Notes

Abbreviations

AN&Q  American Notes and Queries
CE   College English
CentR Centennial Review
ChauR Chaucer Review
ELH  Journal of English Literary History
JEGP Journal of English and Germanic Philology
MAE  Medium Aevum
MLN  Modern Language Notes
MLQ  Modern Language Quarterly
MP   Modern Philology
MS   Mediaeval Studies
NM   Neuphilologische Mitteilungen
PL   Patrologia Latina, ed. Migne
PQ   Philological Quarterly
RES  Review of English Studies
RLV  Revue des Langues Vivantes
SP   Studies in Philology
UTQ  University of Toronto Quarterly
YES  Yearbook of English Studies

Chapter One


5. For an examination of ambivalence in a specific work by Chaucer, see Paul T. Thurston, Artistic Ambivalence in Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1968).


9. The different narrative kinds in which Chaucer composes dictate different narrative functions for the first-person consciousness who represents him. In accordance with common practice, I shall distinguish these different functions by calling the voice of the dream visions the persona, the voice of legendary narratives like *Troilus* the narrator, and the voice of *Canterbury Tales* the character or the pilgrim Chaucer. There seems to be a relationship between Chaucer the poet's separation of himself from his fictional voice and his control of his form. The more control he has over his form, the more clearly separate Chaucer seems from the voice representing him. At the point where the poet shows the greatest control of form, in *Canterbury Tales*, his alter ego the pilgrim is reduced to narrative incompetence.


15. The fact that the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* precedes the *Physician's Tale* in many manuscripts does not convince me that, as Chaucer integrated the materials for the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* more fully into the developing structure of the *Canterbury Tales*, he would have included him in the *General Prologue*; nor does it invalidate my argument that with the *Canon's Yeoman*, Chaucer found a way to open up a previously conceived closed form.


17. Benjamin Minor, chap. 71, in *PL*, vol. 196, col. 51. (Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Latin are mine.)


22. In a conference on the renaissance of the twelfth century, held at Harvard University in November 1977, John F. Benton delivered a paper entitled "Consciousness of Self and of Personality," which offered numerous, less accessible, examples of this epistemology at work.


28. These controversies were actually a part of the larger philosophical problem of free will and necessity. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the problem was frequently cast in terms of the *potentia absoluta* vs. the *potentia ordinata* of God. On the distinction, see Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 30-36.


31. Ockham, *Smr., Prologi, Questio 12, Responsio ad Articulum*.


33. Leff, *Bradwardine*, p. 130.


35. I have been encouraged in my argument by the interest that some recent books on Chaucer have shown in epistemology as a useful category for interpreting Chaucer's meaning. Aside from Howard's *The Idea of the Canterbury Tales*, I am thinking of Robert Burlin's *Chaucerian Fiction* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), which appeared after my manuscript had been written in first draft, and John Fyler's *Ovid and Chaucer* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979), which appeared after my manuscript had been revised. Although not explicitly interested in intellectual thought and epistemology, Alfred David's *The Strumpet Muse: Art and Morals in Chaucer's Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976) implies them as the historical cause of Chaucer's conflict between art and morals. See also David Aers's

**Chapter Two**


9. Spearing, *Dream-Poetry*, pp. 48 ff., quotes Jung, although his analyses are not particularly "Jungian."

Octavian and the Golden Age. John Fyler, “Irony and the Age of Gold in the Book of the Duchess,” Speculum 52 (1977): 314-28, has developed the connection as a part of his examination of the elegiac quality of the poem. He astutely points out that the narrator is so self-absorbed that his consolatory exempla to the Knight’s grief fail “to mention the one example obviously analogous to the Knight’s predicament: Ceyx and Alcyone.”

11. Perhaps for this reason, Kittredge mistakenly thought that the persona understood the lyric but for therapeutic reasons refused to let the Knight, or us, know about it; see Chaucer and His Poetry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1915), p. 49.


