

SHAKESPEARE THE CHAUCERIAN

By

JACOB ALDEN HUGHES

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of English

MAY 2009

To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation/thesis of JACOB ALDEN HUGHES find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Michael Delahoyde, Ph.D., Chair

Todd Butler, Ph.D., Co-Chair

Michael Hanly, Ph.D.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This project arose out of many conversations with my chair, Michael Delahoyde, who has been researching Shakespeare/Chaucer connections for years. Most of what is contained herein originated from those informal talks while I was still an undergraduate, the product of a hyperactive imagination filtered through an academic lens. Without his assistance, I surely would have gone mad “north-northwest” in chasing any number of leads and getting caught in the bogs that reside between Middle English and its Early Modern variety. Thanks are also certainly due to my other committee members, Todd Butler and Michael Hanly, who have provided a variety of helpful suggestions and useful critiques of my work. Dr. Butler’s breakfast metaphors have served as highly effective motivators for revision.

SHAKESPEARE THE CHAUCERIAN

Abstract

By Jacob Alden Hughes, M.A.
Washington State University
May 2009

Chairs: Michael Delahoyde and Todd Butler

A small contingent of scholars, most prominently represented by E. Talbot Donaldson, argues that Shakespeare holds a deep appreciation for Chaucer and his complexity, saturating his work with Chaucerian constructions. But Shakespeare does not simply inject Chaucerian references into his drama: they serve as his own reactions to and interpretation of the poet's themes. Focusing specifically on Shakespeare's authorial identification via Chaucer as reflected in key caricatures in the bard's canon, "Shakespeare the Chaucerian" operates both a source-study and a critical analysis of the texts in question.

Just as Chaucer projects a meta-understanding of his own authorship through his stand-ins "Chaucer the pilgrim" and at times "Geffrey" as in *House of Fame*, Shakespeare employs these tactics as well with his own stand-ins, showing not only his deep understanding and appreciation for Chaucer's art, but his methods. Shakespeare's author-figures, symbolic representations of Shakespeare himself at various stages in the creative process and reflections of his identity as an author, often directly invoke some component of Chaucer's works. Duke Theseus, Feste, and Falstaff serve as the most prominent examples of this phenomenon.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
CHAPTER	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THEATER IN <i>THE KNIGHT'S TALE</i> AND <i>A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM</i>	9
3. AUTHORIAL IDENTITY IN <i>TWELFTH NIGHT</i> VIA <i>SIR THOPAS</i>	30
4. CHAUCER LOST AND FOUND IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES	43
WORKS CONSULTED	69

Dedication

To many.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

It should come as no surprise that Shakespeare and Chaucer, the two greatest artistic forces in early English literature, have faced comparative scholarly treatment over the past century. However, this treatment has been relatively uneven in terms of scope and intent, and there is considerably less of it than one would expect. For the most part, Shakespeare source studies concerning Chaucer are focused on the sources themselves rather than resolving any question of content or providing an indication of Shakespeare's broader purpose. Chaucerian influence is rife throughout the Shakespearean canon and isn't isolated to a particular artistic period for Shakespeare, nor do the manifestations of these sources, for the most part, stand as simple signals, planted by Shakespeare, concerning the bard's erudition. Rather, Shakespeare reads Chaucer closely and engages him in a variety of subtle ways, often responding to some issue Chaucer posits or providing his own reaction to a particular theme. Shakespeare recognizes Chaucer as an exemplar, and yet does more than pay homage to him (if he pays homage to him at all) as he does with other authors, Ovid and Gower in particular. Just as Chaucer projects a meta-understanding of his own authorship through his stand-ins "Chaucer the pilgrim" and at times "Geffrey" as in *The House of Fame*, Shakespeare employs these tactics as well with his own stand-ins, showing not only his deep understanding and appreciation for Chaucer's art, but his methods. Miskimin asserts, "Chaucer's discoveries as a poet, and his originality, lie not in narrative--plots, myth making, invention—but in voices, and in the controlling of language so that voices other than his own are made to speak" (31). Chaucer shares this characteristic with Shakespeare. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Shakespeare's author-figures, symbolic representations of Shakespeare himself at various stages in the creative process and

reflections of his identity as an author, often directly invoke some component of Chaucer's works. At times obliquely manifested in the form of a title, phrase, or even a sharp echo of a particular sentiment, the bard does not simply inject Chaucer; he infuses him. Effectively, Shakespeare uses Chaucer in this manner consistently when he wants us to recognize a particular aspect of the authorial condition. Shakespeare is more of a Chaucer scholar than an admirer. This is not to say that Shakespeare didn't admire Chaucer—it is almost certain that he did—but rather Shakespeare is a critic in the sense that he has something to say about Chaucer, and uses this embedded commentary to illuminate what he is trying to say in a given dramatic situation.

Despite the variety of issues that Shakespeare engages via Chaucer, the bard's use of the poet is in many ways inextricably linked to his age. A century prior to Shakespeare, Chaucer was appreciated as a religious reformer rather than a poet. A variety of anti-Popish poems, not actually written by Chaucer, were mistakenly attributed to him (Buxton 224), distracting 15th-century audiences from his art. Furthermore, Chaucer was deemed too difficult to read in his original vernacular, and instead his works were read in either contemporary English or Latin translations: "His poetry was as obscure as *Beowulf* is to the majority of readers today: a monument whose greatness they preferred to take on trust rather than to investigate" (Buxton 224). The same cant may have held true for the Elizabethan period, but Chaucer's attention to classical themes and characters, exemplified in *Troilus and Criseyde*, fit well with an Elizabethan England that considered itself in a *renaissance*. Chaucer's poetry may have seemed like a beacon shining through the barbarous dark ages of the 15th century.

Donaldson points out, "Until Marlowe and Spenser almost in his own time, there were no poets in English besides Chaucer who had anything to teach him, though he was willing to plunder Lydgate and Gower for bits and pieces of lore" (*The Swan at the Well* 5). Thompson

echoes this assertion, postulating, “The sheer quantity of the material involved implies that Shakespeare did not merely use Chaucer for a plot or two (as he did some authors) but knew him so well that he recalled his work (often unconsciously, one would imagine) in virtually every play” (59). Moreover, Chaucer’s works were reprinted a number of times during Shakespeare’s lifetime, and a number of editions would have been available besides (Donaldson 5): *Thynne* was released in 1532, revised again in 1542 and 1550 in the “booksellers” edition; *Stowe* in 1561; and *Speght* in 1598, revised in 1602 (Miskimin 239). Thus, Shakespeare likely had access to a number of these editions throughout his career. However, a number of critics have disputed the extent to which Shakespeare read Chaucer, if he read Chaucer at all. Anne Thompson points out that Ben Jonson’s assertion that Shakespeare had “small Latine and lesse Greeke” has led to a history of heated scholarly debate over Shakespeare’s indebtedness to classical sources (1). This hyper-focus on the classics led some to believe that Shakespeare read nothing in the vernacular save for the work of his contemporaries. Essentially, the primary hang-up that most who doubt Shakespeare’s reading of Chaucer concerns Tudor grammar school education: i.e., vernacular literature was not taught (Thompson 2). However, Shakespeare is indebted to a wide variety of sources in multiple languages. It is unreasonable to assume that a canon as rich and varied as Shakespeare’s, both in terms of its indebtedness and multiplicity of erudite insights, could in its entirety be the product of grammar school education. Shakespeare surely read beyond his primary schooling. Thompson, somewhat exasperated, concludes:

there is no sure way of ascertaining when, how, and in what variety a middle-class schoolboy might have come across English books; for the most part we are thrown back upon the internal evidence of the plays themselves. (2)

Thus, it is no wonder that the majority of scholarly discourse regarding Shakespeare's use of Chaucer is more focused on the incidents rather than the patterns. Effectively, the scholarly community needs some sort of precedent to assume that Shakespeare read Chaucer, and the reticence to point out broader implications is understandable considering there is little consensus as to the degree with which the bard treats the poet. For example, Nevill Coghill's contribution, "Shakespeare's Reading in Chaucer" in the festschrift for F.P. Wilson (1959), spends most of its time discussing the particulars over the disputed nature of Chaucer's influence on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* rather than addressing his central argument—that Shakespeare is at least indebted to Chaucer for this particular play. The closest he comes to addressing the broader significance to his findings is a chart comprised of various connections between ideas, phrases, and themes between Shakespeare and Chaucer (Coghill 98-99), really more of a catalogue than anything. Thompson cites Geoffrey Bullough's reticence towards these kinds of source studies, an attitude "largely due to the shortcomings of the source-hunters themselves who have failed to realize that pin-pointing sources is not an end in itself: 'their pursuit should be the first stage in an investigation of Shakespeare's methods of composition'" (Bullough, qtd. in Thompson 15).

Perhaps the earliest viable piece of comparative Shakespeare-Chaucer scholarship that alludes to a broader, more significant relationship between the authors is an anonymous article that appeared in the *Quarterly Review* in 1873, generally assumed to be by H.W. Hales (Donaldson 1). Hales puts the relationship between Chaucer and Shakespeare in terms of aesthetic considerations, rather than simply noting instances of use. Hales goes so far as to say that Shakespeare and Chaucer share so much in common that despite the differences between their forms, "in spirit there is a remarkable likeness and sympathy....Chaucer in many respects is

a lesser Shakespeare” (Hales 58).¹ While to say that Chaucer is a lesser Shakespeare is problematic for a variety of reasons, the statement nonetheless conveys Hales’s understanding of the strong connection between the authors.

Since Hales’s contribution, Coghill’s festschrift article, and efforts by others such as Dorothy Loomis and Thomas McNeil, Anne Thompson compiled the first book to systematically address Chaucer’s presence in Shakespeare’s canon. Like Bullough and Donaldson, Thompson shuns source studies as an end to themselves, seeking instead to illuminate the inner-workings of Shakespeare’s composition method (vii). However, even she resorts to listing, compiling all of her findings outside of *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, based on Chaucer’s *The Knight’s Tale*, into a single chapter.

Ultimately, the work that stands out as the most significant critical examination of the broader and more significant aesthetic connections between Shakespeare and Chaucer is E. Talbot Donaldson’s book *The Swan at the Well*, published in 1985. Since then, little has been done in terms of Shakespeare-Chaucer scholarship. This comes as something of a surprise, especially since it was Donaldson’s text that could have functioned as a kind of academic call to arms for continued “Chaucespeare” studies, albeit a quiet one. Donaldson, a noted Medievalist, critiques most of the previous attempts to analyze the links between Chaucer and Shakespeare, arguing that they “do not, on the whole, do justice to the relationship” (1). He feels that few of the works say much about the larger relationships between the authors. Most importantly, Donaldson distinguishes his position from those source hunters who insist on “static” meanings in the bard’s works, those scholars who “have been primarily Shakespeareans and only

¹ The pagination refers to *Notes and Essays on Shakespeare*, where the same article appears under Hales’s name.

incidentally Chaucerians” (2). Rather, he asserts “that Shakespeare read Chaucer's poetry with understanding and great care, more carefully, perhaps, than some of his critics” (4).

Even Donaldson’s reformation of Chaucer-Shakespeare criticism, however, was (admittedly) limited in scope. He focuses primarily on those plays in which Shakespeare was “most indebted to works by Chaucer”: mainly *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and only incidentally and “more conjecturally” *Romeo and Juliet* and the Wife of Bath’s possible connection to the conception of Falstaff (1). Regardless, Donaldson does not allow his effort to become mired in arguments concerning the degree of Shakespeare’s reading of Chaucer. Instead, he establishes a precedent for further relatively unmired academic inquiry.

Extensive character studies have generally fallen under the radar in the body of Shakespeare-Chaucer critical literature, especially in regards to those plays that don’t directly seem to owe Chaucer anything in terms of plot. Donaldson examines how Criseyde becomes Cressida, and makes some tentative remarks about how the Wife of Bath may serve as a character template for Falstaff in some respects, but otherwise limits his commentary to isolated incidents. Thompson necessarily has broader aims. These initial oversights are not failures on the authors’ parts to pick up on subtlety, but instead reflective of other constraints. Not much foundational scholarship had been conducted on Shakespeare’s reading of Chaucer by the time Donaldson and Thompson completed their works. However, Hales, Donaldson, and Thompson all recognize Shakespeare’s complex and professional understanding of Chaucer. Using a more focused lens on character details, Shakespeare’s Chaucerian constructions allude to the bard’s professional self-identification vis-à-vis Chaucer and eventually reveal his direct responses to the poet and his work.

Three characters exemplify how Shakespeare interacts with Chaucer, addressing both larger concerns of the drama at hand as well as embedded authorial issues. Duke Theseus from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is in many ways representative of a producer of entertainments, a master of revels in his own right, as he commands Philostrate to rouse Athenian youths for the purposes of his entertainment so that he may wile away the hours prior to his wedding night. His conception is derived from Chaucer's Duke Theseus of *The Knight's Tale*, a character associated with considerable pomp and spectacle and a builder of theaters. Like Chaucer's Theseus, Shakespeare's Duke is an administrator, one who is in control, but primarily motivated by a sense of spectacle and visual entertainment. Feste from *Twelfth Night* is a professional entertainer, a composer of music and a gifted wit. As an authorial stand-in, he represents Shakespeare's professional persona. Slighted by Malvolio, Feste dons the likeness of "Sir Topas" while speaking to the steward at a mad house. He uses a Chaucerian caricature to signal the use of a particular Chaucerian tactic. Finally, the answer to Chaucer's conspicuous absence throughout the bard's canon is Falstaff. The fat knight is both the foil and representation of a poetic predecessor that Shakespeare uses as an authorial barometer. Falstaff is the surrogate and eventually rejected father figure, possibly representative for Shakespeare as a literary exemplar and influence, yet one ultimately deviated from. However, if Hal represents Shakespeare, his rebuke should be less brutal and absolute, at least acknowledging some degree of indebtedness ("we had some good times, old man" rather than "I know thee not old man"). Shakespeare does not privilege himself above Chaucer. Rather, he sees himself *in* Chaucer. This conclusion is logical if Donaldson's assertion that Chaucer is Shakespeare's only significant poetic predecessor is true. As a professional, Shakespeare wonders about rejection in terms of his own authorship.

Falstaff also serves as a stand-in for Chaucer, who performs the same subversive function (similar to Feste) that Chaucer did during his time.

