



Regulation of Grief

The Concept of Consolation in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*

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Abstract

This thesis considers how Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* can be read as a consolatory text, and what consolation strategies are used within it. Accordingly, this thesis argues against satirical readings of the *Consolation*, like those presented by Joel Relihan (2007), and against John Marenbon's interpretation that the text explores the limitations in Lady Philosophy's ability to console. To this end, this thesis will consider specific features of the *Consolation*, its use of personifications, and the dialogue form, from the perspective of emotional practices established by Monique Scheer (2012) and Christoph Jedan's (2020) five axis model of consolation. In addition, this thesis uses various adaptations and translations of the *Consolation of Philosophy* from the Medieval period to compare the function of the dialogue form, and the use of personifications to the consolatory meaning of the text. Research on the *Consolation of Philosophy* has focussed on Lady Philosophy's rational arguments, delineating a healing worldview to Boethius. This thesis explores other ways in which Lady Philosophy consoles Boethius, most importantly through indicating acceptable ways to behave and to engage with grief.

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Introduction

Introduction to topic and research question

The *Consolation of Philosophy* by Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was an incredibly influential text in the Middle Ages. The autobiographical story of Boethius being charged with treason and imprisoned, and being consoled by the personified Lady Philosophy in his cell, has been translated, commented on, interpreted, and adapted throughout the medieval period. Scholars have spent much time debating the meaning of the *Consolation*, analysing its philosophical discussions about Fortune, luck and providence, and discussing oddities like its prosy-metric form and the lack of specific references to Christianity. In short; the *Consolation* is an immensely complex text with a rich interpretative history and many interesting and noteworthy features. One of these features is of particular interest for the field of the history of emotions: the *Consolation of Philosophy* was read for many centuries as a consolatory text,¹ one that addresses certain emotions in its characters and audience, and tries to console by using and re-orienting these emotions.

Modern research has shown that consolation is a very broad and multi-interpretable concept, that can inspire many different practices. For example, Eva Weber-Guskar has argued that ‘consolation’ is an ambiguous concept since it can refer both to something one offers someone else, giving consolation to someone, and something one experiences, as someone who is being consoled (Weber-Guskar 2014, 176). It is also not apparent whether ‘being consoled’ means simply the elimination of negative emotions, or an active development of happy emotions (Weber-Guskar 2014, 175). In addition to this, Christoph Jedan has shown with his five-axis model of consolation that the act of consoling can involve many different practices and approaches. One can appeal to the inner strength of the person being consoled (the ‘consoland’), one can aim to remind the consoland of his or her communal ties, or one can explain why someone should not be saddened by a so-experienced loss. Christoph Jedan categorizes Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* as ‘metaphysical and moral consolation’, a text that focusses on the metaphysical underpinnings and understanding of reality (Jedan 2019, 24). Other scholars also consider the *Consolation of Philosophy* as an attempt to offer this kind of consolation (Duclow 1979), and in examining the meaning of the *Consolation* they mainly take into account the philosophical arguments set out within it (Marenbon 2003, 142). However, it is my hypothesis that there is more to consolation in the *Consolation of Philosophy* than metaphysical arguments, and that

¹ Some scholars dispute whether or not the *Consolation of Philosophy* can be considered part of the *consolatio* genre, and there is dispute about whether or not it can be considered a genuine consolatory text. I discuss this issue late on in this introduction.

the specific ways in which this text consoles are more nuanced than the rational arguments that are presented within it.

In this thesis I want to investigate how the *Consolation* addresses the emotions of the character Boethius and in this way constructs a concept of consolation for its audience. To this end, I will look at how the literary device of personification is used in the *Consolation* for consolatory purposes, and how the dialogue form of the text shapes and influences the consolatory meaning. The research question I want to answer is the following:

What is the effect of narrative devices like dialogue and personification on the emotions of both the figure Boethius and the audience of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, and how do these narrative devices work towards the construction of a consolatory narrative?

In my thesis I will seek to understand the concept of consolation as it is presented in the *Consolation* through the narrative devices used to express it. However, my research will not be exhaustive. As mentioned earlier, the *Consolation* has many features that make the text the complex interesting treasure-trove that it is, and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse them all. Consequently, I will focus on the dialogue form of the *Consolation* and the use of personifications, and I will leave other relevant features, such as the alteration between prose and verse, for a future research project, for myself or for another student of this intriguing material.

To answer my research question I will do a close textual analysis of the *Consolation*, guided by the recent research on the text itself, as well as by research from the history of emotions regarding personifications and dialogue. In addition to this, I will compare the *Consolation of Philosophy* with later translations and adaptations of it, so that differences and similarities in the structure of the narrative will provide a clearer picture of the workings of the features within the *Consolation*. To this end, I have selected four different texts that are all part of the interpretational history of the *Consolation* in the medieval period, and that all include either personifications, or include dialogue, or both:

1. The *Old English Boethius*, allegedly translated by King Alfred the Great (ca. 849-899).
2. The *De Querimonia*, by Hildebert of Lavardin (1056-1133).
3. The *Consolatio de Morte Amici*, by Lawrence of Durham (ca. 1114-1154).
4. The *Kingis Quair*, allegedly written by King James I of Scotland (ca. 1394-1437).

I will provide more information on these texts and the basis for their selection later on in this introduction.

Theoretical framework

Earlier in this introduction I already briefly mentioned some modern research on consolation as a concept, and that this is by no means a straightforward notion. In this section I will say more about the research of Christoph Jedan, and his five-axis model of consolation, to which I will relate my own findings on consolation within the *Consolation of Philosophy*. Jedan's five-axis model of consolation is an attempt to combine several modern approaches to the concept of consolation, and include them all in a single model. To this end, Jedan identifies five axes (aspects/themes) of consolation that emerge from his study of a large corpus of consolatory texts throughout history. I will discuss them here briefly, in order:

1. Resilience: consolations often attempt to appeal to the inner strength of the consoland, and any virtues they might possess. The key message is that if the consoland uses these virtues and his or her inner strength, he or she can overcome the present grief.
2. Regulation of emotion: consolations are generally aimed towards the regulation of grief, and very often there is a negative view of either grief in general, or of an excessive, unchecked sort of grief. Consequently, consolations very often aim to replace these kinds of unacceptable forms of grief with an ideal of acceptable grief; a form of grief that all who are involved (consoland, consoler, surrounding community, etc.) can live with, and is helpful in some way (Jedan 2020, 7). In this thesis, I will be complementing Jedan's description of this axis with a distinction, motivated by appraisal theories of emotion. While Jedan's account of regulation of emotion seems mostly concerned with regulating the behavioural response of the consoland to fit ideas of acceptable grief, regulation of emotion on account of the appraisal theory would entail regulating an individual's judgement of the thing causing grief. The basic idea of this notion is that emotional processes begin with the appraisal of a certain stimulus (Rosenwein and Cristiani 2018, 20); how an event or object affects me personally. This in turn affects my actions. Emotions can be regulated at the level of behaviour; seeking to change my actions that follow certain emotions. Or emotions can be regulated at the appraisal level; by changing the consoland's judgement of an event, object, or situation.
3. (Auto)Biography: consolations often try to (re)write the narrative surrounding the loss and grief. For example, this can involve highlighting a way in which a deceased's life can be perceived as being complete and fulfilled. This axis also involves the preservation of this narrative.

4. World-view: consolations often present their audience with a worldview in which death and loss have a legitimate place. The main idea is that by giving loss a meaningful place in the world, it might more easily be accepted.
5. Community: consolations often aim to re-establish disrupted communal ties. Community can be understood in different ways; family ties, connection with a society, nation state, or religious community, or even one's connection with humanity as a whole (Jedan 2020, 9-10).

These strands can all -to a bigger or lesser extent- be present in consolatory texts, and not all texts include all axes of consolation. Jedan argues that the *Consolation of Philosophy* consoles through the world-view axis; in the context a discussion of what he terms 'metaphysical and moral consolation' he names the *Consolation* as iconic text, and he argues that this type of consolation tries to present its audience with a world-view in which death and loss have a legitimate place (Jedan 2019, 21-24). In my thesis I will engage with Jedan's model where relevant; I will demonstrate that the *Consolation* includes more of the axes of consolation, and that these consolatory practices are represented and expressed through the emotions of the characters, and through the narrative devices that are used in the text.

My research on how the concept of consolation is presented in the *Consolation of Philosophy* should be understood against the background of Barbara Rosenwein's notion of emotional communities. Within this context, the scholar focusses on the "systems of feeling" that define how specific emotions are evaluated and conceptualised within a community (Rosenwein 2002, 845). These emotional communities are usually understood to be social communities with close connections between individual members, but it is also possible for an emotional community to be linked through a medium, such as a textual one (Plamper 2015, 69). In this thesis, I will consider and investigate the conceptions surrounding consolation within the textual emotional community that consists of the audience of the *Consolation of Philosophy* throughout the Middle Ages. Of course, with each adaptation and translation these conceptions vary slightly, and in order for future research in which we will track these variations to be possible, it is necessary to lay the groundwork of understanding the conception of consolation as is presented in the *Consolation of Philosophy*.

In addition to this, I will make use of the notion of emotional practices as delineated by Monique Scheer (2012). She argues that emotions do not just inspire practices, but that emotions themselves can be seen as practical interactions with the world (Scheer 2012, 193). In this line, we must see emotions as something we *do* rather than *have*, and we must consider that emotions are represented and expressed by things other than just words. A key notion to Scheer's model of emotional practices is the idea of 'performativity'. This is the notion that someone's emotions and dispositions are cultivated

through interaction with his or her environment (Neuendorf 2021, 228-229). Scheer discusses four different kinds of emotional practices: The first of these is *mobilizing*. Mobilizing practices are practices that are aimed at achieving a certain emotional state; to invoke certain emotions in ourselves and in others (Scheer 2012, 209). The second kind of emotional practice is *naming*, which has the main idea that putting a name on our feelings is a necessary component of experiencing them (Scheer 2012, 212). The third emotional practice is *communicating*. The key idea here is that because emotions have certain functions in social contexts, people use them as a means of exchange (Scheer 2012, 214). An example of this is a parent shouting at a child, communicating anger, to discourage the child from displaying similar behaviour in future. The last kind of emotional practice that Scheer identifies is *regulating*, which encompasses practices aimed at establishing and reinforcing social norms and cultural scripts surrounding specific emotions. A modern example is the sentence 'boys don't cry', which indicates a social norm concerning a specific group; boys are discouraged to cry (Scheer 2012, 216). This *regulating* practice is very closely related to the 'regulation of emotion' axis from Jedan, and this emphasizes that consolation in itself can be seen as an emotional practice.

To summarize; in this thesis I will consider which emotional practices of consolation are present within the textual emotional community that is constituted by the *Consolation of Philosophy*, and I will pay specific attention to how personification and the dialogue form of the text represent, affect, and relate to these consolatory practices. I will use Jedan's five-axis model to present my findings on the concept of consolation in the *Consolation* in a comprehensible way. In the remainder of this introductory chapter I will discuss some relevant information and controversies about my source texts, firstly on *The Consolation of Philosophy*, and also on the texts I have selected for comparison.

Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*

The *Consolation of Philosophy* was probably written around the year 525, while Boethius was in prison and awaiting execution. He was finally put to death in 526.² It is in the confines of prison that the narrative of the *Consolation* begins, with the opening verse in which the fictional character Boethius, aided by the Muses of poetry, laments his own fate and his sudden change in Fortune.³ After this opening poem, Lady Philosophy appears at his bedside to console him. Lady Philosophy does this in several stages, as she states herself: she will first administer some 'milder medicines', "for that is the

² For a full account of Boethius' life and the circumstances surrounding his execution, see (Moorhead 2009).

³ The distinction between the author Boethius, the historical person who wrote the *Consolation*, and the character Boethius, who is a persona within the written narrative of the *Consolation* is an important one. Throughout my thesis I will uphold this distinction. The author Boethius will always be designated as such, while the character can be referred to as simply 'Boethius'.

state you are in, you are not ready for stronger medicines” (Boethius 1973, 165). Lady Philosophy’s lighter medicines consist of an explanation and defence of the workings of Fortune, and the argument that nothing in this world can bring true happiness (Book I and II). Lady Philosophy’s stronger medicine is an elaboration of what true happiness is, and that this can be found in God (book III). Although Boethius agrees with Lady Philosophy’s arguments throughout the dialogue, he still does not seem entirely convinced at the beginning of book IV, where he asks Lady Philosophy how evil can exist in the world when God reigns over it. In book V Lady Philosophy also discusses how the existence of fate is reconcilable with the existence of human free will.

One way of reading the *Consolation* has been dominant for centuries; the *Consolation* is taken at face value, as a genuine attempt to console. On this reading, the two main characters of the text (Lady Philosophy and Boethius) represent two sides of the author of the text. The character Boethius is understood to be the emotional side which is wallowing in grief over the loss of his earthly fortune, while Lady Philosophy represents the enlightened authoritative rational side (Marenbon 2021, §7), who will argue that no real loss has occurred, and she is thus not affected emotionally (Donato 2013, 7). However, more recently this view has been adjusted. Some scholars have argued that rather than provide genuine solace, the *Consolation of Philosophy* is trying to show Lady Philosophy’s inability to console Boethius. One argument for this view is the fact that form of the *Consolation of Philosophy* is atypical for consolation texts of its time (Donato 2012, 1). The *Consolation* is a prosi-metric text; a text in which verse and prose alternate. This is a key characteristic of a genre called ‘Menippean Satire’ (Marenbon 2003, 160), and modern scholars disagree about whether or not the *Consolation* can be read as a genuine consolatory text. For example, Joel Relihan has argued that the Menippean form of the *Consolation* is not an incidental feature, but that the text should be interpreted as satire. He states that everyone to date has “missed the joke” (Relihan 2007, 9), and that the real meaning of the text is to demonstrate Lady Philosophy’s inability to console Boethius. Some scholars, Relihan among them, hold that the *Consolation* promises solace that is either only partially delivered (Marenbon 2003), or not achieved at all (Payne 1981).

This is potentially a serious interpretational issue in light of what I am trying to do in this thesis, namely; to investigate how the *Consolation of Philosophy* might present a concept of consolation. A prerequisite for my research question is that the *Consolation* is in fact a serious consolatory text, instead of a satirical text mocking any effort in consoling. However, I am also trying to trace the conceptions of consolation within the textual communities that read the *Consolation* throughout the Middle Ages, when it was in fact read as a genuine consolatory text (Von Moos 1971, 32). And it is my hypothesis that reading it through the lens of emotional practices of consolation, and by considering

different consolation strategies, provides a counter-interpretation for Relihan's satirical reading. Throughout my thesis I will engage with some passages that are used to support a satirical interpretation of the *Consolation*, like the beginning of book IV where the figure Boethius states that he is still grieving and asks Lady Philosophy questions that divert her from her arguments. Relihan argues that the character Boethius is diverting Lady Philosophy from her own argumentative plan, and that because of this she ultimately fails in her mission to console Boethius (Relihan 2007, 21). I will explain these passages within a genuine consolatory interpretation, aided by my findings about consolation as a broader emotional practice within the *Consolation*.

Comparison texts

As mentioned earlier in this introduction, part of my examination of the narrative structure of the *Consolation* will be a comparative study. For this, I have selected four texts, that I will briefly introduce in this section.

