



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

INVENTING WHILE DREAMING: THE PERFORMANCE OF  
AUTHORSHIP IN CHAUCER'S DREAM TRIO

by

SAHAR SAMIR SALAMEH

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
to the Department of English  
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon  
September 2014





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks goes to Dr. David Wrisley for all of the time and effort he put into helping me formalize my thesis argument by sharing his in depth knowledge of medieval literature and what it meant to be a writer in the medieval period, for the long hours that he put in to our discussions on the topic of the dream vision, and all the interrelated topics that fall into my thesis argument, and for introducing the topic of fragment binding and assemblages and helping me build up my theoretical apparatus as a whole.

My recognition and gratitude are also addressed to Dr. David Currell and Dr. Amy Zenger, respectively, for being the second and third readers of my thesis.

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Sahar Samir Salameh for Master of Arts  
Major: English Literature

Title: Inventing While Dreaming: The Performance of Authorship in Chaucer's Dream Trio

My thesis explores the way Chaucer, as a young poet, mobilizes different rhetorical strategies from the theories of translation, compilation, and bricolage, by taking fragments from various ancient and medieval sources (Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses*, Macrobius' *Commentary on Scipio's Dream*, Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Alain de Lille's *The Complaint of Nature*, and Guillaume de Lorris' and arguably Jean de Meun's *The Romance of the Rose*), and placing them in his dream sequence trio; *The Book of the Duchess* (1368), *The Parliament of Fowls* (1380-81), and *The House of Fame* (1381-82), for the purpose of literary invention.

I examine the implications of translation theory and vernacular literary criticism, and I use the "primary" and "secondary" theories of translation discussed by Rita Copeland in her book *Rhetoric Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts*, as well as the theories of compilation and bricolage in my close reading of Chaucer's dream trio. By doing this, I investigate how Chaucer uses the generic form of the dream vision as a frame to appropriate literary fragments and assemblages from past authorial figures to repurpose familiar literary scenarios for the rhetorical purpose of invention, in order to enact a performance of

author building within his dream sequence. We find throughout each dream poem in the progression of the dream sequence, instances depicted in greater frequency where the narrator poet, through misprision, tinkers with the texts he translates, and similarly more blatantly rejects and subverts the main conventions of the dream vision set by the exemplars of that form: the consolatory dream vision of *The Consolation of Philosophy* and the love vision of *The Romance of the Rose*; accordingly, the relationship the dream setting has with the plot of the dream vision shifts as does the role of the authoritative dream guide within the poem, in leading the dreamer narrator to certain conclusions about philosophy, morality and love.

Furthermore, through my close reading of the dream trio, I consider the extent to which a compilation makes a whole, the problems that present themselves in relation to the question of what it means to be an author, and how this topic relates to the issue of translation and compilation. I examine how Chaucer enacts a performance of author building by exploring his reception of ancient and medieval contemporary materials as exhibited within the form and content of his dream trio, and simultaneously investigate how ancient and medieval culture influenced his dream vision sequence. Hence, Chaucer's vernacularization of these texts becomes a significant process in his own influence over the meaning of these French and Latin texts, and their reception by his English speaking audience.

In fact, one of the conclusions of my thesis is to shed some new light on the debate about the chronology of Chaucer's dream trio, by relating it to the other basic tenants of my thesis argument. This order is indicative of the historical events which are hinted to within the works and the historical references within these texts are important in Chaucer's placement of them within an English cultural milieu.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. CHAPTER ONE: <i>THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS</i> .....	34
III. CHAPTER TWO: <i>THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS</i> ....	69
IV. CHAPTER THREE: <i>THE HOUSE OF FAME</i> .....	93
V. CONCLUSION .....	117
REFERENCES .....	122



## INTRODUCTION

While Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400) is mostly known for *The Canterbury Tales*, his authorial composition is much wider than that; he is known to have also written the following works: *Troilus and Criseyde*, *Legend of Good Women*, *Anelida and Arcite*, various short poems and complaints, and a partial translation of *The Romance of the Rose* (hereafter *Rose* to refer to the 13<sup>th</sup> c. poem), *Romaunt of the Rose* (hereafter *Romaunt*).<sup>1</sup> In my thesis, I focus on the first set of works Chaucer wrote in his literary corpus; the dream trio: *The Book of the Duchess* (*Duchess*) (1368), *The Parliament of Fowls* (*Parliament*) (1380-1381), and the *House* (*House*)(1381-1382), respectively, along with his translation of Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy* (*Consolation*), entitled *Boece*. My thesis argument shows that Chaucer had a deep engagement with the *Consolation* from the beginning of his literary career as early as the dream sequence, a perspective that has not been elaborated on by critics. While there is a debate over the chronology of Chaucer's dream trio, these works are basically contemporaneous and correspond to the early part of Chaucer's career before the *Canterbury Tales*. Accordingly, my thesis explores the way Chaucer, as a young poet, mobilizes different rhetorical strategies from the theories of translation, compilation, and bricolage, by using them on the fragments that he takes from various ancient and medieval sources which he places in his dream sequence for the purpose of literary invention, so he may dramatize the experience of being a writer by creating a progressive performance of authorship throughout his dream trio. First and foremost, this idea of early authorship differs from late authorship in that the topics of plagiarism

---

<sup>1</sup> I make this distinction to separate the "original" text from the translation.

and copyright had not yet been introduced, and did not play a role in affecting the way writers alluded to, and toyed around with other writer's works. Writers were able to be more explicit in their usage of other writers material without having to give credit where it is due (Guzman 708). Accordingly, Chaucer's performance of authorship is seen through the progressive unraveling of the authorial self, through his intensified use of rhetorical invention, intelligent and productive misreading, and the exploration of the boundary of assertiveness he can use as a court poet, in seeing how he can address Dukes and Kings. Through his engagement with these texts, he emerges with an authorial voice that makes authorial gestures. As the texts progress within the sequence, we see more Chaucer, and less "authority" in the silencing of the man of great authority. It is this authorial performance mapped out by Chaucer's cautious narrative persona throughout the dream trio, that I speculate places each poem in the sequential order of the aforementioned chronology. The dreamer narrator's slow uncovering of his authorial self as he treads through his dream landscape, is seen through his effort to uncover both a national identity and most importantly, his own voice and literary expression progressively in the trio. After all, medieval writers had to maneuver through an intertextual and translingual network, which working with compilation, bricolage, translation, and the general topic of vernacularity imposed on them. One of the problems critics have had in tackling these texts, and which has affected the debate about the chronology of Chaucer's dream poems, is that traditionally, critics have had trouble with the question of closure. Even though the literary landscape of the conventional dream vision provides for a beginning, middle, and end (falling asleep, dreaming, and waking up, respectively), these moments do not always fit narrative expectation. While most critics have tried to find a unity of theme in their analysis of his

dream sequence, I speculate that Chaucer creates an authorial performance that provide for a unity of narration within the dream sequence, since for me, the dream trio is a performative space for early Chaucer, where through his narrative persona, he is able to map out an authorial performance through the progressive use of rhetorical invention: while Chaucer first highlights the use of literary imitation, his performance progresses to a criticism of convention and ends in the rejection of these literary conventions and silencing of figures of “authority”. Furthermore, what adds to the existing fissures within the trio, is the fact that the nature of dreams is not smooth to begin with, they allow for disjunctures within dream narratives, but these gaps within the texts are indicative of the difficulties found in the creative process writers undergo through the use of rhetorical invention which they utilize through techniques such as translation, compilation, and bricolage—which in themselves, are not smooth by nature— so the “margin of unity” I work with in my thesis is wider than that allowed by others.

### **What Is a Dream Vision?**

Chaucer’s dream trio belongs to the generic form of the dream vision, one of the most prominent literary models in the medieval ages, and ancient past. A dream vision is typically narrated by a dreamer that regales the tale of a dream or vision he/she experiences while asleep or awake. Two of the most notable dream vision types are the philosophical vision and the love vision (*Norton Critical Edition* xiv). Boethius’ *Consolation* is the prototype of the philosophical vision, as Guillaume de Lorris and Jean De Meun’s *Rose* is the prototype of the love vision. While the dream vision is mostly fluid for Chaucer, the general conventions of the dream vision have been followed more or less rigidly by writers in the recent and ancient past. In most contexts,

these conventions include the topic of sleep and dreaming, where a dream guide or dream guides, in most cases, a personified larger than life figure of authority, comes to guide the dreamer and aids him/her in some manner. Chaucer is intimately familiar with these two kinds of dream visions since he translated the *Consolation*, naming it *Boece*, and arguably, “Fragment A” of the *Romaunt*, which I will discuss further in my introduction. My argument reveals Chaucer’s deep engagement with the *Consolation* and Chaucer’s own *Boece*, and these two texts’ great influence on Chaucer’s trio more than any other texts ancient and contemporaneous texts. In a philosophical consolation, the dreamer is guided in some sort of philosophical journey, so he can learn to come to terms with an earthly conundrum he/she is facing. In the case of the *Consolation*, Boethius—while in his jail cell, is led on a philosophical journey by Lady Philosophy, who teaches him to throw away his earthly attachments, and come to terms with his imminent execution. While it appears that Boethius follows Lady Philosophy in their discussion which is meant to lead to philosophical ascent, he makes no remarks at the end of the vision to confirm that he had been consoled; she has the last of many words at the end of the dream vision, and Boethius is actually rendered silent.

When you have a love vision, as is shown particularly in the first part of the *Rose* written by Guillaume de Lorris, there is also a philosophical assent towards an understanding of truth—that personified figures lead the lover Amans to—that is conjoined with the possible union between that lover and his beloved. But by the end of Lorris’s book, no such union occurs, and it is uncertain whether Amant, the lover, would be able to achieve his objectives—although in the second book, Jean de Meun does give the lover that privilege of uniting with his beloved, *Rose*—nor does he actually wake up from his dream. In most cases however, dream narratives are usually

structured by various dream frames that mark stages within the dreamer narrator's narrative journey. These frames may begin before the dreamer falls asleep, in order to get a sense of his/her state of mind, another frame holds the actual dream journey itself during the dreamer's slumber, and a final one contains the narrative period after he awakens. These dream frames help propel the dreamer's narrative forward. However, not all dream vision endings are certain, as is seen in both the *Consolation* and the *Rose*. In my thesis, we will take a closer look at how Chaucer draws on these two dream archetypes—especially the philosophical vision—and likewise toys and tinkers with the certainty of closure.

### **What Is Early Chaucerian Authorship?**

I will place Chaucer in a medieval context to explore the idea of authorship. Accordingly, the dream sequence explores the problems presented in relation to the question of what it means to be a young author in the middle ages. With each dream poem, there is a greater emphasis placed on the idea of the dreamer narrator being a writer for an English audience, trying to build a literary career that distinguishes him from the non-English literary past. The fact that the dreamer narrator is a struggling poet provides a convenient lens through which we can imagine a young English poet trying to build a career at court. It is significant that we will explore modern notions of compilation and translation since Chaucer was writing in a translingual network (so his methods were not merely a way of becoming an English author which invoke a nationalist expression and agenda, since part of the link of vernacularity is related to nation building, rather than being a way of trying to look for a literary expression in the

English vernacular, to find a literary language and literary expression out of what literature existed in other languages). Chaucer emerges out of this translingual network, and by that I mean he was working with translation, but he was also working with compilation, taking texts and combining them from all of these different literary spaces. The dream vision is a translingual network *par excellence*—the dreamer narrator of each of the dream poems uses methods of compilation and translation to piece together the fragments of his dream narrative, both prior and post the actual dream scenario, hence relaying to his audience a very personal experience, quite original and unique to himself.

The dream frame itself plays a key role in placing Chaucer's dreamer narrator poet at the core of the narrative frame. All of the literary fragments which are gathered and tinkered with from other sources are incorporated to fit the narrator's narrative, helping him with the process of invention. In my close reading of the dream trio, I will repeatedly refer to recomposition as a creative form of misreading. It is rather the fluidity of the dream frame genre that allows Chaucer to do this. Hence, one of Chaucer's author moves is found in his conscious effort to carefully piece together the multiplicity of frames within the dream frame itself for the purpose of rhetorical invention. This fact counterbalances the textual traces—albeit changed considerably—of various famous Latin and French literary works found incorporated into the dreamer narrator's narrative. In addition, Chaucer's creative misreading and recomposition of said material from authoritative writers is a self-reflexive move to feed off of their literary authority and call to gain his own authority as well. Chaucer establishes himself as an author, not necessarily by undermining his predecessors, as much as he is trying to explore how he could establish a literary model in the English language, rather than in

Latin or French, which requires necessary changes that would be more suitable within an English context. The authoritative narrator figure grows in strength not only in narrative time throughout each individual poem, but across the collection of the dream trio itself. This is in contrast to what other writers have written about Chaucer's dreamer narrator who has in many contexts been described as a bumbling idiot misinterpreting the texts of the auctores whom he references within his dream narrative, along with what his role within the dream landscape should be, rather than what he actually is, a narrator-poet who carefully tinkers with these aforementioned texts and the conventions of the dream vision (i.e. the mixing of the philosophical consolatory vision setting with that of the love vision setting, and the changing of the role of authoritative personified figures within the dream scenario). Accordingly, Chaucer's process of authorship is very much: Reduce, reuse, and recycle. I know this sounds a bit glib and anachronistic, but Chaucer distills down these long scenes from the works of auctores from the recent and ancient past, takes these fragments, and places them in a new assemblage within his dream narrative.

### **The Inter-textual Toolkit: The Sourcebooks Used by Chaucer**

I will offer a set of close readings of the dream trio in relation to their intertextuality, and hence, talk about all the various texts that influenced their composition. I will start by discussing the most ancient to the most recent writers used by Chaucer: **Publius Virgilius Maro**, or **Virgil** (70— 19 B.C.E.) wrote the *Aeneid*, an epic story that depicts Rome's myth of origin in Latin, and in particular, the tragic love story of Aeneas and Dido found in Book 4. For the purpose of my thesis argument, I will explore how Chaucer uses fragments from Virgil's text in the *Duchess* and the

*House*, along with fragments from the latin *Heroides* by **Publius Ovidius Naso**, or **Ovid** (4 B.C.E. – 17 C.E.)—the Roman writer— who offers an analogous version of this myth, but with a more sympathetic outlook on Dido’s lot. Ovid’s written work about love was in fact even an influence on the *Rose*, so much so, that when Chaucer writes about ancient works, he is often writing about them through their medieval reinventions. Chaucer employs fragments from the *Aeneid* and *Heroides* with regards to the depiction of the goddess Venus whom Chaucer changed, and a description of the house of Rumor from the *Metamorphoses*. Chaucer also borrows the personified figure of Fame from the *Aeneid*. Moreover, a fragment from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* is also used in the *Duchess* to depict the sad tale of Alcyone— who lost her beloved husband Ceyx to death— in a new and changed context to suit Chaucer’s narrative objectives.

Chaucer took and recomposed fragments from two other texts, mainly, the Roman politician (**Marcus Tullius**) **Cicero’s** *Scipio’s Dream*, and **Macrobius** (**Ambrosius Theodosius**) (ca. 399-422 C.E.), the Roman grammarian who wrote the *Commentary on Scipio’s Dream*, and incorporates them in all three of his dream poems. It is worth mentioning that *Scipio’s Dream* forms the first part of the larger commentary by Macrobius, whereby Chaucer takes fragments from both works. While Chaucer mistakes Macrobius instead of Cicero for having written *Scipio’s Dream* in the *Duchess*, he then playfully retracts this misinformation in the *Parliament*, when the dreamer narrator claims to be reading Cicero’s work: “Tullius of the dreame of Scipioun” (Cicero’s *Scipio’s Dream*), before he falls asleep. Ironically, Chaucer ends up focusing more on a reconstruction of Macrobius’s *Commentary on Scipio’s Dream* in his summary of the work within the poem, rather than actually summarizing and reconstructing Cicero’s *Scipio’s Dream*. However, there is also evidence of Chaucer’s



recomposition of the fragment of the *Commentary* in the *House* when the dreamer narrator lists the causes and types of dreams.

The late antique philosopher (**Anicius Manlius Severinus**) **Boethius** (480-24 C.E.) was a Roman Christian. He was a writer and a prominent government head under Theodoric the Great before he was wrongly accused of treason, imprisoned, and later executed. In jail, he wrote the *Consolation*, where a personified figure named Lady Philosophy comes to console the author narrator Boethius in jail, and teach him how to let go of his Earthly concerns, and find happiness in the arms of philosophy itself. This text comes to be a marker for the consolatory dream vision. Chaucer not only translated it into what became the *Boece* between the years 1381 to 1382, but also came to be inspired by both works, using them extensively in his dream trio. It is significant that Chaucer particularly has a more creative engagement with the *Boece* in the *House*, the last poem in his dream sequence, for two reasons: firstly, Chaucer may have completed the *Boece* by the time he wrote the *House*, and secondly, his use of the *Boece*, his own work, as a source-text to employ fragments from in another one of his works, the *House*, is a powerful rhetorical move of invention, in one of his final author moves in his performance of authorship.

The late 12<sup>th</sup> century **Alain de Lille** was a French scholar who wrote *The Complaint of Nature (Complaint)*, a text from which Chaucer employed fragments of in the *Parliament* with regards to the figure of Nature and her garden. Alain's Nature is a figure of authority that has full control over her garden of birds that follow her will without complaint. Nature's complaint is directed towards humans that go against her will by not always following their nature to mate and procreate. Yet again, through

Chaucer's creative misreading, the figure of Nature is greatly debased in comparison to her former self as shown in the *Complaint*.

Finally, the *Rose*, one of the most influential dream visions, and a paragon of the love vision, was also used extensively by Chaucer. **Guillaume de Lorris** (lived ca. 1230 C.E.) wrote the first part of the *Rose*, and 40-50 years later, **Jean de Meun** (ca.1225-40-1305 C.E.) wrote the other longer part of the poem. While it is possible Chaucer translated "Fragment A" of *The Romaunt of the Rose* in 1368, nothing is certain in that regard, and critical opinion is divided. Hence, rather than focus on Chaucer's actual translation, which in itself shows the extent of influence this text had over Chaucer's work, I will focus simply on the original text itself, so when I mention the *Rose* in my thesis, I am actually mentioning the original *Rose* text.

It is important to note that all of aforementioned works were also found in traces of influence in Chaucer's later writing. It is also necessary to mention again that Chaucer is not the only one using these sourcebooks (from the *Aeneid* to the *Rose*), and that such usage of ancient and contemporaneous texts was recurrent in the medieval period. Furthermore, the same fragments taken out of the works of the aforementioned ancient and contemporaneous authors and incorporated in Chaucer's dream poems, are all found excerpted in the *Norton Critical Edition* itself. This point validates that reading Chaucer this way, in a deep intertextual context, signifies that reading Chaucer's dream trio actually requires a deep engagement with Chaucer's intertexts.

### **Chapter One-Three Summaries**

I will proceed to give a summary of each of my three chapter arguments. A set of close readings of the dream trio poems will straddle the question of intertextuality

and invention and will cater to a historicized reading of the poems. Partially, this process will allow me to revise the chronology of the poems, but more significantly, it will allow me to study the gestation of Chaucerian authorship. To start with, each of the dream poems is grounded within an English historical marker. I will provide a close reading of the dream trio, linking both the formal characteristics; the frame and literary fragments and assemblages of compiled and translated ancient and medieval works within, to the content (plot and themes) of the medieval dream vision, keeping in mind the fluidity of the genre, and drawing on historical evidence that links these texts to significant events in medieval English history. I will examine the way Chaucer's translated literary fragments and assemblages incorporated within his dream narratives are in dialogue with the dream frame, sub-frame, and themes, to create meaning in the set chronology of the dream sequence, indicating Chaucer's conscious effort of building a performance of authorship.

The *Duchess* has by most critics been labeled the first dream poem written in Chaucer's dream trio. The order of the *Duchess* is usually established by the historical events hinted at within the work dating it to the years 1368-1372. Like many before me, I pay heed to the historicization of Chaucer's poem, portraying it as a eulogy for Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, the late wife of Chaucer's patron John of Gaunt, the Earl of Richmond, and as a tool to also praise that said patron. Blanche and Gaunt are both allegorized in the poem; the former as lady "Whyte" and the latter as the knight named the "man in black." Blanche the Duchess died in 1368, and it is most likely that the poem was meant be read at her funeral. Ultimately, the historical references within this text, as I will also indicate in the other dream poems, are important in Chaucer's placement of them within an English cultural milieu.

The *Duchess* as the first of Chaucer's dream poems, marks the first stage of Chaucer's authorial performance. Chaucer's dreamer narrator is a poet that regales his audience with a story of his dream narrative, and at the end, claims that it was such a wonderful dream, that he plans on putting it in to rhyme. This first author move Chaucer focuses on in this poem is one of imitation. Chaucer uses a fragment of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and changes it to suit the plot-line of his dream scenario. Chaucer then creates a dream-landscape that mixes both the dream-genre of the consolatory vision of the *Consolation*, with that of the love vision of the *Rose*. The actual setting itself resembles Guillaume de Lorris's garden, and the actual plot-line of the dream narrative starts by resembling the one faced in the *Rose*, where the dreamer narrator of the *Rose*, Amans, who is played here by the nameless dreamer narrator in the *Duchess*, is love stricken and suffering for want of his love. The dreamer narrator begins to frolic in the *Rose*-like garden participating in a hunt for a "hert". The dream scenario then turns to one that resembles the suffering seen by Boethius in the *Consolation*, since the dreamer narrator encounters a man of prominence, grief-stricken, and in dire need of philosophical consolation to get over his earthly troubles. Significantly, in Chaucer's *Duchess*, no dream guides or personified figures of authority exist to aid either the dreamer narrator, or the Black Knight in any manner; whether it be in maneuvering through the dream landscape, or in overcoming philosophical conundrums on the nature of love and loss. This stark change in one of the core attributes of the dream vision is compensated for by Chaucer when he places his dreamer narrator in the role of the *Consolation*'s Lady Philosophy—albeit a friendlier version of her, so Chaucer would not in any way disrespect his patron by placing him in a disparaging role — to come to the knights rescue and console him of his grief over his lost love "Whyte". In this

chapter, I will explore the way in which the dialogue exchanged between the dreamer narrator and the Black Knight bares resemblance to the consolatory dialogue exchanged between Lady Philosophy and Boethius in the *Consolation*, ironically, in an environment that very much resembles the one in the *Rose*—with the absence of the personified figures that would belong in such a setting. We find imitation, in Chaucer’s acceptance of this said authoritative figure’s role within his dream scenario, and the functionality of a Lady Philosophy-like figure to provide a philosophical consolation to the grieving knight.

I place the *Parliament* as second within the chronology of the dream sequence, although many critics have placed it as the third in order after the *House*, as they claim that Chaucer uses the more complicated rhyme royal in his writing rather than the unembellished iambic tetrameter couplets of the *Duchess* and the *House*. However, Chaucer’s explicit usage of the *Boece* in the *House* overrides his minor usage of it in the *Parliament*; this point coincides with the fact that Chaucer was working on the *Boece* while working on the *Parliament* but may have finished it or was in the process of finalizing it by the time he wrote the *House*. I argue that the *Parliament* was written in 1381, after the engagement of Richard II to Ann of Bohemia in 1380. A historicized reading of the poem places Richard II as the Royal tercel in the poem, and Ann of Bohemia as the formel tercel being pursued. With such a reading, the poem comes to reflect the different views on marriage that a stratified society would have, yet affirms the idea that “Reson” would have it that the marriage of a King with his rightful queen would surely bring joy to all the people, as such a union could come to reflect a harmonious situation that would bring about and reflect the merging of that king with his subjects (*Parliament* line 632). It is of worth to mention that the date of the dream

poem is said to be Valentine's Day. In fact, the *Parliament* is recorded as the first text in English that mentions Valentine's Day. Of course, the poem was written after Richard II had secured Anne of Bohemia as his own in 1381, where at that time, the other suitors, namely Friedrich Meissen and Charles VI of France, had already been dismissed; otherwise the poem would not recommend itself as serving the proper play of power politics. Surely, Chaucer would have to be careful so as not to offend his young king (*Norton Critical Edition* 93).

