en […] eue sa part'.[69] Thus, by forging a relational connection that unites the personal and the political – Marie with political agents and those fighting battles, Marie with Pizan, and Marie and Pizan with all the other suffering women of France – Pizan can use her personal affective situation to reach others as well, to speak to 'toutes semblablement'.

Offering a lighter representation of crying that nonetheless showcases the same type of corporeal entanglement of body and political enterprise, in the 1429 *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, tears are again aligned with affective response. Following Pizan's encouragement for tears to cease in the *Prison*, in this work celebrating Joan of Arc's triumphant actions at the Siege of Orléans (1428–29), which marked a decisive, albeit temporary victory for France, it is the abatement and transformation of tears that is celebrated.[70] As catalysts for authorial reorientation, tears come to represent Joan of Arc's abilities and Pizan's own authorial revolution. Their absence signals the conversion of Pizan's long suffering to happiness, the transformation of her habitual sorrow into a newfound and extremely rare laughter:

> Je, Christine, qui ay plouré
> Unze ans en abbaye close
> Où j'ay tousjours puis demouré
> Que Charles (c'est estrange chose!),
> Le filz du roy, se dire l'ose,
> S'en fouy de Paris, de tire,
> Par la traïson là enclose:
> Ore à prime me prens à rire.
> A rire bonement de joie … (I.1–8 ; II.9, 28).
>
> [I, Christine, who have wept for eleven years in a closed abbey, where I have lived ever since Charles (how strange this is!), the

> king's son – dare I say it? – fled in haste from Paris, I who have lived enclosed there on account of this treachery, now, for the first time, begin to laugh.] (41)[71]

Pizan situates the years of retreat and sorrow before she is able to laugh parenthetically. She frames them, on one side, with the unprecedented 'sequence of military disasters' and 'succession of national humiliations' leading up to France's terrific rout at Agincourt[72] and the shameful betrayal and flight from Paris of the dauphin Charles (later to be Charles VII) during the Paris Massacres of 1418.[73] On the other side, Pizan frames the difficult years with the Siege of Orléans and the 'desperate relief' that Joan of Arc brought to the city in 1429,[74] which consequently brought her many years of sadness and enclosure to an end. Of course, history teaches that Joan of Arc's successes were rather short-lived,[75] which does imbue Pizan's dramatic laughter – she laughs 'bonement de joie' – with a certain pessimism for contemporary readers.[76] However, as far as Pizan can tell, the eleven years spent in effective retirement 'enclosed' at the Convent of Poissy,[77] and the eleven years of crying, have ceased with Joan's victory.

By presenting the time that she has cried as a determinative integral temporal unit that replaces time counted more neutrally – for example, in hours, days, months or years – Pizan dramatises the imbrication of the personal and the political, the affective entanglement of her body – in this case, her tears – with the political context, and with the various transformations brought about by Jeanne's impressive victory. The dramatically altered political situation inaugurates change, triggering even a transformation of Pizan's authorial stamp, as tears turn to joy. By situating laughter such that it illuminates the darkness, strangeness and treachery that precede it, Pizan reasserts her own corporeal imbrication in the newly auspicious political terrain to which she has access once her tears cease, while drawing attention to the transformative reworking of own authorial identity as a frequently weeping woman, widow and author.

With the new perspectival and affective orientation signalled by the opening up of an enclosed, restricted space, Pizan rejoices in her liberation from her cold, 'dreary cage' that exemplifies her forced withdrawal, and her affective numbness:

L'an mil CCCCXXIX
Reprint à luire li soleil,
Il ramene le bon temps neuf
Qu'on [n']avoit veil de droit oil
Puis long temps, dont plusers en dueil
Orent vesqu; je suis de ceulx.
Mais plus de rien je ne me dueil,
Quant ores voy ce que [je] veulx. (III, 17–24, 28)

[In 1429 the sun began to shine again. It brings back the good, new season which had not really been seen for a long time – and because of that many people had lived out their lives in sorrow; I myself am one of them, But I no longer grieve over anything, now that I can see what I desire.] (41)

As she explains at the end of the *Ditié*, the sight that she desires is peace, which she was not even able to envision without Jean's timely intervention: 'for a person whose head is bowed and whose eyes are heavy cannot look at the light' (50). Adding to her critique, the suggestion of faithlessness – given the visual restriction occasioned by a bowed head – Pizan was caught 'tristement en cage' because her sorrow – and by extension, her tears – prevented her sight, a metaphor for hope.