The first text is the Old English translation of Boethius' *Consolation*, probably written between 887 and 899 (Payne 1968), and ascribed to King Alfred the Great, although in reality he may have only commissioned it (Irvine & Godden 2012, vii-xv). The text survives in two different versions, each unique to their manuscripts; one prose version, and one prosimetric version, and it is generally considered by modern scholars to be a rather free translation, especially in later passages (Marenbon 2003, 180).⁴ In the Old English Boethius (OEB), Boethius' Mind (Mod) is visited by the male character Wisdom. Britton Brooks has argued that the focus of the *OEB* is less on the development of philosophical arguments, like in the *Consolation*, but more on the development of the relationship between Mod and Wisdom (Brooks 2018, 530). The *OEB* also treats its personified figures in other ways. For example, the Muses are not personified within the *OEB*. I will compare these differences between the *OEB* and the *Consolation* in order to draw focus to specific aspects of personification and dialogue in the *Consolation*.

The second text is *De Querimonia*, which is a 12th century adaptation of the *Consolation* written by Hildebert of Lavardin (1056-1133).⁵ Like the *Consolation*, it is a semi-autobiographical prosimetric dialogue in which the author presents himself as a character who is visited by a female personification. But while in the *Consolation* the figure Boethius is visited by Lady Philosophy to discuss the working of Fortuna, in *De Querimonia*, bishop Hildebert is visited by Anima, the personification of his own soul. In

⁴ All references to the *Old English Boethius* are to the prosimetric version, edited by Irvine and Godden (2012).

⁵ All references to *De Querimonia* in this thesis are based on the edition by Peter Orth (2000).

the subsequent dialogue they discuss the workings of the soul. *De Querimonia* is particularly interesting for comparison with the *Consolation*, because it is so similar on so many fronts, while diverting from the Boethian model on several key aspects. Firstly, while in the *Consolation* it is the Boethius figure who laments his situation and is being consoled by the personified Lady Philosophy, in *Querimonia* it is the personified figure who is in need of help from the Hildebert figure. Secondly, while Lady Philosophy's first task is to free the Boethius figure from his emotional distress, Anima is purposefully trying to elicit emotional responses from Hildebert (Balint 2004, 9). As soon as she succeeds in doing this, the first inversion where Hildebert (instead of the personified figure Anima) is the authoritative consoler seems to shift back to the Boethian model. Despite these differences, the interaction between Anima and Hildebert is similar to that between Boethius and Lady Philosophy, and these similarities reveal some important aspects of how personification works for consolatory purposes.

Thirdly, we have the *Consolatio de Morte Amici (CMA)*, also a twelfth-century adaptation, written by Lawrence of Durham.⁶ The *CMA* is a prosimetrical dialogue between a mourner (Laurentius), who is grieving over the death of his friend Paganus, and the consoler, who appears unnamed and undescribed, and introduces himself as a friend. Where in the *Consolation of Philosophy* there is a clear authoritative voice (Lady Philosophy) and a student (Boethius), in the *CMA* the two interlocutors are on a much more even footing, which produces a much more lively dialogue full of emotional turmoil (Balint 2009, 61). Uniquely in my selected corpus, the *CMA* does not include any personified abstractions; the consoler in the text remains unnamed and unspecified, and can only be related to Lady Philosophy in the *Consolation* through the fact that he appears at the same point within the narrative. The dialogue that follows concerns the true meaning of happiness, and the mourner eventually accepts the consoler's message that his friendship with Paganus was not true happiness.

The fourth and last text that I have selected for comparison is the *Kingis Quair*, a fifteenth-century Scottish poem allegedly written by King James I of Scotland. It tells the story of a young boy (allegedly James I himself) who is imprisoned, and how he deals with this adversity. The *Quair* is heavily influenced by Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, which is mentioned in the opening lines of the poem (St. 3-8, ln. 15-46).⁷ The narrator is reading the *Consolation*, and then sets out to describe events from

⁶ All references to the *Consolatio De Morte Amici* are based on the edition by Udo Kindermann (1994).

⁷ All references to the *Kingis Quair* in this thesis are based on the edition by Norton-Smith (1981). All translations of the *Quair* are my own, based on the glossary of Norton-Smith (1981), and the glossary in the edition by Linne Mooney and Mary-Jo Arn (2005).

his youth that pertained to this book. The heavy influence of the *Consolation* on the *Quair* is also described by modern commentators, who regard the *Quair* to be a “direct response to Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*” (Ebin 1974, 321). Although the *Quair* is not written in dialogue-form, the dream vision that is at the heart of the poem contains dialogues between the main character and the goddesses Venus, Minerva, and Fortune. It is for these passages specifically that the *Quair* has been included as a text for comparison.

Structure of thesis

My thesis is divided in several parts, with corresponding chapters; part one will focus on the narrative device of personification as it is used in the *Consolation*, and what this tells us about the concept of consolation. Several modern studies on personification have shown that personifications are powerful literary devices, that can be used for a range of purposes (Breen 2021) (Flannery 2016). In this first part of my thesis, I will examine how personifications are used in the *Consolation* to bring across its consolatory message.

Part two will focus on the dialogue form of the *Consolation*, and how this contributes to its consolatory message. In this chapter, I will analyse the way the dialogue between Lady Philosophy and Boethius progresses throughout the narrative, and how this has a thematic connection to the consolation practices that are presented within the text. I will also consider how the character Boethius can be analysed not just as a representation of the author, but also as a representation of the expected audience. In this sense, his reactions can give us clues as to how the audience is expected to react to the arguments in the text, and the conceptions of consolation that go with this.

These two parts of my thesis will begin with an introduction to the relevant recent publications about the narrative devices in relation to the history of emotions, and specific analyses of these devices in the *Consolation*. Both parts are further structured thematically, based on my findings from comparing the *Consolation* with the four later texts. The final chapter of my thesis will combine the conclusions from these two chapters, and relate the results of this thesis to the existing pool of research about the *Consolation of Philosophy*, and the history of emotions.

Chapter 1: Personification

Theoretical Background

In this chapter I will examine how the personifications of Lady Philosophy, Fortuna, and the Muses, are used within the *Consolation* to engage both the Boethius figure and the audience emotionally, and how this contributes towards constructing a consolatory narrative. Before I begin my analysis of personification in the *Consolation* and my comparison between the *Consolation* and later adaptations of it, it is necessary to briefly explore some previous research about personification as emotional tools, and personification in the *Consolation*.

Most important is the article *Personification and Embodied Emotional Practice in Middle English Literature* by Mary C. Flannery, in which she builds on the theoretical framework of emotional practices established by Monique Scheer (Scheer 2012). As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Scheer argues that emotions are themselves practices, i.e.: emotions are something we *do* rather than *have*. In line with this, we must consider that emotions are represented and expressed by things other than words, such as bodily reactions, gestures, images, rituals, actions, et cetera. Flannery argues that we can see personifications as embodied emotional practices, that also have the capacity to put emotions into practice (Flannery 2016, 353). She writes:

“Possessed of a body, the personified emotion exhibits the symptoms and performs the gestures associated with that particular emotional state, enabling readers to imagine the sensory experience and practice that emotion.” (Flannery 2016, 353)

Flannery also argues that gestures and physical descriptions of personified figures are crucial for how they are perceived and conceptualized (Flannery 2016, 359). In this chapter, I will approach personifications as emotional practices, and I will look closely at how they are used to mobilize, name, communicate and regulate emotions in the *Consolation*, and how this might contribute to the consolatory process.

Another important publication with regard to personification is *Machines of the Mind: Personification in Medieval Literature* (2021), in which Katherine Breen explores the workings of personifications as ‘machines of the mind’. She traces the use of different kinds of personifications throughout the Middle Ages, with a strong focus on how they work in relation to medieval theories of abstraction, rather than on what they might mean or represent (Breen 2021, 9). Breen situates medieval conceptions of personifications in the medieval discussion of *universalia*, and argues that this is fundamental for

understanding how personifications work. The range of positions in the medieval debate on universals roughly corresponds to the range of ontological statuses attributed to medieval personifications.

Breen distinguishes between different types of personifications, based on their ontological status and the underlying philosophical theory. She argues that the personification of Lady Philosophy in the *Consolation* falls into the category of Platonic daemonic personifications, and that interpreting personification in the *Consolation* in this way solves many interpretative issues (Breen 2021, 26). Within the category of what Breen calls 'Platonic personifications', personifications are understood to represent in some way the Platonic forms, and this theory of personifications assumes that abstractions are not simply words, but that they have a real existence (Breen 2021, 111). The daemonic personifications are characterized as intermediary beings, that serve as mediators between humans and the forms which are associated with the highest level of divinity. They sometimes act much like guardian spirits, accompanying individual humans through life. Unlike more formal Platonic personifications, that directly represent the ideas they personify, these personifications are often flawed, emotional, and they act on impulses. Daemonic personifications also tend to have tutelary relationships with their human interlocutors, claiming that they have known each other their entire lives (Breen 2021, 113).

I find Breen's interpretation of Lady Philosophy as a Platonic daemonic personification very plausible, and I will support her case throughout this chapter. I will also argue that this presentation of Lady Philosophy as daemonic intermediary, who has a very personal relationship to the human interlocutor, is a crucial feature of the narrative, and for the consolatory process.

Representation of Lady Philosophy

The first personification I will discuss in this chapter is that of Lady Philosophy herself. Not only because she is the personification that plays the biggest role within the narrative, but also because her appearance, ontological status, and meaning have been a point of discussion for many modern critics of the *Consolation*. Lady Philosophy's appearance suggests that she is some kind of divine being. There are numerous details about her visual manifestation that suggest supernatural status (Marenbon 2003, 153):

[...] adstittisse mihi supra verticem visa est mulier reverendi admodum vultus, oculis ardentibus et ultra communem hominum valentiam perspicacibus colore vivido atque inexhausti vigoris, quamvis ita aevi plena foret ut nullo modo nostrae crederetur aetatis, statura discretionis ambiguae. Nam nunc quidem ad communem sese hominum mensuram cohibebat, nunc vero

pulsare caelum summi verticis cacumine videbatur; quae cum altius caput extulisset, ipsum etiam caelum penetrabat respicientiumque hominum frustrabatur intuitum.

[...] there seemed to stand above my head a woman. Her look filled me with awe; her burning eyes penetrated more deeply than those of ordinary men; her complexion was fresh with an ever-lively bloom, yet she seemed so ancient that none would think her of our time. It was difficult to say how tall she might be, for at one time she seemed to confine herself to the ordinary measure of a man, and at another the crown of her head touched the heavens; and when she lifted her head higher yet, she penetrated the heavens themselves, and was lost to the sight of men. (Boethius 1973, 132-133)

Accordingly, despite the lack of specific references to Christianity in the work, some scholars interpret Lady Philosophy as an angel, who leads Boethius back to God (Klinger 1921, 117). Other scholars interpret Lady Philosophy not as representing Christianity, but as a personification of human reason (Courcelle 1967, 337-44). Joel Relihan, the main advocate of a satirical interpretation of the *Consolation*, argues that Lady Philosophy is presented in terms of pagan Lady Philosophy. He also maintains that Lady Philosophy is deliberately presented as flawed and imperfect, thus prompting the audience to turn to Christianity as a true form of consolation (Relihan 2007). The large amount of discussion amongst modern scholars reveals the ambiguous nature of the character Lady Philosophy.

Lady Philosophy's actions throughout the *Consolation* contrast somewhat with the image of divinity that is set up with the description given when she first appears. Her actions are surprising, not what we might expect from a personified abstraction (Dronke 1994, 39). In her interaction with Boethius she acts very humanly. For example, she lashes out to the Muses of Poetry, calling them '*scenicas meretriculas*' (Boethius 1973, 134); 'little stage whores' (Breen 2021, 163). In this same passage it becomes clear that Lady Philosophy speaks with a lot of authority, because Boethius describes:

At ego cuius acies lacrimis mersa caligaret nec dinoscere possem, quoniam haec esset mulier tam imperiosae auctoritatis, obstipui visuque in terram defixo [...]

I myself, since my sight was so dimmed with tears that I could not clearly see who this woman was of such commanding authority, was struck dumb, my eyes cast down;

(Boethius 1973, 134-135)

Lady Philosophy acts as the authoritative voice of the teacher within the standard dialogue form (Sweeney 2019), and as mentioned in the introduction, she is usually understood to be the enlightened rational party in the dialogue. Although one would expect a character who embodies the discipline of Lady Philosophy to use only rational arguments and follow a coherent line of reasoning, there is a

number of ways in which Lady Philosophy diverges from these expectations: she does not follow a single traceable line of investigation, she alternates between her rational arguments and poems, and she even allows herself to be diverted from her line of reasoning by Boethius' questions (Donato 2013, 68-69). John Marenbon argues that the fact that Lady Philosophy is set up to be a divine character in the opening passages, and then acts so differently from expectations throughout the texts, supports the case that the *Consolation* should be interpreted as satirical (Marenbon 2003, 162).

How then should we interpret Lady Philosophy as a character? For this we need to consider further how she is depicted at the start of the *Consolation*:

Vestes erant tenuissimis filis subtili artificio, indissolubili materia perfectae quas, uti post eadem prodente cognovi, suis manibus ipsa texerat. [...] Harum in extrema margine .Π. Graecum, in supremo vero .Θ., legebatur intextum. Atque inter utrasque litteras in scalarum modum gradus quidam insigniti videbantur quibus ab inferiore ad superius elementum esset ascensus.

Her dress was made of very fine, imperishable thread, of delicate workmanship: she herself wove it, as I learned later, for she told me. [...] On its lower border was woven the Greek letter Π (P), and on the upper, (Θ) (Th), and between the two letters steps were marked like a ladder, by which one might climb from the lower letter to the higher.

(Boethius 1973, 132-135)

In modern scholarship, the Greek letter Theta (Θ) is taken signify *theoria*, while the Pi (Π) signifies *praxis* (Gruber 1978, 63-64). *Theoria* signifies the most abstract way of thinking, concerned with the structure of reality, while *Praxis* is concerned with how one should act in the material world (Donato 2013, 71). In Boethius' time, the image of the ladder was used to signify the ascend from practical to intellectual virtues. If we read this depiction of Lady Philosophy in this way, she can be taken to signify the notion that *Theoria* and *Praxis* are closely connected, and that *Theoria*, the understanding of reality, can only be reached through *Praxis*; moral conduct (Donato 2013, 72). Thus, Lady Philosophy teaches both theoretical understanding (worldview), as practical conduct necessary for establishing and understanding this worldview. She is not only an intellectual, philosophical teacher, but also a life-teacher of practical virtues. And Lady Philosophy will not only teach Boethius a healing worldview, but she will also address his conduct and attitude and how to deal with sorrow.

Earlier in this chapter I stated that I agree with Katherine Breen's argument that Lady Philosophy is a Platonic daemon, rather than a direct embodiment of human reason or the discipline of Lady

Philosophy. Although Lady Philosophy is described like this in the beginning of the *Consolation*, her actions and descriptions throughout the rest of the text do not present her as some perfect being representing a Platonic idea. Rather, she is presented as a being that mediates between humans and the Platonic ideas. Thus, Lady Philosophy has a personal, tutelary relationship with the character Boethius, as is evidenced by the way they refer to one another. For example, Boethius refers to Lady Philosophy as *'nutricem meam'* (Boethius 1973, 140); 'my nurse', and Lady Philosophy refers to Boethius multiple times as *'alumne'*, meaning something like 'foster-son', 'pupil', or 'nurseling' (Lewis 1890, 50). Understanding Lady Philosophy as an intermediary Platonic daemon helps to explain the peculiar contradiction between her description as a transcendental, divine being, and her human, imperfect behaviour and reasoning throughout the *Consolation*. She is not a perfect being representing Platonic ideas. Rather, she is an intermediary being who guides Boethius through *Praxis*, towards *Theoria*.