In the *Parliament*, Chaucer collapses one of the major tenants of the dream vision by pinpointing the inability of traditional dream authority figures used by the auctores of the recent and ancient past to play a functional role within the dream scenario. The authority Affrican from Macrobius's *Commentary* and Alain de Lille's personified figure, Nature, fail to play the same helpful and constructive role in Chaucer's dreamer narrator's dream vision as the one they had played in the original texts in which Chaucer had extracted them from. While Affrican presents himself in the beginning of the dream setting in the *Parliament* as someone coming to offer the dreamer narrator with material about true love—as a reward for having read the book written about him, “Tullius of the dreame of Scipioun”— that the narrator could then write about, Affrican actually abandons the dreamer outside the gate of Alain de Lille's Nature's garden just moments into the actual dream, instead of being the authoritative guide of wisdom as depicted in the *Commentary*. The dreamer is then left to find said material on his own, and has to make his own conclusions about what he sees within the garden's gates. Inside these gates, the dreamer then encounters the personified figure of Nature, who struggles to bring order to a parliament of birds that quarrel over who should marry a female tercel. Instead of solving the debate herself, or helping the

parliament of birds solve the debate, Nature actually delegates the responsibility of the decision to the female tercel herself, giving her a full year to make her decision after having wasted the parliament of birds' time, for what seemed like an indefinite and overly prolonged time. This figure of Nature stands in great contrast with the authoritative and reasonable figure of the *Complaint*, a figure who resembles the *Consolation's* Lady Philosophy. The dreamer narrator awakens unsatisfied with Affrican's "reward", since he declares his need to continue to read more books to find more lucrative material to inspire him.

Finally, I argue that the *House* is the last poem within the dream sequence, written after the *Parliament* between 1381 and 1382. I argue that this poem marks the end of Chaucer's early authorial performance. The historicization of the *House* places it around the time that Richard II had announced his marriage to Anne of Bohemia, a point that I relate to the bit of news about true love the man of great authority comes to relate at the end of the narrator's dream narrative. Chaucer's condemnation of the dream authority figure convention reaches its peak in this last poem within the dream sequence. A domineering eagle dream guide comes to the dreamer narrator and promises him a gift of tidings about true love from Venus—who he portrays as a lusty goddess rather than the spiritual one depicted in Virgil's *Aenied* — for all his hard work in writing about love. Instead, the dreamer is given nothing but stories of false lovers—fragments that Chaucer incorporates from the works of Virgil and Ovid, who provide opposing perspectives regarding the story of Aeneas and Dido—and is later taken to the court of the personified figure of fickle Fame who unfairly bestows her gifts amongst those that come to her for help. Chaucer's dreamer narrator completely rejects what the aforementioned dream authorities have to offer him within this dream landscape.

Chaucer uses the *Boece* most in this dream narrative, taking quotes from his own work and incorporating them as fragments that intermingle with the courtly setting of the love vision of the *Rose*. The end result is a chaotic setting that leaves the dreamer poet without the gift of love tidings that he was promised by the aforementioned authorities.

### **Micro Literature Review**

My literature review is broken into two categories: My review at a micro level attempts to sketch some of the more common approaches to close readings that are done of the dream poems, and my brief responses to them, whereas at the macro level, I provide a deeper background for my responses and attempt to resituate my readings in terms of some larger theoretical categories, especially with regards to the topic of invention.

There is an immense corpus of criticism for Chaucer, and a number of points that recur between authors. At the micro level, there are three general trends that I argue against. A.C. Spearing in his book *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, attempts to create the dream vision as “distinct literary tradition” that exhibits itself in a variety of types, so he may draw a chronological, thematic and structural link between Chaucer’s dream vision trio— a line of thinking that centers around closure and unity to which I do not subscribe (Spearing 7). I argue that the dream vision is non-normative and loose, with the capacity to change and hold a host of intermingling modes of representation

Such formal arguments have led some critics to even make the claim that the *Duchess*, the *Parliament*, and the *House*, are not a sequence, and are not related, because they cannot find a thematic and structural link between the three dream poems, and hence find that the narrator in each poem, is not in fact the same narrator (*Norton*





*Critical Edition* 41-93). However, I look for the performance of authorship charted out throughout the three poems where both the content and form are in constant dialogue.

Furthermore, some critics have claimed that the *Parliament* comes before the *House*, because the formal elements within the *Parliament* are more complex than those in the *House*, or the *Duchess* for that matter, and to add to that, there are not many historical references to situate the *House* decisively in chronology with the latter two in the dream trio (*Norton Critical Edition* 93). The *House* marks the end of the authorial performance and the form of the poem coincides with this plot that is dictated by this performance so the style of rhyme used is of little significance. One of the focal aims of my thesis is to shed some new light on the debate about the chronology of Chaucer's dream sequence. While I do reference more traditional historicized perspectives with regards to the alignment of the dream trio alongside each other, I will discuss the way my argument about Chaucer's authorial performance helps justify my speculated chronology.

More so, while there are some critics that focus on unity and closure, that claim that the *House* is incomplete since the man of great authority at the end of the poem is left silenced, and the dreamer never wakes up from his dream, I am rather not interested in conventional thematic and formal links, I am interested in the narrative closure found in the narrative of Chaucer's authorial performance.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, there are even some critics that disregard historical references within the dream trio completely, and do not explore them through a historicized reading.<sup>3</sup> The

---

<sup>2</sup> Terrell, Katherine H. "Reallocation of Hermeneutic Authority in Chaucer's 'House of Fame'." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1997), pp. 279-290.

<sup>3</sup> While some critics such as Phillip C. Broadman, Robert A. Watson and Susan Schibanoff opted for a historicized reading of Chaucer's poem, seeing the *Black Knight*

historicization of these poems is inevitable since we see the English life that Chaucer lived mirrored in his work as clearly as we see Chaucer's interest in mirroring his life as a writer through the life of his dreamer poet to show his interest in becoming an auctor rather than just a budding courtly poet.

And finally, many critics have viewed the dreamer narrator as lacking; he is seen as either inexperienced, or outside the heteronormative sphere, being either asexual, or homosexual.<sup>4</sup> The *Duchess* particularly indicates the narrator's masculinity and heterosexuality, yet also shows his lack of interest in such courtly endeavors as pursuing women after he had become a philosophical figure by the end of the poem. More so, while the dreamer narrator has been mistaken by many critics to be as a bumbling idiot misinterpreting the texts of the auctores, he proves himself to be a narrator poet who carefully tinkers with these aforementioned texts, carefully piecing together the multiplicity of frames within the dream frame itself for the purpose of rhetorical invention, and the conventions of the dream vision (i.e. his mixing of the philosophical consolatory vision setting with that of the love vision setting, changing the affect the setting of the dream has on the plot of the dream, and his changing of the role of authoritative personified figures within the dream scenario).

---

as an allegorical representation of John of Gaunt, others such as John Block Friedman, D. W. Robertson, Michael D. Cherniss, Helen Phillips, and Robert Edwards diverged in thought.

<sup>4</sup> Thinkers such as Helen Phillips, Deanne Williams, Susan Schibanoff, Michael D. Cherniss, John Block Friedman, Robert Edwards and Phillip C. Boardman, and the like, also tried to place the narrator in an inexperienced and obtuse role.

## **Macro Literature Review**

In my macro literature review, I attempt to argue against the aforementioned critics in my micro literature review and I mention the works of critics whose thoughts align with the argument of my thesis. One of the focal points of my thesis is to shed some new light on the debate about the chronology of Chaucer's dream sequence. While I do reference more traditional historicized perspectives with regards to the chronology of the dream trio, the following basic tenants of my thesis argument cater to justify my proposed chronology of the dream poems, and show how Chaucer tinkers with the dream vision conventions with various authorial moves, in a more progressive manner throughout this chronology. In the following paragraphs I will also discuss the topic of invention with regards to key theoretical terms in my macro literature review and in my thesis as a whole.

Unlike Spearing, I argue that the dream vision is non-normative and loose, with the capacity to change and hold a host of intermingling modes of representation (Spearing 7). According to Phillips' article "Frames and Narrators in Chaucerian Poetry": "Chaucerian poetry creates originality from conventionality, working variations on familiar motifs" (72). I am particularly interested in an approach which views the dream vision as a malleable genre that shows how Chaucer takes advantage of this in his dream poems for the purpose rhetorical invention. Phillips charts a break in the conventional structure of the dream poem in relation to Chaucerian dream poetry. She provides a detailed cataloguing of the different transitional and shifting dream frames that exist along with the different dream frame motifs that these frames contain, comparing and contrasting conventional strategies to Chaucer's own original techniques. Phillips also shows how Chaucer uses structure and style to convey

meaning, and while creative tensions exist, the frame and center of his dream-narratives are in constant dialogue with each other. Finally, Phillips also exposes the rudimentary position of the dreamer narrator as a point of reception through which the dream narrative is unraveled, as he/she passes from one frame to the next. I argue that Chaucer utilizes the aforementioned transitional dream frames as elaborated on by Phillips, as a means for innovating the dream vision. Chaucer's three poems are placed within a dream framework. According to Phillips, the dream's formal narratological frames work to hold the dreamer narrator's narrative together through an accumulation of transition frames that exist during the dream, and both before and after having had the dream. For example, all three dream poems include the mention of a book within a reading of a book frame. The books referred to are written in a non-English language and belong to a different culture; namely Latin or French. Hence, the dreamer narrator's vernacularization of these texts become a significant process of his own influence as a narrator poet over the meaning of this text, and over the reception of this text by those who read his dream visions after he could "putte [his] sweven (dream) in ryme" (*Duchess* line 1330). Hence, in his attempt to create a performance of authorship, Chaucer also incorporates different frameworks in his writing as instruments for invention.

Allegory and personified figures were of utter importance to conventional dream vision models. Whitman's article "From Antiquity to the Middle Ages" provides a depiction of ancient and medieval allegory, and a defining structure for compositional allegorical works such as Boethius' *Consolation*, and carefully illustrates how narratives are built around personified abstract concepts. Whitman exposes the significance of the extent to which allegorical writing is a self-conscious act, and how important the issue

of form is in relation to personal writing techniques within the corpus of interpretive and compositional traditions that existed. Nevertheless, in each of Chaucer's dream-visions, we find a less of a pervading image of an allegorical authoritative figure to lead the dreamer narrator to an understanding of his dream, or to help him achieve his stated literary objectives; which in all three dream poems is his requested claim to need material—that centers around the topic of love—to write about. This material becomes an outlet which he uses for rhetorical invention. This point is emphasized on the most in his last poem the *House*, where Geoffrey, the dreamer narrator claims to be writing for the English masses. In order to create a starker break with the dream vision conventions dictated by the pillars of the genre: The consolatory dream vision of the *Consolation* and the love vision of the *Rose*, Chaucer changes one key aspect of the dream vision; that of having a personified authority figure leading the dreamer narrator to certain conclusions about philosophy, morality, and love.

With the progression of each one of the dream poems within the dream sequence, all the action unfolds in a setting that becomes more and more chaotic from the mixing of prominent medieval texts such as the love vision of the *Rose* and ancient texts such as the consolatory philosophical vision of the *Consolation*. Clearly, as Whitman claims, Chaucer's writing is self-aware. Taking the events in each dream as a performance, I view this escalation of chaos in the absence or rejection of these authoritative dream guides, and the mixing of settings from the love vision and the consolatory vision by the dreamer narrator relating his tale, as a show of how flexible the dream frame is, and how it can be manipulated by a young and ambitious writer. Yet tension still exists within each dream to depict how the task of becoming an author is a difficult and complicated one. English authors have to try to mitigate between past and

accepted traditions of classical authorities and those of contemporary medieval literature, and create new literary works within a tradition that speaks through the English language and to an English culture.

I find that Chaucer's dream narratives reveal themselves as a grounding for the process of what anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss coined as "bricolage" in his book *The Savage Mind*. In this literary context, bricolage consists of a retrieval and rearrangement of available literary products and constructed parts that are put together to form the creation of a work, where individual components are taken out of context and are given a new meaning for a purpose that is presently suitable. In each of Chaucer's dream poems, the wealth of narrative frames and assembled fragments become evidence of a conscious effort on the part of their author to construct a new kind of literary writing in English; this inauguration breaks with the literary conventions of the dream vision with respect to the distant and recent French literary tradition and Latin literary past, and creates a performance of author building.

Author building is a micro-textual practice. We will find that there is a scale of influence and manipulation that exists within the literary fragments that Chaucer incorporates in his dream poems. I argue that what takes place in Chaucer's dream trio is "misprision"—an intentional misreading—a term used by Harold Bloom in his book *A Map of Misreading*, that refers to an intentional changing of the context and meaning of a text.<sup>5</sup> While Bloom refers to this term in a deeply psychoanalytic context, I use this term in a highly rhetorical sense. In my close reading of the dream trio, I will repeatedly be referring to recomposition as a creative form of misreading. Hence, this misreading, is in this case, not only intentional, but also really productive since it is creative.

---

<sup>5</sup> Misprision is used in linguistic contexts.

Chaucer's three dream poems are a performative space for bricolage, a space where he may tinker with the ancient and medieval literary tradition. While compilation is a larger rubric which requires the assemblage and fusing together of parts, bricolage is about small frame tinkering, and the putting together of smaller pieces. This kind of tinkering is an experimental playful exploration. Hence, I'm not making an argument of Bloomian misreading, where in the process of writing, the author kills himself and his literary fathers. Deconstructionist critics have taken misprision, bricolage, translation, and even compilation a step further as annihilating the concept of the writer. This is not the step I want to take, but rather, I want to explore how tinkering is linked to the idea of finding something, just as invention is linked to the idea of a slow uncovering, and in this case, the uncovering of the authorial self.

In exploring the way Chaucer uses bricolage within his three dream poems, I will consider how these poems are composed of an accumulation of sub- and micro-narratological frames in the form of fragments, and frames found in the assemblage of those fragments in a compilational frame which ties all the pieces of the dream frame together. Accordingly, I will explore the ways that medieval compilation and translation were utilized by Chaucer as tools for the different author moves he enacts through rhetorical invention in his attempt to build a performance of authorship. We begin here to answer the question of why Chaucer used compilation and translation as writing methods in his dream trio; the preliminary works he wrote as a budding new writer in the English court.

Firstly, I argue that Chaucer uses the compilational frame in his dream trio to exploit the advantages that come with being a compiler in order to aid him in literary invention. The dreamer narrator poet uses bricolage to piece his narrative together



within each dream framework, and uses the compilational frame to envelope his dream sequence. As a young medieval author, the use of compilational strategies is significant, since compilation was designated as a significant mode of medieval literary production, and is arguably the ultimate form of appropriation of a written past. Accordingly, Chaucer's dream sequence is a compilation of assembled fragments of mainly Boethius' *Consolation*, Guillaume de Lorris and arguably Jean de Meun's the *Rose*, among other various prominent medieval and classical texts. While examining these aforementioned fragments, I will consider compilation theories through perspectives that have been elaborated on by contemporary authors like John Gower and Christine de Pizan, and would like to emphasize that Chaucer's use of compilation and his rhetorical putting together of fragments as a strategy in these dream visions is particularly important with regards to the extent literary fragments and assemblages are able to form a unity, and with regards to pinpointing where tension may exist in the process of compilation, along with what such conclusions may imply when related to the issue of author building within the middle ages.

The process undergone in all medieval writing was to a great extent a combination of authoring, commenting, and compiling, and depending on the scenario, each activity varied in degrees. When compilers assemble different literary fragments, they engage in an artistic process of creating new meaning from old pieces. When they partake in the process of commenting between literary fragments within their compilations, they do so in order to guide their reader's thinking and understanding of what they have created. What I would like to make clear is that even though Chaucer uses compilational methods and engages in the activity of compilation, Chaucer writes to an authorial end. Using compilational methods neither make Chaucer a failure at

being an author, nor does it make him a compiler by default of any said failure at authorship. In fact, compilation is used to animate and invigorate Chaucer's authorship (Olsson 1). How did compilation enliven Chaucer's authorship? It gave him room for invention. It allowed him both to show knowledge of ancient authors and their works and simultaneously reject them by changing their works drastically, and in that manner, drawing from their ancient status. In summary, Arbuthnot states the following about compilation:

Used of a medieval literary activity, [compilation] refers to a recycling process whereby extracts culled from a variety of manuscript sources are cobbled together to create new texts. . . Compiling is the textual equivalent of creating a mosaic – the fragments originally belong to very different contexts, a certain amount of compiler-provided 'grout' holds the entirety together, and the end product is a quite distinct artifact in itself." (1)

According to Arbuthnot, through this process, authors can endeavor "to convert literary borrowings to purposes they did not originally serve (8). We will also find that compiling was an act that very much resembled book writing. Book writing according to Guzman worked as follows: "[A]uthors would simply reorganize the work of others: judicious selection (*compilatio*) and arrangement (*ordinatio*) produced what appeared to be entirely new works. . . In a culture that lacked concepts such as 'plagiarism' or 'originality,' this is the way writing a book would be" (Guzman 708). According to Bahr in his article "Convocational and Compilational Play," what makes a compilation different from manuscripts is that it was composed of artistically related fragments that were not just placed together in a random order simply because they were tied by a similar theme. In a compilation, any literary text taken out of place and moved around or read out of the assigned order could significantly alter the meaning of the work as a whole (Bahr 4-5). Accordingly, Bahr posits the following:

[T]exts needed to be carefully arranged in order to become a compilation in the sense of a unified object with a meaningful aesthetic or ideological program. Some compilations did not necessarily achieve or even aim for a single meaning to the exclusion of others; indeed, the capacious forms of play – generic, intertextual, imitative – that gave them their literary appeal tended to multiply rather than delimit meaning. . . (1)

In this sense, the very nature of fragment binding within a compilational frame made it difficult to achieve a unified meaning within a text. Bahr asserts that such works that use a compilational frame to assemble literary fragments aim at something more complex in their arrangement than any of the singular components that compilation could achieve for the writer on their own. He says: “They all collect disparate texts into a single artifact as a way of constructing aesthetic effects and ideological perspectives more complex than would be possible for any single one of their constituent parts” (Bahr 1). Despite that fact, authors using compilational methods found difficulty in creating one autonomous meaning for their text (Bahr 3). Bahr states:

The significance or goal of that compilational arrangement may be stated explicitly . . . or be sufficiently subterranean as to prompt reasonable readers to disagree about whether it exists at all. . . such a compilation need not attempt or achieve a single, totalizing effect; it may rather produce kaleidoscopic accumulations of meaning, or contradictory and deconstructive rather than unifying and teleological ones. (6)

While Chaucer appears to push for a proliferation of contradictory meaning, and at times the goal may appear to be “subterranean” with many peaks, but ultimately, his dream sequence is quite grounded, and there are various attempts on Chaucer’s part at a “totalizing effect” which in itself creates tension. In fact, how each dream scenario ends is just a motor to keep that tension running. The tension reaches a climax with the ending of the House when the man of great authority is left silenced at the end of the

poem, and the dreamer narrator leaves his audience with no closing remarks about his dream experience.

One way I would like to view Chaucer's compilational strategy is similar to the one dictated in Holderness's article "Compilation, Commentary and Conversation" about Christine de Pizan's *Advison Cristine*. In it, we find that a medieval compilation can hold authorial power, especially when it is used as a cover for literary invention:

Christine compared the compilers task to the embroiderers: he or she created new meaning by cleverly weaving together disparate threads. [T]he opening of Part One of the *Advison Cristine* [is an] astonishing tangle of texts by Dante, Boethius, Alan of Lille, and Christine herself, the study. Like Dante, she is enlightened; like Boethius, she is consoled. Finally, she has transcended Nature, in the manner of Alan of Lille's new man. . . . Some scholars have suggested that Christine used compilation as a disguise for what were in reality authorial creations. Joël Blanchard has even called Christine's compilations a sort of terrorism, a sly appropriation of power. . . . Christine's interest in compilation was nonetheless ambitious. She sought to be analytical. . . . In the *Advison*, one of her goals is to comment on the interconnectedness of knowledge. . . . (Holderness 47-48)

According to Holderness, Christine de Pizan is able to end her work with the resonance of one stable voice that unifies the unharmonious dialogue between the auctores whose literary fragments she includes in her work. It is in fact one of the functions of a compilational frame to allow a writer to do that, regardless of how difficult that may be (51). In the three upcoming chapters, I will explore how Chaucer rejects certain fragments written by some literary auctores, to embrace other literary fragments from other auctores, or even to highlight his own personalized version of things. Like Christine de Pizan, Chaucer uses compilational tactics to gain a certain claim to authority without necessarily sticking to all the conventional and formal rules and constraints of compilational writing. According to Brown:

The right balance of mimicry and originality let vernacular literature bid for the capacious, self-sufficient cultural authority in spite of its overt dependence on Latin, French and Italian sources, on mere reportage and on compilation. Naturally, the Latin commentary tradition, whose glosses of the Bible, law, grammar, classical and medieval standard texts (auctores) presented most explicitly the discussion of authority, still commanded a primary claim to textual authority: what was glossed was authoritative, as was what or who did the glossing. A vernacular, courtly writer concerned with satire and secular love could hardly hope for either. (27)

There have been many writers like Bahr that argue that the *Canterbury Tales* comprise a compilation, although according to Bahr not in the: “codicological sense of the term” (Bahr 5). I find that Chaucer’s dream-trio too fits such a characterization. Minnis states that Chaucer in his works utilizes the compilational frame to his advantage sometimes sticking to the accepted conventions and tricks of a compiler, and sometimes going astray from the accepted rules. Keeping this in mind, I argue that Chaucer uses these tactics to tinker with the generic form of the dream vision, and the following three chapters will explore how Chaucer does this.

So far, we have compared Chaucer’s compilational method to Christine de Pizane. Copeland comments on Gower’s compilational method as it relates to translation and vernacularization; the combination of translating, commentating, and compiling within a text into the vernacular allow for literary invention:

The power of the compiler lies in the way that he can retreat behind the *ipsissima verba* [very words] of the texts and conceal the very control that he exerts as orchestrator of auctoritates. Here, by invoking the compiler’s conventional regard for the integrity of his materials, the poet of the *Ovide moralisé* claims for these vernacular texts a canonical privilege like that of Ovid’s own text. . . he insists upon the integrity of the Latin text which he is about to translate and expound . . . [and] he asserts the integrity of the vernacular texts that he is about to compile. (118)

Copeland also posits that Chaucer has the tendency – in his later compilation-like works such as the *Legend*— to claim a certain amount of credit over the creativity of his

literary work—despite his literary borrowing—by using compilational conventions. Copeland makes the following claim: “[When the narrator of the Legend says,] ‘myn entente’ Chaucer’s narrator invokes the topic of intention auctores not to explain the intention of the auctores whose works he is about to “declare” but rather to explain his own intention for declaring those works” (193). According to Brown:

In the prologue to the legend of good women: “Chaucer’s self portrayal as a compiler opens. . . with the importance of writing for capturing examples from the past. . . he presents himself as merely a reaper gathering sheaves from others’ works (F66-83); later he asserts, as Higden does, that the works were ‘his’ (i.e. governed by his entente) even if take from others: ‘what so myn auctour mente, / Algate God woot, yt was myn entente / To forthren trouthe in love’ (470-2). (35-36)

As a budding new poet within the prestigious English courtly circle, pressure was added on the writer’s career to exhibit his literary skills— particularly by showing his familiarity with literary conventions and authoritative literary texts— and to be a sufficient representative of the English culture in which he belonged, while compilation was very helpful to Chaucer in doing this, translation was also necessary.

Chaucer employs the “primary” and “secondary” theories of translation elaborated on by Copeland when he reuses and repurposes familiar literary scenarios for the rhetorical purpose of invention, in order to create works of literature for those who spoke in the simple English vernacular. I will use these theories to investigate how Chaucer uses the dream vision genre as a frame to both appropriate the sub-frames of literary fragments and assemblages from past authorial figures for the rhetorical purpose of invention in order to build a performance of authorship. Rita Copeland posits that a vernacularization of renowned texts of non-English canonical authors into the English language would inevitably transform these translated texts into new literary products, displacing the old texts within England’s literary corpus. This process in turn makes the

author of these new authoritative texts in English, a literary “auctor” of the English language. Chaucer’s approach to old books reveals the complex relationship between the historical differences that existed between the cultural milieu present at that time and the English one Chaucer had to create, with the processes of hermeneutical exploration and rhetorical invention.

Chaucer arguably writes "Fragment A" of *The Romaunt of the Rose* around 1368 and finishes the *Boece* between 1381 and 1382. Both are considered primary translations according to Rita Copeland. While traditional conceptions of translation are that a writer’s translation is meant to be faithful to the source text that it is proposed to serve, in many circumstances, what ends up happening is that such translations end up displacing the authentic force of the authoritative model (Copeland 4).

[There is a] distinction between interlingual reception, in which a vernacular translation stands in direct relationship to Latin sources, and intralingual reception, in which a group of vernacular translations in the same language draw as much from one another as from the Latin tradition. . .In the case of intralingual reception, a group of vernacular translations of a single auctor generates its own textual tradition which effectively displaces the Latin source tradition... Vernacular productions displace their Latin sources, and vernacularity inserts itself into the privileged sphere of academic culture. . . (Copeland 7).