All three characters highlight direct Chaucerian allusions. On the surface it may seem as if Shakespeare merely flavors his key personas with literary acumen, displaying his own reading prowess in tandem. Closer inspection reveals considerable thematic and autobiographical significance. To Shakespeare, Chaucer isn't incidental: he is the bard's chief literary exemplar, and Shakespeare learned how to embed himself in his works just as Chaucer did. Furthermore, in reading Chaucer, Shakespeare cultivated an affinity with the poet as an artist. The two share common concerns, anxieties, pressures as poets, and a vested interest not just in the understanding of their works, but their embedded personas.

CHAPTER TWO

THEATER IN *THE KNIGHT'S TALE* AND *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*

Regarding Shakespearean source studies involving Chaucer, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* arguably receives the most scholarly coverage next to *Troilus and Cressida*, “the happiest hunting-grounds in this particular quest for sources” (Coghill 88).² Most point out the numerous surface connections between the two works, largely revolving around the Duke Theseus character. Thompson suggests that Shakespeare’s Theseus is very similar to Chaucer’s “not only in his current situation and the things we are told about him such as his love of hunting and his recent conquest of Thebes...but also in his role as the slightly aloof spectator, judge, and figure of authority” (87).

These allusions may not be solely indebted to Chaucer. Thompson cautions, “One snag...that critics have usually overlooked is the possibility that Shakespeare might have drawn his ‘Chaucerian’ material from the lost *Palamon and Arcite* play put on by the Admiral's Men in 1594” (92). Neville Coghill points out a source noted by HRD Anders that potentially reveals a different basis for the seeming *Knight's Tale* material found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: the Richard Edwards play *Palamon and Arcyte* was performed in 1566 at Oxford, Christ Church’s great hall for the Queen (89). However, the seemingly most damning evidence that Anders proffers concerns Theseus and his Ducal titles: Chaucer anachronistically refers to Theseus as a “duke.” Thus, Anders supposes that the memorable Oxford spectacle³ with its accompanying account contemporary to Shakespeare provides a more viable source than Chaucer. Though Anders’s supposition is important, Shakespeare reading this account and being familiar with

² Anne Thompson, Neville Coghill, Dorothy Loomis, and J.W. Hales especially.

³ Coghill explains that three spectators were crushed to death by a falling stone wall during the production, which was attended by Queen Elizabeth (89). The documentary account included a “detailed synopsis” of the play.

Chaucer are not mutually exclusive. Thompson asserts that “since Shakespeare’s usual habit seems to have been to look up several available versions of any single story it is likely that he would have used the play and the poem together if he used the play at all” (92), echoing Donaldson’s sentiment that Shakespeare really didn’t have many others to look to in terms of poetic exemplars (*The Swan at the Well* 5). Thus, Anders’s supposition should not be regarded as evidence against Shakespeare’s reading of Chaucer, but instead shed light on potential sources additional to *The Knight’s Tale*.

Though Shakespeare’s attention to *The Knight’s Tale* is not solely focused on Duke Theseus, his presence is the most significant in terms of authorial borrowing. Both the Chaucerian and Shakespearean models of the character indicate that he is a capable ruler, conqueror, and adjudicator. However, his role as a kind of master of ceremonies, associated with theater, music, and other courtly entertainments is more significant in terms of how Shakespeare uses, and on some level identifies, with the character. In *The Knight’s Tale*, Duke Theseus uses theatricality and spectacle as a means of social control, establishing a dynamic of spectators and performers, with some characters occupying both roles in tandem, in order to regulate reactions and control outcomes.

In many ways, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is a play about putting on plays. All of the principle action serves as a form of entertainment for the upper-class characters. Oberon dupes Titania into loving Bottom via a drug, sending Puck to stir up mischief just as Duke Theseus sends Philostrate to “Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments” (I.i.13). The lovers—Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, and Hermia—serve as objects of entertainment for Puck. The mechanicals—Bottom, Quince, Starveling, Snout, Snug, and Flute—actualize the theater atmosphere that Theseus establishes early on in the play with a touching, yet “so bad it’s good” performance of

Pyramus and Thisbe, whose parody closely hearkens unto Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas* (Donaldson 3, 8-9, etc). Finally, Puck submits an apology for the performance, and begs for applause:

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumb'ed here
While these visions did appear.

...

Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

(Epilogue 423-26, 437-38)

This pronouncement and request is odd, especially in light of Duke Theseus's caution to the mechanicals' performance:

No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when
the players are all dead, there need none to be blam'd.

(V.i.355-357)

This admonishment by Duke Theseus is both potentially dark and confusing. Surely the audience does not wish to believe that Theseus is implying that he will execute the mechanicals for their performance; such a supposition seems out of hand, considering the context anyway. Theseus seems relatively pleased, if not impressed, with the performance, declaring it "very notably discharg'd" (V.i.360-361). The "players" could on one hand refer to the dead Pyramus and Thisbe on the stage, yet the term itself implies "actors." Garber insists on the presence of a "fourth wall": "An actor playing Theseus watches an actor playing Bottom play the part of

Pyramus, and feels secure in his own comparative reality” (Garber 237). Thus, Shakespeare may be commenting on his own role in this play’s authorship and its remembered performances.

Since the adage comes from the play’s primary authority figure, and its true master of revels for the human characters (Philostrate seems fussy in his role), this literary investment makes sense.

A reading of *The Knight’s Tale* may serve to shed better light on Shakespeare’s meaning. The Theseus of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, as Thompson asserts (87), shares more than incidental details with his counterpart of the same name in Chaucer’s tale. Shakespeare borrows more from Chaucer than Athens and a few names. His caricature is a response to Chaucer’s not just in being an authority figure, but rather as one responsible for staging the action. Though neither incarnation of Theseus is directly responsible for the antics associated with his realm, both set the parameters for them, primarily through modes of entertainment. Chaucer’s Knight begins by telling a tale that should focus on Theseus. His deeds are enumerated in detail and there is a relatively contained moral at the beginning of the story: Creon of Thebes treats the bodies of his enemies disrespectfully, and will not allow the women to tend to their men. Upon hearing their lament, Theseus, like any good chivalric knight, conquers Thebes in response. The Knight even states that his tale could end here: “what nedeth wordes mo?” (A 1029). However, he instead moves on to tell the tale of Palamon and Arcite, Theban knights captured by Theseus, refused ransom, and locked in a tower overlooking a beautiful garden where Hippolyta’s sister, Emelye, frequently visits:

The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun
(Ther as the knyghtes weren in prisoun
Of which I tolde yow and tellen shal),

Was evene joynant to the gardyn wal
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyynge.

(A 1056-1061)

To say the least, this garden is oddly located next to a prison. While this works in terms of the Romance genre, Chaucer is focused on the voyeuristic aspects of the two knights' tower. On the morning that Palamon spots Emelye, he receives leave from the guards to pace the upper reaches of his prison, and Chaucer describes the view in grand terms:

Bright was the sonne and cleer that morwenynge,
And Palamoun, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by the leve of his gayler,
Was risen and romed in a chamber an heigh,
In which he al the noble cite seigh....

(A 1063-1066)

Palamon can see the entire city, and conversely, he is upon a large stage himself. In placing the imprisoned knights in a tower that overlooks the entire city, Theseus actively establishes a spectator-performer relationship. The knights are spectators to the performing city below, while the reverse is also true. Their prison is arranged in full view of Emelye, who plays about in the gardens, ultimately for the visual benefit of the knights.

Even early on, the stage Theseus sets begins to break down. Arcite's ransom is bought by Perotheus, a friend of the duke's. The freed knight bewails being removed as an audience member:

Allas, that evere knew I Perotheus!
For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus,

Yfetered in his prisoun evermo.
Thanne hadde I been in blisse and nat in wo.
Only the sighte whome that I serve,
Though that I nevere hir grace may deserve,
Wolde han suffised right ynough for me.
O deere cosyn Palamon,” quod he,
“Thyn is the victorie of this aventure.
Ful blissfully in prison maistow dure—
In prison? Certes nay, but in paradys!”
(A 1227-1237)

Effectively, Arcite argues that Palamon has better seats. Both are imprisoned spectators, and cannot rightly hope to achieve the love of Emelye. Arcite seems to accept this dynamic, declaring Palamon the victor “of this aventure” (A 1235), emphasizing his own banishment. Palamon cries the contrary, insisting that Arcite, being free, can actually pursue their mutual love. Ultimately, their dispute is governed in terms of the theater-environment that Duke Theseus has established. Arcite privileges “sighte” and spectatorship. Though Palamon cries that he will never be able to participate in the show that is Emelye’s life, he earlier emphasizes the importance of *seeing* Emelye first, as if that predestines him to be the arch-audience member. Neither Knight seems convinced that he will marry Emelye; rather, the dispute concerns who has the right to love her. Furthermore, neither man should hold the other at odds for loving the same woman in their position as spectators, but as spectators they have invested personal capital into the imagined relationship. In modern terms, it is almost as if two fellows are arguing over who loves a certain Hollywood actress more than the other: both are without hope of ever establishing

a relationship with their icon. In terms of realism, Palamon and Arcite have about as much chance of getting together with Emelye as an ordinary person does with a supermodel. However, Chaucer's readership is aware of the genre at hand, and can predict the impending conflict between the kinsmen. Thus, Palamon and Arcite are not simple spectators—they are spectators being watched by yet another audience, one that Duke Theseus constructs and occupies in the same manner as he does in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Garber's comment concerning the comfort of an actor playing Duke Theseus while watching a play put on by actors whose parts are played by other actors is applicable in terms of *The Knight's Tale* in that Chaucer, via his Knight via Duke Theseus, establishes the borders of the "performances." The term "performances" should be regarded as those actions expected of the characters, dominated by genre and whatever the primary mover of the action in this tale—Duke Theseus—demands.

This is not to say that Chaucer's Theseus is omniscient—he doesn't need to be for Shakespeare to connect the character as the primary performance-inducer. Rather, Chaucer's Knight fills in whatever gaps the Duke cannot occupy by virtue of being an active caricature in the poem. For instance, the Knight prompts the audience to decide on who has the worse plight between the love-struck nobles: "Yow loveres axe I now this questioun:/Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?" (A 1347-48). While his rhetorical intention may be to render the characters indistinguishable, the prompt still invites visualizing their individual plights. The Knight tells little of Palamon's remaining time in incarceration, but instead focuses on Arcite's misery in exile. While Palamon's condition arguably remains in the status quo, Arcite's removal as a spectator proves unbearable, and the knight disguises himself and enters into the court of Theseus:

And yet dooth Juno me wel moore shame,

For I dar noght biknowe myn owene name;
But ther as I was wont to highte Arcite,
How highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte.

(A 1555-58)

Arcite disguises himself as “Philostrate.” Unable to play his own role safely at the court, he dons one “noght worth a myte,” but at least he can see the “Emelye Show” again, and is even a supporting cast member. Significantly, Arcite privileges sight yet again, this time framed in terms of battle-language:

Love hath his firy dart so brennyngly
Ystiked thurgh my trew, careful herte
That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.
Ye sleen me with youre eyen, Emelye!

(A 1564-67)

Love and the pains of love are described emphasizing sight only. Emelye is utterly objectified in that her agency is only passively acknowledged by either of her would-be wooers. She is part of a show, a thing to be seen, heard, but never really interacted with.

Just as Arcite’s role in the Knight’s production changes, so does Palamon’s. He manages to escape from prison, finds his way to a forest, and overhears Arcite’s tale. Palamon confronts Arcite, whom he calls a “false traytour” (A 1580), and the two agree to a duel. Arcite observes the chivalric code, and leaves to obtain Palamon some armor and proper weaponry. Considering that the audience is hearing a Knight’s tale, such observances initially make sense. However, Palamon is described as “wood, with face deed and pale” (A 1578)—he is out of his mind with anger. Why then delay the fight? Palamon swears:

And though that I no wepene have in this place,
But out of prison am astert by grace,
I drede noght that outhur throw shalt dye,
Or thow ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
Chees which thou wolt, or thou shalt nat
asterte!

(A 1591-95)

Arcite is similarly incensed, and draws his sword “fiers as a leon” (A 1598). Though the Knight describes both as furious, the duel is postponed until Palamon can receive proper battle array—a hypocrisy regardless, as no higher authority is present to sanction the match, and armor seems like a needless accoutrement when fighting to the death on supposedly equal terms. In donning their pomp and armor, Palamon and Arcite anticipate an audience.

Ultimately, Duke Theseus and his train, including Emelye, will provide Palamon and Arcite with an audience. Theseus encounters Palamon and Arcite fighting “as it were bores two” (A 1699), identifying them with the object of his initial sport. The Duke is furious, and seems more worried about competition procedure (and spectating) than bloodshed:

Namoore, up peyne of lesynge of youre heed!
By myghty Mars, he shal anon be deed
That smyteth any strook that I may seen.
But telleth me what myster men ye been,
That been so hardy for to fighten here
As it were in a lystes roially.

(A 1707-1713)

Duke Theseus will kill anyone who landed a stroke in the present conflict, and wonders why the knights are fighting so hard *as if* they were in “lystes roially”—a significant observation from the primary producer of theatrics and entertainments in this poem (A 1713). The implication of this *as if* statement is that the knights are fighting as if they had the Duke’s sanction, that they were part of the show. If modern law enforcement officials were also fight managers, they may have exuded a similar tone when encountering two professional boxers fighting in full regalia on the street. Palamon confesses their mutual love for Emelye, and exposes Arcite’s true identity, accepting whatever punishment Theseus intends to mete out. Though the Duke determines that the two will be executed, the women of his train cry in protest: “The queene anon, for verray wommanhede,/Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye./And alle the ladyes in the compaignye” (A 1748-50). Theseus capitulates, and decides to hold a tournament—to put on a show—instead. The Duke is effectively swayed by the prospective crowd members. Curiously, Emelye’s weeping is mentioned secondary to Hippolyta’s. Logically, her woe as the wooed should appear first in the list. Thus, Emelye remains a spectator, reactionary to her sister, interacting with the knights only in that they are part of the spectacle. Just as Palamon and Arcite utterly objectify Emelye, she does the same to them. The audience/spectator dynamic runs both ways.

Despite the relatively isolated nature of the dispute, which should logically conclude after a series of single-combat contests, Duke Theseus sets up the contest as a grand tournament, and the knights even bring in the God’s involvement—Palamon to Venus, and Arcite to Mars. The entire conflict has been blown entirely out of its original proportion, exacerbating the emphasis on spectacle, just as the knights were trying to do by donning their armor in a forest where no one was watching. Theseus, however, ensures that the proceedings will be conducted in the most lavish manner possible. The Knight carefully describes the venue:

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence
If I foryete to tellen the dispense
Of Theseus, that gooth so bisily
To maken up the lystes roially,
That swich a noble theatre as it was
I dar wel seyen in this world ther nas.
The circuit a myle was aboute,
Walled of stoon, and dyched al without.
Round was the shap, in manere of compass,
Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas,
That whan a man was wet on o degree,
He letted nat his felawe for to see.