Familiarity

The comparison between the *Consolation* and the other texts from the corpus of this thesis calls attention to a specific feature of the authoritative personifications in the texts; the personifications are very concerned with stressing the familiarity between themselves and the male figures they interact with. For example, in *De Querimonia*, roughly one third of the dialogue is dedicated to Anima trying to establish who she is, and her long-standing relationship with Hildebert. In fact, the first thing Anima says to Hildebert is "I am surprised that you have so far forgotten me and our long association [...]" (Balint 2009, 174).⁸ That it is important for Hildebert to understand who she is also becomes clear by what he says to her after her lament in the first verse passage:

Multa mihi quesitu digna tuus offert habitus, multa sermo, multa vultus, mestitudo. Nihil horum negligenter opinor transeundum, si tamen, que sis aut quod nomen tibi sit, prius te monstrante didicero. (Orth ed. 2000, 74)

Your bearing conveys to me much that is worthy of inquiry, as do your words and the sadness of your countenance; none of these things, I think, is to be passed over lightly; if only I might first learn from you who you are or what your name is. (Balint 2009, 177)

It is only after Hildebert remembers the close relationship between Anima and himself that he starts to get truly emotionally involved in the dialogue, by feeling shame for his forgetfulness, and anger at Anima's accusations.

⁸ " 'Misor', inquit, 'te sic oblitum mei, sic longeve sodalitatis immemorem [...].'" (Orth ed. 2000, 70).

Similarly, the Boethius figure in the *Consolation* also does not seem to recognize Lady Philosophy right away:

At ego cuius acies lacrimis mersa caligaret nec dinoscere possem, quaenam haec esset mulier tam imperiosae auctoritatis, obstipui visuque in terram defixo, [...]

I myself, since my sight was so dimmed with tears that I could not clearly see who this woman was of such commanding authority, was struck dumb, my eyes cast down; (Boethius 1973, 134-135).

After this verse passage, Lady Philosophy is still concerned with establishing the connection between her and Boethius:

“Tunc ille es,” ait, “qui nostro quondam lacte nutritus nostris educatus alimentis in virilis animi robur evaseras? Atqui talia contuleramus arma quae nisi prior abiecisses, invicta te firmitate tuerentur. Agnoscisne me? Quid taces?”

She said: “Are you the same man who was once nourished with my milk, once fed on my diet, till you reached full manhood? And did I not furnish you with such weapons as would now keep you steadfast and safe if you had not thrown them away? Do you recognize me? Why do you say nothing?” (Boethius 1973, 138-139)

The phrase “why do you say nothing” is also of significance here. Up to this point in the narrative, only Lady Philosophy has spoken, while Boethius has not yet uttered a word. The only Boethius-voice we have heard up to this point is the narrative voice that recounts the story. It is only after Boethius has recognized Lady Philosophy as “*nutricem meam*”, “the nurse who brought me up” (Boethius 1973, 140-141) that he begins to speak with her, and asks her why she has come to him.

It is my argument then, that it is crucial for the emotional involvement of Boethius, and by extension the consolatory process that the personification of Lady Philosophy establishes an emotional bond with her ‘consolant’ Boethius. She does this through stressing and establishing a familiar bond with him, and through naming and invoking his grieving emotions. The stress on the familiarity between the male figure and the personification is purposeful and necessary for the Boethius figure to emotionally connect to the personification he interacts with. As established in the previous section, this presentation of personifications as having a long-standing close relationship with the figures they interact with is typical for daemonic personifications, and it serves the tutelary relationship that exists between them. What the comparison between the *Consolation* and *De Querimonia* calls to the

forefront is the importance of this all-ready existing close relationship for the emotional connection of the autobiographical figures to the personifications, and by extension; the consolatory process.

Within this context it is an interesting difference between *De Querimonia* and *The Consolation* that Anima clearly tries to invoke emotional responses in Hildebert, while Lady Philosophy's ultimate purpose is to try to make Boethius less emotional (Balint 2004, 9). However, if we analyse Lady Philosophy's tactics very closely, this does not seem to be her immediate purpose. Indeed, her first purpose is to connect to Boethius emotionally, so that he is receptive for her consolatory messages. Much like Hildebert in *De Querimonia*, Boethius assumes a silent and awaiting attitude when Lady Philosophy first appears. In reaction to this, both Lady Philosophy and Anima sing highly emotional lamentations. In case of Lady Philosophy, this lament describes and bewails the circumstances in which Boethius finds himself, while Anima's lament concerns her own dire circumstances. However, both verse passages work in a similar way; they serve to name and communicate the feelings of the character in the dialogue who is in need of curing/consolation. In addition to this, both poems speak of a time in which things were better, and a present in which there is some sort of grief:

<i>"Hic quondam caelo liber aperto</i>	"This man
<i>Suetus in aetheros ire meatus</i>	Used once to wander free under open skies
	The paths of the heavens;
[...]	[...]
<i>Nunc iacet effeto lumine mentis</i>	But now he lies
	His mind's light languishing,
<i>Et pressus gravibus colla catenis</i>	Bowed with these heavy chains about his
	neck,
<i>Declivemque gerens pondere vultum</i>	His eyes cast down beneath the weight of
	care,
<i>Cogitur, heu, stolidam cernere terram</i>	Seeing nothing
	But the dull, solid earth."

(Boethius 1973, 137-139)

While Anima speaks like this:

<i>Triste igum cervice gero gravibusque catenis,</i>	I bear the hard yoke on my neck, heavy
	chains,
<i>Proh dolor! Ad mortem non moritura trahor.</i>	Alas, I, drag me, although immortal, toward
	death.

<i>Magna satis, reminiscor enim, sperare solebam</i>	Indeed, I remember that I used to hope for great things,
<i>Dum non alter amans, Christe, sed unus eras.</i>	While you, Christ, were my only love, and there was no other.
(Orth ed. 2000, 72)	(Balint 2004, 175)

These poems use very similar bodily terminology to describe the grieving emotional states that Anima and Boethius find themselves in. For example; both poems refer to the ‘heavy chains’ that the grieving figures feel around their necks. This is an explicit bodily reference to specific emotions, which occurs in both poems that serve to *communicate* the feelings of the consolator. What I suggest is that these poems are another step in the process through which the personifications are trying to connect with their interlocutors.

In short, the personification of Lady Philosophy is a way to put the concept of consolation, the management of negative emotions, into practice. Lady Philosophy in the *Consolation* serves the function of being able to connect with Boethius emotionally, and thus making him more receptive to the consolatory message and arguments expressed further on in the text. In this way, Lady Philosophy serves as an intermediary, and she is a narrative device through which the character Boethius can engage with these concepts in a meaningful way. As a comparison with the establishment of an emotional dialogue in *De Querimonia* brings to our attention, Lady Philosophy’s methods in this are to stress and (re-)establish the familiar bond that exists between her and Boethius, and to name and describe his feelings.

Personification of the Muses

Another personification to be found in the narrative of the *Consolation* is the personification of the Muses in the beginning of the work, in the opening verse that is written by the character Boethius, and in the following prose passage. Their first mention is in the 3rd line of the work, when the character Boethius laments:

*Ecce mihi lacerae dictant scribenda camenae
Et veris elegi fletibus ora rigant.*

See how the Muses grief-torn bid me write,
And with unfeigned tears these elegies drench my face.
(Boethius 1973, 130-131).

Directly after this opening lament, in which Boethius bewails his change in fortune and his loss of happiness, Lady Philosophy appears at his bedside. She immediately sends away the Muses of poetry, and for our purposes it is worth to read this passage in full:

Quae ubi poeticas Musas vidit nostro adsistentes toro fletibusque meis verba dictantes, commota paulisper ac torvis inflammata luminibus: "Quis," inquit, "has scenicas meretriculas ad hunc aegrum permisit accedere quae dolores eius non modo nullis remediis foverent, verum dulcibus insuper alerent veneris? Hae sunt enim quae infructuosis affectuum spinis uberem fructibus rationis segentem necant hominumque mentes assuefaciunt morbo, non liberant. [...] Sed abite potius Sirenes usque in exitium dulces meisque eum Musis curandum sanandumque relinquite."

Now when she saw the Muses of poetry standing by my bed, helping me to find words for my grief, she was disturbed for a moment, and then cried out with fiercely blazing eyes: "Who let these theatrical tarts in with this sick man? Not only have they no cures for his pain, but with their sweet poison they make it worse. These are they who choke the rich harvest of the fruits of reason with the barren thorns of passion. They accustom a man's mind to his ills, not rid him of them. [...] Get out, you Sirens, beguiling men straight to their destruction! Leave him to my Muses to care for and restore to health."

(Boethius 1973, 134-135)

Lady Philosophy expresses in this passage that the Muses of poetry are not helping Boethius deal with his state of mind. In terms of Scheer's emotional practices, the Muses are helping Boethius to *name* his feelings, which is a big part in experiencing and expressing them. However, what is interesting, and also a little contradictory, is the fact that Lady Philosophy says that Boethius must listen to *her* Muses, and that she proceeds to sing a lament of her own, while she has just expressed that weeping Muses and poetry are not a healthy way for Boethius to grieve. This way of personification of the Muses is not present in the other texts in our corpus. In the *Old English Boethius Wisdom* simply says:

Depart now, you accursed worldly sorrows, from my pupil's mind, since you are the worst of evil-doers. Leave him to turn again to my teachings. (Irvine & Godden 2012, 13)

This does suggest that even in the *OEB*, wallowing in sorrow over grief is not seen as the way to go forward in Boethius' circumstances, but without the personification of the Muses, the passage simply does not have the same effect as in the *Consolation*, as I will specify in this passage.

The only other text in our corpus for comparison that personifies the Muses in some way is *The Kingis Quair*, where the Muse of Poetry is invoked: "*Help, Calyope, and wynd, in Marye name!*", "Help,

Calyope, and wind, in Mary's name!" (St. 17, ln. 119). A few lines later the persona also invokes "*goddis and sistris all, in nowmer nine*", "all gods and sisters, in the number nine" (St. 19, ln. 129-130), to guide his pen to write down his joys and torments. The context for this invocation of the Muses is important. Modern scholars have argued that the *Kingis Quair* is the story of an older narrator, who writes down events that happened to him in his youth (Quinn 1981). However, this story starts with the younger persona, who is the protagonist of the story, also trying to write a book, and failing because of his lack of experience and maturity (Quinn 1981, 336-337). Critics of the *Quair* have also argued that the writing of this book by the younger persona, is thematically directly connected to the central issue of the poem; how to deal with the loss of fortune (Ebin 1974, 339). In light of this, the failure of the younger persona to write is directly connected with his immaturity and his inability to deal with the loss of fortune. The Muses then, represent a lack of consolation; a point in the narrative in which the persona is (still) unable to deal with his grief, in both the *Kingis Quair* and in the *Consolation*.

But in light of this, how can we explain the fact that the Muses of poetry are sent away by Lady Philosophy, while she then proceeds to use poetry in her process of curing Boethius? This issue has been discussed by several authors. In *Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy as a Product of Late Antiquity* Antonio Donato argues that Lady Philosophy distinguishes between good and bad rhetoric and poetry, as well as good and bad muses, and that Lady Philosophy relies on 'good muses' to cure Boethius (Donato 2013, 102-103), while the Muses of poetry are 'bad muses'. Similarly David Chamberlain has argued that the opening poem by Boethius, in which the Muses guide him, is an example of "vicious music that injures rather than cures the soul" (Chamberlain 1970, 85). It has also been suggested that the Muses are a barrier for Boethius' expression, and that they hinder his search for his own voice; "They render him passive and put words in his head, if not his mouth" (Lerer 1985, 101).

I want to suggest, with Jedan's five-axis model of consolation in mind, that the Muses of poetry whom Lady Philosophy sends away, are part of an unacceptable way to grieve, and that her own Muses are associated with an acceptable method of grieving. As Jedan argues, unacceptable grieving styles are generally characterized by excessive, unchecked grief (Jedan 2020, 7-8), as Boethius expresses in his opening poem, aided by the Muses:

*Mors hominum felix quae se nec dulcibus annis
Inserit et maestis saepe vocata venit.*

Death, if he come
Not in the years of sweetness
But often called to those who want to
end their misery

Eheu quam surda miseros avertitur aure

Is welcome. My cries he does not hear;

Et flentes oculos claudere saeva negat.

Cruel he will not close my weeping eyes.

(Boethius 1973, 130-131)

It is not insignificant, I think, that in contrast to the other verse passages in the *Consolation*, this is the only verse passage that is not spoken aloud within the context of the narrative. The character Boethius is thinking the words to himself, and is preparing to write them down (Boethius 1973, 132-133). Very similar to what Seth Lerer (1985) argues; the Muses do not help Boethius to express his feelings. Or in Scheer's terms; through the Muses Boethius focusses solely on *naming* his feelings, but he is not yet *communicating* them.

In contrast, Lady Philosophy encourages Boethius to not only *name* his feelings, but also to *communicate* them to her:

Ἐξαύδα, μὴ κεῖθε νόψ. Si operam medicantis expectas, oportet vulnus detegas.

As Homer says, 'speak out, don't hide it in your heart.' If you are looking for a healer's cure, you must lay bare the wound.

(Boethius 1973, 145-147)

When Lady Philosophy casts out the Muses, she states that "*hominumque mentes assuefaciunt morbo, non liberant*", "they accustom a man's mind to his ills, not rid him of them" (Boethius 1973, 134-135). What Lady Philosophy then does in her lamentation is not only to *name* Boethius' feelings, but she is also setting up a first step towards the *communication* of feelings, by describing Boethius' mental state and expressing what she believes to be his problems. After her lamentation, Lady Philosophy adds: "*Sed medicinae tempus est quam querelae*", "But now is the time for cure rather than complaint" (Boethius 1973, 138-139). This suggests that complaint is an important first step in the consolatory process that Lady Philosophy will embark upon with Boethius. Lady Philosophy sends the Muses away not because they help Boethius complain (*name* his feelings), since this is what she does for him as well. Rather, the Muses are part of Boethius' solitary style of grieving, in which he simply broods over his feelings. And this style of grief is unacceptable. Lady Philosophy sends the Muses away not because they help Boethius complain, because this is part of grieving, but because this is all they do, and that is not a helpful emotional practice.

The Muses thus represent an unacceptable grieving style. And, in line with Flannery's research; the fact that they are embodied, and Lady Philosophy is able to physically send them away within the context of the narrative, helps the audience to envision the practices associated with the Muses. In addition to this, the Muses display shame and grief when Lady Philosophy sends them away:

His ille chorus increpitus deiecit humi maestior vultum confessusque rubore verecundiam limen tristis excessit.

Thus upbraided, that company of the Muses dejectedly hung their heads, confessing their shame by their blushes, and dismally left my room.

