THE DREAM AS PROBLEM-SOLVING METHOD IN CHAUCER'S THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS AND THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS

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NOVEMBER, 1987

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

ISBN 0-315-45938-7

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express gratitude to my thesis advisor, Professor Paul Piehler whose graduate seminar on the Parliament of Fowls first introduced me to the profound currents in the medieval period and to the artistic mastery of Chaucer's early dream poems. On a practical level Professor Piehler's willingness to read drafts of my thesis mailed from abroad and to respond with tapes and letters containing useful criticism and scholarly advice, enabled me to pursue my research to its conclusion.

In addition, I wish to thank the many friends in both Canada and Israel whose support and stimulating discussion contributed to the progress of my work. My husband, Steve, deserves particular thanks for the time he has taken from his own research to assist me in preparing the final typescript. During the lengthy course of writing and re-writing, his clear thinking and critical judgment provided a constant challenge for my ideas; his unfailing interest and encouragement were of immeasurable support to me.

THESIS ABSTRACT

THE DREAM VISION AS PROBLEM-SOLVING METHOD IN CHAUCER'S THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS AND THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS

In his early love visions Chaucer transformed the traditional allegorical dream poem into an associative structure more closely resembling the pattern of actual dreams. His changes resulted in a new method of poetic problem-solving which, while rooted in the earlier philosophical allegories of Boethius, Alain de Lille, and Jean de Meun, was adapted to expressing the conflicting truths characteristic of late medieval thought. By juxtaposing images associated with previous literary contexts, Chaucer communicated intuitively what his predecessors stated in direct, didactic discourse.

My thesis consists of three parts. First, I examine the allegorical visions of four poets preceding Chaucer for their application of the dream convention to philosophical problem-solving. Second, I examine the similarities between actual dreams and the artifice of allegory. I then investigate Chaucer's personal interest in the dream and suggest how appropriation of neglected aspects of its structure led to a development in philosophical poetry. Finally, I examine two of Chaucer's dream poems, the Book of the Duchess and the Parliament of Fowls to demonstrate his innovation in practice.

Résumé de thèse

La vision onirique comme méthode de solution de problèmes dans les poèmes The Book of the Duchess et The Parliament of Fowls de Chaucer

Dans ses poèmes de jeunesse, Chaucer a modifié le poème de songe allégorique, pour lui donner une forme plus ouverte, associative, qui ressemble à la structure de veritables songes. Ses changements ont permis un nouveau mode de résolution de problèmes, qui reconnait ses racines dans les allégories philosophiques de Boèce, Alain de Lille, et Jean de Meun, mais qui peut projeter la complexité des vérités incompatibles de la societé de la fin du moyen âge. En juxtaposant des images qui rapellent des contextes idéologiques, Chaucer a su communiquer de façon intuitive ce que ses prédecesseurs enonçaient d'un discours direct et didactique.

A l'appui de cette thèse, l'article approche l'oeuvre de Chaucer de trois perspectives. Premièrement, il montre comment les grandes lignes de la convention ont leur racine dans des allégories oniriques précédentes. Deuxièmement il examine l'adaption du revè a l'allégorie et démontre comment

l'expression symbolique de véritables rêves a fourni un modèle à Chaucer. En dernier lieu, il étudie deux des poèmes oniriques de Chaucer, The Book of the Duchess et The Parliament of Fowls, comme exemples dans la pratique de ses innovations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. A New Approach to Allegorical Problem-solving

> Many men sayn that in sweveninges
> Ther nys but fables and lesynges;
> But men may some swevenes sen
> Whiche hardely that false ne ben,
> But afterward ben apparaunt.
> The Romaunt of the Rose(ll. 1-5)

Throughout his life Chaucer was fascinated by dreams. Evidence of his immersion in contemporary dream theory appears everywhere in his poetry from his discussion of Macrobius in the Parliament of Fowls to the humorous interchange between Chauntecleer and Pertelote in the Nun's Priest's Tale. It is my thesis that Chaucer used his understanding of the dream to transform the allegorical dream convention to a more open, associative form resembling the structure of actual dreams. His goal was to create a new technique of poetic problem-solving which, while acknowledging roots in the earlier philosophical poets, was capable of projecting the conflicting truths characteristic of late medieval thought.

The allegorical dream poem as Chaucer inherited it served as the transmitter of two important traditions. On the one hand, writers such as Boethius, Alain de Lille, and Jean de Meun adapted the dream framework to a poetry of philosophical debate. On the other, poets such as Guillaume

de Lorris, Machaut, and Froissart chose the dream as an idealized setting for courtly romances of quest and adventure. Both literary traditions approached problem-solving through discourse and dialectic and were explicitly didactic in their intention. In the philosophical poems either an authoritative personification such as Nature or Lady Philosophy visited the distressed poet in a dream to lead him by rational argument to the truth; or a procession of counsellors such as Raison, Ami, the Duenna, Nature and Genius in the Roman de la Rose engaged in a series of didactic monologues expounding their doctrines on a topic such as love. In the romance tradition the same rhetorical approach appeared in the form of love casuistry. In Machaut's Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne, for example, the dispute between a knight and lady over who had suffered most in love was debated in a court of love and finally resolved by the King's verdict. In either case, the dream artifice gave credibility to the allegory while freeing the poet from the strictures of logic and verisimilitude to pursue his philosophical argument.

Chaucer's familiarity with both the courtly and philosophical aspects of dream allegory can be seen directly in his work. Early in his career he translated both Boethius' philosophical vision, the Consolation of Philosophy, and Guillaume de Lorris' courtly romance,

the Roman de la Rose. Furthermore, in his extensive borrowings from Machaut and Froissart in the Book of the Duchess, and in his adaptation of Alain de Lille's concept of Nature in the Parliament of Fowls Chaucer revealed his close contact with the dream convention as it was used by previous poets.

Another model for poetic problem-solving came from the dream experience itself. A vast amount of authoritative literature on the topic of dreams was available to Chaucer, from classical and medieval sources. Already in the early dream poems we see abundant references to classical dream lore as well as to medical and philosophical speculations on the origins and credibility of dreams.[1] For example, in the Ceys and Alcione story recounted in the opening of the Book of the Duchess, Chaucer describes a visit to Morpheus' Cave where dreams are produced in classic Ovidian fashion; in Proem I of the House of Fame, he catalogues fifteen medieval theories on the causes and classifications of dreams; and in the waking frame of the Parliament of Fowls, he provides an extended retelling of Cicero's Dream of Scipio.

Though Chaucer's poetry reflects his acquaintance with both dream commentaries and the prevailing dream conventions, there remains a notable change in the pattern he selected for his early love visions which is unexplained by

reference to previous models. This additional element is the step toward greater dream realism--the replication in a literary genre of the dynamics of actual dreams as described by modern theorists such as Freud. The possibility that Chaucer's close observation of dream phenomena provided the basis for his detailed portrayal of dream processes has fascinated literary critics. George Lyman Kittredge, for example, in his 1915 essay on Chaucer, observed, "The physiological aetiology of dreams as well as their possible significance, was a subject to which he /Chaucer/ returned again and again." Kittredge speculated that Chaucer may have had unusually vivid dreams like Caedmon, Shakespeare, or Coleridge. In his opinion, "This consideration reduces the amount of convention and increases the proportion of fact in Chaucer's employment of the device."[2] Over fifty years later, James Winney (1973) continued in this vein, speculating that in the absence of an accepted theory of the imagination, the dream experience provided a close parallel to the experience of poetic invention. Winney concluded that "for Chaucer the dream poem seems to have provided a means of understanding the creative process on which his work depended."[3]

While not entering too deeply into biographical questions, we may conclude that some combination of literary knowledge, authoritative sources and personal observation

led Chaucer to move beyond the overt didacticism of preceding dream allegory to the open-ended, dream-like structure of his early dream poems. In the course of transforming the dream genre, Chaucer shaped an innovative technique for combining serious moral instruction with entertainment. Wolfgang Clemen refers to this breakthrough as "a new art of silence".

> Chaucer has clearly evolved a novel process to impart the significance of his poems--a process indeed that strikes us as almost modern. By putting different elements together without comment, simply by the sequence or juxtaposition of his episodes or symbols, he can convey a definite way of interpretation, a train of possibilities, a line of choice The reader is always left to draw his own conclusions. The 'significance' however lies in the realm of imaginative, poetic logic; in the 'logic of imagination' rather than on the plane of mere logical deduction.[4]

In other words, by avoiding a set of pre-ordained answers, Chaucer involved the reader directly in the problem-solving process. His poetry awakened the reader's naive "wonderment" and questioning state of mind linking him to the freshly responsive attitude of Chaucer's own dream personae.

Seen in this light, the Book of the Duchess and the Parliament of Fowls, often criticized for their random organization and unassimilated literary borrowings, become complex poetic unities of related scenes and images. The placement, sequence, and relevance to the whole of these apparently heterogenous elements can be seen to carry much

the same potential for meaning as symbol clusters in an individual's dream. Freud's description of the "means of representation" in dreams can aid us in understanding this process.[5] When we read Chaucer's early love visions in terms of the "fusion," "condensation," and "displacement" of Freudian dream theory, his undisguised borrowing of conventional themes, personae, and landscape takes on an inventive aspect. Clemen refers to Chaucer's re-ordering of familiar signifying elements as the "reversing of the plus and minus signs."[6] Transferred to new poetic contexts, the accepted images and topoi generate ironies and fresh perspectives as a tension is established between their new meanings and the reader's expectations based on previous literary sources. Furthermore, the dream-like juxtaposition of images tends to establish an implicit confrontation of ideas which serves to replace the explicit dialogue of earlier dream poems. In Chaucer's poetry, the complexity of issues is richly unfolded, rather than reduced to a single, authoritative solution.

2. The Dream Poem as Context for Cultural Change

Chaucer's technique of combining heterogeneous elements from previous literary sources is typical of what Clemen calls, "the style of any outgoing period, one already in the process of breaking up."[7] His creative use of conven-

tion and his revitalization of inherited literary devices (topoi, myths, stylistic and rhetorical models) represents a transition from the rich classical and medieval tradition to a new spirit of realism and reliance on personal experience characteristic of the Renaissance. The role of the dream in this transformation is significant. Since the dream itself was an established poetic genre, the willingness to shape its form in the direction of actual dream processes offered great potential for organizing cultural experience. In other words, Chaucer used the poetic dream fable to accomplish the same results on a cultural level as the personal dream accomplished in the psychic economy of the individual. In his book, The Collective Dream in Art, Walter Abell develops this viewpoint:

> As imagery symbolizing underlying and often unconscious psycho-historical depths, works of art function in the mental life of society much as do dreams in the experience of an individual. Thus we are led to conceive the higher forms of cultural expression in any society as manifestations of a collective dream.[8]

Though this statement is, no doubt, debatable, it seems to have applicability to Chaucer's early art in which the poetic form was a simulation of the dream and the dream components were the symbols and ideologies inherited by fourteenth-century society.

Why would Chaucer find this reformulation desirable? Perhaps a clue comes in Huizinga's description of the

depreciation of late medieval imagery. According to Huizinga, the Middle Ages showed a marked tendency to embody thought in concrete symbols and images, but forfeited the sanctity of these forms through excessive exposure and particularization.[9] By the late fourteenth century the vast network of cultural emblems available to Chaucer had become frozen in a literature of exaggerated convention and over-elaborate ornament. The free, imaginative structure of the dream allowed Chaucer to arrange established symbols such as Venus, Nature, the Paradisal Garden, and the House of Fame in freshly humorous or ironic combination. In Freudian terms, he could make them the irrationally connected manifest content for a deeply significant latent content to be deciphered by the waking dreamer. If, as Huizinga contends, the late medieval familiarity with traditional images led to solidification, rigidity, and a "disintegration of all mystery," then the creative juxtaposition of these images in Chaucer's dream narratives constituted a mode for the recapture of their evocative power.

It is my thesis, then, that Chaucer developed the allegorical dream poem according to a realistic dream model in order to achieve a new kind of problem-solving capable of balancing the conflicting truths in late medieval society. To support this view I approach Chaucer's work from three

perspectives. First, I examine previous dream allegories to establish the conventions of the genre from which Chaucer's innovations can be measured. Included in this section is a discussion of the rhetorical background for poetic problem-solving which shows the evolving efforts of allegorical poets to treat philosophical issues in their work. Next, I explore the analogy between dream and allegory to clarify allegory's suitability to the dream vision and to demonstrate how a more realistic model of the dream could better deal with complex ideological conflicts. Finally, I look closely at two of Chaucer's dream poems, the Book of the Duchess and the Parliament of Fowls to demonstrate how Chaucer's poetic dream works in practice.

CHAPTER II

THE CONVENTION OF ALLEGORICAL DREAM VISION

1. The Rhetorical Background to Poetic Problem-solving

The dream convention appealed to allegorical poets as a means for communicating philosophical ideas in an entertaining and appealing way. The ideas themselves were typically selected from a medieval store of authoritative doctrines. Presented allegorically, the poet's message usually emerged as a unified ideological statement either implicit or explicit in the literal text. For Chaucer, however, as for the twelfth-century Chartrians who tried to reconcile classical learning with Christian revelation, the juxtaposition of inherited answers often led to disturbing contradictions that refused to be solved logically. In response to this predicament, poetry with its capacity for figurative, imagistic expression became more than an entertaining means of revitalizing old truths; it became an essential vehicle for discovering new ones. To fully understand the poetic solution represented by the dream genre we must, therefore, place its use in the context of a classical debate on the relation of poetry to philosophy.

Although medieval poetic theory evolved from the dictum expressed in Horace's Ars poetica that poetry's role was

to both entertain and instruct, the understanding of how this dual function was to be carried out raised questions about the value of poetic form in relation to its content, about the kind of truths to be taught, and about the relative importance of the reader's emotions or intellect in responding to the poem. Two theoretical traditions arose in response to these questions: one rhetorical and persuasive; the other dialectical and intuitive.

The first tradition derived from classical rhetorical theory found in Cicero's De inventione, the Pseudo-Ciceronian Rhetorica ad Herennium, and Quintilian's Institutio oratoria.[1] In the late twelfth century the same rhetorical formulas reappeared in the writings of Matthew de Vendôme and later in the Poetria nova (1200-1215) of Geoffrey de Vinsauf. In their efforts to devise a poetic theory based on ancient models, medieval rhetoricians transferred the pragmatic goals of oratory to those of poetic expression. If, as Cicero wrote, the purpose of elegant style or elocutio was to persuade, and the supreme orator was a man "whose speech instructs, delights and moves the minds of his audience,"[2] then the poet, likewise, must decorate his ideas with figures of speech designed to appeal to the emotions. This view of rhetoric implied a literary practice in which the choice of pertinent, authoritative doctrines for instruction preceded

the selection of ornamental "tropes" designed to present these precepts in a pleasurable way. The knowledge conveyed was presumably something already known and its mode of expression merely a useful means of securing emotional assent.

An alternative tradition attempting to link poetry and philosophy derived from the theories of Saint Augustine. In his fifth-century treatise, De doctrina Christiana, Augustine set forth principles for interpretation of scripture. According to Augustine, poetry was not merely an entertaining ornament, but a necessary form for communicating profound ideas which could only be approached through image and likeness. The ambiguities of poetry were the stimulus required to lead the reader into a philosophical inquiry that would yield discovery and new understanding. Augustine's defense of scriptural obscurity led him to draw a distinction between literal and figurative writing which eventually served as a guideline for allegorical interpretation in the Middle Ages.

In his "Egyptian Gold" passage, for example, Augustine argued for Christian use of pagan authors by advocating a search through the integumenta of their writings for valuable moral teachings applicable to Christianity.[3] According to Augustine, obscurity was both pleasant and useful. Rather than needlessly confusing the reader, the

difficulties provided by the text helped the reader to overcome pride by work. In intellectual matters, the rigors of deciphering had the beneficial effect of preventing the mind from disdaining a thing too easily grasped. The function of figurative language, then, was not decoration and pleasure, but the conveying of truth in a way that is most impressive to the inquiring mind. As Augustine emphasized, "No one denies that things are more readily learned through similitudes and that these things which are sought with difficulty are more pleasantly discovered."[4]

Aspects of Augustine's defense of figurative language occur in Macrobius' essay on the "fabulous narration" in his Commentary on the Dream of Scipio. To support his argument for the obscuring use of fable in poetry, Macrobius points to a directive from Nature. Poets disguise their truths because:

> they realize that a frank, open exposition of herself is distasteful to Nature, who just as she has withheld an understanding of herself from the uncouth senses of men by enveloping herself in variegated garments, has also desired to have her secrets handled by more prudent individuals through fabulous narratives.[5]

Augustine's ideas are found again in Alain de Lille's Anticlaudianus (c. 1182) where the difficulty of deciphering a text is described as excluding the unworthy from the knowledge of holy things.[6] In the fourteenth century,

Boccaccio, in his discussion of poetry also praises enigma and describes the strenuous deciphering process as analogous to the waking dreamer's struggle to elucidate the obscurities of a dream:

> You must read, you must perservere, you must sit up nights, you must inquire, and exert the utmost power of your mind. If one way does not lead to the desired meaning, take another; until your strength holds out; you will find that clear which at first looked dark.[7]

He adds, "for we are forbidden by divine command to give that which is holy to dogs, or to cast pearls before swine."[8]

Augustine bases his discussion of figurative language on a distinction between "letter" and "spirit," between literal meaning and the text read according to an interpretation of "charity." In Augustine's view, charity is

> the motion of the soul toward the enjoyment of God for His own sake, and the enjoyment of one's self and one's neighbour for the sake of God; but 'cupidity' is a motion of the soul toward the enjoyment of one's self, one's neighbour, or any corporal thing for the sake of something other than God.[9]

Since the scripture "teaches nothing but charity, nor condemns anything except cupidity,"[10] we can assume that a concept expressing charity can be taken literally, but a concept expressing cupidity must be figurative and interpreted in terms of its concealed meaning consistent with the spirit of the text. In Augustine's words, "What is read should be subjected to diligent scrutiny until an interpretation contributing to the reign of charity is pro-

duced.[11] He captures the same idea in the analogy of kernel and husk: "Shameful acts and incidents in the Scripture are all figurative, and their secrets are to be removed as kernels from the husk as nourishment for charity."[12]

Followers of Augustine take up this metaphor as a model for reading their own literary works. We find it, for example, in the moralized account of Statius' Thebiad written in the sixth century and attributed to Fulgentius:

> Not uncommonly poetic songs are seen to be comparable with nuts. For as in a nut there are two parts, the shell and the kernel, so also there are two parts in poetic songs: the literal and the mystical senses. The kernel lies hidden beneath the shell; beneath the literal sense lies the mystic understanding. If you wish to have the kernel, you must break the shell; if the figures are to be make plain, the letter must be shattered. The shell is tasteless; the kernel is flavorful to the taster.[13]

In Alain de Lille's the Complaint of Nature, when the speaker asks about obscurity in poetry, Nature replies with the same 'shell-kernel' analogy:

> Yet in the superficial shell of the letter, the poetic lyre sounds forth falsehood; but within, it speaks to those who hear, the secret of a higher understanding, so that the exterior shell of falseness having been cast away the reader may discover within secretly the sweet kernel of truth.[14]

The distinction between literal and figurative appears again in the writings of the twelfth-century theologian, Hugh of St. Victor. In his Didascalicon ("On the Study of Reading") Hugh continues the tradition of Augustine's

De doctrina Christiana by presenting an allegorical approach to the reading of scripture. Hugh distinguishes between three orders of exposition: the letter, the sense, and the deeper meaning or sententia.[15] Observing the contrast between the frequent illogic of the poetic surface and the unity of the deeper meaning discovered from it, Hugh writes:

> The divine deeper meaning can never be absurd, never false. Although in the sense, as has been said, many things are found to disagree, the deeper meaning admits to no contradiction, is always harmonious, always true.[16]

He, like Augustine, justifies the difficulty in deciphering as part of the pleasure of acquiring knowledge:

> Thus also is honey more pleasing because enclosed in the comb, and what ever is sought with greater effort is also found with greater desire.[17]

The views of Augustine and his followers have led to two misconceptions about the relation of poetry to philosophic truth. The first, based on Augustine's emphasis on "an interpretation contributing to the reign of charity" has led some recent critics to conclude that secular as well as sacred medieval texts could be analyzed to reveal a consistent statement of Christian doctrine. According to Huppé and Robertson (1963), for example, "The poet's function was to express in terms of the figurative and the fabled the doctrinal truth which the homilies and the con-

fessor presented directly".[18] The second misconception is the discounting of the poetic vehicle as part of the final truth that is apprehended. "The kernel is what is important; it is to get at this that we crack the shell. The shell has no other value."[19] And again, "Eloquence unrelated to the revelation of truth is a hollow shell. The perception of the truly beautiful comes not from the shell, but from gaining the kernel after breaking the shell."[20] The pleasure in poetry, in this view has been redirected from the letter to the truth it contains.[21]

An alternative interpretation of Augustine's ideas which reasserts the power of the letter can be found in the School of Chartres. Flourishing in the twelfth century, the School of Chartres was a center of rationalist, scientific thought and philosophic Platonism. Its poetic followers had a strong influence on Chaucer. In their attempt to reconcile eloquentia and scientia, the arts of rhetoric and the sciences of the quadrivium, the Chartrians elevated poetry to a new status. The poetic form itself became important as the only means of communicating the relation between visible nature and its underlying reality. In their view, poetry had a "syncretistic" aspect in that its very structure was instrumental in combining and reconciling different beliefs. According to Winthrop Wetherbee's study of the Chartrian influence on twelfth-

century poetry, the thinking of this school began and ended in a kind of poetry: "poetic intuition /was/ finally the only means of linking philosophy and theology, pagan auctores and Christian doctrine, sapientia and eloquentia."[22]

Looking to Plato's Timaeus as the embodiment of the Chartrian ideal, poets such as Alain de Lille and Jean de Meun used their poetry to explore philosophical questions. The central insight of the Timaeus, that an analogy exists between the microcosm of man's constitution and the macrocosm of universal order, laid the foundation for an ideal union of poetry and philosophy Plato's vision appealed to these writers as "a model of reality which could be 'read' allegorically as a means to philosophic understanding "[24] That is, the very nature of the philosophic insight required metaphor and analogy as a mode of expression. The application of this principle can be seen, for example, in Alain's Complaint of Nature where abandonment of Nature's law is reflected on the human level in the metaphor of disordered language and sexual perversion:

> Man is made woman, he blackens the honor of his sex, the craft of magic Venus makes him of double gender. He is both predicate and subject, he becomes likewise of two declensions, he pushes the laws of grammar too far. (I, 18-21)

The highly intuitive subject matter of the Timaeus provided a further justification for the union of poetry and philosophy. In the Timaeus, Plato unfolded his cosmological vision of a divine demiurge creating the universe as a living creature having soul in body and reason (34 B). Introducing his work, Plato declared that his account, so far from being exact, could not even be consistent within itself (29 C). Since his vision was not easily reducible to an exact literal statement of physical laws, poetry became a necessary means of conveying the knowledge it contained. In other words, profound intuitive philosophy such as Plato's could not be encapsulated in neat kernels of wisdom easily extracted from their setting. It had to be experienced as inseparable from the poetic means themselves.

Interest in the Timaeus lead to an evolution of the poet's philosophical perspective as well as of his poetic form. As Winthrop Wetherbee observes, attempts to explain Plato's idea of a world soul "led directly to the development of the idea of a more or less autonomous 'Nature,' operative in cosmic and human life and insuring moral as well as physical stability."[23] Alain de Lille, for example, drew upon Plato's cosmology to develop his ideal concept of a universe based on a harmonious relation of erotic love, natural generation, and heavenly love. The form he chose was an allegorical dream vision in which

philosophical dialogue ornamented with rhetorical tropes conveyed his message. Chaucer, in turn, adopted Alain's philosophical model in the Parliament of Fowls, but communicated his concept of universal order through significant placement of poetic images such as Venus' temple or Nature's garden, rather than through explicitly didactic discourse.

The Chartrian philosophers made another departure from Augustine in emphasizing the role of nature as well as scripture as a source of truth. If the natural world were a visible reflection of a divinely ordained cosmic order, then it, too became a text with veiled meanings. The same concept, as we have noted, was implied by Macrobius' image of Nature's protective raiment. In this light, the Chartrians read the ancients, not with "a single-minded view to charity" as Augustine had suggested, but with an eye to the integumentum, the covering which carried hidden significance in myth or fable and which could reveal universal spiritual, moral, or cosmological truths coexistent with theology. That is, the Chartrians regarded the letter itself as important, not as a chaff to be discarded, but as the only real source of meaning available for rational analysis. In this respect, they have found the concurrence of many modern readers. As Morton Bloomfield stated in his study of allegory, "the literal sense of fiction alone is

profound, for it alone contains the possibility of other meanings.[28]

Chaucer, faced with such contradictory systems as courtly love and Christian charity, classic deities and Christian vices and virtues, rationalist consolations and actual human suffering, had to devise a form capable of organizing complex truths into a meaningful perspective. Although the frequency of classical rhetorical devices in his poetry and his often explicit concern with the means of expression seem to indicate Chaucer's closeness to the classical rhetoricians, his willingness to parody the same devices in other works such as the Nun's Priest's Tale, implies the tropes themselves may have served a different purpose in Chaucer.[27] As we shall see in the Book of the Duchess and the Parliament of Fowls, rather than embellishing traditional truths, the ironic use of tropes could serve to evoke previous contexts in which philosophical ideas were raised.

In the end we may conclude that Chaucer adhered more closely to the Chartrian ideal of poetry than to the advice of the rhetoricians. His aim was not merely to clothe old ideas in elegant new dressing, but rather to explore philosophical questions by imaginative means which would transcend the powers of logic. To this purpose, he used the allegorical dream genre inherited from Boethius, Alain de

Lille, and Jean de Meun, but pushed it beyond the clear equivalences of traditional allegory to a more openly suggestive form based on a realistic model of the dream. We will look now at some of Chaucer's prececessors to ascertain their use of the allegorical dream vision as a poetic means for conveying philosophical truth.

2. Boethius: The Consolation of Philosophy

A logical starting point for a study of the allegorical dream tradition comes in the work of the sixth-century poet and philosopher, Boethius, whose Consolation of Philosophy was admired by medieval and Renaissance readers. The Consolation, with its graceful style and profound thought, provided an outstanding example of the successful union of instruction and literary delight. Its reflections on the existence of evil in a world ruled by Providence appealed to a wide audience including both Latin-educated clerks and interested laymen who obtained the work in the vernacular. One testimony to the book's popularity was its eminent list of translators which included not only Geoffrey Chaucer, but Alfred the Great, Jean de Meun, and Queen Elizabeth I.

Chaucer drew upon the Consolation as a source of both philosophical ideas and literary structure. Boethius' view on the inconstancy of Fortune, the relation between

divine knowledge and individual free will, and the ascent from transient worldly pleasures to an apprehension of God as the supreme good can be recognized in the Book of the Duchess, the Knight's Tale, and the concluding stanzas of the Troilus. As V. E. Watts comments in his translation of the Consolation, "almost all the passages of philosophical reflection of any length in the works of Chaucer can be traced to Boethius."[28] A close examination of the Consolation, therefore, will be useful in revealing how Boethius conceived of poetry's relation to philosophy and how, as a consequence, he employed the poetic dream vision to convey his philosophical message.

The problematic role of poetry in a purely philosophical quest becomes immediately apparent in the opening lines of the Consolation when, following Boethius' introductory elegy, Lady Philosophy banishes the Muses from the poet's bedside. Her anger is in response to Boethius' passionate poetic complaint recalling his former joys and deriding "fickle Fortune" who has robbed him of youth and wealth (I, i).[29] From the glory of high estate, he complains, he has been reduced to exile and impatient longing for death. In Philosophy's view, the crime of the Muses who inspire such verse is their association with uncontrolled emotion:

> These are the very women who kill the rich and fruitful harvest of Reason with the barren thorns of Passion. They habituate men to their sickness of mind instead of curing them (I, i).

As an antidote to the debilitating Muses of elegy, Philosophy introduces her own set of Muses whom she claims have the power to "heal and cure" (I, i). In fact, far from shunning poetry, she uses it in alternating doses with her "stronger medicine" of prose dialectic to comfort her pupil, sweeten his learning with memorable lines, and hearten him for the next stage of instruction. Clearly, Philosophy distinguishes between two orders of poetry--one decadent and undesirable; the other worthy and useful.

