

This chapter is divided in five sections: 1. General; 2. Canterbury Tales; 3. Troilus & Criseyde; 4. Other Works; 5. Reception and Reputation. Sections 1, 3, and 5 are by Ben Parsons; sections 2 and 4 and by Natalie Jones.

1. General

A number of essays have shed valuable light on Chaucer's relationships with his contemporaries, beginning with David R. Carlson's 'Gower *agonistes* and Chaucer on Ovid (and Virgil)' (*MLRev* 109.4[2014] 931-52). As Carlson stresses, whether or not Chaucer and Gower were friends in reality, their poetry expresses a clear rivalry: this in turn means that several features of Gower's work can be conceived in terms of Bloomian *agon*, if not *clinamen*, deliberately flinching away from Chaucer's precedent. A particular flashpoint is the usage of Ovid by the two poets. This aspect of Gower's work comes into play in his manifold engagements with the figures of Alcione and Ceix, which pick up on Chaucer's treatment of their myth in the *Book of the Duchess*; at other points his tendency to swerve towards Virgil where Chaucer prefers Ovid can be seen in the same light. Such differences might suggest a proprietary relationship with Ovid on the part of Gower, as well as a sense of friction with his most immediate, albeit more junior, contemporary. Ovid also offers a common focus for understanding Gower and Chaucer in Andrew Galloway's 'Ovid in Chaucer and Gower' (in John F. Miller and Carole E. Newlands, eds., *A Handbook to the Reception of Ovid*, pp. 187-201). Galloway reviews the points of contact by which the two writers encountered Ovid, such as the grammar school curriculum, the synoptic or moralised commentaries of John of Garland and Pierre Bersuire, and the imitations of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun. He notes that the two poets made heavy use of medieval exegesis on Ovid, as their own personae owe a conspicuous debt to Ovid's biography, as it was

understood by the Middle Ages. This can be seen in Gower's stance as an elderly lover who has outgrown the game of love, and Chaucer's posture as lover making amends for his crimes against love in the *Legend of Good Women*. For much of Galloway's discussion, however, the usage of Ovidian narratives comes to the fore. He finds that Gower leans on Ovid most consistently during the middle part of his career, suggesting that he found Ovid not merely to be 'potent' but 'potentially troubling' too, causing him to retreat from Ovidian influence during his final years as a 'full-throated propagandist for King Henry IV' (pp. 198, 190). Chaucer, on the other hand, retains his connection to Ovid throughout his career: Ovid's influence might in fact underwrite the various social and generic metamorphoses of the *Canterbury Tales*.

The relative influence of classical material on Chaucer and Gower continues to be an important basis of comparison in Robert Epstein's 'Dismal Science: Chaucer and Gower on Alchemy and Economy', (*SAC* 36[2014] 209-48). Epstein selects as his theme the treatment of alchemy across the *Confessio Amantis* and *Canterbury Tales*. He notes that the science fell both inside and outside institutionalised knowledge in the period, as it could boast 'an ancient lineage and an extensive written tradition' although 'was never incorporated into the standard curricula of schools' (p. 210). Such ambivalence informs Gower and Chaucer's views of alchemy. For his part Gower is curiously laudatory of alchemists and their claims: his comments in the fourth book of the *Confessio* ignore the moral and social complaints usually levelled at the discipline, even though he shows pronounced hostility towards gold and money elsewhere, seeing them as perversions of an original, communal order. What underlies this praise is a sense that alchemy is at every step bounded by natural laws, whereas money behaves without recognisable order, and as a result inculcates only chaos. An opposing view is found in Chaucer, who sees alchemy as an empty fantasy without results or substance. Again, what underpins Chaucer's dismissive attitude is a larger sense of the purpose of

money: throughout his work, from the *House of Fame* to the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, there is a marked interest in measurement and valuation, which money might complement, and the abstractions of alchemy can only compromise. Looking beyond Gower, George Shuffleton draws connections between Chaucer and another of his contemporaries, discussing the career of ‘John Carpenter, Lay Clerk’ (*ChauR* 48.4[2014] 434-56). Carpenter was Common Clerk of London from 1417-38, and is known for his part in compiling the chronicle *Liber albus*, for sponsoring the construction of the Dance of Death at Old St Paul’s, and for the extensive library detailed in his will. He also belonged to the same broad social position as Chaucer, although was less well recompensed for his labours. Most significantly, his career shows that being a literate non-priest was less an ‘uneasy negotiation between well-established social identities’ and more ‘an empowering combination of secular and sacramental authority’, suggesting that clerks were not merely caught in limbo between the two roles but could capitalise on their duality (p. 436). Equally important is the fact that his activities as chronicler and patron show ‘the laicization of public memory’ in the late Middle Ages, a movement of the power to commemorate from religious to secular hands (p. 456). Widening the range of Chaucer’s contemporaries still further, Nicolette Zeeman sets Chaucer’s work at the meeting-point between art and theology in ‘Philosophy in Parts: Jean de Meun, Chaucer, and Lydgate’ (in Dallas G. Denery, Kantik Ghosh, and Nicolette Zeeman, eds., *Uncertain Knowledge: Scepticism, Relativism, and Doubt in the Middle Ages*, pp. 213-38). Zeeman examines a strategy found throughout Chaucer’s allegories, and those of his major followers and forebears, as he often seems to take ‘a subordinate element or process within a hierarchical system’ and grant it precedence over that system as a whole; as Zeeman states, such a manoeuvre allows the system involved to be questioned without being wholly cancelled (p. 213). Chaucer thus comes to participate in a ‘recognizable tradition of “literary”

and sceptical philosophizing’, one which has often escaped the attention of ‘historians of medieval philosophy’, despite its vitality and importance (p. 234).

A more literal reading of Chaucer’s place in his cultural landscape is developed by Laura L. Howes in ‘Chaucer’s Forests, Parks, and Groves’ (*ChauR* 49.1[2014] 125-33). Howes observes that managed spaces of various kinds run through Chaucer’s poetry, as woodlands, gardens, and hunting grounds infuse his work. What unites these places is their connection to aristocratic power, as each is designed to impress its owner’s stature on to the visitor. Such a means of expressing power would have been a central part of Chaucer’s experience of elevated social circles, from his early service in the households of Elizabeth de Burgh and John of Gaunt, to his later position as Richard’s Clerk of Works. It can also be seen at work in his poetry, as the woodlands of the *Book of Duchess* and *Parliament of Fowls* are best read as cultivated spaces designed for social interaction; likewise, reference to contemporary land-management can resolve some of the mysteries in his work, such as how Theseus’ park can incorporate an amphitheatre, or why gold can be found beneath an oak in the *Pardoner’s Tale*. As a result, landscape in Chaucer’s hands is not merely a literary resource or series of conventionalised symbols, but is informed by political and practical considerations.

For the past four decades, Jill Mann has herself been a central feature in the landscape of Chaucer criticism. The collection Jill Mann, *Life in Words: Essays on Chaucer, the Gawain-poet and Malory* brings together fifteen of Mann’s essays on Middle English, originally published between 1980 and 2009. Eight Chaucerian essays are compiled here: ‘Troilus’ Swoon’ (pp. 3-19), which argues that Troilus’ fainting fit is not a mark of passivity or ‘ineffectuality’, but a gesture deeply entangled in Chaucer’s wider conceptions of love; ‘Shakespeare and Chaucer: What is Criseyde Worth?’ (pp. 20-41), which explores the themes of value and exchange surrounding the medieval and early modern Criseyde; ‘Chance and

Destiny in *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Knight's Tale*' (pp. 42-61), which lays bare tensions between Fortune and Providence in Chaucer's major reworkings of Boccaccio; 'Chaucerian Themes and Style in the *Franklin's Tale*' (pp. 62-79), which emphasises that patience is a central virtue in the *Tale*, spanning its themes of changeability and *trouthe*; 'Anger and "Glosynge" in the *Canterbury Tales*' (pp. 80-101), which meditates on the confluence between deceitful speech and wrath in Chaucer and Langland; 'The Authority of the Audience in Chaucer' (pp. 102-116), which weighs up Chaucer's readerliness and his expectations of his audience; 'Parents and Children in the *Canterbury Tales*' (pp. 117-37), which stresses the devotional aspects of childbirth and child-rearing, and the ability of each to stand for surrender to a greater will; and 'Satisfaction and Payment in Middle English Literature' (pp. 138-66), which decodes the mercantile language running through the *Clerk's Tale*, *Gawain* and *Piers Plowman*.

Moving from comparative to linguistic analysis, Martin J. Duffell examines Chaucer's versification in 'Chaucer's Pentameter: Linguistics, Statistics, and History' (*ChauR* 49.2[2014] 135-60). Duffell brings together various strands of linguistic analysis to make sense of Chaucer's metrical innovations, and to identify his precise continental models, looking to the work of Jakobson and the generative metrics of Halle and Keyser. Duffell's statistical analysis confirms that Chaucer's decasyllabics usually fall into 'the rhythm of canonical iambic pentameters', as 'more than ten times as many stresses fall in even-numbered as in odd-numbered positions' (p. 141). He also shows Chaucer manipulating syntactic subdivisions in order to preserve these patterns, and using monosyllabic words to sustain them. Given the presence of these and other features, it seems most likely that Chaucer's meter is derived from the *endecasillabo* of Petrarch and Boccaccio, rather than the French *vers de dix*, as his own rhythmic variety is closest to the Italian poets, who show similar fluidity in their own lines. A further aspect of Chaucer's language is discussed by

Denise Ming-yueh Wang in 'Chaucer's English and Multilingualism' (*Medieval and Early Modern English Studies* 22[2014] 1-27). Wang's essay begins with a potted history of English and its shifting fortunes in legal, literary and pedagogic discourse after the Conquest, emphasising the 'poly-linguistic' milieu in which Chaucer was operating; given his family's holdings in the immigrant centre of Vintry Ward, he was likely to have been immersed in multiple languages throughout his life. Wang then moves on to the difficulty of bringing Chaucer's work into contact with other languages in the twenty first century, drawing on her experiences teaching his poetry in Taiwan. Wang notes that his work remains obstinately 'foreign' even to students specialising in English, a hurdle that might be overcome by calling attention to his own operation in 'a polyglot cultural space' (p. 14), his wilful combination of registers and traditions, and the traffic of French and Italian material into his own cultural and linguistic 'world'.