(Boethius 1973, 134-135)

The shame of the Muses, and their dejection, which can be further associated with the state of excessive grief that Boethius is in at this part of the narrative, present their unacceptable emotional practices in sensory terms. It has been long established that shame is one of the basic emotions through which cultures establish and enforce acceptable behavioural norms (Stearns 2017, 1). Thus, the Muses displaying shame while leaving the narrative under the angry command of the authoritative figure of Lady Philosophy, presents the audience with a powerful picture of unacceptable emotional and behavioural standards. If we compare this with the *Old English Boethius*, where wisdom simply says that Boethius' sorrows should depart from his mind, and then continues to introduce himself, it leaves the audience with a much less powerful image of unhelpful emotional practices. The Muses embody an excess of grief, and their embodiment and display of emotions help the audience gestate these practices and form associations with it.

Personification of Fortuna

One more personification is present within the narrative of the *Consolation*: Fortuna. Throughout the text, Fortuna is attributed bodily expressions and human features. For example, Fortune is said to have a face (*Fortunam vultum*, Boethius 1973, 144) and she can hate (*exosa fortuna*, Boethius 1973, 192), or favour people (*fortuna faveret*, Boethius 1973, 132). But, most importantly, in book II.2, Lady Philosophy imitates her. She speaks:

Vellem autem pauca tecum fortunae ipsius verbis agitare.

But I should like to deal with you for a moment in fortune's own words;

(Boethius 1973, 180-181).⁹

⁹ The translation by Steward, Rand and Tester does not reflect that Fortuna is a personification, hence their translation reads 'fortune' instead of 'Fortuna', the way I will refer to this character in this thesis.

For the remainder of the passage, Lady Philosophy speaks in Fortuna's voice, referring to her in the first-person singular. Although Fortuna does not appear physically before Boethius within the context of the narrative, the fact that Lady Philosophy can imitate her and speak with her voice, emphasizes the embodiment of Fortuna, and through this passage, Fortuna appears to the reader as well as Boethius as a one-dimensional character. We are not told how she looks, however, and she is not physically part of the narrative.

This passage in which Lady Philosophy personifies Fortuna has been noted by several authors, and how this instance fits into Lady Philosophy's consolatory strategy has been analysed in several different ways. For example, Antonio Donato argues that Lady Philosophy's imitation of Fortuna is a way to present views on the workings of Fortuna that are different from Boethius' views, thus moving him away from his wrong opinions. These views are not quite the same as Lady Philosophy's own outlook (Donato 2013, 150). Donato notes that the account on the workings of Fortuna given by Lady Philosophy personifying her in II.2 differs from the account she gives on Fortuna in Book IV (Donato 2013, 149). Namely; in book II Lady Philosophy argues that Fortuna has no true value, because she only offers external goods, and that she is not trustworthy due to her fickle nature. In Book IV, however, Lady Philosophy argues that Fortuna is assorted under the workings of the divine providence (Brouwer 1990, 41), who gives to each person what is becoming to them according to their virtue (Boethius 1973, 392-393). Because these two views seem to disagree with one another, Donato concludes that Lady Philosophy is presenting Boethius with a view that, although not quite true, will bring Boethius closer to the view she is eventually trying to present him with. The view of Fortuna presented in II.2 is a step closer to the proper way of seeing things, but it is not the final view toward which Lady Philosophy is leading Boethius.

It has also been argued that Lady Philosophy personifies Fortuna in order to provoke a reaction from Boethius, and to start a process towards new abilities of insight. Seth Lerer asserts that one of Boethius' problems in the beginning of the *Consolation* is his inability to speak, and that one of Lady Philosophy's first concerns is to cure him of his speechlessness (Lerer 1985, 100). Right after her impersonation of Fortuna, Lady Philosophy states:

His igitur si pro se tecum fortuna loqueretur, quid profecto contra hisceres non haberes, aut si quid est quo querelam tuam iure tuearis, proferas oportet. Dabimus dicendi locum.

Now if fortune spoke to you in this way in her own defence, you would not know what to reply, would you? If indeed you do have anything to say that would justify your complaints, you must utter it -you shall have your chance to speak now.

(Boethius 1973, 184-185)

According to Lerer, Lady Philosophy is trying to engage Boethius in the discussion (Lerer 1985, 113). Indeed she succeeds, and Boethius responds:

Tum ego: "Speciosa quidem ista sunt," inquam, "oblitaque Rhetoricae ac Musicae melle dulcedinis; tum tantum, cum audiuntur, oblectant. Sed miseris malorum altior sensus est. Itaque cum haec auribus insonare desierint, insitus animum maeror praegravat."

"Such arguments", I said, "have a specious sweetness, honeyed as they are with rhetoric and music. While a man listens to them, they please him, wretched though he is, but his sense of his wrongs lies deeper, so that once they cease to sound in his ears he is oppressed again by the grief deep in his heart."

(Boethius 1973, 184-187)

According to Lerer, Boethius "appears to recognize the sham of Fortuna's rhetoric" and is thus baited to respond.

While I do not axiomatically disagree with either of these readings, I think that Lady Philosophy's purpose in imitating Fortuna in Book II.2 has another important aspect that is overlooked in both these readings. This aspect comes forward in comparative analysis, in this case with the *Old English Boethius*. The *Old English Boethius* has translated passages that correspond to the passages in the *Consolation* where Lady Philosophy personifies Fortuna. Right after this passage, Wisdom, the corresponding character to Lady Philosophy, speaks:

The fact that you are almost completely in despair is still part of your mistake. I did not want you to despair. But I wanted you to be ashamed of such folly, because one who despairs is dispirited, but one who is ashamed is penitent.

(Irvine & Godden 2012, 45)

Wisdom is saying that his purpose was to make Boethius feel ashamed of his attitude and behaviour. Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned that shame is one of the basic emotions through which we establish acceptable norms (Stearns 2017, 1). What Wisdom's purpose seemed to be by speaking with the voice of the 'worldly felicities', is to correct in some way the attitude or behaviour of Mind (the Boethius-character). Which attitude Wisdom is trying to adjust in Mind becomes clear in the speech where he speaks representing the worldly felicities:

How will you want to answer worldly felicities now if they say to you: 'Why do you reproach us, Mind? Why are you angry with us?'

(Irvine & Godden 2012, 43-45)

Wisdom is trying to make Mind feel ashamed of his reproach of- and anger at the worldly felicities, and to make him adjust his attitude towards them. His ultimate goal is to make Mind realize that he is not unfortunate, and that he has no real cause to grief (Irvine & Godden 2012, 51).

Something similar is happening in the corresponding passage in the *Consolation*. In her speech as Fortune, Lady Philosophy says to Boethius:

Quid tu homo ream me cotidianis agis querelis? Quam tibi fecimus iniuriam? [...] meis opibus fovi et quod te nunc impatientem nostri facit, favore prona indulgentius educavi, omnium quae mei iuris sunt affluentia et splendore circumdedi.

Why, man, do you daily complain against me? [...] What hurt have I done you? [...] I supported you, and, ready to be kind to you, even pampered you with my wealth, and over-indulgently spoiled you -which is precisely why you are now so angry with me. I surrounded you with every kind of affluence and splendour within my power.

(Boethius 1973, 180-181)

The word translated here as 'angry' is *impatiens*, meaning 'impatient' or 'apathetic'. Although this is not technically connected to the emotion of anger, it does denote a general intolerance (Lewis 1890, 384-385). A reference to Boethius being angry is made in the first book of the *Consolation*, when Lady Philosophy denotes her strategy to cure Boethius:

Sed quoniam plurimus tibi affectuum tumultus incubuit diversumque te dolor, ira, maeror distrahunt, uti nunc mentis es, nondum te validiora remedia contingunt.

But since you are buffeted by a tumult of different emotions, and grief and anger and sorrow pull you in different directions, for that is the state you are in, you are not ready for strong medicines [...].

(Boethius 1973, 164-165)

One of the emotions that need to be addressed in Boethius is anger, and as I am arguing, specifically anger towards Fortuna. By impersonating Fortuna, Lady Philosophy provides Boethius with a confrontation with her that is almost face-to-face. Lady Philosophy is representing Fortuna as an embodiment of how Boethius perceives the world to work, and then defends her while addressing specific emotional accusations Boethius has made against her. For example, Fortuna argues that the things she granted Boethius (his good fortune) were never truly his, and that it is her nature to take them away again:

Audacter adfirmem, si tua forent quae amissa conquereris nullo modo perdidisses. An ego sola meum ius exercere prohibebor? [...] Haec nostra vis est, hunc continuum ludum ludimus; rotam volubili orbe versamus, infima summis summa infimis mutare gaudemus. [...] An tu mores ignorabas meos?

I may say quite firmly that if those things the loss of which you complain of were really yours, you would never have lost them. Or will I alone be not allowed to exercise my rights? [...] For this is my nature, this is my continual game: turning my wheel swiftly I delight to bring low what is on high, to raise high what is down. [...] You were hardly unaware in my ways!

(Boethius 1973, 180-183)

The character Boethius and the audience are invited to empathize with this embodied representation of Fortuna, and to see things from her point of view. It is important here to stress the performativity of Lady Philosophy's speech. While Lady Philosophy appears physically to Boethius within the context of the narrative, and is only a personification for the reader, Fortuna is personified from the perspective of both the reader and Boethius (Donato 2013, 145). Through her performance, Lady Philosophy is addressing specific emotional responses to Fortuna that the character Boethius and the audience have, and she is trying to manipulate those responses by invoking an emphatic reaction.

After the impersonation, Lady Philosophy says to Boethius:

"Sed quod tu," inquit, "falsa opinionis supplicium luas, id rebus iure imputare non possis."

"But you cannot rightly blame anything else for the fact that you are punished for your own wrong ideas."

(Boethius 1973, 190-191).

It is the blame, the anger against Fortune that Boethius has, that Lady Philosophy wants to address. And to this end, she impersonates Fortune so that she can invoke empathy for her in both Boethius and the audience. In book II.1, the passage just before Lady Philosophy's impersonation of Fortune, Lady Philosophy makes many of the arguments that are presented when she speaks as Fortune. But apparently, she does not expect these arguments expressed with her own voice to convince Boethius. To truly engage him emotionally, and to invoke the right responses in him, she needs to speak to him with the voice of Fortune.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented several ways in which personifications are used in the *Consolation of Philosophy* to engage both Boethius and the audience emotionally, and how they represent and inspire specific emotional practices. Lady Philosophy places a lot of emphasis on her close relationship with Boethius, thus trying to establish an emotional connection with him. Her Muses represent an acceptable way to grieve, while the Muses of poetry that are sent away represent an unacceptable grieving style; an unwanted emotional practice. I have also given an analysis of how the personification of Fortune is used to address specific emotions and attitudes in both Boethius and the audience.

Chapter 2: Dialogue

The *Consolation of Philosophy* is written in dialogue form, as a conversation between Boethius and Lady Philosophy. In this chapter I will examine how this dialogue form helps to constitute a conception of consolation for the audience of the text. I will pay specific attention to how the character of Boethius is displayed, and how he can be seen to represent the audience. I will also analyse the way in which the dialogue between the two characters progresses throughout the narrative.

Theoretical framework

One of the most intricate and thorough interpretations of the *Consolation of Philosophy* is by Seth Lerer, who analyses the dialogical structure of the text as the most fundamental feature of it. In his book *Boethius and Dialogue: Literary method in the 'Consolation of Philosophy'* Lerer explores how the dialogue within the text progresses, and how the *Consolation* is about Lady Philosophy curing Boethius of speechlessness. In his reading the dialogic *Consolation* is entirely about itself; about the meaning of dialogue. However, it has also been argued that we should not consider the dialogue form of the *Consolation* as being so significant. As Danuta Shanzer writes:

Philosophical texts were written in dialogue form in part for pedagogic reasons so that the recreation of an authoritative dialogue could work on the mind of the external reader, who reacts sympathetically in parallel with the internal participants. Explicit outlining of the progress and procedures thus has a very practical and mundane function for the reader. One must be aware of overpathologizing it. (Shanzer 2009, 236)

It is possible therefore, that the *Consolation of Philosophy* is in dialogue form simply because this was the norm at the time, and because it follows the precedent set by authoritative figures like Plato, who established the form for philosophical enquiry (Gerbrandy 2019, 27). Setting texts dealing with philosophical issues in a dialogue form allowed the writer to deal with counter arguments, by letting one of the participants in the dialogue represent such views, and consequently arguing against them. However, it is hard to ignore some thematic connections between the dialogue form and the content of the work. As Seth Lerer (1985) has argued, one of the first things that Lady Philosophy does in the first book is to 'cure' Boethius of his speechlessness (Lerer 1985, 100). Lady Philosophy is purposefully trying to establish a dialogue with Boethius. The question of whether the dialogue form of the *Consolation* is integral to its message is what I will explore in this chapter. I will examine in what ways the dialogue form helps to constitute a consolatory narrative.

To explore a way in which the dialogue form of the *Consolation* might be of significance to the meaning of the text, we come very close to what Danuta Shanzer expresses as a function of dialogue in authoritative philosophical texts. When Boethius objects to arguments made by Lady Philosophy, with similar thoughts, questions, and arguments to those the audience might have, and is then convinced by her counterarguments, the audience is also more likely to be convinced. The reader or audience of the text reacts sympathetically with the internal participants of the dialogue (Shanzer 2009, 236). It has also been established that consolatory texts that pretend to be aimed at a fictional consoland (like the character Boethius) are also directed towards the audience of the text (Von Moos 1971, 41). In line with this, through the inclusion of autobiographical details within consolatory texts, and the continual use of the first person singular, consolatory texts can construct a *figura* with which the reader can identify (Verbaal 2004, 113-114), and to which they can relate both argumentatively and rationally and -most importantly- emotionally. The *Consolation of Philosophy* contains a lot of autobiographical information about its author Boethius, and the narrative is described from the first person perspective of the character Boethius. It will be part of my argument then that an emotional connection is made with the audience of the text through these dialogic features.

This notion is very similar to another important notion that I will use in this chapter: the concept of mirror characters. These are characters in a narrative that represent and display emotions that the author of the text hopes to evoke in the readers of the text (Brandsma 2005, 285). Characters like these provide a mirror for the audience of the text, by observing events within the narrative, and reacting to it in a way the audience is expected to. Central to this notion of mirror characters is the notion of empathy; the idea that the audience connects with the emotions displayed by characters within a narrative, and feeling those emotions themselves (Brandsma 2005, 284). The audience sees the events within the narrative, and the reaction of the mirror character to the narrative, and is inclined to mirror their reaction to that of the mirror character (Brandsma 2000, 38). Thus, mirror characters can be used to suggest certain kinds of emotional behaviour to the audience, and present them with emotive scripts, which dictate the framework of emotional values and behavioural codes for the audience (Ríkharðsdóttir 2017, 27). These emotive scripts provide the blueprint for emotive behaviour within a given work, and for a given audience.

Philosophical dialogues convey their author's view in a very different way than other texts. For example, in a treatise the author speaks to his audience in the first person, conveying his views directly. In dialogues however, specifically dialogues where the author is not himself represented as a character (since the audience will assume the views of this character are also the views of the author), the author's thoughts cannot be identified with those of an interlocutor (Hösle 2012, 3-4). Interestingly, in

the *Consolation of Philosophy* the author of the text is present as a character, but he does not seem to be the authoritative voice within the dialogue. Consequently, the thoughts of the character Boethius are not those of the author Boethius. Accordingly, in this chapter I will examine ways in which the character Boethius functions as an emotional *figura* with whom the audience can sympathize, thus becoming a character that is meant as a mirror for the audience. I will argue that through the dialogue form, the text presents the audience with acceptable emotional and behavioural norms for dealing with grief and the loss of earthly fortune, and also acceptable norms for consolatory practices. I will pay specific attention to passages in which Lady Philosophy and Boethius are speaking in terms of their own and each other's emotions, and passages in which Lady Philosophy comments on Boethius' behaviour.