In addition to her misery coming to an end – Pizan's liberation from a physical and affective prison, and her revivified faith, as she describes it – to Pizan, Jeanne's success makes even the weather seem to lighten, triggering a reprisal of the joyful *reverdie* topos that inspires troubadouric happiness and a felicitous pathetic fallacy *avant la lettre*. As dark winter turns to milder days, turning 'grant dueil en joie nouvelle' [great sorrow into new joy], the 'lovely season called spring' returns and revitalises. This renews Pizan as well, prompting her to realise that the change in atmosphere also requires a linguistic change: 'Mais or changeray mon langage / De pleur en chant'(II.5–6, 28) [But now I shall change my language from one of tears to one of song] (41). Although Pizan references 'dueil' in three alternating lines in rapid succession (III.5,7; IV.2), these are the only mentions of 'dueil' in the entire *Ditié*, and she proffers this brief litany of grief only as a final valediction to her sorrow.[78] An intentional authorial reorientation and a new register are necessary, for these will better reflect Pizan's more favourable

environs, improved emotional state and France's ameliorated political situation.

Ultimately, in the case of the the *Ditié,* Joan of Arc is able to offer to Pizan directly, and to France more broadly, a new perspectival, political and affective orientation. The celebratory transformations charted throughout the work underscore the decisive transformation that Jeanne is able to effectuate on both a small-scale, individual level – as any individual, and as Pizan, retired in a convent might perceive it – and on the much larger scale of national politics. In the victory that Jeanne earns for France, Pizan believes that her own sufferings are over, and the diametrical shift in tone augurs very well while evidencing her new positionality. Newly hopeful for herself and for France, and with Joan of Arc standing as a propitious 'national symbol',[79] Pizan can finally proclaim that 'ore à prime' – for the very first time – she is able to laugh. Although the *Ditié* is often read rather summarily as a 'celebration of Joan's accomplishments' and 'a fitting end to Pizan's career',[80] the political movement that Pizan illuminates with her climactic portrayal of the cessation of tears and the laughter supplanting her sorrow is evidence of an analogous coupling – the constant entanglement of the personal and the political that unites the corporeal investment and engaged civic argument in all of her works.

Notes

1 Chance, 'Christine de Pizan as Literary Mother', 246.
2 See Chance (ed.), *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages*, 4–16. For a critique of Chance, see Classen, 'What Do They Mean', 203.
3 Mombello, for example, regards Pizan as merely a passive observer of her surroundings. 'Quelques aspects'. For a formative rebuttal and argument against essentialising the gendered dynamics of Pizan's work, see Richards, 'Rejecting Essentialism'; see also Ferrante, *To the Glory of Her Sex*, 9; and Rigby, 'Wife of Bath', 131–6.
4 Adams, '"Moyenneresse de traictié de paix"', 177–8 and *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France*. See also Hicks, 'Une femme dans le monde', 233–43; and Margolis, 'Christine de Pizan'.
5 See Reno, 'Christine de Pizan'; Zimmerman, 'Vox Femina', 114; Gauvard, 'Christine de Pisan'; Green, *Healing the Body Politic*, xi;

Brown-Grant, 'Writing Beyond Gender', 155–69; Reix-Videt, '*Le livre de la paix*', 329–44; Brownlee, 'Structures of Authority', 146; and Delany, '"Mothers to Think Back Through"'.

6 On the pitfall of regarding medieval women writers as uninterested in political arguments, or only capable of operating intertextually (and thus, purely imitatively), see Blanchard, 'Compilation et legitimation'; Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan*, 215–17; Chance, 'Christine de Pizan as Literary Mother', 249; Kelly, 'Social Relation', 809–12; and Harwood, *Medieval Women and War*, 137. See also Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*; and 'En quoi la ville est-elle un espace féminin et féministe?'