(A 1881-92)

Chaucer's use of the word "theatre" here is significant. The concordance shows that the term "theatre" is only used three times throughout the entire Chaucer canon, two of which appear in *The Knight's Tale*. Axton suggests that Chaucer may have conceptualized his theater based on the arena in Boccaccio's *Teseida*, which mentions "500 rows of seats, raked [sic] so that no man impedes the view of the man behind him" (85), a depiction that clearly emphasizes the almost voyeuristic aspect of spectacle. This use suggests that the following proceedings promise only surface substance; the bedecking of lists and decorating of the world's finest venue suggests that this has all been conducted before and to a similar effect. Duke Theseus never allows, even from the beginning, Palamon and Arcite to resolve their disputes on their own terms, or outside of Athenian view. He does not just demand constant surveillance, but more importantly

entertainment. It is easy to wonder whether Theseus was swayed by the emotion behind his wife's tears, or rather convinced by their conviction that he can indeed exploit the knights further by making them the main event. Furthermore, the tournament circle may also be a metaphorical representation of medieval theater in the round (Axton 85). The audience never receives any interplay between Emelye and her would-be lovers. Duke Theseus doesn't just dominate the show, he stages, directs, and produces it entirely:

Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;
That geometrie or ars-metrike kan,
Ne portreyour, ne kervere of yimages,
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
That theatre for to maken and devyse.

(A 1896-1901)

Effectively, everyone who is skilled in theater craftsmanship was involved on the Duke Theseus project. This attention to detail makes sense when considered in the context of Theseus as host, but is framed better when his reputation relies on how well he can put on a show. All of Athens is roused for the spectacle, and the Duke hosts a myriad of noble personages. These notables aren't just spectators, but participants themselves:

An hundred lords hadde he with hym there,
Al armed, save hir heedes, in al hir gere,
Ful richely in alle maner thynges.
For trusteth wel that dukes, erles, kynges
Were gadered in this noble compaignye,

For love and for encrees of chivalrye.
Aboute this kyng ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame leon and leopard.
And in this wise these lords, alle and some,
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.
(A 2179-2189)

The lords themselves are a part of the spectacle, and curiously subordinated to the drama of the main event that centers on Palamon and Arcite. These lords love “chivalrye,” a term that can refer both to the code and to horsemanship itself. Even set in Athens, imagined in the Middle Ages, *The Knight’s Tale* is adorned with considerable glitz. The spectacle ultimately serves as the tale’s primary framing mechanism. Theseus provides numerous courtly entertainments: minstrels, gifts, singers, dancers, hawks and hounds along with jousting and other events that precede the main show in this multi-day festival (A 2199-2208).

When the momentous battle finally concludes in Arcite’s favor, Theseus issues him his reward—Emelye—and the crowd goes wild: “Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne/For joye of this, so loude and heighe withalle/It semed that the lystes sholde falle” (A 2660-62). There isn’t even a standing pretension that the entire spectacle wasn’t a show. Since Arcite and Palamon are relatively indistinguishable, save for the colors they chose in terms of the gods they align themselves with, the outcome of the fight will thus be the same regardless. This is especially true for Emelye, who remains a center of spectacle herself, but now in trophy-form. The Duke strains to retain control over even the audience’s reaction, just as he does with Hippolyta and Emelye in the forest.

Theseus calls an end to the event, not just declaring Arcite as the winner, but reasserting his own dominion over the proceedings: “I wol be trewe juge, and no partie” (A 2657). However, Theseus loses control when the gods become involved. Venus, who patronizes Palamon, cries to her father Jupiter, complaining that her wishes should be honored as well as Mars’s. Jupiter then appeals to Pluto, who sends the Furies to kill Arcite—though the knight successfully received the patronage of the God of War and won the battle, he is publicly destroyed by the furies before he can collect his reward. Duke Theseus is rendered powerless to the will of the gods much as he is in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* when Oberon decides to involve himself in the mortals’ love plights. Even in the face of Arcite’s brutal wounds, Theseus declares, “that Arcite shal nat dye;/He shal been heeled of his maladye” (A 2705-06). This platitude seems more like a publicity stunt to preserve the notion that nobody was harmed in the production of the show, as Arcite is clearly egregiously wounded:

His brest tobrosten with his sadel-bowe.

As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,

So was the blood yronnen in his face.

Anon he was yborn out of the place,

With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.

(A 2691-95)

Though Theseus may be in denial, the swift sweeping off of Arcite’s barely living body suggests that the brutality is affecting the outcome of the show. Despite the Duke’s reassurances, the knight dies, leaving Emelye the trophy in a vacuum. On his deathbed, Arcite bequeaths his prize to Palamon, and Duke Theseus, ever the showman, adroitly seizes the opportunity to produce a new theater for Arcite’s funeral:

And at the laste he took conclusioun
That ther at first Arcite and Palamoun
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swoote and grene,
...
He wolde make a fyr in which the office
Funeral he myghte al accomplice.

(A 2857-60; 28863-64)

Rather than let the grove act as a kind of cover for the dead knight, Theseus has it cut down—“to hakke and hewe/The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe/In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne” (A 2865-67)—providing Theseus with both a pyre and a clear space from which Arcite’s funeral can be watched. The dead knight’s train passes through Athens, richly adorned, to the report of “sorweful cheere” (A 2897). It is odd that Theseus is so honoring a former adversary, and not an entirely famous one at that. The Duke isn’t so much paying homage to Arcite as he is perpetuating the spectacle. Even in death, Arcite is a player in Theseus’s production, and is exploited to get a reaction out of the crowd. Theseus makes an appeal to fame, concluding:

And gladder oghte his freend been of his deeth,
Whan with honour up yolden is his breath,
Than whan his name appalled is for age,
For al forgeten is his vassellage.
Thanne it is best, as for a worthy fame,
To dyen whan that he is best of name.

(A 3050-56)

Ultimately, Duke Theseus accepts the *deus ex machina* solution, declaring, “I rede that we make of sorwes two/O parfit joye, lastynge evermo” (A 3071-72). However, this “lasting joy” seems both desolate and randomly appropriated. There is no significant difference between Palamon and Arcite to warrant any real worry over who gets the girl; their prospective relationships with Emelye are equally meaningless. However, Duke Theseus takes advantage of the potential for spectacle, and relocates the drama to a public forum, involving a large number of combatants and associated side attractions to do little more than turn an isolated incident into a public spectacle replete with commodity associated with entertainment: a prize (Emelye), an aggrandized reputation for the Duke, and an amused crowd who have little to invest in the personages in question. Effectively, there is little more at stake here, in terms of depth, than there is with a contemporary professional wrestling grudge match. Duke Theseus is the catalyst that sets the theatrical boundaries for the action in question, and serves more as a master of revelries than he does a king. With the possible exception of his handling of Creon, Theseus only arbitrates conflicts or makes decisions based on the entertainments in question. Despite the impending death of Arcite, the Knight describes the festival with the language of intoxicating summer revelry:

Greet was the feeste in Atthens that day,
And eek the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to been in swich pleasaunce
That al that Monday justen they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.

(A 2483-87)

Effectively, Chaucer's Knight has his audience listening to a tale about watching people, a significant dynamic that Shakespeare picks up on and employs in his play.

Shakespeare's response to the Duke Theseus character suggests a sophisticated understanding of Chaucer's methods. James Andreas points out that Shakespeare was influenced by Chaucer's setting in terms of "the Matter of Thebes" (49). He explains that Thebes thematically is the seat of classical comedy and tragedy—Antigone, Oedipus, and Theseus himself—instilling Shakespeare's drama with thematic complexity. While everything in the proceeding play is light and comic, a darker subtext persists throughout. For example, Duke Theseus refers to his conquest of the Amazons only days prior to their marriage: "I woo'd thee with my sword/And won thy love doing thee injuries" (I.i.16-17).

The Duke Theseus character is the clearest manifestation of Shakespeare's response to Chaucer's methods in this play. Whereas he is a control-driven governor of spectacle in *The Knight's Tale*, Shakespeare's Theseus only differs significantly in terms of brevity. Neither character is exclusive of the other, and Shakespeare's could function comfortably in *The Knight's Tale* for the most part. They differ in terms of their respective situations. However, Donaldson surmises, "[Shakespeare's] Theseus seems to me somewhat less mature, less philosophical, and a good deal more skeptical than the first" (*The Swan at the Well* 32). Since Shakespeare's Theseus doubts the tale of the lovers, he refuses to acknowledge the influence of supernatural forces according to Donaldson. This seeming difference in attitude serves as an excellent example that illustrates Shakespeare's position as a responder to Chaucer. Though Chaucer's Theseus does recognize higher powers, he does so with the benefit of direct observation. The furies burst forth and kill Arcite on the field. Even Donaldson points out that Theseus is then reticent to comment on where Arcite's spirit has gone, remarking that at least he

is in a better place and he died famous. Such sentiments are purely crowd-pleasers.

Shakespeare's Theseus could be imagined deriving the same conclusions were he forced to comment on such a grave situation. The closest he ever comes to leveling such a cant is when he pontificates on Hermia's options: death or marriage to Demetrius. Regardless, Donaldson notes that both Theseus characters are the "most fully responsible" (*The Swan at the Well* 32) in both narratives. Shakespeare comments on what Theseus is "fully responsible" for.

As is true with his counterpart in *The Knight's Tale*, Shakespeare's Theseus is linked to the administration and organization of revelry with its associated responsibilities of managing the reactions of his subjects. Though both Theseus characters admonish the "lunacy of lovers" as Donaldson puts it (*The Swan at the Well* 32-33), they ultimately frame this lunacy in the form of entertainment. Whereas Chaucer's Theseus organizes Palamon and Arcite's quarrel into a theatrical sporting event, Shakespeare's Duke frames the lovers' misadventures in terms of theater itself. At the outset of the play, Theseus calls for Philostrate (the pseudonym adopted by Arcite in *The Knight's Tale*) to "Stir up the Athentian youth to merriments" (I.i.13). Though he is distracted by administrative miscellanea involving the quarrel of Egeus and Demetrius against Lysander, Oberon and Puck effectively stage the entertainments, both for Theseus and Shakespeare's audience. As in *The Knight's Tale*, supernatural forces compel action outside of Theseus's control, who then can respond only by incorporating it into further crowd-pleasing revelry. Since the lovers' antics aren't as grave as Palamon and Arcite's, he instead invites them, to join (horn) in on his wedding ceremonies.

Both authors' spectacles significantly start in May. Chaucer's Knight is very specific about the date of Palamon's escape: "It fel that in the seventhe yer, of May/The thirddre nyght" (A 1462-63). Upon discovering the lovers whilst hunting, Shakespeare's Theseus surmises, "No

doubt they rose up early to observe/The rite of May” (IV.i.132-33). The folly of lovers, in both cases, can be attributed to midsummer madness. “Midsummer Night” normally occurs in late June, and its festival atmosphere permeated with superstition cultivates a sense of otherworldliness and enchantment, and when paired with the heat results in a state of altered consciousness “when people are most apt to imagine fantastic experiences” (Asimov 17; cf. Garber 218). For Chaucer, Palamon’s escape is the final catalyst for the ensuing lunacy and its accompanying festivities. Shakespeare responds to this point, and goes so far as to frame Chaucer’s theater-like spectacle in terms of actual theatricality. Just how Chaucer’s Theseus rounds up Palamon and Arcite, preparing them for their performances, Shakespeare’s Duke turns his wedding into a circus as well. The effect is a disturbing blur between a violent spectacle that unintentionally leads to Arcite’s death and a wedding, replete with Bottom’s performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which ends tragically as well. Shakespeare indicates that theatricality can have consequences outside of the director’s intentions. However, both authors’ Theseuses are effective circumstantial directors who makes the most out of unexpected circumstances.

Shakespeare directly echoes Chaucer when Theseus commands, “Away with us to Athens. Three and three, / We’ll hold a feast in great solemnity” (IV.i.184-185), matching up with Chaucer’s “With muchel glorie and gret solempnitee” (A 870).⁴ Both statements occur in conjunction with Theseus and Hippolyta’s wedding ceremonies, furthering the blur between Chaucer’s and Shakespeare’s respective spectacles. Prior to Bottom’s show, Theseus and Hippolyta converse about poetry. In the following speech, Theseus privileges the manifestation of imagery brought forth by poets:

⁴ Coghill points out Hales’s assertion that Shakespeare derived his “With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling” (I.i.19) from this particular Chaucerian instance, noting “He might have cast his eye a line or two higher to find an echo of *solempnitee* in Theseus’s phrase ‘the night of our solemnities’ [I.i.11]; but the detail escaped him” (88). My observation apparently escaped Coghill.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
...
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to aery nothing
A local habitation and a name.
(V.i.7-8, 14-17).

The Duke's association of poets and lovers with madmen is interesting in the context of Shakespeare's reading of Chaucer, exacerbated by the theater setting. Theseus himself is derived from one such "local habitation"—*The Knight's Tale*. Chaucer's imagination of Theseus isn't an "aery nothing" to begin with, though as the character was derived from Greek sources. Hippolyta replies, placing the imaginative responsibility on the audience, or collective understanding. Poetry and drama are therefore edified through audience reactions and interaction:

But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But howsoever, strange and admirable.
(V.i.23-27)

Stanley Wells points out that "Theseus allows himself to be governed by reason, whereas Hippolyta knows that illusion and the imagination have an even more important part to play in

human affairs” (68). Thus, spectacle is sustained through audience understanding. Shakespeare is an audience member to Chaucer, and Hippolyta’s argument is realized through Shakespeare’s treatment of the poet and his Theseus in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. However, Hippolyta’s supposition has a darker side that Shakespeare recognizes through his adoption of Chaucer’s Theseus. When the minds of audience members are “transfigur’d” together, a collective interpretation trumps perhaps an individual correct one. Chaucer’s Knight tells a tale that on the surface can be cheered at, but has darker implications when examined only slightly more closely. Chaucer’s Miller is the only textual respondent to the Knight, who ultimately mocks the pomp and spectacle of his form. Though Shakespeare’s Theseus is on gentler ground, he very quickly could be “transfigur’d” depending on the situation. He possibly shares his sense of spectacle with Shakespeare after a fashion, but is better representative of Shakespeare’s directorial anxiety. For Chaucer’s Theseus, and his Knight who tells the tale, rabble-rousing trumps the truly disturbing aspects of Palamon and Arcite’s plight. They are both exploiters of Emelye and exploited by Theseus as performers in turn. Chaucer’s embedded critiques of chivalric pomposity are necessarily subtle, and yet in danger of being overlooked. This is especially true if Chaucer’s audience collectively decides on an incorrect interpretation of the text. Thus, theater is necessarily distinct from literature in the mind of Theseus, and Shakespeare recognizes the danger of his own meaning being lost in a wilderness of fairies on stage.