Construction of the dialogue

To understand how the dialogue develops in the *Consolation*, and how this may be significant for the consolatory meaning and the emotional development of both Boethius and the reader, it is fundamental to examine how the dialogue is established at the beginning of the text. As has been briefly mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis, Seth Lerer has noted that the *Consolation* begins with the speechlessness of Boethius, and Lerer connects this bewilderment of Boethius specifically to the Muses of poetry (Lerer 1985, 101-102). There are several references to Boethius being silent in the opening passages of the *Consolation*, beginning with the fact that the opening poem of the work is thought and written instead of spoken (see page 22 of this thesis). The character Boethius also describes his silence:

At ego [...] obstipui visuque in terram defixo quidnam deinceps esset actura, exspectare tacitus coepi.

I myself [...] was struck dumb, my eyes cast down; and I went on waiting in silence to see what she [Lady Philosophy] would do next.

(Boethius 1973, 134-135)

Even Lady Philosophy comments on Boethius' silence:

Agnoscisne me? Quid taces? Pudore an stupore siluisti? Mallem pudore, sed te, ut video, stupor oppressit.

Do you recognize me? Why do you say nothing? Were you silent because you were ashamed or stupefied? I should like to think that you were ashamed, but I can see that you are quite stupefied.

(Boethius 1973, 138-139)

In the previous chapter, when speaking about the shame that the Muses of Poetry display when being sent away by Lady Philosophy, I brought up the question of shame as a behavioural regulator (Stearns 2017). Lady Philosophy is hoping that Boethius is silent because he is ashamed, i.e. that he recognizes, like the Muses did when leaving the narrative, that his behaviour was inappropriate. However, according to Lady Philosophy, something else is the case, something which she did not hope for: Boethius is silent because he is stupefied.

From the very beginning then, Boethius' silence and stupor is quite heavily stressed. If we look to the other texts in our corpus, we can see this is a recurring theme. For example, in *De Querimonia* Hildebert reacts to the appearance of Anima in a similar way:

Obstupui, fateor, et quid diceret, quid ageret, sub silentio prestolari disposui. (Orth ed. 2000, 70)

I was stupefied, I confess, and I decided to await silently what she might do and say. (Balint 2009, 174)

In the *Kingis Quair* we also find references to an inability to express thoughts in words. In the much commented upon ship metaphor in the opening of the poem, the persona states:

<i>The lak of wynd is the deficultee</i>	The lack of wind is the difficulty
<i>In enditing this lytill tretty small:</i>	In writing this small treatise;
<i>The bote I clepe the mater hole of all:</i>	'The boat' I call the whole matter;
<i>My wit, vnto the saile that now I wynd</i>	My wit is the sail that I now hoist
<i>To seke connyng, though I bot lytill fynd.</i>	To seek cunning, though I find but little.

(St. 18, ln. 122-126)

In the previous passages, the persona speaks about his inability to properly govern his will, and he compares his journey through life to a ship without a rudder (St. 15-17). Like such a ship, the persona is presented as completely dependent on the changing of Fortune. So too does this ship metaphor pertain to his ability to express himself; his boat of expression lacks the wind to propel it forward.

Thus we see that silence, stupor and the inability to speak or write is an important theme throughout the textual community established by the *Consolation*, just as it is heavily stressed in the *Consolation* itself.

Another small allusion to Boethius' lack of speech is made in the verse passage in which Lady Philosophy laments Boethius' state of mind:

<i>Quin etiam causas unde sonora</i>	Causes, moreover, he sought and knew:
<i>Flamina sollicitent aequora ponti,</i>	Why the winds howl and stir up the waves of the sea,
<i>Quis volvat stabilem spiritus orbem</i>	What breath turns the fixed star's sphere,
<i>[...] latentis</i>	[...] He sought and told
<i>Naturae varias reddere causas,</i>	All Nature's secret causes.

(Boethius 1973, 136-137)

Lady Philosophy's lament expresses a grief over the loss of a particular kind of attitude in Boethius. According to her verse, Boethius used to seek and describe (*reddere*) Nature's secret causes. Seth Lerer argues that the verb *reddere*, meaning 'give back in speech or writing', 'repeat', 'render' or 'declare' (Lewis 1890, 707), signifies an active quality now missing in Boethius' silent and waiting attitude. But Lerer interprets Boethius' silence at the beginning of the *Consolation* as a complex state, where he has lost any ability to communicate, to participate in dialogue (Lerer 1985, 103). Lerer also states that it is only at the beginning of book III that the prisoner 'finds his voice', and that his silence changes from the speechlessness of the opening to the listening of a student to a teacher (Lerer 1985, 123). While I will argue in this chapter, with Lerer, that the dialogue form of the *Consolation* is also part of its consolatory theme, I do not go so far as to say that the entire text is *about* dialogue. Rather, dialogue will be an important part in one of the axes of consolation (to speak in Jedan's terms). I will argue that dialogue is presented as an emotional practice through which to engage with grief, but it is not the only one.

Lady Philosophy then, is lamenting the loss of a certain kind of inquisitive attitude in Boethius. As established in the chapter on personification, the first thing Lady Philosophy does is to establish a bond of familiarity with Boethius, to thus connect with him emotionally, and -if we hold to the idea of Boethius as a mirror character- also with the audience. After this, her purpose is to establish a dialogue with Boethius, in Lerer's interpretation; to cure him of his speechlessness. She encourages him to tell her of his woes:

Ἐξάυδα, μὴ κεῖθε νόω. Si operam medicantis exspectas, oportet vulnus detegas.

As Homer says, 'speak out, don't hide it in your heart.' If you are looking for a healer's cure, you must lay bare the wound. (Boethius 1973, 145-147)

This leads to a long speech in which Boethius describes, explains, and complains about the circumstances that led to his current predicament. He complains that he is being unjustly punished, and that he had no opportunity to defend himself:

Nunc quingentis fere passuum milibus procul muti atque indefensi ob studium propensius in senatum morti proscriptionique damnatur. O meritos de simili crimine neminem posse convinci!

But now I am condemned to death, my goods confiscated, for too zealously supporting the Senate, although I am nearly five hundred miles away and unable to speak in my own defence. Ah me! Surely I deserved that no one could possibly be convicted on a charge like this! (Boethius 1973, 154-155)

This highly emotional passage, in which a lot of autobiographical details are included, may be seen as an invitation to the audience of the text to empathize with the character Boethius, and to connect to his emotions of grief, loss, and helplessness. Thus, in these passages Boethius is set up as a mirror character for the audience, which -as I will argue later- is an important step for engaging the audience, in order to establish a concept of consolation that can be presented to them. Simultaneously, within the context of the narrative, this passage serves as the beginning of communication, the establishment of a dialogue, between Lady Philosophy and Boethius.

The reaction that Lady Philosophy gives to Boethius' complaint is interesting:

Haec ubi continuato dolore delatravi, illa vultu placido nihilque meis questibus mota: "Cum te," inquit, "maestum lacrimantemque vidissem, ilico miserum exsulemque cognovi. Sed quam id longinquum esset exilium, nisi tua prodidisset oratio, nesciebam."

When I had done thus baying my unabated grief, she said, with a calm expression, unaffected by my complainings: "When I saw you weeping in your grief I knew at once that you were wretchedly banished; but how remote was that banishment I should not have known if your speech had not told me." (Boethius 1973, 160-163)

Later in the same passage Lady Philosophy states that Boethius' emotions are actually in the way of his healing process:

Sed quoniam plurimus tibi affectuum tumultus incubuit diversumque te dolor, ira, maeror distrahunt, uti nunc mentis es, nondum te validiora remedia contingunt. Itaque lenioribus paulisper utemur, ut quae in tumorem perturbationibus influentibus induruerunt, ad acrioris vim medicaminis recipiendum tactu blandiore mollescant.

But since you are buffeted by a tumult of different emotions, and grief and anger and sorrow pull you in different directions, for that is the state you are in, you are not yet ready for strong medicines, so we shall for a little use milder ones, so that by our gentler touch what has swollen hard under the influence of all these passions and worries may soften and become fit to be treated with a sharper, stronger physic. (Boethius 1973, 164-165).

Boethius' emotions are pulling him in so many different directions, that he is not yet ready for the strong medicines of consolation, a state he only achieves at the beginning of the third book (Boethius 1973, 228-229). In light of this, it should be surprising that she seems unaffected by such an emotional display in Boethius' long speech. If his emotions are actually distracting Boethius from his healing process, why is Lady Philosophy not disgruntled by such an emotional oration? However, if we consider that this is a first step in establishing both an emotional connection and a dialogue with him, it is coherent that she does not seem displeased by his behaviour.

After establishing an emotional connection, and the beginning of a communication with Boethius, Lady Philosophy turns to diagnosing his problem. She does this by asking Boethius questions about how he perceives the world, and she concludes that Boethius has forgotten his real self, and that one of his problems is that he does not know the end goal of all things (Boethius 1973, 168-171). It is at this point in the narrative then, that the worldview axis that Jedan connects with Boethius starts to come to the forefront. But, as I have argued in this section, and in the chapter on personification, before Lady Philosophy can address any 'wrong' opinions Boethius has about the world, several steps have to be taken to establish a bond and to engage him in communication. And if we consider Boethius as a mirror character for the audience, who might share Boethius' wrong world-view opinions, these passages may also be seen as a way to engage them. Thus, if we analyse the set-up of the dialogue form of the *Consolation* closely, we can interpret it as a purposeful way to engage both the character Boethius and the audience of the text emotionally, and to establish the groundwork for other aspects of Lady Philosophy's consolatory method. I will turn to these aspects in the next section.

Emotional regulation and resilience

One of the texts in our corpus for comparison is of particular interest for the development of the dialogue in the *Consolation* in the context of cultural emotional scripts: the *Consolatio De Morte Amici* by Lawrence of Durham. The authoritative voice in this dialogue is the Consoler (*Consolator*) who uniquely does not appear as a personified abstraction. The dialogue begins, much like in the *Consolation*, with a lament from the autobiographical figure of the author, in this case Laurentius. Then the Consoler appears in the dramatic space in which Lady Philosophy appears in the *Consolation*.

Bridget Balint has noted that the Consoler introduces himself as a friend, and that because of this the discussion that arises between them is on much more equal ground than in the *Consolation*, which has a clear student-teacher dynamic (Balint 2009, 62). And indeed, where Lady Philosophy in the *Consolation* has many long monologues (especially towards the end of the work), and Boethius very often interjects relatively little substantive to the content, the Consoler and Laurentius are involved in a much more lively debate. In the end Laurentius does however accept all of the Consoler's conclusions and arguments as true, and there are also many instances in which the Consoler is clearly in an authoritative teaching position, calling out flaws in Laurentius' reasoning and accusing him of not listening attentively enough.

Significant for our purposes are the scenes in which the Consoler in the *CMA*, and Lady Philosophy in the *Consolation* are commenting on the behaviour and responses of their interlocutors, and the similarities in the discussions surrounding these. One of the crucial passages in the *CMA* is the episode where Laurentius and the Consoler come to talk about Fortune. The Consoler asks Laurentius what he thinks about Fortune, and Laurentius answers with the same thoughts that Lady Philosophy expresses in the *Consolation*: Fortuna's goods are completely unrelated to the virtues of men, according to which a man should measure his good (Donato 2013, 30) (Balint 2009, 214). What is interesting for our purposes is the way the Consoler responds to Laurentius' statement:

Placet quidem quod audio, sed displicet quod in te video. Suam quippe, sitamen recta est, exercere morali gravitate rationem laudabile est, contraque miserrimum rerum agendarum scientiam sine fructu possidere. Unde nec immerito michi displicet, quia, ut prius, in oculis lacrimae, squalor in facie, pallor in ore, macies in membris, assiduitas in suspiriis, in edendo parcitas, in gemendo nimietas ob mutatam circa te fortunam tibi sunt, presertim cum id omne, quod vel terret vel blanditur, despiciendum cognoveris et documento rationis et exemplo sapientis. (Kindermann ed. 1994, 173)

I am pleased by what I hear, but displeased by what I see in you. It is praiseworthy to exercise one's own reason (as long as it is right) with moral seriousness; and on the contrary, it is the most wretched thing possible to possess fruitless knowledge of how things should be done. Hence it is not without reason that I am still displeased by the tears in your eyes, squalor in your face, paleness of skin, emaciated limbs, continual sighs, eating too little and groaning too much about your change in fortune, especially since you have recognized, by the teaching of reason and the example of the wise, that whether it frightens or flatters, fortune is worthy of scorn. (Balint 2009, 214)

Although Laurentius holds a true opinion, and the Consoler is pleased by this, his appearance and actions are still not what they should be according to the Consoler. Laurentius still does not embody these proper opinions through his behaviour and physical reactions. It is also noteworthy that we only come to know Laurentius bodily reactions like tears and the paleness of his skin, through the comments of the Consoler. Thus the function of the dialogue in terms of emotions of the characters becomes even more plain. Although Laurentius understands that changes in Fortune should not bother him, he is still bemoaning the loss of his friend, which has been presented as a stroke of bad Fortune. Through the expressed displeasure of the Consoler, the audience is presented with an emotive script telling them how to behave if they understood the arguments. It also becomes clear that 'correct' worldviews are not enough, one also has to show the right emotional practices.

Later in the discussion, the Consoler turns to the examples of wise men to further argue that Laurentius response is unsatisfactory:

Quodsi sapientum aliquem suorum exequias amicorum obieceris lacrimis prosecutum, et ego nonnullos hoc idem fecisse concedo, sed nullum ululatibus et lamentis concedo. Et quid ad rem, si fecerint? Neque enim extra hominum numerum sapientes educo nec dolores ab illis sicut a silicibus sensum nullum admittentibus summoveo. [...] Unde et sapiens tangi quidem dolore potest, ceterum vinci non potest, oculique eius, etsi ob eventum aliquem madent, tamen ob nullum fluunt. Ipsumque, quod madent, non processu temporis intermittitur, sed consideratione rationis cito omittitur. Nichil enim sapienti insipienter displicet, quod deo placet, neque iudicat pertinaciter lugendum, quicquid dei dispositione cognoverit impletum.
(Kindermann ed. 1994, 177-178)

But if you object that some wise man followed the exequies of his friends with tears, I myself concede that some have done exactly this; but I concede them no wailings or laments. And what matter if they did? I do not consider the wise to be outside the number of human beings, nor do I deny that they suffer, as though they were stones that admit no emotions. [...] Even a wise man can be touched by sorrow, but he cannot be defeated; and his eyes, even if they brim with tears at some occurrence, never overflow. His tearfulness is not merely given respite by the passing of time, but is quickly set aside by rational consideration. For nothing that pleases God is displeasing to the wise man, nor does he think he ought to mourn ceaselessly for something that he understands was fulfilled according to God's plan. (Balint 2009, 216-217)

According to the Consoler, even a wise man might shed some tears for the death of a friend, but they do not mourn ceaselessly. They can be touched by sorrow, but they set it aside by rational

consideration. The Consoler is thus providing both the character Laurentius and the audience with a more detailed emotional script. And the fact that he can do this is made possible by virtue of the dialogue form. We -as the audience- not only hear the Consoler's arguments, but also Laurentius' reactions, both embodied and verbal, to them. This gives room for the Consoler to react to Laurentius reactions, thus providing the reader with a conception of desired behaviour. This invites the audience to mirror their reactions to those of Laurentius. Laurentius expresses thoughts that the Consoler considers correct, and that the audience might also be familiar with. But then, the Consoler calls out the inconsistencies between these correct views and Laurentius' behaviour, and the audience is invited to consider their own behaviour in a similar way.