7 Wisman (ed.), *Epistle of the Prison of Human Life*, xiv. See also Kennedy, *Christine de Pizan*; Forhan, *Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, 1–26; and Adams, *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France*, 188–9.

8 On the dating of this work see Kennedy's critical edition (xvii–xix); Collett, 'Three Mirrors', 13. See also Krueger, 'Christine's Anxious Lessons', 26–7.

9 See especially Delogu, who identifies the *Livre des fais* as 'not simply a mirror or a biography (or a history, a panegyric, or a secular hagiography), but … also an autobiographical text'. *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*, 182; Margolis, 'Royal Biography as Reliquary', 123–8; and Nederman, 'Living Body Politic', 19.

10 Tuchman, *Distant Mirror*, quips that Pizan's efforts to portray Charles's zealous piety and political excellence amount to 'eulogizing him for everything but his real contribution', 237–8, 268; Delogu offers a far more nuanced assessment of Pizan's didactic aims and intentionally strategic praise in *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*, 153–9.

11 Solente, 'Traité', 265.

12 Taylor, *Chivalry*, 33.

13 On this, Pizan's first text to be printed in France, albeit unattributed to her, published as the *Art de chevalerie selon Vegece*, and with neither a female nor first-person narrator, see Brown, 'Reconstruction of An Author in Print', 215. See also Bossy, 'Arms and the Bride', 249–51, for a study of the various compilations and extant manuscripts of the *Fais d'armes*; Willard, 'Christine de Pizan on the Art of Warfare'; and Delogu, 'En quoi la ville est-elle un espace féminin et féministe?', 99.

14 Wisman, 'Life of the Author', xvii.

15 Richards's comprehensive study of Pizan's Latin formation and legal expertise in 'Christine de Pizan and Medieval Jurisprudence'; and 'Somewhere between Destructive Glosses' helpfully contextualise Pizan's formation. On the 'notoriously brittle' nature of 'Hundred

Years War peace treaties', see DeVries, 'Hundred Years War', 50–2; see also Solente, 'Traité', 265–7; Collett, 'Three Mirrors', 16; and Adams, '"Moyenneresse de traictié de paix"', 194–6.

16 D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval', rightly expands this list to include the *Epistre d'Othea* and *Le Livre des trois vertus* (204), while Zhang, 'Du Miroir des Princes', makes a persuasive case for reading the *Livre des trois vertus* as a 'miroir des princesses' [mirror for princesses]. Walters emphasises Pizan's 'unprecedented position as a writer and royal advisor' in three texts – the *Mutacion*, the *Livre des Fais* and the *Cité des Dames* – in which 'Christine acquires the authority to speak on behalf of her country', 'Christine's Symbolic Self', 1.

17 Adams, '"Moyenneresse de traictié de paix"', 188; Green, 'Introduction'; Krueger, 'Christine's Anxious Lessons', 16–18.

18 See Adams on the political import of the *Mutacion*, which she reads as 'represent[ing] another important step in Christine's career as a political commentator', *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France*, 88. Brownlee likewise identifies the *Mutacion* as 'a universal history framed by a personal history' work, which underscores Pizan's political transformation 'into a new kind of *clerc*: a learned woman poet of history', 'Image of History', 49, 44. See also Walters, 'Christine's Symbolic Self', 21–5; Akbari, 'Death as Metamorphosis', on Pizan's attempts to reformulate the body politic as resistance to the 'social turmoil of the period', 283–4; and Collett, 'Three Mirrors', which reads Pizan's works through the lens of the *speculum regis* tradition, 1–18.

19 See Krueger, 'Christine's Anxious Lessons', 27–9; Brown-Grant, 'Miroir du prince', 34–5; and '*L'Avision Christine*', 92–3. See also Lassabatère's important study, 'La personification de la France'. On the *Avision*, see Wood's chapter in this volume.

20 A notable exception is Willard's 'Christine de Pizan on the Art of Warfare', which analyses a small selection of Pizan's ballades – addressing the lack of appreciation for military might (Ball. 2), knights' most laudable characteristics (Ball. 64), and praise for specific military leaders, to reconstruct 'Christine's association with a number of military men', 3–4.