CHAPTER THREE

AUTHORIAL IDENTITY IN *TWELFTH NIGHT* VIA *SIR THOPAS*

In *Twelfth Night*, Feste is described as a “corrupter of words” (III.i.36). An entertainer for Olivia’s father, he has just returned from an apparently long hiatus, possibly induced by creative burnout. Harold Bloom says, “He carries his exhaustion with verve and wit, and always with the air of knowing all there is to know, not in a superior way but with a sweet melancholy” (244), a near-echo of Stanley Wells, who contends, “He is the artist at the heart of the play, the creator and entertainer who has constantly to strive to make contact with his audience, and who relies on his ability to do so for his very living” (184). He can be readily identified as an authorial stand-in. Feste’s investment in his professional identity manifests most clearly in his initial interactions with Malvolio in the play. As the clown is attempting to jostle Olivia out of her self-imposed misery and mourning for her dead brother, Malvolio snaps

I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal. I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone. Look you now, he's out of his guard already. Unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagg'd.

(I.v.83-88)

Malvolio will pay dearly for this slight to Feste’s reputation and professional ethic. In saying that he “put down...with an *ordinary* fool that *has no more brain than a stone*,” Malvolio insults both Feste’s intelligence and the professional company that he keeps. These aspects of his insult are the most significant, as Feste’s intelligence and quality as a performer are apparently well understood, and the clown seems proud of this.

Apart from their surface affinities as authors, there is a more significant connection between Shakespeare and Chaucer in *Twelfth Night*'s clown. Shakespeare himself produces this effect intentionally, and provides his audience with subtle cues indicating his masking. As with his other Chaucerian habitats, Shakespeare identifies Feste as such with tell-tale references to Chaucer's canon. The initial clues in *Twelfth Night* come out in an exchange of wit between the clown and Viola. Feste jokes about Viola suggesting that he save his money, or spend his coins all in one place: "I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir, to bring a Cressida to this Troilus" (III.i.51-52). Feste has identified himself as an actor and as Cressida's uncle, who served as a "go-between" for the lovers (Barton 458). The scene serves to highlight part of Viola's role.⁵ Disguised as Cesario, she literally is operating as a go-between for Orsino, upholding the courtly love tradition that Chaucer sets out in his own tale, yet with inverted gender roles (Box 47). Since Feste points out the significance of this exchange, the indication is that Shakespeare stands behind the authorial mask that he has established in Feste, amplifying his Chaucerian tone.

When their conversation concludes, Viola notes:

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
And to do that well craves a kind of wit.
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
The quality of persons, and the time;
And like the haggard, check at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practice
As full of labor as a wise man's art;

⁵ Terry Box notes that in *The Miller's Tale*, Chaucer instills Absolon, one of Alisoun's wooers, with "characteristics traditionally associated with the courtly love heroine," matching Muscatine's *Galaran de Bretagne*: "the ideal courtly lady has blonde hair... grey eyes" and "the heroine's face is described as white mingled with vermillion" (47).

For folly that he wisely shows is fit,
But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit.

(III.i.60-68)

Essentially, Feste himself is clever at adopting masks and disguises to veil the complete capacity of his wit. Moreover, these traits suggest that Feste knows more than he should. While in part, this is in no way unexplainable by Feste's penchant for observance and sensitivity to the motivations of those around him, and yet his invocation of *Troilus and Criseyde* indicates that he is the primary conceptual framer of this scene between him and Viola. Moreover, Feste's powers of observation and sensitivity are a part of his craft, which Viola describes in terms of labor and a "wise man's art." Feste wisely masks his own cleverness behind the guise of a fool.

Chaucer significantly employs similar tactics. In developing the caricature of his narrator, "Chaucer the pilgrim," Chaucer himself may veil his underlying meanings and the full capacity of his wit, made accessible only to very close readers and maybe even only close acquaintances. In Chaucer the pilgrim's tale, *Sir Thopas*, the Host charges the narrator to liven up the mood after the Prioress's ghastly fare. One would expect, as Chaucer's readers possibly did, that the great poet will assign his own character the most rousing tale, and therefore win the Host's contest. However, *Sir Thopas* proves so ludicrous as to be interrupted by the Host. Donaldson points out that Chaucer's tale is "206 inexorable lines describing the non-adventures of an unusually uninteresting knight" (8), highlighting that the poem is widely understood as a "superlative parody." Benson notes that the tale has no source—unsurprising, considering that it is interrupted—and yet "almost every line has its parallel in one or another of the popular *minstrel romances*, brief oral works that rely on audience reaction" (16-17). Benson notes their heavily formulaic nature and uneven verse structure, characterized primarily as a plot driven by

“adventurous action” (17). Though the form is old-fashioned in Chaucer’s time, Benson suggests that the poet is very familiar with the genre, and even “seems affectionate” towards it. The audience should be clued in during the tale’s prologue, as Chaucer’s character is apologetic after the Host commands him to tell a tale: “‘Hooste’, quod I, ‘ne beth nat yvele apayd,/For oother tale certes kan I noon,/But of a rym I lerned longe agoon” (1897-99). The pilgrim does not wish for his host to be displeased, yet is enthusiastic about getting to tell a tale. Eventually, the Host stops the tale mid-sentence:

“Namooore of this, for Goddes dignitee,”
Quod oure Hooste, “for thou makest me
So wery of thy verray lewednesse
That, also wisly God my soule blesse,
Myne eres aken of thy drasty speche.
Now swich a rym the devel I biteche!
This may wel be rym doggerel,” quod he.
“Why so?” quod I, “why wiltow lette me
Moore of my tale than another man,
Syn that it is the beste rym I kan?
“By God,” quod he, “for pleynly, at a word,
Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord!
Thou doost noght ells but despendest tyme.
Sire, at o word, thou shalt no lenger ryme.
(B2 2109-2122)

Chaucer's Host literally decries the poem as not being worth a turd. The Host then bids Chaucer to tell something in prose, as his rhyming is unbearable. The irony of this interrupted tale would not be lost on Chaucer's readership, as he has expressed himself masterfully as the composer of *The Canterbury Tales*. Thus, in portraying himself as an inept poet, Chaucer doesn't just satirize his own tastes and skills, but softens the fact that the noble Thopas is a buffoon. He employs a similar tactic in the prologue to *The Miller's Tale*, warning his audience that the Miller is a "cherl" (A 3182), that "He nolde his wordes for no man forbere" (A 3168), advising that anyone easily offended should "Turne over the leef and chese another tale" (A 3177). Thus, Chaucer exonerates himself from any offensive material that he presents as well as any nasty parallels the nobility could be offended by between *The Knight's Tale* and the Miller's "quite" (A 3135): "Avyseth yow, and put me out of blame;/And eek men shal nat maken ernest of game" (A 3185-86). Chaucer adroitly moves between his masks in an attempt at avoiding direct criticism for his tales that are potentially offensive to the right (or wrong) sort of observant reader. Miskimin asserts, "Chaucer's distinctive achievements as a poet are to be found in his discoveries of means of concealment of himself, of art that seems to be artless" (30).

Feste, like Chaucer, is a professional masker himself. Summers claims that in terms of the multiplicity of maskers in *Twelfth Night*, "Feste is the one professional among a crowd of amateurs; he does it for a living" (134). Feste's persona serves to protect himself and his own identity while penetrating the masks of others around him. Summers indicates that the roles and their associated disguises donned by the other characters typically are ill-suited to them (133). Malvolio, who has insulted Feste egregiously on a professional level, is pierced the most deeply by the fool's wit: the steward's mask is utterly crushed. Malvolio is a pretender in the extreme, a household servant with no hope of ascending to a noble station, especially within the context of

the strict Tudor-era hierarchy. Regardless, Malvolio sees himself as a part of “an aristocracy of taste and leisure...ruled by [his] mistaken notions of the proper role of an upper-class gentleman” (Summers 132). Malvolio’s aspirations ascend above his sense and understanding of his appropriate place in society (Garber 529). Thus, Maria easily hatches her plot to fool the steward, tricking him into believing that Lady Olivia has sent amorous correspondence to him. Malvolio’s faults as a character are the same as his strengths: Goddard notes, “he is gravity—dignity, decency, decorum, servility and severity in the cause of ‘good order,’ carried to the third degree and beyond—and as such fair game for his tormentors” (298). In being so immovable, and so consistent, as set in his fantasies as he is in his severe sense of order, he is an easy target for Maria’s trick. More significantly, Feste pierces the steward’s masked persona more completely than any other character in the play, and adopts an overtly Chaucerian tactic to accomplish his ends. Feste cracks Malvolio’s mask by donning the likeness of “Sir Topas the curate” (IV.ii.2). In identifying himself as Topas, a modification of Chaucer’s “Thopas,” Feste (and Shakespeare) signals the trajectory of his satirical intentions. Topas could be considered as a kind of pretender knight, foolishly and incompletely copying the chivalric modes of his exemplars. J.A. Burrow points out that aside from his name deriving from the Topaz gem—which could symbolically indicate effeminacy and/or androgyny, in any case being “a type of superlative excellence”—the prefix “sire” is consistently attached to the foolish knight, a tactic that Chaucer avoids in his other works when referring to knights: “Except in Thopas, Chaucer avoids prefixing *sire* to a knight’s name, thus following contemporary French practice, which confined the usage to wealthy bourgeois” (918). Malvolio is much the same—perhaps best considered as a part of a wealthy bourgeois class due to his status as Lady Olivia’s Steward—and perhaps similarly severe and serious about his social position as a gentleman as Sir Thopas is.

Benson notes that the “satire in *Sir Thopas* may be social as well as literary, since Thopas is something of a would-be gentleman, who works just a bit too hard at observing the proper forms of romance knighthood” (17).⁶ Feste’s adoption of this particular Chaucerian mask necessarily cues his relationship to Chaucer the pilgrim; as with the poet’s own mask, Feste adopts his persona to pierce pretensions and subtly satirize behind a carefully crafted guise. Sir Toby admits, “The knave counterfeits well; a good knave” (IV.ii.19), not just referring to Feste’s effective disguise—Maria even points out to Feste, “Thou mightst have done this without thy beard and gown, he sees thee not” (IV.iii.64-65)—but rather pointing out that the allowed fool’s trick was borrowed from elsewhere, perhaps in an indirect homage to Chaucer himself. Chaucer the pilgrim subtly pierces his fellow pilgrims on the basis of their own behaviors that contradict their proper social roles, the very same tactic and rationale employed by Feste. Though Feste is world-weary and shrewd while Chaucer the pilgrim is social and amiable, both serve the same didactic purpose in the context of their respective works.

The significance of Feste’s adoption of the Topas persona is manifold: not only is the fool playing a part for the sake of Malvolio, challenging the steward’s identity, but his mask is derived from Chaucer the pilgrim’s own tale. Thus, the Chaucerian mask begets the Shakespearean one, though with an additional layer of complication. Shakespeare’s audience would not necessarily recognize *Sir Thopas* as the tale told by Chaucer the pilgrim. Indeed, the pilgrim is never identified specifically as Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*. However, Shakespeare is reading the narrator as Chaucer, recognizing Chaucer’s masked authorial presence: a supposedly foolish poet telling a tale about a foolish knight. Feste tells, or acts, his own version of *Sir Thopas*, not so much corrupted in content but altered for Malvolio’s sake. In

⁶ The italics are mine—In the *Riverside Chaucer*, Benson et al. typically do not italicize titles intra paragraph.

Twelfth Night, Shakespeare employs Thopas as a kind of literary trope, used as Chaucer used him. For Malvolio, identity is as much at stake as it is for both Chaucer the pilgrim and Sir Thopas himself. The steward pretends nobility, calling Toby and Maria “idle shallow things” (III.iv.123-24), and yet his supposedly improved element fails to garner him reprieve or any sort of consideration beyond what the pranksters provide. Feste mines the cracks in the steward’s presumed identity as Olivia’s betrothed. Malvolio makes frequent appeals to Olivia, crying, “Sir Topas, Sir Topas, good Sir Topas, go to my lady” (IV.ii.23-24), to which Feste replies, “Talkest thou nothing but of ladies?” (IV.ii.25-26). While on the surface Feste seems to be simply playing games with the steward, he actually serves to highlight Malvolio’s key character defect and mask. In the face of the fool’s duress, Malvolio’s noble façade crumbles. Importantly, however, he never once concedes that he is mad. Harold Goddard maintains that “Malvolio keeps his head during his confinement in darkness” (299), the authentic portion of his identity firmly intact. Thus, “Sir Topas” is only a mirror to Malvolio’s pretensions—the foolish knight paired with the identity of a curate, a religious and moral authority as Malvolio also presumes himself to be. Just as Malvolio considers himself being of a higher element than even his social betters, his moral pronouncements, even made in the face of his incarceration, mark him as believing a clerical station without actually holding one. Feste asks him, “What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild-fowl?” (IV.ii.50-51), and Malvolio immediately makes a spiritual and moral pronouncement: “That the soul of our grandam might happily inhabit a bird...I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion” (IV.ii.52-56). Again, Feste counters his pretention:

Fare thee well. Remain thou still in darkness. Thou shalt hold th’ opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits, and fear to kill a woodcock lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam. Fare thee well.

(IV.ii.57-60)

Initially it seems as if Feste tells Malvolio that he will eventually agree with Pythagoras, as the steward will go mad from his incarceration. However, in reading Ovid, Shakespeare surely better understood the concept of metempsychosis (the transmigration of souls) than Malvolio.

Pythagoras asserts an appreciation of the souls of living things; Malvolio corrupts this intention, much in the same manner as Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice*, instead assuming, yet again, the superiority of his own “element.” Feste promotes that Malvolio should adopt the *opinion* of Pythagoras, not necessarily his doctrine. The fool has already been called a “corrupter of words,” and as usual he employs his art to illuminate a personal flaw, just as he did with Olivia. Thus, Feste is able to exact his complete professional revenge, and exercise upon Malvolio, though doubtfully for the steward’s improvement, the art that he so deftly applies to Olivia when attempting to draw her out of her state of mourning. In the likeness of Topas, Feste serves as a mirror to Malvolio, a “corrupter of words.”