Interlingual reception is what in fact happened with the case of Boethius’ *Consolation*. Translation and compilation are life-like processes. Chaucer liked the *Rose* and the *Consolation* enough to make them his own, which is why I specifically reference the *Rose* and the *Consolation* in his dream trio. Although Chaucer is embedded in this translingual network, I won’t be doing a translingual reading between the *Rose* and *Consolation*, and even if I did have access and wanted to work with these texts, these texts; the *Rose* and the *Consolation*, change so much from copy to copy, it would be hard to know which one Chaucer had. I want to specifically turn to the Chaucerian

*Boece*, since this is where Chaucer uses translation as a way of rethinking and re-appropriating the *Consolation* into something of his own. So I'm looking at the type of Boethius that arises from Chaucer's own hands. I can't do this for the *Rose* because of its textual problems and missing pieces, since it is uncertain as to who wrote the other fragments of the *Rose*, whether it was Chaucer or other writers. Furthermore, the core argument is not how Chaucer translates the *Consolation* in these dream visions, but the point of emphasis is to look at similarities in diction and on the *Boethian* narratorial stance as opposed to another:

The *Boece* is a response to two linguistic traditions, Latin and French. It is an attempt to master and appropriate the academic discourse of Latin culture; but it also challenges the ascendancy of French literary culture, represented by Jean de Meun's *Livres de Confort*. Like Jean's translation, the *Boece* participates in a wide orbit of vernacular interests: it builds upon vernacular foundations in French to become, in turn, the *pint* of reference for other vernacular developments of the *Consolatio* in English... [it] functions through its reception-history as a sign of the crossover of academic discourse from Latin to vernacular. . . But in the case of the *Boece*, the productive authority is carried further into what, for the Middle Ages, is an explicitly rhetorical domain, poetic composition as a form of invention. Within the canon of Chaucer's writings, from the Boethian lyrics to *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*. . . In many instances [the *Boece*] provides more than a link: it can occupy a foundational position, providing the actual source of further formulations rather than just an access to sources outside of English. . . In Chaucer's own career, the *Boece* performs the function of an academic reference in place of the *Consolatio*. (Copeland 142-143)

I argue that not only did Chaucer use the *Boece* as an academic reference for rhetorical invention in his later works *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*, but began to do this in his preliminary works, the dream trio, as an author move to create his performance of authorship across the dream sequence landscape itself.

With respect to secondary translation, Copeland states the following of such texts:



They take the rhetorical motive of difference and displacement one step further than primary translation: these secondary translations insert themselves into academic discourse, not by proposing to serve the interests of continuity with the *antique*, but rather by calling attention to their own status as vernacular productions and thus underscoring the fact of cultural and historical difference that vernacularity exposes. . . Unlike primary translations, define themselves expressly in terms of difference: they call attention to their own position in a historical rupture and in so doing advance their own claims to displace their sources. (Copeland 179)

Secondary translations define themselves through the discovery of a new point of argument or subject matter that can be derived out of what is available in authoritative texts. Hence, it works through rhetorical invention (Copeland 6-7). The fact that Chaucer incorporates bits and pieces of the *Rose* and the *Consolation* scattered across the dream narrative, having translated one, and having the interest to translate the latter, is noteworthy regarding his intention to perform different author building moves throughout his dream poetry.

In Lynch's Article "Dating Chaucer", Lynch quotes Butterfield on Chaucer's method of invention: "His patterns of borrowing were "kaleidoscopic," shifting and merging new lines of sight and fields of literary vision" (13). Chaucer's methods of rhetorical invention are used to enact a performance of author building. I very much agree with Deane Williams in his article "Chaucer's Dream Visions" on one major premise, which according to Lerer: "shows how Chaucer used the form throughout his lifetime to 'explore the idea of authorship itself'" (Lerer 4). Williams says the following of the dream trio:

An allegory of the processes of reading and writing, Chaucer's dream visions dramatize the experience of being a writer in late-fourteenth-century England. Raising questions concerning inspiration and transmission, as well as interpretation and authority, they destabilize tradition instead of reaffirming it. Highlighting the ongoing and productive tension between continental literary forms and the impulse to experiment with English poetry, and addressing the confusions as well as opportunities of cultural in-betweenness, Chaucer's

dream visions explore the idea of English authorship. They move between imitation and innovation, carving out space for Chaucer's unique contribution to the genre as an English author and, together, confronting the revolutionary idea of using the English language as a medium for courtly poetry. (149)

However, while Deane Williams looks at the trio as an attempt by Chaucer at nation building, I look at the trio as Chaucer's tool for author building.

## CHAPTER ONE: *THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS*

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will explore how Chaucer's performance of authorship employs rhetorical invention in the *Duchess*. We come to see that Chaucer's translation of recomposed fragments he takes from works by other authors begins to articulate a compilational strategy. Chaucer employs bricolage, and to use the terms of Copeland, "primary" and "secondary" methods of translation to further legitimize his own authority. Chaucer recognizes the depth of conventions in previous dream vision models all the while misreading them for his own authorial agenda. He accomplishes rhetorical invention by first recognizing previous dream models and then later rejecting them. Within Chaucer's dream poem the *Duchess*, we have evidence of the inclusion of fragments of mainly the *Boece*, Guillaume de Lorris and arguably Jean de Meun's the *Rose*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

In his first dream poem, the *Duchess*, as in the *Parliament*, and the *House*, Chaucer tinkers with the traditional dream vision; he alters the love vision of French courtly poetry and the philosophical Boethian consolation, and places them in dialogue with each other. This move by Chaucer becomes a reflection of how an author himself comes to reject the conventions of the dream vision conventions set by the authorities that created them, by recomposing fragments from their work, and placing them in a new narrative framework—an incubator for the English vernacular. The *Duchess*, like the latter two dream poems in his dream sequence, is used to question the dream conventions— such as the authoritative status of the dream guide figure and the influence between certain dream settings and the narrative plot of the dream— used by

previous literary auctores, as well as to give Chaucer credibility as a writer, as such prominent writers of the recent and distant past.

### **Chaucer's Method**

Chaucer engages in different forms of fragment binding within the various frames he builds around his dream sequence. There is the compilational frame that binds the three dream poems together, the dream frame itself that envelops each dream poem, the transitional frames as discussed by Phillips in her article "Frames and Narrators in Chaucerian Poetry", as well as the smaller narratological frames that bind fragments within them. I consider Phillips' article for the *Duchess* only so far as to investigate how Chaucer utilizes the three traditional dream frames: the *eavesdropping narrative frame*, *transition frame*, and *book frame* for the means of invention, as ways of reinventing two of the main characteristics of the dream vision. Chaucer changes both the influence the traditional dream settings have over the plot, and the presence of the authoritative teacher figure present within the dream (*Norton Critical Edition*, xiv-xv). I argue that this subversion of the traditional dream scenario occurs because the dreamer narrator takes on the role of a masculinized Lady Philosophy, coming to the aid of the morally bereaved mourning Black who needs consolation through philosophical instruction for the great loss he has suffered because of the goddess Fortune. In doing so, nevertheless, we learn that the narrator too who had been suffering from insomnia for 8 years has himself been consoled, and is no longer dwelling on his own lovesickness. What happens as a result of these changes with convention is that the narrator is placed within an empowering position within the poem. My reading of the poem however, will

reconcile this fact by maintaining the sensitive balance of gender and class power dynamics within the dream scenario.

As was mentioned in the introduction of my thesis, one of the angles I use to explore the meaning behind the dream sequence is a historicized reading of the poems. The *Duchess* is the easiest to place within a historicized reading with respect to the *Parliament* and the *House*. Schibanoff in her article “Courtliness and Heterosexual Poetics in the *Duchess*” claims that any historicized reading of the *Duchess* must pay heed to the delicate power dynamics within the poem so as not to offend John of Gaunt in any way, while maintaining the elegiac function of the poem (66). It is only with this final point that my interpretation aligns with hers.

Furthermore, while I have mentioned that some critics have opted for a historicized reading of Chaucer’s poem, seeing the Black Knight as an allegorical representation of John of Gaunt, others have diverged in their interpretations. However, critics that fall in either category in their outlook, draw comparisons that are either vague, lacking, or untrue to keeping with the form of the Boethian consolation. Some critics even go so far as to deny the existence of any consolatory fulfillment within the poem.<sup>6</sup> Other thinkers have tried to place the narrator in an inexperienced and obtuse role to try to compensate for the fact that he miraculously consoles the knight.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, these arguments are either limited by traditional formal constraints or are awkward attempts to attest for the power dynamics in the poem. These narrow approaches hinder one from seeing the dreamer narrator as he truly is, a once ‘love-

---

<sup>6</sup> Boardman, Watson, and Schibanoff opt for the historicized reading, while Friedman, Robertson, Cherniss, Phillips, and Edwards do not.

<sup>7</sup> Phillips, Williams, Schibanoff, Cherniss, Friedman, Edwards, and Boardman try to place the narrator in an inexperienced and obtuse role.

sick,' but nevertheless a morally uplifted, philosophical masculine figure. He is able to embody both the role of a pining courtly lover and a philosophical healer.

A narrator-centered reading is of equal importance here for better understanding Chaucer's position as it relates to his desire as a flourishing poet to show off his literary skills within the court. This skill manifests itself most explicitly in his ability to allow the structure of the poem to give voice to, and reinforce, the tribute he intended for John of Gaunt and Blanche the Duchess, and his own poetic prowess. I view that the narrator's "cleverness" and the "nature of the narrator's eight-year sickness" are important for understanding the poem (*pace* Boardman) since they help reconcile the clearly evident diverse characteristics of the poem: "1) its elaborate courtly style, 2) its consolatory purpose, and 3) its superimposition of elegiac forms upon the primary dream vision" (567).<sup>8</sup> There are a number of ways that my argument proves to be unique amongst those that draw comparisons between Chaucer's *Duchess* and his *Boece*. My analysis draws its strength from elements of Phillips' argument: "There are often significant parallels between the narrator and protagonist(s), and frame and core" (83). She also posits that "'transition' frames take the narrator from one stage into another. . . ." (80, 81) and goes on to state that: "Chaucerian poets planned the selection and sequencing of frames carefully to match the core narrative. It always repays the reader to scrutinize the choice, ordering, and handling of frames" (81). In other words, *the structure of the poem is not random and critics must take note of its significance*. So let us take a look at the three transition dream frames within the *Duchess* to

---

<sup>8</sup> Boardman, Phillip C. "Courtly Language and the Strategy of Consolation in *The Book of the Duchess*." *ELH*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Winter, 1977), pp. 567-579.

understand their significance as they relate to how Chaucer tinkers with the traditional dream vision conventions employed in the *Boece* and the *Rose*.

Chaucer's compilational strategy illustrates how fragment binding corresponds to a consolidation of authorial identity. His three dream poems center around a dream narrator's dream experiences and exhibit moments of authorial performance. Gaylord has suggested that the fragment is "controlled by a single, though admittedly very broad subject: the art of story-telling" (cited by Astell 269).<sup>9</sup> Chaucer uses his dreamer narrator's dream narrative to accomplish the task of controlling the various literary fragments he takes out of ancient and medieval literary works. The narrator's masculinity and familiarity with love as it is established within the tripartite structure of the poem is revealed more clearly as we consider the three narrative frames that also define the structure of the poem. This particular structure paves the way for my analysis of the poem, comparing it with the Boethian structure for consolation. With it, we come to realize that the narrator was not only able to console the knight at the end of the narrative as Lady Philosophy did Boethius, but had even consoled himself in the very beginning of the poem. It is this fact which allows him to take on the role of Lady Philosophy to begin with. It is the mixing of both the love vision with the philosophical vision that gives Chaucer the room to create the dream narrative for his dreamer to narrate. Minnis, does a thorough job of comparing Chaucer's writing method to John Gower's method in the *Ovide Moralisé*, and Olsson also makes a similar comparison in

---

<sup>9</sup> Astell, Ann. "Chaucer's 'Literature Group' and the Medieval Causes of Books." *ELH* 59 (1992): 269–87.

“The *Confessio* and Compilation”.<sup>10</sup> Let’s consider the following example by Olsson on how a compiler may play around artistically with fragments:

In the *Confessio*, Gower often changes what he inherits from others, and he does not always do so to tighten its fit with a new *moralitas*, or to affirm a truth latent in his source; “the more aggressive *compilare* ‘to pillage’ better describes his mode of gathering than does “the rather neutral *colligere* ‘to collect.’”<sup>36</sup> On this occasion, he oversteps what tradition, the original narrative, and his announced *ordinatio* allow. . . Gower, in fact, often rewrites stories to disjoin meanings in his text, sometimes when the original would seem to have served his announced topic better. If it is a task of the compiler to organize received material in a new structure and to display that material coherently and accessibly, the poet would seem to have failed in the task. This feature of the work, however, is part of a larger design. In one sense, to be sure, Gower creates an impression that he seeks to imprint his own authorship and sense of coherence on what he gathers; as in the Senecan model of voices in a chorus, he gives a performance where “out of the many only one voice results.” (12,14)

Whereas sticking to one dream vision form could have made his dream poems easier to understand and link as a sequence, such formal constraints would not have given Chaucer enough room for the authorial dance he does in his dream landscape. Within the tension and disunity that exists in certain moments within Chaucer’s dream poetry, there is one voice that stands out amongst the many voices; the voice of the narrator stands out like the voice of both the compiler does within his compiled texts and the voice of the translator in his translated works when they participate in rhetorical invention. Chaucer utilizes these methods to create his performance of authorship.

---

<sup>10</sup> Minnis, Alastair. “*Literary Theory and Literary Practice*”. *Medieval Theory of Authorship: cholaistic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*. Second Edition (2010) pp.160-210.

Olsson, Kurt. “The *Confessio* and Compilation.” In *John Gower and the Structures of Conversion: A Reading of the Confessio Amantis*. D. S. Brewer: Cambridge, (1992) pp. 1-15.



## A Narrator Centered Reading

In the *Duchess*, we begin our journey into the fictional world of the text from within the dream narrator's bed chamber. This particular transitional frame sets the theme of the entire dream poem: love and loss brought about by death. We have the narrator who suffers from insomnia for eight years and desperately yearns for sleep in fear that he may die. He states: "But men might axe me, why so I may nat slepe / I holde it be a siknesse that I have suffred this eight yere" (*Duchess* lines 30-31, 36-37). He says: "And drede I have for to dye" (*Duchess* line 24). Krugar claims:

The poem explicitly and insistently concerns itself with melancholic illness occasioned by love and by loss. The poem's tripartite structure—focused first on the narrator, then on Alcyone, and finally on the knight—depends on the triple reiteration of melancholia. (372)

We consider the frame narrator's sadness, self-stated illness and fear of death as a foreshadowing and sad analogue to the core lover's mournful state of lost love, revealing the core narrative's subject; death and lost love, and coping with it. To further connect the narrator's previous state of illness with the Black Knight's, is Chaucer's use of the Alcyone story of her husband's death and her eventual death from grief. It is no coincidence that the narrator, Alcyone and the Black Knight's feelings are likened to a "siknesse" particularly "melancolye" (*Duchess* line 23, 36). All express an inability to feel happiness (lines 8-11, 697-705), except for one difference, the narrator fears dying: "And dred I have for to dye" (*Duchess* 24). The knight wishes death in lines 688-690: "My lust hooly is. . . to deye sone," as does Alcyone, since before she dies of grief she says: "Allas. . . that I was wrought" (*Duchess* line 90). This is what Chaucer uses to mark the narrator's moral superiority over them.

I argue that the dreamer narrator, like the Black Knight, is very much depicted like the pining lover of the *Rose*. Williams explains that the narrator's sickness is depicted in a way that is associated with, as she states: "Conventional metaphors for unrequited love or an unhappy love affair" (149). Williams points out that the dreamer does in fact share the same symptoms as the man in black, which as she states are: "Bereavement and the loss of love" (150). Even Muscantine concurs with this argument: "The narrator has a kinship with the Man in Black— they are both disappointed lovers. . ." (311). At the end of the day, whether I am going to call it love-sickness or as Krugar does: "Melancholic illness occasioned by love and by loss", the situation remains the same; the narrator cannot be displaced from the courtly love tradition (372). Chaucer assembles fragments from the *Rose* and the *Consolation* together for the purpose of reinventing the main conventions of both dream vision forms. Chaucer's insistence on making the dreamer narrator resemble a pining courtly lover like the dreamer narrator in the love vision of the *Rose*, is what makes his dream vision interesting when he later comes to resemble Lady Philosophy from the consolatory philosophical vision of the *Consolation*. According to Krugar: "His dream gives him access to a naturalized, courtly world where he can again take charge as a man helping a friend come to terms with the loss of his wife" (6). This allows us to understand the transition scene into the dream where the narrator hears the hunting horn and quickly joins men in the hunt for a 'herte.' Krugar goes so far as to say: "The dream of *The Book of the Duchess* thus works to masculinize and heterosexualize the body of the ailing narrator" (383).

In the world of the dream, the narrator is given the opportunity to come in as a Lady Philosophy figure and become the "physician" that the Man in Black needs, and at

the same time, the ‘physician’ that he himself needs, intimating an epiphany and self-cure on the narrator’s behalf (*Duchess* line 39). Ironically however, this cure is a moral cure like the one in the *Consolation*—since Boethius himself is taught to shun earthly concerns in order to be consoled— rather than one to appease a lover like the one in the *Rose*—since Amans, the dreamer narrator, is allowed to consummate his love with his beloved through a kiss in the the first part by Guillaume de Lorris. The “physician” that is referred to in the *Duchess*, was at one point to both the narrator and knight, their lost lovers whose loss has made them suffer and brought about their lovesickness. The parallels between the Black Knight and the dreamer narrator are also seen when the Black Knight mentions that there is no solution to his problem. This likens him to the narrator who feared he too had no solution to his own problem. The Black Knight states: “Allas, than am I overcome, / For that is doon is nat to come” (*Duchess* lines 707-708). While the narrator states:

And yet my bote is never the nere,  
 For there is phisicien but oon, that may hele, but that is dooon,  
 Passe we over until efte; that will nat be, mot nede be lefte. . . (*Duchess* lines 38-42)

So they are left to suffer their grief because the beloved cannot return to life to make them happy again. Not only Krugar, but also Williams and Muscatine view the narrator as a man who suffers from the loss of love (Krugar 372, Williams 149, 150, Muscatine 311). However, at the end of the dream poem, the “phisicien” becomes the dreamer narrator who provides a philosophical consolation (*Duchess* line 39). Chaucer does not make the Black Knight verbalize his recognition of this fact, in order to be sensitive to the power dynamics of the poem. While we are not given the name of the narrator’s “phisicien” in the beginning of the poem, this is to not take too much of the focus on the

core protagonist's grief over his lover Whyte, the allegorical figure of Blanche who must ultimately be eulogized in this poem rather than the female that the narrator mourns. At the same time, since the narrator does focus on trying to create an image of his lost love for us, we are given the opportunity to take him more seriously as a man of philosophical learning.

Chaucer takes a fragment he translated from the *Consolation* of Boethius in his pre-consolatory state, and recomposes it in the following scene where we see the Black Knight in his analogous pre-consolatory state. The Black Knight, like Boethius, is eager to complain about his grief, rejecting any help offered to him, thinking it's useless. The Black Knight feels the dreamer narrator simply does not get how much he has lost, implying that the narrator cannot help him: "Though woste ful litel what thou menest; I have lost more than thou wenest" (*Duchess* lines 743-744). In considering Boethius' dialogue with Lady Philosophy, we see how Boethius is suffering from a deep-seated misery. After Lady Philosophy tries to make him feel better with rhetoric, he explains that his misery is so deep that after she is done with her verse he feels terrible again:

Certeynely quod I pan pise ben fiare pinges and enoyntid wip hony swetnesse of rethorike and musike. And only while pei ben herd pei ben delicious. But to wrtecches is a deppere felyng of harm. Pis is to seyn pat wreeches felen pe harmes pat pei suffren more greuously pan pe remedies or pe delits of pise words mowe gladen or comforten hem. So pat whan pise pinges stynten forto soun[e] in eres. Pe sorwe pat is inset greuep pe pouȝt. (*Boece* 36-37)

Lady Philosophy then explains that her verse is only used to ease his pain but it is not the solution to his problem; it will not change his miserable state:

Ryȝt so is it quod she. For pise ne ben ȝit none remedies of pi maladie. But pei ben a menere norissinges of pi sorwe ȝit rebel aȝeyne pe curacioun. For whan pat tyme is. I shal moue swiche pinges pat percent hem self depe. But napeles pat pou shalt not wilne to leten pi self a wrecche. (*Boece* 37)

Lady philosophy then asks Boethius not to complain of his malady but accept the medicine that she will provide him with: “Bvt tyme is now quod sche of medicine more pen of compleynte” (8). After this point, Boethius refers to Lady Philosophy as his “fyciscien” (10) Lady Philosophy offers her medicine to Boethius in a more authoritative manner than the dreamer narrator does the Black Knight, making the dreamer narrator a kinder more compassionate figure of authority than Lady Philosophy. The dreamer asks to help the knight in a manner of placing himself under his service, and the conversation they share thereby affects the cure needed by the knight.

### **The Book Frame**

The next frame I will explore in the *Duchess* is the book frame. Phillips states: “Book” frames are of two kinds. One is the book read initially before core events begin. This frame suggests a theme, or poses an issue; this is one of the best-known Chaucerian devices, initiated, for English literature, by Chaucer’s dream poems. Chaucerian poets also used book frames of another type. . . Among these are references to the narrator’s decision to write. (81) In the *Duchess*, we have a reference to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, where Chaucer translates a fragment from the *Metamorphoses* and refits it to suit the narrative of his dream scenario.<sup>11</sup> As a compilation, the *Duchess* contains fragments of the *Consolation*, the *Rose*, and the *Metamorphoses* all assembled together strategically to suit the dreamer narrator’s tale which Chaucer uses to weave all the fragments of his dream frame together through bricolage. The dreamer narrator begins by alluding to the aforementioned work as “a romaunce” about Seys and

---

<sup>11</sup> Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (ll. 411-748).

Alcyone prior to falling asleep and having his dream. The dreamer also mentions his intention to wanting to write up his dream in a poem after he had woken from it. Essentially, when Chaucer's dream poems are read to an audience of the court, or to a modern audience today, they are done so with the inclusion of the dreamer narrator's narrative before the actual dream begins, hence, the narrator's recomposition of the *Metamorphoses* as the "romance" that he read, is included within the work. According to Lerer: "Long poems that we consider entities were often read as anthologies of a sort, capable of being broken up and rearranged" (18).<sup>12</sup> Medieval writers were aware of the textual condition of the written text. Chaucer performs the act of reading an anthology in the *Duchess* where the narrator reads a collection comprising of romances, fables, etc. (lines 57-59) (18). Lerer goes on to say: "Well into the first decades of print, the anthological impulse controlled much of the dissemination, marketing, and critical reception of vernacular English writing" (19). In this sense, the *Duchess* takes a classical tale and incorporates it within an English context and such an "anthologizing" gesture is in step with late medieval modes of citation and text use.

Chaucer creates a "secondary translation" of the segment of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* about Ceyx and his queen Alcyone and changes the significance of the tale to suit the moral he wants to give in his own dream vision.

Chaucer's sense of combining and organizing diverse materials may owe something to the compilers theory and practice of *orinatio partium* [ordering parts]. The major medieval compilations were compendious, containing materiae to cater for a wide range of demands and tastes," argues Minnis. (200)<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Lerer, Seth. "Introduction" *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*. Yale University Press: New Haven & London, (2006), pp. 1-28.

<sup>13</sup> Minnis, Alastair J. 'Literary Theory and Literary Practice', reprinted material from monograph

The dreamer narrator does not indicate one specific author of the “romaunce” that he reads and reveals the different topics covered within his book. He says the following:

In this book were wryten fables that clerkes hadde, in olde tyme and other poets, put in ryme to rede and for to be in minde whyl men loved the lawe of kinde. This book ne spake but of swiche thinges, of quenes lyves and of kings and many othere thinges smale. (*Duchess* 52-59)

Yet the tale that the dreamer narrator chooses to translate to the reader about King “Seys” and his queen “Alcyone” is as he describes “a wonder thing” that he reads so he could pass the time of night since he was suffering from insomnia (*Duchess* lines 61, 63, 65). Ultimately, the words that the dreamer narrator uses to describe his feelings towards the book and the events within it are indicative of his ownership of the tale that is held within it. After relating how much queen Alcyone suffered for the loss of her king Seys, the dreamer relates: “Trewely I that made this book had swich pitee and swich routhe to rede her sorwe” (*Duchess* lines 96-98). The *Duchess* reveals Chaucer’s reception of both ancient and contemporary medieval literature as exhibited in the form and content of the dream, yet he uses the rhetorical move of the compiler, the “apostrophe”, by only name dropping the names of ancient authors as a means of gaining from their authoritative status. Chaucer consciously does not give Ovid credit for his work in this dream poem. This is significant because it was not Chaucer’s intention to blatantly show that he is changing Ovid’s tale at this point in his performance of authorship. Leaving out Ovid’s name would not be an issue for Chaucer, since the audience of the court would be familiar with Ovid’s tale in any case,

---

*Medieval Theory of Authorship*, in: *Middle English Literature: A Guide to Criticism*, ed. Roger Dalrymple (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 14-19.

and would recognize the playful changes he has made to the said “romance” (Smallwood 433).

