

## Chaucer

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; section 4 is by Natalie Jones; section 2 is by Natalie Jones with contributions by Ben Parsons.

### 1. General

Alexander Gabrovsky's *Chaucer the Alchemist: Physics, Mutability, and the Medieval Imagination* provides an important re-evaluation of the influence of medieval sciences on Chaucer. By approaching the subject in terms of change and transformation, and as an attempt to schematise the necessary flux of worldly being, Gabrovsky expands the range of Chaucerian texts in which scientific thinking can be detected. After an opening chapter on the physics of sublunary existence, he reads the *House of Fame* as a thought-experiment on the human understanding of space. His discussion finds Chaucer considering the ways in which sensory interpretation can be subject to distortion, not only by visual illusion but by hearing, as 'language (a product of sound)' proves to be 'the ultimate agent of distortion' (p. 60). The second section turns to alchemy, with two interconnected chapters looking at the *Franklin's Tale* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. The first discusses the principle of 'opposicion' evoked in Aurelius' prayer to Apollo, a term that recalls the idea that 'features of the alchemist's laboratory...have their natural counterparts in the actions of the sun' and other astral bodies (p. 106); this in turn provides a key for reading the ethical system of the *Tale*, from the harmonization of disparate elements that underpins Arveragus and Dorigen's marriage, to the ability of the black rocks to 'transmute' human conduct into noble, self-sacrificing *freedom*, somewhat like the philosopher's stone. *Troilus* also situates alchemy within a complex

network of symbols, one which focuses on the 'stiel' body of its hero and its failure to undergo transmutation, at least until Troilus' final, posthumous sublimation. Finally, the *Parlement of Fowls* is seen in terms of the new philosophical technology of modal logic, which provides the 'formal structure' underlying the 'surface elements' of *demande d'amour* and parliamentary debate, and accounts for the poem's greater interest in raising possibilities than positing solutions (p. 202). As should be clear from the breadth of its survey, the work as a whole serves to stretch the limits of Chaucer's scientific engagement, showing how fully themes of chemical mutability pervade his work.

Learning of a different kind features John Marenbon's lively *Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz*, which dedicates a chapter to fourteenth-century English poetry. The fundamental issue that Marenbon addresses is the pre-Christian foundation of philosophy, and the ways in which western thinkers have attempted to plaster over this fault-line running through their discourse. Langland and Chaucer prove especially important in the long history of engagement with paganism, as their struggles not only take radically different paths but often overstep the bounds of earlier scholastic engagement. While Langland raises profound questions by ascribing varying and uncertain levels of authority to his personifications, Chaucer takes a more relativistic tack. His attempts to reconstruct a pagan world in the *Knight's Tale* and *Troilus and Criseyde* refuse to set this world within a Christian eschatology or cosmology, instead allowing it to function by its own rules. Hence *Troilus* folds back into a pagan frame in its final passages, referring the reader to 'this worlde that passeth soone' even as Troilus achieves transcendence. Both texts are united by making 'inappropriate or incomplete' reference to Boethius, especially in Theseus' politicised 'First Moevere' speech, as though to underscore the selective and limited viewpoints their characters and narratives occupy (p. 230). Eve Salisbury also considers Chaucer's work against the subject positions created by larger

discourses in 'Carried Away by the Law: Chaucer and the Poetry of Abduction' (in Andrea Boboc, ed., *Theorizing Legal Personhood in Late Medieval England*, pp. 50-70). Salisbury takes a further run at one of the slipperiest terms in medieval jurisprudence, the concept of *raptus*. Her discussion departs from earlier treatments by concentrating on male victims of abduction in Chaucer's work, such as Ganymede in the *House of Fame* or Chauntecleer in the *Nun's Priest's Tale*. She finds that Chaucer is able to conceive what medieval legal discourse cannot, broaching the possibility that the male body might also be subject to forcible seizure, aggression and violation.

In *Passion and Precision: Collected Essays on English Poetry*, A.V.C. Schmidt joins a number of distinguished Chaucerians who have produced retrospective overviews of their careers. While this particular volume represents several facets of Schmidt's output, Chaucer receives the lion's share the attention. The majority of the pieces are revised versions of articles published previously: 'Structure, Language and Myth in Chaucer's The Former Age' (pp. 2-16) examines the ways in which Chaucer reconstructs images of the Golden Age to present technology and trade as triggers, rather than symptoms, of a fall from a primal order; 'Nimrod in "The Former Age"' (pp. 21-24) considers the echoes of exegetic tradition embedded in Chaucer's 'Nembrot', and the ways in which he serves to bridge biblical and classical cultures; 'Telling the Truth About Love' (pp. 25-89) sees Troilus' love as a means by which he experiences inadvertent, unconscious contact with a Christian divinity; 'The Pity of It' (pp. 90-96) defends this position against Gerald Morgan's reading, especially his claim that Troilus is guilty of misguided idolatry in his love; finally 'The Tragedy of Arcite: Chaucer's Knight's Tale' (pp. 97-105) compares the endings of *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*, showing how their tragedies still seek to recoup the values of love and chivalry. In addition to these reprinted items, Schmidt also includes a new piece, 'Questioning the Chivalric: Chaucer and the *Gawain*-Poet' (pp. 106-21). This offers a careful examination of

the extent to which Chaucer and his north-western contemporary offer a critique of the ideals of knighthood. Against Huizinga's view of a culture in terminal decline, Schmidt offers a vigorous denial that fourteenth-century poetry 'had lost faith of in the robust and lucid values of the formative period of chivalry', tracing the continued vitality of chivalry's core virtues in the *Franklin's Tale*, and revisiting the triumphant conclusions of the *Knight's Tale* and *Troilus* (p. 110).

Chaucer's two adaptations from Boccaccio also draw the focus of Katarzyna Stadnik in *Chaucer's Choices: Through the Looking-Glass of Medieval Imagery*. Here Stadnik examines Chaucer's visual metaphors through the prism of cognitive linguistics. The first half of the study is dedicated to elaborating this complex system and its utility for literary analysis, observing how the use of visual images in written texts, especially those intended for oral performance before a particular community of listeners, might provide a means of shaping, rather than merely reflecting, the conceptual order of that community. The final, longest chapter pursues these concerns across Chaucer's two great classical romances, tracing out the ways in which moments of spectacle and sight become a site of 'interplay between the individual's idiosyncrasy and their sociocultural situatedness' (p. 108). Stadnik investigates the ways in which images serve as conveyers of collective memory, showing how Chaucer's appeals to vision are both rooted in and expand upon Boethian philosophy; she herself draws on the work of Carruthers to show how the human body serves as a particularly rich repository of these communicative images. Linguistic concerns of a more traditional bent are investigated in Gyöngyi Werthmüller, 'Final -e in Gower's and Chaucer's Monosyllabic Premodifying Adjectives' (in Juan Camilo Conde Silvestre and Javier Calle Martín, eds., *Approaches to Middle English: Variation, Contact and Change*, pp. 179-98). Werthmüller finds a relatively stable pattern of practice across the work of the two poets, assembling

copious evidence to show that terminal *-e* can have grammatical rather than purely metrical functions.

Discourse-theory animates Nancy Mason Bradbury's 'The Proverb as Embedded Microgenre in Chaucer and *The Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf* (*Exemplaria* 27:1-2[2015], 55-72). Bradbury draws on Bakhtin's late, incomplete work on genre, and especially on his account of the processes that occur when one genre is absorbed into the boundaries of another. As she writes, the effect of such integration is to switch rapidly between voices and worldviews in ways that can prove unstable and dynamic. Chaucer's inclusion of proverbs in *Troilus and Criseyde*, *Melibee*, and the Miller's and Cook's Tales show the fluidity of these quotations, as proverbs do not merely serve as tidy statements of conventional wisdom, but can become points of tension between competing truths, perceptions and even social realities. Chaucer's debt to demotic forms is further investigated in Douglas Gray's *Simple Forms: Essays on Medieval English Popular Literature*, a self-conscious attempt to breathe new life into the shop-worn field of folklore studies. In Gray's erudite discussion of oral narratives, Chaucer comes to participate in a far-reaching nexus of connections, not only through his use of proverbs and traditional topoi, but in his references to charms, giants, rituals, and theories on the disappearance of the fairies.

For newcomers to Chaucer and his period, Elaine Treharne's *Medieval Literature*, part of OUP's popular Very Short Introduction series, offers a typically learned access-point. Chaucer's work is not only evoked in its own right, as *The Canterbury Tales* receives extensive discussion, but it appears as a witness to the conditions and the climate of ideas in which medieval authors worked. Hence *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde* are used to exemplify the variability of manuscript culture, and the 'information exchange and communal recollection' that underpins oral performance; likewise, the *Book of the Duchess* shows how personal and public registers might interact with one another, while the *Legend of*

*Good Women* demonstrates the importance of patronage (p. 33). Ultimately, the breadth and detail of these references makes the book at least as useful for students of Chaucer as for parties interested in the Middle Ages as a whole. Comparable in intent, although with a narrower focus, is Bernard O'Donoghue's *Reading Chaucer's Poems: A Guided Selection*. For the benefit of the untrained reader, O'Donoghue draws together a varied and comprehensive collection of highlights from Chaucer's canon, supported with detailed glosses, a running commentary, and biographical material. Most of the major works are represented in part, from the *Book of the Duchess* to *The Canterbury Tales*, along with many shorter poems. Chaucer features in a further anthology for general readers, providing the capstone of Laura Ashe's *Early Fiction in England: From Geoffrey of Monmouth to Chaucer*. Interpreting 'English' culture with a similar generosity, the selection moves through Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace, Marie de France, Walter Map and the *Ancrene Wisse* before reaching *Troilus and Criseyde*, offering an implicit challenge to the popular idea of Chaucer as absolute origin of the English literary tradition.

Readers at every level are likely to derive benefit from Mark Allen and Stephanie Amsel, *Annotated Chaucer Bibliography 1997-2010*. This brings together synopses of 4632 separate items of research on Chaucer, along with other resources and responses. The contents are based on the annual overviews of scholarship published in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, although these entries are supplemented by over six hundred new items that had previously escaped the compilers' attention. What is of particular interest here, however, is the organisational scheme imposed on this formidable array of work. As well as placing criticism under the expected headings, dividing them according to the works they address, there are also thematic divisions ('Style, rhetoric, prosody and versification', 'Gender, sexuality and identity'), descriptions of audio-visual media, and a section on pedagogic materials. A further novelty in its taxonomy is the inclusion of modern fictional portrayals

and adaptations. Lastly, the latest instalment of this larger project, the Annotated Chaucer Bibliography (SAC 37[2015] 347-400), remains a resource of central importance in its own right. The entries for 2013 give succinct overviews of 172 articles and books, as well as listing 28 reviews.