21 As Kennedy and Varty clarify (in Christine de Pizan, *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*), '[a]lthough this militant anti-Englishness will recur in much of Christine's subsequent writings, … it is interesting to note that it is soon matched, at a very early stage, by an ever-growing awareness for the need for peace', 12–13.

22 Bal. XXIX, 'Prince honnoré, duc d'Orliens, louable' [honoured prince, duke of Orléans, commendable], in Christine de Pizan, *Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. Roy, vol. 1, 240.

23 Bal. XCV, 'Nous devons bien' [We have to], *Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. Roy, vol. 1, 95.

24 On Charles's euphemistic 'absences' that 'became longer and more frequent over time, undermining almost completely his effectiveness as a ruler' and increasing the tensions between the Burgundian and Orléanist factions, see Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*, 153. See also Singer, *Representing Mental Illness*, 87; Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies* on challenges related to the separability (or lack thereof) between a king's natural body (the Body Natural) and the Body Politic; Gibbons, '"Limbs Fail when the Head is Removed"', 50–3; Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*; and Autrand, *Charles VI*.

25 Autrand offers a full recapitulation of this episode, which stemmed from an attempt against Olivier de Clisson's life in Vannes, in *Charles VI*, 271–328.

26 These are 'the words of the doleful Libera, figure of France' in the *Advision*, quoted in Adams, *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France*, 1:179. On the terminology and discourse surrounding questions of mental illness, see Metzler, *Fools and Idiots?*; Pfau, 'Mental Health Issues', 133–47; Gibbons, '"Limbs Fail When the Head is Removed"', 53.

27 Guenée, *La folie*, 260–2.

28 On Isabeau and political intercession, see Verdon, *Isabeau de Bavière*, 107–25; Adams and Rechtschaffen, 'Isabeau of Bavaria', 119–23; Adams, *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France*, 113–14.

29 Certainly, the thorny matter of succession that Charles VI's illness intensified was also related to the reinvocation of Salic Law – that 'otiose Frankish law code' (Taylor, 'Salic Law', 360) – excluding women from royal succession following the death of Charles IV of France in 1328.

30 On Charles's ordinances permitting Louis to rule and Isabeau to serve as guardian, see Adams and Rechtschaffen, 'Isabeau of Bavaria', 122–3; and Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix de pièces inédites*, 1:241.

31 See Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*; Forhan, *Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*; Richards, *Reinterpreting Christine de Pizan*; Wisman, 'L'éveil du sentiment nationale au Moyen-Âge'; and the collections edited by Brabant, *Politics, Gender and Genre*; and Green and Mews, *Healing the Body Politic* and *Virtue Ethics for Women*.

32 Krueger, 'Christine's Anxious Lessons', 15–18.

33 As Pizan complains in the *Avision*, this period also aligns with her unsuccessful bid to find favour for her son at the court of the duke of Orléans, and later, successfully, at the Burgundian court of Philip the Bold. Willard, 'Christine de Pizan', 19.

34 On tears in Pizan's work, see Margolis, 'Christine de Pizan's Life in Lament'; and Leppig, 'Political Rhetoric', 141–56. On tears as connected to Marian references see D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval'; on weeping more generally, particularly in religious contexts, see Patton and Hawley, 'Introduction', 1–23.

35 Bal. XI, 'Seulete suy' [Alone I am], *Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. Roy, vol.1, 12. See also Davies and Perry in the Introduction to this volume. On the figure of the *seulette,* see Walters, 'Mother-Daughter Conflicts', 115, and 'Figure of the *Seulette*'; along with McKinley, 'Subversive "Seulette"'; and Forhan, *Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, 15–19; D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval', 213.

36 All citations from the *Epistre de la prison de la vie humaine*, the *Epistre a la Royne* and the *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile* are taken from the 2020 edition of Wisman's 1984 critical edition and translation.