More direct remarks on rendering Chaucer suitable for the modern classroom are provided by three new handbooks, Stephen Fender Chippenham's *The Connell Guide to Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales*, A.J. Minnis' *The Cambridge Introduction to Chaucer*, and Peter W. Travis and Frank Grady's *Approaches to Teaching Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*. Each is tailored for a different level of academic audience. The first is aimed squarely at a pre-university readership, being designed principally for use by GCSE and A-level students; accordingly, it provides an accessible, affordable and engagingly written account of Chaucer's foundational status in English literature, covering such aspects as the tension between rhetoric and reality, and the extent to which Chaucer offers a panoramic view of fourteenth-century social order. Minnis's *Introduction*, on the other hand, is written with an undergraduate audience in mind, touching base with the texts most likely to be included on university curricula: after a brief overview of the key historical and biographical data, *Troilus* and the dream visions receive a chapter each, while two chapters are dedicated to the

Canterbury Tales, grouped according to their common topics. The organising principle is thematic, as Minnis leads the reader through important standpoints and strands of critical debate, from pagan culture and its values in *Troilus* and the *Legend of Good Women*, to technology and wonders in the *Franklin's* and *Squire's Tales*, to femininity in its active and passive voices in the *Wife of Bath* and *Man of Law*. For their part, Travis and Grady assemble a useful collection of resources and approaches for instructors, designed to supplant Joseph Gibaldi's 1980 text. This eminently practical guide begins by helping teachers to navigate the formidable array of scholarship and supplementary material that has built up around Chaucer, pointing readers towards the authoritative editions, modernisations, bibliographies, and digital resources, as well as making shrewd suggestions for student reading. The remainder of the volume is itself formidable in the most positive sense of the word, bringing together a range of brief essays by leading names in the field, including Peter Beidler, Larry Scanlon, Kathryn Lynch, David Wallace and many others; collectively these pieces touch on every conceivable aspect of Chaucerian pedagogy. Individual sections, for instance, focus on such issues as handling Chaucer's Middle English and versification, understanding his humour and broader legacy, introducing theoretical approaches, and engaging students in secondary schools or from a non-liberal arts background. Finally, for specialist researchers, the Annotated Chaucer Bibliography (SAC 36[2014] 359-421) offers a reliably detailed overview of scholarship on Chaucer for 2012, bringing together synopses of 229 articles and listing 42 reviews.

2. The Canterbury Tales

The *General Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* has been the subject of a number of studies this year. *Historians on Chaucer: The General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (ed.

Stephen Rigby, with the assistance of Alastair J. Minnis), contains a total of twenty-six essays which, together, provide a detailed re-examination of all of the character portraits in the *General Prologue*. Written by medieval historians, these essays examine each portrait in light of the socio-historical context of the late fourteenth century and thus seek to ‘demonstrate what historians themselves can contribute to the historical understanding of Chaucer’s work’ (p. vii). Before turning to focus on the individual descriptions of each of the pilgrims, the volume begins with two introductory chapters. In Chapter One, ‘Reading Chaucer: Literature, History, and Ideology’ (pp. 1-23), Stephen H. Rigby reflects on the social climate of the late fourteenth century and notes that scholars have typically viewed Chaucer’s treatment of social models and hierarchies as either ‘conservative’, ‘sceptical’, or ‘open-ended’ (p. 10). In order to assess the plausibility of these readings, Rigby highlights the value of a historicist approach and asserts that it is a particularly effective tool for examining Chaucer’s engagement with social and moral issues. In the second chapter, ‘Chaucer the Poet and Chaucer the Pilgrim’ (pp. 24-41), Caroline M. Barron considers the possible links between Chaucer the man and his poetic persona in the *Canterbury Tales*, typically referred to as ‘Chaucer the Pilgrim’. By surveying what we know about Chaucer’s early life and the social circles in which he moved, Barron concludes that Chaucer the author and ‘Chaucer the Pilgrim’ share a degree of social aloofness, as both are considered to be ‘outsiders, observers rather than participants’ (p. 35). Following these two opening chapters, the rest of the collection is devoted to single essays on each of the pilgrims listed in the *General Prologue*; a chapter is also devoted to the Host, Harry Bailly. Although each essay takes its own approach in terms of argument, they all engage with such matters as critical history and reception, historical context, and contemporary reader response. For instance, in his discussion of the Knight’s portrait (pp. 42-62), Rigby examines the list of battles and crusades in which the Knight took part, placing them in their likely historical contexts. Noting the critical

contention that surrounds interpretation of the Knight's portrait, most notably the debate regarding whether he is meant to be read as an idealized figure or as a mercenary, Rigby demonstrates that the surviving historical records suggest that the Knight's conquests would have most likely been seen in a positive light by a contemporary audience. The issue of scholarly reception is also an important factor in Peter Coss's discussion of the Franklin (pp. 227-246). Acknowledging that the Franklin has been interpreted both as a respectable member of the gentry as well as a social aspirant, Coss attempts to shed new light on how Chaucer may have understood the Franklin's social standing in the context of the late fourteenth-century. For Coss, Chaucer is less concerned with the Franklin's actual social position, but is instead using the Franklin's portrait, particularly the attention drawn to the Franklin's own self-presentation, to question the contemporary concern for social mobility and status. In view of this, Coss argues that Chaucer intends the description of the Franklin to be read as a 'satire of pretension' (p. 242), which is revealed through the tone of the portrait as well as the Franklin's rehearsed courtly manners and his tendency towards self-elevation. Rosemary Horrox's essay on the Pardoner (pp. 443-59) further demonstrates the value of approaching a character portrait through its specific historical context. Focusing predominantly on the religious climate of the fourteenth century and the power of the Church as an institution, Horrox examines the extent to which the actions of Chaucer's Pardoner would be viewed as legitimate. She argues that the Pardoner's adoption of priestly duties, his preaching, and his false relics, all point to his deviant nature and would thus encourage a contemporary audience to regard him as a suspect figure. As a whole, the essays gathered together in *Historians on Chaucer* demonstrate the virtue of approaching the portraits in the *General Prologue* through a historicist lens; rather than arguing for a single reading of Chaucer's text and his group of pilgrims, this collection of essays encourages a re-evaluation of existing readings by opening up new possible lines of enquiry and modes of interpretation.

The portraits of the pilgrims in the *General Prologue* also form the subject of Beverley Boyd's monograph, *Chaucer and the Taverners of Ipswich: The Influence of his Paternal Ancestors Upon Some Portraits in the General Prologue and Upon his Descendants*. Boyd argues that Chaucer's family history, most notably the fact that his paternal ancestors were provincial taverners in Ipswich, was a great source of interest to Chaucer and served as a significant influence on the shaping of some of the portraits in the *General Prologue*. In particular, she argues that Chaucer's awareness of his family heritage encouraged him to value a simpler way of life, which he placed in contrast to the affectation of courtly behaviour that he was exposed to in London. After recounting Chaucer's ancestry and the history of ownership of his family's Ipswich tavern, Boyd turns to focus on a series of portraits in which Chaucer criticizes courtly affectation. In examining the portraits of the Man of Law, the Merchant, the Prioress, the Monk, and the Friar, Boyd demonstrates the extent to which these characterizations are informed by popular stereotypes and argues that these figures are criticized explicitly for a pretension which is allied to their elevated social position. According to Boyd, these pilgrims stand in contrast to the 'provincial pilgrims' (namely, the Wife of Bath, the Shipman, the Knight's Yeoman, the Franklin, the Miller, the Reeve, the Parson, and the Plowman), who are all 'untouched by the artificiality of courtly behaviour' and thus present a truer reflection of the human condition (p. 91). Boyd argues that the distinction drawn between these two groups of pilgrims is directly informed by Chaucer's knowledge of his paternal ancestry and that this, in turn, made him a 'rather humble' individual (p.159); she concludes that Chaucer's modesty stands in contrast to subsequent generations of his family, who were much more concerned with social class and advantageous marriages. Lawrence Besserman's study, 'Girdles, Belts, and Cords: a Leitmotif in Chaucer's *General Prologue*' (*PLL* 50[2014] 241-44) also draws a distinction between the group of pilgrims, but does so by focusing on dress and clothing. Besserman

notes that while the portraits of such figures as the Yeoman, the Man of Law, and the Franklin all include a description of belts or cords of some sort, the portraits of the religious pilgrims never include such references. According to Besserman, this omission functions as a subtle form of criticism, as during the period it was usual for members of religious orders to wear cords or girdles to signify ‘a variety of spiritual and ethical values’ (p.244). Besserman concludes that Chaucer’s omission of belts, cords, or girdles in these portraits is intentional and signals to the audience that the religious pilgrims are all ‘spiritually lax or corrupt’ figures (p. 244).