Ultimately, through the rhetorical invention Chaucer employs in his translation of the fragment he takes from the *Metamorphoses*, the tale that the dreamer narrator relates to the reader changes from the one provided by Ovid to suit the narrative of Chaucer’s dream scenario. Ovid’s tale is one where a love between a king and queen is so strong, that after the Queen learns that her husband has died, she ends up dying of grief. Because the couple’s love is so pure, the gods take pity on them, and they are able to reunite after death as immortal birds. Chaucer’s version of the *Metamorphoses* is shortened significantly. This fragment ends right after the queen’s death, whereby the story becomes a warning to people who over value earthly love; in that over valuing earthly love will eventually lead to a tragic death (*Duchess* lines 47-48). Unlike Bruns’ theory of the grammarian mythology, whereby grammarians extend the works of the auctores they borrow from, I posit that writing for Chaucer is not an embellishment of what is already written or an “amplification of discourse” (115-117, 122-123).<sup>14</sup> Chaucer does not necessarily extend what is already written by another author, but in fact cuts off the texts of these authors; cutting off certain parts and summarizing others, turning them into fragments, and places these fragments alongside other fragments that he recomposes from other works, or other fragments of his own invention. Hence, the dreamer narrator goes on to stop the tale of Alceste and Peleus short in an opportune place to lay emphasis on the element of death from mourning over a lost lover, and the idea of achieving a restful sleep. After he describes the queen as having died, the dreamer

---

<sup>14</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. “The Originality of Texts in a Manuscript Culture.” *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Spring, 1980), pp. 113-129.



narrator acknowledges that there is more left of the story that is unsaid, and he advantageously says: “But what she seyde more in that swowe I may not telle yow as nowe, it were too longe for to dwelle” (*Duchess* lines 215-218). Hence, Chaucer’s narrator claims that the remainder of the story does not suit his current purpose. Chaucer makes sleep of importance so one may escape from their earthly grief. Yet Chaucer makes his dreamer narrator change another aspect of Ovid’s tale; Morpheus is made the God of sleep in the dreamer narrator’s tale, instead of Somnus, as indicated in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* a tale that places Morpheus as Somnus’s son. This misprision emphasizes that it is not only for direct reasons that the dreamer narrator has to change Ovid’s tale, to make it more suitable as a tribute to John of Gaunt and his late wife Blanche the Duchess, but more importantly, it is an author move that highlights the dreamer narrator’s skill at rhetorical invention, and chopping, displacing, and distorting Ovid’s tale allows Chaucer to do that. Copeland says the following of such secondary translations:

Rather than representing themselves as translations in the service of authoritative sources, these texts tend to claim for themselves (either directly or implicitly, through the irony of disclaimers) a kind of originary discursive status, as if the translation, once achieved, displaces the source by assuming a certain canonical authority of its own. While they may acknowledge a source (as in the case of Chaucer’s *Legend of Good Women* or even the fictive claims of the *Troilus*) and hence their own status as translations, they exploit the logic of exegetical supplementation to recontextualize their sources and so to efface them. This is one function of the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*. . .” (94-95).

Hence, in the *Duchess*, Chaucer uses secondary translation to exploit the status given to Ovid’s work, the *Metamorphoses*. Essentially, we come to find that the bedroom scene and the book scene, also work to draw our attention to the narrator and the authority he possesses as a budding writer within this dream poem.

Narratological frames allow for the progression of the dream narrative from before the dreamer falls asleep till his dream narrative ends. The bedroom scene in the *Duchess* along with the reading of the book scene, are examples of how narratological frames function to push for the positive progression into the dream vision by setting the themes of love and death as they relate to the situation of the narrator and the characters of Alcyone and the Black Knight. The dream narrator's reading of a book as a transitional frame, allows the reader to enter the world of a 'romance', where the previously developed theme of grief over a lost love, is maintained in Alcyone's love for her husband Seys who dies, the dream she has of him, and her own eventual death. These narratological dream frames draw the reader into the dream world. We find that the text the dreamer narrator reads before sleeping becomes a mere reflection of what is presented in the dream. We realize at the end of Chaucer's dream poem, after we compare Alcyone to the situation faced by the dreamer narrator and the Black Knight that she really dies because she dies tragically because she is unable to procure a remedy for her ailing grief, as both the dreamer narrator and the Black Knight were able to do. The "romance" is changed through Chaucer's translation to reflect the lesson he wants to present in his dream. Chaucer created such an ending for his this fragment that he translates from Latin to English to let it mimic the events within his dreamer narrator's dream vision. This story allows us to better understand the dreamer narrator's own obsession over wanting to get some rest from his grief so as not to tire himself emotionally and die as Alcyone did. The dreamer narrator suffers from love-sickness and reads this "romance" so he would be reminded of the importance of sleep as a form of rest so he would not languish away like queen Alcyone from his love sickness. It also allows us to better understand what happens in the transition scene in the

“wode,” and the friendly move on behalf of the narrator in wanting to help the Black Knight overcome his own grief in their therapeutic conversation so the dreamer could help the Black Knight save himself from a death caused by his grief over his lost love (*Duchess* 444).

Phillips’ article points to the use of such beginning book frames in creating a positive progression, as we find in the *Duchess* that helps support the argument that the dreamer narrator provides the Black Knight with a Boethian consolation. She states: “One after another, traditional prologue motifs, including the planetary opening, restless narrator in bed, and book read before the dream, appear, each shaped to prefigure the theme of optimistic movement” (85). Even at the end of her article, Phillips acknowledges that the *Duchess* “transmuted real-life tragedy into poignantly beautiful platonic yearning” (96-97). In that same line of thought, I would argue that the dreamer narrator takes on the role of Lady Philosophy who heals Boethius through a talking cure. Of course the dreamer narrator is not like the domineering Lady Philosophy, but more like a helpful friend. This is to keep the balance of power politics that play within the poem, which includes of course praising “Whyte” tremendously for her formal beauty and virtuosity, since the poem is ultimately a eulogy for her.

Generally speaking, the positive progression seen in all three of the dream poems is a result of the dreamer narrator’s individualism. The dreamer narrator depends on his own authority; in his ability to come to his own conclusions, to criticize, and try to forge his own path without any traditional dream guide leading him blindly, despite the complications he faces along the way. The narrator’s authority is asserted by his ability to be his own dream guide and the dream guide of the Black Knight. His authority is also marked through his occupation as a writer and the control he has over

the information that he unfolds in his narration. The aforementioned points reflect back on the authorial performance Chaucer wants to develop and chart out throughout the *Duchess*, *Parliament*, and *House*. The process of writing and the dreamer narrator being a writer himself are highlighted in the last lines of the dream vision when the narrator uses the rhetorical move of the “humility topoi” to ascertain that he liked his dream so much that he will strive to write up his dream in a dream poem, to the best of his abilities. He says: “This is so queynt a sweven that I wol, by processe of tyme, fonde to putte this sweven in ryme as I can best, and that anon” (*Duchess* lines 1330-1333). According to Schibanoff, the Black Knight also uses the “humility topoi” when claims he lacks both “Englyssh and wit” (898) to explain the beauty of Whyte’s face and then varies this apology by claiming that his “spiritis” (natural abilities) (900) are too dull to “devyse” (901) so “grete a thyng” (902) as Whyte’s beauty is” (91). As readers, we find ourselves reading the final product of what the dreamer narrator had already written. We are especially reminded of that fact when he says in his final lines that announce the end of his tale, “This was my sweven; now it is doon” (*Duchess* line 1334).

### ***The Romance of the Rose***

Moving forwards, the frame of the dream itself is also ornamented with fragments from both the *Consolation* and the *Rose*. The dreamer narrator finds himself in a bed chamber surrounded by stained glass windows with imagery depicting *The Romance of the Rose* and briefly, the story of Troy from Virgil’s *Aeneid*:

Ful wel depeynted, and with glas  
Were al the windows wel y-glased,  
Ful clere, and nat an hole y-crased,  
That to beholde it was gret joye.

For hooly al the story of Troye  
 Was in the glasinge u-wrought thus,  
 Of Ector and of King Priamus,  
 Of Achilles and Kinge Lamedoun,  
 Of Medea and of Jasoun,  
 Of Paris, Eleyne, and Lavyne.  
 And al the walles with colours fine  
 Were peynted, bothe text and glose,  
 Of al the Romaunce of the Rose.  
 My windows weren shet echoon,  
 And thurgh the glas the sonne shoon  
 Upon my bed with bright bemes,  
 With many glade gilde stremes. (*Duchess* lines 322-338)

Wetherbee's article made me consider the significance of this scene as continuing both with the theme of the poem about love and death, but also allowed me to make connections with the *Consolation* and the *Rose*. Wetherbee states:

The challenge posed by the tragic possibilities of life to the ordering and affirming power of philosophy is again set off by a largely Boethian structure. The action expands from an initial focus on the fortunes of love and war [to reveal] human life seems to be at the mercy of random natural forces. (292)

War in this case really pointing to its association with death, we find meaning in the stained glass imagery of Troy along with Chaucer's version of the story of Seys and Alcione. In these tales, we also find a strong association with the theme of love, which is similarly highlighted in the mention of *The Romance of the Rose* in the glass imagery. The theme of war also reminds us of Philosophy's torn robes and the battles she has fought and won against as she calls it: "[P]e foolharines of foly" (*Boece* 10). It also calls us back to consider the imagery surrounding Boethius in the beginning of his spiritual and mental transcendence as Lady Philosophy describes it: "So pat I seye pat pe face of pis place ne amouep me nat so myche as pine owen face. Ne. I. ne axe not raper pe walles of pi librarie apparailled and wrou3t wip yvory and wip glas pan after pe sete of

pi pouzt (*Boece* 24). Yet at this moment, we know that the dreamer narrator has already begun his spiritual and mental transcendence because he has asked for sleep to relieve him of the task of pondering over his grievances. So again, these images in the stained glass around the dreamer narrator highlight the themes of love and death and reinforce the dreamer's spiritual and emotional enlightenment. Ultimately, we find in the fragments assembled in the dream narrative, that the narrator awakens in a dream world resembling the setting of a courtly romance similar to the one depicted in the stained glass; the *Rose*, but Chaucer nonetheless incorporates a Boethian twist. The courtly romance imagery with the singing birds, conventionally grand morning setting, with pleasant May weather with a clear blue sky—the weather dream frame motif also being important to consider—hint at the narrator's "heterosexual amorousness" and likens him to the dreamer narrator of the *Rose*, Amans (Phillips 85).

The narrator's courtly virility is especially brought to light in the next transitional dream frame after he leaves the bedroom that he wakes up in within the dream, and goes into the outdoor landscape. The narrator comes more to resemble a courtly lover once he gets out of bed and leaves the bedroom setting; he jumps on his horse and rides out to a "feld," a field or open country outside to join a hunt for a "hert" (*Duchess* line 359). While we will consider the courtly implications of a "hert" hunt and how it reflects the dreamer's manly prowess, we will also consider how the transitional dream frames used by Chaucer which are meant to serve as the setting for this "hert" hunt are used to subvert traditional frame settings that involve a hunt for a "hert". To begin with, I concur with Williams that the trope of hunting for the "hert" alludes to the courtly love tradition of a male hunting to catch the heart of his female lover. Williams states:

[H]unting deer, with the Middle English pun on 'hart' and 'heart' was a popular medieval metaphor for courtship, and the dog was a popular image of constancy, and specifically, marital fidelity. These are dream symbols of the ideals of love and marriage addressed by the Ceyx and Alcione narrative (152).

However, in this case, we will find that the "hert" that the narrator captures is the "hert" (heart) of the problem he is suffering. It is a cure for his "melancholy". He seeks the remedy for both the Knight's emotional and spiritual enlightenment and inevitably in doing so, he confirms his own healing and enlightenment.

The significance of the "hert" hunt is elaborated on in the final transitional dream frame, where the dreamer follows the "welp" wandering down a "floury grene wente," a flowery green path which leads to the "wode" where the encounter between the dreamer narrator and the Black Knight becomes indicative of the Boethian connection to the hunt for the "herte" (*Duchess* 359, 397, 444). This little pup is the only guide the dreamer narrator has had so far, up to this point, the narrator has made his own way through the dream landscape. Ironically, this setting which is depicted like the *locus amoenus* of the garden in the *Rose* with its extra fertile flowery depictions, only reinforce the subversion of its use for spiritual and philosophical enlightenment, rather than being a place where one may indulge their earthly senses. Carruthers' argument mentioned by Schibanoff's in her article evokes the relation of the heart and memory: "Aristotle included a role for the heart in the physiology of memory. . . and the metaphorical use of heart for an organ of memory continued well into the Middle Ages and beyond"(82). This fact points to the narrator finding the knight and consoling him with the Boethian consolation tactic of recollection which inevitable paves the way for his own consolation. We find in these two particular transitional frames an opportunity to mix both the courtly love vision and philosophical vision together, and tinker with

them both so as to change one of the main conventions of the dream vision. Instead of the narrator gaining the love of his female lover or at least attempting to ‘hert-hunt’ in this courtly setting, we have a narrator interested more in spiritual and philosophical concerns rather than sensual earthly matters. And instead of a domineering personified figure coming to give the narrator a good education, we have the narrator himself becoming an educator, a varied depiction of the Lady Philosophy figure from the *Consolation*. Furthermore, this particular transitional dream frame serves to carry the heart of the poem; it allows the knight to create an idealized depiction of Whyte for the function of Blanche’s eulogy, and it provides us with an idealized description of the Man in Black— winner of her love— for the function of paying John of Gaunt his due. Furthermore, the sound of the horn at end of the poem signifying the end of the “hert-hunting” reminds us that the dreamer narrator was able to reach the heart of the problem by providing a Boethian consolation to his friend in his time of need, and in turn, providing himself with one as well (*Duchess* line 1313). While traditional settings used in courtly love visions are used in Chaucer’s dream scenario to first establish the narrators masculinity and heterosexuality, and also to liken him to the dreamer narrator of the *Rose*, such settings are then uniquely used not for the establishment of the narrator getting his desired lover, succumbing to the sensual world around him, and dwelling on his emotions, rather, this setting paves the way for him to become the reasoning philosophical consoler of the Black Knight, the lamenting bereaved lover, just as the narrator was in the beginning of the poem (Phillips 85).



### **The Eavesdropping Frame: *The Consolation of Philosophy***

This aforementioned scenario comes up in the next transition frame, the eavesdropping frame, which brings us into the “wode” where we discuss another literary fragment taken out from the Boethian consolation scene (*Duchess* line 444). Phillips states that: “The eavesdropping frame, [is] where a narrator overhears a lament, debate, or other event, which then forms a core of the narrative. . .” (78) The narrator eavesdrops on the Knight’s lament in the same way that Lady Philosophy listens in to the unaware Boethius as he complains about his misfortune. It is worth comparing the Black Knight’s self-imposed isolation away from the courtly world shown in his reluctance to join the hunt and return to his home in the court, to Boethius’ self-imposed isolation from his home (Goins 134). Furthermore, this scene in the woods is a crucial part of the poem that allows Chaucer to reconcile the delicate power dynamics within the poem. We can see this in action by focusing on how first the narrator praises the knight, places himself in his service, and through tactful, polite, and sympathetic questioning, the narrator motivates the knight to go through a process of recollection in order to find the “hert” of the problem (*Duchess* lines 529-535, 548-557).

In this frame, we observe the dreamer narrator eavesdrop on the Black Knight lament over his lost love Whyte, hearing the Knight clearly say: “I have of sorwe so grete woon that joye gete I never noon Now that I see my lady bright which I have loved with all my might, If fro me deed and is agoon, and thus in sorwe lefte me aloon” (*Duchess* 475-480). The narrator hears the Black Knight literally say to himself that he is sorrowful because his lady has died. Grieving to see the Black Knight suffering as he himself had suffered, he decides to let him know he was right behind him, and asks him to disclose what is troubling him to allow him to procure a Boethian cure for his malady

(*Norton Critical Edition* 19). Muscantine affirms this point and states that the narrator: “[W]andering away from a hunt, accidentally overhears the Man in Black’s complaint, but tactfully and sympathetically pretends ignorance of the lady’s death so that the other may find relief in pouring out his sorrow” (310). Muscantine provides us with a basis for such a reading with evidence from the French tradition, particularly the narrator depicted as what Muscantine calls: “[T]he knowingly courteous one of Machaut” (314).<sup>15</sup> Hence, rather than take on the position of Phillips, Schibanoff and Williams, that the narrator is the detached, obtuse and passive, I see that Chaucer uses this dream frame to simultaneously show that the narrator dreamer is very much familiar with the morally debilitating sensual heterosexual love (148). Furthermore, Chaucer uses this fact to subvert one of the major characteristics of the dream vision, and in particular, the Boethian model of education, where instead of the dreamer narrator meeting an authoritative instructional figure, he becomes one himself, albeit a more sympathetic version, in order to provide the Black Knight with a moral service, and accordingly make clear that he too has recovered from his own “melancholy” or love-sickness (*Duchess* line 23).

In the following passages, we will consider the similarities between the *Boece* and Chaucer’s recomposed fragments from the *Boece* as they are implemented in the *Duchess* through bricolage. In the introduction to the *Consolation*, Watts informs us that: “[T]he ascent of the soul is not simply a process of education, it is also one of remembering. . . or recollection” (*Consolation* xxvi). So we see the importance of remembering what you have lost in order to heal. Lady Philosophy says the following to Boethius:

---

<sup>15</sup> The medieval French love poet Guillaume de Machaut.

I now wot...oper cause of pi maladie and pat ryzt grete hou has t left forto knowe pi self what pou art. Poruz whiche I have pleynelche knowen pe cause of pi maladie. Or ellis pe entre of recoueryng of pin hele. Forwhy for pou art confounded wip forzetyng of pi slef. Forpi sorwest puo pat pou art exiled of pi proper goodes... Forpi wenest pou pat pise mutaciouns of fortune fleten wip outen gouvernour. Pise ben grete cause not oonly to maladie. But certes grete cuase to deep... I say somewhat to maken oinne and wayk by lyzt and meenelyche remedies. So pat after pat pe derknes of desseyuyng desyrynges is don away: pou mow[e] knowe pe schynyng of verray lyzt. (*Boece* 28)

Here Lady Philosophy encourages Boethius to embark on the journey of remembering the fact that one must not place their cares in fickle fortune, since that would be destructive. In comparing this scene to the one in the *Duchess*, first the dreamer narrator humbly places himself in the Knight's service:

But certes, good sir, if that ye  
Wolde ought discure me your wo,  
I wolde, as wis God help me so,  
Amende it, if I can or may;  
Ye mowe preve it by assay.  
For, by my trouthe, to make yow hool,  
I wol do al my power hool.  
And telleth me of your sorwes smerte;  
Paraventure it may ese your heart  
That semeth full seke under your syde. (*Duchess* 548-557)

After this lament, the Black Knight complains about fortune in line 618 calling her “fals fortune”, and in line 620, calling her “the traiteress fals and ful of gyle”; these complaints mirror Boethius’ grumble when he calls her “contrarious fortune” (*Boece* 21). In return, the narrator’s sure-fast advice to the knight to become healthy again and overcome his grief so that he would not risk becoming a morally depraved soul by wishing to die, is similar to Lady Philosophy also reminding Boethius to remember “Socrates” whose side she fought by at a time when “philosophi be now alperfirst assailed in perils by folk of wicked[e] maneres” (*Boece* 11). The dreamer narrator goes

on to try to get the Black Knight to remember how Socrates was an individual that did not succumb to fortune:

A! goode sir...sey nat so.  
Have some pitee on your nature  
That formed yow to creature.  
Remembre yow to creature.  
Remembre yow of Socrates  
For he ne counted nat three stress  
Of nought that Fortune coude do. (*Duchess* lines 714-719)

Here the Black Knight is so grieved and limited by his debilitating self-pity over his loss to fortune that he cannot remember this fact and replies: "No...I can not so" (*Duchess* lines 720). Accordingly, the narrator is forced to warn the Black Knight about the moral dangers of dwelling over such temporal losses and succumbing to his grief by wishing to die:

Though ye had lost the ferses twelve,  
And ye for sorwe mordred yourselve,  
Ye sholde de dampned in this cas  
By as good right as Medea was,  
That slow hir children for Jasoun;  
And Phyllis also for Demophoun  
Heng hrself, so welaway,  
For he had broke his terme day  
To come to hir. Another rage  
Had Dido, the queen eek of Cartage,  
That slow hirself for Eneas  
Was fals, which a fool she was!  
And Ecquo dyed for Narcisus  
Nolde nat love hir, and right thus  
Hath many another foy don.  
And for Dalida died Sampson,  
That slow himself with a pilere.  
But there is noon alive here  
Wolde for a fers make his wo! (*Duchess* lines 723-741)

So here the narrator shows that he is clearly familiar with the fact that the Black Knight is contemplating death for the love of his dead lady, he compares the morally corrupt

state the Black Knight would be in if he were to allow his grief to take him over in that manner to the famous literary ladies of the past that died for love. Going back to the Boethian scene within this eavesdropping frame, it is important to consider Goins's claim in "Removing the Cloud of Mortal Anxieties" which draws attention to Boethius' metaphorical "self-imposed exile" (134). Moving forward, we consider Lady Philosophy's warning to Boethius about being a willing exile to his own home, of course with metaphorical implications. She states:

Whan I say pe quod sche sorweful and wepyng I wist[e] on-one pat pou were a wrecche and exiled. But I wist[e] neuer how fer pine exile was. . . pou hast fayled of pi weye and gon amys. And yif pou hast leuer forto wene pan pou be put out of pi contre. Pan hast pou put oute pi self raper pen ony oper wyzt hap. For no wyzt but pi self ne myzt[e] neuer haue don pat to be... Haste pou forzetten pilke ryzt olde lawe of pi Citee. . . he may not be exiled by no ryzt fro pat place. For who so pat is contened in-wip pe paleis [and the clos] of pilke Citee. Per nis no dreded pat he may deserue to ben exiled. . . (*Boece* 24)

Lady Philosophy warns Boethius about the moral dangers of his self-imposed exile. Boethius' exile away from his home – which is depicted to have palace imagery – is in a place described above with words such as "in-wip" and "clos". Such descriptions reminded me of the Black Knight's actual physical self-imposed exile in the 'wode' away from his home, the court depicted at the end of the poem which the dreamer narrator describes as: "A longe castel with walles whyte. . . on a riche hille. . ." (*Duchess* lines 1316-1319). The Black Knight is also isolated and not with the other huntsmen involved in the hunt. When asked about this by the narrator, the Black Knight says he doesn't care about that: "I do no fors therof" (*Duchess* line 542). The Black Knight obsesses over his misfortune in a Boethian manner, since the theme of death informs both scenes; Boethius lamenting over his upcoming death in prison and his loss of earthly possessions, and likewise the Black Knight wishing to die like his dead love,

Whyte. The dreamer narrator's consolation of the Black Knight helps ease his grief over the death of his love, Whyte, and move on with his life by going back to the castle, rather than remain in exile in the wood all alone.

Considering the sensitive power politics at play within the poem, as was mentioned before, Whyte is in fact idealized in Black's portrait of her, and Williams points out that class distinctions are respected by the narrator doing his best not to speak in a derogatory manner around the knight, but in fact to place himself in his service: "Y gret him as I best koude / Debonayrly, and nothing lowed" and ". . . [Y]if that yee Wolde ought discure me youre woo, I woulde as wys God helpe me soo, Amende hyt" (*Duchess* lines 517-18, 548-51). The narrator wants the best interest of this fellow that he thinks highly of as he states: "I . . . gan m'aqueynte with him, and fond him so treftable right wonder skilful and resonalbe, as me thought" (*Duchess* lines 31-34). Muscatine states: "The narrative of the bereaved lover is periodically interrupted by short, colloquial interchanges that are designed to motivate its continuation" (313). The narrator performs this motivational task in a most tactful manner, and proves to be successful as opposed to the overbearing manner that Lady Philosophy performs this task, especially considering the fact that Boethius never confirms that he has been consoled by Lady Philosophy at the end of their dialogue, but rather, at the end, she is the one left talking extendedly while the author narrator, Boethius, is left forever silenced; never actually awakening from his vision within his retelling of it in.