Chapter Three


3. It is a commonplace of Chaucer criticism that Chaucer is a poet of love and that the dream-vision form, inherited from the French, is itself the vehicle in which love and its vicissitudes came traditionally to be expressed. However, though the persona repeatedly asserts that love is the subject of his poem, his dreams, and his studies, he is not himself a lover, as are many poets of the dits amoreux. Rather he is a clerk, like Jean de Meung, in search of materials about love. Yet he differs even from poets like Jean in his interest in the poet, in poetry, which repeatedly preempts his stated subject, love. We never forget that Jean is writing about the concept of love, categorizing it into constituent parts, and examining its effects. In Chaucer, especially in the dream-visions after the Book of the Duchess, the experience of the dreamer as a
poet in search of knowledge, of certainty, challenges the experience of love for the reader’s attention. Not until Troilus, when he leaves the dream-vision form and turns to translating a narrative love story out of legend or history, does Chaucer ever really stand out as anything resembling a poet of love. To be sure, the subject of love is significant to each of the dream visions. The Black Knight’s suffering, the experience in the Temple of Glass, Nature’s calling of the parliament of birds, all concern love in some way. The eagle in the House of Fame, moreover, tells the persona: “Thou writest, / and ever mo of love enditest” (633—34). Yet, these poems seem less about love than about a poet’s experiences in search of answers to questions about meaning in dream experiences. The poems use love but absorb it into a poetic framework about the poet’s experience. This distinction between an ostensible subject, love, and an apparent subject, poetic experience, creates a tension in the forms of the early dream visions that contributes to the general sense of inconclusiveness we feel in the forms of the poems. On Chaucer as a poet of love, see, for example, the group of essays collected in Chaucer the Love Poet, ed. Jerome Mitchell and William Provost (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1973), and David, Strumpet Muse, pp. 17—20. Cf. my remarks here with those by Lawrence K. Shook, “The House of Fame,” in Companion to Chaucer Studies, ed. Rowland, pp. 341—54.

4. In this poem the persona’s experiences are overwhelmingly visual and aural. Information from the sense of touch is infrequent and from the senses of taste and smell is absent. The persona’s visceral reaction to flight produces swooning, sight/sound, not nausea, its alimentary equivalent. The absence of the alimentary senses is particularly interesting in light of John Leyerle’s suggestive interpretation of the poem as motivated by breaking wind; see “Chaucer’s Windy Eagle,” UTQ 40 (1971): 247—65.


6. “During the later middle ages St. Leonard was greatly revered in France, England and Germany, but nothing certain is known about him; the eleventh-century Life in which he is first mentioned tells us, among other things, that he was a hermit, who founded a monastery in Noblac (now Saint-Leonard), near Limoges, in the sixth century. Doubtless his popularity was due to the very large number of miracles and aids attributed to his intercession, and to the enthusiasm of returning crusaders, who looked on him as the patron saint of prisoners” (Donald Attwater, The Penguin Dictionary of Saints [Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965], p. 218).

7. Delany, Skeptical Fideism, pp. 48—57.


9. A lover forswearing himself in order to get what he wants informs not only book one of the House of Fame and some stories in Legend of Good Women. It is an issue in Troilus, although the sexes are reversed, and is directly related to the central concern of Anelida, the Squire’s Tale, and, in the larger sense of swearing oaths in general, to the tales by the Franklin and the Friar. Indeed, swearing and forswearing oaths is one of Chaucer’s most fundamental and abiding thematic concerns.

10. Delany, Skeptical Fideism, pp. 58—68.


12. Chaucer’s analogy suggests an eccentric but not unique scientific understanding. Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), p. 132, points out similarly peculiar views concerning rivers and the sea in Hildegard of Bingen’s *Subtilitates*, 2. 3, and in the *Secretum Secretorum* of the Pseudo-Aristotle (ed. Roger Bacon), both of which were written before Chaucer.


14. The *OED* gives no support for the reading of “for” in the sense of “by” to indicate passive construction, although it is possible that “for” can mean “through,” indicating something like a dative of means. Generally, however, “for” signifies “for the sake of.”


21. David, *Strumpet Muse*, p. 21, comes close to, but finally ducks, the issue of the syntax by stating: “One expects the old adage to be applied to the art of poetry, not, as it actually turns out, the art of love, but the art of poetry is never far from Chaucer’s mind in composing the so-called ‘love visions.’” Burlin, *Chaucerian Fiction*, pp. 84–85, faces the matter of the syntactic ambigu-
ity, analyzes it rhetorically, and concludes: "It is still possible to ask, is this an art of love or an art of loving? A treatise of philosophical objectivity or a practical handbook? Both possibilities seem to inform the opening lines."