The elegiac couplets of the opening metrum exemplify Boethius' use of the "undesirable" sort of poetry. As Anna Crabbe observes in her study of literary design in the Consolation, Boethius' introductory poem seems to be modelled on Ovid's late elegies, the Tristia and the Exponto.[30] Ovid wrote these bitter laments at the end of his life when, like Boethius who was sentenced to imprisonment and death, he was condemned to exile on the Black Sea coast. In Crabbe's view, the identification with Ovid at the outset of the poem represents the bottom of the scale in a hierarchy of reactions to adversity. The scale ascends to the enlightened vision of Socrates who scorned earthly vicissitudes and pursued only philosophical wisdom. For Boethius, the reversion to Ovid's elegiac verse implies

an abandonment of the philosopher's pursuit of truth for the delusory comforts of emotional self-indulgence. Philosophy comments that refuge in this type of poetry ties a man to his illness instead of lifting him out of it (I, i). She prefers reason over passion, dialectic over self-pitying emotion.

The divergent moral status of poetry and philosophy is dramatized allegorically by the rivalry between their contrasting female personifications. Philosophy plays the virtuous lady to poetry's strumpet Muses. This opposition recalls the disreputable Muses of Plato's Republic who were banished from the ideal state for their association with excess emotion and false ornament.[31] In the Consolation, the Muses are histrionic creatures willing to sing joyous lyrics at one moment, only to tear their cheeks and dictate mournful elegies the next. Their variability allies them with the "random goddess," Fortune, whose inconstancy is described at length in Book II. Boethius admits that the Muses have always accompanied him in giving vent to his emotions: In his youth he "composed with eager zest," but now he is "driven by grief to shelter in sad songs" (I, i). In Philosophy's estimation, the Muses are "hysterical sluts" who approach a sick man's bedside and offer "sweetened poisons" to aggravate his pain (I, i). They are "sirens" who dare with "deadly enticements" to

seduce Philosophy's favorite pupil from the nobility of his former task.

Philosophy, on the other hand, is a figure of queenly bearing who displays sceptre and book as the symbols of the sovereignity of her intellectual quest. She enters with "imperious authority," her eyes "alight with fire." Her costume of imperishable cloth woven with learned allusions has been fashioned by her own skill. The damage done to it through dusty neglect or tearing by "the hands of marauders" has been the fault of others, not proof of her compliance with changing fortune. Her height, which ranges from human dimensions to a heavenly grandeur, implies the heights to which she leads; her mixture of youth and age indicates the enduring vitality of her wisdom.

It is no wonder, then, that Lady Philosophy dismisses the "sirens" of poetry and invites in their stead her own servants, Music and Rhetoric, as aids in her philosophical task. Poetry is acceptable if it serves a didactic aim, if it raises the mind to higher perpectives and enlightens it with true knowledge. This requisite becomes the theme of the second metrum in which Boethius' former interest in astronomy, fit subject for philosophical poetry, is contrasted with his present reversion to sentimental elegy. Whereas his earlier speculations brought him upward toward light and freedom, his present "deep despair" leaves him a

"prisoner of night" condemned "to contemplate the lowly dust" (I, ii). Philosophy recognizes that poetry, when used with "caution," can be an antidote to excessive passion. In small doses it can prepare the mind to ascend to the more powerful remedies of philosophical argument. To one "swollen and calloused" with excessive emotion as Boethius seems to be, poetry's "more gentle action" can serve as as homeopathic medicine, tempering the mind to receive the sharper medicine of pure reason (I, v).

Philosophy's own use of poetry demonstrates her theory. In contrast to the four emotionally turbulent metra delivered by Boethius (I, i, iii, v; V, iii), the metra sung by Philosophy have a clearly instructive purpose. They serve to reiterate, exemplify and emphasize the prose argument, to present the issues in a wider perspective, or to anticipate or refer back to ideas in other parts of the poem.[32] Each time Boethius lapses into a "long and noisy display of grief (III, i) Philosophy responds with unperturbed reason. When by Book III Boethius has become more amenable to her teaching, the proportion of poetry to prose dwindles considerably. By Book IV, prose vi, for instance, Philosophy abandons the pleasure of verse altogether to deal at length with the intricacies of her argument. Fifty-seven sections later she realizes Boethius' attention is flagging and offers him the sweetness of song to refresh his mind.

Lady Philosophy's use of poetry places her in the school of writers who, following Horace, compose to delight and instruct.[33] The Horatian prescription fits neatly with Boethius' choice of the ancient genre of "consolation" in which known remedies are applied as soon as a disorder is named.[34] In both cases poetry performs a primarily decorative role in expounding well-formulated truths. In Boethius' Consolation this process gains the added philosophical dimension of its association with the Platonic theory of anamnesis. According to Plato, all knowledge exists before birth and the education leading to the ascent of the soul is, in fact, a remembering of this knowledge.[35] When Philosophy diagnoses Boethius' problem as a forgetting of his true nature and endeavors to remedy his "blunted memory" (I, vi), she reveals her closeness to this position. She will use prose dialectic to recall the lines of philosophical argument and poetry to state them in a delightful and memorable way.

The knowledge, then, that is "discovered" by the dreamer in the Consolation of Philosophy is really the authoritative knowledge known in advance by the writer and made pleasantly available to his audience. The insights offered by the poetic experience are not something new and intuitive to be ascertained within the poetic imagery itself. Although there is a process of education and dis-

covery for the dreamer, his destination is charted in advance and proclaimed with unequivocal clarity in the prose passages. The poetry has prepared the mind and secured its consent. It has not disturbed preconceptions and forced the reader into an active search for innovative solutions. The dream vision, in so much as it is a poetic device, serves the same purpose. It sets the scene for descent of an awesome personification into the world of men. It adds interest by leading the reader into an extraordinary experience and gives otherworldly authority to Boethius' own philosophical position.

Yet at two points in the Consolation, Boethius' use of poetry hints at wider possibilities for presenting philosophical issues in literary form. In the Orpheus myth (III, xii) and the Circe myth (IV, iii), Boethius implies a conflict inherent in the human condition which impedes the acceptance of merely rational answers to man's dilemmas. On the one hand stands the clear order of truth provided by logic and reason; on the other, the complex nature of man imprisoned by the inevitable love of earthly things and unable to ascend to the realm of universal truth. The intuitive message of these poetic myths set in contrast to the clear logic of the prose passages has important implications for Chaucer's use of the dream vision.

The Orpheus myth appears at the end of Book III when Lady Philosophy is concluding a long syllogistic prose discussion establishing the harmonious union of mutual love between Creator and Creation. Her pupil, who has been 'chaffing under the strain of so much involuted reasoning, declares, "'You are playing with me, aren't you, by weaving a labyrinth of arguments from which I can't find the way out'" (III, xii). In his opinion, Philosophy's fault is that she has taken no "external aid;" she has not referred at all to experience, but has argued her point with "'one internal proof grafted upon another so that each draws its credibility from that which preceded'" (III, xii). In response to her pupil's distress, Philosophy moves to poetry to bridge the gap between his human situation and her rational proofs of divine harmony.

Her poem is a retelling of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus is a singer who, like Boethius, indulges in emotional elegies to mourn his loss. Like Boethius who found no relief in self-pity, Orpheus discovers that "his passions unrepressed /Burned more fiercely in his breast (III, xii). In defiance of the gods who have taken Eurydice's life, Orpheus descends to Hades, successfully appeals to the monarch of the dead, and secures permission for Eurydice's return. He is bound by one condition: He must not look back until she has been safely conducted up to

the world of light. Despite the clear directive of reason, Orpheus is unable to resist the desire to see Eurydice. He turns around and she is gone forever.

Philosophy intends this exemplum as an admonishment to the prisoner bound by earthly loves:

> For who gives in and turns his eye
> Back to darkness from the sky,
> Loses while he looks below
> All that up with him may go. (III, xii)

In effect, however, the story only serves to underscore the tragic contradiction between Lady Philosophy's rational certainty and the prisoner Boethius' keen sense of loss. Despite the perceived rightness of Philosophy's position, Boethius is still bound by regrets for his former joys (I,i), nostalgia for his earlier political prominence (II, iii), and anger at his isolation and betrayal (I, iv). Chaucer picks up the same conflict in the Book of the Duchess, which in many ways resembles Boethius' Consolation. By having the grieving Man in Black temporarily restored by the idealized memory of his lady's character and then brought back abruptly by the inexorable fact of her physical death, he is made to face the same dilemma: the contradiction between man's earthly desires and his perception of a harmonious order where Fortune's vicissitudes can have no hold.

What Boethius emphasizes by the contrast of prose and poetic passages is that prose is the language appropriate to reason, while poetry is shaped by a complex mixture of reason, emotion, and intuition which more completely represents the human response to a situation. As we shall see, Chaucer's development of the dream's associative potential permits him to take Boethius' implication even further. By presenting the accepted authoritative solutions to a problem through fragments of familiar rhetorical debate, and the perspective from experience through emotionally-laden myth and landscape, Chaucer uses the dream to account for the manifold nature of truth and the need to consider all aspects of man in a problem-solving situation

3 Alain de Lille The Complaint of Nature

In the twelfth century the Latin scholar, Alain de Lille, continued the exploration of philosophical problems through visionary allegory. In his Complaint of Nature, Alain preserves Boethius' alternation of prose passages with poetry and his use of an awesome female personification as soothing mentor to the poet Similar to Boethius, whose solitary lament preceded a vision ("I became aware of a woman standing over me," I, i), Alain opens his poem with a distressed poet whose elegiac complaint is answered by the appearance of a female figure who glides "down from the

inner palace of the impassable heavens" (I, 2-4) and hastens to approach him. Alain, however adds a concluding frame to his dream by having the narrator awake from sleep and declare, "With the mirror of this visionary sight taken away, the previous view of the mystic apparition left me, who had been fired by ecstasy in sleep" (IX, 248-51). Finally, Alain follows Boethius' mode of unravelling a philosophic problem in Socratic dialogue between a single visionary authority and a bemused dreamer. As in Boethius' work, there is a notable disproportion between the minor questioning role of the dreamer seeking to make sense of a disordered universe, and Nature's extended discourse offered to clarify his clouded vision.

Although closely adhering to the Boethian model, Alain de Lille made his own significant contributions to the dream poem genre. First, on a thematic level, Alain narrowed down Boethius' concern with general philosophy to focus on the topos of sexual love and a discussion of its relation to God's order in the universe. The love theme continued to flourish as the major subject matter of medieval courtly dream poetry, with Alain's treatment of it providing a direct influence on the Roman de la Rose and later on Chaucer's Parliament of Fowls.[37] More importantly, however, for the development of the dream form as a problem-solving genre were Alain's departures from Boethius at

the level of rhetorical theory. While both writers were philosopher-poets committed to expressing metaphysical truths through visionary dialogue, Alain showed greater confidence in the appropriateness of poetry to this task. For Alain, poetry, not prose, was the medium especially equipped to communicate non-material, non-rational concepts. His conviction led him further than his predecessor in exploring the figurative possibilities of language. To clarify the differences between Boethius and Alain de Lille over poetry's role in philosophical discussion, we might look at the rhetorical theory of Macrobius whose Commentary on the Dream of Scipio was available to both writers.

In the section of his Commentary dealing with the "Fabulous Narration " (I, ii), Macrobius justifies the philosopher's use of fable, both of his own invention and those drawn from earlier classical sources. By pointing to the examples of Plato, Homer, Cicero, and Virgil, Macrobius demonstrates that fiction performs a legitimate role in the establishment of transcendent ideals and moral sanctions among men. The teacher of wisdom, however, must be cautious to select the right kind of fable for his purposes. In a series of distinctions, Macrobius differentiates between fables which merely "gratify the ear" and are false in their

interior meanings as well as their outward expression, and the narrationes fabulosae, which promote virtue and truth through fictional plot and setting (I, ii, 7-9).

In the Complaint of Nature, Alain echoes Macrobius' categories of fable by making them the basis for Nature's reprimand of the dreamer in Prose IV. Nature is shocked at the dreamer's over-literal understanding of poetry: "Dost thou attempt to give faith to the dream fancies of the poets . . . Does not philosophy's saner treatment file away and erase with higher understanding that which is learned in the child's cradle of poetic teaching?" (IV, 196-201) While some poets "intoxicate" the ears of their hearers and bewitch them with a "melody of honeyed delight," others use the exterior of fable to cloak "the mystery of loftier understanding" (IV, 205, 211). Nature agrees with Macrobius' position that the philosopher who is prudent in handling sacred matters, might choose to present his holy truths with "respectable events and characters. . . beneath a modest veil of allegory" (I, ii, 11).

This description of the philosopher's use of fable also resembles the views of Boethius' Lady Philosophy who invoked the Muses of Music and Rhetoric to entertain and enlighten her auditor. However, other statements from Macrobius concerning the limitations of language lead to Alain's more advanced position that poetry's use of analogy and metaphor

is uniquely suited to drawing the reader's attention towards concepts incapable of direct, concrete expression. After his discussion of narrative categories, Macrobius turns to the philosopher's need to convey concepts which "not only pass the bounds of speech, but those of human comprehension as well" (I, ii, 14), concepts such as nature, the soul, and the divine order of the universe. Such invisible causes and essences can only be discovered in their visible manifestations, that is, in the phenomena of the natural world. To communicate these transcendent ideas, the philosopher-poet must follow Nature's model by representing invisible forms figuratively in the tegumen of his fictional exposition.[38] As Nature presents the archetypal ideas of the divine mind in the image of the material universe, so the poet must make verbal pictures to aid the human mind in ascent to divine truth.

Macrobius' ideas take dramatic form in Alain's Complaint when Lady Nature describes the same restrictions as the philosopher-poet in bringing divine conceptions into a material realm. Her figure itself, with its elaborate allegorical costume is a poetic concession to the dreamer's earthly vision. As the narrator explains:

> . . . she depicted for my mental perception the image of a real voice, and by this brought into actual being words which had been, so to speak, archetypes ideally preconceived. (III,17-20)

Nature describes herself as the lowly disciple of the Supreme Creator, the vicegerent of God. She creates through replicas of the Divine Image, but God, as the Source and Creator of all, brings Creation "out of the spiritual abode of His inner preconception into the external mode: He expresses in a material world the mental word conceived from the everlasting foundation of the universe" (IV, 315-17). While Nature directs man's earthly existence, God controls the means of man's healing and redemption. Understanding of the workings of Nature requires reason and intellect; understanding of divine mysteries requires faith.

Nature is aware that our minds "faint" to grasp "the ineffable mystery of Godship" (III, 143) and may be reached only through analogy and metaphor. She has consequently fashioned man "into the likeness of the original mundane mechanism, that in him, as in a mirror of the world itself, combined nature may appear" (III, 74-75). In other words, man is the microcosm for the macrocosm of universal order. He is the "vehicle," the "signifier," in Nature's metaphor.

The philosopher, following Nature's model, can approach the conception of divine truth through the simile and metaphor of poetry. Pursuing this goal, Alain piles image upon image, analogy upon analogy, in order to draw the mind from vivid sense impressions to an intuition of the inex-

pressible. In the elegiac prologue, for example, although Alain seems to be merely indulging in the same self-pitying complaint as Boethius, he is at the same time introducing a cumulative pattern of images that will be used later to discuss man's wandering from his true nature. He depicts Nature in disarray, Venus warring against Venus, and Genius abandoned. Achieving what R. H. Green describes as a "surface diversity /which/ is not incompatible with inner unity," Alain draws comparisons from every area of twelfth-century learning.[38] He refers to Venus and the lovers of classical mythology (I, i), the plow and anvil of medieval daily life (I, i, 25-35), and the grammar and rhetoric of the Schools (I, i, 2). The cosmology of the Timaeus is combined with the doctrine of the Fall from Christian theology. Most striking is the image of sexual perversion (I, i, 16 ff.) as the prototype for the perversion of reason from the bond of divine love. Each image is but a particular aspect, a microcosmic point of the macrocosmic disorder resulting from man's rejection of the divine plan. Despite their apparent eclecticism, Alain's images have the combined effect of giving figurative expression to his central theme: the suffering of man resulting from his wilful infidelity to God's harmonious design.

While communicating invisible truths to the wise, the cloak of poetry has the additional virtue of protecting these truths from the coarse and literal minded. As men-

tioned earlier, Macrobius refers to the example of Nature who finds a frank, open exposition of herself distasteful."[40] She, therefore, envelops her form in variegated garments to avoid the "uncouth senses of men" and to permit the handling of her secrets by more prudent individuals through fabulous narratives. In a similar metaphor, Alain's Nature is cloaked in an ornate tunic depicting the entire created universe. Significantly, the garment is ripped at the panel portraying man. Hidden within her attire are secrets concerning man's origin, spiritual destiny, corruption and punishment. Nature's reason for veiling her truths echoes Macrobius' warning not to throw pearls before swine. In her words:

> I have determined to cover the face of my might in very many ways, preserving its mystery from commonness, for fear lest, if I should impart to man a close knowledge of myself, those matters, which at first prized among men because unknown, would afterward, when known, be held of little worth. (III, 192-94)

Poetic image and fable, then, serves Alain as a means of communicating immaterial concepts through figurative likeness and of veiling these concepts from exposure to the unworthy. Alain's concern with transcendent ideas, however, leads him even further to a position resembling the traditional interpretation of scripture as the ascent of the mind to the mysteries of God.[41] According to this perspective, poetic images have the power to raise the reader from lower to higher apprehensions of truth corresponding to

ascending faculties of comprehension (sense, will, reason, and intuition). In the prologue to the Anticlaudianus, Alain explicitly defines the philosophical poem's progression from literal to moral to allegorical and finally to mystical or anagogical:

> For in this work the sweetness of the literal sense will soothe the ears of boys, the moral instruction will inspire the mind on the road to perfection, the sharper subtlety of the allegory will whet the advanced intellect. Let those be denied access to this work who pursue only sense images and do not reach out for the truth that comes from reason . . . Let those, however, who do not allow their reflections to dwell on disgraceful imaginings but have the courage to raise them to a view of forms above the heavens, enter the strait paths of my work . . . .[42]

The literal meaning engages the senses and imagination in the act of recognition; the figurative meaning supplies the intelligence with truths which lie behind appearances; and the moral instruction stimulates the will to the love and practice of virtue. Beyond this, lies the final vision, the intuition of the divine mysteries which are the ultimate goal of human knowledge. It is this view of "forms above the heavens" which Alain as philosopher-poet wishes to communicate, but as a writer is hampered by the limitations of language. His use of analogy and fable will, therefore, stimulate the imagination to move beyond simple sense impressions in its ascent to higher states of understanding. As R. H. Green writes,

> In this final level of mature response I take Alain to be describing an essentially poetic experience which begins, but does not rest, in the senses and reason,

> and rises to the intuition and enjoyment of a truth for which the usual modes of discourse are not appropriate.[43]

In conclusion, Alain's poetic theory leads him to explore poetry's use of analogy and figurative expression, a potential that was to be realized later in Chaucer's dream poems. The Complaint of Nature, however, falls short of an entirely intuitive treatment of philosophical themes. Although the opening images portraying disorder, and the lengthy allegorical description of Nature's attire seem to signal a poetic work based entirely on implied meanings, Alain refrains from trusting completely to indirect statement. In the dialogue following Nature's appearance before the dreamer, he retreats to more direct discourse to gloss and expand on what he has already presented implicitly. In other words, Nature unravels the mystery of her allegorical garment. She describes her office as vicegerent of God, her shaping of man as the microcosm of the universe, man's singular violation of her laws, the corruption of genitive love, and the consequent corruption of the world. Though Nature carefully maintains "a modest veil of allegory" for her didactic statements, her philosophic doctrine is explicitly laid out for the reader.

We might inquire at this point how Alain's goals as philosopher-poet are benefited by the use of the dream genre. In Alain's work, as in the case of Boethius, the dream brings the reader into a transitional realm between

earthly reality and heavenly vision which provides access to otherworldly knowledge. By simulating communication between two worlds, the poetic vision imitates Macrobius' somnium oraculum in which a god clearly reveals what will transpire and what actions to take or avoid.[44] The framework of visionary encounter allows Alain's dream, although merely a narrative fable, to draw upon itself the aura of authority accorded by Macrobius to his actual dream classifications. However, as in Boethius' Consolation, the cues announcing the dream are minimal, amounting only to an introductory elegy followed by the astonishing arrival of a heavenly personification who initiates the visionary dialogue. Aside from a detailed allegorical description of the visitor's appearance, there are no further dream devices such as idealized landscapes or imaginary voyages. The vision itself remains essentially a specialized conventional setting designed to organize the dialogue and poetic images which build the philosophical theme and to enhance the poet's insights with claims to extraordinary states of awareness.

4. Prudentius: Psychomachia

It is important to mention at this point that the allegorical confrontation of ideas found a direction other than philosophical dialogue. In the early fifth century, for example, Prudentius had treated the subject of the divided will in the first fully developed allegorical poem, the Psychomachia.[45] Embodying C. S. Lewis' conviction that it is "the very nature of thought and language to represent what is immaterial in picturable terms,"[46] Prudentius translated the struggle of man's "double nature" (non simplex natura)[47] into an objectified battle of personified abstractions. As an early Christian poet, Prudentius' portrayal of psychic conflict took the specific form of the battle of virtues and vices for control of the believer's soul. This perspective, added to his admiration for the classical Latin poets, led him to adapt his Christian subject matter to the epic manner and machinery of Virgil. The result was a grossly literal translation of the bellum intestinum (Lewis' primary subject of allegory) to the blood and gore of the epic battlefield.

In the Psychomachia opposing armies of virtues and vices rage in fierce combat. The outcome of each confronta-

tion is portrayed with horrifying detail meant to instill an allegorical message. In the struggle involving fallen Pride, for example, we are told:

> Chance drives the stone to smash the breath-passage in the midst of the face and beat the lips into the arched mouth. The teeth within are loosened, the gullet cut, and the mangled tongue fills it with bloody fragments.(l. 421 ff.)[50]

Prudentius' attention to detail supports his view that visualization is a major weapon in the soul's battle against its enemies:

> The way of victory is before our eyes if we mark at close quarters the very features of the Virtues, and the monsters that close with them in deadly struggle. (ll. 17-20)

To bring his subject before the reader he bestows lavish description both on his personifications and on their often gruesome methods of despatching of one another. Humility, for example, although supplied with meagre arms, boldly strikes off the head of Pride, then modestly uplifts her face, "tempering her joy with look of kindness" (l.276) to indicate her triumph:

> Grasping her blood-stained enemy by the hair, she drags her out and with her left hand turns her face upwards; then, though she begs for mercy, bends the neck, severs the head, lifts it and holds it by the dripping locks (ll. 280-83)

Long-suffering, after decking herself in sturdy armour, opposes Wrath by "standing with staid countenance, unmoved amid the battle" (l. 110 ff.) until all Wrath's darts and lances have bounced harmlessly off her breastplate and

helmet. Wrath, then, frustrated in her fury, conveniently commits suicide. The allegorical message is clear, but the absurd, often humorous dramatizations contradict the serious tone intended by the author. Evidently Prudentius' allegiance to both his epic model and the demands of allegory led him into uncomfortable situations in which gentle virtues such as Humility and Mercy could triumph only through acts of bloodthirsty violence [49]

The Psychomachia may be seen as a pole of extreme intellectual abstraction in a general progression of allegory towards increasing concretization and verisimilitude.[50] The personifications of the Psychomachia take their place with the iconographic abstractions on the wall of the Garden of Déduit in the Roman de la Rose, or the abstractions such as Lust, Curteysie, Delyt, and Gentillesse surrounding Venus' temple in the Parliament of Fowls (ll. 218-245). In the Roman de la Rose we can see a further development as other personifications within the garden such as Belacueil and Danger retain their names as abstractions while becoming more concretely exemplified in their actions in the poem. Ultimately, they lead to the highly realistic characters of the Canterbury Tales who appear to represent both individuals and the specific example of their dominant virtue or vice.

Seen in relation to Chaucer's dream poetry, the Psychomachia offers a clear example of the power of allegory to visualize subjective states and to speak through dramatic images rather than dialogue. Unfortunately, however, Prudentius did not trust the power of his personifications to convey doctrine through images alone. Instead, he intervened after each confrontation, offering such reiterative moral statements as the one that follows Pride's fall into the pit: "God breaks down all arrogance. Greatness falls; the bubble bursts; swollen pride is flattened." As we shall see in the dream poems, Chaucer learns to keep silent at these points and let his allegorical figures communicate implicitly through their actions and attributes. In contrast to Prudentius, Chaucer uses abstractions not as a direct dramatization of the author's didactic message, but as condensed visual representations of ideas to be weighed against others in the poem. The abstractions outside Venus' temple, for instance, elicit the atmosphere of youthful desire and courtly ritual found in the Cligés of Chrétien de Troyes or in Guillaume's portion of the Roman de la Rose. They are balanced against the agony of the pleading lovers (ll. 278-79), the urgent demands of the common birds, the sterile rituals of the tercel eagles, and the orderly dispensation of "plesaunce" by Nature. In like manner, although Chaucer uses rhetoric, his statements are not intended as a direct revelation of

allegorical significance, but as one out of many ideological positions to be evaluated in context.

5. Guillaume de Lorris: The Roman de la Rose: Development of the Dream as Fable

The most influential of all dream poems, the Roman de la Rose, consists of the work of two poets whose strikingly different orientations toward dream and allegory inevitably produced divergent methods of poetic problem-solving. Guillaume de Lorris, who completed the first 4000 lines of the poem in 1237, based his narrative technique on the ancient rhetorical tradition deriving from Quintilian's definition of allegory as a continuous metaphor; Jean de Meun, writing forty years later, modelled his 17,000 line sequel on the theological tradition of patristic exegesis.[61] Guillaume, in effect, invented a fable whose literal meaning would convey a preconceived significance; Jean used discourse and argument to gloss the themes raised in the fictional structure of Guillaume's work. Guillaume enlisted concrete images to talk about ideas and emotions; Jean took Guillaume's fable as a "pretext" to stimulate argumentation, irony, and a dialectical approach to truth. Together the poems form an allegorical unity in which the second section prods, parodies, and dissects the courtly preconceptions of the first to reveal a message never

conclusively stated in Guillaume's version. Because Chaucer derives poetic ideas from each of these authors, I will consider their works in sequence.

Guillaume's method of problem-solving is characterized by the clarity with which he indicates his intentions to instruct the reader in a lesson associated with love and the absence of an explicitly-stated, unifying doctrine. The poem's unresolved conclusion complicated by the author's untimely death before its completion caused its message to remain ambiguous. More interesting for a study of Chaucer, however, are Guillaume's techniques for conveying ideas, techniques which indicate a movement away from traditional dialogue to the more associative, dream-like structure of Chaucer's dream form.

Guillaume promises his readers a significance to be contained in his poem when he declares at the outset, "L'art d'Amors est toute enclose" (l. 38).[52] His problem then becomes one of gaining credence for his message. He achieves this by using the prologue to assert the authority of dreams. The dream's truthfulness, he claims, is confirmed by his own experience. Though he received the vision five years ago,

> . . . in that sweven is never a del
> That it nys afterward befalle,
> Ryght as this drem wol tel us alle.
> (ll.28-30)

If his argument from experience fails to convince the reader, Guillaume offers as further proof of the prophetic power of dreams a reference to the medieval dream authority, Macrobius. In his Commentary on the Dream of Scipio, Macrobius divides dreams into categories according to their reliability in prophesying truth and demonstrates that the messages of dreams are often confirmed by reality. Ironically, Guillaume's dream as an adventure of love could be classified by Macrobius as a worthless fantasm, an erotic fantasy in which "the lover dreams of possessing his sweetheart" (III, 4). Guillaume has apparently prepared his audience for serious moral allegory while simultaneously undermining its expectations with a nightmare or insomnium.[53] The difficulty is evaded somewhat by Guillaume's retrospective time scheme. Because his dream occurred in the past and foretold future events which have indeed transpired, it retains the dignity of an oraculum or prophetic dream.