Scholars have mistakenly considered the narrator to be an obtuse and non-inquisitive one. This is incorrect for two main reasons: not only does the dreamer narrator accomplish the task of a dream authority, but he also claims his own authority

through the various author moves he makes using rhetorical invention.<sup>16</sup> The narrator never mistakes Whyte to literally be a chess piece when he says: “But ther is noon alive here Wold for a fers make this wo!” (*Duchess* lines 740-741) He is simply objectifying her. In a sense, this points to the temporality of the female body, diminishing from its worth as something one should not mourn, since it is subject to Fortune’s taking. Furthermore, the narrator’s description of her as such, is not out of tune with the Knight’s own depiction of his lady as such, prior to the narrator’s statement that Whyte was taken from him by fortune: “[W]han she my fers caught” (*Duchess* 681). More so, after the narrator’s statement, the Knight goes on to describe his lady in an objectified manner as he goes over her physical beauty. In her article, Schibanoff states: “The physical portrait follows the conventional head-to-toe order, enumerating the beauty of Whyte’s hair, eyes, neck, face, hands, limbs, and body (817-96) before it proceeds to defining her inner virtues and qualities (961-1087)” (89). So we refer back to the text of *The Duchess* when the Knight says: “Hir throte, as I have now memoire, Semed a round tour of yvoire” (*Duchess* lines 945-946). The recalled chess imagery from earlier in the poem, along with the reference to the color of ivory, and Blanche the Duchess’s name being Whyte, are all connected. And as a result of this dialogue between the dreamer narrator and the Black Knight, Black is given the opportunity to be author to the most eloquent verse within the text to crown him as a master poet; this fact serves to maintain the Black’s Knights dignity within the text. In maintaining the hierarchy within the poem, Chaucer allows the knight to exhibit great poetic prowess. Despite his mournful state and isolation from his true home, the knight creates beautiful poetic verse and can thus be hailed for his poetic virility (*Duchess* line 1322). Yet, even Blanche is given her

---

<sup>16</sup> Helen Phillips, Deanne Williams, Susan Schibanoff, Michael D. Cherniss, John Block Friedman, Robert Edwards and Phillip C. Boardman.

due in this poem. Her eulogy is best depicted in the verse composed by her knight. She is praised for being incomparable for her ideal beauty and virtue and is also given credit for being the instructress of the knight during the time of their courting. Finally, by this point, the narrator is not only proven to be an active participant and member of the courtly world for successfully ending the ‘hert’ hunt, but also a philosophical authority figure able to instruct a “tretable”, “skilful” and “resonalbe” fellow in need (*Duchess* 533-34). Most importantly, at the end of the dream scenario, the ‘hunt’ for the heart of the problem is found and the knight rides back home to his “castel” ready to take his rightful place in the world, leaving the narrator behind gazing up at him, just as we see Boethius ready to return to his own home depicted as the “paleis” in the *Boece* (*Boece* 57-58). The aforementioned exchanges between the narrator and the knight, mimic those between Lady Philosophy and Boethius, and lead up to this point (*Duchess* lines 444-450, 618-21, 714-41, 746-52, 1298, 1308-09).

Key to this comparison is the way lady philosophy banishes the muses that cannot provide moral aid to individuals that are mournful, but rather make them dwell on their sensual concerns (*Boece* 40). Verse in the *Consolation* is the “ly<sup>3</sup>ter medicines” Lady Philosophy provides Boethius with (*Boece* 59). The Knight’s gentle medicine is in turn his own elaborate verse about Whyte that the narrator provokes him to compose. Just as there is less verse and more prose in the *Consolation* as the text is near to a close and Boethius is closer to being ready for the fulfillment of his moral consolation, the Knight’s own very sensual courtly rhetoric—verse that ultimately objectifies the object of desire, in this case Whyte—at the end, fails to console him. This fact exemplifies the Boethian doctrine against grief where one must shun the physical world of which we can never possess as it belongs to Fortune. The failure of the poetic verse to console



reveals that nothing transient, physical or earthly drowned in the senses may bring comfort (Wetherbee 298, Goins 130). It is at this moment that the narrator interrupts the knight probing him to verbalize the harsh reality of his circumstance in simple prose without metaphor or abstraction. This is compared to lady philosophy's "myztyer remedies" pushing Boethius to accept the circumstances of his condition (*Boece* 59).

### **The Eavesdropping Frame: *The Romance of the Rose***

So let us now look at the climax of the dream poem that is placed in this eavesdropping dream frame. At this point, the Knight is the one that comes to resemble the dreamer narrator of the *Rose*. Firstly, he explains to the dreamer narrator how he had placed himself under love's service in order to win the heart of his love Whyte:

Dredeles, I have ever yit  
Be tributary and yive rente  
To Love hooly with goode entente,  
And thurgh plesaunce become his thral  
With good will, body, hert, and al.  
Al this I putte in his servage  
As to my lorde and did homage;  
And ful devoutly I preyde him to  
He shulde besette myn herte so  
That it plesaunce to him were,  
And worship to my lady dere. (*Duchess* 764-774)

The Knight commences to remember Whyte and how he was able to win her love in a highly idealized traditional French courtly poetic style, but the fact that he had dedicated himself to Love's service, and the fact that he can create all this technical and stylized verse, does not provide the knight with the remedy he needs.

I consider what Wetherbee states in *The Consolation and Medieval Literature* to reveal the significance of this fact, as it relates to the *Consolation*: "Philosophy had

begun her ministrations to Boethius by banishing the Muses of poetry, whose persuasions, sweet unto death, had only intensified his grief by inviting him to indulge it” (Wetherbee 298). Goins concedes to this idea in his article ‘Removing the Clouds of mortal anxieties’ and states: “[H]er banishment of the muses of elegy, likewise seems to recall Plato’s scorn for the morally debilitating effects that poetry can have” (130). Furthermore, Watts states in the introduction to the *Consolation*: “They have no medicine to ease his pains, only sweetened poisons to make them worse. These are the very creatures who slay the rich and fruitful harvest of Reason with the barren thorns of Passion. They habituate men to their sickness of mind instead of curing them” (*Consolation* 4). We observe in Boethius that while there are thirty-nine poems, we see less and less verse and more prose as we move further along in our reading and Boethius begins to reach a healthier more enlightened state.

If we consider authorial intentions for highlighting the efficacy of simple English prose, we read Williams’ article ‘The Dream Visions’ where he states:

The French origins of the dream vision genre were a constant reminder of the pervasive presence of French language and culture in England during the Middle Ages. . . Chaucer’s dream visions are an allegory for the process of reading and writing. . . They explore the idea of English authorship. . . [T]hey move between imitation and innovation. . . [C]onfronting the revolutionary idea of using the English language as a medium for courtly poetry. (148,149)

In this case, we see how Chaucer wanted to highlight the importance of the English language and English prose through the situation with the Black Knight who is debilitated by figurative language and abstractions. Williams states: “[T]he Man in Black regards his world through the poetic vocabulary of past generations” (153). I don’t argue that the narrator in this case lacks the familiarity with any ancient authorities, it’s quite the contrary as I have discussed in my introduction and throughout

this chapter, after all, the dreamer narrator of the *Duchess* references Macrobius, Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, and Virgil's *Aenied*. But in order to be a Lady Philosophy figure, the narrator uses the more pragmatic simple English prose, and gets straight to the point. Muscatine states: "The narrative of the bereaved lover is periodically interrupted by short, colloquial interchanges that are designed to motivate its continuation" (313). The narrator performs this motivational task in a most tactful manner and proves to be successful. At the end of the discussion, Williams points out: "The Dreamer has had to wring it out of him. But finally, the Man in Black is speaking with an unadorned honesty that previously had eluded him" (155). The following is also stated: "The catharsis comes near the end of the poem, in lines 1309-10, when the knight is pressed to acknowledge his loss without art or equivocation\_ 'She is deed' \_\_ and the dreamer to produce the only comfort possible in such circumstances, a simple expression of fellow feeling \_\_ 'By God, it is routhe [pitiable]'" (*Norton Critical Edition* 5). With regards to Black's lament for his lost love that the narrator overhears, Schibanoff informs us that Barbra Nolan observes the following:

[Chaucer] indulge[d] himself in direct imitation of the French love poets", giving the knight the most elegant verse in *The Book of the Duchess*. Nolan goes on to say: "[A]ll the best poetry- that is, refined, artificially structured, thoroughly subjective, Frenchified verse-belongs to the Knight." And continues by saying that in giving the Black Knight the best poetry, Chaucer meant to criticize the value of such art to reckon with morality by contrasting it to the narrator's gentle, though insistent, pressure on the Knight to state his loss prosaically, which constitutes the 'talking cure' of the poem. (88-89)

Yet it cannot be disregarded that this is the language of love used by the lovers across literature, including the dreamer narrator Amans in the *Rose*. The imitation of such language, and then rejection of its efficacy, is relevant to his subversion of dream conventions. Again, proof that the Knight finally comes to terms with his loss, is seen

when he gets on his horse and rides home to the court, the castle I described that resembles the home of Boethius, a home that both men left willingly in their once morally degraded state.

The “transition frames” within the *Duchess* show us how the narrator is no longer love-sick as well, by showing him to be active throughout the entire structure of the poem. First in taking us into the world of the romance; he reads and actively interprets it, then, once in the world of his dream; his quick integration within the courtly hunt shows that he is ready to move on with his life rather than stay alone, isolated, and grief-stricken like the Black Knight. At the end of the poem, we are again reminded that the narrator is in fact consoled and is no longer love-sick because, I repeat, that he expresses his interest to write up his dream in the form of a poem, rather than stay morbidly passive dwelling on his sadness as before (*Duchess* lines 1330-1332). His dream becomes an outlet that people utilize for consolatory reasons as they would the *Consolation* or Chaucer’s own *Boece*, but it is also a source of entertainment, which is the main attested function of the love vision such as the *Rose*. (*Norton Critical Edition xv*)

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, Chaucer pays heed to the power dynamics of the poem in order to pay homage to his patron and his deceased wife through the elegiac trope, and similarly to validate his own poetic abilities within the court. The *Duchess*, like the *Parliament*, and the *House*, deals a lot with subversion: Chaucer is able to intermingle the two dream vision forms, by uniting the philosophical vision with the love vision under the

theme of grief over lost love. Chaucer tinkers with the main conventions of the dream vision and changes the role of the dreamer narrator poet from a passive role, to a more active, aggressive, and authoritative one, although the *Duchess* is least aggressive in its approach at variance as compared to the *Parliament* and the *House*. Furthermore, by recomposing and assembling translated fragments of mainly the *Consolation*, the *Rose*, and the *Metamorphoses* in his dream poem, the dreamer narrator is able to perform preliminary author moves as a first step in his authorial performance. Despite some disjuncture in the unexpected shifts found within the dream narrative, nuance is created despite the fact that Chaucer compiles and interweaves fragments that belong to multiple literary traditions within this one dream frame. Chaucer's ability to weave together this mosaic of works from the ancient and recent past, highlighting some voices at times, and canceling others out at others through the clashes of the voices of the auctores provide the reader with an image of a budding writer, and the process of writing that he must undergo in developing his *authorship*.

## CHAPTER TWO: *THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS*

### **Introduction**

In the *Parliament*, Chaucer incorporates into his own dream context, fragments from two classical texts; Macrobius's *Commentary* and Alain de Lille's the *Complaint*, which he translates and assembles alongside the translated fragments he had also taken from *Rose* and the *Consolation*. In the *Parliament*, we see the work of bricolage and the narrator's utilization of translation and compilational methods for the means of rhetorical invention to a greater extent than we did in the *Duchess*. Furthermore, in this poem, Chaucer also provides a greater break with the major conventions of the dream vision, pushing further from the imitation presented in the *Duchess*, particularly with the role of an authoritative dream guide. In the *Duchess*, Chaucer makes the dreamer narrator himself become this authoritative persona in imitation of Lady Philosophy—albeit a masculine and friendlier version—guiding the Black knight to a moral healing, rather than having the dreamer narrator himself be lead to some didactic lesson by such a figure, while In the *Parliament*, there exist authoritative figures and even a dream guide. While the presence of these figures would lead one to assume that Chaucer is not moving further away from convention, but falling deeper into imitation, the fact that these authoritative figures do a lousy job at performing their conventional tasks is of great significance at indicating both Chaucer's critique of using such literary customs set by the auctores of the genre—particularly, Boethius, Alain de Lille, Guillaume de Lorris, and Jean de Meun—and his rejection of these customs as well through the narrator's purposeful misreading of the fragments he takes from their work and weaves together in his dream narrative. Hence, the *Parliament*, dated by most critics at 1380, stands as evidence of Chaucer, the writer, participating in more extensive authorial

moves to find a literary voice in the English vernacular within the interlingual network of literary voices that existed at the time, as compared to the slighter variations from the standard dream vision, exhibited over ten years prior in the *Duchess* written in 1368. Alongside each other, with the *Parliament* coming after the *Duchess*, we begin to find evidence of an authorial performance of a young author moving further away from merely emulating his predecessors to finding his own style and voice to convey it.

### **The Book Frame**

In *Parliament*, Chaucer depicts a dreamer narrator poet that is led within his actual dream by what would seem like the authoritative figure of “Affrican” from what the narrator calls “Tullius of the dreme of Scipioun” (*Somnium Scipionis* [*Scipio’s Dream*], the last book of Cicero’s *De re publica*). Affrican offers to reward the dream poet with material to write about for having read what he claims to be *his* book by giving him a dream that would teach him about true love which he could then write about. It is more likely, however, that the dreamer narrator playfully misnames the work that he recomposes here; instead of Scipio’s Dream by Cicero, the dreamer narrator most probably read Macrobius’s philosophical commentary on dreams and sourcebook for dream theory in the European middle ages, the *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* (the *Commentary*). The latter is more relevant with regards to the topic of dream analysis, information which the dreamer narrator later recomposes in his dream (*Norton Critical Edition* 94). The dreamer narrator gives us the misread title he wants for the *Commentary*, “Tullius of the dreme of Scipioun,” and goes on to mention some of the parts that he found of value in the text. The dreamer narrator does not give credit to Macrobius, but rather gives credit to Cicero by noting that he will briefly summarize his

writing to include in his narrative what he can deduce as important or noteworthy from Cicero's meaning. The dreamer narrator here manipulates the rhetorical move made by compilers to name and give credit to their sources, by misnaming his source, as he had done in the *Duchess* when he gave Macrobius the credit of writing the original *Scipio's Dream*. Affrican says the following to the dreamer narrator:

Thou hast thee so wel borne  
In looking of myn olde book to-torn,  
Of which Macrobie roughte nat a lyte,  
That somdel of thy labour wolde I quyte. (*Duchess* lines 109-112)

Chaucer's dreamer narrator poet in the *Parliament*, like in the *Duchess*, is one interested in moral and philosophical topics, as well as the topic of love. This reading of the book frame, as argued by Phillips is one of Chaucer's iconic moves in his dream poem. We will come to find that such frames are connected by theme and context, creating links in what often seems like a disjointed dream atmosphere. The fact that the dreamer narrator is a writer looking for noteworthy material to write about, links the reading of the book frame which holds the fragment of the *Commentary* with the other frames and fragments within the dream scenario which comprise the gift given by Affrican to the dreamer as material he could use for writing. The dreamer narrator felt fortunate for Affrican's offer, since he had initially read what is essentially the *Commentary* in order to gain new knowledge from the previous material presented in old books. He says:

. . . [I]t happed me for to beholde  
Upon a book, was wryte with letters olde;  
And therupon, a certeyn thing to lerne  
.....  
[O]ut of olde bookes, in good faith,  
Cometh al this newe science that men lere. (*Parliament* lines 18-20, 24-26)



The dreamer narrator clearly reads so he can learn about what is deemed noteworthy, this noteworthy material is known to be produced by the literary auctores familiar to Chaucer was from both the ancient and recent past. Accordingly, the dreamer narrator delighted in the old book he read, and says: “To rede forth it gan me so delyte, that I the day me thought but a lyte” (*Parliament* lines 27-28). After having done so however, the dreamer narrator confesses that he is anxious and full of thought. He says: “And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse / Fulfild of thought and besy hevynesse” (*Parliament* lines 88-89). It is not simply enough that the dreamer narrator has translated and recomposed this fragment from the *Commentary*. Part of the process of literary invention when it comes to author building is actually creating a context that this fragment in which may be placed. As I will discuss in detail in this chapter, Chaucer tinkers with the *Commentary* through a playful misreading. Hence, after this moment, Chaucer places a fragment from the *Boece* before the dreamer narrator has his dream. By this time of his career, Chaucer was most probably involved in writing the *Boece*. The dreamer narrator explains the reason for his feelings of dissatisfaction after his recomposition of the *Commentary*, by saying that he both had what he wanted and didn’t at the same time. He says, “For bothe I hadde thing which that I nolde/ And eek I ne hadde that thing that I wolde” (*Parliament* lines 90-91). These lines bear a resemblance to the ones found in Book 3, prose 3, lines 33-36 of the *Boece*.<sup>17</sup> Lady Philosophy says to Boethius: “For that the lakkide somewhat that thou noldest nat han lakkid, or ells thou haddest that thou noldest nat han had,” so he responds with: “Ryght so is it,” where after Lady Philosophy then adds: “Than desiredest thou the presence of the toon and the absence of the

---

<sup>17</sup> The *Dream Visions Norton Critical Edition* makes the claim that these lines are similar to the ones in the *Consolation* and I have identified where this is played out in *Boece*.

tothir?” Lady Philosophy explains to Boethius that humans want to achieve happiness but don’t know the means of doing it because they are always focusing on earthly materialism as a means to achieve this goal of happiness, rather than focusing on greater philosophical matters. This fragment, along with its relation to the dreamer narrator’s interpolated *Commentary* fragment, prove to be the entire focus of the dream scenario in the *Parliament*, in the same way that the fragment that likens the dreamer narrator in his state in the beginning of the *Duchess* with the restless and love-sick Amans from the *Rose*, and the relation of this fragment with the dreamer narrator’s inserted *Metamorphoses* fragment come to reflect the events and overall outcome of the dream scenario in the *Duchess*. We will find that Chaucer creatively changes the *Commentary* here, as he had changed the *Metamorphoses* in the *Duchess* to something else that suits his dream narrative. Yet it is not enough for the dreamer narrator to merely reinvent textual fragments if he cannot actually place them in a narrative of his own, after all, the dreamer narrator’s proclamation to be in need of writing material implies that he needs to actually compose something of his own. In the *Parliament*, I will explore the way the dreamer narrator’s recomposition of the *Commentary* and the *Complaint* fragments, and his translation of them into the English vernacular of this text, contribute to the growth and development of Chaucer’s authorial performance, building on the dreamer narrator’s in the *Duchess*. The *Parliament* is an interesting mix of dream narrative with moral and philosophical guidelines that emerge through the conflict between the parliament of birds in Nature’s garden. My reading of this poem also pays heed to the dynamic of power politics within the poem. Critics have pointed out court figures are allegorized in it; Richard II, represented as Nature’s favored tercel eagle, or his bride to be, Anne of Bohemia, represented as the formel eagle, whom the three eligible eagles—

representative of Anne's actual suitors, Friedrich Meissen Charles VI of France, and Richard II—are trying to pursue (*Norton Critical Edition* 93).

### *Macrobius' Commentary on Scipio's Dream*

Quite similar to the fragment in the *Commentary*, the dreamer narrator begins his narrative by using the rhetorical move of attempting to explain the reasons for why people have the types of dreams they have.<sup>18</sup> He notes that people have dreams that are associated with who they are, what their profession is, or what state of mind they are in before they have a dream. Despite the dreamer narrator's apparent knowledge about dreams, the dreamer narrator makes the claim that he does not know if the dream he had about Affrican and the parliament of birds is in fact a result of his reading of the *Commentary*. The dreamer narrator's doubt remain regarding the link even though Affrican tells him that it is in fact the case; that the dreamer narrator's reading of "Tullius of the dreame of Scipioun" is a cause of the dream that he will have. The dreamer narrator says:

The wery hunter slepinge in his bed  
To wode ageyn his minde goth anoon  
The juge dremeth how his plees been sped  
The carter dremeth how his cartes goon;  
The riche, of gold; the knight fight with his foon;  
The seke met he drinketh of the tone;  
The lover met he hath his lady wonne.  
Can I nat seyn if that the cause were  
For I had red of Affrican biforne,  
That made me to mete that he stood there. . . (*Parliament* lines 99- 108)

Clearly, since the entire dream narrative is relayed to the reader after the dreamer narrator has woken and put his tale into rhyme, the fact that the dreamer narrator still

---

<sup>18</sup> Chapter 3 of the *Commentary* as found in on page 265 in the *Norton Critical Edition* 265.

claims to not know why he had his dream is an authorial move allowing him to frame his own invention. Since the dreamer narrator is in fact a writer, it makes sense that his dream has to do with the process of writing; and in this case preliminary steps in this process of scouting for material to write about. Accordingly, another convention of compilational writing that Chaucer used to his advantage was providing a “final cause” or validation for their compiled work. According to Minnis:

The wish to justify their special literary activity had encouraged some compilers to think not only of the practical *utilitas* of *compilatio* (its efficacy in providing doctrine in a convenient and predigested way) but also of its *utilitas* in a more absolute sense – it is the function of doctrine to bring us eventually to salvation. (204)

However, at the end of the dream poem, the dreamer narrator hints he is not satisfied with the topics and lessons learned from his reading of what is essentially his recomposition of the *Commentary*, and those topics and lessons, if any, found in his own dream narrative. What this rhetorical move indicates on the one hand, is that the *Commentary* itself is insufficient in producing the inspiration the dreamer poet is looking for with regards to the standard of writing he aims to produce. While the dreamer’s actual dream has great historical relevance within the English court—being particularly an allegory for the marriage negotiations between Richard II and Anne of Bohemia, the dreamer narrator shows that the knowledge gained from the ancient Latin text of the *Commentary* does little to actually help resolve this particularly English conflict. Furthermore, the dreamer narrator’s rhetorical move is a means to encourage the reader to follow the dreamer poet on to the next dream poem, in hopes that he would have found more satisfactory inspiration to actually write it (*Norton Critical Edition* 93).

To lighten this accusation against the *Commentary* however, the dreamer narrator makes it clear that night time had taken away the light that he was using to read his book, and therefore he couldn't finish it. This is an implicit implication on the part of the narrator, that there could be something in the *Commentary* that could be of more use to him. He says:

The day gan failen, and the derke night  
That reveth bestes from hir besynesse  
Berafte me my book for lack of light. . . (*Parliament* lines 85-87)

Hence, the dreamer narrator was still not able to link the old book to the “newe science” that he was looking for, nor was he able to find information within it that could help explain the outcome in his dream—a fact of utter significance regarding the dreamer narrator’s performance— that I will elaborate on in detail throughout this chapter (*Parliament* line 25). The dreamer narrator is a writer figure looking for material to write, and that want of material is what brought about the dream. The fragment from the *Boece*, inserted before the dreamer narrator actually has his dream, comes to act as a self-fulfilling prophecy, for after he awakens, the dreamer narrator is still unsatisfied, and goes on to read more books so that he can come upon something that would give him better fortune than what he had previously read. He says:

“I wook, and other books took me to  
To reade upon, and yet I rede alwey  
I hope yws to rede so som day  
that I shal mete som thing for to fare  
the bet. . . (*Parliament* lines 695-699)

From appearances, the narrator’s playful claim of not being able to make the link between his dream scenario and the book he reads prior, makes sense, considering that the *Commentary* is about morality and politics, and the dream that the dreamer narrator ends up having is about mating and love. Achieving “new science” would be to weave

together the topics of morality and politics in the *Commentary*, and the themes of mating and love in the dream scenario of the parliament of birds. Affrican, as dream guide, instead of explaining the connection between the book and the dream, rather leaves the interpretative gap open, forcing the dreamer narrator to link these concepts together on his own. Just before Affrican ditches him outside the gates of the garden, saying:

For thou of love hast lost thy tast, I gesse,  
As sek man hath of swete and bitternesse.  
But natheles, although that thou be dulle,  
Yet that thou canst nat do, yet mayst thou see;  
For many a man that may nat stoned a pulle  
Yet lyketh him at wrestling for to be  
And demeth yet wher he do bet or he;  
And if thou haddest cunning for t'endyte,  
I shal thee shewen mater of to wryte. (*Parliament* lines 160-168)

Affrican tells the dreamer narrator, that although the dreamer narrator himself may not be in love—clearly, after playing a Lady Philosophy figure, he would have no interest in that— if he nevertheless has the power of observation, and the literary skills to write the words of the matter down, that Affrican himself would give him the sought-after narrative material. But this never happens because Affrican, the dream guide, ends up deserting the dreamer narrator once in Nature's garden, and leads him to no understanding of the events that ensue before him; Affrican proves to be a kind of false prophet. Although the eavesdropping frame is used later, perhaps it is its lack at *this* narrative moment that is the problem. Had there been an eavesdropping frame here, where the “authority” figure of Affrican actually hears the dreamer narrator lament about his problems, he could know how to help him solve them. The omission of this transition frame becomes tactical in helping Chaucer negate the omnipotence and

omnipresence of Affrican within his dream scenario, along with negating the efficacy of the *Commentary* in delivering a message as an authoritative text altogether.