22. Bennett, *Parlement of Foules*, pp. 44—45, argues that the certain thing is "love doctrine."


25. The unpleasant quality of Craft is apparently intensified by either confusion or mistranslation from Boccaccio. Regarding these lines, Bennett points out the following in a note: "In the following line Craft is described as 'disfigurat'—a nonce word, derived from Boccaccio's *figurare*; the etymological note in O.E.D., s.v., requires revision" (*Parlement of Fowles*, p. 88 n. 3).


Chapter Four

1. My distinction between the two kinds of narratives Chaucer wrote—dream-vision and storial—is not intended to substitute for the different, interesting, though not particularly relevant distinctions between the various narrative genres in which Chaucer composed. On the question of Chaucerian genres, see Paul Strohm, "Some Generic Distinctions in the *Canterbury Tales*," *MP* 68 (1970—71): 321—28; and also his "Storie, Spelle, Geste, Romauence, Tragedie: Generic Distinctions in the Middle English Troy Narratives," *Speculum* 46 (1971): 348—59. See as well the review article by Theodore A. Stroud, "Genres and Themes: A Reaction to Two Views of Chaucer," *MP* 72 (1974): 60—70.

2. Robinson, in *Works*, p. 790, note to l. 105, lists parallels between *Anelida* and the *Squire's Tale*. The list of parallels may be intended to suggest that Chaucer composed the *Squire's Tale* at about the time he was composing *Anelida*, but Robinson never asserts this.


8. For a recent argument about the *Complaint of Mars* and the *Complaint of Venus* as a single poem—the *Broche of Thebes*—see Rodney Merrill, Chaucer's "*Broche of Thebes*": The Unity of The *Complaint of Mars* and *The Complaint of Venus*, Literary monographs, no. 5 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), pp. 1—61.

12. Ibid., p. 206.
17. Aristotle’s argument that plot is more significant than character is implicit as a value throughout his *Poetics*, although he confronts the issue explicitly only in chapter 6. I have used the translation by Francis Fergusson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), pp. 61–64.
20. This is also implied by Alfred David, “The Hero of the Troilus,” *Speculum* 37 (1962): 566–81.
25. Bloomfield, “Distance,” p. 206, describes the several ways in which Chaucer emphasizes “the struggle of the artist-narrator against the brutality of the facts to which he cannot give a good turn. As a faithful historian, he cannot evade the rigidity of decisive events—the given.”
Notes


Chapter Five

1. The curious position the *Legend of Good Women* holds in criticism of Chaucer's development as a narrative artist may be exemplified by the fact that Muscatine's significant book on the development of style and meaning throughout Chaucer's career does not at all deal with the poem but moves rather from *Troilus* to the *Canterbury Tales*. It may also be exemplified by the strikingly honest opening sentence of the preface to Robert Worth Frank, *Chaucer and the Legend of Good Women* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. vii: "This book is designed to fill a gap in Chaucerian Studies, though I might wish it had been done long since by another hand."

2. Increasingly, Chaucer critics are recognizing that the *Legend of Good Women*, especially its prologues, represents a significant, even crucial, turning point in Chaucer's poetic career. See Frank, *Legend*, pp. 1-10; Payne, "Making His Own Myth," *Chaur* 9 (1975): 197-211; David, *Strumpet Muse*, pp. 36-51. Payne has always been one of the poem's great partisans and supporters: see *Key of Remembrance*, esp. pp. 91-112.

3. See, for example, Frank, *Legend*, pp. 52 and 88 ff.; see also Fyler, *Ovid and Chaucer*, p. 99.

4. John Gower, *Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), p. 235. No one, however, knows what the nature of the command was, or if the command included a prescription for form, as it seems to have included a prescription for theme.
The accusations against the poet in the prologue suggest that the actions and nature of the heroine in *Troilus* may have created a stir to which the poet responded by writing this piece.


7. If the *Monk's Tale* were indeed written earlier in Chaucer's career than the "Canterbury" period, its form could be the prototype even for the storial portion of the *Legend of Good Women*.