A consideration of language and syntax in the *General Prologue* is the subject of Norm Klassen’s article ‘To Seek Distant Shrines: A Syntactical Problem in Chaucer’s General Prologue’ (*MP* 111[2014] 585-92). Klassen examines lines 12-14 of the *Prologue* and highlights the syntactical difficulty caused by the phrase ‘to ferne hawles’ (l. 14), frequently glossed as ‘to distant shrines’. Klassen notes that although translators and editors have repeatedly acknowledged the clumsiness of these lines, line fourteen is always treated as the end of a clause and thus concludes with a semi colon in modern editions. According to Klassen, this treatment of line fourteen is grammatically incorrect and leads to a lack of clarity: ‘How does it make sense to say “Palmer’s long to seek strange shores, to distant shrines?”’ (p. 585). By revisiting the study of the *General Prologue* conducted by the nineteenth-century philologists, Bernhard ten Brink and Otto Jespersen, Klassen asserts that a colon should instead be placed at the end of line thirteen: ‘The grammatical problem disappears if the prepositional phrase, “to distant shrines” initiates a new clause’ (p.586). In highlighting this, Klassen argues for a new reading of line fourteen and states that the line as frequently edited contains a syntactical error that has been repeatedly perpetuated in scholarship. An interest in Chaucer’s use of language is further exemplified in Benjamin S.W. Barootes’ article, ‘Whence the *buf*? Chaucer’s Philological Burp’ (*Neophil* 98[2014]

495-501). Focusing on the word 'buf' (l. 1934) in *The Summoner's Tale*, where it is used to verbalize the collective burp of overindulgent monks, Barootes explores the word's likely etymology and semantic history to demonstrate that it is loaded with meaning. Barootes traces back the etymological roots of 'buf' to Old French (e.g. the verb 'bouffer', which is used to describe the act of overeating), and also finds examples in Anglo-Norman and Latin sources. He observes that in all these cases the words typically have negative connotations and are often linked to food, eating, and overindulgence. According to Barootes, the etymological roots of 'buf' demonstrate that Chaucer's use of the word is intentional and that, for a contemporary audience at least, it would be understood as a comic extension of Chaucer's satire, confirming the gluttony and indulgence of the monks being described. Also focusing on language in the *Canterbury Tales* is Agnieszka Wawrzyniak's essay, 'Metaphors, Metonymies and the Coreferentiality in the Conceptualization of Love and Heart in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*' (in Bilynsky, ed., *Studies in Middle English: Words, Forms, Senses and Texts*, pp. 311-328). In order to consider the language and imagery used to describe the acts of love and marriage in the *Canterbury Tales*, Wawrzyniak identifies and then analyses a total of nine different metaphors and metonymies for love in Chaucer's work (such as 'love is fire', 'love is a disease', 'marriage is the unity of bodies'). By drawing on a range of supporting examples, Wawrzyniak argues that 'courtly love' is typically associated with pain and suffering in the *Canterbury Tales*, while marriage is more closely linked to the law and a lack of autonomy.

In his article, 'The "Dialect" of Chaucer's Reeve (*ChauR* 49:i[2014] 102-124), Philip Knox reinvestigates the linguistic evidence that supports the assertion that Chaucer depicts his Reeve as speaking in a Norfolk dialect. Concentrating particularly on the use of the *ik* pronoun in the Prologue to the *Reeve's Tale*, Knox begins by surveying the surviving linguistic evidence for the possible Norfolk origin of this form of the first-person pronoun.

By surveying the evidence preserved in the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English* and the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*, Knox asserts that the *ik* pronoun is only associated with the Norfolk region in Early Middle English. When considering the extent to which the *ik* pronoun is found in manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* and, more particularly, in those manuscripts known to be copied by East Anglian scribes, Knox concludes that by the later Middle English period scribes in the Norfolk region no longer recognized the *ik* form and typically corrected it. In light of this evidence, Knox asserts that in utilizing the *ik* pronoun Chaucer was not seeking to enhance the verisimilitude of the Reeve, but was deliberately employing an archaic form in order to convey a generalized, and rather comic, idea of dialectal difference through speech.

The treatment of sex and gender in the *Canterbury Tales* has been a popular topic of investigation. Drawing upon the concept of queer theory, Tison Pugh's *Chaucer's (Anti-) Eroticism and the Queer Middle Ages* examines the conflict between the erotic pursuit of love and anti-erotic desire in Chaucer's works. Pugh argues that in the Middle Ages the normative workings of sexual desire, as expressed through the model of courtly love, are juxtaposed with an anti-eroticism that is encapsulated in the states of virginity, chastity, and widowhood, and is promoted by the medieval church (p. 4). In the context of Pugh's reading of Chaucer's works, the term 'queer' serves to encapsulate a 'divergent stance vis-à-vis ideological normativity, in matters of gender and sexuality' (p. 3); in light of this, Pugh seeks to highlight the 'queer narrative tensions' that exist 'between eroticism and anti-eroticism' (p. 12) in Chaucer's poetry, and in the *Canterbury Tales* in particular. In Chapter Two, 'Mutual Masochism and the Hermaphroditic Courtly Lady in Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*', Pugh examines the marriage of Arveragus and Dorigen and its refiguring of gender. He argues that as a consequence of Dorigen's rash promise, both husband and wife are divested of their normative gender roles, with Arveragus adopting the role of the courtly lady who demands

servitude and obedience from the lover (here refigured as Dorigen). Pugh argues that in spite of the tale's complex web of collective suffering, Dorigen and Arveragus's 'mutual masochism' is what eventually leads to 'their sharing of authority and submission in marriage' (p. 32). Chapter Three, "'For to be sworne bretheren til they deye": Satirizing Queer Brotherhood in the Chaucerian corpus', examines the depiction of sworn brotherhood in the *Knight's Tale*, *Franklin's Tale*, *Pardoner's Tale*, and *Shipman's Tale*. Pugh notes that in each of these tales sworn oaths are quickly rejected, overturned, or rendered problematic in some sense. This pattern demonstrates that bonds of brotherhood have an inherently queer potential for Chaucer, due to the fact that they 'carried with them the likely possibility of erotic queerness' (p. 65). In Chapter Four, 'Necrotic Erotics in Chaucerian Romance: Loving Women, Loving Death, Destroying Civilization in the *Knight's Tale* and *Troilus and Criseyde*', Pugh asserts that while for the male characters, Emelye and Criseyde are viewed as coveted objects of desire, both women consciously seek to reject this role by aligning themselves with the anti-erotic through their respective chastity and widowhood. By expressing their own non-normative desires and thus rejecting heteroerotic passion (if only initially), Pugh observes that both Emelye and Criseyde serve to highlight the centrality of male narcissism in erotic love. Chapter Five 'Queer Families in the *Canterbury Tales*: Fathers, Children, and Abusive Erotics', examines the role children play in narratives which focus on male rivalry (such as the *Reeve's Tale*, *Summoner's Tale*, *Clerk's Tale*, and *Physician's Tale*). Pugh asserts that in these tales children are not only used as a means to affirm their father's masculinity, but are frequently depicted as the victims of erotic violence. In the final chapter, 'Chaucer's (Anti') Erotic God', Pugh turns his attention away from earthly desire to focus instead on Chaucer's treatment of divine love. In order to reflect on the ways in which Chaucer engages with the concept of God's sensuality, Pugh focuses

particularly on the relationship between God and the female beloved as it is explored in such narratives as the *Second Nun's Tale*.

Questions of sex and gender are also explored in Amy S. Kaufman's 'Erotic (Subject) Positions in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*' (in Hopkins, Rouse and Rushton, eds., *Sexual Culture in the Literature of Medieval Britain*, pp. 27-38). Here, Kaufman seeks to challenge conventional readings of the *Merchant's Tale* which typically approach the narrative action from the perspective of Januarie and thus render May as a commodity or object (p. 28). She argues that May's erotic agency is, in fact, present in the tale and is communicated to the reader through May's relationship with Damyan; specifically, it is Damyan's role as the conventionally passive courtly lover which allows May the freedom to assert her own erotic identity. In this context, May's craving for pears can be read not only as a latent metaphor for her lust for Damyan, but also as an expression of her desire for agency. Kaufman concludes that in approaching the action of the tale from the perspective of May, rather than that of Januarie, we are able to free May from her role as object and are thus able to 'sympathize with her boredom, her repressed youth' and 'her wasted vitality' (p. 34). Annalese Duprey, in "'Lo, pitee renneth soone in gentil herte": Pity as Moral and Sexual Persuasion in Chaucer' (*EssaysMedSt* 30[2014] 55-66), examines the role of pity in the romantic and sexual relations of the *Merchant's Tale* and the *Franklin's Tale*. Duprey notes that in conventional courtly relationships the exploitation of 'wommanly pitie' is an important means through which the male lover secures the affection of his beloved (p. 55). Although this model of romance is evident in a number of Chaucer's works, Duprey argues that in the *Merchant's Tale* and the *Franklin's Tale* May and Dorigen are able to free themselves from the conventional 'paradigm of pity', and as a result, are able to 'carve out for themselves a position of individual agency' (p. 57). Thus, for Duprey, the pity May feels towards Damyan and his passive love-longing is understood as the vehicle through which she can express her

autonomy in their relationship. Dorigan, on the other hand, is able to exploit the paradigm of pity to her own advantage when, at the tale's end, her genuine display of grief prompts Aurelius to release her from her rash promise, thus allowing her to retain her autonomy.