The resulting ambiguity between inspired, prophetic dream and one motivated by physical and psychological conditions in the narrator is later exploited by Chaucer. In the Book of the Duchess, for example, we are not certain whether the narrator's dream is the result of his "sorwful ymagynacioun," his subsequent bedtime reading of

"Céys and Alcyone," or his reckless wager with the god, Morpheus; in the Parliament of Fowls, we are again left in doubt concerning the narrator's dream. Does it result from his late night reading of the Dream of Scipio or is it inspired by the goddess Cythera, who "madest me this sweven for to mete"? Actually, as Chaucer was to realize, Guillaume is not using the dream to predict the future or to provide knowledge from another world, but to gain authority for the allegorical fable invented to present ideas covertly.[54]

After establishing its prophetic credentials, Guillaume makes his invented dream more convincing by elaborating the waking frame and strengthening its connection to the visionary narrative. In the opening segment, Guillaume provides certain biographical facts about the narrator: his belief in dreams, his youthful experience of love, his dedication of the poem to a lady called the "Rose." Serving a similar function to Boethius' opening references to the "glory of /his/ happy youth" and the "wealth short-lived" (I. i), the waking segment in Guillaume's poem provides a transition from the logic and verisimilitude of everyday reality to the free, idealized world of the imagination. It points to Chaucer's expansion of the waking frame into a complex portrayal of the problems disturbing the waking narrator. For Chaucer, as we shall see, the frame serves

both to introduce important issues and to provide convincing psychological motivation for a dream which attempts to resolve them.[55]

As a further link between the introduction and the dream itself, Guillaume connects the character of the waking narrator (the author's fictional counterpart) to the narrator-dreamer, a younger version of himself who is, as yet, uninitiated in love. Chaucer, too, adopts this device by presenting the narrator of the waking frame as a bookish poet, presumably a replica of himself, agonizing over seemingly irresolvable problems. He emerges transposed in the dream as a humble, naive observer embarking on a imaginary adventure in which he is free to explore varied aspects of the problem introduced by his waking counterpart.

Once Guillaume enters the dream, he has three main strategies for conveying "l'Art d'Amors," each of which comes close to revealing his message, only to fall short of providing a comprehensive doctrine. The first is the fable itself which combines the "psychomachian" conflict of Prudentius with the Arthurian romance of Chrétien de Troyes. In Prudentius' Psychomachia, as we observed, the triumph of good over evil in the mind of man was projected into an allegorical battle between warring vices and virtues. Using a similar device, Guillaume portrays the personified moral and psychological traits of the lady as they enter into

combat with the persistent lover who relentlessly pursues her favor. The Arthurian adventures of Chrétien, on the other hand, provided Guillaume with a framework of courtly ritual and chivalric romance to embellish the struggles of his hero. In romances such as Cligés, for example, Chrétien depicts the lover's quest for his lady as a series of trials and strategems paralleled by a corresponding set of schemes by the lady.[58] Similarly, in the Roman de la Rose, Guillaume's dreamer is initiated into the service of the God of Love and led into adventure, trial and combat in quest of his coveted rose. He is encouraged by Fair Welcome, frightened off by Danger, advised by Reason to abjure love, emboldened once again by Friend, and interceded for by Franchise and Pity. When the dreamer at last succeeds in kissing the Rose, he is immediately slandered by his enemies, Evil Tongue, Jealousy, Shame, and Fear. Jealousy then locks Fair Welcome and the Rose in a thick-walled, moated tower.

C. S. Lewis attributes the brilliant fusion of "psychomachia" and Arthurian romance to Guillaume's search for a poetic representation of the lover's psychology. In Lewis' view, Guillaume observed the inadequacy of psychological soliloquy in the midst of Chrétien's narrative adventures. Although knightly combat existed side by side with interior monologue, the two forms never fused. The

adventures did not completely explain the emotions, nor did the emotions gain clarity by the characters' actions.[57] Guillaume, in an innovative move, decided to drop the Arthurian exploits of Chrétien's fantasy world and to deal exclusively with the lover's feelings. The resulting poem was able to objectify emotions in a "psychomachian" allegory which would provide, in effect, a more "realistic account of imaginative passion."[58]

The Roman de la Rose, however, is more than a detailed drama of a lover's feelings. It is an allegorical fable which uses the language of romance to convey a message covertly. In traditional allegory, the fable or literal pattern of events implies a moral or philosophical significance at the level of ideas which justifies the fiction of the fable and which is generally divulged openly somewhere in the text either by one of the personifications or by the narrator himself.[59] In the prologue of the Roman de la Rose, the narrator follows this pattern by promising us a special significance to be contained in the dream. Later, after submission to the God of Love, he again assures us a message will be revealed to those patient enough to await its hidden meaning:

> The book is good at the eendyng,
> Maad of newe and lusty thyng;
> For whoso wol the eendyng here,
> The craft of love he shall mowe lere,
> If that he wol so long abide,
> Tyl I this Romance may unhide,

And undo the significance
Of this drem into Romance.
The sothfastnesse that now is hid,
Without coverture shall be kid
Whanne I undon have of this dremyng,
Wherynne no word is of lesyng.
(ll. 2163-2174)

The dream's signification, however, remains enigmatic. Does Guillaume's message refer to "l'Art d'Amors" (l. 38) with its suggestive reference to Ovid's Ars Amatoria, a practical guidebook to erotic success? Or does it imply the courtly ideology of "fin'amour" in which elaborate ritual is necessary to the refinement of passion? The narrator's change in terms from the "art" to the "craft" of love ("des jeus d'Amors," l. 2069) reinforces the association with Ovid's treatment of love as a "game" based on detachment and deception rather than on genuine devotion.[80]

The inconclusiveness of the narrative fable leads us to Guillaume's second strategy for presenting the significance of his dream, the introduction of a classical myth which concentrates the issues confronting the dreamer. Guillaume chooses the myth of Echo and Narcissus with its themes of the lover's disdain, the sterility of misdirected passion, and the ominous death of the lover.

Superficially, Guillaume's treatment of the Narcissus story resembles the recounting of the Orpheus myth in the Consolation of Philosophy. Yet, unlike Boethius' use of myth as a didactic exemplum enhancing the philosophi-

cal argument, the Narcissus tale in the Roman de la Rose is directly related to the narrative events of the dream. It is, first of all, connected to the landscape experienced by the dreamer whose wanderings in the garden lead him to fountain inscribed, "Here starf the fayre Narcisus" (l. 1468). As part of a landscape complex which locates a spring beneath a tree next to a stone, the fountain recalls the love and death associations of "la fontainne perilleuse" of Chrétien's Yvain (ll. 374 ff.; 408 ff.),[81] or the more archetypal biblical paradisal garden. Furthermore, the dreamer discovers the fountain at the crucial intersection between his contemplation of the beauties of Mirth's garden and his service to the God of Love. Its sinister implications become immediately apparent when the dreamer looks into the "mirrour perilous" (l. 1601) and remembers the tragic love and death of Narcissus. The identification of Narcissus as a victim of love connects him both with the dreamer who is about to be caught in Love's snare and the narrator who presumably has undergone the mixed pleasure and pain of love to emerge with some superior knowledge.

The ambiguity of the myth's message comes partly from this dual perspective of innocence and experience. Since the Narcissus story recounts both the pangs of unrequited passion and the folly of self-love, it serves as a cautionary tale alerting the dreamer to the perils awaiting

him in Love's garden. The dreamer, however, ignores its message and allows himself to be enticed by the crystals in the well which reflect the beautiful world of the garden as well as the delicate Rose, the object of love. From the perspective of the narrator, on the other hand, the Narcissus story becomes a testimony to the "art of love" learned from his past and transmitted in the fable of the poem. The terms chosen to recount the myth clearly associate love with entrapment, frustrated longing, suffering, and death. Though the image in the well is beautiful, the interlude is recalled negatively as a "sory houre" (l. 1639), one which the narrator has since come to regret:

> For sithen /have/ I sore siked;
> That mirrour hath me now entriked.
> But hadde I first knowen in my wit
> The vertu and /the/ strengthe of it,
> I nolde not have mused there.
> Me hadde bet ben elliswhere;
> For in the snare I fell anoon,
> That hath bitrasshed many oon.
> (ll. 1641-48)

The narrator's plaintive comment seems to imply that the myth of Narcissus and the secret of the "Welle of Love" hold the key to the meaning of the dream. We are not given a clear explanation, however, but a promise. As in the prologue (l. 40) and in the initiation to the service of the God of Love quoted above (ll. 2163-2174), the narrator proposes to provide the significance of all this matter.

His poem will surpass the great books of old romance in uncovering the fountain's meaning:

> But they shull never so verily
> Descripcioun of the welle heere,
> Ne eke the sothe of this matere,
> As ye shull, whanne I have undo
> The craft that hir bilongith too.
> (ll. 1630-34)

The ambiguities raised by the myth lead us to examine Guillaume's third strategy for presenting the matter of love--his introduction of a god or powerful personification. The didactic certainty with which Guillaume's mentors instruct the lover is reminiscent of Boethius' Lady Philosophy or Alain's figure of Nature. Yet while these earlier abstractions served to dramatize authoritative doctrine, Guillaume's figures present conflicting points of view, neither of which is convincing enough to carry the meaning of the poem. Let us look, for example, at the first authority to offer his instruction, the God of Love.

When Love begins his counsel to the dreamer, he has already taken part in the poem's literal action by performing his conventional role as arrow-shooting lord of passion. His demand for allegiance does not stem from an idealized past relation with the dreamer as claimed by Boethius' Philosophy, nor from a sense of universal authority as projected by Alain's Nature, but from a more partial interest--the desire to capture disciples for his doctrine of love. His credibility as a beneficial agent is

further undermined by his contradictory effects on the dreamer. Rather than clarifying his vision, Love's intervention affects his pupil with painful desires which distort perception. His emotions no longer obey his reason. As the dreamer remarks, it seems to him as if his life depended on possession of the Rose:

> I was bothe anguyssous and trouble
> For the perill that I saw double:
> I nyste what to seye or do,
> Ne gete a leche my woundis to;
> For neithir thurgh gras ne rote
> Ne hadde I help of hope ne bote.
> But to the botoun evermo
> Myn herte drew; for all my wo,
> My thought was in noon other thing.
> For hadde it ben in my kepyng,
> It wolde have brought my lyf agayn.
> (ll. 1755-1765)

The dreamer is caught in double peril: though he senses a danger in his allegiance to Love, he is, nonetheless, powerfully drawn to submit:

> I felte sich woo my wounde ay wrought,
> That somonede me alway to goo
> Toward the Rose that plesede me soo.
> But I ne durste in no maner,
> Bicause the archer was so ner;
> 'For evermore gladly,' as I rede,
> 'Brent child of fir hath myche drede.'
> (ll. 1813-1820)

Atlast, to resolve his painful conflict, the dreamer relinquishes his heart to the Lord of Love who locks it with a golden key.

After securing the dreamer's loyalty, the God of Love presents a three-part program to educate his new initiate.

The first part, consisting of a series of "commandments" might qualify as an "art of love" or practical guide to manners and qualities appropriate to a courtly lover.[62] Such prescriptions were familiar to a thirteenth-century audience from Andreas Capellanus' De arte honeste amandi (1182-86) and from the earlier classical source of Ovid's Ars amatoria.[63] In these handbooks, as in Guillaume's poem, the lover is instructed to avoid such faults as villainy, gossip, and ribaldry and to cultivate courteous, moderate behavior. He is to select the best clothes he can afford, maintain a clean person, bow at the proper moments and display a cheerful disposition. In the Roman de la Rose, for example, Love counsels the lover to:

> Thyn hondis wassh, thy teeth make white,
> And let no filthe upon thee bee.
> Thy nailes blak if thou maist see,
> Voide it awey delyverly,
> And kembe thyn heed right jolily.
> (11.2280-2284)

In a corresponding passage in Ovid's Ars amatoria the lover is similarly advised to:

> Let your person be clean, your body tanned by the sunshine,
> Let your toga fit well, never a spot on its white,
> Don't let your sandals be scuffed, nor your feet flop in them loosely,
> See that your teeth are clean, brush them at least twice aday,
> Don't let your hair grow long, and when you visit a barber,
> Patronize only the best, don't let him mangle your beard,
> Keep your nails cut short, and don't ever let them be dirty,

Keep the little hairs out of your nose and your ears,
Let your breath be sweet . . .
(I,513-522)[64]

Andreas puts less emphasis on the grooming of the lover and devotes more attention to character traits such as generosity, courtesy, and avoidance of villainy, traits which correspond to Love's recommendations in lines 2175-2254. We are left to speculate whether Love's speech is intended in the manner of Ovid to provide instruction in a cynical game of seduction or, as in Andreas' treatise, to provide a code of manners suitable to a refined art of courtly love. Its meaning may lie in yet a third possibility which involves the condemnation of idolatrous love through the ironical elaboration of its rituals.[65] At any rate, Love's instruction of the lover has brought us far from the realm where Lady Philosophy advised Boethius to ignore the riches of this world. In place of universal truth, Love offers a code of courtly manners in service of a doctrine of passion.

Love's second lesson involves the pains of love which he portrays with such vividness that the lover is driven to remark,

'Sire, how may it be
That lovers may in such manere
Endure the peyne ye have seid heere?
I merveyle me wonder faste
How ony man may lyve or laste
In such peyne and such brennyng . . .
(ll. 2722-2727)

Love then responds with his third instruction on the remedies of passion. His advice follows the tradition of Ovid's Remedia amoris which provides the lover with strategies for subduing love if he should fall into its trap. Love, however, does not tell the lover how to free himself from love, but merely how to endure its discomforts through sweet thought, sweet speech, and sweet sight. His message seems to be that love is painful, but its pleasures are worth the suffering: "A man loveth more tendirly/ The thyng that he hath bought most dere" (ll. 2738-2739). We might conclude that from Love's perspective, the "art of love" is essentially the art of withstanding its pain.

The dreamer's second mentor, the female personification, Reason, more closely resembles her philosophical forebears, Nature and Philosophy. Her entrance immediately follows the lover's lament when his progress toward the Rose has been thwarted by the menacing "cherl," Daunger:

> I trowe nevere man wiste of peyne,
> But he were laced in loves cheyne;
> Ne no man wot, and sooth it is,
> But if he love what anger is.
> Love holdith his heest to me right wel,
> Whanne peyne he seide I shulde fel;
> Noon herte may thenke, ne tunge seyn;
> A quarter of my woo and peyn.
> (ll. 3177-3184)

Though the lover's anguish is voiced in courtly terms, his words carry the despairing elegiac note which signalled the intervention of personified wisdom in the philosophical

poets. "Resoun" enters with godlike authority and is given the conventional praise of her person, although with a sparseness of detail that contrasts noticeably with the earlier description of the fair "Ydelness" (ll. 538-584).

> . . . she was neither yong ne hoor,
> Ne high ne lowe, ne fat ne lene,
> But best, as it were in a mene.
> Her eyen twoo were cleer and light
> As ony candell that brenneth bright;
> And on hir heed she hadde a crowne ...
> (ll.3196-3201)

Resoun's instruction consists of retracing events leading to lover's seduction and giving an interpretation consistent with her godlike perspective. She berates him for yielding to the pleasant "tyme of May" in entering the garden, for submitting to the invitation of Ydilnesse, and for falling victim to the God of Love who has since brought him only pain. Her arguments pose experience against youth (l. 3220), health against illness (l. 3268), security against chance (l. 3272 ff.), and profits against losses (l. 3279 ff.). Her characterization of the futility of love is a foreshadowing of the narrator's opening lines in the Parliament of Fowls:

> The peyne is hard, out of mesure;
> The joye may eke no while endure;
> And in the possessioun
> Is myche tribulacioun. (ll. 3279-3282)

In conclusion, she advises putting a rein on passion and fleeing love (l. 3295).

Although Resoun and the God of Love do not enter into formal dialogue, they talk essentially in the same terms. Both acknowledge the pain of desire and the folly of love. For the God of Love, however, the pain is worth enduring, while for Resoun it is to be avoided at all costs. In Resoun's view the "art of love" is identical to a remedy for love. Her perspective might be taken for the significance of the poem if it were not for the the dreamer's firm rejection:

> All that ye seyn is but in veyne.
> Me were lever dye in the peyne,
> Than Love to me-ward shulde arette
> Falsheed, or tresoun on me sette.
> I wole me gete prys or blame,
> And love trewe, to save my name.
> Who that me chastisith, I hym hate.
> (ll. 3325-3331)

After the dialogue with Resoun, the lover returns to his pursuit of the Rose until the poem breaks off abruptly. Guillaume seems to be praising the beauties of a passionate, idolatrous love, while at the same time indicating its dangers spiritually. We await a final recantation in favor of Resoun's argument, but get none. This lack of the traditional "palinode" is the problem C. S. Lewis found in interpreting the poem.[44]

In Lewis' view, Resoun presents wise arguments to which the lover has no adequate response. By implication, therefore, Guillaume condemns what he relates and would probably have closed the poem with the lover's submission if

the work had been completed. Precedents for this retraction are found in Guillaume's two models for instruction in love. Ovid, for example, follows his strategies for enjoyment of love in the Ars amatoria with a program for love's cure in the Remedia amoris. In the twelfth century, Andreas Capellanus, writing in a Christian context, repeated Ovid's scheme by praising courtly ideals in the first two books of The Art of Courtly Love only to recant them in a third book which derides the whole pursuit as indulgence in unworthy passion.[67] At the end of Guillaume's poem, however, we are given no such statement of a unifying significance to organize the contradictory messages in the dream. It is not clear, finally, whether love is a game to be enjoyed or an enemy to be fled.

Whether Guillaume intended to withhold a clear statement of meaning from his literal text, or simply failed to complete his narrative, the resulting ambiguity provided a model for an allegorical dream poem capable of generating several interpretations around a single theme. For Chaucer, this inconclusiveness suggested new possibilities for presenting complex cultural concepts; for Jean de Meun, Guillaume's successor, it provided an evocative pretext to be glossed to his own satisfaction in a companion poem that would be indissolubly bound to the first.

6. Jean de Meun: The Roman de la Rose: The Dialectic of the Gloss

Jean de Meun's continuation of the Roman de la Rose changes the poem's center of gravity from the allegorical significance to the literal sense, from the signifying fable to the power of direct discourse. Guillaume's story of the lover in pursuit of his Rose is pushed to the periphery and vociferous personifications intervene, threatening at every moment with the digressive flow of their arguments to lose the thread of the narrative. The fictional supports of the dream as Guillaume presented it are withdrawn. In Jean's version the narrator ceases to identify with the dreamer and, therefore, no longer guarantees the truth of the dreamer's experience by association with his own. The story, however, is told in the first person from the dreamer's point of view. Many of Guillaume's personifications such as Reason, Idleness, Danger, Shame, and Fair Welcome are retained, while others which expand the context of Reason's argument such as Nature and Genius are added. In Jean's poem both time and space become universal: History is introduced by examples drawn from classical antiquity (the story of Nero and Seneca; the story of Manfred); contemporary society is represented by False Seeming's portrayal of the controversy over the Mendicant orders; and the future is foreshadowed by Genius' promise of Utopia.[88]

Jean's distinctive handling of the dream stems from a difference in allegorical perspective. His poem returns to the inspiration of the philosopher poets such as Boethius and Alain de Lille. As we have seen, these earlier writers used minimal dream devices to provide the stage setting for prolonged philosophical discussions on the model of Plato's dialogues. In similar manner, Jean opens his continuation of Guillaume's poem, not with an attempt to prove the veracity of dreams, but with a depiction of the dreamer engaged in a classic lament over the extremity of his dilemma. His hero complains (l. 4059 ff.) that hope is untrustworthy, Love's gifts have failed him, Fair Welcome is imprisoned, and Reason's warnings remain ignored.[88] The elegy concludes with the dreamer's melodramatic declaration of loyalty to the God of Love and the bequeathing of his heart to Fair Welcome. At this point Reason enters in the manner of the traditional awesome authorities such as Lady Philosophy and Dame Nature to remonstrate the lover and educate him to her viewpoint.

Although Reason offers many of the same arguments as in Guillaume's poem, her view of love has expanded from the courtly malady of sweet suffering which must be eschewed to avoid a life of pain (ll.3295-96) to a more philosophical concept of disordered thought ("vision desordenee,"l. 4382). In Jean's poem she functions less as the voice of rational

restraint in the game of courtly love, than as a cosmic spokesman for order and balance of the spirit. She is no longer content to incriminate the folly of youth, but draws upon such classical arguments as Cicero's contrast between Youth and Age, Boethius' warning against the instability of Fortune, and Alain's concept of Cupid or Jocus as the agent of Nature's plan for procreation and renewal. Her final advice to the lover is to flee love: "Se tu le suiz, il te suira,/ Se tu t'en fuiz, il s'en fuira" (ll. 4357-4358).

Reason's case, however, fails to convince the dreamer and it is not long before we sense a divergence in tone between Jean's poem and the dialogues of his philosophical predecessors. The dreamer's attitude towards his visitor becomes increasingly truculent and disrespectful, culminating in an accusation of her lewdness for using the term, "coilles," in her retelling of the Jupiter and Saturn myth. The dreamer's prudery places his own position in an ironical light. As the "incarnation of genteel lechery,"[70] he is nevertheless offended by the frank use of physical terms in describing the act of love. Reason's response to the dreamer is interesting for its relevance to Jean's approach to allegory. According to Reason, speech was given to man to name things God created:

> N'encor ne faz je pas pechié
> Se je nome les nobles choses
> Par plain texte, senz metre gloses,
> Que mes peres en paradis

Fist de ses propres mains jadis,
E touz les autres estrumenz,
Qui sont pilers e argumenz
A soutenir nature humaine,
Qui senz aus fust or casse e vaine.
(ll. 6956-5964)

Love and the organs of reproduction have a place in God's scheme and can be spoken of openly without shame. The myth of Jupiter, however, was told to teach a lesson. As a fable in the tradition of poets who veil their truths beneath an integumentum of fiction, the story must be glossed to be understood:

Car en leur jeus e en leur fables
Gisent deliz mout profitables,
Souz cui leur pensees couvirent
Quant le veir des fables vestirent;
Si te couvendrait a ce tendre,
Se bien veauz la parole entendre.
(ll. 7175-7180)

Reason's preference for an open discussion of issues relating to the divine order of things and her insistence that fables intended to instruct must be glossed to be understood, amounts to a summary of Jean's relation to Guillaume's poem. Jean rejects the allegorical method of using a fiction or continuous metaphor to veil a significance which the reader must discover. He prefers instead, like Lady Reason, to bring all the arguments into the open arena of discourse, to bring the significance back into the realm of the literal text. Where a rich fable exists, such as Guillaume's dream vision, and no significance is given, he sees his role as providing the "gloss" or explication of

ideas concealed in the narrative. In fact, similar to Guillaume's promises of a hidden sense or significance, Jean twice pledges himself to make this knowledge clear. First, when the God of Love describes the genesis of the poem, he announces that the romance begun by Guillaume will be finished by Jean:

> Car, quant Guillaumes cessera,
> Johans le continuera,
> . . .
> E qu'il seit jourz e qu'il
> s'esveille.
> Puis voudra si la chose espondre
> Que riens ne s'i pourra respondre.
> (ll. 10587-10588; 10602-10604)

Later, the poet himself makes a promise to lovers:

> Notez ce que ci vois disant:
> D'Amours avriez art soufisant;
> E se vous i trouvez riens trouble,
> J'esclarcirai ce qui vous trouble,
> Quant le songe m'orreiz espondre;
> Bien savriez lors d'amours
> respondre,
> S'il est qui en sache oposer,
> Quant le texte m'orreiz gloser
> (ll. 15143-15150)

The words, "espondre," often associated with uncovering the truth in dreams, and "glose," a term used in the Schools in connection with biblical exegesis, form the basis of Jean's relationship to Guillaume's original dream allegory.[71] Since Jean feels obliged to continue the work of his predecessor but no longer believes in the efficiency of his form, he will mine the poem's interior for all its hidden truth.

Jean's conception of his poem as a "glose" on Guillaume's does not mean he will supply the single definitive interpretation of the dream, but rather he will suggest its meaning through a rich interchange of ideas. According to Armand Strubel, the gloss as it was used by scholastic theologians such as Thomas Aquinas meant dialectic, confrontation of opinion, fruitful contradiction.[72] Rather than "decoding" the signification of Guillaume's dream, therefore, Jean constructs an allegory of "otherspeaking" in which discordant voices reveal the truth by debating each important element of Guillaume's theme. Jean accomplishes this through altercatio or a debate of personifications whose ongoing, seemingly digressive arguments provide a continuous gloss on the literal text. As Charles Dunn comments in his introduction to the poem, Jean's realization that truth has many parts leads to a lively conflict of opinions:

> Reason reveals love's folly, Genius argues its necessity, the Duenna describes the sordidness of its strategms, Forced Abstinence suggests the unhealthiness of its renunciation, and so on, until every aspect of love has been ordered within the totality.[73]

Although, as we have noted, Jean organizes his opening dialogue to resemble the univocal didacticism of Boethius and Alain de Lille, he quickly diverges to a polyvocal procession of allegorical counsellors whose clash of doctrines can be measured in relation to Reason's wise counsel. While she presents rational philosophy, they

present a cynical anti-philosophy of sensuality and opportunism. While she seems stiff and self-righteous, they seem exciting, related to the dreamer's immediate interests. She counsels truth, while they lead the dreamer to moral degeneration and spiritual death." The collective instructions of Friend, False Seeming and other advisors provide the dreamer with an elaborate reverse education in which the potentially destructive elements of courtly love concealed beneath the charming surface of Guillaume's poem are made manifest by parody and exaggeration. The God of Love's counsel, for example, that the joy of love is worth the suffering becomes distorted into Friend's conviction that love's joys are momentary and its consequences the misery of a lifetime. Friend is willing to help the lover in his "idolatry" despite his conviction that women are covetous, lustful, and the bane of men in marriage ("Si nou di je pas pour les bones . . . Don encor n'ai nules trouvees," ll. 9917-9919). Love's commandments to impress the lady with gifts and a fair appearance become exaggerated in the blatant hypocrisy preached by False Seeming, the lewd instructions of La Vieille, and the cynical strategy of Friend to win the Rose through deceit, bribery, and seduction.

Jean's method exploits allegory's most radical form--irony, in which significance is approached through

opposition.[74] A striking example is found in Jean's persistent use of anti-feminist citations, a predilection which brought him accusations of misogyny from contemporary critics of the poem.[75] Aside from incorporating a popular theme in scholastic glosses, Jean's treatment of women demystifies the idealized woman of courtly love portrayed by Guillaume. Instead of being apotheosized as the source of beauty and virtue, she is described as covetous of gain (l.8281), lustful (l. 9125), the deceiver of men (ll. 9072-9360). The courtly lady's Shame, Fear, and Danger which protected her from the lover's approach in Guillaume's poem are countered by Friend's view that women want to be taken by force and are angry if their defenses succeed (ll. 7693-7700), and by La Vieille's calculating strategies to aid the lady's seduction. The feudal obedience which the courtly lady conventionally demands of the lover is set in contrast to the testimony of the Jealous Husband who demands mastery and beats his unfaithful wife into submission; to the counsel of Friend who suggests giving a woman her will and then manipulating her through flattery (ll. 9688 ff.); and to the voice of Genius who recommends the lover possess her in fruitful union (ll. 19701-19704). The delicately veiled references to sexual joys typical of courtly romance are opposed by Reason's defense of frank and open description of the organs of reproduction, and by Genius' advice to Love's followers to:

Arez, pour Deu, baron, arez,
E vos lignages reparez;
Se ne pensez forment d'arer,
N'est riens qui les puist reparer.
(ll. 19701-19704)

This frankness is compounded by the unromantic description of the lover's final "deflowering" of the rosebush, a metaphor which Guillaume kept gently poised between the tediously botanical and an overtly explicit reference to female anatomy. Jean's unveiled allegory, however, leaves no doubt that the lover has consummated his desires, thus making the Rose "the first important pregnant heroine in European literature."[76]

In a similar vein of opposition, Guillaume's major images are reiterated in Jean's poem, but in didactic counter-images. The sterile self-love of Narcissus becomes the hopeless love of one's own creation in Pygmalion. In both myths the lovers focus the force of their desires on an unattainable object. However, in the latter myth, the lover moves beyond the stage of <u>delectatio cogitationis</u> to the actual embrace of the love object, albeit a statue of stone. Like Alexander in Chrétien's <u>Cligés</u> who embraces a shirt containing a woven strand of his lady's hair, Pygmalion's love of a stone image shows the complete abandonment of reason to which his disordering passion has led him. His fantasy given life by excessive desire has involved him in idolatry which implies a lesser love of God.[77]

In further oppositions, the perilous fountain which mirrored the sensuous world of the dreamer's garden becomes, in Jean's poem, the wisdom-giving fountain of life, the "Mirror of Lovers," which teaches the good uses of love consistent with the demands of Reason and Nature (ll. 20419-20464). Guillaume's Garden of Delight with its transient joys of carol and youthful passion becomes the Shepherd's Park, the abode of everlasting joy for lovers who have fulfilled Nature's purpose (ll. 20344 ff.).