Macrobius's *Commentary* is very much about politics. In it, we learn that Scipio the younger has a dream of his great grandfather, Scipio Affrican, who provides him with a moral for how to lead his life through a career in politics. According to Affrican, only the people with the greatest value on Earth should take this privilege upon themselves as a duty. Scipio is told that he must spend his life serving the state and disregarding the pleasures of the transient Earth, such as those derived from Fame, and that only by doing so, will he be able to ensure his path to heaven, wherein the heavens are then described in great detail within the poem. Chaucer however, translates certain fragments of the *Commentary on Scipio's Dream* in a manner that suits the plot of his dream narrative. Chaucer utilizes this strategy of writing to make it difficult to tell what is in fact his in his dream poem, and what is actually borrowed; bricolage, indeed, blurs the idea of originality. The dreamer narrator's version of the *Commentary* is strategically shorter. While the *Commentary* is composed in six chapters, the dreamer narrator's version is only 48 lines, and offers some key changes in the text. Chaucer's version functions like a fragment; it both assumes significance over the meaning of the entire poem, and collaboratively alongside the fragments Chaucer has assembled in his poem. The meaning of the entire poem must be deduced by the balance of power each fragment holds individually and collectively, keeping in mind my assertion that Chaucer's arrangement of these fragments is strategic. The dreamer narrator's announcement of his retelling of "Tullius of the dreame of Scipioun" hints at the inventive force of misprision through translation and fragment binding. He says:

This book of which I make mencion,

Entitled was al ther, as I shal telle,  
'Tullius of the dreme of Scipioun';  
Chapitres seven it hadde of hevene and helle  
And erthe and soules that therinne dwelle,  
Of which, as shortly as I can it trete,  
Of his sentence I wol yow seyn the grete. (*Parliament* lines 29-35)

However, in the *Commentary*, there is no talk of hell, there are no "Chapitres seven. . . of hevene and helle". The hell described in Chaucer's version is one where humans who sin are sentenced to suffer on Earth after they die for many years before they are admitted into heaven:

But brekers of the lawe, sooth to seyne,  
And lecherous folk, after that they be dede,  
Shal whirle aboute th'erthe alwey in peyne  
Til many a world be passed, out of drede,  
And than, foryeven all hir wikked dede,  
Than shal they come unto that blisful place. . . (*Parliament* lines 78-83)

The dreamer narrator's "Tullius of the dreme of Scipioun", like Macrobius's *Commentary*, includes a fragment which states that one whose behavior is aligned with the "comun profit", would be able to reach a blissful place. Chaucer's dreamer narrator posits that Affrican says to his great grandson Scipio: "What man, lered other lewed, that loveth comun profit, wel y-thewed, he shal unto blissful place wende, ther as joye is that last withouten ende" (*Parliament* lines 31, 46-49). This quote in Chaucer's version of the *Commentary* fuses the incongruent themes of love and politics. These themes resonate collaboratively throughout Chaucer's dream poem. However, by tinkering with the *Commentary*, the dreamer narrator also removes two of the following points from his citation of the *Commentary*. Firstly, in reciting "Tullius of the dreme of Scipioun", Chaucer's dreamer narrator does not dwell on the idea that Scipio, as an elite member of



society, is encouraged by Affrican to serve his state. Chaucer removed that segment. Chaucer's version promotes the all-inclusive idea that everyone, regardless of their social or educational background, should serve for the "comun profit", without particularly specifying how that would be done (*Parliament* lines 31, 46-49). Chaucer's version goes accordingly:

Then preyed him Scipioun to telle him al  
The wey to come into that heven blisse;  
And he syede, 'Know thyself first immortal,  
And look ay besily thou worke and wise  
To comun profit, and thou shalt nat misse  
To comen swiftly to that place der,  
That ful of blisse is and of soules clere. (*Parliament* lines 71-77)

It is true that the dreamer narrator's version, like the *Commentary*, indicates that Earth is a transient place that can bring humans torment. In Chaucer's version, Affrican explains to Scipio that because the Earth was so small and filled with pain, he should not focus on finding joy there. He says:

Than bad he him, sin erthe was so lyte,  
And ful of torment and of harde grace,  
That he ne shulde him the world delyte. (*Parliament* lines 64-66)

While there is this similarity shared between both texts, the second change that I would like to indicate with regards to the dreamer narrator's version in lines 74-77 as mentioned above, is the message that despite the fact that an Earthly existence can bring about pain, one may be able to achieve bliss on Earth if one is able to promote the common good.

As in the *Duchess*, the book the dreamer narrator translates before falling asleep in the *Parliament*, also reflects what happens in his actual dream. Hence, as the dream scenario continues, we find that Chaucer's version of the *Commentary*, as related

by the dreamer narrator, comes to mirror what actually happens in his dream scenario itself. The topic of the “comun profit” ends up having to do less with regulating political matters of the state, as much as it has to do with mating. Likewise, the paradise that one should strive for in heaven is reduced to an earthly paradise. It is significant that this earthly paradise fails at being a consistently blissful one. Chaucer’s skepticism of the function of the authoritative dream guide is brought to light here, since these dream guides cannot actually teach the members of the parliament of birds how the “comun profit” can be achieved. The possibility of having a blissful paradise on Earth becomes elusive; be it because of the upheaval between the birds throughout the dream and the lack of resolve in the parliamentary debate, or because the birds still fly away happily singing a roundel in praise of Nature, ambivalent to the fact that Nature was unable to create stability amongst them or teach her creatures, the birds, to work together for the “comun profit.” Whereas the dreamer narrator’s misprision of Macrobius’s *Commentary* provides a lesson that would have resolved the conflict faced by the parliament of birds, the dream guides within the poem actually hinder that resolution from ever happening.

### *The Complaint of Nature*

When the dreamer narrator actually enters the garden of Nature within his dream, he witnesses this conflict on his own after losing his initial dream guide. The entire scene with Nature and the parliament of birds is taken out and compiled with fragments from Alain de Lille’s the *Complaint*. The dreamer narrator’s entrance into this garden becomes a subversion of the eavesdropping frame. Whereas we might think after reading the *Duchess*, that the dreamer narrator would eavesdrop over the inhabitants of the garden and help them with their problems as he did the Black Knight

in the “wode,” he in fact watches over them quietly, and refuses to play the dream guide role altogether. At this stage of the dreamer narrator’s authorial performance, Chaucer makes his dreamer narrator move further away from imitation, and focus more on how he can collapse this dream guide convention by highlighting its fallibility. The only two authorities present in this dream scenario are useless, as is seen with the impotent Affrican who ditches Chaucer at the gate of Nature’s garden, and with the personified figure of Nature, who makes a muck of things in her very own garden. Having these flawed “authoritative” figures is where Chaucer breaks with convention. Chaucer’s dreamer narrator himself informs us that the figure of Nature he saw in his dream was the same one Alain de Lille had described when it clearly becomes obvious she isn’t. This is a clear swerve away from tradition on the dreamer narrator’s part, since Alain’s Nature is an authoritative personified figure much resembling the *Consolation*’s Lady Philosophy, a figure who guides and teaches Boethius with her great reasoning skills about the nature of true love and the importance of philosophical matters over the material world. Alain’s Nature resembles Lady Philosophy both in her grand demeanor and in the way she uses philosophical didacticism as she complains about the crimes that humans commit against her. They do this through their breaking of the laws of Nature, especially with regards to mating and reproduction, whereas in the birds that adorn her robe in the *Complaint* follow her will to the button without complaint or disturbance, and all of the natural world is in order because of her strong and assertive will. (*Norton Critical Edition* 273-274). However, in the following fragments of the dream scenario, Nature fails as an authoritative figure, precisely because she is unable to lead the parliament of birds to a point where the “comun profit” is achieved. Affrican, whose job it was to guide the dreamer narrator through the events that transpire in the

dream scenario, or help keep order within the dream world by aiding Nature somehow in getting the parliament of birds to work for the common profit, similarly renders himself useless. Despite the fact that the parliament of birds behave as if Nature and Affrican's failure is negligible, when they fly off singing a song, the dreamer narrator could not remain as ignorant about his disappointment of both said dream authorities.

In the *Parliament*, Chaucer uses bricolage more extensively for the purpose of fragment binding, than he does in the *Duchess*, since, unlike in the *Duchess*, the dreamer narrator incorporates not one, but two texts by literary auctores of the recent and ancient past other than the *Consolation* and the *Rose*. Hence, we find that throughout each dream poem, that Chaucer engages more deeply in intertextuality: translating, recomposing, piecing together, and assembling frames and fragments, and compiling them together to create the authorial performance that is his dream sequence.

With the dreamer narrator's secondary translations of the *Commentary* and the *Complaint*, and his intentional misreading of these texts, we are provided with a change in a few important aspects of these pieced together textual fragments. In the dreamer narrator's version, the idea of one trying to work for the "common profit" is no longer reserved just for those who are part of the elite of society, and the "common profit" is not indicated as a political act of serving the state. Once in the garden, the dreamer narrator envisions a parliament of birds that represent the different stratifications of society, spanning from the lower ordered birds, to the noblest bird of prey, the royal tercel. The dreamer narrator envisions that these birds were finding difficulty living a purely blissful life in Nature's garden since they could not work together for the "comun profit"; they could not agree on what bird would best be suited for the formel eagle. Through Chaucer's misprision of the *Commentary*, the issue of the common

profit is reduced from an official matter of serving one's state in the field of politics to the baser question of one of a group of birds choosing their mates.

When the dreamer narrator comes into the presence and Nature and begins talking to her, he goes on to call her the vicar of god, where birds were gathered all around her waiting to hear what she has to say and hear her judgment so they could choose their mates, just as Alain, in the *Complaint* describes her:

And right as Aleyn in the Pleynt of Kinde  
Devyseth Nature of aray and face,  
In swich aray men might hir there finde.  
This noble emperesse, ful of grace,  
Bad every foul to take his owne place  
As they were wont alwey fro yeer to yere,  
Seynt Valentynes day, to stonden there. (*Parliament* line 316-322)

The dreamer narrator then goes on to describe how all of the birds in the presence of Nature naturally come to sit around her according to their station as they are accustomed to; from the birds of prey, the smaller birds that eat worms, the water-fowls, to the birds that eat seeds (*Parliament* lines 323-370). From line 372-665, all of the birds gather to choose their mates according to Nature's consent, and since the highest order bird goes first, Nature stands holding a formel eagle and tells the royal tercel eagle that he can make his choice for whom he wants to mate with depending on whom he loves most. The royal tercel eagle ends up competing with two tercel eagles of lower order for the formel eagles's hand and Nature does nothing to stop this despite her first saying that the first choice goes to the royal tercel eagle. Accordingly, a parliament is formed between the birds— who have grown impatient and want to go choose their own mate—where they argue the matter out to no avail, and Nature stands idly by, helpless to get them to make the right decision. This situation mimics the difficult situation Richard II had with Anne of Bohemia and her other two suitors. Chaucer indicates

clearly here, that those two suitors could not possibly win Anne's hand considering their inferiority to him in status. Whereas the common profit would be for the birds to allow the royal tercel bird that deserves the formel eagle to have her, so they can move on with their mating, instead, everyone's time is wasted and much tension is built up between the community of birds before Nature delegates the decision and ultimately postpones solving the matter for another year. Ironically, Nature goes against her own nature in not insisting that the royal tercel mate with the formel tercel immediately. Instead, Nature abdicates all responsibility.

The dilemma that occurs between the birds is very much because Nature herself is much changed from the way she had been in the *Complaint*; she no longer has the same philosophical gusto and reasoning skills, and is incapable of keeping order in her own garden. While all the birds argue as to who deserves the formel eagle, Nature indicates that if she were Reason, she would council the formel eagle to take the royal tercel. Nature says to the formel eagle, "If I were Reson, than wolde I/ Counseyle yow the royal tercel take. . . That to yow ought to been a suffisaunce" (*Parliament* lines 632-633, 638). Nature's justification for being unable to direct the birds behavior to the "comun profit" is that she is not Reason, and that had she been, she would have been able to teach the formel eagle that her best choice in a mate would be the royal tercel, rather than allow her to make her own choice after a year's time, especially having already wasted everyone's time up to that point. After Chaucer's transformation of the figure of Nature as seen in the *Complaint*, Nature in the *Parliament*, is incapable of performing the necessary authoritative role that she had performed in Alain's *Complaint*, since here, she is seen to lack didactic argumentative skills, and her general abilities to persuade. Hence, Nature is unable to force the eagles to mate and behave

according to their nature, or guide the birds to a state of peace by solving the matter. All the birds remain in dispute over who should get the formel eagle's hand, and are in great distress for a long duration till Nature postpones solving the matter by delegating the decision on to the formel eagle, and willingly giving her a year to make up her mind. By conceding to the formel eagle's request to take her time for another whole year till she can make her choice, clearly goes against Nature's own wishes. Yet Nature appears as if helpless to stop her. While the garden the dreamer narrator walks into looks like a paradise, the birds cannot enjoy their earthly bliss, since the dream authority does not allow the parliament to reach a consensus together. As was indicated in the dreamer narrator's version of the *Commentary* fragment, "comun profit" must be achieved to attain this earthly bliss. Yet regardless of the evident disharmony of the natural order, at the end of the poem, all of the birds ironically begin to sing a roundel about the joys of summer, in praise of Nature, at the end of the dream, and fly away in happiness. This ignorant compliance with the state of things as dictated by the false prophets that guide the characters within the dream world is not something the dreamer narrator wants to be part of. Unlike the birds that leave happily, the dreamer narrator leaves the dream scene dissatisfied.

### ***The Consolation of Philosophy***

The fragments of the *Commentary* and the *Complaint* in the *Parliament*, function very much like the fragment of *The Metamorphoses* in the *Duchess* in mirroring the content of the dream scenario. Furthermore, these fragments are recombined alongside the fragments of the *Consolation* and the *Rose*; the two texts that most influenced Chaucer's dream trio. The influence of the *Consolation* can be seen in

the fragment before the narrator's entry into the transitional dream frame and after the fragment where he provides his version of Macrobius's *Commentary*, written by "Tullius of the dreame of Scipioun." As mentioned prior, this fragment is composed of the dreamer narrator's simple assertion, that he possessed what he did not desire, and did not possess what he actually did yearn for: "For bothe I hadde thing which that I nolde and eek I ne hadde that thing that I wolde" (*Parliament* lines 90-91). These lines are placed before the dreamer narrator falls asleep and is visited by Affrican in his dream. This fact would lead the readers to assume that Affrican would be the one to reconcile this great philosophical conundrum to the dreamer narrator in his dream. However, as was previously disclosed, Affrican abandons the dreamer narrator in the garden, even though Affrican had promised the dreamer narrator the reward of material about love to write about for reading his book. Once they reach the garden gate, the narrator is afraid to go in, but Affrican thrusts him in after he explains to the dreamer narrator that he has nothing to fear, abandoning him instantaneously. One of the main reasons why the dreamer narrator cannot gain profitable material is because he does not have the proper guidance from the dream authority Affrican.

The dreamer narrator remains a spectator within the remainder of the dream while observing a group of birds monitored by Nature, in what turns out a chaotic atmosphere. While it is clear to the reader that one must "loveth comun profit" so that one may "unto a blissful place wende" and clearly the birds the dreamer narrator's encounters in his dream are very much interested in their own selfish concerns, none of them seemed to love the "comun profit" and the garden they resided in was nowhere near blissful (*Parliament* lines 47, 48). And Nature, the alternative contestant for a dream authority figure, is unable to establish order, or teach the parliament of birds to



act in accordance to the “comun profit”, while she herself is meant to ascertain order in what is supposed to be a paradise by making sure everyone is working for the “comun profit” of all, she rather delegates authority over to a formel tercel, and meanwhile the dreamer had to endure watching the events of this chaotic garden where all the birds do is make a racket of noise.

Affrican fails to provide the dreamer narrator with a vision in his dream of how working for the “comun profit” can allow one to find bliss. In that sense, the authority figures Affrican and Nature from the *Commentary* and the *Complaint* respectively, were not competent enough to provide the dreamer narrator with the writing material he was first promised prior to the dream. Likewise, any blame for the disjunctures found within the dream poem can be placed on the dream guide figures that are unable to play out their role properly. These figures find their origins in the Latin and French texts of Chaucer’s Latin and French literary predecessors, but within a text of the English vernacular, these dream guides lose their potency. While what the dreamer narrator really desires when he reads old books like “Tullius of the dreame of Scipioun” is inspiration so he can have material to write about in the English vernacular, he is left searching through his books for reading material that would be of more benefit to him.

### ***The Dreamer Narrator Poet***

Critical to Chaucer’s authorial performance in this second stage of author building, is of course the topic of writing and being a writer. Unlike the *Duchess*, where this topic of the dreamer narrator being a writer is only referenced at the very end of the dream poem, in the *Parliament*, the fact that the dreamer narrator is a writer is brought to our attention from the very beginning of the poem. While we are constantly reminded

that the dreamer narrator narrates his dream experience in rhyme after having had it, he simultaneously translates “Tullius of the dreame of Scipioun” within the retelling of his dream poem. He goes on to explain that he to want to improve his “craft”, or writing abilities, indicating that this is something that takes time. He says, “[T]he craft so long to lerne” (*Parliament* line 1). Yet he also indicates that it could be love itself that is the “craft” which takes a long time to learn, this hints the upcoming theme of his dream. Writing and loving become intermingled as they are both in a sense compared to a craft. We are reminded at this moment that the dreamer narrator, before telling his dream narrative, gives an invocation to “Cytherea,” or Venus, whom he claims sends him this dream through Affrican, and thus asks her help in composing his dream and putting it to rhyme. He says:

Citherea, thou blisful lady swete  
That with thy frybron dauntest who thee lest  
And madest me this sweven for to mete,  
Be thou my help in this, ofr thou myst best;  
As wisely as I sawe thee north-north-west,  
Whan I began my sweven for to wryte,  
So yif me might to ryme and endyte! (*Parliament* 113-119)

The fact that Venus herself is supposed to be behind the dreamer narrator’s dream is another example of a failed authority figure; in this sense, Venus’s inability to gift the dreamer narrator with a dream that has a successful love story as its plot. Although love remains one of the primal themes of the dream scenario, it remains evident that the theme of love is what ties the *Parliament* to the *Rose*. Accordingly, I will explore the many fragments Chaucer has translated from the *Rose* text for the means of rhetorical invention.

### *The Romance of the Rose*

We see translated fragments from Guillaume de Lorris's the *Rose* in parts of Chaucer's description of the garden that Affrican leads the dreamer narrator to in the *Parliament*. From lines 183-315, the dreamer narrator introduces us to the world of the garden that very much resembles the structured paradise-like garden of the *Rose*, all walled up from the world, but always day and full of joy, exhibiting natural beauty, flowery shrubbery, birds and friendly animals, and many of the personified figures of the courtly world of Amans. Mixed into this world is the temple of Venus the goddess of love herself.<sup>19</sup> Unlike Amans however, the dreamer narrator in the *Rose*, the dreamer narrator of the *Parliament* is considered to be one not involved in the affairs of love, a lesson which he learned after overcoming his love sickness in the *Duchess*. Hence, the dreamer narrator and is not addressed by any personified figures enticing him to choose a mate, nor is he lead by an authoritative figure to make any particular conclusions within his dream vision, whether they are philosophical conclusions, or any other kind for that matter. The dreamer narrator makes it clear that it is the topic of love, which he has read about in books, similarly interests him particularly for writing, but as in the *Duchess*, the dreamer narrator of the *Parliament* also attaches the topic of love to that of philosophy and "new science". He says: "Th'assay so hard, so sharp the conquering, the dredful joy alwey that slit so yerne, al this mene I by Love ... For al be that I knowe nat Love in dede ne wot how that he quyeth folk hir hyre, yet happeth me ful ofte in bookes rede of his miracles and his cruel yre" (*Parliament* lines 2-4, 8-11). I conclude that, through the dreamer narrator's dream experience, the dreamer gets a very limited

---

<sup>19</sup> According to the *Dream Visions Norton Critical Edition* on page 102 footnote 3, the temple of Venus is taken from Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Teseide* (Book of Theseus).

and unsatisfying perspective of love to write about; it is a selfish love that does not suit the dreamer narrator's philosophical interests. The lack of a real authority figure worthy of bringing on such a didactic lesson about philosophical and spiritual matters with regards to what real spiritual love, is missing from his dream. This is why the birds run amuck, and this is why the dreamer narrator wakes up looking for reading material that would be of more use to him in lines 695-699.

## Conclusion

The aforementioned conflicts actually tie in with Chaucer's objective of using the dreamer narrator to begin with. Yet the growth of the author figure has still not been finalized, since Chaucer does not yet completely abandoned or rejected the use of dream conventions such as the authoritative dream guide in the *Parliament*. Conversely, these conflicts, according to the editors of the *Norton Critical Edition*, have led critics mostly to place the *Parliament* after the *House* in the chronology of Chaucerian writing, since they find it more complex to deal with because of its multitude of themes on writing, love, time, politics, etc:

The critics, in response, while agreeing that the *Parliament* presents a puzzle, have reached little consensus about its solution or even about whether it finally brings concord to the different elements it includes. Thus, essays about the *Parliament*, for much of its critical history, have had titles like "The Harmony of Chaucer's *Parliament*," "The Harmony of Chaucer's *Parliament*: Dissonant Voice," "Antithesis as the Principle of Design in the *Parlement of Foules*," "The Question of Unity and the *Parlement of Foules*," and many others along similar lines. (Norton Critical Edition 95-96)<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> See the bibliographic section in the *Dream Visions Norton Critical Edition* on page 396 for further information.

I would claim that these disjunctures, rather than being faults in Chaucer's writing, are key to my understanding of the poems. The dream Affrican gives the dreamer narrator does not prove as useful as had been expected, and we are reminded of his Boethian reiteration before relating the dream, that he had the thing he didn't ask for, but didn't have the thing he wanted. In this sense, we are reminded of the process a writer goes through in reconciling the information he takes from other authors to inspire him, with information he can invent on his own, either from his imagination or experience. Yet here, at the end of the dream scenario, just like the beginning, the dreamer narrator claims to be left empty handed despite having reiterated his whole dream narrative after having had it. The fact that Chaucer's his dreamer narrator desires to compose something better at the end of his dream narrative brings us next to the *House* where Chaucer breaks even more with convention, and where again, Chaucer will criticize, albeit more explicitly, the convention of the dream guide and the non fluid use of the dream form as either being a philosophical vision or a love vision rather than both—the method implemented by his literary auctores— and indicate the lack of functionality of these rigid conventions through the experiences of his dreamer narrator poet, who by this last dream, will reveal his name and his more confident authorial identity.

## CHAPTER THREE: *THE HOUSE OF FAME*

### Introduction

[The House of Fame] is a highly intellectual and literary poetic performance, skeptical if not lighthearted in tone. According to [A.J. Minnis]: ‘[This] most bookish of Chaucer’s books’ puts Chaucer’s learning on display. . . [H]e demonstrates a wide-ranging knowledge of classical and medieval literary traditions. . . Although the poem wears its learning lightly. . . [I]t is an ambitious and bravura demonstration of its author’s increasing confidence in his craft. (*Norton Critical Edition* 39)

I will show how in this dream vision, more so than in the previous two in the trio, Chaucer utilizes translation and compilation strategies, in an unconventional, highly original manner. I will also highlight his attempt to complete his authorial performance in this last dream poem within the dream sequence. I apply William’s statement that compares the *Duchess* with the *House* to my theory about Chaucer’s use of invention: “[In] The Dream Visions: Chaucer uses the House of Fame . . . to make a declaration of literary independence. In the *Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer was content to translate and imitate literary sources; in the *House of Fame*, he calls these authorities into question” (156). While I have already provided evidence indicating that Chaucer’s methods of translation, compilation, misprision, and bricolage, Williams is correct in his claim that, more than the other two earlier poems, the narrative of the *House* self-consciously depicts an image of an author creating a starker break with the literary conventions of his predecessors. In the *House*, Chaucer incorporates four classical texts; Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides*, as well as Boethius’ the *Consolation*, and one medieval text Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun’s the *Rose* into his own narratological dream framework. As in the previous chapters, these fragments are recontextualized as Chaucer claims them as his own. As an example, one of the reasons

that Chaucer tries to claim credit for his work in the *Prologue* of the compilation, *The Legend of Good Women*, Copeland indicates, is because Chaucer's *Prologue*—unlike the *Ovide Moralise*, where Ovid gives credit to the auctores— is indicative not only of compilational methods, but particularly secondary translation:

Although the *Ovide Moralise* has a prologue that is auto referential. . . [t]he *Ovide moralise* does not go so far in its effacement of Ovid as to produce a *vita* or any personal narrative of the translator himself. In relative terms, the vernacular exegete has not emerged from behind the self-effacing shadows of instrumental or supplementary role. But in Chaucer's *Prologue* to his exegetical translations of Ovidian and other classical texts, the focus is plainly directed to the translator as *auctor* whose own personal experience (the comic fiction of his love of daisies, his dream, the accusation of moral transgression in his earlier literary career is the direct cause of the present text. Here we have a concrete measure of the difference between primary and secondary translation. (Copeland 194)

However, through his secondary translations found within the three dream poems, Chaucer has been doing exactly that: incorporating his translations into a new narrative context that tells the experiences of the dreamer narrator of the dream trio; but this is especially seen with the *House* through the experience of his dreamer narrator Geoffrey. In this dream, I will show how Chaucer exploits various authorial postures in a performance. As was done in the *Duchess* and the *Parliament*, Chaucer uses the narratological framework of the dreamer narrator's dream experience as a canvas for bricolage. The *House* becomes a mosaic where an assemblage of frames and tiny fragments is pieced together within the context of the dreamer narrator's narrative. Geoffrey, a poet and reader of literature in his own right, mitigates through a dream world that brings him face to face with literary material created by past authorities which he narrates back to his readers in rhyme. Chaucer's translation of these aforementioned literary works shortens and breaks them down. The changes made

within these texts become a clear indication of intentional misreading for the purpose of invention, where the interpretive meaning of Chaucer's translations is dictated by the plot of the dream scenario that the dreamer narrator has. The dreamer's narrative experience is what influences Geoffrey to make the changes that he does in the works of the literary auctores that he chooses to recontextualize in a way that suits his own literary agenda. Charting the dreamer poet's interaction with ancient texts and his struggle to narrate them to "every maner man that Englissh understonde can"—in other words, his English audience—which ultimately provides a clear image of the process a medieval author has to undergo in creating his own material from what he has at hand within the translingual network that existed (*House* lines 509-510).