The *Merchant's Tale* also forms the basis of Laura Kendrick's discussion of Chaucer, in her essay 'Medieval Vernacular Versions of Ancient Comedy: Geoffrey Chaucer, Eustace Deschamps, Vitalis of Blois and Plautus' *Amphitryon*' (in Douglas and Henderson, eds., *Ancient Comedy and Reception*, pp. 377-96). Here, Kendrick discusses the work of Chaucer and Deschamps, and argues that both writers would have primarily engaged with ancient comedy through Medieval Latin adaptations. In her discussion of the *Merchant's Tale*, Kendrick notes that the cuckoldry storyline is informed not only by the twelfth-century Latin comedy, *Lidia*, but is also indebted to Vitalis of Blois's *Geta*, which is a rather free adaptation of Plautus's *Amphitryon*. Although *Lidia* has often been recognized as a source for the tale's pear-tree episode, she notes that the tale's comic depiction of the pagan gods 'has its precedent in Vitalis' *Geta* and Plautus' *Amphitryon*' (p. 385). According to Kendrick, the reason this link has been hitherto overlooked is due to Chaucer's 'irreverent attitude' (p. 379) to his sources.

In her monograph, *Chaucer and Array: Patterns of Costume and Fabric Rhetoric in the Canterbury Tales, Troilus and Criseyde and Other Works*, Laura F. Hodges offers an analysis of Chaucer's 'costume rhetoric' (p. 1). She focuses particularly on costume descriptions and references to textiles and materials, considering their importance within particular texts as well as looking for patterns across Chaucer's works as a whole. Following the Introduction, in which Hodges offers an overview of the use of costume rhetoric throughout the *Canterbury Tales*, Chapter One focuses on the *Knight's Tale* and considers how its use of costume description both fulfils and frustrates an audience's expectation of the romance genre. Although Arcite's funeral adheres to generic convention in its emphasis on

the deceased hero being dressed in 'cloth of gold', Hodges notes that the tale does not detail the other main characters' costumes, nor does it include an arming scene, as would be typical in romances. As part of this discussion, Hodges also devotes some attention to the tale's description of the tournament procession and notes that in many respects, and in particular through its reference to 'cloth of gold', the scene accords with historical accounts of processions in the late-fourteenth century. The female undergarment, the *smock*, forms the subject of Chapters Three and Four, which explore the *Clerk's Tale* and the *Miller's Tale* respectively. Noting that the smock serves as 'an important costume sign representing social status or character' (p. 91), Hodges examines the garment's material and cultural history in order to consider how the smocks worn by Griselda and Alisoun may reflect their character and position. In her discussion of the *Clerk's Tale*, Hodges points to the many clothing transformations that Griselda endures and notes that, in the absence of any detailed descriptions of her costumes, the centrality of Griselda's smocks convey the changes in her social status. In Chapter Four, Hodges examines the description of Alisoun's smock at the beginning of the *Miller's Tale* and notes that the reference to the elaborate embroidery which decorates its collar is particularly unusual. As well as considering the type of embroidery likely to have featured on Alisoun's garment, Hodges also investigates the implications of such decoration, noting that embroidered smock collars, particularly those worn on display as Alisoun's is, would have likely been read as a sign of wantonness and lack of refinement by a contemporary audience. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the place of clothing rhetoric in the *Tale of Sir Thopas*, and considers both the descriptions of Thopas' courtly attire and the arming scene in detail. Hodges notes that in contrast to his other romances, which are typically lacking in this conventional mode of description, Chaucer devotes considerable space to Thopas' 'comically excessive' (p. 160) dress in order to enhance the parodic nature of this tale.

An interest in dress and clothing also informs John Slefinger's article, 'Two Alisouns: The Miller's Use of Costume and His Seduction of the Wife of Bath' (*EssaysMedSt* 30[2014] 156-64), in which he argues that the *Miller's Tale* can be understood as the Miller's covert attempt to woo the Wife of Bath. Slefinger asserts that the lengthy account of Alisoun's appearance at the beginning of the *Miller's Tale* intentionally resembles the description of the Wife of Bath in the *General Prologue*, as in both instances attention is directed towards the characters' wimples, dress, and social aspirations. Slefinger argues that this comparison should be understood as the Miller-narrator's attempt to reframe the Wife of Bath in accordance with his own desires; it reflects his wish to 'control and win the Wife of Bath's sexual attention while undercutting any agency and interiority she may have' (p. 155).

The *Tale of Melibee* has been the subject of several essays this year. Ulrike Graßnick, in "'This litel tretys": Chaucer's Mirror for Princes *The Tale of Melibee*' (in Rosenberg and Simon, eds., *Material Moments in Book Cultures: Essays in Honour of Gabriele Müller-Oberhäuser*, pp. 3-15), notes that the *Tale of Melibee* reveals Chaucer's awareness of the Mirror for Princes tradition. Although *Melibee* adheres to a number of conventions allied to this mode of writing, Graßnick asserts that it is a particularly distinctive example due to its emphasis on narrative and the way in which its meaning is affirmed by its broader context in the *Canterbury Tales*. Indeed, she argues that the tale's focus on the dangers of tyrannical rulers is reinforced by the *Monk's Tale*, while Chaucer's interest in female counsellors is confirmed in the *Nun's Priest's Tale* through the character of Pertelote. The role of Prudence is of particular interest to Stephen Yeager, in his article 'Chaucer's Prudent Poetics: Allegory, the *Tale of Melibee*, and the Frame Narrative to the *Canterbury Tales*' (*ChauR* 48:iii[2014] 307-21). Approaching the text through a consideration of the methods through which Prudence interprets and offers advice, Yeager argues that *Melibee* is concerned with the 'literary mode of moralizing allegory and contingent reading practices' (p. 308). Although

some scholars have found Prudence's advice inconsistent, Yeager argues that her approach is marked by a sensitivity and flexibility that enables her to judge advice rationally and in a manner that is shaped by the immediate circumstances (p. 310). Thus, unlike her husband, Melibee, whose strict adherence to his counsellors' advice prompts him to seek vengeance, Prudence interprets this same advice more freely and in a manner which prioritizes mercy. By juxtaposing Melibee's strict allegorical readings with Prudence's rational and measured understanding, the tale affirms Prudence's role as the personification of practical wisdom and demonstrates that her 'interpretive program' (p. 307), with all of its inconsistencies, allows her to promote a clear argument in favour of mercy.

A number of general, thematic studies have included in their discussions a consideration of Chaucer's works. For example, *Food and the Literary Imagination*, by Jayne Elizabeth Archer, Richard Marggraf Turley, and Howard Thomas, devotes its third chapter to the treatment of food in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. By reflecting on the place of food production, agriculture, and manual labour at the end of the fourteenth century, this chapter focuses on how 'questions of food security and anxieties of sustenance help to shape Chaucer's pilgrims, their language and the tales they tell' (p. 56-57). These concerns are filtered primarily through a consideration of Chaucer's Plowman, who is named in the *General Prologue* but never tells a tale. According to Archer, Turley, and Thomas, the silencing of the Plowman may be an intentional move by Chaucer that both reflects his understanding of the 'heightened tensions surrounding the politics of food supply' (p.56), and demonstrates his awareness of the contemporary politicization of the Plowman figure in the Peasants' Revolt. In order to demonstrate this, Chaucer's Plowman is considered in relation to the Lollard text, *The Complaynte of the Plowman*, which was composed around 1400 and, for some time, was attributed to Chaucer himself. It is argued that *The Complaynte* enters into a dialogue with the *Canterbury Tales* through the texts' shared focus on the politics of food

and hunger. The chapter ends with a consideration of food and the economics of food supply in the *Reeve's Tale*.

In *Against the Friars: Antifraternalism in Medieval France and England*, Tim Rayborn dedicates a chapter to a consideration of the extent to which English writers of the fourteenth century engaged with antifraternal traditions in their works. Rayborn's discussion of Chaucer focuses specifically on the portrait of the Friar in the *General Prologue* and the *Summoner's Tale*. Rayborn highlights how the portrait of the Friar in the *Prologue* accords to a number of general, antifraternal stereotypes, noting in particular the emphasis on Hubert's greed and arrogance. In the discussion of the *Summoner's Tale*, Rayborn considers the sins of the friar described in the tale and notes that he most likely serves as 'a kind of "everyman" friar', who is not affiliated with one specific order but shows 'the worst in all of them' (p. 122). Rayborn concludes that while Chaucer's use of antifraternal imagery is informed by popular thought at the time, his depiction of friars in general is imbued with a degree of ambiguity, as Chaucer's attack seems to be directed towards 'hypocrisy in general, not the friars as a singled-out group' (p. 121).

Included in his introductory guide to the Middle English Breton lays, entitled *Reading the Middle English Breton Lays and Chaucer's Franklin's Tale*, Leo Carruthers offers an examination of Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale* and argues that it is a particularly complex and accomplished example of the Breton lay form. Carruthers considers the extent to which the Franklin's story adheres to generic conventions and notes that in spite of its focus on such themes as the supernatural, love, and loyalty (p. 124), it also plays with expectation by countering these aspects with a gritty edge of realism. Indeed, we are reminded that the clerk who answers Aurelius's requests by making the rocks disappear does so not by any supernatural means, but through his understanding of astrology and astronomical tables. In light of this subtle change in emphasis, Carruthers concludes that 'Chaucer's intention is not

to mock the Breton lay as a genre but to use it as a vehicle for his own purpose'; the function of the *Franklin's Tale* is not merely to entertain, 'but to reflect on human relations in a way much more like serious modern novelists' (p. 131).