If we examine similar passages in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, we see there is a similar device in play, within a similar context of the discussion. A first example is in the second book, where Lady Philosophy argues that Boethius has not lost everything he had to Fortune. She argues that his father-in-law, Boethius' wife, and his sons are still alive, and that thus Fortune has not taken everything he has.¹⁰ Boethius accepts this argument, stating that he will not drown as long as they live (Boethius 1973, 193). Lady Philosophy's response to this is key:

"Promovimus," inquit, "aliquantum, si te nondum totius tuae sortis piget. Sed delicias tuas ferre non possum qui abesse aliquid tuae beatitudini tam luctuosus atque anxius conqueraris."

"Come, we have taken a small step forward," she said, "if you are no longer grieved by the whole of your present state. But I cannot tolerate your luxuriating in your grief to such an extent, peevishly complaining that something is lacking in your happiness." (Boethius 1973, 192-193)

Although Boethius has taken a small step in the right direction, according to Lady Philosophy, the audience of the text is still sent a clear message regarding Boethius' thought and behaviour: they are - at least at this stage in the dialogue- not yet acceptable. Boethius still embodies unacceptable behaviour. And we may consider it an important part of the consolation process to establish more helpful thoughts and reactions in the consoland.

An indication of this being achieved can be found in book IV of the *Consolation*. In book III, Lady Philosophy delineates an account of true happiness, and how this can be found with God.¹¹ Perfect happiness is completely outside the realm of changes in earthly fortunes, and therefore Boethius

¹⁰ This passage also proves that the *Consolation of Philosophy* appeals to more consolation strategies than 'worldview', namely; that of community. But I will say more on this in a later chapter.

¹¹ Although not specifically a Christian God, but rather a Neo-Platonic understanding of God.

should have nothing to grieve over (Marenbon 2021). This is mostly written in a very Socratic dialogue style, i.e.; Boethius' interjections in the dialogue are things like "*Ita est*" / "That is so" (Boethius 1973, 278-279), and "*Nihil video cur dissentire quispiam possit*" / "I see no reason why anyone could disagree" (Boethius 1973, 284-285). In these passages the dialogue form is used for the pedagogic reasons that Shanzer attributes to it, but in other passages the dialogue form is used for other purposes. The account of happiness that is outlined in book III is not enough to completely cure Boethius of his ailment, because at the beginning of book IV it is specified that Boethius is still grieving (Boethius 1973, 313) and he asks Lady Philosophy:

Sed ea ipsa est vel maxima nostri causa maeroris, quod, cum rerum bonus rector existat, vel esse omnino mala possint vel impunita praetereant; quod solum quanta dignum sit admiratione profecto consideras.

But this itself is the very greatest cause of my grief, that, although there does exist a good ruler of the universe, evil can exist at all and even pass unpunished; and I beg you consider now how much wonder this fact alone properly causes.

(Boethius 1973, 312-313)

This question leads to a discussion of good and evil, and this is once again mostly in a Socratic dialogue style. However, something does change in this part of the narrative. Boethius takes up a much more active role in this part of the narrative. He asks Lady Philosophy to explain things, and he draws conclusions based on what Lady Philosophy argues. For example Boethius says:

Ex his enim quae concesserim, bonos quidem potentes, malos vero esse necesse est imbecillos.

For from these propositions, which I have granted, it follows necessarily that the good are powerful, but the evil are weak.

(Boethius 1973, 322-323)

Lady Philosophy's response to this makes clear that these kind of reactions to her arguments are gratifying:

"Recte," inquit, "praecurris idque, uti medici sperare solent, indicium est erectae iam resistentisque naturae."

"You run ahead rightly", she said, "and that is, as doctors usually hope, an indication of a nature now raised up and resistant."

(Boethius 1973, 322-323)

In this passage, the way Boethius' responds within the dialogue is then connected with his healing process. Interesting for our purposes is the fact that Lady Philosophy makes a reference to Boethius' improved resilience, which is another one of Jedan's axes of consolation. We can interpret this in a double way. On the one hand, Lady Philosophy expresses in this passage that she is pleased with the way in which Boethius responds to her arguments, thus indicating to both the character Boethius as well as the audience that Boethius' attitude and behaviour are part of an acceptable emotional script. On the other hand, Lady Philosophy is making an appeal to Boethius' resilience by referencing its existence. If Boethius is reminded of his own resilience, he may find strength in it and be more easily consoled, as is a typical consolation strategy (Jedan 2019, 34). At the same time, the audience is invited to reflect on their own resilience as well.

That Lady Philosophy has been concerned with increasing or re-establishing Boethius' resilience can also be seen if we look back to the beginning of the first book of the *Consolation*, at the point in the narrative where Lady Philosophy is still trying to (re-)establish her close relationship with Boethius:

“Tunc ille es” ait, “qui nostro quondam lacte nutritus nostris educatus alimentis in virilis animi robur evaseras? Atqui talia contuleramus arma quae nisi prior abiecisses, invicta te firmitate tuerentur.”

She said: “Are you the same man who was once nourished with my milk, once fed on my diet, till you reached full manhood? And did I not furnish you with such weapons as would now keep you steadfast and safe if you had not thrown them away?” (Boethius 1973, 138-139)

Lady Philosophy references weapons she equipped Boethius with, and that he has lost these. In other words; he has lost the tools he once had to properly overcome his present situation. Lady Philosophy's purpose throughout the dialogue is to re-establish these tools, thus increasing Boethius' resilience.

In the passage cited where Lady Philosophy comments on Boethius reactions, she was also indicating that Boethius' attitude and behaviour is getting better, as displayed by his responses within the dialogue. But, as established earlier; Boethius is still grieving at this point in the narrative (Boethius 1973, 312-313). He is not yet fully consoled. Yet, his disposition is, as Lady Philosophy states, 'raised up and resistant', and his responses are deemed acceptable, as evidenced by Lady Philosophy's reactions. In Jedan's terms, we may interpret Boethius' way of responding at this part of the narrative as part of the regulation of emotion axis; an acceptable form of grief. Boethius is still grieving, but no longer in an unhelpful way. He is actively engaging with his interlocutor, and *expressing* and *communicating* his grief and confusion, and *regulating* these by examining them. Boethius's behaviour

is regulated by Lady Philosophy's responses to him within the dialogue, so that he can regulate the appraisal of his emotions himself, by seeking answers to philosophical questions. On this reading, the dialogue form of the text not only becomes a way to establish a cultural script of acceptable forms of grieving and consolation for the reader, but also as a way to regulate the emotions of the consoland. Boethius is regulating his grief and confusion by inquiring as to the causes of things. The loss of this active, helpful attitude is exactly what Lady Philosophy lamented Boethius had lost in the beginning of the *Consolation*. Through this, Boethius' active participation in the dialogue is presented as an emotional regulator, an emotional practise through which to engage with our grief, and to attempt to regulate our own feelings at the appraisal level.

Another indication that Boethius' attitude in the fourth book can be considered as an acceptable form of grief can be found further on in the fourth book of the *Consolation*. Boethius is wondering why it seems that good people are punished, and wicked people are rewarded, and how this is compatible with the concept of a God who is governor of the universe. This last concept of a world that is subject to divine reason, and not to random chance or Fortune, has been established since the beginning of the *Consolation* as a true belief, and Lady Philosophy even stated to Boethius that this believe is the 'best kindler of your health' (Boethius 1973, 171). However, at this point in the narrative this belief mostly seems to confuse Boethius. He says:

sed cum tui muneris sit latentium rerum causas evolvere velatasque caligine explicare rationes, quaeso uti quae hinc decernas, quoniam hoc me miraculum maxime perturbat, edisseras.

Yet since it is your office to unfurl the causes of hidden things and to unfold explanations veiled in mist, I beseech you to explain what conclusions you draw from this, for that wonder I mentioned disturbs me very greatly. (Boethius 1973, 356-357)

Here, Boethius is *communicating* his confusion at this seeming contradiction. And, if we take him to be a mirror character, the audience of the text might be thinking exactly the same at this point in the discussion. Lady Philosophy's reaction to this remark by Boethius is telling:

Tum illa paulisper arridens: "Ad rem me," inquit, "omnium quaesitu maximam vocas, cui vix exhausti quicquam satis sit. [...] Sed quoniam haec quoque te nosse quaedam medicinae tuae portio est, quamquam angusto limite temporis saepti tamen aliquid deliberare conabimur."

Then she said, smiling a little, "You invite me to discuss a matter greatest of all in the seeking, and such that almost no discourse, however exhaustive, is sufficient for it. [...] But since that you should know these things too is some part of your medicine, although we are constrained

within a narrowly limited time, we shall try to have some discussion of them.” (Boethius 1973, 356-357)

Note the bodily reaction by Lady Philosophy; she is smiling at Boethius’ remark. The word used for ‘smiling’, *arrideo*, has specific connotations of approvement and endorsement (Lewis 1890, 28), denoting that Lady Philosophy is once again pleased with the way Boethius is responding within the dialogue, and by extent she is signalling to the emphatic audience that this is a favourable way to act. Thus the dialogue form is used as a way to regulate emotions, as a way to establish acceptable ways to grieve. The worldview axis in Jedan’s model is indeed also present in this passage, since Lady Philosophy considers it part of Boethius’ therapy to have knowledge of certain matters. And indeed, as already established by Jedan, much of the *Consolation* is about changing Boethius’ worldview into one where he has not truly suffered any loss.

Still, it also becomes clear that Lady Philosophy’s consolatory strategy is not just to present Boethius with a specific worldview. As I have now argued, her strategy also includes regulation of emotion, resilience, and the community axis. That the worldview axis is by no means the only consolatory strategy being employed can be seen in the fifth and final book of the *Consolation*. Here, the character Boethius asks about the existence of chance, and how this idea is compatible with the notion of a world being governed by divine reason. In this passage, the dialogue form of the text again enables Lady Philosophy to demonstrate emotional norms through her reactions to Boethius’ interjections:

Tum illa: “Festino,” inquit, “debitum promissionis absolvere viamque tibi qua patriam reveharis aperire. Haec autem etsi perutilia cognitu tamen a propositi nostri tramite paulisper aversa sunt, verendumque est ne devius fatigatus ad emetiendum rectum iter sufficere non possis.”

“I am hastening,” she replied, “to make good my promise and open the way to you by which you may be brought back to your homeland. But these things, though they are very useful to know, are yet a little aside from the path we have set ourselves, and it is to be feared you may not be able to last out to the end of the direct road if you are tired by going down by-paths.”

(Boethius 1973, 384-385)

Like in the earlier passages, Boethius is interrupting Lady Philosophy’s arguments -the exposition of her healing world-view- with questions, but this time she does not seem pleased by his interjection. She is afraid that discussing what he asks her will distract him from the worldview she is trying to present. Yet, after Boethius’ response, she does follow up on his questions:

“Ne id,” inquam, “prorsus vereare. Nam quietus mihi loco fuerit ea quibus maxime delector agnoscere, [...]”

Tum illa: "Morem," inquit, "geram tibi," simulque orsa est: [...]

"There is really no need," I said, "for you to be afraid of that. For I shall find it a resting-place, to understand these things, which I most delight in. [...]"

"I will grant your wish," she said then; and at once began thus: [...]

(Boethius 1973, 384-387)

Joel Relihan, who has argued for a satirical interpretation of the *Consolation*, reads this passage and those that follow it as a diversion from Lady Philosophy's original intent (Relihan 2007, 129). According to Relihan, the fact that Lady Philosophy allows herself to be diverted from her line of argument underlines the fact that she fails to console Boethius, and thus Lady Philosophy's authoritative consolation is undermined (Marenbon 2003, 161).

However, in light of the argument I have been making in this chapter, we can also interpret this passage as a way to downplay the importance of the worldview axis, in favour of other consolatory strategies, specifically the regulation of emotion axis. Throughout the *Consolation*, Lady Philosophy has established acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and attitudes through her reactions to Boethius within the dialogue. The fact that in this passage she ultimately chooses to go along with Boethius' request should be seen as a concession that her healing worldview is not the only consolation strategy being applied. Boethius has found an acceptable way to deal with his grief; by enquiring about philosophical questions that bewilder him. If we think back to Lady Philosophy's verse-lament in the first book, the loss of this kind of attitude from Boethius is exactly what she was bemoaning. If Boethius' enquiry about the existence of chance were truly an unacceptable diversion from Lady Philosophy's plan, why does she go along with it with so little argument? One would think that Lady Philosophy would put more effort into persuading Boethius to conform to her line of reasoning.

Another one of Relihan's arguments for his satirical reading of the *Consolation* is the fact that the *Consolation* ends rather abruptly (Relihan 1999, 190-191), with the direction from Lady Philosophy:

Aversamini igitur vitia, colite virtutes, ad rectas spes animum sublevate, humiles preces in excelsa porrigite.

Turn away then from vices, cultivate virtues, lift up your mind to righteous hopes, offer up humble prayers to heaven.

(Boethius 1973, 434-435)

These final words by Lady Philosophy have been interpreted in various ways. Some interpreters speculate that the author Boethius had to finish the work in a rush, pending his execution (Heijer 2014,

454). Relihan interprets the fact that Boethius does not close the dialogue with a response as a recourse by Boethius to Christian faith (Shanzer 2009, 235), since references to Christian faith have been inconspicuously absent throughout the *Consolation*. Boethius' silence at this ending is interpreted as a sign that Lady Philosophy has failed to console him, having given no satisfactory answers to Boethius' interjected questions (Relihan 1993, 193). Yet, it was not uncommon in (late-) Antiquity for dialogues to finish rather abruptly, e.g. Plato's *State* and Cicero's *Republic* (Heijer 2014, 455). Even in our corpus of comparison texts, the consolatory texts do not always end with complete consolation. In the *Consolatio de Morte Amici*, the Consoler and Laurentius have to cut their discussion short because of a third party, who is not further specified, needs them. The Consoler's final words are:

cui quoniam adesse iam possumus nec amicis libenter abesse volumus, congruo satis ordine, ubi finis tuo dolori succedit, accedit et huic nostrae disputationi. (Kindermann ed. 1994, 189)

Since we are able to go to him and we do not willingly wish to be absent from a friend, and since an end to your grief draws near, in the right order of things the end also comes to our disputation. (Balint 2009, 223)

The character Laurentius is not yet fully consoled at the end of the dialogue. But, consolation is on the horizon, implying that Laurentius has somehow acquired some tool or skill through which he can make this happen. In a similar way, the abrupt ending of the *Consolation of Philosophy* need not be interpreted as a demonstration of Lady Philosophy's failure, as Relihan does. The ending may be interpreted as a success by Lady Philosophy; she has given Boethius the tools through which consolation is attainable, and her help is no longer needed.

Another text within our corpus also presents consolation in this way. The persona in the *Kingis Quair* is also not immediately consoled after the dream vision that is at the heart of the poem. When he wakes up, he first receives a turtle dove, carrying a divine message, after which he gradually starts to get better:

<i>To quikin treuly day by day my lore,</i>	To truly increase my knowledge day by day,
<i>To my larges that I am cumin agayn</i>	To my prosperity that I am coming again,
<i>To blisse with hir that is my souirane.</i>	To by bliss with her that is my sovereign.