## **2. *Canterbury Tales***

Complementing work on Chaucer's treatment of the sciences, and in several ways serving as a counterpoint to it, is Patricia Clare Ingham's *The Medieval New: Ambivalence in an Age of Innovation*. Ingham is less concerned with scientific discourse *per se*, and more with the ways in which mechanical developments were encoded as 'newfangelnesse' by medieval culture, and what concerns were projected into this term. Hence the wondrous technologies of the *Squire's Tale* are treated as a meditation on human creativity in general, one in which poetry and machinery are equally implicated. According to Ingham, Chaucer uses the marvellous artefacts of Cambuskan to explore the questions surrounding novelty and innovation: as he moves from an account of mechanical wonder to a familiar story of failed love, his narrative shunts newness out of a purely fantastic mode into an ethical one, exploring how innovation might simply perpetuate older forms and narratives. The *Tale* as a result takes a profoundly paradoxical view of ingenuity, asserting that 'creative production...can produce breakaway moments' or merely dissolve into a mass of accumulated material: as Ingham reminds us, the objects the Squire describes might be wondrous on the one hand, but on the other they are simply treasure to be added to the pile (p. 138). Later, Ingham reads the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* in a similar light, paying particular attention to its depiction of the 'elvish' science of alchemy. Her unpicking of this term reveals a point at which conflicting ideas converge, as

Chaucer shows that alchemy might function as a transformative resource akin to poetry, although might also be empty, illusory quackery.

Creativity of a different kind informs Jameson S. Workman's *Chaucer and the Death of the Political Animal* (Palgrave). Here Workman offers an idiosyncratic reading of the *Canterbury Tales*, explicitly positioned as an alternative to the dominant, historicist current of medieval scholarship. Rather than seeking to situate Chaucer's texts in a limited cultural moment, Workman treats them as nodes in a more extensive network of ideas, setting up lines of literary and philosophical continuity that stretch well beyond the Middle Ages, bridging antiquity and modernity. Despite the eccentricities of this approach, with its wilful blurring of influence and reception and its allusive, cut-and-paste style, it undeniably delivers some arresting insights. A key concern is the way in which language and lived experience, both readerly and authorial, is coordinated through art. Workman's reading of *The Miller's Tale* puts Chaucer into dialogue with voices as diverse as Plotinus, Dali, Alain of Lille, Samuel Butler and Radiohead, raking over the apocalyptic overtones evoked and frustrated throughout the text, to show how the fallen world of the *Tale* is beyond the power of poetry or God to fix. In the subsequent chapters, *The Manciple's Tale* is treated as an examination of mythopoeics as a whole, as the silencing of the bird becomes an originary moment for poetry itself, while the *Nun's Priest's Tale* returns to an even earlier point, moving backwards through the history of language, through imitation and animal cries into silence. The final word goes to the pleasures of the text and their superiority over the deadening labour of historical inquiry, as Workman proposes 'an irresponsible criticism' as an answer to Chaucer's 'irresponsible literature' (p. 205).

In her monograph, *Desire in the Canterbury Tales*, Elizabeth Scala adopts a theoretical approach and argues that the overall frame of the poem, as well as the narratives of individual tales, engage in a complex 'discourse of desire' (p. 3). Although Scala examines



the ways in which desire shapes the stories told by a number of pilgrims, she also considers how this impulse leads to acts of misrecognition and misreading which, in turn, contribute to the rivalry between some of the pilgrim-narrators in the frame narrative. In order to sustain this approach to the *Canterbury Tales*, the discussion repeatedly engages with psychoanalysis, most notably the theories of Lacan and his work on desire and the relationship between the Subject and the Other. Chapter One reads the *Knight's Tale* as an 'elegant meditation on erotic and worldly desire' (p. 44). By focusing on the relationship between Palamon and Arcite, it is argued that the desire of the two Theban knights, rather than their object of desire, Emelye, forms the driving force behind the tale's narrative as both knights express a violent drive against the threat of the Other; as Scala asserts, 'their interest in the feminine object is sustained largely through a fantasy of what the other wants, perhaps even envy of what the other might attain' (p. 52). In Chapter Two, Scala examines the relationship between the *Reeve's Tale* and the *Miller's Tale*, focusing particularly on the Reeve's angry response to the Miller's story. It is proposed that the Reeve is pivotal to the exploration of desire in the *Canterbury Tales*, as he and his tale demonstrate how the desire of the Subject can be linked to misreading and misrecognition: the Reeve's desire to tell his tale is motivated not only by his inability to see the comedy in the Miller's story, but by his belief that the tale is a personal insult targeting his previous occupation as a carpenter. The relationship between wives and clerks in the *Canterbury Tales*, seen most acutely through the interaction between the Wife of Bath and the Clerk, forms the subject of Chapter Three. Scala notes that the tales told by the Wife and Clerk share similar concerns, as both interrogate the concept of female desire: in the *Wife of Bath's Tale* female desire is overtly asserted through the will of Guinevere and the words of the old woman, while the *Clerk's Tale* relays the story of patient Griselda who relinquishes her will entirely to Walter's desire. Although these narratives seemingly run in opposition to one another, the Wife and Clerk are motivated by a

shared desire to inhabit the morals or attributes embodied in their tales' protagonists; according to Scala, the magical old woman and Griselda serve, respectively, as 'ideal self-images imagined and projected by the Wife and Clerk' (p. 127). The pairing of the Wife and Clerk is furthered by the links that can be drawn between the end of their tales, as both speakers withdraw from a position of mastery in order to recognize and identify with the Other (p. 151): both the Wife's latent desire to submit to a worthy husband, as well as the Clerk's wish to obtain absolute mastery, have been exposed. The final chapter of Scala's study demonstrates that desire is also an important shaping force in the religious tales. Focusing initially on the *Physician's Tale*, the chapter considers Chaucer's handling of the story in relation to its sources and analogues and notes how earthly desire, in the form of Apius's lust for Virginia, is the driving force behind Virginia's death. In spite of their acknowledgement of earthly desire, the religious tales typically place desire in a devotional context and, in keeping with the tradition of female hagiography, redefine it as a longing for union with God. This is seen most acutely in the *Second Nun's Tale* where, in spite of consenting to an earthly marriage, Cecilia's actions are untouched by, and typically counteract, all earthly desire.

The structural principles which underpin the *Canterbury Tales*, particularly with regards to the links between pilgrim-narrators and their respective tales, is also explored by Warren Ginsberg in his study, *Tellers, Tales, and Translation in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*. Engaging with the theories of language and translation put forward by the philosopher Walter Benjamin, Ginsberg argues that the material we use to compile our understanding of any one of Chaucer's pilgrim narrators (i.e. a pilgrim's portrait in the General Prologue; the tale, and where relevant, the prologue, assigned to a pilgrim; and finally, a pilgrim's appearance in any links or episodes in the poem's frame narrative), should be read as 'translations' of one another, as each component serves to express 'in a different mode a

coordinating idea or set of concerns' (p. 3). In addition to this, Ginsberg also argues that certain events, motifs, and ideas are 'translated', in the sense that they reappear in different guises, throughout the *Canterbury Tales*. In the first two chapters, Ginsberg suggests that Chaucer may have found a model for 'Benjamin-like intralingual translations' (p. 17) in the works of his favourite classical and contemporary authors: Chapter One focuses on acts of textual transformation in Ovid, Statius, and Dante, while Chapter Two examines Boccaccio's *Teseida* and *Filostrato* in relation to the *Knight's Tale* and the portrait of the Knight in the General Prologue. In Chapter Three, Ginsberg turns to focus more closely on aspects of the *Canterbury Tales* by examining the role of interruption in the poem. According to Ginsberg, interruption serves not only as a form of confession, but also as an act of 'interdiction' or 'a "speaking between" that makes use of speech to cut off speech' (p. 80). This is seen most acutely in the character of the Franklin, whose interruption of the Squire can be read as a reflection of his wish to prove that his status and nobility match that of the young knight. The motivations behind the Franklin's interruption are reinforced by the end of his tale and the *demande d'amour*, as in contrast to the handling of the scene in Boccaccio's *Filocolo*, the Franklin's *demande* 'betrays the precariousness of identity based on class' (p. 108). The next chapter focuses on the Wife of Bath and examines the textual relationship between her prologue and tale. By reading these two works as translations of one another, Ginsberg notes that in her tale the Wife transforms a number of strategies that she had previously deployed in her prologue; for instance, the choice given to the rapist-knight by the old woman can be read as a translation of the Wife's words to the Pardoner, while the magical old woman herself, who transforms into a young, beautiful, and faithful wife at the tale's end, can be understood as a translation of the Wife's own desires. In Chapter Five Ginsberg suggests that the Clerk and the Merchant can be read as translations of one another, as both characters are depicted as being in a state of fluctuation. Through an examination of the Clerk's construction of his

tale in relation to Petrarch's version, as well as a consideration of his portrait in the General Prologue, it is argued that Chaucer depicts the Clerk as a figure in transit, 'with one foot in the physical world and the other in a world beyond it' (p. 155). Ginsberg suggests that this presentation of the Clerk is mirrored in that of the Merchant, who is also in a state of flux due to the world of commerce and exchange that he and his goods occupy. In Chapter Six, Ginsberg examines the ways in which sacramental imagery is translated in the *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*. It is argued that the Eucharist and the act of transubstantiation become the subject of parody and perversion for the Pardoner, as is evinced by the subtle similarities that are drawn between his false relics and the Eucharistic Host. The Pardoner intentionally corrupts the conventions of eucharistic imagery in order to translate those he gulls into his own image, as is demonstrated by his unsuccessful attempt at mock communion with the Host at the end of the tale. Finally, Ginsberg concludes his study with a consideration of the Miller and Fragment I. According to Ginsberg, the Miller instigates a sequence of translation and repetition throughout the first fragment, as his insistence that he tell the next tale after the Knight 'echoes the Host and translates him' (p. 204). The Miller can be regarded as a 'figure in whom class translates itself' (p. 205), as he not only overturns the social ordering set up by the Host, but entirely reframes the story told by the Knight by retelling it in a manner which accords to his own social level.

A number of smaller-scale studies have considered issues of narrative technique, voice, and form in relation to particular tales. In her monograph, *Medieval Ovid: Frame Narrative and Political Allegory*, Amanda J. Gerber devotes her fourth chapter, 'Clerical Expansion and Narrative Diminution in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*', to a consideration of the narrative style of the *Monk's Tale*. Gerber observes that although the Monk adheres to a Boccaccian *de casibus* model in his handling of classical and contemporary material, the form of his tale can be most fully understood in relation to developments in the clerical

commentary tradition and models of Ovidian paraphrase. Indeed, the Monk's style of narration, which focuses on truncating and reshaping his classical material, mirrors the techniques found in clerical commentaries which sought to condense classical or religious Latin works in order to accommodate a wider, lay audience. The influence of clerical commentaries on the *Monk's Tale* also extends to its subject matter, as Gerber argues that Chaucer's knowledge of Ovid would have derived from his contact with the truncated paraphrases of Classical myth contained in these sorts of commentary texts.