Questions surrounding Chaucer's narrative style and structural techniques inform Gerald Morgan's discussion, 'Chaucer's Tellers and Tales and the Design of the *Canterbury Tales*' (in Jacobs and Morgan, eds., *Truthe is the Beste: A Festschrift in Honour of A.V.C. Schmidt*, pp. 137-168). By reflecting on the many narrative layers that make up the *Canterbury Tales*, Morgan explores the structure of the work and considers in detail the relationship between tale and teller. He reminds us of the need to avoid seeing the pilgrim narrators as the 'real tellers' of the tales, pointing to Chaucer's authorship and the intentional shaping of the multiple narrative voices contained within the work. Morgan also examines the 'Fragment theory' and concludes that although the *Canterbury Tales* is unfinished it has a sense of completeness; it is 'complete in the sense that the great organizing ideas of the work ... have been fully worked out' (p. 164). In the same volume, Nicholas Jacobs' essay, 'Nebuchadnezzar and the Moral of the Nun's Priest's Tale' (in Jacobs and Morgan, eds., pp. 109-26), considers the thematic similarities between the *Nun's Priest's Tale* and the *Monk's Tale*. Although both works seem to have a shared moral point, Jacobs notes that the *Monk's Tale*, with its relentless focus on man as the victim of Fortune, is ultimately less successful than the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, which communicates its moral in a more effective, concise, and sophisticated manner. In noting these distinctions, Jacobs suggests that the contrast between the two tales can be read as 'Chaucer's light-hearted summary of his own poetic career' (p. 111). He argues that the juxtaposition of the *Monk's Tale* and the *Nun's Priest's Tale* is deliberate and demonstrates Chaucer's awareness of his own progression as a writer: the *Monk's Tale* should be understood as 'Chaucer's little joke at the expense of his younger self

and as an example of how not to address the issue of fortune', whereas the *Nun's Priest's Tale* serves as 'a sparkling example of how the mature poet would go about it' (pp. 111-112).

Narrative style is also an important consideration for Michael Murrin in his examination of the *Squire's Tale* in his monograph, *Trade and Romance*. Noting that scholars have typically concentrated on the aristocratic focus of the tale and its teller, Murrin argues that the *Squire's Tale* is intended for a 'mixed audience' (p. 43) and that the narrative works in two social directions: 'upward to the aristocracy and downward to the urban middling sort' (p. 44). Reflecting on the order of the *Canterbury Tales*, Murrin notes that, in spite of his courtly aspirations, the Squire is aligned with 'people on the margins between the upper and middle social levels' (p. 47), such as the Man of Law, the Merchant, and the Franklin. According to Murrin, this arrangement encourages us to draw a similarity between these pilgrims and prompts us to seek an 'urban reading' of the tale. Indeed, for Murrin such a reading is affirmed by the Eastern setting of the *Squire's Tale*, as during the fourteenth century Sarai was a popular site of trade frequented by many merchants and clerics; as Murrin observes, Sarai formed 'part of a widening western European horizon' (p. 57) and was thus viewed as 'a zone of adventure for people from the lower social levels' (p. 60). Murrin concludes that although the setting of the *Squire's Tale* can initially be read as a convention of the romance genre, it functions as a mask which conceals the tale's mixed audience and subtly obscures the 'economic base of the aristocracy' (p. 60).

Focusing predominantly on the *Knight's Tale*, Leah Schwebel's 'The Legend of Thebes and Literary Patricide in Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Statius' (*SAC* 36[2014] 139-68) considers Chaucer's use of sources and his participation in what she describes as a tradition of 'authorial obfuscation' (p. 141). Schwebel notes that although Chaucer's failure to cite Boccaccio in the *Knight's Tale* has typically been read as his attempt to instil the work with greater authority, this erasure should rather be understood as a literary trope that Chaucer

learned from Boccaccio himself. Indeed, she argues that Boccaccio and Chaucer purposefully erase their immediate sources in order to ‘participate in a tradition of authorial usurpation practiced by the Latin epicists’ (p. 140). In so doing, both writers are able to acknowledge their debt to the classical tradition, while also pointing to their own ‘preeminence as modern poets writing in a new, literary language’ (p. 140). Yet, Schwebel notes that Chaucer does not merely reproduce this device in the *Knight’s Tale*, but rather reveals ‘a further interest in recovering Boccaccio’s silenced source ... by celebrating Statius as the predominant authority of Thebes’ (p. 153). This manoeuvre is most noticeable at the beginning of the tale, where Chaucer omits the extra material added in by Boccaccio in an effort to return to the original form of the work as written by Statius. By overlooking Boccaccio in favour of naming the ultimate source of his story, Chaucer not only hints at the longstanding literary tradition behind the act of authorial erasure but ‘renders this device more conspicuous [and] more metapoetic, than it appeared in previous forms’ (p. 156).

Also reflecting on Chaucer’s practice as a writer, albeit through the adoption of a biographical approach, is Paul Strohm’s *The Poet’s Tale: Chaucer and the Year that Made the Canterbury Tales*. Strohm argues that 1386 was a pivotal year for Chaucer and that the events which took place prompted him to write the *Canterbury Tales*. By reflecting on biographical details, Strohm seeks to highlight the connections between Chaucer’s ‘immersion in ordinary, everyday activities and the separately imagined work of his literary work’ (p. 6); it is argued that in order to understand the context in which Chaucer conceived the *Canterbury Tales* we must appreciate the events that took place in Chaucer’s life at that time. The first four chapters of the study are devoted to a consideration of the events that led up to the 1386 crisis. In Chapter One, Strohm reflects on Chaucer’s marriage and asserts that in 1386 it is likely that Chaucer became further estranged from his wife, Philippa; Chapter Two focuses on Chaucer’s lodgings over Aldgate and considers the implications of living in

such a location. Chaucer's occupation as Controller of the Customs, including his association with Nicholas Brembre, forms the subject of Chapter Three, while Chapter Four examines Chaucer's attendance at the parliamentary sessions in 1386. By charting these events in such detail, Strohm demonstrates that by the end of the year, Chaucer had lost his position as Controller of the Customs and, having been ousted from his Aldgate apartment, had decided to leave London in favour of setting up residency in Kent. Having set out this sequence of events, Strohm then devotes the remainder of his study to an examination of Chaucer's response to the crisis. By considering Chaucer's relationship with literary fame in Chapter Six and the practical implications of his new life in Kent in Chapter Seven, Strohm asserts that once Chaucer had left London he started to reflect on his role as a writer and decided to begin work on the *Canterbury Tales*. According to Strohm, the form of the *Canterbury Tales* is directly influenced by Chaucer's removal to Kent, as it is argued that without his London audience Chaucer was inspired to create 'an audience of his own invention' (p. 227), that is, the group of Canterbury pilgrims. For Strohm, the creation of this new textual audience is a decisive moment in Chaucer's literary career and reflects his ambition and skill as a writer: 'this expansively imagined Pilgrim band may be taken as an emblem of Chaucer's growing ambition for an enlarged literary public – not as an exact blueprint for the public but as a measure of his increasingly inclusive ambitions' (p. 230). Finally, Strohm concludes his study with an Epilogue entitled 'Laureate Chaucer', in which he reflects on the rise and influence of Chaucer's works in the fifteenth century, demonstrating that Chaucer's tentative ambition for a wider readership of his poetry was fully realized after his death.

3. Troilus & Criseyde

Foremost among the interesting new readings of *Troilus* is Mary Carruthers' 'The Sociable Text of the "*Troilus* Frontispiece": A Different Mode of Textuality' (*ELH* 81.2[2014] 423-41), originating from a conference given at Johns Hopkins in 2012. The focus of Carruthers' analysis is the so-called 'Troilus Frontispiece', the famous full-page illustration of Chaucer performing his text before a noble audience, included in Corpus Christi MS 61. What the image presents, with its depiction of a group of hearers gathered before an author, conversing freely as they listen, is a stark contrast to later models of textual engagement, which see reading as 'a solitary activity', performed 'by silent individuals reading something in psychic, if not always actual, solitude' (p. 424). What this boils down to is a sense that medieval texts are designed for social consumption above all, as their 'readers' are often active commentators, responding vocally in the company of other consumers, in a moment of collective performance. This element of the *Troilus* also resonates more deeply with medieval theories of authorship and reception, as Carruthers observes that physical performance is embedded in such thinking, from the definition of *intentio* as bodily movement, to the sense that narrative is a *ductus* or road on which readers and authors are fellow travellers. Cultures of reception also form a major part of Kara Gaston's "'Save oure tonges difference": Translation, Literary Histories, and *Troilus and Criseyde*' (*ChauR* 48.3[2014] 258-83). Gaston takes as her starting point the prologue of Book 2, in which Chaucer warns his readers of the historical and cultural distance of the events he is setting out to describe. Chaucer's self-consciousness here asks us to look to the culture from which his own raw material stems, as the development of Italian vernacular poetry offers a way of understanding his own policies as a translator, attempting to convey ancient material in medieval language. Gaston gives a detailed account of the ways in which classical syntax and vocabulary served as a

means of bolstering vernacular discourse in Italy, looking principally to Dante's comments in the *Convivio*. Chaucer's treatment of Petrarch in the *canticus Troili* serves as a particular point of focus for her analysis, as the paradoxes and blind-spots with which it struggles can be attributed to translation as readily as love.