### **The Book Frame**

The *House* is the site of a multitude of translated texts woven in a tapestry framed by the dream narrator's dream vision, making it harder to distinguish one literary fragment from another, let alone think "intertextually," recalling the original texts and contexts. In this respect, the *House* most clearly interrogates the process of writing and the issue of literary authenticity and intention. In this dream vision, the dreamer narrator is described, more than ever, as a man that does not care for earthly experiences such as love, but rather chooses to live the life of a hermit. As a dedicated writer, he is described as toiling away at his art. We learn this information about the dreamer narrator from what the eagle dream guide actually says to Geoffrey when describing him:

. . .Thou hast no tydinges



Of Loves fold, if they be glade,  
 Ne of nought ells that God made;  
 And nought only fro fer contre  
 That ther no tyding cometh to thee  
 .....  
 In stede of reste and newe things,  
 Thou gost hoom to thy hous anoon;  
 And, also domb as any stoon,  
 Thou sittest at another booke  
 Til fully dasweed is thy looke and livest thus as an hermyte... (*House* lines 644-648, 654-659)

Interestingly enough, the dreamer narrator reveals himself to be a writer through his first invocation to a muse, a common epic style used by literary auctores such as the ancient and Greek poets like Homer, or Virgil.<sup>21</sup> One of the first steps that the dreamer narrator does, is reconstruct a fragment from Macrobius's *Commentary* where Macrobius gives a list of the causes and types of dreams. However, in this recomposition, the dreamer narrator initially claims ignorance on what causes different dreams, indicating that he does not know the types of dreams, nor their significance, or the time that certain types of dreams are had. He says:

For it is wonder, by the roode,  
 To my with what causeth swevenes  
 .....  
 . . . I certainly  
 Ne can hem nought, ne never thinke  
 Too besily my wit to swinke  
 To knowe of hir signifiaunce  
 The gendres, neither the distaunce  
 Of tymes of hem. . . (*House* lines 2-3, 14-19)

The dreamer narrator does claim to be aware that traditionally speaking dream theory distinguishes good and bad ways of interpreting dreams, and that this has very much to do with the intentionality of the interpreter. Hence, the dreamer narrator's occupation

---

<sup>21</sup> Aeneid Book 1 lines 1-11

with the topic of intention is justified, in that it draws the reader's attention towards Chaucer's game of interpretation. The dreamer narrator first indicates that he wants to have a good dream. He says "God turne us every drem to goode!" (*House* line 1) As a narrator poet, this becomes a wish to have material to write. The dreamer narrator continues by making an invocation to the god of sleep to allow him to relate his dream experience properly, and prays that good tidings befall those who understand his dream, and bad tidings fall on those that don't. He says:

I wol make invocacioun  
 With special devocioun  
 Unot the god of slep anoon  
 .....  
 And to this god tha ti of rede  
 Prey I that he wol me spede  
 My sweven for tot elle aright  
 .....  
 And sende hem al that may hem plese  
 That take it wel and scorne it nought  
 Ne it misdemen in hir thought  
 Thurgh malicious entencioun.  
 And whoso, thurgh presumpcoun  
 Or hate or scorne or thurgh envye,  
 Dispyt or jape or vilanye,  
 Misdeme it, preye I Jesus God  
 .....  
 That every harm that any man  
 Hath had, sith the world began  
 Befalle him... (*House* lines 67-69, 77-79, 90-97, 99-101)

Accordingly, the narrator's stress on the importance of his readers not misinterpreting or misrepresenting his work through their bad intentions, is indicative of what the dreamer narrator actually does with the books he interpolates into the *House*. The dreamer narrator's intentional misuse of these authoritative books, allows him to also borrow from their literary authority, and confer that authority on to his own work and himself, which he intends to impose over an English audience in the English vernacular. While

there is no book that the dreamer narrator reads before he falls asleep, like in the *Duchess* and the *Parliament*, fragments from three books, other than the *Rose* and the *Consolation* are pieced together within each frame, and assembled within the compilational frame of the *House*. So far, the dreamer makes it clear that the value of the tale of his dream is great, and emphasizes how important it is for him to be able to relate it well. After this first invocation, the narrator pieces together fragments of the *Aenied*, *Metamorhoses*, and *Heroides* which I will discuss in detail later in on the chapter after I discuss the dreamer narrator's second invocation.

After his second invocation, the dreamer narrator relates the second segment of his dream composed of fragments taken mainly from the *Consolation* and the *Rose*. But the second invocation is of key significance itself. Chaucer depicts the dreamer narrator as a budding English writer, making many significant references in his invocation to his writing skills and the process of writing, including the importance of the English language with respect to his dream narrative. The dreamer narrator's invocation proceeds as follows:

Now herkneþ, every maner man  
That Engliſsh underſtonde can,  
And liſteth of my drem to lere;  
For now at erſte ſhul ye here  
So ſely an aviſioun,  
That Iſaye, ne Scipioun,  
Ne King Nabugodonosor,  
Phoro, Turnus, ne Elcanor,  
Ne mette ſwich a drem as this!  
Now fiare bliſſful, O Cipriſ,  
So be my favour at this tyme!  
And ye, me to endyte and ryme  
Helpeth . . .  
O thought that wroot al that I mette,  
And in the treſorie it ſhette  
Of my brayn, now ſhal men ſee  
If nay vertu in thee be

To tellen al my drem aright;  
Now kythe thyn enyne and might. (*House* lines 509-528 )

The dreamer narrator begins his invocation by saying that he wants those who speak English to pay close attention to what he will relate in his dream, as the incidents that he will unfold are to be disclosed for the first time ever. In the second half of his invocation, the dreamer first asks Venus to allow him to put his dream in rhyme in a way that shows talent and imaginative skill. As in the previous two dream visions, the emphasis on the English language is of significance with regards to the fact that the dreamer narrator is going to narrate stories from books he gathered from the translingual networks of the late Middle Ages. Here the dreamer narrator utilizes the convention of name dropping so he may associate himself with the auctores of the dream visions of the past, yet to distinguish himself from them as well, since he places emphasis on the originality of his tale, and claims that none of those aforementioned auctores had had a dream such as his:

. . . [Chaucer] wished to use the names of the *auctores*, to ‘cash in’ on their antiquity and *auctoritas*. Thus he created the illusion that his ‘storie’ was indeed ‘ancient’, and established himself as the objective historian who sought to describe how certain pagans had lived and loved. (Minnis 210)

Chaucer used apostrophe, by which is meant the explicit reference to prominent individuals at strategic points within his works (Smallwood 433). Through the dream narrator, Chaucer uses this compilers method of name dropping intermittently in the *House*, more than he does in the *Duchess* and the *Parliament*. “Chaucer repeatedly reminds us of all the aspiring visionaries of literary, mythological, and biblical history to whom he should *not* be compared” (*Norton Critical Edition* 40). Chaucer has his dreamer narrator place emphasis on the originality of the tale he will relate, mentioning

that no famous person ever had a dream such as his. Distinguishing himself from writers of the past is significant, and is also indicative of how he will distinguish the fragments he has taken from their writing after he translates and recontextualizes them in the dreamer narrator's dream narrative.

While the narrator says that he does not have any opinion on the matter of dreams, he does wish that everyone is given a good dream and brags another time that no one has ever had a dream as wonderful as he had on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, which he proceeds to give details of. He says:

For I of noon opinioun  
Nil as now make mencioun,  
But only that the holy roode  
Turne us every drem to goode!  
For never, sith that I was born  
Ne no man ells me biforn,  
Mette, I trowe stedfastly,  
So wonderful a drem as I  
The tenthe day now of Decembre,  
The which, as I can now remember,  
I wol yow tellen every dele. (*House* lines 55-65)

Within his dream, the dreamer narrator is told by the golden eagle he encounters that he has been given this dream so that he may have tidings of love to write about as a gift for serving Venus and Cupid so loyally in his writing ("bookes, songes, dytees, in ryme or ells in cadence") throughout the years (*House* lines 622). Accordingly, since he had not yet been rewarded, this is the time that he finally will be recompensed by being given different bits of news about true love to use as material in his stories that he could write about. The eagle says the following to the dreamer narrator:

[T]hou so longe trewely  
Hast served so ententifly  
His blinde newew Cupido

And faire Venus also,  
 Withoute guerdoun ever yit,  
 And nevertheless has set thy wit  
 .....  
 To make bookes, songes, dytees,  
 In ryme or ells in cadence,  
 As thou best canst in reverence  
 Of Love and his servants eke  
 .....  
 And paynest thee to preyse his art  
 .....  
 And nought him nor his folk despysed  
 Although thou mayst go in the daunce  
 Of hem that him list nat avaunce  
 .....  
 And therfor Joves, thurgh his grace,  
 Wol that I bere thee to a place  
 Which that hight the House of Fame  
 .....  
 So that tough wolt be of good chere.  
 For truste wel that thou shalt here  
 .....  
 Mo wonder thinges, dar I leye,  
 Of Loves folke mo tydinges. (*House* lines 615-620, 621-625, 627, 638-640, 661-663, 671-672, 674-675)

While the theme of love is crucial in an analysis of the *House*, many writers have tried to make this the sole occupation in finding a coherent meaning behind what appears as a disjointed dream atmosphere.<sup>22</sup> According to Lynch, the editor of the *Norton Critical Edition*:

[T]he theme of love is more intermittent than consistently developed, and there is certainly no sustained attempt to follow earlier medieval authors like Alain de Lille, Jean de Meun, or Dante in building a serious philosophical discussion on the framework of earthly love. (*Dream Vision* 40)

---

<sup>22</sup> Dickerson, Inskip. "Chaucer's House of Fame: A Skeptical Epistemology of Love". *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Vol. 18, No. 2, An Issue Devoted to the Medieval Period and the Eighteenth Century (SUMMER 1976), pp. 171-183.

The idea of coherence has been a dilemma for many critics in trying to understand the message behind the *House*, or even in trying to link it to the earlier two poems in the dream sequence; critics' opinions diverge from my argument even with regards to the ending of the poem and the man of great authority, and even with regards to the narrator, which many label as obtuse.<sup>23</sup> In my argument, what unifies the poem is the writers quest at finding material for composition and the actual depiction of the writing process and the dreamer narrator's general tinkering with dream conventions all together. Instead of finding positive tidings of love as the dreamer narrator had been promised by Venus, the dreamer narrator finds the following: ". . . [A] sandy desert and an icy palace rather than a lush garden, and the lore and science provided by the dream guide. . ." (*Norton Critical Edition* 40)<sup>24</sup> Hence, we get a hint from the start that the dreamer narrator's dream will not bring forth any fruitful writing material with regards to the topic of love. The date in which the dreamer has his dream is also indicative of this fact, since he has the dream on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December rather than springtime or the month of May, as was the case in the *Rose*, being the love vision *par excellence*. So according to dream conventions, the setting of the dream that the narrator has, is not at all conducive to the topic the narrator hopes to gather information about. Accordingly,

---

<sup>23</sup> The following is an example of one critic that thinks the *House* is not finished: Terrell, Katherine H. "Reallocation of Hermeneutic Authority in Chaucer's 'House of Fame'." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1997), pp. 279-290. The following are examples of critics that think the narrator is obtuse: David, Alfred. "Literary Satire in the House of Fame." *PMLA*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (Sep., 1960), pp. 333-339. Bevington, David M. "The Obtuse Narrator in Chaucer's House of Fame." *Speculum*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Apr., 1961), pp. 288-298. The following critics have varying opinions on who the man of great authority is at the end of the poem: Trefzger, Pat. "The 'Man of Gret Auctorite' in Chaucer's 'House of Fame'." *Modern Philology*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (Nov., 1975), pp. 157-16. Ruggier, Paul G. "The Unity of Chaucer's *House of Fame*." *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Jan., 1953), pp. 16-29.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Lynch's introduction to the *House*.

throughout the dream narrative, the dreamer narrator is faced with the news of false lovers that betray their loved ones for Fame. While I will focus in detail about the tale of Aeneas's betrayal of Dido, the other false lovers and those they betrayed are discussed in lines 388-426.

### **The *Aeneid* vs. *Heroides***

The dreamer narrator takes up half of the dream narrative in establishing this background about the varying bits of news about false lovers that had betrayed their partners for fame. Eventually, he leads up to the scene where the unreliable dream authority, Fame, is portrayed in her court performing her job of giving off arbitrary favors—to many that don't deserve it. The bits of news narrated by the dreamer, imply that as authorities on love, and authoritative figures within the dream scenario, Venus, Cupid, and the eagle fail in their endeavor of endowing the dreamer with the gift of what should have been tidings about love rather than false lovers. To reflect this failure on the part of these personified figures, the dreamer narrator mitigates between bits and pieces of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides* to create his own nuanced version of the Aeneas-Dido story. Interestingly enough, like Virgil's *Aeneid*, the dreamer narrator sees Venus and her temple in his dream and describes it as he had done in the *Parliament*. However, in the dreamer narrator's version, the dreamer narrator reinvents Virgil's depiction of Venus as a goddess that heals and takes action, especially in the matters of love (*House* 128-139).<sup>25</sup> The goddess Venus that is meant to talk about true love and possibly say something significant to the dreamer narrator about

---

<sup>25</sup> Virgil's *Aeneid* (i.e. Book I when Venus protects Aeneas).



true love, as she did Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*, just lays there half-naked and useless. The fact that the dreamer narrator's depiction of Venus in the *House* is of this passive figure, is indicative of the dreamer narrator's refutation of her presence as an authority figure on love in the dream, and her ability to provide some sort of didactic lesson.

In the fragments that contain the story of Aeneas (whom Chaucer names as "Eneas") and Dido, Chaucer includes a fragment about Aeneas as a national hero similar to the one in the *Aeneid*, but he also includes a fragment from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—which depicts the tale of Dido and Aeneas from Dido's perspective—and from Ovid's *Heroides*—which is essentially about women lamenting over their betrayal by the men they love, and simultaneously relates the letter Dido writes to Aeneas in Epistle 7 to show that he sympathizes with Dido's lot. Olsson has observed the same phenomenon in Gower's *Confessio*, pointing out how fragment binding can function within a text to create nuance— if that is the intention of the compiler— especially when there are opposing perspectives about a particular issue, as there is between the fragments Chaucer binds together regarding the Aeneas-Dido story:

The form of the *compilatio* is suited to this imaginative play or "game," for it does not allow us to settle prematurely into a superficially "correct" judgment. The conflict is enriched, moreover, because Gower does not merely oppose doctrine to doctrine, but also frames each opinion in a structure of perception that lends to that opinion an appearance of truth. It is now also important to note that these structures are not merely the formal divisions of the *Confessio*, but also frames of perception generated within and across arguments. (Olsson 17)

Essentially, both works that Chaucer incorporates fragments from, show Aeneas as a false lover who betrays Dido. However, in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas' treatment of Dido is justified, since Virgil places emphasis on Aeneas's duty towards his mother land.

While Virgil's *Aeneid* however, describes Dido's death in detail (4.474-705), this part is left out by Chaucer who actually brings Dido back from the dead in the dream narrative. She is a living, speaking woman engaging in a dialogue with the dreamer narrator "Geffrey" (*House* line 729). In Chaucer's recomposition of the tale through his dreamer's narration, Dido explains how she has been wronged by her lover "Eneas" and the goddess Fame. (*House* lines 300-374) Since "Eneas" was persuaded by Venus to betray Dido in Virgil's tale for the sake of his imperial mission, the dreamer narrator's own version of the tale not only indicates his sympathy with Dido, but his lack of allegiance to Venus, and Fame for that matter. The dreamer narrator then explains that there is a lot more that Dido says about her story, but that he does not have the time to narrate it. He then uses the rhetorical move of the compiler, the "'disavowal of responsibility' trope", by referencing the auctores, Virgil and Ovid, who wrote earlier versions of Dido's tale (Minnis 198). The dreamer narrator says the following:

. . . [A]ll the maner how she dyde,  
 And al the words that she seyde,  
 Whoso to knowe it hath purpose,  
 Reed Virgile in Eneidos,  
 Or the Epistle of Ovyde  
 What that she wroot er tat she dyde,  
 And nere it too long to endyte,  
 By God, I wolde it here wryte. (*House* 375-382)

We come to find Dido complain regarding how Fame has treated her unfairly with regards to the events that ended her relationship with Aeneas, and she denounces "wikke Fame" (349) for unfairly ruining her reputation, in the same way Boethius renounces wicked Fortune for her unfair ways. (*House* line 345-363) Boethius says:

. . .Whi suffrest pou pat slid-  
 yng fortune turnep to grete vtter chaungynges of pinges.

So pat anoious peyne pat scholde duelly punisshe fel-  
 Ouns punissitȝ innocentȝ. And folk of wikked[e]  
 Maneres sitten in heize chaiers. and anoienge folk  
 Treden and pat vnryȝtfully in pe nekkes of holy men.  
 And virtue clere and schynyng naturely I shid in  
 dirke dirkenesses. And pe ryȝtful man berip pe blame  
 and pe peyne of pe felowne. . .  
 . . . we men pat ben nat a  
 Foule party but a faire party of so grete a werke we  
 Ben turmentid in pe see of fortune. (*Boece* lines 335, 543-545)

Ironically, the precedence of an unruly Fame in this poem, and the fact that there is no Lady Philosophy figure to create a contrast of opinion, is reflective of Chaucer's criticism of the value of personified figures of authority in bringing about constructive outcomes within the dream scenario.

In the dream narrator's version, Virgil's story of a national hero becomes a story of a man betraying his love. "Eneas's" story as an unfaithful lover along with Fame's unfair administering of renown, tarnish the name of the unfortunate betrayed woman Dido. The *House* comes to show that there exist no real happy tidings of love because of the unfair way Fame works in tarnishing the name of those who are good lovers and giving renown to those who don't deserve it. Chaucer places emphasis on how Dido, a true lover, had her name tarnished by Fame, while "Eneas", an untrue lover, was given renown for being a hero to his land. The dreamer narrator relates the following of loyal and honest Dido, and Aeneas betrayal of her:

. . . [S]he . . .  
 Made of him shortly, at o word,  
 Her lyf, hir love, hir luste, hir lord,  
 And dide of him al the reverence  
 And leyde on him al dispence  
 That any woman might do,  
 Weninge it had al be so  
 As he hir swoor; and hereby demed

That he was good, for he swich semed.  
Allas, what harm doth apparence  
Whan it is fals in existence!  
Fo he to hir a traitour was,  
Wherfor she slow hirself, allas! (*House* 256-268)

Ultimately, by juxtaposing Ovid and Virgil's take on the of Aeneas and Dido story, Chaucer brazenly indicates that neither alone offers a whole or verifiable account, hence undermining them all. In fact it is Chaucer's dream compilation that can present the varying perspectives.

### ***The Consolation of Philosophy***

As in the *Duchess* and the *Parliament*, the *House* takes on the philosophical position of denouncing earthly concerns. As Cooper has argued, I also find that there is an extensive influence of the *Consolation* in the *House* which attests for its dating after the *Parliament*, especially with regards to Chaucer's translation the *Boece* (*Norton Critical Edition* 42).<sup>26</sup> However, I find that it is in fact the *Boece* that was at this point the source text that Chaucer referenced having practically finished it by this time. A fragment of the *Boece* is seen next after the dreamer narrator's interlude with Venus. In this next transition frame, the dreamer finds himself in isolation all alone in a desert. This scene is translated and recontextualized through a creative misreading from the scene when Lady Philosophy claims Boethius was in spiritual exile. In the dream scenario, a golden eagle coming in as a dream guide, lifts the dreamer narrator up high, above the clouds, so he can reach the place where he can get what he is looking for,

---

<sup>26</sup> Helen Cooper, "The Four Last Things in Dante and Chaucer: Hugolino and the House of Rumour," *New Medieval Literatures* 3 (1999): 59.

reminding us of when Lady Philosophy tells Boethius that she is going to dispel the clouds around his eyes, and remove those clouds of ignorance from his eyes, so he can see clearly; which in the *Boece*, goes as follows:

. . . He hap a litel  
forgeten hym self. But certis he sehal lygtly remembren  
hym self. 3if so be pat he hap knowen me or now.  
and pat he may so done I wil wipe a litel hys eyen.  
pat ben derked by pe cloude of mortel pinges These  
words seide sehe.and wip pe lappe of hir garment  
yplitid in a frounce sche dried[e] myn eyen pat were  
ful of pe wawes of my wepynges. . .  
Pus when pat nyzt was discussed and chased away.  
derknesses foreleften me. And to myn eyen repeyre  
a3eyne her frste strenkep. And ryzt by ensample as  
pe sonne is hid when pe sterres ben clusted. Pat is to  
sey when sterres ben eouered wip cloudes by a swifte  
wynde . . . (*Boece* lines 141-156)

In the *House*, we are given an image of the dreamer narrator in the clutches of the golden eagle being taken up higher and higher into the air. Chaucer has the dreamer narrator actually reference his own work when he says:

Thought I upon Boece,  
that wryt, 'A thought may flee so hye  
with fethres of philosophye  
to passen everich element;  
and whan he hath so fer y-went,  
than may be seen behind his bak  
Cloud and al that I of spak. (*House* lines 972-978)

These words are actually from Book 4, meter 1 of the *Boece*. Chaucer using his own work as a source text and creating this kind of comparison is highly significant. Not only is Chaucer utilizing in the terms of Copeland primary translation, but also secondary translation for the purpose of rhetorical invention. This fact coincides with Geoffrey's later rejection of Fame's help in attaining renown since Book Two of the

*Boece* centers on Lady Philosophy explaining to Boethius the uselessness and downside of wanting fame and renown.

As the dreamer narrator and the eagle go up on their journey, we find that the *House*, more so than the *Parliament*, and the *Duchess*, comes to show Chaucer's refusal to comply with the dream convention of the authoritative dream guide. The dreamer narrator of the *House* becomes an authority over himself within his dream, as he rejects figures that are supposed to be authorities like the eagle. Geoffrey cares little for what the eagle has to say to him or teach him. When the eagle asks him if he would like to know about the stars, he replies in a derogative manner: "Nay, certeynly. . . right nought. . . for I am now too old" (*House* lines 994-995). Essentially, the dreamer narrator makes it clear that he had every right to reject the authority of the eagle. The golden eagle that is supposed to take the dreamer narrator somewhere to find stories of true love, or at least go on an enlightening journey that would clear his mind and give him a certain truth that he has been looking for, as Lady Philosophy took Boethius metaphorically up above the clouds, actually ends up bringing him to a place of chaos, where Fame rather than Philosophy reins, and eventually, no love tidings are heard. Interestingly enough, the eagle tells Geoffrey that he could know of Fame and her house from his own book. The eagle says, "First shalt thou here wher she dwelleth, and so thyn owne book it telleth..." (*House* lines 711-712) While this could be a reference to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that describes Rumor's house, the Latin *Fama*, Fame's house in the dreamer narrator's dream bears a resemblance, yet he extends his recomposition by also giving a description of Rumor's House as well (*House* 1165-1200, *Metamorphoses*

12.58-93).<sup>27</sup> Hence, Geoffrey's 'owne book' comes to mean literally a book of his own creation, since through rhetorical invention implemented by secondary translation and misprision, such fragments from the *Metamorphoses* have become transformed from what they were in Ovid's book.