(St. 181, ll. 1265-1267)

The phrase 'day by day' is used multiple times in the surrounding text, signalling that the persona's coming to prosperity is a gradual process, in line with the theme of the poem about the link between dealing with adversity and personal maturity (Quinn 1981).¹²

Conclusion

Thus, if we analyse the establishment and development of the dialogue throughout the *Consolation* closely, it becomes clear that the worldview axis that Jedan connects to the *Consolation* is not the only consolation strategy going on. There are references to other axes, such as to resilience and community (Boethius' family), and dialogue and inquisitive attitude is presented as an acceptable form of grief (regulation of emotion axis). I have also argued that this interpretation can be a counter-reading against Relihan's satirical interpretation of the *Consolation*, through a different reading of Lady Philosophy's strategies. I have asserted in this chapter that the dialogue form of the *Consolation of Philosophy* is fundamental for the conveying of its consolatory message. Through Boethius' and Lady Philosophy's reactions to each other, emotional norms can be conveyed to the audience of the text. And if we consider Boethius as a mirror character for the audience, it becomes clearer how their emotions and thoughts are being engaged, shaped, and regulated, parallel to those of Boethius.

¹² This theme in the *Kingis Quair* is also discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis.

Chapter 3: 'Consolation' in the *Consolation of Philosophy*

So far I have presented various ways in which the *Consolation of Philosophy* uses emotions and narrative devices to construct a concept of consolation for its audience. It has become clear that Lady Philosophy's consolatory strategy involves far more than simply presenting Boethius with a healing worldview. In this chapter, I will consider what part the worldview axis plays in Lady Philosophy's consolatory strategy. I have left this largely unexamined up to this point in this thesis. Through the discussion of the worldview axis, I will further situate the research of this thesis within the existing scholarly interpretations of the *Consolation*. In addition to this, I will combine the arguments and conclusions from the two main chapters in this thesis to form a coherent whole, and provide an answer to the main research question.

Worldview

I have stressed how the different axes of consolation that Jedan has identified are present in the *Consolation*, but I have spent relatively little time on many of the rational arguments that Lady Philosophy presents to Boethius, which I consider to be part of the worldview axis.¹³ This is because, as disclosed in the introduction, the existing research on consolation within the *Consolation of Philosophy* focusses on understanding the arguments presented within it, and how they fit together. For example, it has been suggested that Boethius' healing in the *Consolation* comes with insight in philosophical issues, and that his suffering and grief stems from a lack of understanding of how the world works. Accordingly, Lady Philosophy addresses this by shifting through different perspectives (Duclow 1979, 335). It has also been argued that Lady Philosophy's arguments, although all individually make logical sense, do not form one coherent whole, and that this is part of the overall meaning of the work as a work that explores the limits of Lady Philosophy's ability to console Boethius (Marenbon 2003, 162). Marenbon also supports this view by contrasting the lack of coherence in Lady Philosophy's arguments with the fact that her description in the beginning of the *Consolation* suggests some kind of divine status. This view is, I think, overstressing the importance of philosophical arguments for the *Consolatory* process. I have argued in the chapter on personification that Lady Philosophy is an intermediary being, and that she acts as a personal guide to Boethius. It is also apparent that her consolatory methods are tailored to his personal needs:

¹³ Since there are any analyses of Lady Philosophy's arguments, and these analyses are generally very extensive, I focus in this chapter on those parts of her line of reasoning that are relevant for the arguments of this thesis.

Primum igitur paterisne me pauculis rogationibus statum tuae mentis attingere atque temptare, ut qui modus sit tuae curationis intellegam?

Now first of all, will you let me ask a few simple questions, to probe and test the state of your mind, so as to learn what kind of cure is best for your condition? (Boethius 1973, 166-167)

Although I do not agree with Marenbon's argument that 'consolation' in the *Consolation* is presented as purposefully limited, because Lady Philosophy's lack of coherence in her arguments contrasts with her set-up as a divine being, it is necessary for the completeness of this thesis to consider Lady Philosophy's arguments. And, in doing so, I will base my discussion on Marenbon's valuable analysis of the structure of the arguments in the *Consolation*.

In order to cure Boethius, Lady Philosophy sets out a series of arguments about the workings of the universe. Ultimately her goal is to show Boethius that he has not lost anything of true value, and that what he experiences as loss has a purpose in the grand scheme of things. An underlying question for Boethius' healing process is the question of what happiness is. In the beginning of the text, Boethius is bewailing his loss of earthly fortunes. John Marenbon writes:

Philosophy's first job—true to the generic aim of a *consolatio*—is to console, not by offering sympathy, but by showing that Boethius has no good reason to complain: true happiness, she wishes to argue, is not damaged even by the sort of disaster he has experienced. (Marenbon 2021, §5)

Lady Philosophy's consolation strategy is to show Boethius that he has no real reason to complain, because true happiness is unaffected by changes in worldly fortune. Thus, true happiness is still attainable for Boethius, and it must not be sought in the instable, ever-changing worldly things. Lady Philosophy says:

Quae si etiam fruenti iucunda esse videatur, tamen quo minus cum velit abeat retineri non possit. Liquet igitur quam sit mortalium rerum misera beatitudo quae nec apud aequanimos perpetua perdurat nec anxios tota delectat.

A happiness which even if it seems pleasant to a man when he enjoys it, yet cannot be prevented from passing when it will. So it is clear how wretched is the happiness of mortal affairs, since it neither endures for the contented nor altogether satisfies the uneasy. (Boethius 1973, 194-195)

Although Boethius has lost his worldly fortune, he has not lost his true happiness. True happiness, Lady Philosophy argues, must be something far more stable. As she states, this stability can be found in God:

Quare ne in infinitum ratio prodeat, confitendum est summum deum summi perfectique boni esse plenissimum. Sed perfectum bonum veram esse beatitudinem constituimus; veram igitur beatitudinem in summo deo sitam esse necesse est.

Therefore, so that our argument does not fall into an infinite regress, we must admit that the most high God is full of the most high and perfect good; but we have decided that the perfect good is true happiness; therefore true happiness must reside in the most high God. (Boethius 1973, 276-277)

Contrary to what we might expect from a Christian author like Boethius, this 'most high God' is not specified as being the Christian God. As discussed in chapter 2, references to Christian faith are conspicuously absent from the *Consolation*, and this plays a considerable part in controversies about the general meaning of the text among modern scholars. Relihan identifies Lady Philosophy as representing pagan traditions and philosophies, and argues that she fails at consoling Boethius, thus pushing him towards the solace of Christian faith (Relihan 1993, 193). Although I argue against Relihan's interpretation of the *Consolation* in this thesis, the lack of specific Christian references in the text is irrefutable. Consequently, the 'most high God' which Lady Philosophy equates with true happiness should not be understood as the Christian God.

John Marenbon argues that this discussion of God as perfect happiness fails as a consoling argument. He writes:

But what this second approach fails to explain is how the individual human, such as Boethius, is supposed to relate to the perfect happiness which is God. Philosophy seems to speak as if, merely by knowing that God is perfect happiness, Boethius himself will be rendered happy, although in the next section it seems that it is by acting well that a person can attain the good. (Marenbon 2021, §5)

The relationship between the individual grieving human being and the perfect happiness in God is not yet apparent in this passage. Lady Philosophy is trying to show Boethius that he has no real cause to grieve, because he has not lost anything that he should grieve over. She is, in fact, attempting to regulate his emotions at the appraisal level, attempting to change the way Boethius judges his situation, and thus affecting his emotions. From this perspective, this argument does have some value within her consolation strategy. Although it is not yet clear for Boethius how he can obtain true

happiness, the realisation that he did not lose true happiness by his change in worldly fortunes is helpful to lessen his grief over his situation.

Lady Philosophy goes on to specify the workings of the God that she equates with perfect happiness. In so doing, she presents Boethius with a worldview where his 'misfortune' has a meaningful place. Lady Philosophy argues that there is an inherent order to the universe, but she offers different accounts of how God brings about this order (Marenbon 2021, §5). In book III she presents God as non-intervening, providing order by existing as a goal towards which all things strive (III.11-III.12). However, later on in the text God is presented as an active intervener, controlling the entire course of events through what is called 'fate':

Sicut enim artifex faciendae rei formam mente praecipiens movet operis effectum, et quod simpliciter praesentarieque prospexerat, per temporales ordines ducit, ita deus providentia quidem singulariter stabiliterque facienda disponit, fato vero haec ipsa quae disposuit multipliciter ac temporaliter administrat.

For in the same way as a craftsman first conceives in his mind the form of the thing he is to make and then puts the work into effect, and produces by stages in temporal order what he has previously envisaged in a simple and instantaneous manner, just so God by providence disposes what is to be done in a single and unchanging way, but by fate accomplishes those same things he has disposed in a manifold and temporal way. (Boethius 1973, 359-361)

In this view, God no longer gives order to the universe by simply existing, but his providence sets everything in motion. Although humans may not fully understand what plan the divine providence has, from his timeless perspective it makes perfect sense (IV.6). This argument is part of a discussion on the existence of evil, and forms the beginning of an answer to Boethius' question on why it seems that virtuous are punished, while evil people seem to be rewarded. According to Lady Philosophy, something that might be seen as a punishment of the virtuous, makes sense in the grand plan of the divine Providence, and is not truly a punishment at all (Boethius 1973, 364-365). Lady Philosophy also argues that the good suffer misfortune so that God can test them (Marenbon 2003, 119). Thus, Lady Philosophy is trying to provide meaning to Boethius' predicament, by suggesting it is all part of a larger plan that leads towards the goodness of God. On this view, wicked people do not truly prosper in good fortune because they persevere in their wickedness, and all things naturally seek to be good.

According to John Marenbon, these arguments from Lady Philosophy are not very agreeable:

Altogether, it is hard to read Philosophy's long and varied defence of the justice of human affairs without finding it incomplete. At the most, it gives an answer to the question posed by someone in Boethius's position -a good person in adversity- about his downfall is consistent with divine justice. It does not explain why God would have designed his providence as a whole in the way he seems to have done. In particular, it does little to explain the existence of wicked people, who may be justly punished but, because they remain wicked, receive no benefit from punishment. (Marenbon 2003, 121)

According to Marenbon, Lady Philosophy's account is lacking in certain areas. It does not explain the order of the universe in a comprehensive way. There are holes in Lady Philosophy's account that do not seem to be fitting in a philosophical argument from a being that embodies the discipline of Lady Philosophy. In addition, the argument she makes about human beings not being able to completely understand the plan of the divine Providence hardly seems convincing to someone seeking to understand the workings of the universe.

Much of the dialogue within the *Consolation* is concerned with consoling Boethius through addressing his understanding of the world with rational arguments. This section was a cursory discussion of Lady Philosophy's argumentative line, and the inconsistencies within it. These inconsistencies are also part of an argument stating that the *Consolation of Philosophy* is not a genuine text attempting to provide consolation, but rather a text that explores the limits of Lady Philosophy's consolatory strategies (Marenbon), or even mocks them (Relihan). John Marenbon argues that there are several options for explaining the inconsistencies in Lady Philosophy's line of reasoning:

- (1) The incoherences are due to the ineptitude of Boethius the author
- (2) The incoherences are a typical feature of the genre of the *Consolation*: a consolatory work, intended for a general readership, in which arguments need not fit together rigorously.
- (3) The incoherences are merely superficial, because they can be explained by the structure of the *Consolation* in which Philosophy gradually leads her pupil to the truth
- (4) The incoherences are intentional, and need to be taken into account in reaching an overall interpretation of the *Consolation*.

(Marenbon 2003, 159)

Marenbon argues that none of the first 3 options are plausible. The author Boethius displays far too much intelligence within the individual arguments, and through the literary construction of the text for him to leave such gaps in Lady Philosophy's reasoning by mistake. Option 2 is implausible because the technicality of Lady Philosophy's arguments is already at odds with conventions of the consolation

genre. Option 3 can only be credible if Boethius' interjections and questions would have been answered satisfactorily by the end of the text.

Marenbon concludes that the only plausible option is that the incoherences in Lady Philosophy's line of reasoning are intentionally done by the author Boethius, and that we should take this into account when interpreting the *Consolation*. He goes on to discuss the Menippean features of the *Consolation*, and eventually draws his conclusion about Lady Philosophy only partially being able to console Boethius. While I do not agree with his conclusion, I do agree with his argument that the incoherences in Lady Philosophy's reasoning should be taken into account when interpreting the *Consolation*. In the chapter on dialogue I discussed how in book V of the *Consolation*, Lady Philosophy diverts from her own argumentative plan in favour of discussing the objections and questions of the character Boethius. Relihan argues that this diversion is further evidence that Lady Philosophy is not capable of consoling Boethius (Relihan 2007, 129). I argued against this, by interpreting the fact that Lady Philosophy allows herself to be diverted by Boethius as a purposeful devaluation of the worldview axis. Through an examination of the emotional reactions of Boethius and Lady Philosophy to each other, it became clear that Lady Philosophy was not just trying to console Boethius by changing his view on the world, but also by regulating his emotional responses and behaviour. In this reading, Boethius' active participation in the philosophical inquiries themselves, not the answers to them that Lady Philosophy might provide, were the final goal. Boethius' inquisitive attitude is an acceptable way to deal with sorrow.

In short, the inconsistencies in Lady Philosophy's arguments should indeed be taken into account when considering the meaning of the *Consolation*. However, as I have argued, they need not mean that Lady Philosophy fails in her mission to console Boethius. Instead, they should be taken to mean that the rational arguments that Lady Philosophy puts forward are not the only way she is trying to console Boethius. Rather than having to lead him towards some kind of truth in order to console him, she is regulating his emotions in such a way that he can cope with the situation.

Dialogue, personification, and the axes of consolation

I have discussed the part that the worldview axis, or more precisely Lady Philosophy's rational arguments, play in the *Consolation*, and how this has been interpreted in modern scholarship. In this section I will set out a complete interpretation of Lady Philosophy's consolatory strategies and the emotional practices associated with consolation. Before I do this, I want to reiterate and put together the ways in which the narrative features of personifications and dialogue can be understood to affect the emotions of the character Boethius and of the reader, and what this reveals about emotional practices surrounding consolation.

In my first chapter I argued that the various personifications in the *Consolation*, the Muses of poetry, Fortuna, and Lady Philosophy, all embody emotional practices. The Muses of Poetry embody an excessive, unhelpful kind of grief, one that will “accustom a man’s mind his ills, not rid him of them”¹⁴ (Boethius 1973, 134-135). As I argued, the Muses of Poetry only help Boethius to *name* his feelings in a poem, and to *mobilize* feelings in the audience, but they do not help him to *communicate* the true cause of his emotions or to *regulate* his feelings. Similarly, in the *Kingis Quair*, the Muses of Poetry are also associated with a lack of an ability to communicate (see page 20-21 of this thesis). Thus the Muses of Poetry embody an excessive form of grief, one that should clearly be discouraged. This is signalled to Boethius as well as to the audience of the *Consolation* when Lady Philosophy angrily casts the Muses of Poetry out of the narrative, and through the shame that the Muses of Poetry then display. Thus, Boethius and the audience are presented with the beginnings of an emotional script, and this also forms a starting point for the regulation of their emotional behaviour.