However, most scholarship on the *Troilus* has tended to focus on particular characters in the poem, with Pandarus receiving most sustained attention. A case in point is Cory James Rushton's essay 'The Awful Passion of Pandarus' (in Hopkins, Rouse and Rushton, eds., *Sexual Culture in the Literature of Medieval Britain*, pp. 147-58). Rushton starts with Donaldson's claim that the (implicitly male) reader is driven to fall in love with Criseyde, which drives him to consider Pandarus' conversation with Criseyde in the bed she has recently shared with Troilus (3.1562-82). He argues that the central question here 'is not the lovableness of Criseyde, but her fuckability', and especially the fact that we are invited to view such a quality through the eyes of Pandarus himself (p. 148). A complex pattern of imagery and irony places Criseyde at centre of her uncle's fantasies, from the echoes of Dante's Paolo and Francesca in the eroticised reading Chaucer describes, to the references to traps and bait. Pandarus therefore becomes a specimen of triangular desire, with his function as intermediary affording him both voyeuristic proximity to the lovers and vicarious enjoyment of their coupling; his final profession of hatred for his niece is for his own benefit as much as Troilus'. Pandarus continues to be a central concern for Jonathan M. Newman, in 'Dictators of Venus: Clerical Love Letters and Female Subjugation in *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Rota Veneris*' (*SAC* 36[2014] 103-38). Newman sees *Troilus* as an erotodidactic text, akin to Ovidian *ars amandi*, although notes that it differs from classical precedent by using Pandarus to embody its discourse. The letters he writes are a key aspect of this function, as they resemble Boncompagno da Signa's *Rota veneris*, a guide to the craft of writing love letters, composed by the leading teacher of rhetoric at Bologna. One particularly suggestive

overlap is the slippage of power within this tradition, as the formal love letter is above all a literary game within a 'clerical work culture', serving to showcase its writer's 'prowess' rather than communicate their patron's feelings (p. 113). This in turn registers in Pandarus' own epistolary compositions, as he ceases merely to be a mediator in seduction and is instead able to exert authority over text, body and voice through his letters. But more important is that Pandarus, unlike Boncampagno or his pupils, is enveloped in a narrative that exceeds his own designs, as he is forced to negotiate with a woman who does not merely exist within manipulable text. The final letter from Criseyde causes the whole string of correspondence to collapse, as her claim that letters convey nothing serves to highlight the ironies of male-authored *ars amandi*, its inability to express what it claims to be asserting.

Turning away from Pandarus, Priam steps into the spotlight in Harold C. Zimmerman's 'Kingship, Fatherhood, and the Abdication of History in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*' (*Neophil* 98[2014] 129-44). Close analysis of the passages in which Priam appears, which Chaucer takes care to preserve from Boccaccio, show a general movement away from political vocabulary. The terms Chaucer uses consistently emphasise the king's personal or family relationships rather than his social function, a tendency taken still further by Chaucer's additions to the narrative. Such modifications highlight an important pattern in the poem as a whole, a preference for seeing the events of the Trojan War either in terms of the characters' sense of self or in terms of larger philosophical conceptions, in order to play down the ideological or historical foundation of such ideas. More even-handed in its treatment of character is Laura F. Hodges' chapter 'Sartorial Signs in *Troilus and Criseyde*' (*Chaucer and Array*, pp. 54-90), adapted from an essay that first appeared in *ChauR* 35.3[2001]. Although acknowledging that costume is less systematically presented in *Troilus* than elsewhere, Hodges argues that Chaucer's description of dress is important both symbolically and strategically, as it functions as an index of characterisation and to mark

important points in the narrative. Thus Criseyde's mourning weeds serve to signpost her simultaneous desirability and deathliness while forming a significant counterpoint to the 'mantel' of Troilus' affection. Richer still is Pandarus' reference to the 'game in myn hood', utilising a garment likely to signify the boundary between the public and private self in order to drive home connotations of trickery. All of these individual references to apparel draw deeply from the medieval usage of costume as a complex communicative medium. Another pervasive set of symbols in the poem is investigated by Lindsay Ann Reid's 'Virgilian and Ovidian Tree Similes in *Troilus and Criseyde* 2.1373-84' (*Explicator* 72:2[2014] 158-62). Reid notes a rich seam of arboreal imagery in the text, beginning with Pandarus' reference to Criseyde as a tree that 'bende[s], yet stant on roote' (2.1378). She comments on the classical implications of such terminology, looking to the treatment of the myth of Myrrha in the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* to explain Chaucer's allusions.

4. Other Works

In *Rethinking Chaucer's Legend of Good Women*, Carolyn P. Collette offers a fresh approach to the study of the *Legend* and argues that it should be considered as one of Chaucer's major works. In contrast to earlier studies which have approached the *Legend of Good Women* through a consideration of its use of sources, Collette argues that the poem is 'best understood within multiple contemporary contexts that frame it not as an anomaly, but as a central text in the development of a major writer's work' (p. 2). By placing the *Legend* in its social, cultural, and literary contexts, Collette seeks to demonstrate that the poem is directly informed by 'major intellectual and artistic developments in late fourteenth century European culture' (p. 155). Collette devotes the central chapters of her study to discrete strands of

inquiry, with each chapter engaging with a particular cultural or literary context which, she argues, has had a direct influence on the formation of the poem. In the first chapter, Collette accounts for the Prologue's emphasis on books by reflecting on the context of early English humanism in the court of Edward III. She argues that Chaucer's passion for books, as expressed in the Prologue to the *Legend*, can be understood as a reflection of his affinity with early humanism, which was prominent in the English court and was promoted more widely through the writings of Richard de Bury, author of the *Philobiblon*. By examining each of Chaucer's dream vision poems in turn, Collette asserts that Chaucer's relationship with books culminates in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, where he celebrates 'books as objects of virtue' (p. 11). Chapter Two explores the wider literary context of the *Legend*, by examining how the narratives contained within the poem were utilized by other late-fourteenth century writers. Collette devotes attention to the works of Boccaccio, Machaut, Gower, and Christine de Pizan, in order to highlight the range of exemplary purposes the narratives had in the works of Chaucer's near contemporaries. By surveying how these other writers engaged with the narratives, Collette draws attention to the 'adaptability of the trope of women's fidelity' and how it was repeatedly used to 'exemplify a variety of social and ethical issues' (p. 34). Turning away from a literary context in order to focus on a philosophical one, Chapter Three argues that the *Legend* is informed by the 'broad influence of Aristotelian thought' (p. 78). Through a consideration of the narratives' collected emphases on social and moral behaviour, Collette asserts that the *Legend* as a whole draws attention to the popular Aristotelian ideas of moderation, temperance and the importance of the mean. In the final two chapters Collette reflects on the place the *Legend* has within Chaucer's own writing career. In Chapter Four, it is suggested that the *Legend* was originally a much longer work that was firmly grounded in the tragedy of *Troilus*, while in Chapter Five, Collette reflects on the *Canterbury Tales* and considers how the *Legend* may look

forward to this work. By examining the treatment of Dorigen, Griselda, and Cecilia in the *Tales*, Collette argues that Chaucer's conception of women's fidelity has progressed since his writing of the *Legend*.

The *Legend of Good Women* is also considered in Wolfram R. Keller's essay, 'Geoffrey Chaucer's Mind Games: Household Management and Literary Aesthetics in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*' (in Honegger and Vanderbeke, eds., *From Peterborough to Faëry: The Poetics and Mechanics of Secondary Worlds*, pp. 1-24). Grounding his discussion in medieval medical theory, Keller argues that the belief that the brain was comprised of three interlinked chambers or ventricles serves as a useful model through which to approach the 'poetological journeys' in the *House of Fame* and the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*. It is asserted that in both poems Chaucer not only uses the model of the three ventricles to structure the dreamers' journeys, but also engages with the three mental capacities of imagination, logic, and memory, in order to comment on authorship and literary authority. Although this link is clearly apparent in the *House of Fame*, as evinced through the poem's gradual unveiling of the complicated origins of 'tidings' or narratives, Keller argues that it is even more explicit in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*. Indeed, in the Prologue the dreamer-narrator's experience serves as a means through which Chaucer can comment specifically on his own literary works: 'Chaucer replicates the poet's journey through his own noisy mental apparatus, adopting, as it were, a slanted perspective on the judgment of his own works' (p. 3).

The *House of Fame* has been the subject of a number of studies this year, with particular attention being directed towards the presentation of the poem's narrator, Geoffrey. Alastair Minnis, in his article 'Chaucer Drinks What He Brews: *The House of Fame*, 1873-82' (*N&Q* 61:ii[2014] 187-189), focuses on Geoffrey's words on lines 1873-82 of the poem, where he denies that he has come to seek renown in Fame's hall. Minnis is particularly

interested in lines 1979-80: 'For what I drye, or what I thynke, / I wil myselven al hyt drynke'. He explains that these lines should be understood as a proverbial expression, evoking the common phrase 'One must drink as one brews' (p. 188). Minnis demonstrates that the use of this expression is particularly striking when compared to other examples in Middle English, as Geoffrey 'relates the proverb to himself, rather than having it imposed upon him by moralistic outsiders' (p. 189). A consideration of lines 1873-82 of the *House of Fame* also forms the subject of John Burrow's article, 'Geoffrey's Credo: *House of Fame*, lines 1873-82' (*ChauR* 48:iii[2014] 251-257). Burrow offers a systematic analysis of these lines and pays particular attention to the dreamer's reference to his 'art' on line 1882: 'As ferforth as I kan myn art'. According to Burrow, this line refers to the dreamer's own poetic matter and should thus be understood as a reflection of Geoffrey's self-conception as a poet; it suggests that, for Geoffrey, 'it is not the business of the art poetical to perpetuate an individual poet's "name"' (p. 255). In order to examine how later poets would have responded to this concept, Burrow considers Alexander Pope's *Temple of Fame* (a version of Book III of the *House of Fame*), and observes that Pope sought to rectify Chaucer's stance by including in his poem a concern for reputation and posterity. In light of this, Burrow concludes that reputation and fame seem to be a concern for poets only after the medieval period. An interest in the dreamer-narrator of the *House of Fame* is also shared by Eugene Green in his essay 'Finding Pragmatic Common Ground Between Chaucer's Dreamer and Eagle in *The House of Fame*' (in Milynsky, ed., *Studies in Middle English. Words, Forms, Senses and Texts*, pp. 165-83). Green approaches the exchange between the dreamer and the eagle in Book II from a linguistic perspective and argues that the dialogue can be understood as a verbal exchange which enacts the participants' pursuit for 'common ground' (p. 165). Green focuses on Chaucer's deployment of pragmatic devices and argues that these linguistic features add veracity to the exchange and shape its development. It is argued that although

the dreamer and eagle are initially at odds with one another, the features of their exchange lead to a shared common ground that is in part due to Chaucer's shaping of the dialogue and, in the context of the narrative, is instigated by the sight of the House of Fame and the speakers' agreement regarding its wonder.