Another form of pagan survival is discussed in Alistair Minnis' 'Fragmentations of Medieval Religion: Thomas More, Chaucer, and the Volcano Lover' (*SAC* 37[2015]: 3-27). Based on the Presidential Address given at the 2014 NCS congress, Minnis' essay concerns popular or 'vernacular' religion, the host of practices and beliefs that lurk beneath the formally sanctioned dogma of the church authorities. He pays particular attention to the devotion of wax models of diseased body-parts at the shrines of particular saints, especially the replica genitals that often served as cures for impotence or infertility. The cults of these phallic saints might register at the conclusion of the *Pardoner's Tale*, when Bailly abuses its teller by wishing his genitals were torn from him and 'shryned in a hogges toord', as a more substantial replacement for his bogus relics. The insult might connect with phallic worship in two distinct ways, according to how we judge the Pardoner's claims to virility: if sincere, his body-parts are indeed a fit subject for transformation into a fertility relic; if false, the line voices derisive, ironic praise of something of little worth. Abuse and satire also stand at the centre of Camille Marshall, 'Figuring the Dangers of the "Greet Fornys": Chaucer and Gower's Timely (Mis)Reporting of the Peasant Voice' (*Comitatus* 46:1[2015], 74-97). Marshall picks up on the work of Lee Patterson and Paul Strohm, also seeing the Miller's rebellion as a literary re-enactment of the chaos of 1381. She calls particular attention to the description of Robyn's mouth as a furnace, a manoeuvre that echoes chronicle accounts of

the destruction, and recalls the caricatures of peasant speech found in Gower's *Vox Clamantis* and other sources.

Issues of narrative voice inform David Lavinsky's study of the Pardoner in 'Turned to Fables: Efficacy, Form, and Literary Making in the *Pardoner's Tale*' (*ChauR* 50:3-4[2015] 442-64). Lavinsky notes that in the context of Wycliffite thought, which criticized the use of exempla and fables in preaching, the Pardoner would have been regarded as a false preacher due to his choice of tale. However, the Pardoner's decision to tell a moral tale, rather than a story of "myrthe or japes" as the Host requests, actually serves to reaffirm his role as both storyteller and preacher, as it not only instils his voice with authority, but subtly points to the moral efficacy of his choice of text. Indeed, Lavinsky argues that the Pardoner's exemplum can be read as a defence of the effectiveness of fiction as a form of moral instruction, as it demonstrates 'the potential of finding moral truth in fiction' and links 'efficacy to narrative form and verbal art' (p. 444). A similar concern with the relationship between voice and authority is also evident in Hwanhee Park's essay on the Prioress, entitled "'To Ben Holden Digne of Reverence": The Tale-Telling Tactics of Chaucer's Prioress' (*Comitatus* 46[2015] 99-116). By reflecting on the Prioress's role as both reader and tale-teller, Park asserts that the Prioress intentionally ventriloquizes the voice of the 'litel clergeon' in order to instil the tale with authority. The Prioress's presentation of herself as an innocent and unlearned child, as seen most emphatically in her prologue, not only allows her to 'share in the Clergeon's authority to speak in public' (p. 100), but also heightens the devotional efficacy of her tale. Indeed, by emulating the voice of the martyred boy, the Prioress blurs the boundaries between teller and tale, providing her audience with 'the impression of having actually seen the miracle' which her tale describes (p. 99).

Eleanor Johnson's essay, 'English Law and the Man of Law's "Prose" Tale' (*JEGP* 114[2015] 504-25) situates the Man of Law in the context of English judicial and political

history in order to consider the significance of his unfulfilled claim that he will tell his tale in prose. Johnson argues that throughout his prologue and tale the Man of Law is consistently aligned with the old English legal tradition in order to ‘exonerate him from any blame in the kinds of legal corruption that motivated the dizzying array of antilegal sentiment in the later Middle Ages’ (p. 504). The Man of Law’s desire to depict himself as a representative of the old legal tradition directly informs his assertion that he will tell his tale in prose, as by recalling the popular assumption that prose is the medium of truth and accuracy, the Man of Law implies that his tale is ‘a true and historical work in which the English, Christian law is the implicit hero’ (p. 522). The legal context of the *Man of Law’s Tale* is also considered by Brendan O’Connell in his article, “‘Struglynge wel and myghtily’”: Resisting Rape in the *Man of Law’s Tale*’ (*MÆ* 84[2015] 16-39). O’Connell argues that Chaucer depicts the tale’s attempted rape scene, in which Custance struggles with her attacker until he falls in the sea and drowns, in accordance with legal and ethical arguments relating to self-defence law. By considering Chaucer’s handling of the episode in relation to the story in Gower and Trevet, O’Connell observes that Chaucer amends the scene in order to engage more directly with its contemporary legal implications. Indeed, by cutting material in order to add pace to the scene, as well as by drawing greater attention to the struggle which takes place between Custance and her attacker, Chaucer underlines the fact that the killing should be regarded as ‘an act of non-felonious homicide committed in self-defence’ (p. 35).

A consideration of the treatment of violence informs Ben Parsons’s discussion of the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue*, ‘Beaten for a Book: Domestic and Pedagogic Violence in *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue*’ (*SAC* 37[2015], 163-94). Focusing on Jankyn’s beating of the Wife as described in the prologue, Parsons argues that these acts of violence can only be fully understood if read in a pedagogic, rather than an exclusively marital, context. Indeed, it is observed that Jankyn is aligned with the schoolroom throughout the prologue and thus his

instruction of Alisoun, as well as his beating of her, should be interpreted in this light.

Although the two roles that Jankyn occupies, that of husband and schoolmaster, ‘license him equally to use physical discipline against his wife-cum-pupil’ (p. 171), Jankyn is unable to distinguish between the appropriate uses of violence in the marital and pedagogic sphere. By examining a range of texts which comment on the uses of violence in both contexts, it is noted that the two discourses of violence diverge sharply: in a marital context beating is seen as a means to curtail female agency, while in the context of education, the beating of pupils is regarded as ‘a necessary step in the formation of adult subjectivity’ (p. 177) and should thus be administered with self-restraint. These points of distinction highlight why Jankyn’s beating of the Wife ultimately leads to the transference of ‘maistrie’ which occurs at the end of the prologue: Jankyn has faltered not only due to his lack of restraint when delivering the final blow, but also by beating and instructing the Wife in accordance with the rules of the classroom: ‘The end result of the violence Alisoun undergoes is not subservience but subjectivity, as its effects do not limit her activity, but carve out a space from which her linguistic agency can be displayed in its own right’ (p. 177).

The *Wife of Bath’s Tale* is the subject of Susan Nakley’s article, “‘Rownded She a Pistel’”: National Institutions and Identities According to Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath*’ (*JEGP* 114[2015] 61-77). Nakley contends that in the *Wife of Bath’s Tale* Chaucer explores ideas about national sovereignty, institutions, and identity in order to present a new and accessible model of English nobility. In order to present an inclusive vision of nationhood, the *Tale* locates ideas about sovereignty in such cultural institutions as the household and gossip. The old woman in the tale becomes the advocate for this new form of national sovereignty, as from her very first meeting with the rapist-knight she challenges the importance he assigns to his own aristocratic lineage by ‘replacing it with her concept of the nation as a class-crossing political and cultural family’ (p. 75). The most dramatic demonstration of this new form of



English identity is presented in the old woman's speech on gentillesse. By drawing on Dante's understanding of nobility as inner moral worth, the tale not only celebrates the accessibility of this form of English-Christian nobility, but suggests that a diversion from this model can actually threaten England's sovereign future by hindering the success of such institutions as marriage and the law.

The *Knight's Tale* has been discussed by several commentators. Nora Corrigan's essay, 'The Knight's Earnest Game in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*' (Patterson, ed., *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, pp. 147-68) argues that games, and the risks involved in game-playing, is a central motif in the *Knight's Tale*. Although the tournament in which Palamon and Arcite fight at the end of the tale is the most obvious example of a game, as it initially serves as a form of entertainment for Theseus and positions Palamon and Arcite in the role of 'players', Corrigan also observes that the tale places an emphasis on the rigging of games through the workings of the gods. The Knight's *demande d'amour* can also be read as a form of game, reflecting his own role as a player in the wider storytelling contest of the pilgrimage. The mode of consolation offered by the *Knight's Tale* is re-examined in the fifth chapter of Chad D. Schrock's monograph, *Consolation in Medieval Narrative: Augustinian Authority and Open Form*. Schrock argues that the presence of the Theban narrative in the *Knight's Tale* repeatedly undermines its attempt to adhere to a linear model of Boethian consolation and instead encourages us to read the tale's ending in Augustinian, rather than Boethian, terms. According to Schrock, the 'Theban narrative is the cyclical equivalent of Augustinian secular historiography' (p. 116), which charts human history in terms of repetitions and cycles. The death of Arcite, which Schrock finds difficult to explain in relation to Boethian consolation, should instead be read as the 'Augustinian revelatory climax of the *Knight's Tale*' (p. 122), as the graciousness embodied in Arcite's dying words construct a new model for imitation that replaces the cycle of violence seen up to this point:

‘Palamon will become the lover of Emelye Arcite could not be, and he will do so from the position of gentility and lack of jealousy Arcite has won’ (p. 125). Lastly, Juliana Chapman considers the structural significance of music on the *Knight’s Tale* in her article, ‘*Melody and Noyse: An Aesthetic of Musica in The Knight’s Tale and The Miller’s Tale*’ (SP 112[2015] 633-55). Chapman maintains that both the *Knight’s Tale* and the *Miller’s Tale* use music as a structuring device to shape their narratives. Rather than focusing purely on music in the form of song or melody, Chapman proposes that both tales deploy a ‘literary aesthetic of *musica*’, which she defines as the ‘literary use of music to shape a text’s structure and guide its interpretation, even in the absence of notated or sounded music’ (p. 634). In order to highlight the similarities in structural development between the two tales, Chapman suggests that both narratives work through the same six points of musical development: an initial musical episode, a generalized song from a female character, an explicit song from a male character, a confrontational juxtaposition, a scene of discordant disarray, and, finally, a conclusion. By demonstrating how these six aspects play out in both tales, Chapman’s argument seeks to reinforce the evident interaction between the *Knight’s Tale* and the *Miller’s Tale*.