Later in the scene, Feste holds a three-way conversation between his own persona, Topas, and Malvolio, in effect bringing both Shakespeare’s and Chaucer’s masks together on stage, albeit via a singular personality. After Feste feigns leaving, he readopts his authentic persona, and draws Malvolio’s attention by singing a song—further confirmation of the fool’s identity as a known entertainer. Malvolio cries,

Good fool, as ever thou wilt deserve well at my hand, help me to a candle, and pen, ink, and paper. As I am a gentleman, I will live to be thankful to thee for it.

(IV.ii.80-84)

It is odd that Malvolio would ask Feste for ink and paper rather than Topas. Whereas Sir Topas is supposedly a curate, and would have the benefit of writing instruments, Feste seems more

prone to singing and wordplay. However, if Feste is a stand-in for Shakespeare, the request makes sense metaphorically. Furthermore, Malvolio is speaking in terms of providing Feste a commission—"I'll requite thee in the highest degree" (IV.ii.118-19)—resuming his pretention of nobility. Feste brings back the Topas persona, chiding Malvolio for his "vain bibble babble" (IV.ii.96-97), then rebuking the fool's own persona for colluding with a madman: "Maintain no words with him, good fellow" (IV.ii.99). Sir Topas denies Feste and Malvolio the right to speak, an interesting insistence from this persona, considering that Chaucer's *Sir Thopas* is interrupted by the Host for being a waste of time. However, Malvolio apparently hasn't read Chaucer, and certainly doesn't heed the fool's veiled advice. Stanley Wells affirms, "Shakespeare makes it clear that he ends no wiser and no better than he had begun" (183). He remains in the dark room until the end of the play, despite even Sir Toby's reticence about maintaining the ruse any longer: "I would we were well rid of this knavery" (IV.ii.67-68), which according to Garber "signals the beginning of the end of the revels" (532). Toby's commentary isn't just reflective of his worry over getting in further trouble with Olivia, but a statement about the world of masks and jests leading to a "surfeiting," the theme asserted by the opening lines of the play (I.i.2)—of revelry and disguises.

Chaucer's *Sir Thopas* even goes too far, surfeiting in a way as well. The Host cries, "Namore of this, for Goddes dignitee" (B2 2109). Chaucer does not simply parody the Knight Thopas in terms of character behavior, but also in form. Shakespeare achieves the same effect with *Twelfth Night* in many respects. In terms of Malvolio's abuse, the comedy ceases to function, as the joke at Malvolio's expense is carried too far. Bloom argues that his treatment "passes into the domain of sadism" (237). However, Malvolio isn't the only character who pays for excess. Both Sir Toby and Sir Andrew receive bloody coxcombs; head injuries are of

questionable comedic effect and seem gruesome in light of the happy reunion about to take place. As Sir Andrew offers to help Toby, the play's arch-reveler lashes out: "Will you help?—an ass-head and a coxcomb and a knave, a thin-fac'd knave, a gull!" (V.i.206-207). This scene is devastating not so much due to what is said but who says it: this behavior is especially disappointing coming from Sir Toby, who early on takes his stand against Malvolio's Puritanism, the chief representative of "cakes and ale" (II.iii.114-116). Also, despite Sir Andrew's idiocy, he really is a lot of fun, and doesn't really seem to mind that much of it is at his expense. Toby's rant cannot be reduced to a humorous jab either—he uses too many words to insult Andrew, and his tone is further sobered by his gushing wound. Harsh words and brutal wounds push this scene over the boundaries of enjoyable comedy.

Chaucer does not limit his exploration of comedic excess to *Sir Thopas*. Earlier in *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Miller's Tale* parallels Toby and Andrew's plight in the way of wounds. A Fabliaux, the tale is both comedic and sexually charged. Nicholas, a clerk of Oxford, covets his old carpenter landlord's young wife, Alisoun, and they plot to fool the old man into thinking that God will send a second flood by night. Nicholas convinces the carpenter to hole up in a tub lashed to ceiling rafters, which will float upon the water. The two lovers consummate their relationship, but are later interrupted by a feckless would-be wooer of Alisoun (reminiscent of Sir Andrew in many ways), Absolon. Nicholas and Alisoun play a lewd joke on the fellow, who retorts by stabbing Nicholas in the buttocks with a hot iron ploughshare. Nicholas screams "Help! Water! Water! Help, for Goddes herte!" (A 3815), startling the carpenter, who cuts the cords of his tub, tumbling to the ground and breaking his arm. Regardless of the poem's sauciness, a broken arm and a burned rear seem like brutal wounds to end a comedy with. Chaucer could have easily made the scene slapstick by leaving out the gorier details. Had the

carpenter simply tumbled down and bonked his head, and Nicholas singed rather than burned, the jovial tone would have maintained itself. However, this scene calls attention to the expectations of comedy itself. Does comedy necessitate that someone always be hurt in some way? Malvolio's mistreatment is analogous to the carpenter's in terms of pushing the extremes of comedy. Like the steward's treatment at the hands of "Sir Topas", the carpenter is laughed at by onlookers, and never allowed to explain himself. Garber insists, "At this point *Twelfth Night* almost moves beyond the bounds of comedy and toward another kind of accountability, another kind of moral inquiry" (533). Chaucer examines the extremes of comedy and the expectations held on the teller (in this case the Miller) and those of audience reaction. Shakespeare engages this point for the whole of his play, exploring how excess can serve to actually turn comedy rancid.

Shakespeare inhabits Feste, Topas, and in a way Chaucer, paying homage to his exemplar's methods while engaging them in his own way. For Shakespeare, Chaucer does not simply represent a dead poet to be honored, but an author who inhabits characters in his own right, which instills him with a kind of immortality. It's in these instances that Shakespeare converses with Chaucer. It is also here that he pays tribute to the poet in better ways than simply copying Chaucer while soppily acknowledging his source. Shakespeare doesn't just put Chaucer on display, subliminally indicating "See, I've read *Sir Thopas*." Rather, he exhibits a complex understanding of the poet, one that Harold Goddard recognizes in this play:

We can imagine the Elizabethan gentleman swarming to *Twelfth Night* and paying for the privilege! It is almost as if the dead man were expected to pay an entrance fee to his own funeral and enjoy the proceedings. The poet just holds the mirror up to nature and gets a more devastating effect than the fiercest satire could

achieve. It is the Chaucerian method. Indeed, *Twelfth Night* makes one wonder whether justice has been done to the indebtedness of Shakespeare to the spirit of his great predecessor as distinguished from his indebtedness to him in a narrower sense.... Shakespeare does something similar to what Chaucer does...so sweetens the medicine he is administering to his victims...that they swallow it as if it were the most refreshing draught.

(296)

For the most part, Feste the “corrupter of words” does make his draught refreshing.

The crux and the significance of Shakespeare’s/Feste’s relationship to Chaucer is deeply rooted in the idea of *authorial* identification. Even though Feste is a Chaucerian habitat, he really only shares those things with Chaucer that Shakespeare has in common with Chaucer: uncanny wit, employment as an entertainer, treatments of tales indebted to exemplars, a perceptive and at times sardonic view on life, questionable treatment at the hands of betters, and copious artistic output. Therefore, the clown is not standing in for Chaucer as much as he is inspired by the poet’s methods. It is significant that Feste speaks almost entirely in prose, except when he is singing—Chaucer’s pilgrim, upon being interrupted amidst his Thopas rhyme, moves into the prose tale *Melibee*. While one may expect Shakespeare’s mask, who happens to identify with one of England’s greatest known poets, to speak in his high-flouted iambic pentameter, it is important to consider that Feste has already been identified as a professional, and sings poetry with ease when it suits him. The author is a source of poetry and wit in others. Feste inspires those traits *and* masters them.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAUCER LOST AND FOUND IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

Considering all of the Chaucerian references in Shakespeare, we should wonder why Chaucer himself is never mentioned anywhere in the canon. His absence initially may not seem peculiar—Chaucer himself never mentions Boccaccio in the entirety of *The Canterbury Tales*, despite the *Decameron*'s influence on the work (Benson 3-4). For Shakespeare, however, Chaucer's absence is strange, for the bard alludes to a variety of other authors, often by name, in his dramatic works. Cicero makes his appearance in *Julius Caesar*, and though the renowned Roman poet and statesman figures prominently in Plutarch, his involvement with the events surrounding Caesar's assassination were minimal, and the character disappears early in the play. In many ways, Shakespeare makes frequent use of minutiae in regards to smaller roles. For instance, the murder of "Cinna the Poet," also in *Julius Caesar*, is briefly mentioned in Plutarch's *Brutus* (20). Chaucer's contemporaries are no exception to Shakespeare's strategy. John Gower, a poet acquainted with Chaucer who provided a source for *Pericles* in his *Confessio Amatis* (Smith 1528), is represented physically onstage as Shakespeare's Chorus in that play (Crow and Leland xxiii). Gower may also receive a cameo appearance in *Henry IV Part Two* as a member of the King's party, reporting news and subsequently invited to dinner by Falstaff in Act II (McNeal 87). John of Gaunt, Chaucer's brother-in-law and his most notable patron, receives one of the most dazzling speeches in the canon, in *Richard II*, despite his relatively small part compared to his son, Henry Bolingbroke. Even a "Scoggin" is mentioned in *Henry IV Part Two*, likely the moralist Henry Scogan, tutor to Henry IV's children (Gross 636), and dedicatee of Chaucer's envoy. Shakespeare is familiar with the two courts most crucial to Chaucer's life—those of Richard II and Henry IV—including major and minor figures of the poet's "narrow

aristocratic circle” among the *dramatis personae* and at least mentioning others: John of Gaunt, Henry Scogan, and John Gower were among his key audience members (Loomis 169-170).

Furthermore, Shakespeare showcases works that he apparently admires. Most blatantly, in *Titus Andronicus*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* actually makes an appearance on stage when Lavinia chases young Lucius about in an attempt to identify her rapists:

Titus: Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?

Boy: Grandsire, ‘tis Ovid’s Metamorphosis,/My mother gave it me.

(IV.i.40-42)

In this case, both the author and the work appear by name. While Shakespeare undoubtedly used other sources that he did not cite or pay direct homage to, he seems committed to those sources that greatly influenced his works. Thus, Shakespeare almost literally circles Chaucer, in terms of character allusions, yet never falls on him.

In light of direct allusions to authors he admires, the appearances of literary figures in his works, and an apparent use of Chaucer throughout the canon, one may be tempted to argue that Shakespeare snubbed the poet. While such a case is not entirely implausible, it is highly unlikely given the breadth of evidence to suggest that Shakespeare actually widely read Chaucer’s work. Donaldson even suggests that Shakespeare did not have any other meaningful English poetic influence than Chaucer (*Chaucerian* 5). Regardless of this claim, Shakespeare draws on numerous Chaucerian plot devices and themes in key comedies and tragedies, especially *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Titus Andronicus*. Moreover, when the opportunity to include Chaucer is most auspicious, it is odd that Shakespeare does not mention the poet once by name. Given his pattern of inclusion and admiration, Chaucer’s absence is not only highly suspicious, but also implausible.

In Shakespeare's *Richard II* and *Henry IV* plays, where Chaucer would most logically appear as a historical figure or at least receive some brief mention, there is no direct reference to the poet. While this may not appear as problematic in the scope of those histories' plots, a variety of odd Chaucerianisms significantly creep into our consciousness. In *Richard II*, Chaucer is indirectly infused throughout the play via the frequent use of the term "pilgrimage." Henry Bolingbroke mentions that he and his foe Mowbray are "like two men/That vow a long and weary pilgrimage" (I.iii.49) in regards to their conflict, which is distinguished from his later pontification that he will "make a voyage to the Holy Land" (V.vi.49). It is unclear why Shakespeare uses "pilgrimage" for "voyage," though he may be distinguishing between Henry's initial metaphorical use of the term and his later literal, yet unrealized, intention. John of Gaunt uses the term in a similar manner, when appealing Richard to shorten his son's banishment, fearing that his advanced years will preclude a reunion: "Thou canst help time to furrow me with age,/ But stop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage" (I.iii.230). Henry's response to his father's insistence that banishment can be "a travel that thou takest for pleasure" (I.iii.262): "My heart will sigh when I miscall it so,/Which finds it an enforced pilgrimage" (I.iii.263-64).

Aging, banishment, and suppression do not necessarily match up neatly with pervasive themes in *The Canterbury Tales*, or in a thematic manner that Shakespeare finds meaningful enough to indicate that he was thinking of those works. However, those themes may be biographically prevalent to Chaucer himself. Perhaps significantly, the term "pilgrimage" is used only by Chaucer's patrons—Richard II, John of Gaunt and Henry IV.⁷ Chaucer's associations can be derived from his works without necessarily consulting historical records. In the *Complaint*

⁷ Coincidentally, Terry Jones points out that as a literary figure, Chaucer's relationship to those three nobles may very well have been considerably governed by aging, a kind of banishment, and potential suppression of his works leading up to his eventual retraction (Jones 63-68).

of Chaucer *Unto his Purse*, the poet appeals directly to King Henry IV, and it seems as if he is in dire straits:

O conqueror of Brutes Albyon
Which that by lyne and free eleccion
Been verray kyng, this song to yow I sende,
And ye, that mowen alle oure harmes amende,
Have mynde upon my supplicacion.

(22-26)

Chaucer grandiosely implies that Henry is the rightful bearer of the crown, despite his succession by coup and the death of Richard. Chaucer was a member of Richard II's court, but it seems as if he has at least initially succeeded in surviving the transition, though he was having dire financial woes. Benson suggests that Chaucer's *Complaint* may suggest that the grants originally approved by the new king may not have been paid (xxv).