In his article 'Literary Value and the Customs House: The Axiological Logic of the *House of Fame*' (*ChauR* 48:iv[2014], 374-394), Robert J. Meyer-Lee places Chaucer's writing of the *House of Fame* in its socioeconomic context, considering how Chaucer's position as Controller of the Customs may have informed the poem's exploration of literary value. It is argued that Chaucer's appointment as Controller of the Customs in 1374, and the movement out of court that would have inevitably ensued as a result of this, may have prompted Chaucer to reflect on his standing as a court poet and to rethink the direction of his literary endeavours. In particular, Meyer-Lee argues that the poetics of the *House of Fame*, most notably its detailed exploration of literary value and autonomy, are directly informed by the change in Chaucer's circumstances: 'Chaucer's formulations of literary autonomy in this poem are inseparable from the social, ideological, and practical circumstances of his controllership' (p. 375). As a consequence, it is asserted that the poem's 'tidings/fame complex' (p. 390), that is, the transmission and treatment of sound from the House of Rumour to the House of Fame, can be understood in direct relation to Chaucer's work in the Customs House. This influence is further demonstrated by the fact that the poem is the only work in which Chaucer, in the guise of Geoffrey, makes reference to his non-literary labour. In pointing out these parallels, Meyer-Lee is keen to stress that they do not overshadow the poem's literary value; instead, they 'create a socioeconomic framework for what are very much literary concerns' (p. 393). Indeed, it is argued that by intentionally moving away from the courtly poetry of love and embarking on a work which explores the art of the poetic tradition more overtly, Chaucer redefines the role of poet and thus carves out a new place for

himself in the field of courtly poetry: ‘with the *House of Fame* Chaucer staged an intervention into the literary field of the court, one that, in theory, might alter what the field recognized as literary value by evolving existing models to better suit his new social position’ (p. 393).

Finally, in ‘Among the Schoolchildren: Joyce’s “Night Lesson” and Chaucer’s *Treatise on the Astrolabe*’ (Haun and Gillespie, eds., *Intersections, Interferences, Interdisciplines: Literature with Other Arts*, pp. 35-46), Lucia Boldrini argues that thematic and structural echoes can be found between Chaucer’s *Treatise of the Astrolabe* and the ‘Night Lesson’ chapter in Book II of James Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake*. By acknowledging that both works use a shared range of motifs and images, most notably the use of geometrical metaphors to explain language and its circulation, Boldrini argues that Joyce’s chapter may have been directly informed by Chaucer’s work.

5. Reception and Reputation

Scholarship has continued to show a marked interest in the transformations Chaucer has undergone through various engagements with his work. Beginning with the first generation of his readers, Kathleen L. Scott examines his middle-class audience in ‘Past Ownership: Evidence of Book Ownership by English Merchants in the Later Middle Ages’ (in Carol M. Meale, ed., *Makers and Users of Medieval Books Book Subtitle: Essays in Honour of A.S.G. Edwards*, pp. 150-77). Scott offers extensive evidence of Chaucer’s circulation in the urban, professional locale of the fifteenth century, drawing records from wills, booklists and manuscript annotations. Chaucer proves to be firmly embedded in the tastes of this particular social stratum: of the manuscripts surveyed, six contain the *Canterbury Tales*, either in its

entirety or in extracted form, while four others contain other works by Chaucer; readers of Chaucer include the draper Walter Smyth, the mercer William Fetypace, and the merchant Thomas Heed. As Scott remarks, such popularity shows ‘a turn to the indigenous literary culture virtually the moment it developed in an accessible form’ (p. 151). Chaucer’s links to material culture are also considered in Daniel W. Mosser and Linne R. Mooney’s ‘More Manuscripts by the *Beryn* Scribe and His Cohort’ (*ChauR* 49.1[2014] 39-76). The article fleshes out the career of a shadowy figure responsible for preserving one of the most idiosyncratic continuations of the *Canterbury Tales*, the *Tale of Beryn*, contained in MS Northumberland MS 455. The *Beryn* copyist is already known to be responsible for several manuscripts of the prose *Brut*, along with copies of the *Prick of Conscience* and *Parliament of Fouls*; here Mosser and Mooney confirm Simon Horobin’s suggestion that he might also have been responsible for the paper sections of *Canterbury Tales* in MS Princeton University Library MS 100. Going further still, his hand, and the hands of scribes with whom he collaborated, are also seen in Rosenbach 1084/2 and Rylands English 63, a prose *Brut* in Rawlinson C.901, a *Life of Our Lady* in CUL MS Kk.1.3, and a copy of the *Regiment of Princes* in the same manuscript.

Chaucer’s fifteenth-century readers also receive attention in Emma Lipton’s ‘Law, Chaucer, and Representation in Lydgate’s *Disguising at Hertford*’ (*JEGP* 113:3[2014] 342-64). Lipton regards the text as less assertive in its treatment of royal authority than has usually been assumed, locating within it an ambivalent and fractious presentation of monarchic power. At the core of this view is Lydgate’s reading of the Wife of Bath, who is evoked as a legal precedent by the rebellious wives of Hertford. Alisoun’s simultaneous erosion and appropriation of sovereignty thus comes to inform the text, as Lydgate’s wives are shown to locate legal authority in language itself, rather than in the speaker from which it originates, shunting the foundation of justice away from the person of the king. Similar

concerns are brought into play in Emily Wingfield's 'Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*' (*The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature*, pp. 121-49). Although there is little material evidence of Chaucer's Scottish readership, Wingfield notes that his influence is attested by virtually every major poet of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, from James I through to Dunbar, Blind Hary, and Lyndsay. She examines two records of this impact: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24, a *Troilus* manuscript compiled for the Scottish Sinclair family in the last decades of the fifteenth century, and Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*. Through its images of Criseyde, the first reflects Chaucer's own promotion of his heroine as a symbol of the literary tradition to which she belongs, with her self-conscious meditations on her own openness to variable readings. Henryson is also shown to be attuned to the slipperiness of interpretation, and to place Criseyde at the centre of such difficulties, giving her a vexed, polysemous and self-aware voice. As Wingfield argues, the final section of the poem is not an attempt to close down these issues with 'misogynistic' judgements, despite early modern and critical responses to the poem, but is more an extension of Chaucer's wilful problematising of judgement.

Another fifteenth-century reader representing a different set of sensibilities is considered by Darryl Ellison in "'Take it as a tale": Reading the *Plowman's Tale* As If It Were' (*ChauR* 49.1[2014] 77-101). Ellison focuses on the Wycliffite *Plowman's Tale*, accepted as Chaucer's work until Thomas Tyrwhitt's 1775 edition of the *Works*. He reads the *Tale* in terms of the cultural logic that allowed it to be included among Chaucer's authentic works. Two particularly important sources are the commentary it elicits in the anonymous 1606 edition, and the prologue it gained in the early sixteenth century, which links it explicitly to the *Canterbury Tales*. The first places the text in a generically uncertain territory, between the pure fiction of 'fable' and historical veracity of 'story', suggesting that the text's

attribution to Chaucer was motivated by literary authority as much religious polemic; the second deliberately collapses any distinction between narrator, imitator, and author, as it echoes the Host's words to Chaucer in the prologue of *Sir Thopas* with reference to its narrator. The *Plowman's Tale* thus underscores the permeability of its host text, its fractured and discontinuous character, and its openness to reinterpretation and renegotiation.

One of the most significant contributions to understanding the late medieval and early modern Chaucer is Helen Barr's *Transporting Chaucer*. Across the six essays collected here, Barr examines the ways in which Chaucer and his characters have been reprised in later texts: as she states in her introduction, the question animating her discussion is the ways in which 'authorised versions of literary time and place cease to hold' when readers 'encounter Chaucer's characters, including "himself", in works he did not make' (p. 4). The first chapter, 'The Figure in the Canterbury Stained Glass' (pp. 25-52), engages with a curious continuation of the pilgrimage narrative known variously as the *Beryn Prologue* or *Canterbury Interlude*. Particularly significant is the nameless poet's fascination with the Pardoner, and the violence he inflicts on him; these injuries are read as a parodic replay of Beckett's martyrdom, one which, in its wilful confusion of wounds as signs, disrupts the founding logic of relic-worship. The same text is also considered in the following chapter, 'Crossing Borders' (pp. 53-81), along with the supplementary Canterbury Tale it serves to introduce. The *Prologue* is seen here as a space in which Chaucer's pilgrims grow strangely indistinct from one another, while *Beryn* provides an object lesson of the ways in which appropriation permits revaluation, as it allows the Gieffroy of its French source to become a symbol of Chaucer's own slipperiness. Next is 'Chaucer's Hands' (pp. 82-139), a discussion of the meaning of the hand in medieval culture, focusing on Chaucer's memorialisation in manuscript images, which often show him gesturing at his text from its margins. Just as the hand might stand for the perils of physical contact, for human craft in general, and for the

supervising hand of God, Chaucer's illustrated hands seem to blur the lines between homage and hijack: at one and the same time they 'perform the work of a deceased author in the making, a fictional narrator who is about to speak and an annotator who speaks on another person's behalf' (p. 115). "'Wrinkled Deep in Time'" (pp. 140-65) looks to an apparent contradiction in Shakespeare's treatment of Theseus, suggesting that the characters of the *Knight's Tale* and *Two Noble Kinsmen* are not merely elided from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but retain a ghost-presence throughout it. 'Bones and Bays' (pp. 166-97) discusses Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite* in the light of William Davenant's earlier modernisation of *Two Noble Kinsmen*, looking at the self-interest that guided this deliberate return to Chaucer. Closing the monograph, 'Reverberate Troy' (pp. 198-245) looks to the interplay between silence, sound and cacophony in the treatment of Trojan history, dwelling especially on the *House of Fame* and *Troilus and Cressida*.