Immediately after she casts out the Muses of Poetry, Lady Philosophy bids Boethius to listen to her own Muses instead. Lady Philosophy thus contrasts the Muses of Poetry and their unacceptable grief, with her own Muses. It is very plausible then, to assume that her ways to engage with grief must be seen as acceptable. From the first paragraphs of the work, Boethius and the audience are told about Lady Philosophy’s authority on this issue, but (as I have argued –in line with Katherine Breen) the character Lady Philosophy in the *Consolation* is not a perfect being, and she does not directly represent a Platonic idea, or any one concept. Rather, she is an intermediary being, serving as a personal guide to Boethius. And it is precisely because she is an intermediary that her consolatory methods seem to be lacking in directly consoling Boethius. Her true intent is not to completely console Boethius, or to restore his happiness, but to increase his resilience so that he can cope with his situation. In other words, her aim is to instil a range of helpful emotional practices in Boethius, so that he can handle his grief on his own, and eventually overcome it.

One argument for this interpretation of Lady Philosophy can be found in the description of her appearance. The Θ and Π on her dress are taken to signify *Theoria* and *Praxis* respectively. She does not only present Boethius with a healing worldview, but she also guides his behaviour, his *Praxis*. The ladder in between the two letters indicates that one has to get from the one to the other. Lady Philosophy guides the prisoner towards philosophical understanding of the world, through guiding his thoughts, emotional responses, and actions. Throughout the *Consolation*, the dialogue form helps the

¹⁴ *hominumque mentes assuefaciunt morbo, non liberant* (Boethius 1973, 134).

reader to identify acceptable responses and thoughts from Boethius, through Lady Philosophy's bodily and verbal reactions. For instance, in Book IV, when Boethius runs ahead of her argument, Lady Philosophy responds that doctors usually hope for this, because it signals a resistant and lifted disposition (Boethius 1973, 323). It is important to note that at this point in the narrative, Boethius is still said to be grieving (Boethius 1973, 313). Yet he is more resilient, and Lady Philosophy is clearly happy with his responses within the dialogue. In other words, at this point in the narrative Boethius is behaving in an acceptable way, following the emotional script that Lady Philosophy has established for him. And she is guiding him towards *theoria*, through his *praxis*.

Lady Philosophy's guiding of Boethius' *praxis* comes to the forefront when we closely analyse the interactions between the two characters within the dialogue, in particular when we combine it with the findings on personifications. In the chapter on dialogue I discussed Boethius' speechlessness at the beginning of the text, and how Lady Philosophy's first purpose is to engage the character Boethius, both emotionally and in conversation. In order to better engage him emotionally, she firmly stresses who she is and affirms their longstanding connection. In line with what Seth Lerer argues about Boethius' speechlessness in the beginning of the *Consolation*, I also think that it can be connected to the personification of the Muses, and the undesirable emotional practices they represent. The Muses represent an emotional practice with which Boethius is not *communicating* his feelings, only *naming* them in his silent opening poem. The Muses help Boethius grow accustomed to his grief, but they are not bringing him closer to overcoming it. This silent poem that the Muses help him write, comes from the same problem that causes Boethius' speechlessness, and it is one of the first problems that Lady Philosophy tries to solve. *Communicating* feelings is an important emotional practice to deal with grief. As Lady Philosophy says: "*Si operam medicantis expectas, oportet vulnus detegas*"; "If you are looking for a healer's cure, you must lay bare the wound" (Boethius 1973, 145-147).

It is precisely because Lady Philosophy is an abstract figure who is given a physical body and voice within the context of the narrative that she is such a powerful figure to convey emotional norms. To both Boethius and the audience she presents something more than a regular interlocutor. She is not a human figure. But she can respond to Boethius in human sensory terms, thus conveying to him and the audience which reactions are considered appropriate and desirable, and which are not. Because of her anger and blazing eyes when she casts out the Muses, the audience is given the clear message that their influence is a bad one from Lady Philosophy's point of view. Through a close analysis of Lady Philosophy's (physical) reactions from Boethius, we get an impression of helpful emotional practices and strategies associated with Boethius' consolatory process. The community axis from Jedan's model of consolation is highlighted in the passage where Lady Philosophy argues that Boethius has not lost

everything, since his father-in-law, wife and sons are still alive and healthy. Boethius' response makes clear that he considers this thought helpful, and that he can endure as long as this is true. Lady Philosophy's reaction demonstrates that this response is a step in the right direction, but also that Boethius attitude is not yet satisfactory; he is not allowed to 'luxuriate in his grief' (Boethius 1973, 192-193).

This leads to another aspect of consolation that is presented through the dialogue between Lady Philosophy and Boethius. Lady Philosophy is purposefully trying to regulate Boethius' behaviour in the face of his grief into a demeanour that is acceptable. As I argued in the chapter on dialogue, throughout the *Consolation* Lady Philosophy is trying to engage Boethius in conversation, and she reacts positively to Boethius' active participation in the dialogue. She is establishing active participation in philosophical discussion as an acceptable way to act in the face of grief. Thus, what Jedan calls the 'regulation of emotion' axis is also part of Lady Philosophy's consolation strategy. Another axis that is very closely related to this concept is the axis of resilience. At a point in the dialogue when Boethius is actively participating in the discussions and drawing conclusions based on her arguments, Lady Philosophy responds that doctors usually hope for this. She is signalling again that Boethius' actions are gratifying, but also that his resilience has been raised. It thus becomes clear that part of Lady Philosophy's purpose is to increase Boethius' resilience, so that he can more easily face his grief.

In short, by closely analysing the emotional effects of personification and dialogue throughout the *Consolation of Philosophy*, we get a much more varied picture of the concept of consolation than that of Lady Philosophy simply trying to console Boethius through rational philosophical arguments. There is a full range of acceptable and unacceptable emotional practices and strategies that need to be taken into account when considering Lady Philosophy's purpose.

The concept of consolation

Throughout this thesis I have argued for a genuine consolatory interpretation of the *Consolation of Philosophy*. One of the objectives of this thesis is to lay groundwork for investigating the influence of the concept of consolation as an emotional practice within the *Consolation* on various audiences throughout the medieval period. And since the *Consolation* was considered a genuine consolatory text in the Middle Ages, it is necessary to work from the assumption that the *Consolation of Philosophy* is in fact a genuine consolatory text. I have used my comparison texts to examine ways in which the *Consolation* can be read as a genuine consolatory text, in order to develop a counter-interpretation against satirical readings of the *Consolation*.

I also discussed and refuted many arguments that support a satirical reading of the *Consolation*. In line with this, it is necessary to give some final background on considerations about the genuineness of the *Consolation* as a consolatory text. The word ‘consolation’ only appears in the title of the work, not in the text itself. It is also not clear what exactly the title of the work was, or whether Boethius himself titled the work (Gerbrandy 2019, 28). Consequently, any clues that the title of the work holds as to whether the text was intended as a genuine consolatory text, or as a satirical narrative about a failed attempt to console, are inconclusive. However, it is clear that Lady Philosophy is at least trying to help Boethius with his predicament in some way. She consistently uses a metaphor of sickness and healing when referring to Boethius’ condition, and she presents herself as a physician who promises to help cure him of his ailments. In addition to this, after the argument about the health of his family succeeds to lessen Boethius’ grief a little, Lady Philosophy refers to this as ‘a small step forward’ (Boethius 1973, 192-193). Thus, it is evident that Lady Philosophy is trying to lessen Boethius’ grief; her purpose is to console. But whether she succeeds in doing so is disputed by some modern scholars like Marenbon and Relihan.

In order to successfully argue whether or not Lady Philosophy succeeds in consoling Boethius, I have set out to establish what exactly ‘consolation’ can be thought to entail, as it is presented in the *Consolation*. In this last chapter, I have tried to combine my findings in this thesis to form a coherent interpretation of the concept of ‘consolation’ within the *Consolation*. Based on what I have argued, it may be stated that Lady Philosophy acts a personal guide to Boethius, one who aims to help him come to terms with his situation and regain his emotional control. Contrary to what her description implicating divine status might lead us to believe, and what some modern scholars have argued, Lady Philosophy is not a perfect being. Her actions throughout the *Consolation* are unpredictable and surprising. In line with this, her way of consoling should also not be understood as ‘perfect’, that is; she does not bring Boethius back to full happiness, and as such might be seen to ‘fail’ in her attempts at consolation. However, she does succeed in refurbishing Boethius with the ‘weapons that could hold him steadfast’¹⁵ (Boethius 1973, 138-139), and to regulate his emotional and behavioural responses. Towards the end of the consolation, Boethius is no longer ‘luxuriating in his grief’ (Boethius 1973, 192-193), he is no longer speechless, and he is once again seeking causes. Consider once again part of Lady Philosophy’s lament about Boethius’ state of mind in book I:

<i>Quin etiam causas unde sonora</i>	Causes, moreover, he sought and knew:
<i>Flamina sollicitent aequora ponti,</i>	Why the winds howl and stir up the waves of the sea,
<i>Quis volvat stabilem spiritus orbem</i>	What breath turns the fixed star’s sphere,

¹⁵ [...] *arma [...] invicta te firmitate tuerentur* (Boethius 1973, 138).

[...] *latentis*
Naturae varias reddere causas.
(Boethius 1973, 136-137)

[...] He sought and told
All Nature's secret causes.

In the beginning of the *Consolation*, Lady Philosophy regrets that Boethius is no longer seeking explanations for all kinds of natural phenomena. He is no longer trying to understand how the universe works. Now compare this to how Boethius responds in the dialogue halfway through book IV of the *Consolation*:

Sed cum tui muneris sit latentium rerum causas evolvere velatasque caligine explicare rationes, quaeso uti quae hinc decernas, quoniam hoc me miraculum maxime perturbat, edisseras.

Yet since it is your office to unfurl the causes of hidden things and to unfold explanations veiled in mist, I beseech you to explain what conclusions you draw from this, for that wonder I mentioned disturbs me very greatly.

(Boethius 1973, 356-357)

At this point in the dialogue, this fault in Boethius' disposition has been remedied. He is actively contributing to the discussion, and seeking answers to things that he does not fully understand. Although in Book IV, Boethius is still grieving (Boethius 1973, 312-313), he is no longer drifting in his grief, but instead actively seeking to understand the things that confuse him. Boethius has reached the level of *Theoria*; philosophical thinking about the nature of reality (Donato 2013, 71).

Considered from this perspective, Lady Philosophy's impact on Boethius seems considerable. Although she does not bring Boethius back to a state of happiness, she does change his attitude towards his grief. I have argued that Lady Philosophy embodies an acceptable way to grieve, and this is precisely what she gives to Boethius. Through all kinds of arguments, examples, and emotional engagements, she presents him with a helpful way to engage with his grief: philosophical enquiry. By the end of the *Consolation*, Boethius has an attitude with which he can cope with his situation. And because he had been set up as a mirror character for the audience of the text, the concept of consolation that is presented to Boethius is also transferred to the audience. They know they should mirror themselves to how Boethius acts and thinks towards the end of the *Consolation*, and this invites them to reflect on and adjust their own attitudes, views, and behaviour. Thus, we can succinctly define 'consolation' within the text as the following:

'consolation' in the *Consolation of Philosophy* is presented as a range of emotional practices and arguments aimed towards strengthening the resilience of the consoland, and giving him the (emotional) means to cope with his or her circumstances.

In the chapter on dialogue I discussed other consolatory texts in our corpus for comparison in which happiness is also not obtained towards the end. Both Laurentius' *Consolatio de Morte Amici* and the *Kingis Quair* suggest a notion of 'consolation' as something that has to be achieved gradually, instead of something that can be achieved within the timeframe of a single dialogue. Similarly, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* does not end with the happiness of the character Boethius, but it does end with him possessing the ability to progressively engage with his grief.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined how the *Consolation of Philosophy* can be read as a consolatory narrative, that focusses on addressing certain emotions and conceptions within the character Boethius and the audience. To this end, I focussed on two specific narrative features; the use of personifications, and the dialogue form. To explore how these features are significant for the meaning of the *Consolation*, and the emotional concepts presented within it, I used a comparative method to guide me towards specific features within narratives that are important for understanding the consolatory meaning of the text. My objective in this was to establish a fundament for future research on the influence of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* on consolatory texts in the medieval period. To this end, I formulated the following research question:

What is the effect of narrative devices like dialogue and personification on the emotions of both the figure Boethius and the audience of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, and how do these narrative devices work towards the construction of a consolatory narrative?

Through comparing the *Consolation of Philosophy* with later adaptations and translations of it, I was able to draw attention to parts of the narrative that reveal emotional practices concerning consolation, that otherwise could have been overlooked.

A concise answer to my research question is the following: through the narrative features of personification and dialogue, specific emotional responses from the character Boethius are addressed, such as his anger towards Fortuna, his grief over his circumstances, and his joy for the well-being of his family. Specifically, personifications do this by embodying specific emotional practices, and by physically reacting to comments and acts within the dialogue, such as the Muses blushing when being sent away, or Lady Philosophy smiling at Boethius' comments. This is in part made possible through the narrative feature of dialogue, which enables the character Boethius and Lady Philosophy to respond to one another, and to actively engage within the discussion. It is also through the dialogue feature that the audience is most effectively engaged. Because the audience hears not just Lady Philosophy's views, but also those of the character Boethius, he is being set up as a *figura* with whom they can identify, and to whom they can mirror their own responses. Thus, the audience is presented with emotional scripts that they can use to engage with their own grief.

In this thesis I have tried to provide a counter-interpretation against a satirical or partly satirical interpretation of the *Consolation of Philosophy*. Marenbon considers the *Consolation* to be about the limitations of Lady Philosophy's ability to console, in part because her line of reasoning is incoherent and contrasts with her establishment as a divine being, and because Boethius' questions are never

fully resolved by the end of the work (Marenbon 2003, 158-159). Marenbon also argues that his interpretation is coherent with the associations connected to the prosy-metric form of the *Consolation* (Marenbon 2003, 159-163). Joel Relihan also points towards the prosy-metric form as an argument for his satirical interpretation. Relihan also argues that Lady Philosophy is diverted from her original intent by Boethius' interjections, and because of this she never gets to fully explain the workings of the universe, and her consolation fails (Relihan 2007, 21). I have argued against both these positions by highlighting the importance of consolatory strategies other than Lady Philosophy's presentation of a healing worldview through rational arguments. In light of this, we can interpret the fact that Lady Philosophy lets herself be diverted from her own line of reasoning in favour of Boethius' interjections as an indication that he has reached a state of acceptable grief, and that he is able to cope with his situation. I have argued that Lady Philosophy's consolatory purpose is to shape Boethius' emotional behaviour into a regulated, resilient nature, and that she succeeds in doing so. Thus, we can consider the *Consolation of Philosophy* as a genuine consolatory text.

I have limited my research to two specific narrative features of the *Consolation*, but for a fuller picture of how consolation is presented within the text, it may be fruitful to do a similar analysis for other narrative features. Particularly the influence of the prosy-metric form on the consolatory meaning of the *Consolation* will be of interest for further study, because this is used by some scholars as an argument to support a satirical reading. The inclusion of Boethius' autobiographical details may also be of significance for the concept of consolation. By analysing how the character Boethius is set up as a semi-autobiographical *figura*, and how the passages in which Lady Philosophy and Boethius discuss details from his life fit into Lady Philosophy's consolatory strategy, we might get a fuller picture of the concept of 'consolation' within the text.

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