In conclusion, Jean moves away from a single significance whether it be the poet's message veiled by an allegorical fable as in Guillaume, or a philosophical doctrine conveyed through dialogue as in Boéthius and Alain de Lille. Instead, he creates a rich controversy of viewpoints, none of which is explicitly endorsed by the author. The cumulative effect of the debate is nevertheless to imply an overriding harmonious order in which love takes its place according to the dictates of Reason, Nature, and Genius.

In terms of dream allegory, the Roman de la Rose offers a combination of approaches. Jean returns to both the didactic allegory of the philosopher-poets who used the metaphor of the dream as a framework for transmitting knowledge; and "allegoresis," the rereading of texts considered as metaphors of obscure, incomplete, or occult

thought. Guillaume, on the other hand, goes back to the ancient didactic poets who, lacking the Christian conception of an ordered universe, veiled their partial visions of truth in entertaining fictions. The two poems form an allegorical unity in which the dream narrative of Guillaume forms the image, and the discourse of Jean, the sense.[7]

As we shall see when we examine his early dream poems, Chaucer borrows allegorical techniques from both these poets to create an innovative stucture for exploring philosophical issues without explicit dialogue. Acknowledging Guillaume's concept of allegory as extended metaphor, Chaucer retains the dream fable with its expectation of a single significance. Like Guillaume, Chaucer creates a narrative adventure: His dreamer is led by a hunting party to a paradisal garden in the Book of the Duchess, is carried by an eagle to a distant mountain in the House of Fame, and is transported to Nature's Garden to witness a Valentine's Day celebration of birds in the Parliament of Fowls. Again, following Guillaume, Chaucer's narrative promises to convey a message while at the same time frustrating the search for a clear, prescribed solution. Chaucer achieves this tension by heightening the ambiguity of all signifying elements and by declining to give a clear statement of meaning within the text. Finally, Chaucer continues Guillaume's elaboration of such dream-like

mechanisms as the waking frame and the doubling of the waking narrator with his dream counterpart, devices which give verisimilitude to the dream and hence authority to his invented vision.

Chaucer's indebtedness to Jean stems from the earlier poet's expansion of the possibilities of allegorical debate. Jean's transformation of the didactic dialogue of the philosopher-poets to a controversy of many opposing viewpoints provides Chaucer with a dialectical approach to the complex, often contradictory aspects of truth. Yet, while Chaucer retains the multiplicity of Jean's debate, he avoids its actual discourse which served to maintain the significance on the literal level. Instead, he returns to the possibilities of fable and compresses the dialectic into highly evocative images which imply the arguments of Jean and his philosophical predecessors without stating them explicitly. A striking example of this transformation occurs in the Parliament of Fowls where Chaucer incorporates the doctrine expounded by Alain de Lille and later by Jean de Meun that love's passion serves Nature's plan for procreation and renewal. Chaucer expresses the same idea, not by dialogue, but by the relation of Venus' temple to Nature's garden. The "dredful joye" of love is captured, not by a debate between Reason and the God of Love, but by the contradictory sign over the garden's entrance which

includes a reference to Guillaume's well and May garden as well as to Reason's warning to flee love. It is communicated again by the contrast between Venus' retinue of kneeling lovers suffering the torments of desire and the orderly mating of birds in Nature's garden.

Chaucer shows the further influence of Jean in his use of irony and satire, a technique which questions all ideological positions and holds them in balance until a conclusion can be reached.[77] In Chaucer's dream poems the ironic tone is largely maintained through a contrast between the poet's naive dream persona and the sophisticated poet, Chaucer; through the discrepancy between Chaucer's treatment of traditional figures such as Venus and previous descriptions of such figures in Boccaccio and other poets; and by the portrayal of serious positions through animal spokesmen such as ducks and eagles.

Chaucer's return to fable for philosophical inquiry implies the elaboration of the metaphor of the dream. Chaucer apparently realized that the conflict of doctrines could be expressed without actual discourse by exploiting the imaginative structure of real dreams to which the literary form referred him. Solving a problem by the creative association of images is a common experience in dreams. In Freud's opinion, it is beyond dispute, "that dreams can carry on the intellectual work of daytime and

bring it to conclusions which had not been reached during the day, and that they can resolve doubts and problems and be the source of new inspiration for poets and musical composers."[80] This problem-solving property fits appropriately into the possibilities of a received dream genre which had traditionally been involved with philosophical quest, education of the dreamer, and the hope of solving earthly problems by recourse to another world. In the next chapter I will examine the relation of dream and allegory to show how the techniques of allegorical debate and fable may be combined into a more effective form for problem-solving by the imitation of actual dream structure.

CHAPTER III

THE APPROPRIATENESS OF DREAM TO ALLEGORY

1. The Adventure, Authority, and Didacticism of Dreams

According to C. S.Lewis, "the inner life, and specially the life of love, religion, and spiritual adventure has. . . always been the field of true allegory."[1] The same domain exists for dreams. It is not surprising, therefore, that the parallelism between the world experienced in dreams and the artifice of allegory resulted in the popularity of the dream convention in medieval poetry. In this chapter I intend to show that although allegory has many points in common with real dreams, the analogy breaks down at crucial points which Chaucer was to recognize and develop in his own handling of the dream convention. Allegorists such as Boethius and Alain de Lille appreciated the dream's suitability to their art but were selective as to which of its attributes to accept and which to reject. They were attracted to the authoritative, visionary aspect of the dream, its ability to take one into another world, and its didactic potential; but the other side of the dream, its connection with the mental life of the dreamer, its origin in physical or psychological imbalances, its possible delusory or demonic character was rejected as contradictory to the dignity of allegory. Even when these writers opened with a distressed narrator, they drew no connection between

the dreamer's emotional "imbalance" and the motivation for the dream. They emphasized, instead, the visionary character of the experience and the visitation of a heavenly personage. Furthermore, the dream's tendency to generate ambiguities through cryptic configuration of its imagery was ignored in favor of a clear set of equivalences, a single, unified "significance."

Chaucer was familiar with the conventional allegorical use of the dream, but chose to expand its potential by including the less accepted side of dream phenomena. He made his dreams seem as if they arose from problems of the waking dreamer, yet with subtle irony implied they were inspired visions; he juxtaposed his images to generate contradiction and ambiguity, yet made it clear he was searching for a unifying solution; he brought his dreamer into an idealized world of adventure, yet provided strong connections to the world of waking reality. Chaucer's experimentation with a more realistic dream structure allowed him to achieve the freedom in poetic problem-solving that comes from implied connections between images rather than from direct didactic statements. At the same time, by associating himself with traditionally reliable dream categories, he could retain the acknowledged authority for his personal poetic creations that was generally reserved for prophetic dream visions. Eventually, the expansion of the poetic potential of dream

allegory in his early poetry helped Chaucer to abandon the dream as intermediary in creating the more naturalistic narrative poetry of his later work.

Looking more closely at the qualities of the dream congenial to the allegorist, we may begin with the dream's ability to project an unreal world of fantasy, a sort of "fairyland" or "medieval Arcadia," in Kittredge's terms,[2] which was sealed off from the constraints and painful realities of everyday life. This fantasy atmosphere, which promised to take the reader on a "spiritual adventure"[3] through an idealized universe, satisfied the allegorist's need to entertain his audience. At the same time, the dream's detachment from the logic of natural occurrences supplied an appropriate vehicle for allegorical preoccupation with events of the mind. In the dream, interior states could be objectified into a drama of personified abstractions such as Hope, Desire, Jealousy, and Despair. As Langlois wrote in his study of the Roman de la Rose,

> Les songes et les visions offrent un cadre très commode pour exposer des choses que les sens de l'homme a l'état normal ne peuvent percevoir, et qui ont besoin, pour être crues, que leur connaissance s'explique par un seconde vue.[4]

Yet since the allegorist's aim was to instruct as well as to entertain, it was not enough merely to accept the dream as a literary device. He had also to justify its legitimacy as a source of truth. A readily available

confirmation of the dream's authority derived from its prominent role in sacred and classical literature. Prototypes going back to the prophetic biblical dreams of Joseph, Pharoah, and Nebuchadnezzar, the revelatory vision in the Apocalypse of St. John, and the third-century apocryphal Vision of St. Paul,[5] invested the dream with an aura of spiritual prophecy. This status was enhanced by the authority of classical visionary episodes such as Homer's vision of Hades in Book X of the Iliad or Aeneas' journey to the Underworld in Book VI of the Aeneid. The dream's association with special sources of knowledge led eventually to its appearance in philosophical works such as the concluding Vision of Er in Plato's Republic and Cicero's account of Scipio's Dream of Africanus at the end of his De re publica. In the work of allegorists such as Martianus Capella (De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii) and Alain de Lille (Anticlaudianus), the visionary journey became a metaphor for philosophical quest ending in revelation of the true order of the universe.[6] Thus the fantasy aspect of the dream came to serve the allegorist's didactic purpose. The spiritual adventure was not merely an escape, but a voyage to the Other World in search of special visionary knowledge which could be carried out of the dream into waking reality.

If the allegorist sought further credentials for his dream's pretensions to truth, he could invoke, in addition to these literary models, the authoritative dream classifications of Macrobius. In his highly influential commentary on Cicero's Somnium Scipionis, Macrobius determined the authenticity of dreams as prophecy by dividing them into two groups, one prophetic and significant, the other misleading and worthless. Within these groups were five types. The classification including significant dreams included first, the enigmatic dream or somnium which "conceals with strange shapes and veils with ambiguity the true meaning of the information being offered, and requires an interpretation for its understanding;" second, the prophetic dream or visio in which the dreamer sees the form of an experience which later comes true as foretold; and third, the oracular dream or oraculum "in which a parent, or a pious or revered man, or a priest, or even a god clearly reveals what will or will not transpire, and what action to take or avoid." Through these visions, Macrobius asserts, "we are gifted with the powers of divination." The final two categories are the nightmare or insomnium "caused by mental or physical distress, or anxiety about the future;" and the apparition or phantasma (visum) occurring between wakefulness and slumber in the form of imagined spectres. According to Macrobius' criterion of prophecy, these last two are

rejected as meaningless and of no value whatsoever (III, 2-3). Following Macrobius, the allegorist could claim divine authority for his dream by associating his vision with the categories of somnium, oraculum, or visio; or, conversely, he could disclaim responsibility for its contents by dismissing his vision as an insomnium. Thus, by acknowledging the authority of classical models and dream classifications, the medieval allegorist could use the guise of the dream to give his work of imaginative fiction the status and credibility usually associated with inspired vision.

Alongside this literary-philosophical interest in the dream, ran another current of dream inquiry which was more scientific and empirical and, hence, less appealing to the allegorist. W. C. Curry, in his studies of medieval medical lore noted that dreams were often used by physicians for diagnosis of physical symptoms. This application of dreams to medicine was consistent with scientific writings by Galen and Avicenna who formulated a dream psychology based upon the physiology of sleep. Avicenna wrote that sleep was caused by "a sort of vapour, which ascends from the lower members to the brain. This vapour is an exhalation from digestion of foods and from bodily humours."[7] Avicenna's theory is echoed in Chaucer's Squire's Tale (l. 347)

when sleep is called "the norice of digestion." Following the same line, Galen wrote, "A dream indicates to us the condition of the body, and reflects the balance of humours or conditions of emotional upheaval. In waking, the senses act on the imagination, but in sleep, the imagination stimulates the senses to produce the figures or simulacra comprising a dream."[8]

The studies of physicians led them to establish an alternative to Macrobius' system which included only three types: the somnium naturale, originating in bodily complexions or humours, the somnium animale, arising from anxiety of the waking mind, and the somnium coeleste, coming from influences of celestial minds or intelligences. As with Macrobius' categories, the first two relating to natural causes were considered false and worthless in presaging future events. The somnium coeleste, however, was counted a trustworthy source of revelation.[9]

In summary, regardless of difference in emphasis between the philosophical approach of Macrobius and the more scientific classifications of Galen and Avicenna, the general trend was to regard dreams arising from natural causes as meaningless and to accept revelations from good spirits as prophetic and trustworthy. One needed simply to assess the cause of a dream in order to reach a satisfactory conclusion as to its valid prophecy. The problem was, of

course, that none of these systems provided a reliable way of determining a dream's causes and of thereby establishing its typology with certainty. This difficulty left a margin of indeterminacy for poets such as Guillaume de Lorris and Chaucer who wished to exploit the ambiguity of their dream's authority.

2. Chaucer's Position on the Authority of Dreams

Chaucer's poetry contains many direct statements showing his awareness of the prevailing divisions of opinion and his willingness to exploit this ambiguity for irony and humour. In the opening of the House of Fame, for example, Chaucers follows Guillaume's precedent in the Roman de la Rose by presenting his response to current dream theories:

> God turne us every drem to
> goode!
> For hyt is wonder, be the roode,
> To my wyt what causeth swevenes
> Eyther on morwes or on evenes;
> And why th'effect folweth of somme,
> And of somme hit shal never come;
> Why that is an avisioun
> And this a revelacioun,
> Why this a drem, why that a sweven,
> And noght to every man lyche even;
> Why this a fantome, why these
> oracles,
> I not; but whoso of these miracles
> The causes knoweth bet then I,
> Devyne he; for I certeinly
> Ne kan hem noght . . .
> (HF, ll. 1-15)[10]

Chaucer is perplexed by the manifold causes of dreams which include not only the categories of Macrobius, but an exhaustive catalogue extending from "complexions" and "feblenesse of (the) brayn" to "the cruel lyf unsofte/ Which these ilke lovers leden /That hopen over-muche or dreden" (HF, ll. 36-38). Furthermore, he is unable to determine why some dreams are followed by effects and some not, and how one is to decipher the significance of dreams. Resigned to confusion he prays, "God turne us every dreme to goode!"

Chaucer attempts to evaluate dreams again in the famous interchange between Chauntecleer and Pertelote in the Nun's Priest's Tale. Here, Chaucer uses dramatic dialogue to juxtapose the two prevailing categories of dreams. Chauntecleer dreams of a beast, "lyk an hound" red in color with tail and ears tipped with black, a beast that would take him prisoner and kill him. Though Chauntecleer is terrified, his wife, Pertelote chides him for his cowardice: "Allas! and konne ye been agast of swevenys?/ Nothyng, God woot, but vanitee in sweven is" (NPT, ll. 4111-4112). Her position is that the dream is a somnium naturale attributable to physical causes: "humours," "compleccioun," and in this case, an excess of red choler which causes one to dream of red beasts. Her solution, uttered with wifely practicality is "For Goddes love, as taak som laxatyf." Chauntecleer, however, defends his dream as a somnium

coeleste, relating three exempla to prove that "dremes ben to drede." As further proof he cites figures from the Bible and classical literature, finally quoting Macrobius who "Affermeth dremes,and seith that they been/ Warnynge of thynges that men after seen" (NPT, ll. 4315-4316). Yet, despite his learned arguments, Chaunte-cleer finally ignores the dream which ironically turns out to come true. Thus when the forces of skepticism seemed to have triumphed, Chaucer dislodges our certainty as efficiently as he did in his more direct statements.

Troilus and Criseyde similarly uses dramatic confrontation to contrast two theories of dreams. In recounting his dreams to Pandarus, Troilus tends to judge each one, according to his penchant for predestination, as a somnium coeleste. Pandarus, the skeptic, recognizing the psychological antecedents in Troilus' sorrow and anxiety over his separation from Criseyde, is more in agreement with Macrobius attitude toward the insomnium:

> A straw for alle swevenes
> signifiaunce!
> God helpe me so, I counte hem nought
> a bene!
> Ther woot no man aright what dremes
> mene. (Troilus V, ll. 362-364)

In reacting to Troilus' second dream of Criseyde embracing a boar, the sign of Diomede, Pandarus' reaction is different. He does not reject the dream altogether, but finds fault in Troilus' interpretation:

> Have I nat seyd er this,
> That dremes many a maner man bigile?
> And whi? For folk expounden hem amys.
> (Troilus, V, ll. 1276-1278)

Pandarus' alternative explanation that the boar is Criseyde's father leaves us with the uncomfortable ambiguity that he has been merely acting as soothing counsellor to Troilus and that, in fact, he is as confused as everyone else in evaluating the prophetic power of dreams.

In the Parliament of Fowls, Chaucer refers to a dream theory initially proposed by Lucretius and later adapted by Claudian. The idea finds a context in Chaucer's poem where linking of waking thoughts and dream episode are clearly consistent with Claudian's principles. After reading the Somnium Scipionis, Chaucer dreams of Scipio Africanus standing by his bed and recalls the classic lines:

> The wery huntere, slepynge in his bed,
> To wode ayeyn his mynde goth anon;
> The juge dremeth how his plees been sped;
> The cartere dremeth how his cartes gon;
> The riche,of gold; the knyght fyght with his fon;
> The syke met he drynketh of the tonne;
> The lovere met he hath his lady wonne. (PF, ll. 99-105)

Chaucer's reaction is to see the connection between his reading and vision that follows, "For I hadde red of Affrican byforn,/ That made me to mete that he stood there" (ll. 107-108). With Chaucer's typical ironic ambiguity,

however, Scipio allows him no such questionable conclusion, but makes it clear that this is a respectable prophetic vision bestowed on the poet for his devoted reading of Macrobius:

> Thow hast the so wel born
> In lokynge of myn olde bok totorn,
> Of which Macrobye roughte nat a lyte,
> That sumdel of thy labour wolde I quyte.
> (PF, 11, 109-112)

This summary of Chaucer's views on medieval dream psychology shows that, in the end, he takes no definite position in the conflict between oraculum and somnium animale. He does not know the causes of dreams, how to definitely assign their categories, or how to accurately interpret their symbols; but he is clearly interested in their relation to human psychology. Furthermore, as we have seen in our earlier discussion of the dream genre, he is willing to transform the received dream convention in the direction of more naturalistic, but less prophetically reliable dream categories. The conventional poet's distress which introduced the problem-solving poems of Boethius and Alain de Lille becomes with Chaucer's use of the dream frame an exploration of waking anxieties preliminary to their expansion in the dream context. Guillaume's evocation of the famous author, Macrobius, to give authority to his dream at the beginning of the Roman de la Rose, becomes in Chaucer's poetry the innovative technique of using a book read at bedtime to introduce themes carried over into the

dream narrative. All this implies that Chaucer modifies the received dream convention away from the prophetic models of somnium, visio, and oraculum in the direction of the more personal, psychological, and hence less objectively authoritative dreams of the insomnium or somnium animale.

3. Modern Dream Theory: Freud's Theory of Dreams

Whatever Chaucer's inconclusiveness on the origin and significance of dream visions, the structure of his early poems shows a keen observation of the actual workings of these phenomena. To understand Chaucer's innovative direction, we must explore more closely both the nature of the dream as conveyor of meaning and the nature of allegory as aesthetic form. Freud's research on dreams and, in particular, his studies of the relations between unconscious thought and dream symbolism can aid us in this process. Some recent critics, however, would question the utility or necessity of applying Freudian terminology to Chaucer's method. As Robertson remarks in A Preface to Chaucer, "No one thought in terms of psychology in the fourteenth century any more than he thought in terms of differential calculus or Marxist dialectic."[11]

Surprisingly, Freud himself responds to charges of anachronism. In the lengthy historical introduction to his essay, The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), Freud

provides an extensive survey of dream theory from ancient times to the present and concludes that most modern observations about dream experience had been formulated by the time of the Middle Ages. In fact, to substantiate his own views, Freud often quotes the same classical sources as were available to Chaucer. For example, in support of his theory that dreams contain thoughts, desires, and memories carried over from our waking life, Freud quotes Lucretius' statement from De rerum natura which, as mentioned above, Chaucer incorporated in the Parliament.[12] In another passage, observing that dreams are often disconnected, contradictory, and bizare in content, he cites Cicero's statement, "There is no imaginable thing too absurd, too involved, or too abnormal for us to dream about it."[13] Finally, in addition to Freud's own observations of parallels between his work and that of ancient dream theorists, we might observe that his "means of representation" actually recapitulate the classical rhetorical categories defined by Quintilian and are therefore not contradictory to modes of thought available to Chaucer. Since this concept requires some explanation, we will deal with it in the next section.

4. The Means of Representation in Dream and Allegory

The act of falling asleep seems to involve withdrawal of guidance for the sequence of ideas. Thoughts are no longer connected by the laws of logic and causality or subject to the critical direction associated with the waking mind. Freud attributes the distortion in dreams to what he calls the "dream-work," a process aimed at transferring the "latent content" of thoughts, anxieties, and wishes into a "manifest content" of dream symbols.[14] The formation of these images or symbols is motivated by the psyche's effort to censor painful or forbidden unconscious wishes from the conscious mind.[15] In the process of dream formation, the manifest content attains an economy, visualization, and veiled meaning similar to the poetic surface of allegory. Using terms potentially relevant to allegory's mode of "other-speaking," Freud refers to dream-thoughts and dream-content as "two different languages" dealing with the same subject matter: "The dream-content seems like a transcript of the dream-thoughts into another mode of expression, whose characters and syntactic laws it is our business to discover by comparing the original and translation."[16] In Freud's view, a dream is a "picture-puzzle" rather than a "pictorial composition;" its elements are not in realistic pictorial order, but in a

symbolic relation which we must learn to read to gain their significance.[17]

In The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud notes that dream thoughts, when "brought under the pressure of the dream work," have their elements "turned about, broken into fragments and jammed together--almost like pack ice."[18] The logical connections previously binding these thoughts are dropped leaving a structure devoid of conjunctions. Freud responds to this phenomenom by inquiring, "What representation do dreams provide for "'if,' 'because,' 'just as,' 'although,' 'either--or,' and all the other conjunctions without which we cannot understand sentences or speeches?"[19] He concludes that a crucial concern of the interpretive process must be the "restoration of the connections" discarded by the dream-work. Preliminary to this task, Freud isolates a variety of techniques used by the dream-work to replace explicit relational cues as organizers of the dream thoughts. These he terms, "means of representation."[20] Students of Freud have noted that these symbolic operations lack specificity to dreams and are, in fact, those of any linguistic symbolism.[21] Emile Beneviste, for example, pointed out this connection in a study that appeared in 1956 which states that Freud, as he described dreams and jokes, rediscovered the "old catalogue of tropes."[22]

Tropes are the rhetorical devices used by allegorists to present ideas poetically. In his Institutio oratoria, Quintilian described tropes as "the transference (translatus) of expressions from their natural and principle signification to another, with a view to the embellishment of style."[23] Allegorical poetry, like dreams, does not communicate through direct discursive statements. Instead, it uses these figurative devices, much as the dream uses its symbols, to "transfer" meaning. Though the allegorist may, like the psyche's dream censor, wish to avoid criticism from authority, his main purpose is, as Quintilian suggests, to enclose the rigors of his didactic message in an entertaining, ornamented dressing. He may also, in accord with the rhetorical theories of Augustine and Boccaccio, desire to challenge the reader with the effort of deciphering his significance while, at the same time, obscuring its precious contents from the vulgar-minded. Because of the similarities of structure in dream and allegory, it will be useful to take a closer look at what Freud calls the "means of representation" in dreams. From this inquiry we may determine how far the analogy with allegory's rhetorical modes of meaning can be taken before it ceases to be applicable. It is at the point of divergence where a choice to follow the model of actual dream phenomena leads to changes in the allegorical dream vision. Basically we may begin with the assumption that both the

dream and allegory establish an obscure representational pattern which demands elucidation to "solve" the enigma of meaning. As the dream establishes a configuration of images which the analyst must decode, the allegory, in Angus Fletcher's words, manipulates "a texture of 'ornaments' so as to engage the reader in interpretive activity."[24]

Freud describes several mechanisms by which dream thoughts are translated into dream content. The first is "condensation," whereby a large number of dream associations are compressed into a relatively limited number of symbols.[25] Each item has been selected to appear in the dream because it constitutes a "nodal point" upon which numerous dream thoughts converge and for which many meanings are possible in terms of the dream. Freud calls this phenomenom, "overdetermination." Through it, each of the elements of the dream content is "represented in the dream thoughts many times over."[26]

A similar ideational compression has been observed in allegory which, as a literary form, is organized to express in concrete terms a meaningful network of moral and philosophical concepts. According to Angus Fletcher, "the mode is radically reductive and in that is at war with mimesis."[27] This reductionism or "condensation" is particularly applicable to allegorical characters such as Fair Welcome or False Seeming who resemble caricatures in

their simplification towards single, predominant traits. The traits, when isolated, become "the iconographic meanings of each agent."[28]

On the level of specific dream items, "condensation" appears analogous to the poetic trope described by the classic rhetoricians as "synecdoche," whereby a part is taken to mean the whole.[29] For Quintilian, "synecdoche has the power to give variety to our language by making us realize many things from one, the whole from the part, the genus from a species, things which follow from things which have preceded." He adds, "some also apply the term, "synecdoche," when something is assumed which has not actually been expressed, since one word is then discovered from other words..."[30]

Freud offers as an example of "condensation" the account of a dream centering on a "Botanical Monograph." Its resemblance to poetic "synecdoche" is striking. The botanical theme of the article, explains Freud, could carry associations with a monograph on the species Cyclamen seen in a bookshop window, with the author's own recent monograph on cocaine, with the author's colleague, Professor Gartner (gardener), with the "blooming" looks of Gartner's wife, with Freud's current patient, Flora, and so on.[31] Similarly, in an allegory such as the Roman de la Rose, the central symbol of the Rose could evoke the wider associ-

ations of the budding beauty of young womanhood, the idealized object of courtly love, or the irresistible attraction of the sensuous world.

The use of "condensation" in Chaucer's dream poetry is clearly demonstrated by the temple description in the Parliament of Fowls (ll. 183-294). In a brief sequence, Chaucer shows how an elaborate ideological statement can be compressed into a selected set of juxtaposed visual images. As Howard Schless discusses in his article on Chaucer's use of Italian writers, Chaucer's temple "condenses" three aspects of erotic love into a more general category associated with luxuria.[32] It achieves this by dividing Venus' domain to include three deities: Venus, representing extreme sensuous indulgence; "the god Priapus," representing excessive sexual love; and "the bitter goddess Jealousye," depicting the excessive joys and sorrows of desire. By allowing Venus and her companion deities to dwell within the order of earthly love and yet remain contained by the pillars of the temple, Chaucer uses dream-like condensation to express the harmonious relation between three aspects of unfruitful passion and the Natura generans of Nature's garden.

In another device, "displacement," the dream-work achieves censorship of unconscious wishes through a transference of psychic intensities. According to Freud, ele-

ments of dream thoughts which seem to have most value are represented in a dream by items of small value or interest, while less significant thoughts seem to have prominence.[33] As a result, the dream content no longer resembles the core of the dream thoughts. Translated into literary terms, psychic displacement resembles the trope of "metonomy" which Geoffrey de Vinsauf defines as "the substituting of the name of one thing for another which it suggests or is closely related to. This may include the substitution of the abstract for the concrete, the cause for the effect, the instrument for the user, or the container for the contained."[34] In general, the mechanism of displacement in both actual dreams and their poetic representations directs our attention away from abstract ideas to concrete visual images. At the same time, the deepest conflicts remain unstated and seem to come out when least expected. Such displacement occurs in the Book of the Duchess where the pain of loss is variously represented by the narrator's unspecified grief, Alcione's mythic mourning for Ceys, the death-like cave of Morpheus, and the sorrowful aspect of the Man in Black. At the same time, the central concern of the poem, the death of Blanche, with its dual components of sorrow and inadequacy of consolation, is, in effect, "censored" from direct expression until the very end.