The *Franklin’s Tale* is considered in Darragh Green’s article, ‘Moral Obligations, Virtue Ethics, and Gentil Character in Chaucer’s *Franklin’s Tale*’ (*ChauR* 50:1-2[2015] 88-107). By considering how morality is treated in the tale, Greene argues that the Franklin promotes the values of virtue ethics through his focus on gentillesse. That the Franklin himself embodies this virtue makes him a particularly fitting teller of his tale, as ‘his most distinctive characteristic, generosity or liberality, is ... essential to the solution of the ethical problem presented in his story’ (p. 96). In order to draw attention to the value of virtue ethics, the *Franklin’s Tale* questions the rigidity of law-based morality which does not accommodate the complexities of real life. For instance, Arveragus’s fierce insistence on keeping one’s *trouth*, understood in the sense of keeping one’s word, is rendered problematic given the fact

that the *trouth* Dorigen has pledged to him comes into conflict with the *trouth* she has also sworn to Aurelius (p. 101). By highlighting that it is *franchise*, rather than *trouthe*, that is being tested in the tale, the answer to the Franklin's final question, "Who was the mooste fre, as thynketh yow?", serves to encompass Dorigen, Arveragus, and Aurelius simultaneously: each character has acted in accordance with generosity and, in so doing, has demonstrated the 'need for good example in order to reform character' (p. 105). The treatment of time and 'literary time management' in the *Franklin's Tale* is explored by Kara Gaston in her essay, 'The Poetics of Time Management from the *Metamorphoses* to *Il Filocolo* and the *Franklin's Tale*' (*SAC* 37[2015] 227-56). Focusing particularly on the consequences of Dorigen's rash promise, Gaston views Dorigen's complaint as a way for her to "buy time" and postpone the fulfillment of her oath' (p. 228). Chaucer's interest in time-management can be traced back to his sources: for instance, in Boccaccio's *Filocolo* the manipulation of time is evinced by the conjuring of a May garden in January while, Boccaccio's source, Book VII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, details the account of Medea's rejuvenation of the aged Aeson. Gaston notes that in contrast to the Christian perspective on time in the *Filocolo*, Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale* focuses more acutely on temporality and the desire to control earthly time. This is evinced most clearly through the character of Dorigen who, through her speech, seeks to manage her own time. Indeed, the rhetorical strategies deployed in her complaint, such as listing, excess, and a disorganization of material, can be read as a deliberate move on Chaucer's part to demonstrate the difficulties of time management. Thus, in contrast to Boccaccio's *Filocolo*, in the *Franklin's Tale* 'efforts to define the shape of time are associated not with divine intervention, but with earthly claims of political and sexual power' (p. 243).

The economic world of the *Shipman's Tale* is explored in Robert Epstein's article, 'The Lack of Interest in the *Shipman's Tale*: Chaucer and the Social Theory of the Gift' (*MP*

113[2015] 27-48). Challenging the popular reading of the *Shipman's Tale* as a story of self-interest and individual profit, Epstein argues that social theories of gift-giving, such as that described in Michel Mauss's essay, *The Gift*, can assist our understanding of the tale and can account more fully for the actions and motivations of its characters. Epstein reframes the tale's plot in accordance with social gift theory, arguing that its sequence of borrowings and repayments can instead be regarded in terms of 'mutual indebtedness, communal value, and shared pleasures' (p. 29). With this in mind, the merchant's loan to Daun John, which is to be paid back by no set date and without any interest, can more readily be interpreted as a gift which marks and perpetuates the friendship between the two men. The actions of the merchant's wife can also be seen to engage with social theories of gift-giving, as the tale's final scene, in which the wife simultaneously conceals her infidelity and 'repays' her husband with sex, 'reflects not the conclusive equivalence of the market transaction but rather the perpetual "dynamic of indebtedness" ... in gift exchange' (p. 47). David K. Coley's essay, 'Money and the Plow, or the *Shipman's Tale* of Tithing' (*ChauR* 49:4[2015] 449-73), also focuses on the economy of the *Shipman's Tale* as it draws a link between the hundred francs that the merchant loans to Daun John and the payment of tithes. As one tenth of the thousand-franc profit that the merchant expects to procure from his transaction, his loan of one hundred francs accords to the 'one in ten' rule for the payment of Church tithes. Coley argues that although the hundred francs is a loan, the fact that the money is never repaid, at least not in monetary terms, demonstrates how 'the merchant's profit is subject to the same tithes as other modes of economic production' (p. 471). By subjecting the merchant's profit to the same rules of tithing as applied to agriculture, where one tenth of a crop had to be yielded up as payment, Chaucer draws attention to the increasingly mercantile world of the later Middle Ages, and highlights the role merchants play in England's economy (p. 473).

An interest in situating Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in its wider, historical context is evident in "Soper at Oure Alle Cost": The Politics of Food Supply in the *Canterbury Tales*' (*ChauR* 50:1-2[2015] 1-29), by Jayne Elizabeth Archer, Richard Marggraf Turley, and Howard Thomas. This study reads the *Canterbury Tales* as a 'game of food' as it directly engages with 'the politics and poetics of food supply' (p. 3). In order to demonstrate this, the study focuses particularly on the Plowman, who is described in the General Prologue but is not assigned a tale, and the *Reeve's Tale*. It is argued that Chaucer intentionally constructs the Plowman as a conspicuously silent figure in order to draw attention to the politicization of the food supply that had taken place after the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. That Chaucer's Plowman would have been read in these terms is evinced by the apocryphal *Complaynte of the Plowman* (composed c.1400 and most likely written by a Lollard sympathizer), which directly engages with the socio-political importance of food. Chaucer's interest in this subject is demonstrated further by the *Reeve's Tale* through its depiction of a deceitful miller, and also by the decision to locate the tale's action to Trumpington in Cambridgeshire. It is demonstrated that food supply politics were particularly fraught in Cambridgeshire at the end of the fourteenth century due to tensions between Trumpington Mill and the Cambridge colleges.

A very brief engagement with the *Canterbury Tales* is found in Matthew Beaumont's study of the history of nightwalking, *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London*. In his opening chapter on the medieval context of nightwalking, Beaumont credits Chaucer as the first author to engage with the theme in literature. Beaumont notes that it is likely that Chaucer's character of the Cook in the *Canterbury Tales* was based on a real person, namely Roger de Ware, who is described in a record of 1373 as a 'common nightwalker' (p. 30). Although Chaucer makes no explicit reference to this fact in his characterization of the Cook,

Beaumont suggests that there may be a subtle allusion to nightwalking in the *Cook's Tale* through its depiction of Perkyn Revelour's disruptive behaviour at night.

Michelle Karnes's essay, 'Wonder, Marvels, and Metaphors in the *Squire's Tale*' (*ELH* 82[2015] 461-90), examines how the *Squire's Tale* uses language and metaphor to convey the supernatural. It is noted that, in contrast to some other Middle English romances, the *Squire's Tale* seeks to clarify more fully the magical objects it presents by focusing on the 'relationship between marvels and their mental representation' (p. 463). In particular, Karnes asserts that the tale demonstrates the marvellous nature of magical objects by focusing on the characters' responses of wonder: it is argued that these objects 'excite mental activity, prompting the formation of creative images that reveal the object and bring it to life more effectively than sensory ones' (p. 46). In this way, marvels can be read as a form of literature, as Canacee's magical ring or mirror, and even the unfaithful tercel in the tale's second half, become 'texts' which excite the imagination and require work to be understood. An interest in imagination and mental images is also evident in Hans Jürgen Scheuer's essay on the *Merchant's Tale*, 'The Soul of Ekphrasis: Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale* and the Marriage of the Senses' (in *The Art of Vision: Ekphrasis in Medieval Literature and Culture*, ed. Johnson, Knapp, and Rouse, pp. 224-42). According to Scheuer, 'medieval ekphrasis is essentially an engagement with the union of language and the inner senses' (p. 226) and thus, he argues, it can be understood as a form of mental picturing. In order to demonstrate this, Scheuer focuses on the depiction of marriage in the *Merchant's Tale* and the distinction made between a character's internal and external perception. Although Chaucer purposefully omits to offer an ekphrastic description of such concrete images as the garden or of the marriage of May and January, ekphrasis is deployed to describe a character's internal perception or cognition, such as January's desire to find a bride.

In “‘The Gardyn is Enclosed Al Aboute’”: The Inversion of Exclusivity in the *Merchant’s Tale*’ (*SP* 112[2015] 490-503), John Zedolik examines images of enclosure in the tale and argues that these serve to highlight the irony of January’s situation. By working his way through the tale’s narrative, Zedolik notes that images of enclosure are evident not only in the central image of January’s walled garden, but also on a figurative level in January’s speech, as evinced through his repetition of such words as ‘kepere’, ‘kepe’, and ‘knyt’ (p. 493). In spite of his desire to ‘enclose’ his young wife, May, it is January who ultimately becomes the victim. Indeed, while January’s literal blindness can be read as a form of enclosure, it also takes on a symbolic quality and comes to signify his misguided belief that he is in control of his wife and marriage. According to Zedolik, the tale’s use of a number of images of enclosure draws attention to the comic shift in power that marks the end of the narrative.

A number of studies have considered specific uses of language in the *Canterbury Tales*. A.S.G. Edwards’s essay, ‘The Wife of Bath’s Sixth Man (*Canterbury Tale*, III 21)’ (*ChauR* 49:3[2015] 376-7) draws attention to the Wife’s discussion of the Samaritan woman at lines 15-22 of her prologue, particularly lines 21-2 where the wife asks: ‘But that I axe, why that the fifte man / Was noon housbonde to the Samaritan?’. In the wider context of the passage, where it is noted that the Samaritan woman has been married five times previously and is now living with a sixth man, Edwards notes that the Wife’s question about the Samaritan woman’s ‘fifth’ husband seems erroneous and should, in order to make sense, read ‘sixth’. While Edwards notes that such a reading is found only in one manuscript, he suggests that the error may have easily occurred through scribal misreading (of either long *s* for *f*, or of the roman numeral *vi* for *v*), or may even be original to Chaucer. In a similar vein is Thomas J. Farrell’s ‘The Meanings of Middle English *Wight*’ (*ChauR* 50:1-2[2015], 178-97). This article takes a further look at Donaldson’s amendment of word ‘wight’ to ‘wright’ in

Alisoun's reference to the Creator in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* 115-17. While the reading has been rejected by the Variorum edition, it is supported by the editors of the *Riverside Chaucer*. Farrell argues that the breadth of potential meanings in the Middle English 'wight' does not exclude its application to divinity, as the word is not as narrowly restricted in its meanings as Donaldson infers: the *Pearl*-poet is happy, for instance, to use it in his own references to the Trinity.

A similar focus on word choice and language is evident in Ben Parsons's 'Collie and Chaucer's "Colle"' (*N&Q* 62[2015] 525-9). Parsons examines the complex etymology of *Collie*, the name attributed to a particular breed of dog, and demonstrates that, in spite of popular belief, the term does not derive from the medieval pet name 'Colle'. It is noted that evidence to support this misassumption has traditionally been derived from Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale* where, towards the tale's close, we are told that the widow, her daughter, and a number of animals, including 'Colle our dog', chase after the fox who has captured Chauntecleer. Parsons observes that although the passage in the *Nun's Priest's Tale* clearly identifies the name 'Colle' as belonging to a dog, it does not confirm the assumption that 'Colle' refers to a particular breed of dog used for herding. Indeed, by tracing the uses of the word 'Colle' through a wide range of sources dating from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, it is concluded that there is no evidence to support the claim that the medieval dog's name 'Colle' informs the etymology of *Collie*. Finally, Shawn Normandin's 'From Error to Anacoluthon: The Moral of the *Clerk's Tale*' (*N&Q* 62[2015] 218-19), focuses on the Clerk's words at the end of his tale, specifically lines 1153-61, which offer an explanation to the reader about Griselda's behaviour and her role as a model for imitation. Normandin notes that while lines 1153-61 correspond with Petrarch's text, they fail to include the full explanation that Petrarch offers regarding the purpose of the story and thus 'end in a syntactical pothole' (p. 218). According to Normandin, this omission of Petrarch's full conclusion suggests that



Chaucer viewed it as flawed and illogical: 'if readers succeed in imitating Griselda's perfect constancy, then they will not, as Petrarch claims, learn that 'fragilitas'; if they don't succeed, then there is no clear reason for distinguishing them from matrons who can't match her wifely excellence' (p. 219). Normandin argues that Chaucer saw the illogical nature of Petrarch's conclusion and thus drew attention to it by only adhering to half of Petrarch's argument and thus disturbing the syntax of lines 1153-61.