37 A notable exception, since it begins rather jubilantly, with enamoured princes, gallant noblemen and the 'renommees', 'amees', 'honnorables, saiges, courtoises, [and] agreables' objects of their affections [the ladies who are 'of good renown'; the 'maidens who are loved' and the 'women who are honourable, gracious, well-bred and courteous'] (10–13), is *Le Dit de la rose* (1402). Yet despite gathering happily 'en beau lieu plain de revel' [in fine rooms filled with revelry] (9–12, 20), the consequences of enamourment end up being quite dire, as they are in the *Livre du duc des vrais amans*, which 'showcase[es] its dissident narratorial tones') and emphasises love's deleterious impact upon the lady ('Tale of the Rose', in Fenster and Erler (eds), *Poems of Cupid*, 22, 24).

38 Schnerb, *Armagnacs et les Bourguignons*; D'Avout, *Querelle des Armagnacs*.

39 In 'Christine de Pizan's "Doulce Nourriture"', 93–114, Singer explores the connection between language, nature and nurture, and 'nourriture' [food, or sustenance], particularly as represented through breast milk, to parse Pizan's 'uniquely female claim to authority' throughout her oeuvre (94); Walters, 'Mother-Daughter Conflicts', 115–16; Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, on language and war, especially 268, and 347–9; and Margolis, 'Royal Biography as Reliquary', 142, n. 31.

40 Recalling biblical descriptions of the Virgin Mary's suffering and weeping, this connection between the body, tears and succour that are attributed to the Virgin also appears at the dramatic beginning of the *Cité des dames*, where Christine also aligns herself with the Virgin. Representing herself as being illuminated and informed by divine light and granted a special ministration, Pizan rewrites the scene of the

biblical annunciation: among other points of connection and recodification, light falls on her lap, and it is her group of allegorical women who communicate and play an intercessory role, rather than the Angel Gabriel. On Pizan's recurrence to 'Annunciation iconography' and her frequent appeals to the 'authority of the *mater dolorosa*' as a means by which to bolster her own authorial voice, see D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval', 215–19. Addressing Book III of the *Cité*, Collette, *Performing Polity*, emphasises how the Virgin's intercessory role was 'mediated through language', which helped her 'intercede for her petitioners; it also authorized women's speech in interceding and mediating', 79. This is another point of connection that Pizan maximises in her exaltation – in the *Epistre a la Royne* and elsewhere – of Marian exemplarity and self-representation. See also Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, 342–9 on gender and language; and Adams, *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France*, on the Virgin's exemplarity, 113–15.

41 D'Arcens reads this epistle as 'one of the fullest articulations of the authority of woman as political intermediary', 'Petit estat vesval', 209.

42 Geaman, 'Beyond Good Queen Anne', 76–8; Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 26–30; Collette, *Performing Polity,* 21–40.

43 Ho, 'Communal and Individual Autobiography', 31–8.

44 D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval', 221; Patton and Hawley, 'Introduction', 1–23.

45 Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*, 153–5.

46 Lee Dow, 'Christine de Pizan and the Body Politic', 202–3; Harding, *Medieval Law and the Foundations of the State*, 277–80; Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan's Views of the Third Estate', 315–20, and 'Christine de Pizan and the "menu peuple"', 792–4; Rigby, 'Body Politic'; Angeli, 'Figure della povertà'; and Oexle, 'Christine et les pauvres'. See also Giancarlo's chapter in this volume.

47 Delogu's discussion of Pizan's strategy of appealing to the self-interest of her addressees in the *Livre des fais* helpfully illuminates Pizan's tactics here, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*, 154–9.

48 While the English translation of 'heart' holds, this is the 'center', literally the 'navel' of France; the heraldic significance of 'nombril' (as in the 'nombril' an escutcheon) also reflects the entanglement of the corporeal and the political.

49 Wheatley, *Stumbling Blocks*, 19–24, 96.

50 Although 'l'association du noir au deuil' can be considered 'une pratique relativement moderne' [a relatively modern practice] (Pastoureau, *Figures et couleurs*, 40–3), black took on fluctuating valences as the medieval turned towards the early modern. During the time Pizan was

active, it continued to suggest shame but was becoming increasingly aligned with 'austerity and mourning' (Crane, *Performance of Self*, 10). On the mourning practices of nobles, particularly as related to the assassination and burial of Louis of Orléans, see Gaude-Ferragu, *D'or et de cendres*, 111; see also Gibbons, '"Limbs Fail When the Head is Removed"', 429–32; Hutchison, 'Politics of Grief', 422–4; and Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, 112–13.