Closely related to "condensation" and "displacement" is Freud's observation that "every dream deals with the dreamer himself. Dreams are completely egoistic."[38] According to this tendency, the dreamer may personally appear in the dream or be dispersed and transferred to numerous other identifications. In general, disturbing ideas are relocated from the dreamer's own ego to a series of surrogate egos which can interact with him in the dream. The mechanism has the utility, in Freud's view, of expanding the dream's capacity to include a vast amount of thought material while avoiding the dream censorship. Angus Fletcher has noticed the same tendency in allegory where "the allegorical hero is not so much a real person as he is a generator of other secondary personalities, which are partial aspects of himself."[38] The subcharacters interact with the hero in the narrative and become the means by which his character is gradually revealed.

Freud's mechanism of "ego displacement" can be observed in the evolution of the dream persona in the allegories we have studied. In the Consolation of Philosophy, for instance, Boethius splits his fictional dream representation into two aspects for the purpose of dialectic. He creates a disillusioned and despairing poet to represent his emotional, human side, and an authoritative personification to portray his rational mind and philosophical learning.

Later, in a context of courtly love, Guillaume de Lorris expands the allegorical division of character by apportioning the ego of the lady as well as the lover in the Roman de la Rose to a series of personifications dramatizing their social traits and psychological tendencies.

With Chaucer's love visions, a greater interest in dream verisimilitude results in increased psychological motivation for this ego transference Chaucer achieves heightened realism by elaborating the portrayal of the waking narrator and linking his concerns with various manifestations in the dream, not only with alternative personae, but with images and settings as well. In the Book of the Duchess, for example, the narrator complains of the sleeplessness caused by an undefined distress which has left him devoid of emotion. His mood is expressed in such remarks as, "I take no kep/ Of nothing" (ll. 6-7), "Al is ylyche good to me" (l. 9), and "I have felynge in nothyng " (l 11) His passivity and indifference go "agaynes kynde" and preclude any efforts at problem-solving. The same narrator becomes transformed in the dream into an emotionally active figure who expresses both lively wonder at the beauties of the world and sympathetic concern for another's grief. Meanwhile, the narrator's negative characteristics, his apathy, melancholy, and obsession with death (I. 24), are transferred in the dream

to a second figure, the Man in Black, whom the naive dreamer confronts, questions, and attempts to console. Thus, as in the displaced ego of real dreams, Chaucer transfers the destructive, "unnatural" feelings of his waking persona to an alternative dream figure At the same time, his own dream representation takes an unobstrusive secondary position from which he is free to examine the issues. Beyond the creation of alter-egos, the narrator's character is further displaced to the landscape itself where the dialogue between melancholy fixation with death and joyful participation in life is reiterated in the contrast between the paralysis of Morpheus' Cave and the regenerative beauty of the May garden

The use of visual images to express the central conflicts of the poem corresponds to another characteristic of dreams observed by Freud. He writes, "The direction taken by the displacement usually results in a colorless and abstract expression in the dream-thought being exchanged for a pictorial and concrete one."[37] This visual language enables the contrasts and identifications which dream-work requires without recourse to discursive dialectic. Allegory seems in like manner to thrive on pictorial or emblemmatic images. In Fletcher's discussion of allegorical "kosmos," he defines this specialized poetic ornament as a concrete image or microcosm which signifies a macrocosm or uni-

verse."[38] According to Fletcher, "kosmos" has the ability to generate large scale double meanings if combined with other such images.[39] We see "kosmic" images in weapons, emblems of position, signet rings, even parts of the body. In the Book of the Duchess, for example, the visualized ritual of "hert-huntyng" becomes a "kosmic" representation of the more general pursuit of consolation.

Chaucer's poetry has been praised in particular for its visual quality.[40] V. A. Kolve has remarked that "there is much in his /Chaucer's/ poetry that is 'visual,' that invites us to make images in our mind as we read or listen to his narrative."[41] He goes on to observe that "these are not merely 'decorative images,' nor are they merely metaphors--quick likenesses to be noted and then passed by." They are concrete signs of a higher truth in the sense that the Middle Ages believed meaning was inherent in the material creation because of the divine intelligence that created it.[42] In Kolve's opinion, Chaucer was a poet who conceived his works visually. He remembered poems he had read as a series of pictures while constructing new poems describing these pictures as real. To support his view, Kolve points to examples from Chaucer's dream visions. He cites the extended visual reconstruction of the Aeneid story "graven" on the walls of Venus' temple in Book I of the House of Fame and the story of Paris and Troy wrought

in the stained glass of the dreamer's bedroom in the Book of the Duchess. He sees the same device again in the description of the painting and sculpture in the temples of Venus, Mars, and Diana in The Knight's Tale (III, 1881 ff.). We might add that in building his poems around vivid pictures such as the Garden, Temple, or Cave, the striking costume worn by the Man in Black, or the lively rituals of the hunt or carol, Chaucer uses "condensed" visual imagery in a manner similar to the dream-work to contrast ideas implicitly without recourse to rhetorical debate.

Freud also discusses the prevalence in dreams of contraries and contradictions. Often in a dream, contraries are bound in a unity or represented as the same thing.[43] The dream device of contradiction can be recognized in the paradoxes and oxymorons of poetry. We see it, for example, in the opening oxymorons of Alain's Complaint of Nature or in the image in Chaucer's Parliament of Venus as both "blysful lady swete" and wielder of the deadly "fyrbrond" of passion. In a larger sense, Freud observes that the dream's motivation toward wish-fulfillment often results in "reversal" either of content or chronology.[44] Sudden reversals can be especially noted in Chaucer's dream poetry where the somber atmosphere of the waking narrator's depression is transformed in the dream to a sun-drenched bedroom illuminated through stained glass, or to a re-

freshing May morning. In the Parliament of Fowls love's contradictory aspects are presented through a series of inversions: The stale, hot air of the temple with its lovers' "sykes hoote as fyr" gives way to the welcome relief of the fresh, open air of Nature's court; the artificiality of the building decorated with painted stories of tragic lovers is replaced by the green glade covered with flowers (l. 302); Venus' supplicating lovers are replaced by the birds assembled for St. Valentine's Day to hear Nature's judgment; the immoderate sighs and sorrows of fruitless passion are replaced by "cast" and "mesure."

Although a summary of Freud's theory seems to invite parallels to allegory on specific points, an attempt to define allegory's general mode of meaning reveals weaknesses in the analogy. Perhaps a clue to the divergence between allegory and dream comes in understanding the relative emphasis on metaphor and metonomy which characterizes their forms. As Roman Jakobson observed in his pioneering essay, "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles,"

> . . . in an inquiry into the structure of dreams, the decisive question is whether the symbols and temporal sequences used are based on contiguity (Freud's metonymic 'displacement' and synecdochic 'condensation') or on similarity (Freud's 'identification and symbolism').[45]

In other words, both the tendency to metaphor and metonomy can be noted in Freud's description of dreams. The shape of the literary form imitating the dream phenomenom, there-

fore, would depend on which of these aspects a writer chooses to stress.

At one point in his studies, Freud remarks that dreams favor similarity, approximation, and consonance, the implied relation of "just as" as a mode of representation.[46] This comparative relation corresponds, in rhetorical terms, to Quintilian's definition of metaphor. Deriving the term's meaning from its Latin name, translatio, Quintilian describes metaphor as "a noun or verb . . . transferred from the place to which it properly belongs to another where there is either no literal term or the transferred is better than the literal." In other words, the "object is actually substituted for the thing" when it can be "more impressive than the thing which it displaces."[47] Cicero's Ad Herennium describes metaphor in similar terms as a device used for "creating a vivid mental picture." It occurs "when a word applying to one thing is transferred to another, because the similarity seems to justify this transference."[48]

According to classical rhetorical theory, allegory shows a strong dependence on metaphorical comparisons. In this respect, it can be seen as closely akin to Freud's description of the dream's metaphorical aspect. Quintilian characterizes allegory as a sequence of sub-metaphors which amount in aggregate to one single, extended metaphor. In

fact, the relation of two different modes of meaning which characterizes metaphor seems at times to blur its distinction from allegory. According to Quintilian, allegory or inversio, "Either presents one thing in words and another in meaning, or else something absolutely opposed to the meaning of the words."[49] Some modern scholars such as William Empson concur with this idea. In Empson's view, "Part of the function of an allegory is to make you feel that two levels of being correspond to each other in detail and indeed that there is some underlying reality, something in the nature of things, which makes this happen . . ."[50] Rosemund Tuve goes even further to equate allegory with metaphor: "Allegoria does not use metaphor; it is one. By definition a continued metaphor, allegoria exhibits the normal relation of concretization to abstract found in metaphor in the shape of series of particulars with further meanings. Each concretization or sensuous detail is by virtue of its initial base already a metaphor."[51]

Despite Freud's emphasis on metaphor, however, his descriptions elsewhere concerning both the general organization of the dream and its specific formations such as "condensation" and "displacement" point to a more fundamental mode of relation, the metonymic principle of contiguity. As Freud observes, "whenever they [dreams] show us two elements close together, this guarantees that there

is some specially intimate connection between what corresponds to them among the dream-thoughts." He adds, "Collocations in dreams do not consist of any chance, disconnected portions of the dream material, but of portions which are fairly closely connected in the dream thoughts as well."[52] In other words, meaning comes from the relation between items as much as from some external equivalency.

Modern linguistic theory can be of some help in distinguishing between the two principles, metaphor and metonomy, so crucial to both the dream and poetic expression. Roman Jakobson, in his studies of aphasia, relates metaphor to the linguistic faculty of selection and substitution as opposed to metonomy which is based on combination and contexture.[53] As an elaboration of this distinction, Morton Bloomfield contrasts metaphor's tendency to point outward to macrocosmic or microcosmic concepts with metonomy's tendency to point inward to its constituent context. Metaphor's function is to refer, to convey meaning, to name; metonomy's function is to indicate internal relations, to connect or relate. Bloomfield describes the former function as "vertical," the latter as "horizontal."[54]

We have already noted a fundamental relationship between metaphor's mode of meaning and the structure of allegory. Indeed, metaphor's tendency to locate signi-

ficance outside the literal text seems such an essential component of allegory that it is described in allegory's name, "otherspeaking," from the Greek, allos (other) and agorevein (to speak).[55] In Northrop Frye's view, "We have allegory when the events of a narrative obviously and continuously refer to another simultaneous structure of events or ideas."[56] C. S. Lewis describes the process of allegorization as moving from the realm of "immaterial passions to their expression in concrete form."[57] Paul Piehler expands on this, emphasizing the bond between the material and immaterial realms. Thus allegory is "the transposition of characteristic elements of the 'other' nonmaterial or supernatural reality into material images and events comprehensible in terms of everyday experience, and yet betraying some hint of their otherworldly origin."[58] Angus Fletcher sees the secondary meaning as the raison d'être of the primary meaning in allegory. Although the literal narrative can get along without interpretation, its lack of mimetic naturalness tends to "force /the/ reader into an analytic frame of mind." The surface of isolated, ideologically and emotionally resonant images bound by contiguity rather than rational causality, elicits an interpretive response from the reader who perceives that "by bridging the silent gaps between oddly unrelated images we reach the sunken understructure of thought . . . . There is strong logical control

on the level of ideas even if the narrative events become disjointed."[59] D. W. Robertson also emphasizes the subordination of literal text to the apprehension of "higher" interpretive meanings. In his words, "the incoherence of the surface materials is almost essential to the formation of the abstract pattern, for if the surface materials--the concrete elements in the figures--were consistent or spontaneously satisfying in an emotional way, there would be no stimulus to seek something beyond them."[60]

Actually, "the incoherence of surface materials" is exactly that absence of logical connections which motivated Freud to analyze the means of representation in dreams. It is also the surface disjunction observed by Tatlock, Root, Muscatine and others as characteristic of Chaucer's early poetry.[61] In Chaucer's dream visions, as in actual dreams, however, it is not a metaphorical outward turning toward significance which is stimulated by the lack of normal transitions, but a metonymic relation between images. Two examples from the dream poems will demonstrate this distinction.

As we pointed out in relation to the temple description in the Parliament of Fowls, Chaucer avoids simple metaphorical equivalences in favor of a broader range of associations. The ambiguity of isolated figures such as Venus and Priapus continually sends us back to the literal

text to ascertain their meaning, while the significance of major elements such as the temple itself can only be determined by their relation to other images in context. The god, Priapus, for example, is both ridiculous in the reference to the braying ass, and a figure of adulation set in "sovereyn place" with "sceptre in honde" and garlands of flowers placed upon his head (ll. 253-259). Venus seems at one glance furtive, as she is concealed in darkness in a "prive corner" and at the next moment, lavish, reclining on a "bed of gold," "hyre gilte heres" bound with golden thread, and attended by her porter, Richesse (ll. 260-269). She is both awesome in that lovers kneel at her feet crying for help, and at the same time ridiculous when viewed by the dreamer's naive standards of modesty (l. 271). The figures in the temple comprise an attitude toward love which is then evaluated in relation to both the "love of kynde," represented by the garden, and ultimately to the celestial love of Scipio's vision. Meaning here is not created in the metaphorical mode of allegory which provides visual equivalents for abstract concepts and thereby leads the reader away from the text to a realm of ideas. Instead, it behaves more like metonomy or the "displacement" of actual dreams to bind the image in a context of interrelated images which together hold the secret of meaning.

Another example of Chaucer's metonomyic structure is found in the Book of the Duchess in the episode in which a fawning "whelp" greets the dreamer. The creature's sudden appearance as well as his meaning cannot be found in a detached realm of significances, but only in relation to other meanings in context. The whelp, which has been left behind as the fast-running hounds pursue the hart, approaches the dreamer with meekness and caution. The dreamer remarks, "Hyt com and crepte to me as lowe/ Ryght as hyt hadde me yknowe" (1.391-392). The terms are remarkably similar to the dreamer's descripton of his own approach to the Knight. At first, he says, "I stalked even unto hys bak,/ And there I stood as stille as ought" (ll. 458-459). Later, "I went and stood ryght at his fet,/ And grette hym, but he spak noght" (ll. 502-503). In contrast to the strident activity of the hunt, the whelp leads the dreamer by "gentler means" to a garden paradise of growth, rejuvenation, and transcendence of sorrow. The dreamer similarly leads the Man in Black from deadening preoccupation with loss to an inspiring, restorative vision of his lady. The whelp's function in the poem, therefore, is not simply to stand for an idea as it would in allegory where the appearance of a dog might predictably symbolize fidelity.[62] Instead, it is metonymic in that the whelp's behavior toward the dreamer has qualities in common with the encounter between the dreamer and the Man in Black. Furthermore, as a transition device

connecting the dreamer with both the regenerative garden and the healing dialogue, the whelp is a bridge to the problem-solving process introduced by the grief of the waking narrator.

We see, therefore, that the discontinuous surface in allegory produces a different signifying activity than that resulting from the logical connections in dreams. A corollary of this is the contrast that exists between the relation of "manifest" to "latent" content in dreams and the relation of the literal text to its significance in allegory. The allegorist exercises a high degree of conscious control over the ideas he wishes to communicate. His images are chosen to reveal and make accessible complex immaterial concepts rather than to conceal them as in the dream-work. The ideological structure in allegory precedes the literal text, is often explained explicitly within it, and can with attention be fully extracted and expounded in a logically coherent way. As C. S. Lewis states, "The great allegorist's firm thinking leaves no room for misunderstanding."[63] He adds, "For the function of allegory is not to hide but to reveal, and it is properly used only for that which cannot be said, or so well said, in literal speech."[64] Frye agrees with this emphasis on allegory's control of the relation between ideas and images and sees it as essentially a "contrapuntal technique" in which "a poet

explicitly indicates the relationship of his images to examples and precepts, and so tries to indicate how a commentary on him should proceed. A writer is being allegorical whenever it is clear that he is saying, 'by this I also mean that.'"[65] In fact, Frye criticizes allegory's tendency to present a surface text which demands only one correct reading as threatening the freedom of the reader and thus accounting for the post-romantic decline in the appreciation of allegory. Fletcher agrees that since allegory is "at constant war with doubt," it advocates as a defense, clear, affirmative meanings.[66]

In contrast to the clearly defined allegorical image, a dream symbol is "inexhaustible." In dealing with the difficulties of reconstructing the ideational content underlying dreams, Freud observes that:

> . . . it is in fact never possible to be sure that a dream has been completely interpreted. Even if the solution seems satisfactory and without gaps, the possibility always remains that the dream may have yet another meaning. Strictly speaking, then, it is impossible to determine the amount of condensation.[67]

The ambiguity which raises questions about the existential certainties of our lives is the very essence of dream symbols. Transferred to poetry they are especially suited to works designed to question established ideas and present issues in their full complexity. While polysemous charac-

ters or objects are also found in allegory, as, for example, in the ambiguous descriptions of the Rose and the Well of Love in Guillaume's portion of the Roman de la Rose, their use is generally instrumental to allegory's greater task--to clarify, set in order, and celebrate its view of reality.

From this discussion, it is not surprising that the same dichotomy between metaphor and metonomy, between allegory and actual dreams, is reflected in the two opposing dream categories of Macrobius which served as models for the allegorical dream poem. The oraculum, or prophetic dream, created a metaphorical link between two separate worlds, the spiritual world and the world of material reality. Transferred to literary expression it produced an allegory of "otherspeaking" in which concepts from a separate ideological realm were explored in a concrete fable of images, characters, and events. In contrast, the insomnium, or dream motivated by the psychological or physical state of the dreamer, resulted in a literary dream resembling Freud's model in which the problems, wishes, concerns of daily life were carried into the imaginative realm of associative dream-logic and emotionally laden symbols. While the allegorical dream pointed outward from images to a single, unified significance in the realm of ideas, the metonymic dream pointed laterally from "condensed" images to a context

of associations which avoided reduction and formulation. The oraculum appealed to poets such as Boethius and Alain de Lille who used visionary dialogue to indicate a clearly defined philosophical position. Chaucer, on the other hand, was attracted to the insomnium with its ability to capture the manifold dimensions of a problem.

5. Chaucer's Transformation of the Allegorical Dream Convention

In my comparison of dream and allegory I have demonstrated Chaucer's alternatives in choosing a poetic form to suit his content. If Chaucer's intention were to write poetry dealing with philosophical issues requiring intuitive as well as rational faculties to decipher, than he had to go beyond the doctrinaire, ritually ordered nature of allegory to a more open, evocative poetic structure. The symbolic organization of the dream offered a model for adapting the evolving convention of allegorical dream vision to a form more suitable to examination of complex ideological problems. Although Chaucer's dream poems seem traditionally allegorical to the extent that they include such powerful personae as Venus and Nature, or that they evoke allegorical landscape settings of Garden or Temple, they deviate from their predecessors by not supplying us with a prescribed set of equivalences that lead eventually

to a continuous, exhaustive, and authoritative translation of ideas on another level. As they appear in the poetic dream context, these allegororical elements retain their conventional, clear meanings only as part of an ironical understanding with the reader's knowledge of previous sources. In terms of their treatment in the poem, they radiate "anti-allegorical" ambiguity. The images do not function simply as a visual code for a premeditated "significance," but rather as complexes of meaning set in purposeful relationship to lead the dreamer as well as the reader to new insights.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS

1. Dream Realism

The Book of the Duchess, written in 1369, shortly after the death of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, is the earliest example of Chaucer's use of the dream convention. Praised by some readers for its "flawless" dream psychology, while criticized by others for its disjointed structure and unassimilated borrowings, the Book of the Duchess typifies the conflicting responses to Chaucer's innovative treatment of the allegorical dream vision. Kittredge, for example, in his 1915 study of Chaucer's poetry, contrasted the attitude of Chaucer's predecessors for whom dreams were "a mere service to get the reader into a sort of fairyland," with Chaucer's own extension of the genre to bring the experience of the Dreamer "with admirable art, near to the actual phenomena of dream-life."[1] In a similar vein, Lowes observed that Chaucer "was not content to accept the dream convention as an act of faith," but probed further into the causes of dreams and the phenomena of dreaming to give verisimilitude to his invented vision. According to Lowes, Chaucer was careful to provide a cause for sleeplessness (his Machaut-like melancholy), a book to

induce sleep, and a dream which followed with "irrefragable dream logic."[2] Kittredge agreed that "undoubtedly Chaucer meant this carrying over of the waking impression in the dream state to be inferred by his readers . . . . The fact of such transmission was commonly recognized."[3] Bertrand Bronson continued this line of thinking in his 1952 essay, "The Book of the Duchess Re-Opened." To support his claims of dream verisimilitude he uncovered an elaborate system of dream-like transferences from the waking frame to the imaginative dream sequence. These transferences, in his opinion, gave poetic justification to the perplexing disjunctions in Chaucer's early love vision.

Unfavorable critics of Chaucer's dream poems, on the other hand, have based their judgments of the Book of the Duchess on precisely this discontinuity of poetic elements, a shortcoming they attribute to the incomplete mastery of Chaucer's apprentice period. R. K. Root, for example, regarded the Ceys and Alcione story in the waking frame as a breach of artistic unity, a needless digression which Chaucer neglected to integrate into the poem.[5] Other critics, such as J. S. P. Tatlock, have focused on the lack of credibility in the characterization of the dreamer. Not only is the dreamer in no sense a representation of Chaucer, but his obtuseness in failing to infer the death of

Blanche from the evidence earlier in the poem is incomprehensible to the reader:

> Perhaps such forgetfulness is dreamlike . . . . But no explanation of the dreamer's state of mind . . . will persuade most moderns, still less a medieval . . . to accept the contradiction without question.[6]

Still a third group has attempted to explain Chaucer's disjointed structure by sidestepping the claims of dream verisimilituide and ascribing gaps and inconsistencies to conventions of medieval rhetorical practice. Charles Muscatine, for example, in his studies of the French courtly tradition, contends that:

> It is difficult to distinguish the surface incoherence of dream sequence from the incoherence of plot sequence that is characteristic of conventional narrative of this kind . . . Chaucer's problem is not to make his dream coincide with the facts of dreaming. . . but to interweave it with poetic relevance to his theme.[7]

D. W. Roberston agrees with this emphasis, observing that the problem in making connections between the dream and the prologue in Chaucer's early poems stems from the English medieval style which typically does not explain relationships between component parts. In his view:

> Significant juxtapositions were an established technique in Gothic Art, and English art particularly during the later Middle Ages exhibits a desire to keep the juxtaposed elements separate.[8]

In my opinion, Chaucer's early poems attain a new level of dream realism which is not sufficiently explained by any of these positions. His verisimilitude cannot be adequately described either by the superficial dream-mimesis praised

by Lowes and Kittredge or by the inevitable conformity to medieval convention claimed by Muscatine and Robertson. Rather than merely enhancing the "stage-set" of the poetic vision with more dream-like appearances and unexplained transitions, Chaucer's dream verisimilitude is achieved by applying a deep understanding of the dynamics of dreams to the creation of a new poetic structure. The principles of this structure could be seen as analogous to the Freudian principles of dream-work described in Chapter III. If "incoherence of plot sequence" is characteristic of dream allegory as Muscatine contends, then Chaucer has transformed this discontinuity from a conventional trait to a purposeful form of poetic organization. Chaucer's dream-like disjunction, his unexplained linking of ideologically loaded image complexes, is capable of presenting philosophical problems poetically without explicit philosophical discussion. The difficulties posed by the poem's formal structure, particularly by the need to restore its missing logical connections, engages the reader in an intuitive-rational inquiry which simultaneously becomes the search for a solution to the philosophical dilemma posed by the dreamer.

The analogy between the organization of Chaucer's early love visions and Freud's dream model can provide a key to understanding Chaucer's innovative form. Since Freud

regarded the dream as a chain of highly charged psychic "conglomerates," his "decoding" process involved exploration of all possible thoughts and associations implied by each link before arriving at some unifying statement about the whole.[9] If we assume the dream verisimilitude in Chaucer's early poems results from the same disconnected structure, we might achieve interesting results by applying Freud's method of dream analysis to poetic interpretation. Looking at Chaucer's dream poems as a series of images and settings placed one against another without explicit relations, the interpretive task becomes one of uncovering the associations of each image cluster and determining their relations to other images in context. The implicit communication achieved by this form amounts to a new kind of poetic problem-solving which can be evaluated in contrast to the explicitly didactic dialogue of previous dream poets.

In addition to juxtaposition of visualized images, Chaucer's dream poems communicate through a contrast of styles whose sources are associated with contradictory ideologies.[10] In the Parliament of Fowls, for example, stylistic contrast between the elegant speech of the noble "tercel" eagle and the vulgar reasoning of the duck reflects the contrast between the courtly ideals of romance and the bourgeois practicality of the fabliau. In the Book of

the Duchess, Chaucer's stylistic borrowings similarly reflect the ideologies of their sources. The courtly elegance of Machaut and Froissart[11] with its connotations of suffering for love, absolute devotion of the lover, and idealization of the lady, is superimposed upon the dignity of Boethian dialogue with its consolatory philosophy relating earthly fortunes to a larger cosmic perspective.[12]

An example of this stylistic tension can be seen in line 39 where the narrator's reference to "phisicien but oon/ That may me hele," invites multiple interpretations. In courtly terms it carries the commonplace reference to the lady as physician whose gift of love can remedy the lover's suffering.[13] In philosophical terms it becomes an allusion to Boethius' Consolation in which the physician, Lady Philosophy, offers both "light" and "difficult" remedies to restore her patient's view of truth.[14] Finally, in medieval Christian society, a reference to the one physician inevitably suggests the one true physician, Christ, who cures the spiritual maladies of mankind. The echo of these contradictory sources generates provocative ambiguity.[15] Is this to be a courtly elegy for an idealized lady, a philosophical statement on the transience of worldly possessions, or a Christian exemplum on the relation of earthly to heavenly love? While the ambiguity of references is clearly intended by Chaucer to reflect the

conflicting ideologies available to a late medieval audience, the poem nevertheless encourages the reader's search for a new balance which will set everything in order.

In the Book of the Duchess, then, Chaucer uses the associative structure of actual dreams to communicate an implicit solution to the problem of loss and consolation. He achieves this by balancing the rhetorically explicit despair of the narrator and the Man in Black against image clusters such as the May garden and the portrait of White. At the same time, the juxtaposition of the poem's stylistic strata, its conventional courtly complaint superimposed upon a philosophical dialogue of restoration, prepares for another unspoken resolution to the dialectic of grief and renewed participation in life.

2. The Narrator's Distress

The Book of the Duchess opens with the lament of a distressed Narrator whose prolonged sleeplessness becomes the concrete symptom of an unspecificied problem. In a stylistic fusion which sets the tone for the rest of the poem, the Narrator's lament echoes both the conventional complaint of the courtly lover and the elegiac lament preceding the arrival of a heavenly visitor in the visionary dialogues. To compose the Narrator's speech, Chaucer borrows phrases from Froissart's Le Paradys d'Amours,

lines which may in turn, have originated in the sleepless lover's complaint of La Fontaine Amoureuse.[16] The implication, consistent with the French courtly convention, is that the speaker's sleeplessness is caused by unrequited love. The Narrator's mention of suffering from an eight-year sickness (ll. 36-37), which recalls the Lady's claim in Behaingne that she served eight years for love, seems to corroborate this assumption. In contrast to Froissart, however, who locates the cause of his sleeplessness in love-longing,[17] Chaucer's Narrator seems unable to specify the source of his distress ("Myselven can not telle why," l. 34) and persists in dazed wonder to find a remedy. This indeterminacy takes Chaucer beyond the refined courtly conventions of his French models back to the philosophical depth of the dream visions of Boethius and Alain de Lille. Both of these earlier writers opened their poems with the Narrator's anguish at a disordered world, followed with a dream vision involving the dialectical reorientation of his perception, and concluded with the Narrator's emotional recovery founded upon a vision of universal order.[18]

Evidence for Chaucer's relation to the more serious philosophical allegorists comes in the gap between the Narrator's courtly phraseology and what we sense as a deeper disorder. Describing his state as one of overwhelming negativity, the Narrator complains:

I take no kep
Of nothing, how hyt cometh or gooth
Ne me nys nothyng leef nor looth. (ll. 6-8)

His mood projects apathy, indifference, emotional barrenness ("Al is ylyche good to me," l. 9) Like the poet in Alain's Complaint of Nature whose mental turmoil is expressed through the oxymorons of language, Chaucer's Narrator is in a stalemate where contradictions ("Joye or sorowe," l. 10) cancel one another and leave him paralyzed, unable to move out of his "mazed" state. His "sorwful ymagynacioun" is incapable of perceiving new solutions He is bewildered, confused, uncertain ("I not what is best to doo," l. 29). The Narrator's excessive distress is "agaynes kynde" and takes on negative associations of death amidst life. In fact, he wonders that he lives (l. 1-2), finds his "spirit of quyknesse" slain, and is in persistent fear of death (l. 24). With the extremity of his lament, the poet's condition comes to signify a larger dilemma than unrequited love--a dilemma which demands solution through philosophical quest.