8. The prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* has come down to us in two versions. The F-version has most manuscript support and is assumed to be the earlier; the G-version exists in only one manuscript (Cambridge University Gg. 4.27) and is assumed to be later. Bertrand H. Bronson, *In Search of Chaucer* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 52, says that "the differences between the two prologues are so important that distinct poems are the result." He mentions that in the F-version, the poet "appears to display a continuous and intense personal involvement. In G, on the contrary, the tone of everything that is revised or now first introduced is invariably soberer, more detached, more suited to advancing years." Although it is fascinating to consider the two versions separately and to examine ways in which Chaucer changed his prologue for the better or for the worse, the differences between the two versions, despite Bronson's assertion about the importance of changes from one to the other, have little relevance for my argument. I shall therefore discuss the prologue as if it were one prologue, indicating which version after quotations.


13. *Idea*, esp. pp. 1–20 and 25–28, argues that the idea of *Canterbury Tales* is complete, although the work actually exists in fragments. My own argument does not seek to contradict Howard's thesis; rather, it wishes to alter the terms.


15. Cf. Howard, *Idea*, p. 53: "It is in the nature of amorality to be inconclusive, as it is in the nature of 'concluded' works to have, or seem to have, a moral or a 'theme'."


17. Portions of the following discussion have appeared in my "Catalogue Form and Catalogue Style in the General Prologue of the *Canterbury Tales*," *Studia Neophilologica* 52 (1980): 35–46.


27. On the distinction between the Pilgrim and the Poet, Donaldson's essay "Chaucer the Pilgrim," *PMLA* 69 (1954), has become the locus classicus.


Chapter Six


4. Although the critical assumption about a dramatic principle in the Canterbury Tales goes back at least as far as Kittredge's Chaucer and His Poetry, it is most fully and most complexly worked out in R. M. Lumiansky, Of Sondry Folk: The Dramatic Principle in the Canterbury Tales (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1955).

5. For a notable exception about the Wife of Bath, see Kemp Malone, Chapters on Chaucer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1951), pp. 215-18.

6. Consider also the implications for their tales of the Man of Law's attitude toward women and the Merchant's sense of his own potency.


9. The peculiar reference by Justinus in the Merchant's Tale to the Wife of Bath, who exists in the outer form, is different in nature. It is similar to the Clerk's response in the outer form to the Wife of Bath, although its occurrence in the inner form makes it seem disruptive of the fictional levels in a way that most characteristically can be called mysterious.


12. Ibid., p. 697.


14. It is interesting to speculate that the Cook's Tale of Perkin Reuelour, having adultery in common with the Manciple's Tale, also might have concerned the theme of what it means to talk too much, and hence would have represented a tale in a contrasting form but with a similar set of themes; see Lumiansky, Sondry Folk, p. 237. However, cf. Britton J. Harwood, "Language and the Real: Chaucer's Manciple," ChauR 6 (1973): 268-79.


26. One is tempted to speculate that even the small portion of the Cook's Tale, which must be considered a part of the pattern of fragment one, may be inherently designed, though never realized, in the later fragment. The words of the Pardoner to the Wife of Bath (3. 163-68) may represent an early intention on Chaucer's part to follow the Summoner's Tale with a third "low" tale by the Pardoner, whose appearance in this fragment is otherwise structurally meaningless.


28. It could also be the case that an examination of the Shipman's Tale, believed to have been originally told by the Wife of Bath, may yield a more closely connected thematic purpose, for there the comic effect rests on a promise to repay as it does in both the Friar's and the Summoner's tales.

29. The assertion that Chaucer continually intended to promote charity over cupidity motivates most arguments in Robertson's Preface.


31. Works, p. 11.


33. Ibid., p. 235.


36. The procedure Chaucer undertakes in *Sir Thopas*, including its purposeful incompleteness, is one of the strongest arguments I know in favor of seeing the *Squire’s Tale* as an intentional fragment.


40. On May third Palamon escapes from prison in the *Knight’s Tale* (1. 1462), and Pandarus, suffering a “teene of love,” takes to his bed in *Troilus* (2. 56); see John P. McCall, "Chaucer’s May 3," *MLN* 76 (1961): 201–5.


42. *Idea*, pp. 304 ff.