51 One might think, for instance of the 'Poemes de veuvage' [Poems of widowhood] that open the *Cent Ballades* (*c.*1394–99).

52 The reference is to Argia, who famously led the bereaved Argive women in rebelling against King Creon to bury her husband and the six other leaders comprising the seven against Thebes, all recently killed in the war against the city. This story has numerous textual precedents. In the *Cité des Dames*, Pizan references Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris* (chapter 29) and his exaltation of Argia's uxorial fidelity, yet departs from his version by granting to her bereaved widows a violent scene of Amazonian-inflected vengeance Richards (ed. and trans.), *Book of the City of Ladies*.

53 On Isabeau's attempts at mediation and Pizan's opinion of her, see Richards, 'Bartolo da Sassoferato', 182–3; Adams, 'Moyenneresse de traictié de paix'; Green, 'Isabeau de Bavière', 270–1.

54 By identifying an explicit critique of the queen's inaction, I differ from Tracy Adams, who finds that any perceived animosity towards or impatience with the queen is not due to Isabeau's inaction, but to frustrations regarding the power of the queen, especially as understood ideologically. See Adams, 'Moyenneresse de traictié de paix', 183–4; D'Arcens, 'Petit estat vesval', 220.

55 *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. 'adés'.

56 Singer, 'Christine de Pizan's "Doulce Nourriture"', 94.

57 Singer, *Blindness and Therapy*; Wheatley, *Stumbling Blocks,* 18–24.

58 To further justify her address to the queen, Pizan speculates that the distance between Isabeau, who sits on her 'trosne royal couronné de honneurs' [royal throne surrounded with honours], and her subjects prevents her 'sight' and knowledge, thus necessitating external intervention: 'touteffoiz est-il vray que vous, seant en vostre trosne royal couronné de honneurs, ne povez savoir, fors par autruy rappors, les communes besoingnes, tant en paroles comme ne faiz, qui queurent entre les subjiez' (72) [it may nevertheless be true that you, seated on your royal throne surrounded with honours, cannot know, except by someone's report, the common problems, in words as well as in facts, which prevail upon your subjects] (73).

59 Although the argument that heirs must be produced for France is similar to Pizan's address to the duke of Berry in the *Lamentacion* – the 'noble prince, excellent souche et estoc des enfans royaulx, filz de roy de France, frere et oncle, père d'antiquité de la gleur de liz toute!' (90) [noble prince, excellent father and scion of royal children, son of a king of France, brother and uncle, father of all the antiquity of the lily!] (91), the corporeal implications are more explicit in her comments to the queen.

60 Adams and Rechtschaffen, 'Isabeau of Bavaria', 119–22.

61 This is Wisman's rendering, but the phrase also contains the valences of 'purge' or 'expel'.

62 In both the *Livre du corps de policie* and the *Livre du chemin de long estude* (1402–03), Pizan engages with John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (*c.*1159) and his influential description of the body politic as metaphor in a sustained and nuanced way. In Salisbury's excoriation of tyranny, he presents the metaphor of a rotten tree that must immediately be felled so that it does not infect the organic matter around it. The implications of 'souche' as 'excellent father' but also arboreal foundation evince Pizan's deft renegotiation of Salisbury's persuasive organic metaphor. See Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*, 71; and 'En quoi la ville est-elle un espace féminin et féministe?', 94–8; Forhan, 'Policracy, Obligation, and Revolt', 33–52 and 'Reading Backward'. On problematic takes on Pizan's use of Salisbury, see Nederman, 'Living Body Politic', 19–22, and 'Body Politics'; and Lee Dow, 'Christine de Pizan and the Body Politic', 232–3.

63 For Adams, Pizan's appeals to the royals comprise her efforts to promulgate an ideological understanding of the role of royal mediators, as they 'combine practical advice for good governance with lessons in ideological definition'. Adams, '"Moyenneresse de traictié de paix"', 181. See Leppig, 'Political Rhetoric', for a critical view of the paternalism innate to the construction of the body politic, 153.