The manuscript context of the *Canterbury Tales* has been largely overlooked this year. One small-scale study, Salim E. Al-Ibia's 'Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*: The Position of Fragment VII' (*SLL* 11[2015] 57-61), discusses the theory of the Bradshaw Shift and agrees that Fragment VII should be placed after Fragment II. In addition to surveying the evidence to support this rearrangement, most notably the frame narrative's references to time and place, Al-Ibia also suggests that this new sequence would encourage readers of the *Canterbury Tales* to draw greater links between the fabliaux of the Miller, Reeve, and Shipman.

Finally, questions of audience are explored in Alfred Thomas's monograph, *Reading Women in Late Medieval Europe: Anne of Bohemia and Chaucer's Female Audience*. Thomas devotes considerable space to the *Canterbury Tales* in order to consider how Anne of Bohemia may have influenced Chaucer's works through her role as a possible reader and patron. In order to explore this association, Thomas situates a number of the *Canterbury Tales* in a wider literary context, reading them alongside contemporary works in Latin, German, and Czech that Anne may have known. In Chapter Two, 'Writing Jews, Writing Women: Chaucer's *The Prioress's Tale* and the Sacred Drama of Europe' (pp. 45-77), Thomas suggests that Chaucer may have originally composed the *Prioress's Tale* either for Anne or with her in mind, and that the story recounted may have been informed by accounts of the Prague pogrom in 1389. By reading the tale alongside other continental works, such as

*The Passion of the Jews of Prague* written in Latin and *The Ointment Seller*, a mid-fourteenth century Czech-Latin play, Thomas demonstrates the widespread tendency across Europe to depict Jews not only as perpetrators rather than victims, but as ‘inverted projections of Christian doubts and fears about their own belief’ (p. 66). Similarly, in Chapter Three (pp. 79-110), Thomas argues that Chaucer may have written his *Life of Saint Cecilia* for Anne. Indeed, it is noted that the prologue to the *Second Nun’s Tale* features a subtle compliment to Anne through the praise it directs towards Saint Anne, the Virgin’s mother. Thomas considers the Czech *Life of Saint Catherine*, the Middle English poem, *Pearl*, and the *Second Nun’s Tale* alongside one another and notes their shared emphasis on the virginity, learning, and nobility of the female protagonists. In light of this, it is argued that these three texts may have been the product of a courtly milieu and thus signify a ‘royal female tradition’, as they were written ‘specifically with the devotion of pious lay women in mind’ (p. 100). In Chapter Four (pp. 111-37), Thomas considers the *Knight’s Tale* and investigates the origins of the common suggestion that the tale’s depiction of Hyppolita and her Amazonian maidens can be read as a representation of Anne and her female entourage. Thomas suggests that this association may be due to Chaucer’s familiarity with the story of the ‘Bohemian Maidens’ found in *The Dalimil Chronicle*, a Czech work of the early fourteenth century. While it is unlikely that Chaucer would have had access to the *Chronicle*, the legend of the ‘Bohemian Maidens’ may have been disseminated in court through Anne’s entourage. Noting that Chaucer’s handling of the Amazonian women in the *Knight’s Tale* is similar to that in *The Dalimil Chronicle*, Thomas argues that the ‘struggle between the Amazons/Maidens and the men in both narratives can be understood as enacting the struggle for influence between the adaptors and their *auctores*’ (p. 113). Both Chaucer and the Czech author use the struggle of their female protagonists as a means to convey their own desire to break free from their source material and highlight the literary authority of the vernacular. Finally, Chapter Five

(pp. 139-65) examines the *Wife of Bath's Tale*. Thomas argues that although there is no evidence to suggest that the tale was written for Anne, Anne's role as intercessor between Richard II and his subjects at court may have inspired the tale's narrative. Thomas examines the models of womanhood found in the *Wife of Bath's Tale* in relation to the depictions of women found in the chivalric romances of late-medieval Bohemia, as well as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Chaucer's construction of Guinevere may evoke Anne's role as consort and intercessor, as the tale presents a scene where male power is replaced with female benevolence. Yet, unlike many Bohemian chivalric romances, which tend not only to depict a degree of equality in the relationship between men and women, but typically present female characters as positive figures, Chaucer's tale presents a more masculine point of view where a woman is positioned more firmly under a man's control.

### **3. *Troilus & Criseyde***

New work on Chaucer's Trojan romance is fairly evenly split between its classicism and its treatment of chivalric ideology and religion. Squarely in the first camp is Elizaveta Strakhov's "“And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace”": Reconstituting the Spectral Canon in Statius and Chaucer' (in Isabel Davis and Catherine Nall, eds., *Chaucer and Fame: Reputation and Reception*, pp. 57-74). Strakhov offers a close consideration of Chaucer's tributes to six authoritative poets at the conclusion of *Troilus*, investigating its larger implications for his larger interweaving of vernacular and classical influences. While guided by Boccaccio, Chaucer makes a telling substitution, dropping Dante and moving Statius to the end of the sequence. On the one hand, this decision mirrors his references to Lollius, as it also serves to ground his poem in antiquity and suppress his debt to more contemporary sources; on the other hand, the promotion of Statius serves to crystallise a series of references

and parallels to Thebes scattered throughout *Troilus*. But more importantly again, it also allows the distinctions between Chaucer's poetics and those of Statius to emerge all the more forcefully: Chaucer's skilful revitalisation and self-conscious play with his material stands in contrast to Statius' more deferential and enervating 'practice of authorial self-legitimization', with its pervasive and suffocating debt to Ovid (p. 60).

Occupying similar territory is Alcuin Blamires' essay "'I nolde sette at al that noys a grote": Repudiating Infamy in *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The House of Fame*' (in Davis and Nall, eds., *Chaucer and Fame*, pp. 75-96). Blamires addresses a question first raised by Boitani, investigating the moment in Book 4 when Criseyde finds herself drawn to 'the sceptical view that notoriety is not worth worrying about' (p. 75). Blamires reviews various doubts about the validity of reputation raised by classical and medieval authors, ranging from Boethius to Lydgate. He finds that personal standing is objectionable on three principal fronts: its judgements are questionable on moral grounds, as it opens the way for self-glory and pride, on philosophical grounds as an unstable manifestation of an unstable quotidian world, and on practical grounds, given its ties to the transient and failing powers of youth. Criseyde's rejection touches base with each of these assessments, and further resonates with Geoffrey's dismissal of enduring reputation in the *House of Fame*. Yet what interests Blamires is the fact that these moments of defiance are submerged as quickly as they surface; ultimately they remain isolated flickers, and cannot prevail against the chivalric logic that permeates Chaucer's thinking.

A somewhat different take on the culture of chivalry is given by Jennifer Garrison, 'Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and the Danger of Masculine Interiority' (*ChauR* 49:3[2015], 320-43). As Garrison argues, *Troilus* is often used to dispel the Burckhardtian view that individual subjectivity is a creation of modernity; however, while the poem might be precocious in its understanding of selfhood, it does not treat interiority with particular

sympathy. Rather, she contends, it can be read as a warning against the increased cultivation of the self among Richard II and his circle, especially through their usage of stylised love discourse. Through Troilus' reckless and perilous commitment to his inner life, Chaucer seems to be echoing other contemporary critics of Richard, rounding on his interest in self-fashioning and self-display, and his consequent neglect of wider political concerns. Chaucer's treatment of love discourse also forms the subject of Christopher Stampone's 'Choreographing *Fin'amor*: Dance and the Game of Love in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*' (*ChauR* 50:3-4[2015], 393-419). Stampone looks closely at the figurative references to dancing in *Troilus*, finding that they present the exchanges between Criseyde, Pandarus, Troilus and Diomedes not merely as a game but as a form of rhythmic movement. These terms, which are without parallel in the *Filocolo*, provide an important series of cues for understanding the course of the doomed affair, characterising the characters' deployment of structured rhetoric, and the ultimate failure of Pandarus to contain the events within the bounds of his choreography.

The other major strand of scholarship on *Troilus* considers its treatment of Christian themes. Megan Murton's 'Praying with Boethius in *Troilus and Criseyde*' (*ChauR* 49:3[2015], 294-319) argues that Troilus' grasp of Boethian concepts is more complete than is often alleged. Concentrating on Troilus' hymn in Book 3 and his speech on destiny in Book 4, Murton disputes the common view that Boethian material provides a muted, ironic commentary on the action of *Troilus*. On the contrary, Troilus is made to voice a nuanced, expansive reading of the *Consolatio*, as his own movement from reflection to prayer recalls Boethius' insistence that the proper end of philosophy is devotion. Similar meanings also inform Lawrence Besserman's 'Biblical *Figura* in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, ll. 1380-86: "As don these rokkes or these milnestones?" (*ChauR* 49:3[2015], 344-51). Besserman detects a subtle irony in the imagery with which Pandarus chivvies his despairing, lovelorn

friend. While Pandarus' appeal to oaks, rocks and millstones serve his immediate rhetorical purpose, since all will swiftly collapse despite their initial obstinacy, the unmistakable echoes of the gospels, and of the death of Abimelech, inject a more sinister undertone to his words. Maintaining religious criticism of the poem, although with emphasis on language rather than symbolism, is Laura Clark's 'Stretching the *Sooth*: Use, Overuse, and the Consolation of *Sooth* in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*' (*Neophil* 99:3[2015], 493-504). Clark considers the occurrences of the word *sooth* in the speeches of Troilus, Criseyde and especially Pandarus, and discovers that the term is not as rigidly defined as is often assumed. Although Middle English certainly differentiated between 'truth' in its empirical and moral senses, and used *sooth* and *trouthe* to separate the two levels of meaning, Chaucer seems to bring both into play, allowing one to overshadow and even compromise the other. This is particularly observable in Troilus' soliloquy in Book 4, where Criseyde's failure to disclose the *sooth* of her intentions calls her *trouthe* into doubt.