Chaucer's opening, therefore, serves as a realistic motivation for the dream's problem-solving activity. On the most mechancial level, the Narrator's sleeplessness stimulates his search for a book which eventually leads to sleep and the dream. On a deeper level, the Narrator's mental state communicates "wonder" and astonishment at the confusion of things and despair at old solutions. His mood

sets the tone for a searching, open attitude in evaluating events and, at the same time, strikes an expectation in the reader of a resolution to follow. Thematically, the opening lines carry the concept of deadening, unnatural grief which materializes later in the Knight's sorrowful condition at the loss of his lady. Finally, by introducing the Narrator's sorrow and need for consolation, the waking link prepares for the Boethian splitting of the allegorical hero into aspects of himself for the purpose of dialectic

3. The Book of Ceys and Alcione The Uses of Myth

The Narrator's sleeplessness leads him to find relief in a book, a "romance,"[18] which he chooses for bedtime entertainment over "ches or tables " The book contains the myth of Ceys and Alcione found originally in Ovid's Metamorphoses, but also recounted in Machaut's Le Dit de la Fontaine Amoureuse, Froissart's Le Paradys d'Amours, and the anonymous Ovid moralisé. In the French sources, the story served either as a decorative classical allusion or as a means for furthering the narrative of the poem. Machaut, for example, used Alcione's prayer to Juno to restore her lost lover as a classic model for his courtly lover's request to appear before his lady once again; Froissart, on the other hand, used the offer of a gift to Morpheus as as vehicle for introducing sleep and

entering the dream. Although Chaucer leads us to think the "romance" of Ceys and Alcione serves a similar function to Froissart's expedient device for transferring the Narrator from the waking state to the dream vision, closer inspection reveals links to the thematic uses of myth by earlier allegorical poets. We are reminded of Guillaume's symbolic treatment of the Narcissus myth in the Roman de la Rose or the seminal character of the Orpheus myth in Boethius' Consolation. Adhering to this tradition, Chaucer has reshaped Alcione's story to project the central philosophical issues of the poem: the loss of earthly love and the need for consolation.

Chaucer develops the myth's thematic potential by condensing Ovid's 165 line account of Ceys' drowning at sea to fourteen lines, and by shifting the emphasis to Alcione's grief and longing. Rather than having Juno send the vision of Ceys of her own accord, Chaucer adds Alcione's anguished prayer to the goddess with its phrases reminiscent of prayers to the Virgin.[20] Finally, Chaucer transforms Ceys from Ovid's tear-stained spectre of despair to a gentle figure of consolation. These revisions mold the story into a concrete correlative for the Narrator's formless melancholy. Furthermore, by drawing him from his solipsistic gloom into relation with another's sorrow, the myth creates a response in the Narrator which anticipates the Dreamer's

sympathetic concern for the Knight. After reading this book, the Narrator says he

> Had such pittee and such rowthe
> To rede hir sorwe, that, by my trowthe,
> I ferde the worse al the morwe
> Aftir, to thenken on hir sorwe.
> (ll. 96-100)

Finally, the myth's portrayal of Alcione's grief provides a direct parallel to the Knight's sorrow for his lost lady and thereby joins the Narrator's distress in anticipating the dream to follow.

The technique of transferring the elements of bedtime reading to the dream narrative is a Chaucerian invention which gives psychological credibility to the transition between two worlds--the waking world and the realm of dreams Its use marks a similarity between the Book of the Duchess and the Parliament of Fowls where a short, introductory episode functions as a pretext to be elaborated and reacted upon in the dream In both poems, Chaucer uses contrasting narratives to juxtapose two Macrobian dream classifications. In the Parliament, reference to the prophetic, authoritative Dream of Scipio presents a counterpoint to the solutions offered by the Narrator's imaginative, personal dream. In the Book of the Duchess, Alcione's story assumes the role of authoritative dream with its preliminary treatment of the pain of loss and its final rhetorical consolation. Although it is not prophetic in

revealing the future, Alcione's dream nevertheless contains a message of truth sent by a god from the Other World through the mediation of a dream vision. Indeed, Alcione prays for such a visitation as if she clearly believes in the prophetic power of dreams:

> Send me grace to slepe, and mete
> In my slep' som certeyn sweven
> Wherthourgh that I may knowen even
> Whether my lord be quyk or ded.
> (ll. 118-121)

Opposed to Alcione's "prophetic" dream is the Narrator's imaginative dream arising out of his elaborately portrayed anguish. The Narrator's dream does not look to an external authority, but promises to resolve issues intuitively through the dreamer's personal store of memory and experience. Thus, in a less obvious way than the Parliament, the poem's structure juxtaposes two sources of truth: the dream of Alcione as Macrobian oraculum and the Narrator's personal dream as questionable insomnium. Chaucer, however, undercuts the authority of the oracular dream at the same time as he elaborates it by exaggerating the ludicrous potentialities of Ovid's account of celestial dream production.

In Ovid's version of Ceys and Alcione, we visit the Cimmerian Cave of the god of sleep, see the stock of undreamed dreams "as numerous as wheat ears of the harvest," and see dream images in every form of beast and man:

There are dream-gods here who show
themselves by night
To kings and rulers only, and there are
others
Who come to common people.
(XI, 643-645)[21]

Chaucer's skeptical attitude toward such explanations prompts him to over-literalize his version of the behind-the-scenes dream mechanics with humorous results. In Chaucer, the classic deities descend from the rarified atmosphere of Olympus to enact the familiar bustle of middle class merchants filling out a stock order. Ovid's ethereal Isis "in her thousand-colored mantle" becomes a clumsy male messenger whom Juno exhorts in no-nonsense terms to "Go Bet'" to the god of sleep and "Hye the blyve'" Instead of arousing the sleeping god gently with glowing garments as did Isis, he comes flying fast into the somnolent cave breaking the silence with a raucous, "O, ho! awake anoon!" When that fails to arouse the god, he shouts again: "'Awake!' . . . 'whoo ys lyth there?'/ And /blows/ his horn ryght in here eere" (ll. 181-182). Adding a touch from Machaut which is far less humorous in the French source, Chaucer pictures the god of sleep "with hys oon yë/ Cast up" asking, "Who clepeth ther?" and being met with the laconic reply, "Hyt am I" (ll. 184-186). The god of sleep hears the message, awakes from slumber and goes to fill his order.

Chaucer's irreverent treatment of the classical deities distracts us from the seriousness of Ceys' message that Alcione must accept his death:

> 'My swete wyf,
> Awake! Let be your sorwful lyf!
> For in your sorwe there lyth no red.
> For, certes, swete, I nam but ded;
> (ll. 201-204)

This forgiving, consolatory version of Ceys' speech contrasts sharply with the Ceys of Ovid who comes as a drenched, despairing apparition to bitterly declare the uselessness of Alcione's prayers and to advise her to abandon hope and mourn his death. Chaucer's changes are a product of his poetic design. The tender affection of Ceys' "my swete wyf" prepares the tone for the Man in Black's praise of his lady, while his message of resignation harkens back to its blunter form in the Narrator's counsel to himself:

> . . . but that is don.
> Passe we over untill eft;
> That wil not be mot nede be left;
> (ll. 40-42)

Ceys' message in Chaucer's tale, therefore, prefigures the implied consolation to the Man in Black to face his lady's death and rejoin the living.

Chaucer, however, snatches us away from too pensive deliberation at this point by telescoping the final events of the myth into a few lines and returning abruptly to his "first matere"--the problem of the Narrator's sleeplessness.

We do not feel the impact of Ceys' message again until we arrive at it intuitively at the end of the poem's long problem-solving process. By curtailing the story's conclusion, Chaucer modifies his sources in two ways. Whereas Machaut follows Ovid in transforming the lovers to birds, thus reuniting them after death, Chaucer first eliminates the bird metamorphosis and then says simply that Alcione "deyede within the thirdde morwe." Her death from sorrow leaves Chaucer the opportunity to respond to the myth in the context of the dream. For example, the Man in Black's suicidal response to loss (ll. 690 ff.) analogous to Alcione's dying of grief is rejected by the Dreamer as unworthy (ll. 1723-25) and it becomes a goal of their dialogue to find an alternative, constructive solution to his despair. The excision of the bird transformation eliminates supernatural solutions or consolations in an afterlife and puts the focus here on earth with the implied question: How does a man go on living with the loss of his "worldes blysse?"

Chaucer gains ironic overtones from this mythic interlude by having the Narrator himself invoke the dream deities he has parodied only a few lines before. Claiming he has never heard of them and knows "never god but oon," he nevertheless leaves no remedy untried and boldly strikes a bargain "in game" with the god of sleep. If "thilke

Morpheus/ Or hys goddesse, dame Juno,/ Or som wight elles" (ll. 242-244) grant him the sleep he has so longed for, he will reward him with a handsome featherbed. The same payment was offered by the distraught lover of Machaut's Fontainne Amoureuse (l. 699 ff.) when he begged Morpheus to assume his form and appear before his lady. In Machaut's poem this was a brief and respectful offer spoken in courtly style. In Chaucer's version, however, the overly concrete elaboration of the bed, the bed clothes, and the accompanying interior decoration implies the ridicule of a deity that could be tempted with such specific material inducements. The mocking tone leads us to doubt the effectiveness of such gods in human affairs. Ironically the vow works, for scarcely does Chaucer utter the words when his insomnia ends and he falls fast asleep upon his book to dream an incomparable dream. The sequence creates the double-ironic effect Chaucer later perfects in the Nun's Priest's Tale where Chauntecleer dreams a disturbing dream about his future, but is counselled by his wife to disregard it as merely an absurd hallucination attributable to physical causes. Chauntecleer defends the dream as prophecy, but at last chooses to ignore it only to have the dream actually come true with the arrival of the fox. In the Book of the Duchess, Chaucer tells the story of a god bringing sleep and appearing in a dream to console the dreamer. He reacts with incredulity, but turns around and asks for the

same privilege in jest. The result is that he literally falls asleep and dreams as if the gods had real power.

The scene again puts the status of the Narrator's dream in question. Is it an <u>insomnium</u> arising out of the Narrator's distress or is it a dream divinely inspired by Morpheus in pursuit of a new feather bed? Although the dream which finally appears does not offer consolations from a divine source, the aura of authority is nonetheless maintained by the Narrator's boastful assertion of the incomparable quality of his personal dream. Its wonderful complexity, he claims, would defy even the great dream exegetes, Joseph and and Macrobius:

> So wonderful, that never yit
> Y trowe no man had the wyt
> To konne wel my sweven rede; (ll. 277-79)

4. The Awakening into the Dream: The Garden

The Narrator's entry into the dream is ironically described as an awakening. The association of its images to elements earlier and later in the poem is strikingly consistent with the metonymic structure of dreams discussed in Chapter III. As the Narrator lies naked in his bed at the waking of the day ("dawenynge"), in the rebirth of the year ("May"), he says he was "waked" by birdsong out of his sleep (l. 296). The great horn which alerts him to rise up and follow the hunt recalls the horn blown in the ear of

slumbering Morpheus with the accompanying command to "Awake!" The awakening also recalls Ceys' directive to his mourning wife to "Awake!" let be your sorwful lyf!" (ll. 201-202). The radical reversal of mood from the abject depression of the narrative frame to the joy and wonder of the dream is consistent with the Freudian concept of wish fulfillment whereby the dream environment is the antithesis of the circumstances of waking life. This psychological perspective supports the poem's structure of meaning in which the garden's positive cluster of images reacts in dream-like dialectic with the opposing negative mood of melancholy, lethargy, and despair which have introduced the poem.

Chaucer communicates this opposition, not through philosophical dialectic, but through contrasting environments of cave and garden. The cave of Morpheus described in the Ceys and Alcione myth has its associations with death and the underworld; the garden and its seven traditional beauties has roots going back to the courtly convention of the Roman de la Rose, the locus amoenus of classical literature, and the biblical paradisal garden.[22] Though Chaucer's landscape settings radiate an allusive richness, their function in context is to give concrete expression to opposing views of life. Morpheus' cave is in a "derke valeye" between rocks and is "as derk/

As helle-pit overal aboute" (ll. 170-171). There everyone sleeps and does no other work (l. 169). They slumber not only during the night, but also "whiles the dayes laste." The garden, on the other hand, is filled with light: Its sun shines through his bedroom window with "bryghte bemes" and "with many glade gilde stremes" (ll. 337-338), its sky is cloudless, "blew, bryght, clere,"and its air is temperate. In contrast to the hellish cave, the garden challenges heaven with its loveliness:

> For hit was, on to beholde,
> As thogh the erthe envye wolde
> To be gayer than the heven,
> To have moo floures, swiche seven,
> As in the welken sterres bee.
> (ll. 405-409)

The metaphor, taken from Jean de Meun's description of the idyllic Golden Age garden of Flora and Zephyrus in the Roman de la Rose (l. 8411 ff.), also recalls the astonishment of the Dreamer in Guillaume's poem:

> For wel wende I ful sikerly
> Have ben in paradys erthly.
> So fair it was that, trusteth wel,
> It semede a place espirituel.
> (Romaunt, ll.646-650)

Continued description amplifies the contrast between the vitality of the garden and the sterility of the cave. In place of barren rocks where "never yet grew corn ne gras/ Ne tre" (ll. 157-158), the garden offers an array of flowers, trees, and "gras, ful softe and swete;" in place of the lifeless environment where "beste, ne man, ne noght elles"

survives (l.159), the garden is so filled with deer, squirrels, and beasts of all kinds that even "Argus, the noble countour" could not count them. Though the imagery is clearly derivative of the Roman de la Rose (l. 1391 ff.), and Chaucer even signals this connection in lines 333-334, the passage has been carefully selected and condensed to offer a visual message to the dreamer: "Let be thy sorwful lyf"--let be the darkness, stagnation, and sterility of excessive melancholy and behold the joy available in man's earthly life. The wonders of nature console man with the harmonious sound of birdsong, the abundant growth of animals ("of founes, sowres, bukkes, does"), the visual beauty of flowers, the reassuring order of tall, sheltering trees, and the promise of renewal in the "dewe" which makes the wood "waxe" green. As a reminder of the perpetual cycle in nature where death is restored by new life, the spring garden becomes a model for man's balanced handling of loss:

> Hyt had forgete the povertee
> That wynter, thorgh hys colde morwes,
> Had mad hyt suffre, and his sorwes;
> All was forgeten . . . (ll. 410-413)

5. Hert-huntyng

Chaucer awakes in his dream to the sound of hunters' horns and the bustling activity of the hunt. Commentators

have noted that details of the dream-hunt are in accord with actual medieval hunting practices.[23] This does not explain, however, why Chaucer chooses to interrupt the "pleasance" of the May morning with such noisy sport and why, if he must do so, he chooses this particular courtly ritual instead of, for instance, the dance or the carol of the Roman de la Rose. One explanation can be found in the already mentioned dream reversal whereby the Narrator's apathy is transformed by the awakening effect of dogs and huntsmen. More importantly in terms of dream work, the hunt takes the emotional distress and vague questioning ("myselven cannot telle why") of the waking Narrator and focuses it onto a concrete visual image of the pursuit of quarry. Since the quarry is the "hert," the situation supports the replacement in a dream-like pun of "hert" for "heart," spelled the same in Chaucer's text. This makes the hunter's chase a possible metaphor for the courtly pursuit of love as Froissart used it in Le Paradys d'Amours (l. 916 ff.) where "tout li homme veneour/ Au dieu d'Amours." As with earlier imagery, however, the courtly allusions soon give way to echoes of more serious philosophical allegory.

Viewed as part of a dialogue of consolation, the image of "hert-huntyng" becomes the pursuit of the Narrator's (or Man in Black's) heart, the quest for the source of his distress. In fact, the foregrounding of the word, "hert,"

in the hunting scene and in the preliminary interview between the Dreamer and the Man in Black suggests the image of "hert-huntyng has through dream displacement become a concrete symbol of the poem's problem-solving activity. The hunters are at first elated at the active pursuit of their quarry and brag of "how they wolde slee the hert with strengthe" (l. 351), but their aggressive efforts only cause the "hert" to become "embosed" or more deeply hidden in the woods.[24] Although the hunters follow their leader, Octavian, until the "hert" is found, they discover that the noisy, rampaging hounds have "overshote hym alle," allowing the "hert" to "ruse" and steal away. The whelp, a gentler canine who is unable to keep up with the bold, fast-moving chase, actually demonstrates a more effective approach to "hert-huntyng" by uniting the Dreamer and the grieving Knight in heart-searching dialogue.

6. The Dialogue between the Dreamer and the Man in Black

Having argued thus far that Chaucer surpasses the explicitly didactic dialogue of previous philosophical poets, it seems contradictory at this point to observe that the central portion of Chaucer's first dream poem is, once again, a dialogue Superficially, in fact, the dialogue seems to be strikingly similar to the interchange between Lady Philosophy and Boethius in the first two books of the Consolation of Philosophy.[25] Let us look at some of the similarities

Chaucer recreates the Boethian setting by replacing the allegorical projection of Boethius' philosophy with a realistic human interlocutor, and by transforming the distressed Boethius into a grieving courtly lover, possibly a poetic representation of the mourning John of Gaunt.[28] The courtly lover, or the Man in Black, initiates the encounter by delivering a complaint for his lost "Lady bryght" (l. 477) in which he remembers his past joy and indulges in present grief (ll. 475-79). His sad song establishes the dialogue on the same elegiac note as Boethius' opening lament for his former good fortune. Even the Man in Black's vain longing for death expressed in the lines:

> Allas, deth, what ayleth the,
> That thou noldest have taken me,
> When thou toke my lady swete
> (ll. 481-483)

seems a direct echo of Boethius':

> But now Death's ears are deaf to hopeless cries,
> His hands refuse to close poor weeping eyes. (I, i)

The similarity to the Boethian model is further reinforced by the doctor-patient metaphor which binds the speakers. Despite the ironic disparity between the dignity of Boethius' heavenly guest and the Man in Black's humble dream interlocutor, both figures offer their services as physician to cure their grieving patients through restorative discourse Lady Philosophy proclaims at the opening of the Consolation, the time for "healing not lamenting" (I, ii) and Boethius responds by addressing her as "my physician" (I, iii) In similar manner, Chaucer's Dreamer entreats the Knight to

> . . discure me youre woo,
> And telleth me of your sorwes smerte;
> Paraunter hyt may ese youre herte.
> (ll. 549, 555-556)

If the Knight will reveal his problem, the Dreamer promises:

> . . . to make yow hool
> I wol do al my power hool. (ll. 553-554)

Lady Philosophy diagnoses her pupil's condition as the disordering dominance of emotion. Boethius "has forgotten for a while who he is;" he has entertained the Muses of Poetry that "kill the rich and fruitful harvest of Reason with the barren thorns of passion;" now he longs only for death (I,i). The Knight, in similar fashion, "had wel nygh

lost hys mynde" (ll. 510-511). He admits, "my sorwe . . . hath myn understondynge lorn" (l. 565) and laments that he has changed from his former self to the personification of grief ("For y am sorwe, and sorwe ys y," l. 597). The Knight, like Boethius, longs vainly for death, a sentiment he expresses in his opening lyric (ll. 481-83), again in his claim that death flies from his pursuit ("I wolde have hym: hyt nyl nat me" l. 586), and finally in his twice uttered cry, "Me ys woo that I was born!"(l. 566, 686)[28]

All of these rhetorical resemblances serve only to camouflage the fact that Chaucer's dialogue differs fundamentally from the Boethian model The interchange between the Dreamer and the Man in Black is actually not a systematic philosophical argument, but a series of images elicited by the Dreamer and expounded by the Man in Black in a chain of monologues or mini-narratives within the overall dream sequence The conversational format is especially effective in maintaining the aura of instructional-restorative dialogue of earlier writers while at the same time allowing visual images rather than rational argument to carry on debate. The dialogue also performs a dream censorship function by permitting Chaucer to avoid difficulties of propriety and protocol in a poem which proposes to eulogize the deceased wife of Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt. As Kittredge has pointed out, Chaucer escapes

charges of flattery and presumption by having the Knight, rather than Chaucer's persona, praise Blanche.[29]

If we regard the dialogue as a series of opposing images rather than as a discursive argument, we notice that the verbalized sentiments of the Knight's opening complaint are actually less important than the initial picture of him dressed in black, leaning against an oak, absorbed in his sorrowful thoughts. His figure contrasts dramatically with the vibrant spring garden we have just encountered. As such it presents a condensed visual image of the fundamental death-amidst-life dialectic posed by the poem. The figure of the Knight, furthermore, connects in metonymic relation to elements earlier in the waking frame. The Man in Black's "sorwe and hevy thoght" (l. 509) is the dream-like displacement of the waking Narrator's "sorwful ymagynacioun;" his preoccupation with death recalls the Narrator's comment (ll. 1-2) that "I have gret wonder, be this lyght,/ How that I lyve;" his conviction that "no man may my sorwe glade . . . ne hele me may no phisicien" (ll. 563, 571) echoes the Narrator's similar statement that:

> . . . there is phisicien but oon
> That may me hele; but that is don.
> Passe we over untill eft;
> That wil not be mot nede be left;
> (ll. 39-42)

As the Knight begins to "discure" his woe, his thoughts take the form of an extensive monologue interrupted only by intermittent questions and comments of the Dreamer.[30]

The proportion of speech allotted to each character is a reversal of previous philosophical dialogues in which the troubled Dreamer poses occasional questions which are answered by the long doctrinal disputations of his allegorical mentor. Chaucer's Dreamer-physician, in fact, only presents one argument against his "patient's" distress, the example of Socrates, and this he imparts only when the Knight's grief seems to approach the extremity of suicide. Otherwise, his comments serve as promptings to the Knight's continued narration: Either they stimulate the Knight's defensive response to the Dreamer's underestimation of his tragedy (ll. 740-741) or they prompt the Knight to elaborate his story in answer to the Dreamer's overt curiosity (ll. 746-749). Thus, instead of Lady Philosophy's step-by-step demonstration of man's unreasonable attachment to earthly pleasures, we are presented with a series of images from the Knight's experience which captures the depth of his dilemma.

The first, an image familiar from Boethius' Consolation, is of "trayteresse" Fortune whose greed has claimed his lady in death (l. 618 ff). At the opening of the Consolation, the Narrator railed against Fortune's trustless countenance: "First fickle Fortune gave me wealth short-lived,/ Then in a moment all but ruined me" (I,i). The Knight, in similar fashion begins by lamenting the conversion of all his joys to their opposites: "My song ys turned to pleynynge/ And al my laughtre to wepynge"

(ll. 599-600).[31] Whereas in the Consolation Fortune stands for the mutability of things, the principle of inconstancy built into the universe (ii.ii), in the Knight's description she becomes a highly visualized adversary who engages him in a game of chess and wins:

> With hir false draughtes dyvers
> She staal on me, and tok my fers.
> (ll. 653-654)

With Fortune's "checkmate," the Knight is bereft of his queen and can no longer play.[32] He derides his opponent in a series of images of duplicity: She "baggeth foule and loketh faire" (l. 623); "She ys fals; and ever laughynge/ With oon eye, and that other wepynge" (ll. 633-634); she is like the "scorpioun" who "amydde hys flaterynge/ With hys tayle he wol stynge" (ll. 636-640). Yet contained within these attacks is the Boethian consolation that man can gain freedom from Fortune if he learns to value qualities which are unchanging. The Black Knight seems on the path to this insight when he recognizes that "to lyen" is Fortune's nature (l. 631). He can even sympathize with her actions:

> And eke she ys the lasse to blame;
> Myself I wolde have do the same,
> Before God, hadde I ben as she;
> She oghte the more excused be.
> (ll. 675-678)

Yet his despair is too great to be helped by this recognition and his image of Fortune remains as a symbol of the impermanence of man's earthly loves in a world governed by change and instability.

In antithesis to the negative images of the melancholy Man in Black and his enemy, "fals Fortune," the dialogue presents its final and most powerful image, the inspiring portrait of Blanche. Elicited in defensive response to the Dreamer's apparent insensitivity to the Knight's misfortune, the eulogy of Blanche becomes the central consolatory image in the poem. The Knight's glowing portrait of her fully balances the dark chords of the Narrator's melancholy and the Knight's earlier complaint. The power of Blanche's memory forms the basis of the Man in Black's Boethian regeneration. As her description passes from praise to idealization, to apotheosis, it becomes clear that the inspiration of her virtues and spiritual beauty have remained untouched by Fortune and have the power of leading the Knight back to life.

7. The Eulogy of Blanche

In creating the portrait of Blanche, Chaucer once again calls upon courtly convention to convey deeper philosophical intentions. Chaucer's problem was to devise a positive image adequate to the Man in Black's grief and yet invested with inspirational qualities powerful enough to counter-balance the darker elements in the poem. He, therefore, required an idealized rather than personal portrait such as

could be found in the courtly ideal of womanhood which Speirs has called, "the most exalted earthly (as distinguished from heavenly) idea, a devotion to which made life courteous, gracious, and serene."[33] Formulas for the portrayal of the courtly lady were set down by rhetoricians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Geoffrey de Vinsauf's Poetria nova (1.563 ff.), for example, contained a model for such a descriptio which was probably familiar to Chaucer.[34] Traditionally, the descriptio consisted of a catalogue of facial and bodily beauty proceeding from the hair down to the toes, followed by a description of jewelry and attire. In search of a spiritual dimension to this portrait, Chaucer looked to contemporary applications of Vinsauf's formula by Machaut. While Machaut's Behaingne (11. 302-383) provided Chaucer with many of the phrases used in Blanche's physical description, his Remede de Fortune (11. 252-352) offered balancing attributes of character. By alternating physical with character description, Chaucer achieved the dignity and historical richness of convention while capturing a fresh, personal quality that escaped stereotype.[35]

Chaucer further broke the monotony of the conventional catalogue by interrupting the Knight's extended eulogy with the Dreamer's comments and by portraying the Knight as a man struggling to recreate a recollection. At times, the Knight

seems to be searching for the precise words, as when describing the color of Blanche's hair. At other times, he finds he lacks all words, as when he omits the description of Blanche's face. This use of correctio and protestation of inadequacy are themselves conventions,[36] but in Chaucer's context they seem to arise out of the pressures of the situation to give what Kittredge called, "the impression of artless recollection . . . the order of spasmodic thoughts."[37] Even the Knight's hyperboles which project Blanche as a nonpareil are defended before the Dreamer who innocently suggests the personal bias of the praiser. In response to the Dreamer's "yow thoghte that she was the beste," he retorts, "alle that hir seyen/ Seyde and sworen hyt was soo" (ll. 1049,1052-53).

While admitting the verisimilitude of personal recollection and the possible identification with the historical Blanche of Lancaster, Chaucer moves his portrait toward idealization, even apotheosis as Wimsatt has claimed.[38] What begins as analogy to Boethius' remembered joy becomes the symbol of all joy, beauty, and goodness. This treatment of Blanche fits with the dream process of meaning in which opposing images rather than rational argument carry on debate. In the alignment contrasting consolation with death, she takes her place with the harmonious art of birdsong, the lively ritual of the hunt, and the gentle, restorative beauty of the garden. These elements

counterbalance the "sorwful ymagynacioun" of the Narrator, the darkness and stagnation of Morpheus' cave, and the longing for death of the Black Knight. Even the characters' names seem to carry the essence of the opposition: The Man in Black is the personification of sorrow, while White is the image of light, beauty, joy and goodness.