64 In short, Pizan accepts military defeat but reassures Marie de Berry that the many lives lost were not lost in vain, and particularly since the 'especiales condicions mout reprouchables' [very shameful attributes] (7) of human life – namely, its brevity, lack of tranquillity and overall insufficiency – render the 'miserable prison' of earthly life insignificant and even torturous compared to eternal life. Indeed, the body is nothing 'fors terre et pourreture' (6) [but earth and rot] (7) that imprisons and binds the soul.

65 Although the number of casualties varies wildly across differing accounts, in the brief battle lasting fewer than five hours, France

suffered numerous losses. Hibbert, *Agincourt*, estimates that there were between 7,000 and 10,000 casualties. Given-Wilson and Bériac offer that 'evidence suggests that at least 6,000 French nobles died at Agincourt. Thus the ratio of slain to captured was probably 4:1 or 5:1', 'Edward III's Prisoners of War', 805–7. See also Keegan, *Face of Battle*, 100–14.

66 On the original commissioner and intended recipient of this letter, see Solente, 'Traité', 270–2; and Wisman, 'Introduction', xxii–xxiv.

67 As Pizan makes clear, her widowhood was compounded by additional hardships, like the death of King Charles V in 1380, which led to her father falling out of favour and being poorly remunerated at the court of Charles VI before his death in 1385. See Gabriel, 'Educational Ideas', 4; Hindman, 'With Ink', 457–8; Wisman, 'Life of the Author', xiii–xvi; Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*, 7–8.

68 Pizan's consolation to Marie de Berry broadly reprises the same benefits that in the *Epistre a la Royne* she says will await Isabeau if she is able to bring peace to the fighting Burgundians and Orléanists. Marie should rejoice in knowing that those who died for France sacrificed themselves for France, tried to bring an end to bloodshed, and will receive both earthly and heavenly glory. Wisman, 'Introduction', xxv.

69 This anticipates the description of her own suffering that Pizan will reference in the *Ditie*, when she complains that of hardships, she has 'bien ma part enduré' (28) [well endured [her] share] (41).

70 On Joan of Arc's historical and literary reception, see Barstow, *Joan of Arc,* 31; Fraioli, *Joan of Arc*; Raknem, *Joan of Arc in History,* 34–8; Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, 354–78; and Jones, '"Gardez mon corps"', 9–11.

71 The verses and translation cited here are both taken from Angus Kennedy and Kenneth Varty's edition and translation, 9.

72 Given-Wilson and Bériac, 'Edward III's Prisoners of War', 802.

73 Cousinot's *Chronique de la Pucelle* is one of many sources that details the reaction among French nobles to what essentially amounted to Charles's abandonment of them, 269. See also Sizer, 'Calamity of Violence'.

74 Jones, '"Gardez mon corps"', 9.

75 What Blumenfeld-Kosinski calls Joan's 'fall from grace', Christine de Pizan, *Selected Writings*, 252.

76 Spanning more than a century, and starkly contrasting with Jean's success at Orléans and Patay in 1429, disasters such as Coutrai (1302), Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), Nicopolis (1396) and Agincourt (1415), 'founded a clearly perceptible pattern: that of late medieval French

military failure', Given-Wilson and Bériac, 'Edward III's Prisoners of War', 802.

77 Gabriel, 'Educational Ideas'; Laidlaw, 'Christine de Pizan', 532.

78 By referring to Joan of Arc as the person who 'donne a France la mamelle / De paix et doulce nourriture' [gives to France the breast of peace and sweet nourishment] (v.189), Pizan reprises her earlier discussions of sustenance and breastfeeding. See Walters, 'Mother-Daughter Conflicts', 115; Singer, 'Christine de Pizan's "Doulce Nourriture"', 104–5; Corrington, 'Milk of Salvation', 412–13; and Fraioli, *Joan of Arc and the Hundred Years War*.

79 Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, 354.

80 Christine de Pizan, *Selected Writings*, ed. Blumenfeld-Kosinksi, 252.