Aside from the "pilgrimage" references in *Richard II*, there is little else to connect that play with Chaucer's work or biography, aside from the prominence of his court connections. The two *Henry IV* plays contain the most significant allusions to Chaucer's works. In *Henry IV, Part One*, Poins reports "pilgrims going to Canterbury" (I.ii.126), a connection noted by Thomas McNeal (89). Poins suggests that Hal, Falstaff, and company should don "vizards" (I.ii.128) and rob the pilgrims at Gadshill. Hal is at first reluctant, but agrees after Poins promises a better ruse on Falstaff: rob him after he loots the pilgrims. Ultimately, the pilgrims get the short end of the deal. Despite Hal's reservations, we later learn he does not have problems with taxation through government channels. Falstaff predicts Hal's eventual hypocrisy: "There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee, nor thou camest not of the blood royal, if thou darest not

stand for ten shillings” (I.ii.139-141). Ultimately, Hal plays along with Poins, duping Falstaff into dropping his spoils. The exchange of funds here is representative of the royal tax collection process: the pilgrims are figures without agency who pay taxes, collected by Falstaff, and reaped by the heir-apparent. The same analogy, however, can be drawn to the process of Chaucer’s tales. Regardless of our assumption concerning his fiction, Chaucer depicts himself collecting tales from his fellow-pilgrims, and sets them to record in *The Canterbury Tales*. Loomis points out that Chaucer’s audience was primarily aristocratic (169)—a fact surely not overlooked by Shakespeare. Thus, Chaucer’s tale-telling is analogous to Falstaff’s own antics: an entertainment enjoyed, and exploited, by royalty.

In the General Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer takes care to mention that whenever a story bears repeating, the teller has the responsibility of reporting the facts as closely as they were spoken to him:

For this ye knowen also wel as I,
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche or large,
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.
(A 732-39)

Certainly Falstaff’s tall tales do not meet this criterion, and he is mocked by Hal for his exaggerations: “These lies are like their father that begets them;/gross as a mountain, open, palpable” (II.iv.225-26). However, the fat knight responds wittily, praising his own instinct for

not killing the heir-apparent. Effectively, Falstaff is not so much a liar as he is a “bullshitter.” Even though Bardolph and Peto later reveal that the knight hacked his sword with a dagger, his story seems so obviously exaggerated and contrived that one wonders how seriously Falstaff actually expected Hal and Poin to take him. This tongue-in-cheek pontification on the verity of Falstaff’s claims echoes Chaucer’s scheme in the General Prologue: the poet does not expect his audience to actually treat the work as history, but as a tale. When Chaucer warns that the speaker who fails to memorize whomever he is quoting entirely may “feyne thyng, or fynde words newe,” he is actually paying homage to the creative process. Falstaff, as Shakespeare’s authorial response to Chaucer, answers this claim via theatricality. The entire post-Gadshill spectacle is a show, replete with exaggerated language; costumes (the vizards); and even makeup in the form of blood, as Bardolph bemoans that Falstaff made the would-be thieves “tickle our noses with spear-grass to make them bleed, and then to beslubber our garments with it and swear it was the blood of true men” (II.iv.309-11).

Falstaff’s own operation as a dramatist, similar in philosophical bearing to Chaucer’s handling of truth in the General Prologue, hearkens unto the poet’s caricature of himself in *The Canterbury Tales*. “Chaucer the pilgrim,” as critics such as E. Talbot Donaldson would identify the character, appears as a kind of bumbling, rotund, “wide-eyed,” simple-minded and jolly fellow, a depiction very similar to his own characterization in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* (*Speaking of Chaucer* 2). His tale of *Sir Thopas* is described as “nat worth a toord” by the Host, who interrupts its telling (B2 2119). Similarly, Hal does not seem impressed by Falstaff’s antics. Yet Hal calls for further theatricality, asking Falstaff to “stand for my father, and examine me upon the particulars of my life” (II.iv.376-77), whereupon Falstaff responds by preparing his stage, props, and makeup: “this chair shall be my state,/this dagger my sceptre, and

this cushion my crown” (II.iv.378-79), even calling for another cup of sack “to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept” as he plays Hal’s father (II.iv.385). The entire presentation seems absurd, yet serves to highlight more subtle issues and establish Shakespeare’s skillful blending of fiction within fiction—just like Chaucer’s telling of *Sir Thopas*. Despite our understandable suspicion of her credentials as a drama critic, the Hostess praises Falstaff’s performance: “O Jesu, he doth it as like one of these harlotry players as ever I see!” (II.iv.395-96). Asimov notes that Falstaff employs “exotic words and farfetched similes often drawn from nature” (353-354), taking a euphuistic tone—balanced sentences characterized by contrast. Shakespeare depicts Falstaff as a capable actor, instilling him with linguistic flourishes so that both his staged and real audiences see that the fat knight puts on a good show. Effectively, Falstaff uses the drama to defend himself after Hal turns the tables, forcing him to switch roles. While Falstaff’s interpretation of the King assumes that the fat knight is the only point of virtue in Hal’s unruly lifestyle, Hal’s own projection of his father demands the fat knight’s banishment, to which Falstaff responds:

But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old, the more the pity, his white hairs do witness it; but that he is, saving your reverence, a whoremaster, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! if to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned: if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins: but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy

Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company: banish plump Jack, and
banish all the world.

(II.iv.466-480)

Hal's chilling reply is "I do, I will" (II.iv.481), and the production halts as Bardolph reports that a sheriff and his entourage are approaching. Falstaff demands that the performance continue, crying, "Play out the play: I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff" (II.iv.484-485), maintaining his displaced defense. He will never get the opportunity; the play never resumes.

Like Chaucer the Pilgrim, Falstaff is silenced amidst an artistic defense. Chaucer laments his own interruption:

"This may wel by rym doggerel," quod he [the Host].

"Why so?" quod I, "why wiltow lette me

Moore of my tale than another man,

Syn that it is the beste rym I kan?"

(B2 2115-18)

Chaucer the Pilgrim is eventually requested to tell something else: "Sire, at o word, thou shalt no lenger ryme./.../Or telle in prose somewhat, at the leeste" (B2 2122-24). Chaucer's stand-in is naïve and bumbling, both through his interactions with the other pilgrims and his attempt at a tale (Donaldson, *Speaking of Chaucer* 1-2). Falstaff, though instilled with wit, suffers from a similar plight, since no one will take him seriously as he attempts to defend his position through art. While we do hear defensive soliloquies from him, he never attempts to reassert his value in Hal's presence. Rather, Falstaff is prone to introspection and self-justification. The only defense for both stand-ins is, ironically, through art, and both are interrupted amidst their critiquing.

Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*, like other tales, satirizes the chivalric tradition. Larry Benson suggests that beyond the clear literary satire, Chaucer may have been satirizing Thopas's behavior as a "would-be gentleman, who works just a bit too hard at observing the proper forms of romance knighthood" (17). Aside from his pretentiousness, Thopas does not seem like a particularly chivalrous or skilled knight. For example, he neglects to bring his armor while afield, and after encountering a giant, Thopas boasts,

Tomorwe wol I meete with thee,
Whan I have myn armoure;
And yet I hope, *par ma fay*,
That thou shalt with this lancegay
Abyen it ful sowre.

(B2 2007-2012)

The giant throws stones at Thopas, who retreats but never returns. Though he goes through the general motions of Chivalry, Sir Thopas never really follows them through. He seems more caught up in the pomp than in the practice.

Falstaff himself reflects a poor-behaving gentleman, and as such, serves a similar purpose to both Chaucer the Pilgrim and Sir Thopas. Marjorie Garber points out the parallel Shakespeare sets up between the lower-class characters and the antics of the nobility: "The Gads Hill caper is another version of Hotspur's rebellion, another kind of anarchy and robbery; both are the result of the failed kingship of Henry IV and his usurpation of the throne" (316). Harold Goddard's assertion pairs well with Garber's, as he claims:

The hypocrite has always been a favorite subject of satire. Henry IV is one of the most subtly drawn and effective hypocrites in literature, in no small measure

because the author keeps his portrayal free of any satirical note. But not of any ironical note.

(162)

Thus, Shakespeare, like Chaucer, avoids direct satire, and instead operates using characters either easily dismissed for their vices or confirmed by their limited virtue. Even Falstaff himself is an example of how bad a noble can behave and still retain his station. In his own defense, Falstaff pays homage to this particular strategy, considering the royal target involved. While he in no way seems shy about bantering with Hal, Falstaff's only genuine defense comes in the form of his thinly veiled performance. As with his bullshitting session prior to the mini-play's performance, one wonders to what extent Falstaff expects his audience to ignore his embedded messages—the knight's depiction of his own character is comically exaggerated. Chaucer, on the other hand, exaggerates his mask's ineptitude, and far enough to reach the point where his audience will understand the joke: the author of the *Canterbury Tales* is a skilled poet, unless we believe his earlier assertion about telling the tales as accurately as he heard them, and yet his tale is interrupted for being sub-par. Shakespeare inhabits Falstaff in the same manner. All of the accoutrements for a poor production are present, and Falstaff's performance is interrupted, yet the audience understands that Shakespeare is a skillful playwright, and in a self-reflexive manner presents the simultaneously skilled and bumbling Falstaff as his own artistic mask in response to Chaucer's own caricature.

Falstaff's theatricality is not just significant in terms of how Shakespeare identifies with him as a performer and author—he is, at least in part, a caricature bred of Shakespeare's artistic response to Chaucer the Pilgrim. Shakespeare inhabits part of Chaucer's methodology and physicality in Falstaff. In the prologue to *Sir Thopas*, the Host says of Chaucer, "He in the waast

is shape as wel as I” (B2 1890), indicating that both are overweight. The most revealing self-referential instances come from some of Chaucer’s other poems. In *Lenvoy De Chaucer a Scogan*, the poet suggests that he is “hoo and rounde of shap” (31).⁸ In *House of Fame*, the giant eagle complains that “Geffrey” is “noyous for to carye” (574). Finally, in *Merciles Beaute*, Chaucer puns, “Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat” (27). Falstaff, one of Shakespeare’s best-loved characters, is legendary for his rotundity, and Bardolph confirms this notion: “Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must needs be out of all compass, out of all reasonable compass, Sir John” (III.iii.21-23). Furthermore, Falstaff describes himself as a meddler, an “apple-john” (III.iii.4). We can assume a similar depiction of Chaucer the Pilgrim, as he bustles about the pilgrim’s company at the tavern, learning about his fellow travelers on the evening of the pilgrimage.

Perhaps due to their social natures, both characters consort with dubious individuals and nobles alike, crossing class boundaries in terms of the associations that they keep. “Company, villanous company, hath been the spoil of me” (III.iii.9-10), laments Falstaff, though the audience may find his remark ironic. Chaucer’s busybody interactions with the vile Summoner, who he describes “As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe,/With scalled browes blake and piled berd,/Of his visage children were aferd” (A 626-628), seem contradictory in nature. The pilgrim concludes that the Summoner is ultimately “a gentil harlot and a kynde;/A bettre felawe sholde men noght fynde” (A 647-48), despite his sinister behavior. Whilst drunk, the Summoner “Thanne wolde he speke no word but Latyn” (A 638), and not very well, for “A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,/That he had lerned out of som decree” (A 639-40), seeming like a nastier version of Pistol. Chaucer is grouped in the General Prologue with questionable company: “There was also a Reve, and a Millere,/A Somnour, and a Pardoner also,/A Maunciple, and

⁸ Gross notes that since Scogan was only 30 at the time, Chaucer can be referring only to himself (1087).

myself—ther were namo” (A 542-44), perhaps paralleling, and possibly accounting for Falstaff’s own seedy company.

Reputation may be what is at least partially at stake for Shakespeare in his self-conception via Falstaff. Though Falstaff is verbose, witty, and has a penchant for entertainment and productions, his audience seems largely low-born at this point in his life, save for Hal. According to what he would have us believe in his soliloquy against Shallow being a liar in *Henry IV Part Two*, Falstaff was familiar enough with John of Gaunt to pun on the elder Lancaster’s name, albeit at the expense of Shallow: “I saw [Shallow getting beaten], and told John a’ Gaunt he beat his own name, for you might have thrust him and all his apparel into an eel-skin” (324-325). Chaucer also puns on Gaunt’s name in *The Book of the Duchess*: “A long castel with walles white” (1318), referring to “Lancaster” and his wife Blanche (Wilcocksen 976).⁹ Regardless of his station, Shakespeare’s involvement with the theater and its professionals was likely perceived as a low-brow cultural pursuit.

Falstaff even invokes a character from *The Nun’s Priest’s Tale* in the context of complaining about his company. After he discovers that his pocket has been picked, Falstaff sends the Hostess out to find the culprit. When she returns, he calls out to her, “How now, Dame Partlet the hen? Have you inquir’d yet who pick’d my pocket?” (III.iii.52-53). The footnote to the *Riverside* edition simply states “traditional name for a hen,” alluding to Falstaff’s mockery of the Hostess’s “agitation and flutter” (Baker 911), but McNeal recognizes its Chaucerian origin (89): Falstaff’s gibe is not so much a simple barnyard reference but a literary one. Chauntecleer, the noble rooster in *The Nun’s Priest’s Tale* is infatuated with one of his seven wives, “Of

⁹ Shakespeare also makes a similar “castle” pun in *Henry IV Part One* when Hal calls Falstaff “my old lad of the castle” (I.ii.41-2), a reference to Sir John Oldcastle (Baker 891).

whiche the fairest hewed on hir throte/Was cleped damoysele Pertelote” (B2 4059-60).

Chauntecleer has a disturbing dream about being eaten by a Fox, and Pertelote dismisses his concerns outright, despite the Rooster’s educated insistence of its significance (Benson 18). The Hostess replies indignantly to Falstaff’s own concerns, and repeats “Sir John” in a nagging fashion no less than seven times in her next thirteen lines of dialogue (54-72). Significantly, in the prologue to the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, the Host refers to the nun’s priest as “sir John” (B2 2810). Furthermore, in the same manner Chaucer’s Pertelote denies Chauntecleer’s dream-visions, the Hostess reject’s Falstaff’s accusations of thievery:

Why, Sir John, what do you think, Sir John? Do you think I keep thieves in my house? I have search’ d, I have inquir’ d, so has my husband, man by man, boy by boy, servant by servant. The tithe of a hair was never lost in my house before.

(III.iii.54-58)

Essentially, Falstaff’s invocation of this particular reference from Chaucer serves to highlight his unjust treatment on the part of the Hostess—she dismisses his plight out of hand, like Pertelote. Ultimately, Chaucer’s Pertelote proves incorrect, and Chauntecleer is temporarily captured by a fox, though he is able to save himself using his wit. Thus, while Falstaff suggests that he is being henpecked, identifying with Chauntecleer’s plight, his reference also indicates that he is fond of the Hostess: “He loved hire so that wel was hym therwith” (B2 4066).