#### **4. Other Works**

The *Book of the Duchess* has attracted some scholarly attention this year. Jamie C. Fumo's monograph, *Making Chaucer's Book of the Duchess: Textuality and Reception*, consolidates the many strands of interpretation which make up the poem's critical history by charting its reception and dissemination in detail. In the introduction, Fumo states that the study not only seeks to 'provide a panoramic view of critical trends in *BD*'s interpretation as they develop over time', but reflects on the materiality of the poem by considering its place 'within contemporary understandings of Chaucerian authorship and the culture of book production in the later Middle Ages and early modern period' (p. 3). The first two chapters of the work concentrate on the scholarly reception of the *Book of the Duchess* from the late nineteenth

century onwards. Chapter One charts the history of criticism on the poem, from the pivotal early studies of G.L. Kittredge which concentrated mostly on the poem's sources (p. 8), to later works on the poem's treatment of Christian consolation, as well as the presentation of the dreamer-narrator. The discussion also examines more recent works which approach the poem from a feminist or queer perspective. Following this diachronic overview of general developments in criticism, the chapter then focuses on the poem's date, occasion, and genre, charting more closely the development of scholarly opinion in these areas. Chapter Two takes a slightly different approach by examining the threads of critical enquiry that have repeatedly attracted the attention of scholars. According to Fumo, the 'defining issues in the history of the scholarship on the poem' are 'communication, consolation and Boethianism, gender, sickness and health, and interlingualism' (p. 49), and it is these topics which form the subsections of the chapter. Moving away from critical reception, Chapter Three considers the self-conscious textuality of the *Book of the Duchess* by drawing attention to the poem's repeated emphasis on reading, writing, and authorship. In the first part of the discussion, Fumo considers what she terms the 'compositional consciousness' (p. 80) of the poem, examining the strategies it deploys, such as the recurring references to books and the narrator's identification as an author, to draw attention to its own textuality as a written text. Chaucer's emphasis on reading and writing in the *Book of the Duchess* is then compared to the treatment of the theme in a number of French sources, such as the *dits* by Machaut and Froissart, as well as the *Roman de la Rose*. It also considers the extent to which some of Chaucer's contemporaries, such as Gower and Langland, were interested in issues of authorship and textuality. In the final two chapters, Fumo considers the reception and dissemination of the poem in the fifteenth century and into the early modern period. Chapter Four focuses specifically on the poem's journey from manuscript to printed book in order to explore 'how the material circumstances of *Book of the Duchess*'s preservation, such as we

know them, affected its scope and meaning for early readers' (p. 106). The chapter ends by considering the treatment of the poem at the hands of editors, most particularly focusing on the standard attachment of the short poem, *Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton*, to the end of the *Book of the Duchess*. Finally, the concluding chapter examines the early literary responses to the poem. Drawing on a range of examples from the late fourteenth to the sixteenth century, Fumo explores a number of works which seem to engage with, or appropriate, techniques of narration, characterization, theme or structure derived from Chaucer's poem.

The *Book of Duchess* has also been the subject of a number of small-scale studies. In her article, 'The Place of the Bedchamber in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*' (*SAC* 37[2015] 133-61), Sarah Stanbury asserts that the bedchamber is as an important framing device which serves to localize the poem in an English context. Stanbury considers in detail the narrator's 'bed barter', in which he offers a feather bed to Morpheus in exchange for sleep. It is noted that, in contrast to the scene in Machaut and Froissart, in the *Book of the Duchess* greater attention is devoted to describing the luxurious nature of the linens, pillows, and cloth that the narrator offers to the God of Sleep. By drawing on documentary evidence, principally wills, which testify to the economic value of beds and bedding in the late fourteenth century, Stanbury suggests that the description of the narrator's bedchamber serves to locate the text by pointing to 'economic surplus and bourgeois and gentry power' (p. 150). Stanbury also asserts that the English setting of the poem is further reflected in the poem's ending through the use of wordplay, where the references to 'Rich Hill' and 'Long Castle' point specifically to English locations and buildings, as well as people.

The relationship between language, memory, and consolation in the *Book of the Duchess* forms the subject of Reid Hardaway's essay, 'A Fallen Language and the Consolation of Art in the *Book of the Duchess*' (*ChauR* 50:1-2[2015] 159-77). Although the inability of language to express true suffering is a recurring motif throughout the *Book of the*



*Duchess*, Hardaway argues that Chaucer, by looking to Ovid and the *Metamorphoses*, develops an ‘Ovidian aesthetics’ (p. 160) to suggest that the language of art functions as an effective means to articulate inner grief: ‘By referring to Ovid, Chaucer situates art as a mode of transformation, where destructive emotions undergo conversion, and language, precisely by its indirection, can facilitate a metamorphosis of grief and loss into creativity and invention’ (p. 164). This potentiality is evinced most acutely through the pattern of restless suffering that is exhibited by the dreamer-narrator, Alcyone, and the Black Knight. While the Black Knight and Alcyone are unable to express their grief sufficiently through words, by the end of the poem the narrator, by turning to art through the act of poetic composition, has discovered ‘the transformative capacity of art to sublimate pain’ (p. 173).

In ‘Speaking Images? Iconographic Criticism and Chaucerian Ekphrasis’ (in Johnson, Knapp, and Rouse, ed., *The Art of Vision: Ekphrasis in Medieval Literature and Culture*, pp. 55-76), John M. Bowers examines Chaucer’s approach to ekphrasis, focusing predominantly on the *Book of the Duchess* and the *House of Fame*. Bowers argues that an awareness of the rise in Lollard iconophobia directly informs Chaucer’s use of ekphrasis, as his works focus on ‘conspicuously literary, non-Christian images’ (p. 56) in order to avoid any suspicion of idolatry. This preference for classical rather than Christian imagery is evident in the *Book of the Duchess*, where the windows of the dreamer’s bedchamber are decorated with the story of Troy, as well as in the temple of Venus described in *House of Fame*. As a result, ‘Looking at an artwork is always, for Chaucer, looking into the past’ (p. 70).

Chaucer’s *House of Fame* is discussed in a number of essays in *Chaucer and Fame* (ed. Isabel Davis and Catherine Nall). The first essay in the volume, William T. Rossiter’s ‘Chaucer Joins the *Schiera*: *The House of Fame*, Italy and the Determination of Posterity’ (pp. 21-42), considers Chaucer’s response to the *trecento*’s conception of the poet, focusing particularly on the influence of Dante and Petrarch and the models of poetic fame they

represent. Rossiter argues that although Chaucer's examination of the role and function of the poet is seen most acutely in the *House of Fame*, this poem forms a 'discursive continuum' with the *Clerk's Prologue* and the end of *Troilus*, as together these texts 'constitute an intertextual discourse on poetic *claritas* and *fama*' (p. 21). According to Rossiter, in the *House of Fame* Chaucer plays with the conception of poetic authority, as its Dantean elements, such as the depiction of the Eagle as Geoffrey's guide, 'appear to be the object of Chaucer's gentle amusement' and thus suggest that 'the Dantean conception of poetic renown has not been assimilated' (p. 27). The essay concludes with a consideration of the language of praise directed at Petrarch in the *Clerk's Prologue* and argues that Chaucer uses this to 'establishes his own posthumous poetic fame' (p. 36): the Clerk's 'language of illumination' provides Chaucer's successors, such as Hoccleve and Lydgate, with a discourse through which they can praise Chaucer's own literary authority. Nick Havely's essay, "'I wolde...han hadde a fame": Dante, Fame and Infamy in Chaucer's *House of Fame*' (pp. 43-56), investigates how Chaucer engages with Dante's treatment of fame and infamy. It considers how certain features of Book Three of the *House of Fame*, such as the depiction of Fame's House and the nine companies who approach Lady Fame, find a source of influence in the discussion of Fame in Canto 11 of the *Purgatorio*. It is also noted that Geoffrey's famous rejection of fame on lines 1873-82 of the poem can be linked to the interweaving of glory and infamy throughout the *Comedia* and further reflects Chaucer's complex engagement with Dante's work (p. 56). The fifth chapter in *Chaucer and Fame*, 'The Early Reception of Chaucer's *The House of Fame*' (pp. 87-102) by Julia Boffey and A.S.G. Edwards, charts the poem's reception and influence on later texts and writers. Boffey and Edwards observe that the *House of Fame* appears to have made only a limited impression on later writers. The reasons for this lack of full engagement may be due to the poem's rather limited circulation, its unfinished state, and also the lack of attribution of the poem to Chaucer in the surviving

manuscripts. Through a consideration of a range of works from the fifteenth- to the seventeenth-century, including Lydgate's *Temple of Glas*, Gavin Douglas's *The Palis of Honoure*, and the perhaps lesser-known *Works of Armorie* by John Bossewell, it is demonstrated that although authors draw repeatedly on the imagery of Chaucer's poem, particularly the depiction of Lady Fame and her hall, they almost entirely overlook the poem's meditation on literary fame and poetic reputation (p. 97). It is not until Pope's *The Temple of Fame* that this focus on literary fame is fully acknowledged, as Pope's work re-establishes the 'conjunction of poetic identity and Fame' (p. 102).

The *House of Fame* is also the topic of Rebecca Davis's essay 'Fugitive Poetics in Chaucer's *House of Fame*' (SAC 37[2015] 101-32). Davis argues that the poem's exploration of the relationship between form and motion can be described as a 'fugitive poetics', that is, 'a way of making poetry in a world in which "every kyndely thyng that is" reveals itself in transit' (p. 102). It is asserted that the attention the poem directs towards 'kyndely enclynyng' (l.734), or natural inclination, is significant, as this force 'is not only responsible for the upward movement of "tydynges" to Fame's house', but reveals something about Chaucer's art as it 'serves more broadly as the basis of an *ars poetica* of material agency' (p. 102). Following a consideration of Boethius' theory of natural inclination in the *Consolation of Philosophy* and its relation to the *House of Fame*, Davis argues that the depiction of the field of sand which opens Book II, as well as the chaotic interior of the House of Rumour at the end of the poem, are deployed by Chaucer in order to comment on poetic matter. Davis asserts that these settings serve as liminal spaces and sites of motion, as is evinced by the frequent deployment of water imagery in both sections. However, while the field of sand can be read as a 'site of grappling, where a landscape and the processes that shape it represent the matter of poetry itself' (p. 113), the whirling structure of the House of Rumour demonstrates that poetic form is continually fluid and in motion. As a consequence, the poem overturns the

idea of poetry as fixed and instead encourages us ‘to think of poetic form not as an end point but as a conduit through which dynamic matter takes shape’ (p. 105).

An interest in Chaucer’s approach to poetry is shared by T.S. Miller’s ‘Chaucer’s Sources and Chaucer’s Lies: *Anelida and Arcite* and the Poetics of Fabrication’ (*JEGP* 114[2015] 373-400). This study examines the way in which Chaucer handles his sources in *Anelida and Arcite* and argues that in the poem Chaucer ‘carves out a space for himself as a poetic “fabricator”’ (p. 375), rather than as author or compiler. This is reinforced not only by Chaucer’s slippery use of source material, but by the construction of the poem’s narrative voice, which is repeatedly presented as false and untrustworthy. While this may be typical of a number of voices found in Chaucer’s works, Miller argues that the unreliability of the narrative voice throughout the *Anelida* allows Chaucer to emphasize the ‘deception inherent in his poetic process of slyly integrating sources with material of his own invention’ (p. 377).