Chaucer achieves this stature for White by playing upon the connotations of white and light with which she is associated, by depicting her as a nonpareil, and by choosing courtly phrases which have biblical analogues. Whiteness of skin, although a conventional sign of physical beauty in medieval love poetry, has moral connotations of purity and goodnesss. It also has connections with brightness and light which Chaucer emphasizes through the Knight's repeated references to his "lady bryght" (l.477, 1180) and his remark on the appropriateness of her name:

> 'And goode faire White she het;
> That was my lady name ryght.
> She was bothe fair and bryght;
> She hadde not hir name wrong.'
> (ll. 948-951

She is a nonpareil among nonpareils, for when the Knight first sees her amidst "the fayrest companye/ Of ladyes that evere man with ye/ Had seen togedres in oo place" (ll. 807-809), she outshines them all:

> '. . . as the someres sonne bryght
> Ys fairer, clerer, and hath more lyght
> Than any other planete in heven,
> The moone, or the sterres seven,
> For al the world so hadde she

Surmounted hem alle of beaute.'
(ll. 821-826)

Though the same comparison is found in Machaut's Behaingne, Wimsatt shows that similar astronomical images were used in a well-known fourteenth-century hymn on the nativity of the Blessed Virgin.[38] This celestial allusion gains strength when grouped with other phrases associating White with Mary's "candor" or brightness. The Knight recalls:

'. . . she was lyk to torche bryght
That every man may take of lyght
Ynogh, and hyt hath never the lesse.'
(ll. 963-965)

Like Mary who is the "speculum . . . et imago bonitatis" (Wisdom 7:26), she was "A chef myrour of al the feste" (l. 974). As Mary was chosen over all to be the "maner" or house of Christ, the source of truth, the Knight says of White:

'And I dar seyn and swere hyt wel--
That Trouthe hymself, over al and al
Had chose hys maner principal
In hir, that was his restyng place.'
(ll. 1002-1005)

Other praises of White, though appearing in the courtly descriptions of Machaut, have associations with the sponsa of the Canticle of Canticles. The Knight describes his lady's complexion as "whit, rody, fressh and lyvely hewed" (l. 905). While a similar phrase can be found in Behaingne (ll. 356-358), its original source is probably Canticles 5:10 (Wycliffe translation), "My derling is whyt and rodi; chosen of thousandys."[41]

The Canticle again echoes in the description of the lady's neck as "whit, smothe, streght and pure . . . a round tour of yvorye" (l. 942, 946). With these biblical connections, White achieves a heavenly dimension and the associated power to comfort and inspire man. Her generosity which in her earthly life caused her to love "goode folk . . . as man may do hys brother" (ll. 891-893), to speak with truth (l. 930), and to do no wrong to any man (l. 1015), can remain after death as a sustaining image of light and goodness, a "torche bryghte" to those who loved her.

Chaucer, however, does not state this consolation directly and the Knight certainly does not see it. Even the memory of their perfect joy (ll. 1286-91) does not comfort him in his present woeful state. He can only recall his lady's sustaining power during her life:

> For certes she was, that swete wif,
> My suffisaunce, my lust, my lyf,
> Myn hap, myn hele, and al my blesse,
> My worldes welfare, and my goddesse
> (ll. 1037-1040)

His praise reminds us of Ceys' reference to Alcione as "My worldes blysse!" and his advice to "Awake! let be your sorwful lyf!" Even the Knight's account of his courtship, a courtly love miniature of the elegy which is its frame, does not strike him as analogous to the present situation. The Knight remembers the "woo" and "sorwe" he suffered for love, his longing to declare himself, his conviction that he would die if he kept silent, and his fear of his lady's rejection.

When she relents and bestows "the noble yifte of hir mercy" (l. 1270), the effect is miraculous: "As helpe me God, I was as blyve/ Reysed, as fro deth to lyve" (ll. 1277-78). By analogy, Chaucer implies, White's beauty and perfect love can, even in death have merciful power to soothe the Knight's suffering and awaken him to life.

At the moment when the Knight's blissful recollections soar to a vision of the lovers' perfect union, he is brought abruptly back to reality by the Dreamer's naive question, "Sir, . . . where is she now?" Suddenly the image of past joy succumbs to present sorrow and he reverts to the exact words of his earlier plaint, "Allas, that I was bore! . . . I have lost more than thow wenest." The effort to find consolation in joyful memory has only brought a rejection of consolation and an overpowering sense of loss. The reversion recalls Boethius' position (ii, iv) when he reasserted his unhappiness following Lady Philosophy's lyric on the transitory nature of all things (II, ii). In Boethius' case, this momentary setback precedes the casting off of lethargy and the renewed readiness to receive Philosophy's stronger medicines.

Chaucer, however, chooses this point to expand on the Boethian implication of a gap between rational argument and the human attachment to earthly things which interferes with the acceptance of the true consolation. Although Chaucer does not take the Man in Black any further toward psychic

regeneration, he suggests by his parallelism to the Consolation the possibility of finding comfort in the Boethian view. Since virtue emanates from God and cannot perish, than the virtues the Knight has praised in Blanche will not be claimed by Fortune, but will remain as an inspiration. Because Chaucer does not want to minimize the loss of Blanche by too hasty consolation, in the end, he sets the elements of the dialectic side by side for the reader and Dreamer to reconcile. The Knight states simply and powerfully, "She ys ded!" and the Dreamer responds with sincere pity, "Is that youre los? Be God hyt ys routhe!" With these words the hunters "gan to strake forth" and the "hert-huntyng" is done. The opposing elements of grief and consolation are followed by a renewal of activity implying an awakening from lethargy and a return to life. As John Lawlor puts it,

> we have both a consolation and a rejection of it--but not before it has done its work. Neither invalidates the other; consolation does not cancel pity, nor pity render consolation void.[42]

The open-endedness of the dialogue's conclusion returns us to Chaucer's use of realistic dream structure in problem-solving. The issues have be argued by a balanced opposition of condensed images rather than by rhetorical dialectic. In this regard, even the dialogue has served as a generator of philosophically relevant images which the reader must decode and organize to arrive at meaning. The

cue to problem-solving arises from the Narrator's suffering and inertia which seems to demand relief, and from the transposition of elements from the Narrator's waking world to the free imaginary context of the dream. As the Narrator's love deprivation and Alcione's grief become projected onto the mourning Black Knight, and as the sterile, dark cave of Morpheus blossoms into a romance garden, we are driven to find a consolatory meaning to carry out of the dream. The praise and complaint of courtly love has become fused with the eulogy and lament of the elegy; the love disputes of the courts of love have become blended with the Boethian dialogue of consolation. In this way, the dream's atmosphere of free association has operated analogously to the conditions of poetic creation. In fact, as the poet awakes, he decides to "put this sweven in ryme," thereby reversing the process which began the dream. Whereas a book, the "romance" of Ceys and Alcione, has led to his vision, now the vision will lead to a book, as the Narrator tries to set his dream to poetry. Thus, in the end, the poet is less interested in providing a single, clear answer to his dilemma than in balancing the complex elements of the problem for our consideration.

CHAPTER V

THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS

1. The Critical Response

In the Parliament of Fowls we see the culmination of Chaucer's use of the allegorical dream poem for philosophical problem-solving. Like the Book of the Duchess, this later dream poem has perplexed critics with its puzzling contradictions. Commentators, observing the disjunction between the opening summary of the Somnium Scipionis and the dream vision which follows, have concluded that the Parliament lacks artistic unity. Tatlock, for example, sees the whole Scipio sequence as irrelevant, catering to the medieval taste for classical references.[1] Root calls the section "creaky machinery."[2] James Winney, noting the Somnium's marked contrast in attitude and purpose to the dream of the garden, has labelled it as "something of a red herring" with no bearing on the vital interests of the rest of the poem.[3] Other critics such as Bertrand Bronson have sought to explain the apparently incongruous elements by invoking the "topsy-turvy logic of dreams." Bronson also notes a delicate irony of tone which acts as a unifying force in the poem.[4] Lumiansky similarly supports the Parliament's unity, but locates it in a thematic reconciliation of "true and false felicity."[5]

In the last twenty years, however, critics have returned to an emphasis on the poem's contradictory qualities, justifying their observations by referring to the medieval preference for balancing irreconcilables in a harmonious package. McCall, for example, in his 1970 article on the Parliament, notes the misguidedness of criticism which expects a poem to follow a linear unity leading to a hidden answer. He concludes that "what the Parliament abundantly depicts is an interweaving of conflicting elements that are held together in concord and balance."[6] H. M. Leicester disagrees that discordia inevitably leads to concours. In his opinion, the poet's project to read a unity into his experience on the basis of the authoritative wisdom in the Somnium, ends in failure. Instead, the poem becomes "a kind of late medieval and secular sic et non exacerbated."[7] James J. Wilhelm concurs that "no questions are answered in the poem, and no problems are solved. . . In essence the poem is as enigmatic as its theme: love."[8] In the same vein, Larry Sklute asserts that "the form of the Parliament of Fowls, offers inconclusion as its own poetic principle . . . .Its parts [are] conceived to function in an indeterminate way and to suggest an indeterminacy of meaning." Any attempt to escape this inconclusiveness is "strongly motivated by our modern need to find a thematic and structural unity in poetry."[9]

Again we are faced with a controversy between critics who complain of the confusing or meaningless disjunctions in the text and critics who confirm the poem's balance of contradictions as a medieval trait. Considering what we have learned about the evolution of philosophical poetry and about the distinctiveness of Chaucer's use of the dream genre, we can approach the Parliament of Fowls with fresh insight. Because Chaucer's Parliament deals with a theme common to earlier dream visions, that of love's role in Nature's plan, it provides an especially clear case of the contrast between Chaucer's use of the dream poem and that of his predecessors. As we have seen, earlier writers such as Alain de Lille, Guillaume de Lorris, and Jean de Meun, communicated their significance through allegorical dialogue, narrative fable, or dialectical "gloss." Though Chaucer was willing to adopt their ideological content, he chose to reshape their poetic means of expression into a new literary form modelled on the associative structure of actual dreams. In dreams, ideas are presented through visual images rather than through dialogue; each image contains a highly "condensed" reservoir of associations, and the image's meaning is obtained primarily through its metonymic relation to other images in context rather than metaphorically to a single external equivalence. Chaucer recognized that if the poetic solutions of earlier writers were reorganized in a pattern consistent with actual dream experience, a more

effective form for philosophical inquiry would result. By this reasoning, the didactic discourse of Alain's personified Nature, or the rich ideological dialectic of Jean's various counsellors against Reason could be communicated implicitly through the significant juxtaposition of visualized figures and landscapes. These elements, in turn, could be assembled in a poetic dream fable similar to Guillaume's.

The critical disagreement over the Parliament, therefore, derives in large part from the poem's superficial resemblance to previous dream poems and its refusal to behave accordingly. Rather than invoke the dream as merely an entertaining setting in which characters articulate ideas contributing to a preestablished significance, Chaucer used the problem-solving potential of actual dreams to create an imaginative structure in which the thoughts, memories, and late-night reading of the waking narrator would resurface as part of the figurative material of a visionary narrative. Although any one of the philosophical positions implied by Chaucer's poem--the "commune profyt" of Scipio's dream, the "dredful joye" of courtly love, the "cast and mesure" of Nature's garden, could have supplied the significance for an allegorical poem, by juxtaposing these themes without logical connection, Chaucer forces us to find a deeper harmony that will balance the various ideological viewpoints. Let us now approach the Parliament with a methodology simi-

lar to that used for the Book of the Duchess. We will examine each image cluster for its range of associative meaning before connecting it to other images and finally to a comprehensive significance for the poem.

2. The Narrator's Distress

In the opening section of the Parliament, Chaucer establishes the poet's disturbed state of mind and his quest for a solution in a manner which recalls the poet's distress initiating other dream visions such as Boethius' Consolation and Alain de Lille's Complaint of Nature. The first line, a paraphrase of Hippocrates' ars longa, vita brevis, follows the rhetorical convention of beginning a poem with a sententia.[10] Chaucer's paraphrase, however, which goes on for three lines without mentioning its object, thrusts this authoritative statement into a position of ambiguity: Does he mean art (poetry), or love, or even the quest for truth? We know only it involves:

> The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,
> Th'assay so hard, so sharp the conquerynge
> The dredful joye, alwey that slit so yerne (ll. 1-3)

At line four the poet states, "Al this mene I by Love" and we think immediately of the tradition of courtly love which inspired similar dream poems from the Roman de la Rose to the works of Machaut. By reorienting this sententia

at the beginning of the poem, Chaucer initiates a motif of ambivalence towards authority and asserts his commitment to recast all previous truths into his own vision. The striking oxymoron, "dredful joye," (l. 3) which is the keynote for the pervasive antinomies to follow, links the opening lines to their context in the Roman de la Rose where a similar contradiction serves as Reason's warning to the lover:

> The peyne is hard, out of mesure;
> The joye may eke no while endure;
> And in the possessioun
> Is myche tribulacioun
> The joye it is so short lastyng,
> And but in hap is the getying.
> (Romaunt, ll. 3279-84)

Chaucer's phrase also echoes the oxymorons used by Nature in the Complaint of Nature to define love's role in the universe:

> Love is peace joined with hatred, faith with fraud, hope with fear, and fury mixed with reason . . . deceptive delight, glad sorrow, joy full of pains, sweet evil, evil sweetness, pleasure bitter to itself
> (Metre V, 1-7)

The allusive density of the opening lines shows that even in the waking portion of the poem, Chaucer uses the dream's capacity for activating large areas of cultural experience by combining compressed imagery.

The emphatic contrasts (ll.1-3) between the brevity of love's pleasures, and the length of its pain, between the difficulty of the task and the shortness of life, implies an

eternal dimension where personal preoccupations take their proper perspective. Though the poet is astonished (l. 5) with the wonderful workings of love, and though he himself lacks any practical experience ("I know nat Love in dede"), he knows enough from books of love's "myrakles and his crewel yre" to be perplexed about love's place in the larger order of things. It is this uncertainty which drives him to his familiar resource--books--in search of "a certeyn thing to lerne" (l. 20). The books represent something "olde," a trustworthy authority tested by time against the instabilities of personal perspective. The poet makes it clear, however, that the use of "olde" is to get something "newe" in a kind of natural transformation of elements:

> For out of olde feldes,as men seyth,
> Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere,
> And out of olde bokes, in good feyth,
> Cometh al this newe science that men lere. (ll. 22-25)

Surprisingly, for all his concern about love, the book he chooses is not a romance, but the serious moral and philosophical work, "Tullyus of the Drem of Scipioun" which deals with the whole universe "of hevene and helle/ And erthe, and soules that therinne dwelle" (ll. 32-33). Again we are thrown from the context of courtly love into the perspective of man's place in a universal order. Chaucer's first attempt, therefore, to solve the problem of love will

be his reference to an authoritative dream-vision preserved in the Commentary of Macrobius.

3. Contrasting Dream Classifications

Chaucer's introduction of the prophetic dream of Scipio as his bedtime reading sets up an implied contrast between the authoritative oraculum of which it is an example, and Chaucer's imaginative, associative insomnium to follow. By juxtaposing two dreams--one an oracular dream that imposes absolute truth from an outside authority, the other a personal, psychological dream which uses inner resources to rearrange elements of mind into new insights, Chaucer contrasts two medieval approaches to a dilemma: one rational and authoritative; the other, intuitive and imaginative. The contrasting characteristics of the two dreams function analogously to two types of poetic dream vision. The first, used by Boethius, Jean de Meun, and Alain de Lille, employs dialogue and the pronouncements of an authoritative figure such as Nature or Philosophy to impart an already formulated knowledge to the dreamer. The other, modelled by Chaucer on the realistic workings of dreams, gives form to conflicting emotion by compressing and arranging archetypal and mythic images into a new apprehension of truth. While the authoritative dream incorporates its own explanation, Chaucer's dream contains

no direct comment or interpretation. We are left to use intuition to replicate the visionary experience in ourselves as a way of grasping its message. The solution to the indeterminacy of the Parliament must come, therefore, in understanding the language of the two dreams and the diverse methods of problem-solving they represent.

In his Commentary on the Dream of Scipio Macrobius discusses Scipio's dream, a vision appearing at the end of Cicero's De re publica describing rewards to those who helped the state. Macrobius, seeking to justify Cicero's use of a potentially unreliable dream to communicate weighty subject matter, praised dreams which supplied prophecy through the intervention of a divine authority and rejected as worthless dreams arising from natural causes such as physical or mental distress. According to his classifications, Scipio's dream is found to fit all three of his reliable categories as well as five sub-categories of the enigmatic dream (III, 12). It is suitably oracular in that the dreamer is informed by a guide or spiritual instructor and does not himself see future events. It is also a visio in that the events actually come true. Actually the dismissal of natural causes of the dream is not consistent with Cicero's text in which Scipio comments on the effects of the day's preoccupations in producing his night-

time vision of Africanus: "I believe our discussion was responsible for this, for it frequently happens that our thoughts and conversations react upon us in dreams . . . ." (I, 4).

In contrast to Macrobius, Chaucer is far more interested in the "unreliable" categories of _insomnium_ or _visum_ in which the preoccupations of the dreamer play a role. To the extent that dreams are in some way culture-determined, the _Somnium Scipionis_ is associated with a patriarchal, authoritarian society in which a respected ancestor or god imparts knowledge. Though this classical model survived into the Middle Ages, the emergence in Chaucer's day of a more pluralistic society (exemplified by the "parlement" itself) produced a different attitude toward the dream. As Spearing observes in relation to Froissart's _Paradys d'Amours_ and Chaucer's _Book of the Duchess_, Chaucer is consistent with late fourteenth century alterations in the dream convention:

> This movement towards a kind of realism . . . is of great importance for the development of the dream-poem, involving a new interest in the realities of sleep and dreaming, in the poet-dreamer's real life, and in his personality and social status.[12]

The _Somnium's_ claim to authority based on its reported visitation of an otherworldly intelligence, its classical credentials, and its preservation in the _Commentary_ of

Macrobius makes it a respected source of truth for a medieval audience. Chaucer's personal dream, however, represents a break from tradition. Arising from the particular sources of his own psychic turmoil--his search for "a thyng"--it offers a less universally accepted source of knowledge. One of Chaucer's tasks in the poem is to demonstrate that, in contrast to the oraculum, the realistic dream is more satisfying because it involves the dreamer and the reader in a reintegrating experience which transforms their perception of reality.

Chaucer's summary of the Somnium Scipionis in the waking frame of the Parliament provides a significant vantage point for the poet's vision of Nature's garden. He recounts how Scipio, when visiting Massinissa in 150 B. C., had spent the day talking of the elder Scipio Africanus, and then later that night had experienced a dream of his illustrious ancestor. Africanus' message from beyond the earth informs Scipio that if he loves "commune profyt," he will be rewarded by going to a "blysful place" where "there as joye is that last withouten ende" (l. 49). Since this promise is clearly more appealing than love's "dredful joye, alwey that slit so yerne," we begin to understand why the poet chose this book. Scipio then inquires about life beyond death and is transported by Africanus through the galaxy to the region of the nine heavenly spheres. Africanus' celestial perspec-

tive views the earth from the reverse end of a telescope: Compared to heaven's vastness he sees a "lytel erthe" where transient human life "nis but a maner deth" (l. 54), "ful of torment and of harde grace" (l.65). He advises Scipio that "he ne shulde hym in the world delyte" (l. 66). The contemptus mundi of Africanus' appeal is consistent with Cicero's version. There, Africanus describes men who have passed beyond earthly life as having "flown from the bonds of their bodies as from a prison." They have learned that what we regard as life is "really death" (III, 2).[13] Cicero's Africanus repeatedly chides the younger Scipio to cease turning his eyes back to earth which seems to him "so small" that the entire Roman Empire is "but a point on its surface" (III, 7). Africanus suggests, "Why not fix your attention upon the heavens and contemn what is mortal?" (VI, 10) "If you will look upwards and contemplate the eternal abodes, you will no longer give heed to the gossip of the common herd, nor look for your reward in human things" (VII, 5). Africanus' perspective recalls the message of the myth of Orpheus in the Consolation and the advice of Lady Philosophy to Boethius to rely on the eternal wisdom provided by reason, rather than on the confusing impressions of earthly experience.

Chaucer's fascination with Scipio's vision prompts him to use it again at the end of Troilus and Criseyde when

Troilus, after suffering the "dredful joye" of courtly love, is whisked up in death to the eighth sphere to view with amusement, "This litel spot of erthe." From his heavenly perspective he, like Africanus, condemned

> This wrecched world, and held al vanite
> To respect of the pleyn felicite
> That is in hevene above. (Troilus, V, 1817-19)

Since earthly pursuits are "blynde lust" which cannot last, we should cast our hearts on heaven. The poet agrees, advising lovers to turn their face to God and love Him, "the which that right for love/ Upon a crois, oure soules for to beye,/ First starf . . . For he nyl falsen no wight" (V, 1842-45).

The condemnation of earthly love in the face of the eternal reality of heavenly love may be fit conclusion for a lover's tragedy, but it seems prematurely transcendent and conclusive coming at the beginning of a poem where the poet acknowledges both miraculous and cruel aspects of love and seeks to find a place for it "in this world here." Furthermore, there seems to be a contradiction in Africanus' reiterated praise of "commune profyt" (l. 47, 75) and his advice to find no "delyt" in this world, to put it "out of mynde." As we shall see in the dream of the garden, Chaucer's delight in the abundance and diversity of earthly life would demand its being considered in an acceptible solution to the meaning of love. Finally, Africanus'

attitude toward love seems simplistically black and white: The good (those who work for the "commune profyt") go to a place of "blysse"

> But brekers of the lawe, soth to seyne,
> And likerous folk, after that they ben dede,
> Shul whirle aboute th'erthe alwey in peyne,
> Tyl many a world be passed (ll. 78-81)

The poet's response to Cicero's prophetic oraculum is a discouraging lack of illumination. His mind remains in darkness as night "berafte" him of his book "for lak of lyght" (l. 87). Though the Somnium has provided a clear answer from an outside authority, it has failed to engage the elements of the poet's own imagination: "For bothe I hadde thyng which that I nolde,/ And ek I nadde that thyng that I wolde" (ll. 90-91). These lines expressing dissatisfaction with the formulated truths of authority echo the passage in Boethius' Consolation where Lady Philosophy leads the poet to see the inadequacy of riches:

> 'And was nat that," quod sche,' for that the lakkide somwhat that thow woldest nat han lakkid, or elles thou haddest that thow noldest nat han had?' (Boece, III, 3, 32-35).[14]

Boethius' felt insufficiency even though he was supplied with wealth is an apt metaphor for the discrepancy he feels at times between the rich resource of Lady Philosophy's explanations of universal order and the actuality of present suffering. In the Parliament, Chaucer similarly feels a painful lack even though he has had a view of all the universe from the authority of the Somnium. In Lady

Philosophy's words, "rychesses, that men wenen scholde maken suffisaunce, they maken a man rather have nede of foreyn help (Boece, III, 3, 80). Chaucer, therefore, must not rely on outside help, but arrive at his own insight to solve his dilemma.

As Chaucer organizes the transition into his own dream he gives us clear signs that is to be a somnium animale and not an oraculum. His psychic turmoil upon retiring makes him fit candidate for dreams resulting from disturbances of mind. Immediately upon falling asleep he envisions "Affrican" dressed in the same array as when he appeared to Scipio in the poet's reading of the day before. Not able to quote Freud's dictum that "in every dream it is possible to find a point of contact with the experiences of the previous day,"[15] Chaucer refers instead a passage translated from Claudian (11. 99-105) with the same intent. He then concludes:

> Can I not seyn if that the cause were
> For I hadde red of Affrican byforn,
> That made me to mete that he stod
> there (11. 106-108)

Though this seems clear, Africanus himself sets up an ambiguity. He is, after all, a respected figure whose visit to the dreamer could imply an oraculum as it did for Scipio. In Africanus' words, he is there to "quyte" the poet's labour in so patiently reading Macrobius' book.

Africanus' intervention recalls the illustrous eagle that comes as Jupiter's emissary in the House of Fame to provide "som reccompensacioun" for Chaucer's long poetic labours in service of love. Africanus' presence, therefore, has a multiple function. It supplies proof, on the one hand, of the dream's motivation in the problems of the previous day and, as such, provides a link to the ideal vision of Scipio's dream. On the other, Africanus' appearance implies it is a prophetic dream brought by a respected authority to reveal truth to the dreamer. The ambiguity allows Chaucer to pursue his personal vision while maintaining the aura of authority usually granted to "respectable" oracular dreams.

4. The Invocation of Venus

After the commencement of the dream, Chaucer makes his invocation to Venus who is both "blysful lady swete" and awesome wielder of the deadly "fyrbrond" of passion. The duality of the figure of Venus looks back to the "dredful joye" of the first stanza, and forward to the contradictions of love announced at the gates to the garden. Chaucer's ambiguous attitude, however, is centered not only on Venus as a symbol of love, but on her status as authority and muse. When he invokes Venus whom he claims "made me this sweven for to mete" (l. 115), Chaucer suggests the dual

possibilities that Venus sent the dream, just as Juno had Morpheus send a dream to Alcione in the Book of the Duchess, or that the dream arose from the internal source of the poet's distress. Since Chaucer wants to raise the personal dream to the status of revealer of truth enjoyed by the old, authoritative dream, he must imply that if Venus "made" him dream, it was not through outside intervention, but through the inward process of the poet's preoccupation with love leading to a dream about love.

In his request to Venus as muse to "yif me myght to ryme and ek t'endyte" (l. 119), Chaucer makes the connection between the status of the dream and the status of his poetic creation. As the individual's dream arising from the preoccupations of the day is counted meaningless in contrast with the oracular dream, so the poet's personal fantasy or invention is counted as less endowed with truth than inspired writing resulting from the outside agency of a muse or classic deity. This questioning of the reliability of poetry as a source of knowledge reflects the ancient preference for philosophy over poetry expressed in works familiar to Chaucer. Lady Philosophy in Boethius' Consolation banishes the Muses of poetry from the bedside of the dreamer, declaring, "These are the very women who kill the rich and fruitful harvest of Reason with the barren thorns of Passion" (I, i). Likewise, in Alain's Complaint

of Nature, Nature reprimands the dreamer for his gullibility in accepting the "dreamy fancies of the poets" (IV, 197) rather than the saner truths of philosophy. In these earlier works, the poem functioned either as Boethius' decorative coating for ideas or as Alain's means for expressing the inexpressible. Chaucer, on the other hand, is attempting to reaffirm poetry's role in exploring truths by bolstering the worth of his own inspiration.

Chaucer's invocation to Venus acknowledges his need to certify his poetic credentials, but it is less than a respectful plea. His claim in the much disputed line that he sees Venus "north northwest" could be interpreted idiomatically as "hardly at all," producing the ironic effect that Bertrand Bronson noted.[16] It could, however, be an astrological reference playing on the fact that the planet is never seen exactly in that position.[17] This latter sense could imply that his poem will view Venus in a new perspective and that, furthermore, he will accomplish his task through the indirections of imaginative poetry, rather than through the certainties of philosophy encased in decorative verse.

Chaucer, then, is presenting a somnium animale with a touch of the dignity of the somnium coeleste. His choice allows him to work within the conventions of the Old French dream vision while constructing his poem according

the laws of a more realistic dream psychology. Although as early as 1915 Kittredge recognized Chaucer's progress beyond the static fairyland of previous dream poems toward a new verisimilitude of dreams,[18] he drew his examples primarily from the Book of the Duchess. When confronted with the same materials in the Parliament of Fowls, however, he considered the connection between the poem and the dream form as "imaginatively less close and rather more mechanical" than in Chaucer's earlier poem.[19] Walter Clyde Curry agreed, claiming that the "poet's mind was still absorbing poorly assimilated knowledge largely for its own sake" and that he seemed to "lack that discriminating selection of material" directed to a unified artistic purpose. Though Curry conceded that the dream's motivation seemed creditable, he added, "there is very little dream-psychology in the narrative proper."[20]

As an antidote to these views, it seems worthwhile, as we enter the garden, to notice how Chaucer creates an intuitive understanding of his themes by cleverly organizing the materials of his poetic dream according to principles that have, in fact, proved consistent with modern dream psychology as described by Freud. Freud recognized the long history of dream theory and conceded the poet's grasp of how ideas present themselves in dreams.[21] His modern con-

ception of "dream-work, the way dreams translate the "latent content" of dream thoughts into the symbols and expressions of a "manifest content," may be a key to reading the highly condensed, juxtaposed images in the Parliament which have been previously judged as lacking artistic integration.