Falstaff’s self-identification with Chauntecleer may also serve to explain his behavior towards his other Eastcheap companions. Benson describes Chaucer’s Chauntecleer as “learned as well as courtly” (18), certainly first amongst the other chickens. While Falstaff’s mannerisms certainly are not the courtly ideal, his parallel context must be considered. Chauntecleer is noble, wonderful to listen to, and first amongst the chickens, but he is still a chicken. Falstaff, on the

same token, exhibits great wit and intelligence, enjoyable to listen to and be around. Harold Goddard points to Falstaff's apparent irresistible allure as a companion (176), noting Bardolph's lament at the fat knight's death in *Henry V*: "Would I were with him, wheresome'er he is, either in heaven or in hell" (II.iii.7-8). However, if the mock-heroic parallel can be carried through to Falstaff, his nature seems to precede any virtue, just as Chauntecleer's precludes the Rooster from being noble. While he may well be first among the rogues at Eastcheap, Falstaff still projects the image of a failed noble, a testament to both the shortcomings of the chivalric system and the potential of those who abuse it. Yet on the other hand, are the values of Falstaff and Chauntecleer diminished *a priori* due to their natures? Chauntecleer is a chicken, and Falstaff is fat, but their virtues are both independent and corroborate with their vices, praiseworthy when they deserve it and mocked for the same, yet never once should either character's shortcomings overpower his virtues. The same applies for the reverse.

In the Nun's Priest's mock heroic form, the audience should be tempted to overlook any uncomfortable parallels that the animals share with humans. Larry Benson notes that "Chaucer delicately maintains the balance between the two, combining the elements of courtly discourse with occasional sharp reminders that the characters are, after all, only chickens" (18). Benson's logic is sound. However, Chaucer embeds a literary safety valve in the form of the mock heroic. If his motives are questioned by noble patrons, the poet can simply default to Benson's assumption in his own defense. Falstaff serves a similar purpose. Should his subversion turn too many heads, the author can simply default to the position that "it is just Falstaff and his companions, after all." Garber notes the parallels between the interactions of the Boar's Head ruffians and Henry's own court, pointing specifically to Falstaff's tale-telling after the Gadshill incident and its subsequent mock theatrical performance:

Henry IV does, in a way, “counterfeit” the person of a king (“person” in this sense is nicely related to *persona*, or mask, as well as to “body”). Falstaff’s imaginary men in buckram are the “low” and comic counterparts of the many men marching in the King’s coats, and Falstaff’s lie is in a way no more a lie than Henry’s claim to the crown. Men in costume are men in costume, whether they are encountered in the tavern, on the highway, on the battlefield, or, indeed, on the stage.

(317)

For Chaucer, the form of the mock heroic in *The Nun’s Priest’s Tale* is manifested, and masked, in barn animals.¹⁰ For Shakespeare, the lower-class characters, and Falstaff as their leader, mirror the main action and actual concerns of the nobles. They are operating as Shakespeare’s barnyard animals.

As a writer, Chaucer had to exercise great caution in regards to any critiques he embedded in his works. Patronized by John of Gaunt and Richard II, Chaucer’s political connections were strong, and he depended on them for his sustenance, as evidenced in his appeal to Henry IV in the *Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse*. *The Canterbury Tales* depicts members of the clergy, nobility, middle class, and peasantry at varying moral gradations, ranging from the commendable clerk to the vile Friar. His own caricature, Chaucer the Pilgrim, allows the poet to move betwixt his characters in such a way that we get to know them almost as well as Chaucer the Poet does. The Pilgrim is impressed, perhaps for all of the wrong reasons, with many of his company, and his often flattering descriptions are questionably praiseworthy, aimed at careful readers. For example, when the Monk decries the Benedictine Rule, declaring it “nat worth an

¹⁰ Perhaps beyond coincidence, “Chauntecleer” is an anagrammatical amplification of “Chaucer.” Shakespeare’s audience may have subliminally associated Falstaff with Chaucer in this manner.

oystre” (A 182), the Pilgrim reports, “And I seyde his opinion was good” (A 184), going on to explain that it is foolish to go mad with study. However, the monk is an “outridere” (A 166), and an owner of Greyhounds—he does not go mad with study, but does not study at all. The Pilgrim is impressed with the Monk, who is not very impressive *as* a monk. Chaucer’s pilgrim mask partially obscures his poetic countenance: intentions of the speaker. For Chaucer’s message to take hold, he could not have utterly subsumed his own identity in his pilgrim.

Falstaff presents a similar problem, though his conception is more complex in many respects. Not only is Shakespeare using Falstaff—the entertainer, tale-teller, and faux theater performer—as a mask, but he is fashioning that mask in the likeness of Chaucer. However, in *Henry IV Part One* there is mainly circumstantial evidence, though very compelling, in suggesting such a link. The Gadshill caper, Falstaff’s philosophical motives in connection with *Sir Thopas* and his identification with Chauntecleer from *The Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, physical characteristics, and the similarity in company that they keep seem at least to subliminally connect Falstaff and Chaucer the Pilgrim. On their own, these thematic instances certainly point towards a Shakespearean mindfulness of Chaucer, situated in the poet’s own historical context. In terms of *Henry IV Part One*, Shakespeare’s use of Chaucer could have been relatively self-contained, especially as it seems to primarily draw on themes from *The Canterbury Tales* exclusively.

However, Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* are not the only works that connect in some meaningful manner with Falstaff. The fat knight expands his Chaucerian invocations to some of the poet’s other works, and incorporates them in such a way as to indicate a direct connection between the two. For example, In *Henry IV, Part Two*, Falstaff laments his financial situation after the Chief Justice refuses him a loan:

I can get no remedy of this consumption of the purse; borrowing only lingers and lingers it out, but the disease is incurable....’Tis no matter if I do halt; I have the wars for my color, and my pension shall seem the more reasonable. A good wit will make use of anything. I will turn diseases to commodity.

(I.ii.235-237, 244-248).

Falstaff’s woes significantly echo the *Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse*, both in tone and intention. Chaucer, his last known piece of writing, levels his own appeal to Henry IV, pleading “Have mynde upon my supplicacioun” (26) to the King directly. Falstaff commands his page “Go bear this letter to my lord of Lancaster, this to the Prince, this to the Earl of Westmorland” (I.ii.237-239), seeking similar aid from noble company. He likens his money troubles to a terminal illness, staved off only for a short while.

Chaucer’s gravity concerning his “supplicacioun” shares Falstaff’s tone. Chaucer himself was reliant on his government pensions, as were all civil servants. In 1390 he was robbed by highwaymen at “le Foule Oke” in a forest near Kent, “a short way from London in the direction of Canterbury” (Crow and Olson 477-489), though inconsistencies in the record blur whether he was robbed only once or three times, possibly also in Surrey (Crow and Leland xxv). Though Crow and Leland assert that the records unanimously affirm that Chaucer was blameless and those responsible were punished (xxv), he may have lost up to twenty pounds of the King’s money and his own. After Henry deposed Richard II, Chaucer’s previous royal annuities were apparently renewed, plus an additional forty marks a year for life, though Crow and Leland note that Chaucer’s *Complaint* “suggests that the grants approved by the new king had not yet been paid” (xxv). In a rather poetic way, Chaucer is indeed turning the empty-pockets disease into commodity via his poetic envoy.

Shakespeare understands Chaucer's treatment of his financial woes, and uses "disease" in a complex metaphorical sense. Though Chaucer describes his purse as a lady, she has "been lyght" (3). Falstaff's wordplay with disease extends our understanding of "lyght" to consumption, and it seems apt to understand Chaucer's use of the term as such in any case. Regardless of Chaucer's attitude toward his lady's sickness, he pleads "Beth hevvy ageyn, or elles moot I dye" (14). Thus, Chaucer's money troubles are a terminal illness, just as they are to Falstaff, and ultimately both rely on supplication of their superiors. Both Falstaff and Chaucer make financial appeals on the basis of disease, a strategy that not only importunes the gravity of their plights, but turns such disease into an advantage should their envoys succeed. Falstaff poetically recognizes how his own literature, falling under the disease metaphor, can result in improved commodity in saying that "I will turn diseases to commodity" (I.ii.248).

The connection between disease and commodity is especially reinforced when the Page reports, upon Falstaff's request, a physician's opinion of the fat knight's health based on a urine sample: "He said, sir, the water itself was a good healthy water, but for the party that ow'd it, he might have moe diseases than he knew for" (I.ii.3-5). Falstaff retorts, "I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men" (I.ii.9-10). Falstaff's disease—his wit—is also the source of his authorial impetus. Falstaff's disease is both Chaucer's and Shakespeare's, in terms of both their characters and their livelihoods. Authors are indeed sources of wit in others, and Falstaff's remark may be serving as a double-entendre, a signal that we should see Falstaff as a kind of author.

Aside from his connections to Chaucer's poetry, Shakespeare also incorporates elements of significant biographical information. He quixotically connects Falstaff to some of Chaucer's acquaintances via Master Shallow, who apparently knew Falstaff as a youth. Though

the fat knight warns us of Shallow's liberal exaggerations, "how subject we old men are to this vice of lying" (III.ii.304), Shakespeare provides us with some insight into Falstaff's company as a youth. Notably, he seems familiar with John of Gaunt, Chaucer's great patron and brother-in-law. Though Shallow pretends, as Falstaff puts it, to have "been a sworn brother to him" (III.ii.321), as Chaucer was, Falstaff himself seems to have been more familiar:

I'll be sworn 'a [Shallow] ne'er saw him [John of Gaunt] in the Tilt-yard,
and then he burst his head for crowding among the marshal's men. I saw
it, and told John a' Gaunt he beat his own name, for you might have thrust
him and all his apparel into an eel-skin.

(III.ii.321-326)

Falstaff's wordplay with the meaning of "gaunt" does not simply suggest a familiarity between the two, but more significantly points to Falstaff's previous reference to commodity. As noted earlier, Falstaff is convinced that his wit is his saving grace financially. It is not unreasonable to conclude that Falstaff, like Chaucer, was patronized (or tolerated) by John of Gaunt for his wit.

In conjunction with his pontifications on knowing John of Gaunt, Shallow mentions an incident between Falstaff and a man named Scoggin: "I see him break Scoggin's head at the court-gate, when 'a was a crack not thus high" (III.ii.29-30). The footnote to the *Riverside* edition reads "Shakespeare was perhaps thinking of John Scogan, the court jester to Edward IV and hero of a jestbook popular in the later sixteenth century" (Baker 946), a sentiment echoed by S.B. Hemingway (qtd. in McNeal 91). However, according to McNeal, Shallow is most likely referring to Henry Scogan (91). Laila Gross notes this Scogan as the likely recipient of Chaucer's *Envoy de Chaucer a Scogan* (636). McNeal contends "that Shakspeare [sic] took the name *Skogan* from the poems relating to the man at the back of Speght's *Chaucer*—that we may now

drop the court jester to Edward IV for good and all” (92). Scogan was the tutor of Henry IV’s children, and he wrote a moral ballad for them that quotes the entirety of Chaucer’s *Gentillesse* (Gross 636). Shallow’s allusion to Falstaff’s conflict with Scoggin, no matter how exaggerated, makes greater sense when regarded in the context of Chaucer’s own work. In his envoy, Chaucer skewers Scogan for offending Venus:

But now so wepith Venus in hir spere
That with hir teeres she wol drenche us here.
Allas! Scogan, this is for thyn offence;
Thow causest this diluge of pestilence.
(11-14)

It makes sense that Falstaff would embattle himself with Scoggin over moralistic issues; by his nature, Falstaff challenges the boundaries of morality. Falstaff is better equipped for verbal sparring than a physical altercation anyhow.

In terms of class, there initially seems little that should connect Chaucer the pilgrim and Falstaff biographically. A character sketch of Falstaff reveals that he is essentially a noble in his own right, though his specific titles are in question. He is frequently referred to as “Sir John,” and we see him (somewhat) engaged in combat and responsible for rallying troops. Chaucer, on the other hand, was a civil servant, whose role was primarily of the administrative middle class, though he was closely connected to the court and relied on the patronage of noble personages. Donaldson, however, cautions us against assuming that Chaucer the pilgrim, Chaucer the poet, and Chaucer the man were the same person:

The fact that these are three separate entities does not, naturally,

exclude the probability—or rather the certainty—that they bore a close resemblance to one another, and that, indeed, they frequently got together in the same body. But that does not excuse us from keeping them distinct from one another, difficult as their close resemblance makes our task.

(Speaking of Chaucer 1)

Judging by Shakespeare's use of his own masks, the bard is just as perceptive a Chaucer critic as Donaldson. While Loomis objects, "But Shakespeare wears no mask; he is not there at all" (174), her assertion is stymied by the fact that Chaucer is never specifically named in the tales except in the prologue to *The Man of Law's Tale* (B1 47), and even then his name is never connected specifically to the narrator. Donaldson even identifies this chronicler as "presumably someone called Geoffrey" (*The Swan at the Well* 7), yet critical consensus identifies Chaucer as the narrator: rightly so, as "Geoffrey" is named in other works, such as *House of Fame*. It is perfectly plausible that Shakespeare learned how to mask himself from Chaucer's example, especially considering that his masks are closely associated with Chaucerian references (such as Feste's adoption of the Sir Topas personality in *Twelfth Night*). Falstaff is a mask for Shakespeare, even coded in the syllables of their names in the form of "Fal-staff" and "Shakespeare" (Bloom 273), and a locus for his identification as a masked author vis-à-vis Chaucer.

Thus, Chaucer does appear in Shakespeare after a fashion. He is never mentioned, either in passing or otherwise, because such a tactic would turn our attention away from his habitats. Falstaff is the primary habitat throughout the *Henry* plays where Shakespeare interacts with Chaucer, Shakespeare's mask with a Chaucerian face. This is not to say that Falstaff is Chaucer per se. Rather, his caricature is a filtration of Shakespeare's identity through the lens of

his Chaucerian mask. Nor does this claim preclude other elements in Falstaff. He is a deeply complex character, and as Goddard posits:

Which is [Falstaff]? A colossus of sack, sensuality, and sweat—or a wit and humorist so great that he can be compared only with his creator, a figure...livelier than life? One might think there were two Falstaffs. (175).

Furthermore, Goddard argues that this complexity may account for Falstaff's girth (176), suggesting that Shakespeare at least subliminally intended to augment the notion that more than one Falstaff could inhabit the same body.

One would rightly wonder why Shakespeare would invest so much of Chaucer, the greatest English poet that preceded him, into the problematic Falstaff. On one hand, Chaucer the pilgrim keeps questionable company himself, interacting with even the most vile members of the Canterbury pilgrimage. Benson notes, "Perhaps Chaucer the pilgrim—cheerful, tolerant, but no fool—is closer than has been thought to Chaucer the man, who may even have relished an occasional rascal," though the character is deeply complex and avoids simple characterizations (6). Chaucer the pilgrim, on the other hand, may not have simply relished rascals: he may have been one. He interacts with everyone, crossing class boundaries just as Falstaff does.