### **Fame's Court**

The subversion of convention in Lady Fame's court is seen in the absence of a Lady Philosophy figure that we had expected the eagle to bring Geoffrey to after their spiritual journey above the clouds. While Fortune is silenced in the *Consolation* and was only talked about by Lady Philosophy and cursed by Boethius, in the *House*, Lady Philosophy is not even mentioned all together. Dido's focus on how Fame is the cause of her ruin, coincides with Chaucer's interest in depicting Fame, Fortune's fickle sister and the foil of Lady Philosophy. In fact, Chaucer has his dreamer narrator describe Fame's appearance in a similar light to Lady Philosophy, especially in her ability to seem very tiny or very large at her own will, only to draw a stark contrast in their behavior and character (*House* lines 1364-1376). The dreamer narrator associates Fame with Fortune in his dream by saying that Fame dealt with people in an inconsistent manner like her sister Fortune. He says the following of how people were treated by Fame: "[They] were diversely served, right as hir suster Dame Fortune, Is wont to serven in commune" (*House* lines 1545). After entering Fame's home and seeing the inconsistent manner that she deals with the people that come to her, the dreamer

---

<sup>27</sup> *Dream Visions Norton Critical Edition*, p. 87, n. 8.

narrator rejects the help of Fame when asked by a man inquiring whether Geoffrey was there to gather fame for himself. Geoffrey replies by saying:

Nay, forsooth, frend. . .  
I cam nought hider graunt mercy,  
For no swich cause, by my hede.  
Sufficeth me, as Iwere dede  
That no wight have my name in honde.  
I wot myself best how I stoned;  
For what I drye or what I thinke,  
I wol myself al it drinke,  
Certeyn for the more part  
As ferforth as I can myn art. (*House* lines 1873-1882)

We see the indication here of the dreamer narrator's confidence in his ability to attain renown for his writing skills all on his own, without the help of anyone. Rather than conferring authority on to Fame, the narrator declares that he does not intend to seek meaning in literary or social reputation when he says above "I wot myself best how I stoned". The dreamer narrator finds nothing of interest in Fame's house and expresses frustration with the news he finds in her realm. "Fame, of course, also conveys the contingency and instability of earthly renown. Fame is given characteristics from Virgil's *Aeneid* (4.173-97) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (12.39-63) along with the location of her home. (*Norton Critical Edition* 41) In the dreamer narrator's recomposed fragment about Fame, Geoffrey finds himself in a courtly setting, and interestingly enough, a courtly setting that very much resembles the one from the *Rose*. The courtly setting is put in a negative light as Fame's court is depicted as a chaotic place filled with large crowds of people that were both good and bad, each served a fate arbitrarily that in many cases did not match their worth (*House* 1526-1867). After deciding to walk away from the court of Fame for good, Geoffrey goes on to have a conversation with a friendly man that wants to know what he was doing in the house of



Fame. Geoffrey retorts that he was brought there to hear stories about love and other happy matters, but indicates that his guide had failed him by relaying that the house of Fame has not provided him with any such news. He says:

. . . I stonde here:  
Some newe dydings for to lere  
Som newe thing, I not what,  
Tydinges, other this or that,  
Of love or swiche thinges glad.  
For certeynly he that me made  
To comen hider seyde me  
I shulde bothe here and see,  
In this place, wonder thinges;  
But these be no swiche tydinges  
As I mene of. (*House* lines 1885-1895)

The only law that governs Fame's distribution of renown is that of complete arbitrariness; worth and decency have nothing to do with the reward of good or bad fame, as individuals in precisely equal positions can receive from the goddess opposite results, as her sister Fortune did. (*Duchess* 1544-1548) We find the way that Chaucer blends the depictions of Fame as follows:

If they concur about nothing else, however, Virgil and Ovid provide a vision of Fame herself—her inconstancy, perfidy, and general monstrousness—that is remarkably consistent. They agree, paradoxically, only that there is no authoritative textual basis for agreement—that is, for validation of a unitary truth. And linguistically, Chaucer pushes the rupture even further. In distinguishing between the dwelling of Fame and Rumor, Chaucer draws a contrast that would not have been present in his Latin sources (where the word "Fama" means both "Fame" and "Rumor"). (*Norton Critical Edition* 41-42)

## The House of Rumor

The kind man indicates to Geoffrey that there is a house that would surely allow him to hear of the love stories he is looking for; the house where rumors are brought, identified as the home of Chance (*House* line 1977-1989). Since Geoffrey's dream guide had not been of much assistance to him, Geoffrey takes matters into his own hands and goes to the house of Rumor. Seeing the eagle perched nearby, Geoffrey asks him to wait for him while he goes to check the place out. Only then does the eagle decide to help Geoffrey into the house, telling him it is his duty since Jove gave him a commandment to guide the dreamer narrator to the place where he could hear tidings of love: "Yaf in express commandement, to whiche I am obedient, to further thee with al my might and wise and teche thee aright wher though mayst most tydinges here" (*House* lines 2021-2025). In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Ovid gives a description of Fame's house and a depiction of the "House of Rumor [Latin *Fama*]" (12.39-63) (*Norton Critical Edition* 42). Instead of using this depiction from the *Metamorphoses*, the language Chaucer uses in his description of the house of Rumor is similar to the language Chaucer uses in the *Boece* while translating Book 3, prose 12, lines 154-59 of the *Consolation*; particularly the section that describes Daedalus's House, and gives an analogy that compares it to the infallible strength of philosophical arguments (*Norton Critical Edition* 87).<sup>28</sup> Again, citing his own translation is a great testament of the dreamer narrator's part to making himself an *auctor*, by using his own work as a primary source from which his other works can be derived. Thematically, the presence of the *Boece* is more vivid in the *House* than it is in the *Parliament*. This fact coincides with my argument that the *House* comes after the *Parliament*, unlike what most critics say.

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. note 8 of this chapter.

In Rumor's house, Geoffrey meets Chance, another failed authority figure who does not provide Geoffrey with the tidings of love he wishes to hear. "In the end, the whirling wicker House of Rumor, where the dreamer ends his travels observing the inevitable compounding of truth and falsehood, offers a fitting architectural image of the restless, tentative world of texts that Chaucer represents in his poem." (*Norton Critical Edition* 41) It is after his fruitless experience in Rumor's house that he sees what appears to him as: "[A] man of greet auctoritee" (*House* line 2158).

### **Conclusion: The Dreamer Narrator's Authorial Voice**

Throughout the dream scenario, we see a dreamer poet on his own, finding the answers to his own questions without the constructive help of any dream guides. The dreamer narrator learns that selfish love exists in the world no thanks to any conventional authoritative figure. Yet with the entrance of a man of great authority comes hope that perhaps he will be the one to give the dreamer narrator the second part of the story about love, yet the man is forever silenced. Considering the historicized reading of this poem, the announcement at the end of the poem of "a man of great auctoritee" that comes to give "love tidings" is said to be a man of the court that is coming to announce the upcoming marriage of Richard II with Anne of Bohemia (Klitgard 264). This ties together with the previous dream vision *The Parliament*, in indicating that amongst all the terrible news of false lovers depicted in the *House*, the best news of love would be that of Richard II's marriage. The "man of greet auctoritee" that was supposed to give Geoffrey the tidings of love that he had been promised by Venus, is in fact silenced at the end of the poem (*House* line 2158). In fact, the dreamer narrator has come to the point where he even question whether this man is authoritative

at all when he says that he “semed” as such (*House* line 2157) In fact, all authority figures have failed to help the dreamer narrator get what he desires, and the dreamer narrator poet is left with his own voice resonating and all other authorities voices have been drowned out. The fact that the news is not actually given suspends our hope indefinitely, indicating the difficult process a writer has in finding news to write about.

This final poem indicates the end of the authorial performance that Chaucer began with his dreamer narrator from the *Duchess*—that first began his journey with a bit of imitation—to the dreamer narrator from the *Parliament*—one that exposed the failure of certain dream conventions to hold up—to the dreamer narrator of the *House*—who gave a more blatant criticism of the “normative” elements of the dream genre. “If however we take its own words to heart, we will be skeptical of all claims to certainty where literary tradition is concerned” (*Norton Critical Edition* 43). The traditional figures of the dreamer guides bring the dreamer narrator towards a non-redemptive conclusion. At the end of the *House*, Chaucer disengages with court life. The self-inflicted isolation of the narrator figure is not just from the court, but we witness Chaucer taking a playful ironic stance with his craft and the ways stories can be put together, as indicated by his rejection of the aforementioned classic dream vision moves. This does not indicate a failed conclusion, but rather a playful scenario. It is as if the dream vision is running after Chaucer with a form, as if to achieve redemption, but each time it is undercut. What most critics have tried to do with the dream trio is to force unity and closure on them, when the dream vision for Chaucer is rather fluid. Ultimately, an authorial performance does not require a unity of narration. Critics have trouble with the literary landscape of the dream vision because they provide for a beginning, middle, and end since they do not want loose ends, and with Chaucer, the

authorial performance is not about tying up loose ends. It's neither about narrative unity nor closure, but rather a playfulness that comes with the tinkering he embraces in his identity as *bricoleur*.

## CONCLUSION

In my thesis, I prove that the way Chaucer thinks about authorship is performative. Chaucer's performance of authorship is depicted through his narrative persona's handling of multiple scales of texts, whereby fragments are taken from these texts and are then stuck together for the purpose of invention, rather than an authorship that deals with making the seams within a text disappear, or in dealing with the issue of form and meter. Chaucer's performance is mapped out in the dream sequence in his deeper engagement with ancient and contemporaneous texts—his method being to reduce, reuse, and recycle these texts within his work, by binding and assembling fragments from these texts, and placing them as subtexts within the master text of each of his dream poems, for the purpose of rhetorical invention— and his progressive subversion of the general conventions of the dream vision successively throughout each of the dream poems—where we see how a writer's method evolves from one that begins with imitation and ends with the novelty that comes with the breaking of convention. Conversely, critics have had trouble finding unity in the dream trio.

The dream sequence is composed of fragments that vary from small to large, and even though the poems are still legible, as readers, we cannot help but bump into places of tension. The nature of compilation itself leaves for these fragmentary moments that are not always cohesive. Even if we find the dream sequence's tendency to unity, the nature of dreams is fragmentary nonetheless. One example of such tension is visible near the transitional frames that divide each dream poem, especially at the end of each dream scenario. As was mentioned in the introduction, the lack of narrative closure is not something unique to Chaucer's dream sequence; even Boethius' *Consolation* and Guillaume de Lorris' the *Rose* exhibited a lack of closure in this aspect. However, while

narrative closure may not always exist within Chaucer's dream sequence, performative closure certainly does. This performance again, deals less with porosity and meter as much as it does with culling and then piecing together and assembling of fragments from ancient and contemporaneous texts for the purpose of rhetorical invention in his effort to uncover his authorial self.

I began my work with the dream trio interested in the topic of the medieval dream vision, and my interest extended to the topic of translation. After reading Copeland's book, my interest extended to translingual rhetorical invention.<sup>29</sup> Copeland explores the use of rhetorical invention through the "primary" and "secondary" theories of translation as employed in Chaucer's later works: *Troilus and Criseyde*, *Legend of Good Women*, *Knight's Tale*, and *The Clerk's Tale*. I take Copeland's theories of translation and combine them with those of misprision and bricolage, to see how Chaucer uses these techniques in his earliest works, the dream sequence.

Given the time and resources allotted to me, I only explore Chaucer's earliest works. Furthermore, and I do not explore Chaucer's *Romaunt* as I do his *Boece*, to see if he employs primary translation for rhetorical invention, by using his own work as a source-text that he incorporates pieces of in his other works, in this case, the dream trio. The problem with actually exploring Chaucer's *Romaunt*, as mentioned prior, is that Chaucer may have only translated "Fragment A" of the *Rose*, and the fact that he actually did translate that piece alone, is in itself a debatable issue. However, my closer reading of the dream trio, unlike other critics, shows Chaucer's deep engagement with the *Consolation*, a renowned work in the middle ages, but more so, with the *Boece*,

---

<sup>29</sup> Copeland, Rita. *Rhetoric Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts*. Cambridge University Press: New York, 1991.

which he uses extensively within his dream trio as a source text, especially in his later two dream poems, and mostly in the last poem within his sequence, the *House*. He does this to depict the final stage of his authorial performance in gaining authoritative privilege and *auctoritas* to a point that he can come to reference his own works within his other works

When I explore the dream sequence as a compilation, I take compilation itself as an authorial act, whereas there are other compilational acts at hand. In medieval culture, scribes copied the works of authors changing them and blending them together with other texts. Some critics go so far as to claim that scribes are authors or possess significant authorial presence within written works. (Olsson 5) Furthermore, the history of medieval textuality really needs to take into consideration the fabrication of codices, the owners of libraries, etc. My thesis research provides future suggestions for such interesting questions related to this kind of scholarship; the fifteenth-century editing of Chaucer and what existed within the archives beyond the edited text, to see if my theories about the dream sequence hold up, but a larger version of this study with more time and abilities in this field, would allow me to see if compilation at this authorial level is effected by the material circulation of texts. Writing about Chaucer's oeuvre ranges from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to modern time. My reading of Chaucer's works is a close reading of an established critical edition alongside with contemporary intertexts via the insights of contemporary criticism. It does not deal with manuscripts or a deep medieval corpus. And the *Norton Critical Edition* itself does not help with this problem. My reading grows out of a small school of close readings that the *Norton Critical Edition* encourages. I assume the texts I deal with are stable—although just because a text in the Middle Ages moves or is not stable, doesn't mean that my argument will move and not



be stable too. I have structured my argument about the dream sequence according to a close reading of the texts themselves, which I read through scenes. It remains to be seen if my interpretation relies on a stable version of these texts that the *Norton Critical Edition* gives me. However, my analysis of the dream trio in this way is important, because looking at the texts in such a manner, allows me to make a new suggestion about the chronology of the three dream poems: the *Duchess* (1368-72), the *Parliament* (1380-81), and the *House* (1381-82). My speculated chronology adheres to both a historicized reading of the poems and draws a contextual link between each of the three poems within the dream sequence.

Interestingly enough, it appears that Chaucer's three dream poems have not always been put together in manuscripts. It is noted in the *Riverside Chaucer* for example, there are four versions of the *Duchess* and five of the *House*, without there being a mention of how many version of the *Parliament* exist. But then again, the Chaucerian manuscript tradition is highly complicated; accordingly, my study of the dream sequence neither extends to such problems as catering for the different representation of each of these texts, nor their mobility.<sup>30</sup>

My thesis argument is open to future suggestions that could be taken from Bahr's work, which could help me better understand how to deal with Chaucer's work if I was dealing with archival material rather than the perfect finishing.<sup>31</sup> An extended version of this study would take into consideration not only the material elements of the dream sequence, like the manuscript tradition, but it would also take in consideration

---

<sup>30</sup> Robinson, F.N. "The Text." *The Riverside Chaucer Third Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, (1987), p. xlv.

<sup>31</sup> Bahr, Arthur. *Fragments and Assemblages: Forming Compilations of Medieval London*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2013.

how early editors of Chaucer like the 15<sup>th</sup> century editor William Caxton, have dealt with textual matters. For example, Caxton created an alternative ending to the *House*, where the dreamer actually awakens from a clamor that he hears, instead of the dreamer narrator's dream ending with Chaucer's silencing of the man of great authority (*Norton Critical Edition* 92).<sup>32</sup> If such an ending were used, my analysis of the dream trio would be altered. Another issue that may cause for variance in an edition in the dream poems is if one editor's interpretation of certain aspects of the poem differ from another's. One such perception could be if the editor conceives the dreamer narrator as inexperienced or lacking in knowledge. Some examples where these misconceptions may happen are when Chaucer has the dreamer narrator change the information that he narrates from his source-texts within his reading of the book frame, or when he does not mention the name of the auctore whose book he implicitly references through his narration of it in his dream poem. Both of the aforementioned cases can be found in the *Duchess* with regards to the dreamer narrator's reading of the *Metamorphoses*, otherwise know by the dreamer narrator as a "romaunce".

Most importantly, more time and resources can allow me to extend my research of rhetorical invention to Chaucer's later works as Copeland does, but to include his use of bricolage into my analysis, as I do in my thesis, while I take in account the different editions of his writing.

---

<sup>32</sup> See footnote 7.

## REFERENCES

- Aers, David. "The 'Parliament of Fowls': Authority, the Knower and the Known." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Summer, 1981), pp. 1-17.
- Astell, Ann. "Chaucer's 'Literature Group' and the Medieval Causes of Books." *ELH*, Vol. 59, 1992, pp. 269-87.
- Bahr, Arthur. "Convocational and Compilational Play in Medieval London Literary Culture." *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, 2006.
- Bahr, Arthur. *Fragments and Assemblages: Forming Compilations of Medieval London*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Baum, Paull F. "Chaucer's *House of Fame*." *ELH*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Dec., 1941), pp. 248-256.
- Bevington, David M. "The Obtuse Narrator in Chaucer's *House of Fame*," *Speculum*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Apr., 1961), pp. 288-298.
- Bloom, Harold. *A Map of Misreading*. New York: Oxford UP, 2003.
- Boardman, Phillip C. "Courtly Language and the Strategy of Consolation in *The Book of the Duchess*." *ELH*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Winter, 1977), pp. 567-579.
- Brown, Peter. *A Companion to Chaucer*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.
- Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Trans. London: Victor Watts. Penguin Group, 1999.
- Bruns, Gerald L. "The Originality of Texts in a Manuscript Culture." *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Spring, 1980), pp. 113-129.
- Geoffrey, Chaucer. "The Book of the Duchess." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 6-37.
- Geoffrey, Chaucer. "The House of Fame." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 43-92.
- Geoffrey, Chaucer. "The Parliament of Fowls." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 97-116.

Cherniss, Michael D. "The Boethian Dialogue in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Oct., 1969), pp. 655-665.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. "From Scipio's Dream." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Gen. ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 258-264.

Copeland, Rita. *Rhetoric Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1991.

Cowgill, Bruce Kent. "The Parlement of Foules and the Body Politic." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Jul., 1975), pp. 315-335.

David, Alfred. "Literary Satire in *The House of Fame*." *PMLA*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (Sep., 1960), pp. 333-339.

Delan, Sheila. "Chaucer's *House of Fame* and the Ovide Moralisé." *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Summer, 1968), pp. 254-264.

Edwards, Robert. "The *Book of the Duchess* and the Beginnings of Chaucer's Narrative." *New Literary History*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Narrative Analysis and Interpretation (Winter, 1982), pp. 189-204.

Emerson, Oliver Farrar. "What is *The Parlement of Foules*?" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Oct., 1914), pp. 566-582.

Farnham, William Edward. "The Sources of Chaucer's Parlement of Foules." *PMLA*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1917), pp. 492-518.

Friedman, John Block. "The Dreamer, the Whelp, and Consolation in the *Book of the Duchess*." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Winter, 1969), pp. 145-162.

Goffin R.C. "Heaven and Earth in *The Parlement of Foules*." *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Oct., 1936), pp. 493-499.

Goins, Scott. "Boethius 'Consolation of Philosophy' 1.2.6 and Virgil 'Aeneid' 2: Removing the Clouds of Mortal Anxieties." *Phoenix*, Vol. 55, No. ½ (Spring –Summer, 2001), pp. 124-136.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2005.

Guzman, Gregory G. "Encyclopedias". *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*. California: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996, pp. 702-707.

- Hill, John M. "The Book of the Duchess, Melancholy, and That Eight-Year Sickness." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Summer, 1974), pp. 35-50.
- Holderness, Julia Simms. "Compilation, Commentary, and Conversation in Christine de Pizan". *Essays in Medieval Studies*, Vol. 20, (Summer, 2003), pp. 47-55.
- Klitgard, Ebbe. "Chaucer's Narrative Voice in *The House of Fame*." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1998), pp. 260-266.
- Krugar, Steven. "From Medical and Moral Authority in the Late Medieval Dream." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 366-384.
- Lerer, Seth. "Introduction." *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006, pp. 1-28.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.
- Lille, Alain de. "From the Complaint of Nature." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 273-274.
- Lorris, Guillaume de and Jean de Meun. *The Romance of the Rose*. Trans. Frances Horgan. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Lumiansky, R. M. "Chaucer's Parlement of Foules: A Philosophical Interpretation." *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 94 (Apr., 1948), pp. 81-89.
- Lynch, Kathryn L. "Dating Chaucer." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Summer, 2007), pp. 1-22.
- Lynch, Kathryn L. Ed. *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- McDonald, Charles O. "An interpretation of Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules*." *Speculum*, Vol 30, No. 3 (Jul., 1955), pp. 444-457.
- Miller, T.S. "Writing Dreams to Good: Reading as Writing and Writing as Reading in Chaucer's Dream Visions." *Style*. 45.3 (Fall, 2011), pp. 548-574.
- Minnis, Alastair. "Literary Theory and Literary Practice". *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 2010, pp.160-210.
- Mitchell, J. Allan. "Romancing Ethics in Boethius, Chaucer, and Levinas: Fortune, Moral Luck, and Erotic Adventure." *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Spring, 2005), pp. 101-116.

Moore, Samuel. "A Further Note on the Suitors in the Parliament of Fowls." *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan., 1911), pp. 8-12.

Morris, Richard. "Chaucer's Translation of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*." *Early English Text Society*. London: Ludgate Hill, 1889.

Muscantine, Charles. "From Chaucer's Early Poems." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Gen.ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 307-325.

Olsson, Kurt. "The *Confessio* and Compilation." In *John Gower and the Structures of Conversion: A Reading of the Confessio Amantis*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992, pp. 1-15.

Overbeck, Pat Trefzger. "The 'Man of Gret Auctorite' in Chaucer's *House of Fame*." *Modern Philology*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (Nov., 1975), pp. 157-161.

Ovid. "From the *Heroides*." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Gen.ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 245-251.

Ovid. "From the *Metamorphoses*." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Gen.ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 251-258.

Peck, Russell A. "Love, Politics, and Plot in the Parlement of Foules." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Spring, 1990), pp. 290-305.

Phillips, Helen. "Frames and Narrators in Chaucerian Poetry." *The Long Fifteenth Century Essays for Douglas Gray*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, pp. 71-99.

Phillips, Helen. "Structure and Consolation in the *Book of the Duchess*." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Fall, 1981), pp. 107-118.

Reiss, Edmund. "Chaucer and His Audience." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Directions in Medieval Literary Criticism (Spring, 1980), pp. 390-402.

Robertson Jr., D. W. "The Historical Setting of Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*." *Essays in Medieval Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1980, pp. 235-256, 372-375.

Robinson, F.N. "The Text." *The Riverside Chaucer Third Edition*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987, pp. xlv-xlvii.

Ruffolo, Lara. "Literary Authority and the Lists of Chaucer's *House of Fame*: Destruction and Definition through Proliferation." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 1993, pp. 325-341.

- Ruggier, Paul G. "The Unity of Chaucer's *House of Fame*." *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Jan., 1953), pp. 16-29.
- Schibanoff, Susan. "Courtliness and Heterosexual Poetics in *The Book of the Duchess*." *Chaucer's Queer Poetics: Rereading the Dream Trio*. Toronto Buffalo London: University of Toronto Press, 2006, pp. 64-97.
- Smallwood, T. M. "Chaucer's Distinctive Digressions." *Studies in Philology*. Vol. 82, No. 4 (Autumn, 1985), pp. 437-449.
- Spearing, A.C. *Medieval Dream-Poetry*. London: Cambridge UP, 1976.
- Terrell, Katherine H. "Reallocation of Hermeneutic Authority in Chaucer's *House of Fame*." *The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 1997, pp. 279-290.
- Theodosius, Macrobius Ambrosius. "From the Commentary on 'Scipio's Dream'." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 265-268.
- Tisdale, Charles P.R. "The House of Fame: Virgilian Reason and Boethian Wisdom." *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Summer, 1973), pp. 247-261.
- Virgil. "From the Aeneid." *A Norton Critical Edition: Geoffrey Chaucer, Dream Visions and Other Poems*. Ed. Kathryn Lynch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 231-244.
- Watson, Robert A. "Dialogue and Invention in *The Book of the Duchess*." *Modern Philology*, Vol. 98, No. 4 (May, 2001), pp. 543-576.
- Wetherbee, Winthrop. "The Consolation and Medieval Literature." *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*. London: Cambridge UP, 2009, pp. 279-302.
- Whitman, Jon. "From Antiquity to the Middle Ages." *Allegory: The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique*. Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1987, pp. 112-121.
- Whitman, Jon. "The Allegorical Problem." *Allegory: The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique*. Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1987, pp. 1-13.
- Williams, Deanne. "The Dream Visions." *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*. Ed. Lerer, Seth. New Haven & London: Yale UP, 2010, pp. 149-178.