In her discussion of Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls*, ‘Knowing and Willing in Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls*’ (*ChauR* 50:3-4[2015], 368-92), Sarah Powrie examines the influence of late-medieval voluntarism. It is argued that throughout the poem Chaucer questions the classical view, as espoused by Thomas Aquinas, that reason’s judgement is the basis of all moral action. Powrie notes that by depicting his learned dreamer-narrator as repeatedly unable to demonstrate true virtue, as evinced, for instance, by his lack of courage when confronted with the words on the garden’s gates, Chaucer ‘challenges classical assumptions that moral action can be rationally directed and consistently realized’ (p. 378). The formel’s decision to defer choosing a mate can be understood as the poem’s most forceful demonstration of voluntarism, as she acts in opposition to Nature and Reason by failing to choose the royal tercel. Although this decision may initially appear to be morally dubious, Powrie notes that it is entirely in keeping with the poem’s ‘anti-intellectual objectives’ (p. 390) and thus serves to demonstrate not only the virtue of freewill, but the

moral limitations of reason: ‘the formel’s morally motivated inaction would show that the will’s freedom empowers individuals to resist what is ostensibly rational’ (p. 392).

Marjorie Harrington considers Chaucer’s engagement with the dream-vision tradition in her article, “‘That swevene hath Daniel unloke’’: Interpreting Dreams with Chaucer’ (*ChauR* 50:3-4[2015], 315-67). Harrington argues that, in addition to Macrobian or Augustinian dream theories, the *Somniale Danielis* (a popular manual of dream interpretation that derived its authority from the belief that the Old Testament prophet, Daniel, was an interpreter of dreams), was also a source of influence on Chaucer. However, unlike other contemporary writers who engage with the *Somniale* tradition, in Chaucer’s works we can detect an ‘ambiguity and skepticism in his references to *Somniale*-type dreambooks’ (p. 320). In order to demonstrate the wider reception of the *Somniale Danielis*, Harrington examines two dream texts copied by the Harley scribe: *The Bok of Swevening* in London, British Library MS Harley 2253, and a Latin text of the *Somniale Danielis* in London, British Library MS Royal 12.C.xii (an edited and translated version of this work is supplied at the end of the article). Harrington’s examination of these works demonstrates that there is no evidence that the scribe ‘thought of dream manuals as anything other than practical knowledge made available by divine revelation’ (p. 330) and, as a consequence, such a stance is in contrast to Chaucer’s more sceptical attitude. This demonstrates that although Chaucer’s use of the dream-vision genre has often been seen as original, ‘his attitude toward “Daniel” dreambooks was equally revolutionary’ (p. 330).

The possible intended audience for the *Legend of Good Women* is considered in Chapter Six of Alfred Thomas’s monograph, *Reading Women in Late Medieval Europe: Anne of Bohemia and Chaucer’s Female Audience*. In keeping with his wider discussion about the influence of Anne of Bohemia on Chaucer’s literary career, Thomas argues that the *Legend* was written for Anne, either as an imagined or actual audience. Thomas asserts that

in order to appeal to the Queen's love of female saints' lives, Chaucer sought to integrate the model of female hagiography into his accounts of classical women; however, this was an 'impossible task' (p. 169), as it sought to unite two contradictory discourses about women. As Thomas notes, 'Instead of presenting his heroines as strong and defiant, Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* has the opposite effect of depicting them as weak and passive who became martyrs for human, not divine, love' (p. 170). By comparing the *Legend's* handling of female characterization to that in other works from the Continent, specifically *The Little Weaver* (a Czech prose work of the early fifteenth century) and *The Plowman from Bohemia* (a German prose work of c.1400 which is a loose analogue of the Czech text), Thomas concludes that Chaucer's inability to reconcile his depiction of women in the *Legend* 'may be less a feature of deliberate irony than an index of the larger crisis of male authority in medieval Christendom at the end of the fourteenth century' (p. 194).

Finally, Sarah Stanbury considers Chaucer's short poem, 'The Former Age', in her essay, 'Multilingual Lists and Chaucer's 'The Former Age' (in Johnson, Knapp, and Rouse, ed., *The Art of Vision: Ekphrasis in Medieval Literature and Culture*, pp. 36-54). Through an examination of the poem's vocabulary, particularly its use of French and English words, Stanbury argues that Chaucer exploits the registers of language in order to engage with questions of 'historical change and linguistic translation' (p. 38). Stanbury regards the poem's use of listing as meaningful, examining it in the light of the popular French/English word lists that circulated throughout the later Middle Ages, as well as in relation to business inventories. It is claimed that Chaucer's technique of listing, as well as the mixing of French and English vocabulary, serves as a comment on history, as it not only charts a movement from an English Golden Age to a French fallen world, but depicts the present as a place where French and English sit rather uneasily together (p. 54).

## 5. Reception and Reputation

Chaucer's first copyists have been subject to several fresh readings, beginning with two radically differing interpretations of the Ellesmere and Hengwrt manuscripts. In the first place, Simon Horobin builds on his work with Linne Mooney on Chaucer's scribes in 'Thomas Hoccleve: Chaucer's First Editor' (*ChauR* 50:3-4[2015], 228-50). Horobin reiterates the attribution of the manuscripts to Adam Pinkhurst, although raises the suggestion that Pinkhurst might have been supervised by Thomas Hoccleve. Two particular details lead him to this conclusion: the apparent presence of Hoccleve's hand in Hengwrt, especially at points that seem to organise its redrafting and reworking, and similarities between the Ellesmere and the two earliest copies of Hoccleve's own *Regiment of Princes*. Hoccleve's movement in the same circles as Pinkhurst, and his obvious interest in Chaucer, might also signal his oversight of these important formalisations of Chaucer's work. On the other hand, Lawrence Warner offers a reappraisal of the work of Mooney, Horobin and Estelle Stubbs in 'Scribes, Misattributed: Hoccleve and Pinkhurst' (*SAC* 37[2015], 55-100). While Warner's conclusions on Hoccleve are discussed at length elsewhere in this volume, his work also has implications for the attribution of Ellesmere and Hengwrt. As Warner writes, the claim that Chaucer's 'Adam scribeyn' is in fact Adam Pinkhurst has rapidly attained the status of a critical truism: not only has it received sanction from a string of commentators, and been ratified by the *ODNB*, but it has achieved the rare feat of attracting notice beyond the confines of specialist scholarship. Nevertheless, as Warner argues, despite the appeal of this conclusion, the case has not been proven beyond all doubt. By revisiting Mooney's findings, Warner finds that the case for Pinkhurst rests largely on the 'repertoire of decorative motifs' thought to characterise his hand, such as the 'double slash and dot' that occurs in some enlarged capitals (p. 88). Far from being idiosyncratic, such features seem to be

commonplace among a range of London scribes; even more problematically, they are generally absent from the two Chaucer manuscripts.

Pinkhurst and his circle also feature in Martha Carlin's 'Thomas Spencer, Southwark Scrivener (d.1428): Owner of a Copy of Chaucer's *Troilus* in 1394?' (*ChauR* 49:4[2015], 387-401), albeit as readers rather than scribes. Carlin might have uncovered an extremely rare reference to ownership of a Chaucerian text within Chaucer's own lifetime. Her find concerns the scrivener Thomas Spencer, who was sued at the Common Bench in 1405 for an outstanding debt of 100 shillings; in his defence, Spencer claimed that he had, eleven years earlier, surrendered a *librum vocatum Troylous* in partial lieu of the money. Although this is the sole mention of the book in the proceedings, Spencer gains added interest from his close contact with the tailor, hosteler and book-collector John Brynchele, and from the fact that Spencer's admissions oath to the scriveners' company occurs next to that of Adam Pinkhurst. The relevant records are appended in a full translation. Chaucer's readership in his own lifetime is also a central concern for Stephanie Downes in 'After Deschamps: Chaucer's French Fame' (in Davis and Nall, eds., *Chaucer and Fame*, pp. 128-42). Looking to Deschamps' famous homage to the 'grant translateur, noble Geffrey Chaucier' in the 1390s, Downes considers how Deschamps is likely to have gained access to Chaucer's work, and the extent to which this lone reference marks wider knowledge of Chaucer in medieval France. Despite some evidence of some cross-pollination between francophone and Anglophone culture, the *balade* and its request for more writing remains an isolated but tantalising hint, difficult to site in a wider context.

Moving from material to literary culture, John Burrow offers some remarks on the early fifteenth-century *Tale of Beryn* and its *Prologue*, both of which were grafted into an early manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* in an effort to 'complete' the pilgrimage narrative ('The *Tale of Beryn*: An Appreciation', *ChauR* 49:4[2015], 499-511). Burrow examines the



poet's fidelity to his model: for instance, he suggests that the irregularity of *Beryn*'s lines might be explained by its author having read one of the *Tales* manuscripts that includes *Gamelyn*; he also notes that the text shows an intelligent engagement with the realities of mercantile commerce, although makes little attempt to replicate Chaucer's phrasing or portraiture. Andrew Galloway takes a wider view of Chaucer in the same period in 'Fame's Penitent: Deconstructive Chaucer Among the Lancastrians' (in Davis and Nall, eds., *Chaucer and Fame*, pp. 103-26). Galloway's starting point is Thomas Gascoigne and his description of Chaucer's deathbed repentance, one of many texts from the period to visualise Chaucer as a penitent in the face of death. As Galloway writes, this trope develops a number of important functions: the likes of Hoccleve and Scogan replay Chaucer's apologetic posture in order to legitimise English poetry itself, creating a poetic voice that is founded in 'secular penance...a concern for good governance and social ethics, based on a form of sombre self-reflection tailored to the secular world' (p. 113).

Along the same lines, Heather Blurton and Hannah Johnson look to Lydgate and Hoccleve to draw out a further aspect of Chaucer's fifteenth-century reputation in 'Reading the *Prioress's Tale* in the Fifteenth Century: Lydgate, Hoccleve, and Marian Devotion' (*ChauR* 50:1-2(2015), 134-58). Blurton and Johnson begin by noting the frequent circulation of the *Prioress's Tale* as an independent text, especially in devotional anthologies, effectively stripping away any irony embedded in its narrative persona. This in turn seems to indicate Chaucer's wider acceptance as a specifically Marian poet and the *Tale* itself as an unproblematic account of a Marian miracle. This dimension of his work further feeds into the work of his earliest followers, as Lydgate's *Legend of Dan Joos* and Hoccleve's *Monk and the Virgin's Sleeves* show them using his Marian poems as 'important literary platforms upon which to engage with Chaucer's poetics and reputation' (p. 139). Similar customisation of Chaucerian material is addressed in Seth Lerer's "'The Tongue": Chaucer, Lydgate, Charles

d'Orléans, and the Making of a Late Medieval Lyric' (*ChauR* 49:4[2015], 474-98). Lerer's subject is a minor text in the Findern manuscript, a piece on loose speech botched together from the *Fall of Princes* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. Despite the tendency to treat this poem as purely derivative, a stance embodied by its recent removal from the *New Index of Middle English Verse*, Lerer argues that it interrogates rather than reiterates its sources. By prying them from their original contexts, and bringing them into dialogue with the other, feminine-focused contents of the manuscript, the copyist creates a complex set of new meanings; he also invites us to rethink our own critical definitions of text or lyric.