Furthermore, Falstaff's interactions with women suggest a telling parallel with the poet. Shakespeare may have read somewhat into Chaucer's apparent forced composition of *The Legend of Good Women* in the Prologue by "Queen Alceste," though Shaner and Edwards explain in the notes to the *Riverside* edition that any actual allegorical connection is an item of extensive debate (1061). Regardless, Chaucer's poetry is ambivalent toward women: *Troilus and Criseyde*, *Against Women Unconstant*, and *The Complaint of Mars* are particularly notable

examples. Falstaff suffers from a similar predicament. After he has died, the boy reports of Falstaff, “‘A said once, the dev’l would have him about women” (*Henry V* II.iii.35-36), and that they are “dev’ls incarnate” (31-32). This may indeed reflect Chaucer’s own apparent reticence about women, as projected in several of his works. Though Chaucer may well have only loosely allegorized or even fabricated the conversation with Queen Alceste from *The Legend of Good Women*’s prologue, Shakespeare may have incorporated this aspect of Chaucer’s mask into Falstaff nonetheless.

Despite the compelling links between Falstaff and Chaucer’s mask, the fat knight’s rejection scene at the end of *Henry IV, Part Two* throws a disturbing pall over their connection. It must be noted, that Falstaff’s caricature, if indeed inspired by Chaucer’s self conception, must be distinguished from Chaucer the poet. There is no way of knowing the full extent of Shakespeare’s familiarity with Chaucer’s biography—the only records of Shakespeare’s sources are alluded to in the plays themselves. Unfortunately, that means there is no way to gauge whether Shakespeare distinguished between Chaucer’s mask in his poetry and the man himself. Donaldson, however, cautions against assuming that Shakespeare’s understanding of Chaucer was limited: “Shakespeare himself provides the final indication of the way Shakespeare read Chaucer, and that way is with full appreciation of his complexity” (*The Swan at the Well* 2). Thus, Shakespeare himself is a Chaucerian, concerned with the complexities of the poet’s meaning, but also incorporates that concern into his own art.

Falstaff is a locus where Chaucer and Shakespeare interact, both between their respective masks and the authors themselves. If the understanding of Falstaff’s character is extended to his representation as this locus, Chaucer’s retraction and the rejection scene are inextricably linked via Shakespeare’s treatment of Falstaff. When an ecstatic Falstaff rushes in to

see his friend's coronation, the moment is "one of the most devastating in any of Shakespeare's plays" (Garber 357). Hal, now Henry V, proclaims, "I know thee not, old man" (V.v.47). If Chaucer the pilgrim can appropriately be read as a component of Falstaff, he too has been rejected as an otherworldly literary relic, a Munchausen, a "defaute of myn unkonnyng" (*Retraction* I 1082) in Chaucer's words. Chaucer the Pilgrim is subsumed as one of many "translacions and editynges of worldly vanitees, the whiche I revoke in my retracciouns" (I 1085). The England of *Henry IV Part Two* is "drooping" (I.i.3). Richard's regime, which apparently valued literacy and learning, and, significantly, Chaucer, is replaced with the rule of the Henrys:

One way of mapping the decline is to notice how much of this play is written in prose. Almost every scene in verse is followed immediately by a longer one in prose, full of topical humor, bawdy puns, sexual innuendo and braggadocio, and endless discussions of how much things cost. The prose world is swallowing up the world of poetry....

(Garber 348)

Though it seems as if Falstaff is no poet (neither is Chaucer the pilgrim, really), his wit carries him far, until he is silenced at the end, unable to respond to his own banishment, nor sufficiently employ his bullshitting skills on the now angry Shallow. Falstaff's theatrics, his words, have ceased, and despite the play's epilogue, we never see him again. Harold Bloom gravely suggests "The greatest of all fictive wits dies the death of a rejected father-substitute, and also of a dishonored mentor" (Bloom 272). Chaucer's world, as Garber puts it, is being swallowed by prose. Significantly, Chaucer the pilgrim is swallowed by Chaucer the poet's retraction, and, historically, Chaucer the man also quickly fades from the record.

The relationship between Chaucer, Falstaff, and Shakespeare is complex and tangled. While we can speculate that the bard feared, or felt, rejection in his own artistic circle, and incorporated Chaucer's own self-rejection, there is no positive biographical source to draw upon. However, if we view Falstaff as Shakespeare's mask, representative of his response to Chaucer's *persona*, more than a modicum of anxiety simmers in the fifth act of Falstaff's final play. Even the knight's reported death scene is suggestive of Chaucerian themes:

'A parted ev'n just between twelve and one, ev'n at the turning o' th' tide; for
after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon
his finger's end, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a
pen, and 'a babbl'd o' green fields.

(*Henry V* II.iii.12-17)

This depiction seems to match Donaldson's perception of Chaucer's "outmoded" popular conceptualization as a "wide-eyed, jolly, roly-poly little man who, on fine Spring mornings, used to get up early...and go look at daisies" (*Speaking of Chaucer* 2). Falstaff himself was, and still is, one of Shakespeare's most beloved conceptions. Is Shakespeare, like Chaucer, retracting the fat knight, anticipating the problems he will cause in *Henry V*? Falstaff's death is more significant than a needed killing-off. Though his stage presence and voice are utterly rejected, Falstaff's influence is felt regardless. This shadow of Falstaff may appear in the same manner that Chaucer does in Shakespeare's other works. Chaucer's own rejection, either at his own behest or some other power's, failed to truly kill his literary presence. Shakespeare proves this with Falstaff as he proves it with Chaucer.

It is tempting to jump to a "point" in Shakespeare's use of Falstaff as a Chaucerian-fashioned mask. However, the bard may not have reached any definitive conclusion himself,

either in regards to Falstaff or Chaucer. While he incorporates the poet throughout the canon more significantly than earlier critics have supposed, save for Donaldson, Shakespeare does not so much emulate Chaucer's work as he reacts to it. This trend could indicate that Shakespeare attempts to come to terms with his understanding of Chaucer, rather than simply incorporating convenient plot devices and show off his breadth of reading. Chaucer's retraction is certainly alarming, and as Shakespeare embodies some of his best wit and humanity in an ultimately rejected character, Chaucer does the same for his own work. Taken from the stance as an author, Shakespeare may have feared the same kind of rejection, or fall into obscurity, as Chaucer faced. Shakespeare may be filtering the anxieties of authorial reputation and his legacy as a writer through his understanding and perception of England's greatest poet. Falstaff, who is reflective of both the best and worst of both worlds in terms of wit and reputation, provides the most comfortable vessel through which Shakespeare can inhabit Chaucer. Chaucer, like Falstaff, should be regarded for his virtues, which normally can be understood only when their respective vices (or the perception thereof) are taken into consideration. Thus, there is no dissonance in Shakespeare's appreciation of Chaucer, though there may well be in his reckoning of Chaucer's own conception of himself as an author, who just happens to be a living part amongst a greater cast of characters in the poet's own canon.

WORKS CONSULTED

- Asimov, Isaac. *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare*. NY: Gramercy Books, 1970.
- Axton, Richard. "Chaucer and the Idea of Theatrical Performance." *'Divers Toyes Mengled': Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Culture/Etudes sur la culture européenne au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance*. Ed. Michel Bitot, Roberta Mullini, and Peter Happé. Tours: Univ. François Rabelais, 1996. 83-100.
- Baker, Herschel. "Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2: Explanatory notes." *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 884-973.
- Barton, Anne. "Twelfth Night: Explanatory Notes." *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 437-475.
- Benson, Larry. "Chaucer's Works." *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. xxvi-xxix.
- . "Introduction." xv-xxix.
- . "The Texts." xlv-xlvi.
- Bergeron, David. "The Wife of Bath and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*." *University Review* 35 (1968-69): 279-286.
- Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. NY: Riverhead Books, 1998.
- The Book of the Duchess*. *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 329-346.
- Box, Terry. "Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night: The Miller's Tale* Revisited." *College Language Association Journal* 37.1 (Fall 1993): 42-54.

- Burrow, J.A. "Explanatory notes to *The Prologue and Tale of Sir Thopas*." *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 917-923.
- Buxton, John. "The Elizabethan Appreciation of Chaucer." *Elizabethan Taste*. London: Macmillan, 1963.223-230.
- The Canterbury Tales General Prologue. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 23-36.
- Chaucer's Retraction. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 328.
- Coghill, Nevill. "Shakespeare's Reading in Chaucer." *Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies: Presented to Frank Perry Wilson in Honor of his Seventieth Birthday*. Ed. Herbert Davis and Helen Gardner. London: Oxford University Press, 1959. 88-99.
- The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 656.
- Crow, Martin M. and Virginia E. Leland. "Chaucer's Life." *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. xv-xxvi.
- Crow, Martin M. and Clair C. Olson. *Chaucer Life Records*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966.
- Crowl, Samuel. *Shakespeare and Film: A Norton Guide*. NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008.
- Davis, Norman, Douglas Gray, Patricia Ingham, and Anne Wallace-Hadrill. *A Chaucer Glossary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Donaldson, E. Talbot. *Speaking of Chaucer*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Norton, 1970.
- . *The Swan at the Well*. London: Yale University Press, 1985.

- Donaldson, E. Talbot, and Judith J. Kollmann, eds. *Chaucerian Shakespeare: Adaptation and Transformation*. Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series II. Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1983.
- The Fifth Book of Ovid's Metamorphosis*. *Ovid's Metamorphosis Translated by Arthur Golding*. Ed. Madeline Forey. Baltimore: Penguin, 2001. 151-174.
- Finke, Laurie A. "Falstaff, the Wife of Bath, and the Sweet Smoke of Rhetoric." Ed. E. Talbot Donaldson and Judith J. Kollmann. *Chaucerian Shakespeare: Adaptation and Transformation*. Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series II. Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1983. 7-24.
- The First Part of Henry the Fourth*. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 889-927.
- Fyler, John M. "Introduction to the *House of Fame*." *Riverside Chaucer*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 347-348.
- Garber, Marjorie. *Shakespeare After All*. NY: Pantheon Books, 2004.
- Goddard, Harold C. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Vol. 1. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951.
- Gross, Laila Z. "The Short Poems." *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 631-637.
- Gussenhoven, Sr. Frances, RSHM. "Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* and Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*: The Struggle for Marital Mastery." Ed. E. Talbot Donaldson and Judith J. Kollmann. *Chaucerian Shakespeare: Adaptation and Transformation*. Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series II. Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1983. 69-79.

- Hales, John W. *Notes and Essays on Shakespeare*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1884.
- The House of Fame. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 348-373.
- Jones, Terry with Robert Yeager, Alan Fletcher, Juliette Dor, Terry Dolan. *Who Murdered Chaucer?: A Medieval Mystery*. New York: St. Martin's, 2004.
- The Knight's Tale. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 37-66.
- Kollmann, Judith J. "Ther is noon oother incubus but he: *The Canterbury Tales, Merry Wives of Windsor* and Falstaff." Ed. E. Talbot Donaldson and Judith J. Kollmann. *Chaucerian Shakespeare: Adaptation and Transformation*. Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series II. Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1983. 43-68.
- The Legend of Good Women. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 588-630.
- Envoy De Chaucer A Scogan. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 655.
- Leslie, Nancy T. "The Worthy Wife and the Virtuous Knight: Survival of the Wittiest." Ed. E. Talbot Donaldson and Judith J. Kollmann. *Chaucerian Shakespeare: Adaptation and Transformation*. Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series II. Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1983. 25-41.
- The Life of Henry the Fifth. The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 979-1021.

- Loomis, Dorothy Bethurum. "Chaucer and Shakespeare." *Chaucer's Mind and Art*. Ed. A.C. Cawley. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969. 166-190.
- The Man of Law's Introduction, Prologue, Tale, and Epilogue. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 87-104.
- Merciles Beaute. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 659.
- McNeal, Thomas H. "Henry IV, Parts I and II, and Speght's First Edition of Geoffrey Chaucer." *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin* 21.2 (April 1946): 87-93.
- The Merry Wives of Windsor. The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 324-360.
- A Midsummer Night's Dream. The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 256-283.
- The Miller's Prologue and Tale. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 66-77.
- Miskimin, Alice. *The Renaissance Chaucer*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.
- The Monk's Prologue and Tale. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 240-252.
- The Nun's Priest's Prologue, Tale and Epilogue. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 252-261.
- Plutarch. *The Makers of Rome*. Trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert. London: Penguin, 1965. 223-270.
- The Prologue and Tale of Sir Thopas. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 212-217.

- Roberts, Valerie S. "Ironic Reversal of Expectation in Chaucerian and Shakespearean Gardens." Ed. E. Talbot Donaldson and Judith J. Kollmann. *Chaucerian Shakespeare: Adaptation and Transformation*. Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series II. Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1983. 97-117.
- The Second Part of Henry the Fourth. The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 928-973.
- Shaner, M.C.E. with A.S.G. Edwards. "Explanatory notes to the *Legend of Good Women*." *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 1059-1075.
- Shilkett, Carol L. "The Manipulations of Chaucer's Pandarus and Shakespeare's Iago," Ed. E. Talbot Donaldson and Judith J. Kollmann. *Chaucerian Shakespeare: Adaptation and Transformation*. Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series II. Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1983. 119-130.
- Smith, Hallett. Introduction: *Pericles, Prince of Tyre. The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 1527-1530.
- Spisak James W. "Pyramus and Thisbe in Chaucer and Shakespeare." Ed. E. Talbot Donaldson and Judith J. Kollmann. *Chaucerian Shakespeare: Adaptation and Transformation*. Medieval and Renaissance Monograph Series II. Detroit: Michigan Consortium for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 1983. 81-95.
- Summers, Joseph H. "The Masks of *Twelfth Night*." *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Leonard F. Dean. New York: Oxford University Press. 128-137.
- Tatlock, J.S.P. *A Concordance to the Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*. Concord: Rumford Press, 1927.

Thompson, Ann. *Shakespeare's Chaucer: A Study in Literary Origins*. NY: Barnes & Noble Books, 1978.

The Tragedy of King Richard the Second. The Riverside Shakespeare. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 847-883.

The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus. The Riverside Shakespeare. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 1069-1100.

Twelfth Night. The Riverside Shakespeare. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 442-475.

Wells, Stanley. *Shakespeare: A Life in Drama*. NY: W.W. Norton and Co., 1997.

Wilcockson, Colin. Explanatory Notes to *The Book of the Duchess. The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987. 966-976.