William T. Rossiter returns us to the early sixteenth century with the chapter "'In Kent And Christendome": Wyatt In England' (*Wyatt Abroad: Tudor Diplomacy and the Translation of Power*, pp. 198-224). Rossiter argues that two of the ruling factors on Wyatt's work are his simultaneous alertness to tradition and desire for 'new fangilness'. Both of these impulses are conditioned by his knowledge of Chaucer, albeit the Henrician Chaucer of Pynson and Thynne, who provided him with a model for processing Petrarchan material. Wyatt's work is therefore less the emergence of a radically new phase in poetry, and more the deliberate construction of a continuity with the English past. Renaissance uses of Chaucer also feature in Daniel J. Ranson's 'Chaucerian Echoes in the *Debate betweene Pride and Lowlines*' (*ChauR* 48.3[2014] 322-33). This paper considers the *Debate betweene Pride and Lowlines*, printed by John Charlwood in c.1577, and attributed only to 'F.T.' Although comparatively neglected by contemporary scholarship, the piece was sufficiently popular in the sixteenth century to receive a prose reworking by Robert Greene in 1592. Ranson extracts

a range of allusions to Chaucer from the text, as it draws from the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, the Summoner's portrait in the *General Prologue*, the *Merchants' Tale*, and the *Book of the Duchess*. Insofar as its author is an indicator of tastes in the third quarter of the sixteenth century, he shows a greater preference for works other than the *Canterbury Tales*, and a curious reluctance to advertise Chaucer's influence on him. Still working in the same period, Holly Crocker offers a reading of 'John Foxe's Chaucer: Affecting Form in Post-Historicist Criticism' (*New Medieval Literatures* 15[2014] 149-82). She notes that Chaucer is an oddly unfixed, even transcendent figure in Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. He is not embedded in the political or religious events of his lifetime to the same extent as Foxe's other witnesses to 'Christes vniversall Church', but instead seems to resonate with other figures beyond his own period, such as Colet and Tyndale. Crocker uses this parachronistic sense of Chaucer's writing to consider Foxe's policy as historiographer; she finds that it opens up possibilities for 'post-historicist' scholarship, as Foxe's view of Chaucer works against the central tenets of orthodox historicism, with its sense of the radical alterity of past and present.

Louise D'Arcens takes Chaucer into the Enlightenment in 'Scraping the Rust from the Joking Bard: Chaucer in the Age of Wit' (*Comic Medievalism*, pp. 43-67). As D'Arcens writes, this was a particularly important period in consolidating and classifying Chaucer's reputation, producing 'an avalanche of engagement with Chaucer's legacy' which was driven by the need to 'identify a continuous presence of wit in English culture' (p. 45). Thus in the work of Addison, Hayley, Gay, Pope and others Chaucer is seen as a comic author above all, to the extent that these features threaten to obscure other qualities in his work; the vocabulary used to discuss him leans in a decisively comic direction, with the governing terms being such adjectives as 'witty, sprightly, lively, merry, jolly, gleeful, mirthful' and 'genial' (p. 51). Yet at the same time Chaucer is also seen as 'rust'd', requiring 'polish' to be made comprehensible as comedy: in other words, he is seen as both a precursor to modern

sophistication and a figure made distant by his primitiveness. Other contradictions also combine in readings of his work, as he is seen as both essentially English and beyond any one culture, while his humour is judged to be simultaneously urbane and crude. As D’Arcens observes, this ambivalence is founded on wider attitudes towards the medieval period itself, its status as an ‘other’ which was nonetheless integral to modernity’s sense of its own identity. Other work has also analysed the eighteenth-century Chaucer. Thus Simon Horobin examines the career of the Norfolk antiquarian Beaupré Bell (1704-41) in ‘Beaupré Bell and the Editing of Chaucer in the Eighteenth Century’ (in Meale, ed., *Makers and Users*, pp. 214-23). Bell is known to have written the scattered annotations in two manuscripts of Chaucer now held at Trinity College. Although at first glance Bell’s notes might indicate only limited interest in Chaucer, other sources show a much fuller engagement. Horobin identifies his handwriting in a copy of Speght’s 1598 Chaucer now held at the Bodleian and a copy of Urry’s 1721 *Works* now held at Trinity library. Both of these volumes show Bell paying careful attention to Chaucer, comparing the texts for spelling variants and omitted passages, and showing particular interest in the *Canterbury Tales* and *House of Fame*. Such efforts seem to be part of a wider dissatisfaction among eighteenth-century readers with the texts inherited from the early modern printers, as parallel activities can be attributed to Bell’s contemporary Samuel Pegge. Moving in a similar direction is Barry Sales’ ‘The Landlord’s Tale: An Introduction and Contextualization’ (*ECS* 47[2014] 313-20), which looks at an anonymous Ariosto translation dating from 1708. This text shows continued interest in Chaucer in the eighteenth century, as its framework evokes Dryden’s imitations of Chaucer from the *Fables*, showing how these two authors continued to mediate Augustan contact with the Middle Ages.

Moving forward in time, A.S.G. Edwards assesses Chaucer’s legacy in cold monetary rather than aesthetic terms. In ‘What’s It Worth?: Selling Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* in the

Twentieth Century' (*ChauR* 48:3[2014] 239-50), Edwards studies the sale of Chaucer manuscripts at auction throughout the twentieth century. Fifteen manuscripts are considered, both complete and fragmentary, sold between 1906 and 1983. Surprisingly, Edwards finds little sense that Chaucer was particularly prized by buyers or sellers. For example, what are now MSS Egerton 2863 and Egerton 2864 fetched less than £200 apiece when auctioned at Sotheby's in 1906; for comparison, a twelfth-century New Testament in the same sale raised nearly three times as much. Other auctions tell a similar story, with the Delamare Chaucer possibly failing to reach its reserve in 1928, and a house in 1975 deliberately exaggerating earlier valuations of another manuscript. Precisely why Chaucer has underperformed at market remains unclear, especially since a copy of Caxton's *Canterbury Tales* sold at Christie's in 1998 for over £5 million, the highest price ever paid for a printed volume. Factors might include a lack of appreciation of the rarity of Chaucer manuscripts, given the volume of commentary his work has attracted, and the typical plainness of the manuscripts themselves. Also in the twentieth century, Colin Wilcockson looks to visual interpretations of Chaucer in 'Illustrating Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*: Eric Gill's Woodcuts for the Golden Cockerel Press' (*Anglistik* 25[2014] 29-43). Building on the work of Holliday and Faulkner, the focus of analysis here is the work of graphic designer Eric Gill, whose selections of images to accompany the 1929-31 *Tales* shows a sensitive and complex engagement with the text.

Bringing things closer to the present day, Chaucer in the twenty first century receives attention from three essays. First of these is Alison Gulley's "'We Wol Sleen this False Traytor Deeth": The Search for Immortality in Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale* and J.K. Rowling's *The Deathly Hallows*' (in Karl Fugelso, ed., *Ethics and Medievalism*, pp. 189-204). This takes as its focus Rowling's story of the 'The Three Brothers', which describes the creation of the three titular artefacts of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Gulley finds

that the roots of the story lie in the similar search for Death at the centre of the *Pardoner's Tale*. What binds together Rowling and Chaucer is their mutual interest in the journey as an existential motif, and their emphasis on the inability of human beings to defy death; indeed, Rowling's usage of the episode as a whole provides a point of connection between medieval and contemporary conceptions of mortality. A more direct species of adaptation is surveyed in Katrin Rupp, 'Getting Modern on Alisoun's Ass: The BBC and Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*' (*Neophil* 98:2[2014] 343-52). Rupp offers a reading of the BBC's most recent version of the *Miller's Tale*, that directed by John McKay in 2003, as part of a Bafta-winning series of six of Chaucer's *Tales*. Particular focus falls on the film's negotiation of obscenity, and its attitude towards the exposure of body-parts. Although medieval culture did regard the 'privee partes' as disreputable, as sources ranging from Augustine to Bartholomaeus to Chaucer's own Parson can attest, it is the modern adaptation that proves most squeamish about such issues, insulating its audience from the actor's bodies by the judicious use of camera-shots, shadows, and body-stockings. What seems to be at stake is a sense that actual nudity or sexual contact might disrupt the climate of playfulness essential to the comedy. Pop culture also informs Tyson Pugh's 'Teaching Chaucer Through Convergence Culture: The New Middle Ages as Cross-Cultural Encounter' (in Karina F. Attar and Lynn Shutter, eds., *Teaching Medieval and Early Modern Cross-Cultural Encounters*, pp. 215-28). Pugh asks us to think about the ways in which our own practices as teachers of Chaucer might benefit by looking to contemporary adaptation. He recounts some of his own pedagogic techniques, which employ such material as a means of addressing the complexities of Chaucer's work. In particular, he invites students to consider Chaucer's resistance to such conversion, either by viewing Myerson's ten-minute reduction of the *Knight's Tale*, or Pasolini's salacious *Wife of Bath*. Bryant's *Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog* also features in his teaching, as its self-conscious

parody lays bare the processes by which occupants of one set of cultural norms can attempt to make sense of artefacts originating from beyond the limits of their world.