Another key fifteenth-century reader is considered in Amber Dunai's "'Ane Doolie Sessoun" and "Ane Cairfull Dyte": Cresseid and the Narrator in Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*' (*ChauR* 50:3-4(2015), 420-441). Dunai takes issue with readings that see Henryson's text as a moralising 'corrective' to Chaucer's work; instead, she argues that the narrator of the *Testament* is increasingly compromised as the text progresses, to the extent that he becomes 'the negative exemplar to Cresseid's positive one', only capable of lamenting his own suffering rather than learning from it (p. 440). Later in the same century, Chaucer's role in the emergence of print culture is assessed by Satoko Tokunaga, 'Wynkyn de Worde's Lost Manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*: With New Light on HRC MS 46', (*ChauR* 50:1-2[2015], 30-54). It has long been known that De Worde consulted multiple copies of the *Canterbury Tales* when preparing his 1498 edition, supplementing his main exemplar with a range of further versions. Tokunaga builds on the hypothesis of Stephen Partridge regarding the likely line of descent of De Worde's text, examining a wide number of the *Tales* and their marginalia in order to establish the likely character of the manuscripts De Worde had at his disposal. It is clear that De Worde's imprint is a valuable witness to the transmission of the *Tales*, as it allows many of the family resemblances and groupings of the

early manuscripts to be excavated. An appendix discusses the differences between De Worde's source-manuscripts and those available to Caxton before him.

The transition between medieval and modern cultures proves to be a vital turning-point in attitudes towards Chaucer. In 'Revenant Chaucer: Early Modern Celebrity' (in David and Nall, eds., *Chaucer and Fame*, pp. 185-99), Thomas Prendergast calls on Fred Inglis' notion of celebrity as a type of presence founded in the absence of the original person. He finds this idea a suggestive template for understanding different cultural uses to which Chaucer could be put. While late medieval scribes and readers might try to reconstitute Chaucer in ways that are 'authentically Chaucerian', albeit at times privileging wholeness over authenticity, their counterparts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries turned Chaucer into a free-floating voice into which more or less any concerns could be projected. Likewise, Joanna Bellis maps out another important discontinuity in Chaucer's early reception in 'Fresh anamalit terms: The Contradictory Celebrity of Chaucer's Aureation' (in Davis and Nal, eds., *Chaucer and Fame*, pp. 143-63). While celebration of Chaucer's influence remains consistent across the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the conceptual ground shifts beneath this general approbation. Although Hoccleve, Lydgate, Ashby and others praise Chaucer for introducing complex rhetorical diction into English, writers of the subsequent period usually follow a different path: Spenser, Sherry, and their contemporaries tend instead to salute the 'purity' and directness of his language. The movement from one standard of evaluation to another pinpoints a wider ambivalence, one bound up with nationalism and the necessity (or not) of embroidering English by looking to continental cultures. Further disruptions are also traced by Jamie C. Fumo's wide-ranging essay 'Ancient Chaucer: Temporalities of Fame' (in Davis and Nall, ed., *Chaucer and Fame*, pp. 201-20). Fumo looks at the ways in which Chaucer's fame and supposed 'antiquity' orbit one another during the early modern period. He traces out the ways in which Chaucer's followers either see him as famous because of his

longevity, or deserving of the label 'antique' because of his renown. Thus he is encountered as a poet from the distant past, whose language is filled with 'obscurities', but also has antiquity thrust upon him, a tendency taken to its greatest extreme by Francis Kynaston's partial Latin translation of *Troilus and Criseyde*. Ironically, *Troilus* and other works contain an anticipation of these problems, as Chaucer insists on the timely rather than timeless quality of his poetry. Fumo closes with a meditation on the timeliness of fame, reaching into the new technologies of our period, with its cheap-jack presses recycling public domain works.

In the same volume, Mike Rodman-Jones examines Chaucer's insertion into seventeenth-century Anglican culture in 'Chaucer the Puritan' (in Davis and Nall, *Chaucer and Fame*, pp. 165-84). Despite Chaucer's remarkable versatility as an authority, as he could be made to support astrology, alchemy, grammar and apiculture among other discourses, he is most commonly made to sanction the 'anticlerical... agenda of English Protestantism' (p. 167). Yet, as Rodman-Jones demonstrates, this did not necessarily mean that Chaucer was used in a simplistic way, as a source of dour, dry axioms; on the contrary, many of his appropriations are lively, even comic, such as Samuel Harsnett's playful allusions to the *Miller's Tale*. Puritanism, albeit of the transatlantic variety, also concerns Nancy Bradley Warren, "'Flying from the Depravities of *Europe*, to the *American Strand*': Chaucer and the Chaucer Tradition in Early America' (*ELH* 82:2[2015], 589-613). This essay studies allusions in the work of Cotton Mather, Anne Bradstreet and Nathaniel Ward, noting that Chaucer becomes an important tool for staking out differences and continuities between the new and old worlds. Mather accepts Foxe's view of Chaucer as 'quasi-saint', a judgement that allows him to treat even snippets of the *Wife of Bath* as testaments of moral wisdom. Bradstreet likewise draws her posture from the Chaucerian apocrypha when upbraiding old England, while Ward refers to Bradstreet sporting 'Chaucers boots' in a backhanded

compliment to her art. For all three Chaucer provides an anchorage in a proto-Protestant current of English history.

Material traces of Chaucer's sixteenth-century readership are reviewed in two separate articles by Mimi Ensley and Hope Johnston. Ensley's essay 'Reading Chaucer in the Tower: The Person Behind the Pen in an Early-Modern Copy of Chaucer's *Works*' (*Journal of the Early Book Society* 18 [2015]: 136-57) concerns one John Harington of Stepney and his engagements with Thynne's *Workes* during his imprisonment in 1549-50. As well as putting biographical flesh on the bones of an early modern reader, her analysis is able to reconstruct Harington's reading practices: as well as modifying spelling and punctuation, his annotations isolate phrases of 'sententious or proverbial' value, and set up cross-references with other texts from Harington's reading (p. 140). In particular, his attraction to passages of immediate relevance to his predicament bear witness to a quasi-Boethian dialogue between this prisoner and his consolatory book. Johnston covers similar territory, albeit with a wider scope, in 'Readers' Memorials in Early Editions of Chaucer' (*Studies in Bibliography* 59:1[2015], 45-69). Johnston surveys the multiform inscriptions that occur in the surviving copies of sixteenth-century editions of Chaucer. These notations betray a particular interest in commemorating and celebrating Chaucer: the Westminster epitaph appears in no fewer than eleven copies, and is often augmented with further memorial verses or sketches; similarly, hand-drawn portraits of Chaucer appear in fifteen further volumes.

Chaucer is less a source of inspiration and more a target of ridicule in Kathryn Jacobs and D'andra White, 'Ben Jonson on Shakespeare's Chaucer' (*ChauR* 50:1-2(2015), 198-215). As Jacobs and White observe, Jonson's classicising impulses drove him to deride the use of medieval forms and language among his contemporaries, seeing archaism as a perilous counter-influence to the literature of antiquity. Shakespeare and Spenser drew particular disdain for their addiction to 'Chaucerisms...best expung'd', especially since the former

showed a greater commitment to medieval than Latin sources, with Holinshed, Chaucer and Gower furnishing him with most of his theatrical narratives. One core in these criticisms is the sense that Chaucerian ideas are ‘old’ or ‘stale’, providing Jacobs and White with a key for interpreting some of the more cryptic snipes in Jonson’s plays and poetry.

The relationship between Chaucer and his post-Reformation followers is addressed from the other direction in James Simpson, ‘Not Yet: Chaucer and Anagogy’, originally delivered as the NCS’s Biennial Chaucer Lecture (SAC 37[2015], 31-54). To provide a focus for his discussion, Simpson coins the phrase ‘anagogical posture’: this term describes the tendency of some texts to ‘recognize their own inadequacy, their own wounded, lapsarian and provisional state in time’, as they gesture towards a future they will never see fulfilled (p. 33). Recognising this stance offers a means of redirecting medieval studies, opening its habitual synchronicity into a more diachronic mode. The early modern reception of Chaucer’s work signals his particular suitability for this approach, as Protestant readers such as Bale and Birckbek did see him in exactly these terms, as a figure whose vision could reach beyond his own temporal horizons towards their own. What is more, despite Chaucer’s scepticism towards oracular prophecy, there are points at which his work might actively invite such a response: the *Pardoner’s Tale* in particular looks forward to a church crumbling into fragments, casting detectible ‘ripples’ beyond the frontiers of the Middle Ages (p. 54).

The ideological significance of the Victorian Chaucer is explored in two further articles. Stephanie Downes continues her examination of Chaucer’s French reputation in ‘Chaucer in Nineteenth-Century France’ (*ChauR* 49:3[2015], 352-70). Downes traces out the ways in which Chaucerian scholarship was bound up with nationalistic concerns throughout the nineteenth century, as French literary historians such as E.G. Sandras and Emile Legouis sought to annex Chaucer to francophone culture, claiming him as an honorary French author: although clearly drawn to Chaucer by his Englishness, they sought to redress or reverse it,

emphasising his debts to Mauchaut and De Meun rather than his poetic innovation. On the other side of the Channel, H.L. Spencer discusses one of Chaucer's most important editors, and one of Sandras' most vehement critics, in 'F.J. Furnivall's Six of the Best: The *Six-Text Canterbury Tales* and the *Chaucer Society*' (*RES* 66[2015], 601-23). Spencer weighs up Furnivall's motives in establishing the Chaucer Society in 1868, a mere four years after the foundation of the Early English Text Society. He finds that the decision rested equally on patriotic and logistical considerations, and that interaction between the two societies was often driven by financial concerns, but also notes Furnivall's commitment to high-minded Christian Socialist principles. The greatest monument to these impulses was Furnivall's parallel-text edition of the six (ultimately eight) 'best' witnesses to the *Canterbury Tales*, a deliberate attempt to democratise the editorial process, albeit one that led to Skeat's more authoritative (and authoritarian) edition.

Lastly, Chaucer is propelled into 1970s America by David Hamilton's 'Chaucer's Moose' (*ChauR* 49:3[2015], 378-86). Looking at sections of Elizabeth Bishop's 'The Moose' from her collection *Geography III*, Hamilton finds a string of hitherto undetected echoes of the opening lines of the *Canterbury Tales*. These are chiefly recognisable in the repeated use of prepositions, and the overall emphasis on travel; they also allow Hamilton to pick out several points of ironic interplay between Bishop's poem and its medieval model, as the connected issues of sickness and secularity are threads common to both. Hamilton speculates that Bishop may have come to Chaucer via Ezra Pound, perhaps drawing inspiration from Pound's characterisation of Chaucer as a poet of international scope, a designation that mirrored Bishop's own ambitions.