5. Africanus: the Poet's Guide

When Africanus makes his unlikely appearance as spiritual guide, we notice that his character serves a purpose in the poem consistent with Freud's concept of "condensation" in which many ideas are fused into a single image.[22] It is ironic, first of all, that the same Africanus who, as moral authority of the Somnium, condemned lovers to "whirle about th'erthe alwey in peyne," is now chosen to conduct the poet to the gates of the garden of love. It is also ironic that Africanus' office in this respect clearly recalls Virgil's role toward Dante in the Divine Comedy. In Dante's poem, however, the gates were the gates of hell. Incongruously, Virgil was a gentle, dignified guide while Africanus is physically abrupt (ll. 120, 154), addresses the dreamer with amused disrespect, and even questions his abilities as a poet. In surprising contrast to his prototype in Scipio's dream, Africanus resorts to the language of the marketplace (ll. 162-168) to assure Chaucer that his inexperience in love does not disqualify him from being an observer.

It is significant, furthermore, that Africanus, embodying as he does the otherworldly ideals of the poet's earlier reading, seems to disappear from the poem at the entrance to the earthly paradise. Some critics have praised this as part of the dream verisimilitude similar to the appearance and disappearance of Octavian's hunting party in the Book of the Duchess. Chaucer, however, is writing a poetic dream whose purpose is to reach new understanding through imaginative integration of elements. It can be assured, therefore, that every concrete image has a meaning in the dream's economy. Africanus' action in grabbing the poet and shoving him through the gates of love may be analogous to the Eagle's seizing of Chaucer in the House of Fame (ll. 541-555). Despite the poet's dread and astonishment, the Eagle transports his charge with irresistible energy from his hermit-like world of books to a new domain. Both guides are vehicles similar to the poetic inspiration. As the Eagle abandons the dreamer before his promised revelation, so Africanus can lead Chaucer only to the threshold of his visionary experience.[24] Africanus' authority belongs with the oracular dream. Chaucer's dream, arising from his individual psychology, demands that the dreamer provide his own interpretation of what he observes. Africanus does, however, take the poet's hand "of which [he] confort caughte" (170), possibly implying that the vision he

represents might be of some help in the apparently contradictory realm the poet is to enter.

6. The Double Gates: Entry into the Garden

The garden's double gates similarly constitute a condensation of ideas and images. Most obviously they echo the inscribed gates at the entrance to Hell in the Divine Comedy. They also recall Chaucer's reading of Macrobius' Commentary which cites Virgil's description of the twin portals of dreams, the gate of ivory for false dreams and the gate of horn for trustworthy ones (III, 19-20). Their inscriptions, one inviting, the other repellent, return us to the poet's distress over the "dredful joye" of love that precipitated the dream. Once again we undergo the psychological paralysis of the first stanza when the poet claimed, "So sore, iwis, that whan I on hym thynke,/ Nat wot I wel wher that I flete or synke" (ll. 6-7). Before the twin gates of bliss and dread, the poet complains, "No wit hadde I, for errour, for to chese,/ To entre or flen, or me to save or lese" (ll. 146-47). The inscriptions themselves contain suggestions of literary sources that prepare for the oppositions to be met in the garden. The first promises a "blysful place," (l.127) an earthly version of the "blysful place" (ll. 48, 76-77, 83) promised three times in Scipio's dream. As an entrance to the "welle of grace," it is a pathway to heavenly love,

where the joys of "grene and lusty May" exist eternally. In this promise we are reminded of the "Fountain of Life" and the everlasting Spring of the Shepherd's Park in the Roman de la Rose (ll. 20279-20682) where lovers who follow Nature's plan are rewarded with eternal happiness. We are further reminded of Scipio's promised reward for a life devoted to common profit: "He shulde into a blysful place wende,/ There as joye is that last withouten ende" (ll. 48-49). The second gate evokes the atmosphere of courtly love with its personifications of "Disdayn and Daunger," emblems of rejected or unsatisfied love in the Roman de la Rose. This gate promises the "mortal stroke," the sterility of fruitless trees, the dryness of the fish trapped in the "sorweful were." Its admonition recalls Reason's advice to the impassioned lover: "Th'eschewing is the only remedye!" Thus in a few dense lines Chaucer opposes the terms of natural love and courtly love which he will now expand in the landscape imagery of the garden.

Though the dreamer is unable to solve his impasse by rational deliberation and must be "shof in at the gates" by Africanus, once inside he is pleased with the view. The garden he discovers exactly fits the description of the joyful gate and disproves the forebodings of the bad. The trees are covered with leaves that shall always last, the life-promising color of green is everywhere, the river

abounds with living fish, and gentle breezes stir the temperate air. Chaucer, as enthusiastic observer, notes with loving detail the creatures of the natural world: the "smale fishes lighte,/ With fynnes rede and skales sylver bryghte" (ll. 188-89), the "litel conyes," and "bestes smale of gentil kynde" (l. 196). The garden's imagery, therefore, is the perfect fusion of the heavenly "blysful place" of endless joy in the Somnium with the conventional delights of the earthly paradise from courtly love poetry, and the realistic details of the actual English countryside. In the garden, the heavenly harmony of the spheres translates to the earthly harmony of birds that sing "with voys of aungel in here armonye" (l. 191).

The dream elements which critics have cited as poorly assimilated conventions included by Chaucer to flatter audience expectations thus actually assume an important signifying role within the verisimilitude of the dream. The catalogue of trees, for instance, a convention going back to Ovid and reappearing in Chaucer's day in Boccaccio's Teseida,[25] seems at first glance decorative and extraneous, but actually is a microcosmic reflection of the themes of the poem. In terms of dream realism, the obvious literary borrowing in this and many other passages provides the imagery we would expect to stock a mind little endowed with practical experience, but rich in reading. As the poet

has told us four times, he habitually reads "what for lust and what for lore" and often spends "the long day ful faste" immersed in books. Since Chaucer's invented dream-vision transposes the personal dream into broader cultural terms, his literary references serve to replace a private personal imagery with forms of a more archetypal or mythic potential. The dream, in this respect, operates more in Jungian terms as a manipulation of archetypes to reveal unconscious truths, than according to the Freudian model as a camouflage for ideas too painful to be perceived directly.[28] When Chaucer includes the catalogue of trees, therefore, he gains additional meaning by referring every tree to the services its wood performs. This device not only binds nature to the world of man, but indicates, as McCall has observed, the full range of activities from birth to death, from joy to pain.[27] Everything has a place in God's universe. This sense of plenitude is carried into the poet's description of the flowers, animals, and finally into the lengthy roll call of the bird parliament. The strongly visual quality and the loving attention to detail express the poet's personal "delyt" in "this worlde here" which sharply contrasts with the concept of "lytel erthe" in the ideal vision of Africanus. Yet, despite his joy in the wonderful multiplicity of life on earth, Chaucer never forgets the divine connection--"That God, . . . makere is of al and lord" (l. 199).

7. Venus and Nature

Chaucer's use of realistic dream-work to condense and juxtapose visual images allows a far more powerful and economical expression of philosophical issues than was achieved in the dialogue of earlier dream visions. By opposing the two impressive female figures of Venus and Nature, one a classical goddess transposed into the courtly love tradition, the other an awesome personification borrowed from Alain de Lille, Chaucer is able to give visual representation to the unformulated distress at the beginning of the poem. Each persona is placed in its corresponding setting, a richly condensed tapestry of ideas appropriate to her station: Venus is given her Temple; Nature, her garden and parliament. The two settings comprise a landscape which in "hieroglyphic" form expresses the dream's latent content.

Although we are reminded of Jean de Meun's contrast of the garden of Sir Mirth with the Shepherd's Park (ll. 20279 ff.) in the Roman de la Rose, there is a fundamental difference. Jean's contrasting environments are created almost entirely by rhetorical statement delivered through the mouth of Genius at the end of the poem. According to Genius, lovers bound to sensual passion rather than to Nature's order for love would inherit a garden of decorative trifles, all of which are "corrompable" (l. 20354) as opposed to the "pardurable" (l.20384) or everlasting

beauties of the Shepherd's Park. Their reward would be the fountain of Narcissus ("la fontaine perilleuse," l. 20409 ff.) rather than the unfailing fountain of life (l.20387 ff.) which flows from a triple source and brings knowledge and salvation rather than illusion and death. In place of Jean's rhetorical opposition, Chaucer uses a significant placement of images to convey his message. By situating Venus' temple within the walls of Nature's garden, Chaucer formulates an implicit answer to the apparently irreconcilable contradictions of love which neither reason nor the authority of books could resolve.

A clear understanding of how these images operate requires a close observation of Venus and Nature in their allegorical landscapes. Venus' temple is surrounded by a host of personifications which closely follows Boccaccio's list in the Teseida (vii, stanzas 51-60). Chaucer's translation, however, as McDonald has shown, adjusts the epithets to recall the personifications and courtly atmosphere of the Roman de la Rose.[28] The list in Chaucer is made deliberately static and sterile with very little modification of each name. As such, it creates a sharp contrast to the lively list of birds surrounding Nature (ll. 330-364) where each bird is associated with a characteristic trait or activity and where their very number and variety is a tribute to Nature's inventiveness.

The first figures encountered by the dreamer remind him of the painful aspects of love promised by the dreadful gate. As he looks "under a tre, besyde a welle" (an echo of the perilous fountain of Guillaume's poem), he sees Cupid and his daughter, "Wille," forging and filing arrowheads in preparation for their deadly occupation: "Some for to sle and some to wounde and kerve"(l.217). He also sees Dame Pacience, image of faithful service unrewarded, "Syttyng ... upon a hil of sond" (l. 243). The temple itself is made of "bras ifounded strong," although copper, the metal traditionally associated with Venus, was cited in Boccaccio. Chaucer's change to the cheaper alloy implies a subtle degeneration of Venus' stature.

Within the temple, the dreamer enters the hot, humid atmosphere of passion, of swoons and "sykes hoote as fyr," of desire's flaming altars. There sits "the bitter goddesse Jealosye." The ruler of this establishment is Priapus who stands "in sovereyn place." More powerful than the courtly fin' amour of Venus, he represents sexuality in its crudest animal form.[29] In their attempt to glorify him, men try to put garlands of fresh flowers on his head. Venus herself is lying in a dark, "prive corner" with her porter, "Richesse." Before her on their knees, "two yonge folk" cry for help (l. 279). About her on the walls are the broken bows of Diana and a mural with the stories of tragic lovers, many linked with crimes of incest or adultery, but united by

the common element of desperation which led to their deaths through suicide or inconsolable grief.[30]

From this barren, suffocating enclosure of frustrated sexual desire, Chaucer abruptly emerges into the light, open air, and fertility of the place "so sote and grene" that is Nature's abode. Instead of the static artifice of Venus' mural, Nature's garden offers the lively delights of vibrant, natural beauty. Unlike Venus who reclines secretively in a dark corner, Nature sits nobly "in a launde, upon an hil of floures" (l. 302). Instead of ignoring the pleas of tortured young lovers, Nature generously orchestrates the seasonal matings of her creatures in the annual Valentine's Day ceremony. In contrast to Venus whose porter Richesse is involved in selfish concern and personal profit, Nature's unseen companion seems to be the common profit of Scipio's dream.

Venus and Nature are both represented in condensed dream images linking the poem with the richness of all their previous literary contexts: Venus, most directly with Boccaccio's Teseida; Nature and her Parliament with Alain's Complaint of Nature. They also function as powerful archetypes to reveal new meaning in the context of the dream. The fact that Venus with all her courtly ritual of frustrated, covert, and fruitless love is not "eschewed" as the dark side of he gate recommends suggests the capacity

of Nature to embrace all forms of love within her domain. Although the dangerous consequences of sensual passion are borne out by the stories of the tragic lovers painted on the temple walls, love's desire is, nevertheless, allotted a place in Nature's garden. Since Nature is the "Vicaire of the almyghty Lord," all forms of earthly love have a direct connection to God's order in Creation. Thus, unlike the extreme view expressed in the Somnium where lovers are punished for their desire (ll. 79-80), one need not eschew "delyt" in this world in order to attain heavenly reward. Because Venus working through Nature "prikes" all with "plesance," the fulfillment of personal desire is perfectly in accord with the highest plan of God.

Chaucer's allegorical landscape uses condensed images to communicate concepts explained through lengthy discourse in Alain's Complaint of Nature. Nature, as Vicar of the Lord, is required to "build up a progeny from the living creatures of earth (V, 35). To assist her, she says,

> I stationed Venus who is skilled in the knowledge of making, as under-deputy of my work, in order that she, under my judgment and guidance, and with the assisting activity of her husband Hymen and her son Cupid . . .might weave together the line of the human race in unwearied continuation. (IV, 376-385)

Unfortunately, for the harmony of the natural world, Venus becomes diverted from her task by her adulterous liaison with Antigamous.

> She, then, wishing rather to be pampered in unfruitful love than to be exercised in fruitful labors . . . began to be childish over the joys of extreme idleness . . . and permits the sickle of fate to run out far into the grain of the human race, and does not repair the loss with renewed birth from any fresh seed.
> (V, 200-205, 227-230)

8. The Bird Parliament

The next portion of the dream, the lively presentation of the bird parliament, was early thought to be the core of the poem and hence became the focus of much critical debate. The congregation of birds was theorized to be an allegory of the betrothal of Richard II to Anne of Bohemia, a parody of class-consciousness during the period of the Peasant Revolt, a middle class criticism of courtly love, or simply a Valentine's Day occasional piece.[31] When understood in terms of the poem's dream realism, however, the "parlement" functions as a perfect example of Freudian "displacement." According to Freud:

> . . . what is clearly the essence of the dream thoughts need not be represented in the dream at all. The dream is, as it were, <u>differently centered</u> from the dream thoughts--its content has different elements as its central point.[32]

In the <u>Parliament</u>, Chaucer's opening astonishment at the miracles and cruel ire of love surfaces in the dream as the popular bird assembly familiar from the works of Gower, Machaut, Deschamps, and de Graunson.[33] This distortion of the real content of the dream into symbols to which it bears little resemblance simulates a process in actual

dreams resulting from what Freud calls the "dream censor." This mechanism prevents painful or conflicted elements from being expressed directly. In allegory, a similar effect is achieved by using concrete images to represent established systems of thought. In the case of the Parliament, the philosophical problem to be considered is the place of love within Nature and its vehicle of expression is the debate of a hierarchical society of birds.

The displacement into a bird debate of the poet's distress over love carries with it strong literary associations. Most immediately the hierarchy of birds recalls the parliament depicted on Nature's robe in The Complaint of Nature. As the birds break away from their ground to come dramatically alive in Chaucer's dream, they participate in the traditional Valentine's Day Ritual of choosing a mate. These associations are then combined with the courtly convention of the demande d'amour. Echoes of the courts of love from the poetry of Machaut and Froissart can be seen early in the assembly when Nature's plan for the selection of mates "in forthering of [their] nede" (l. 384) becomes diverted into an absurd debate among the courtly suitors over who bears the formel eagle the most love. Since each suitor seems equally qualified, it is impossible to determine a victor. The rivalry of the three tercels for the beautiful "lady" eagle directs our attention

away from the natural fecundity of love for "commune profyt" back into the temple of Venus where images of unconsummated, barren love prevail. Unlike the common birds whose self-interest leads to perpetuation of the community, the tercels' self-interest is associated with frustration and death. Their egotism shows most obviously in their frequent use of the first person pronoun in their speeches: "Non loveth hire so wel as I" (l. 435), "I love hire bet than ye don" (l. 451), "I am hire treweste man" (l.479). It shows more generally in their obliviousness to the pressing needs of the huge congregation of other birds. In their extravagant claims of honor, fidelity, and bravery, they present a "macho" advertisement of their own virtues, rather than a sincere attraction to the lady. The renuntiatory quality of their love which talks of "long servyse" rather than the urgent need for fruitful union inevitably becomes associated with death, which they, in fact, threaten or promise ten times in their speeches. Actually, the solution of the debate is irrelevant, and the arguments given by the various species of birds are interesting mainly as a spectrum of the prevailing attitudes toward love. The digression finally ends with the lower class birds' insistence on getting on with their pairing:

> 'Have don, and lat us wende!'
>
> . . .
>
> 'Com of!' . . . 'allas, ye wol us shende!
> Whan shal your cursede pletynge have an ende?' (ll. 492-95)

The tension between Nature and Venus transposed in the dream to the debate between birds is the externalization of a conflict within Man's make-up explained at length in Alain's Complaint of Nature. Man is a microcosm of the whole universe and therefore links within his being both the heavenly quest for an ideal existence and the earthly pull of physical needs. As Nature explains:

> I am she who have fashioned the form and eminence of man into the likeness of the original mundane mechanism, that in him, as in a mirror of the world itself, combined nature may appear . . . And just as the army of the planets opposes with contrary motion the fixed rolling of the firmament, so in men is found a continual hostility between lust and reason. For the activity of reason [takes] its rise from a celestial source . . . The activities of lust, on the other hand, . . . turn and slip down into the decline of things on earth . . . The one dishonors man, and changes ~~him~~ to a beast; the other mightily transfigures him into a god. (III, 73-99)

The noble birds' rejection of merely physical animal passion, the sexual instincts of the duck and the goose, is based on the quest to satisfy their spiritual natures according to an ideal love. They go astray, however, because the courtly ideal they choose is one of man's creation--an artifice of rules and customs based on the adulterous Venus. It neither satisfies their full range of needs nor the "commune profyt" of God's plan. In Nature's order Venus as spouse of Hymen assists Nature by "prikking" creatures with sexual love leading to "engendrure," the reproduction of their species according to God's intention. Hence the arrangement in Nature's garden attempts to

reestablish love and common profit in their original divine relation.

As Nature intervenes to direct the debate, all the displaced elements of dream imagery dove-tail into a solution of the dream's dilemma:

> And I shal sone, I hope, a conseyl fynde
> Yow to delyvere, and fro this noyse unbynde (ll. 522-523)

Analogous to the heavenly harmony of Scipio's dream, Nature as Vicar of the Lord is striving toward an earthly harmony that will this "noyse unbynde." Since the greatest harmony is that produced by the greatest number of voices,[34] she will hear "al your opynoun" before establishing order through her judgment. At the peak of conflict she intercedes with "Now pes" and sets about with a loving inclusiveness to satisfy all the diverse needs of her full scale of creatures. She does not exclude the "gosauk" for his rapacity, the "chough" for his thievery, the "false lapwynge" for his treachery, the cormorant for his gluttony, nor the sparrow for his sensuality. She embraces all levels of creation as she embraces both the fin' amour in Venus' temple and the joy of mating in the common birds. Even the fact that most of the birds seem by nature at strife with one another--the "sperhauk" as the "qualyles foo," the "merlion" against the "larke," the pheasant against the

cock, and the "drake, stroyere of his owene kynde"--their discord seems to be part of God's plan.

> Then God added to this worldly palace various kinds of things, and these, though separated by the strife of different natures, He governed with harmony of proper order, furnished with laws, and bound with ordinances. And thus He united with mutual and fraternal kisses things antagonistic from the opposition of their properties, between which the space had made its room from contraries, and He changed the strife of hatred into the peace of friendship. All things, then, agreeing through invisible bonds of union, plurality returned to unity, diversity to identity, dissonance to harmony, discord to concord in peaceful agreement.
>
> (The Complaint of Nature, IV, 326-337)

Nature's role then is to establish hierarchy and harmonious order in the created universe. Her regime suggests Saint Thomas' vision of the Scala naturae:

> . . . for the completion of the universe there are required divers grades of being, of which some hold a high and some a low place in the universe. That this multiplicity of grades may be preserved in things, God allows some evils, lest many good things should be hindered.

Nature's "ordnance" which permits each bird freedom to choose his "formel or his mate" is freely accepted, not enforced. Her solution to the suit of the three tercels is to eschew both the dictates of Reason (ll. 632-633) and the custom of forced marriage, and to finally allow the formel to decide the issues for herself. The radical impact of this judgment is met by the formel's equally surprising decision temporarily to reject courtly love ("I wol nat serve Venus ne Cupide"). She wishes both to have a year's reprieve and "after that to have my choys al fre" (l. 649). Nature's

year which "is nat so longe to endure," brings a satisfying harmony within earthly dimensions, unlike the cosmic year of the Somnium where only after thousands of generations will universal order be restored. Nature's final accord encompasses all the apparently contradictory goals of her bird assembly: The formel is allowed to prolong her independence and afterwards to have a free choice of partner; the three tercels are permitted to wait and serve in the courtly ritual they prefer, but their service will have a reasonable limitation; and the common birds are encouraged to depart "each with his make" in "Blisse and joye" to reproduce their kind. The dream concludes with a roundel "to don to Nature honour and plesaunce" (l. 675) in which the achievement of earthly harmony connects with its source in the heavenly harmony of the spheres of the Somniuum Scipionis.

By the end of the Parliament, the interaction of dream images according to the psychology of the somnium animale has made possible an intuitive working out of the major conflicts in the poet's mind: the dread of courtly love and the joy of natural love, the devotion to an idealized ritual and the physical need to reproduce one's kind, the claims of authority and the need for personal choice. Africanus' ideal of "commune profyt" is brought down from the empyrean into the pluralistic complexity of

Nature's garden to act as an ordering principle for earthly harmony. As the Somnium gave an ultimate perspective from an outside authority by which to view earthly contradictions, Chaucer's realistic dream fosters an immersion in the contradictions to discover a latent unity that will in the end supply a more satisfying resolution to human problems. In the Parliament the contrast between Chaucer's dream and the Somnium reflects the underlying conflict between two theories of poetry: the imaginative poetry of associative imagery patterned on the structure of actual dreams, and the rational, didactic poetry designed to convey authoritative philosophical doctrine. As Jung says:

> A great work of art is like a dream; for all its apparent obviousness it does not explain itself and is never unequivocal. A dream never says: 'You ought,' or: 'This is the truth.' It presents an image much the same way as nature allows a plant to grow, and we must draw our own conclusions.[36]

With this in mind, it seems strange that Chaucer's closing comments upon awaking from the dream should be considered so negatively. Critics have been amazed that after writing such a masterful poem, Chaucer still appears dissatisfied and in search of "som thyng to fare/ The bet." It seems to me, however, that Chaucer has gained valuable insight from the dream process of reshuffling and condensing the materials of his thought and learning. The system of reading, dreaming, and composing poetry, where dreaming can be considered a metaphor for free operation of the imagina-

tion, is one that works. Because it produces results, Chaucer is eager to try it again. The poet's insight is not something final, fixed and self-enclosing like the Somnium Scipionis, but a new configuration which holds opposing elements in balance until another reorganizing experience occurs. In the process, the "too systemaic idealism" of Africanus' message is made to confront the complexity of particulars—"in this world here," a complexity which requires constant reevaluation. And so, when the awakening sound of birds tarries the dream into real life, Chaucer takes himself to other books:

> . . . and yit I rede alwey.
> I hope, ywis, to rede so some day
> That I shal mete som thyng for to fare
> The bet, and thus to rede I nyl nat
> spare.(ll. 696-699)

APPENDIX I

Modern Critical Discussion of the "kernel-Shell" Approach to Medieval Poetry

Critics writing in response to D. W. Robertson's A Preface to Chaucer (1962) have disputed the accuracy of his reading of Saint Augustine. In particular, they question the applicability of Augustine's interpretation concerning the reign of "charity" to secular medieval texts. According to Robert O. Payne, the analysis of secular literature to reveal a unified Christian doctrine mistakenly "sees the Augustinian exegetical aesthetic as much more unanimous, simple, and single-valued than it actually was."[1] In Morton Bloomfield's view, a reading of Augustine which redirects his emphasis away from the letter of the text is a distortion. The whole point of Augustine's interpretation of the Bible is that "what is taught is clearly taught, and if it is occasionally obscure, it is elsewhere in the Bible made very plain."[2] Even when Augustine seeks a figurative meaning, he "allows to Holy Scripture a much broader range of subject matter than merely Charity."[3] In fact, as Utley observes, there was no "cabalistic key" to the interpretation of medieval texts.[4]

Studies of the ubiquitous glosses of scribes and commentators reveal that even exegetes lacked a rigid, simplified, and consistent allegorical interpretation for their readings. This lack of interpretive unanimity was

paralleled by the absence of an agreed upon system of symbolism. The existence of a range of possibilities for even the most common symbols is evident in symbolic dictionaries such as the twelfth-century Distinctiones which lists multiple meanings for each entry.[5] In the end, significance could be determined only by context and even then divergent interpretations resulted.

Critics, furthermore, have rejected the assumption that a method intended for biblical exegesis was, in fact, transferred to an aesthetic theory for the creation of secular literature. As E. T. Donaldson states, "I cannot find that any of the patristic authorities ever clearly exhorted secular poets to write as the Bible had been written."[6] Supporting Donaldson's view, Utley terms the positing of a concealed Christian moral a "genetic fallacy" which mistakenly assumes that since allegory at the time of St. Augustine and St. Paul primarily served the purpose of scriptural exegesis, it must be similarly applied to secular texts in Chaucer's time. In fact, "with the notable exception of the letter to Can Grande ascribed to Dante. . . there is no contemporary evidence for consciously contrived religious allegory of secular poetry."[7] Bloomfield agrees, noting that medieval man was heir to the traditions of classical antiquity as well as to Christian revelation and could be expected to include in his literature its

genres, points of view, and categories of thought.[8] From the twelfth century on, in fact, with the rise of great vernacular literatures, Bloomfield obseves a corresponding decline in the emphasis put on the symbolic method in biblical interpretation and a renewed emphasis on the literal text.[9]

Chaucer's own reference to the "fruyt and chaf" metaphor in the closing lines of the Nun's Priest's Tale has been cited to prove his opinion that the poetic text is but a "transparent aesthetic satisfaction" to be discarded once its kernel of enduring wisdom has been gained. As Kolve points out, however, over 600 lines of brilliant poetry precede Chaucer's statement:

> But ye that holden this tale a folye,
> As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
> Taketh the moralite, goode men.
> For seint Paul seith that al that writen is,
> To oure doctrine it is ywrite, ywis;
> Taketh the fruyt, and let the chaf be stille. (NPT, ll. 3438-3443)

As the conclusion of a narrative which mocks human pretensions to grandeur while raising questions about the relation of dream to reality and fate to free will, Chaucer's advice seems an ironical gesture to readers unable to deal with the poem's rich ambiguities. For those who "holden this tale a folye," he implies, there is always the extractable moral. But for others, "the fruyt of the Nun's Priest's Tale is its chaff."[10] To say

otherwise is to deny Chaucer's art. It is to assume his poetry is a "clumsy and foolishly unnecessary obfuscation of what the exegetes said much more fully and clearly."[11] As Kolve so aptly states, although Christian truths had a priority in medieval culture, Chaucer's use of them in a fictional context is

> less in order to reassert that priority than as part of an assault against the otherwise inexpressible: that range of experience for which we have no single word, no adequate formula--a view of metaphor that goes back to Cicero--and which the mirror of wisdom on its own cannot adequately reflect. In this undertaking the fruit and the chaff, the doctrine and the delight, are inseparable.[12]

APPENDIX II

Chaucer and the Rhetoricians

The relation of Chaucer's poetry to the theories of the classical rhetoricians has aroused extensive critical debate. In his seminal essay in 1926, John Matthews Manly studied the relationship between Chaucer and thirteenth-century rhetorical theories. Manly's method was to count and categorize figures in Chaucer's poetry according to labels and definitions in the textbooks. He concluded that Chaucer's development revealed itself "as a process of gradual release from the astonishingly artificial and sophisticated art with which he began and the gradual replacement of formal rhetorical devices by methods of composition based upon close observation of life and the exercise of the creative imagination."[1] Where Manly discovered an abundance of formal devices in the later work, he ascribed them to inescapable traces of a rhetorical perspective which considered writing improved by sententiae and exempla. He emphasized, however, that Chaucer was able to transfigure these devices for his own dramatic purposes.[2]

Writing in the fifties, Helge Kokeritz continued Manly's focus on particular rhetorical figures in Chaucer's writing. She claimed that Chaucer learned the subtleties of medieval rhetoric from works he translated in his early

career as a poet. As a consequence, she found a greater enthusiasm for rhetorical ornament in Chaucer's youthful works, such as the Book of the Duchess and the Parliament of Fowls which were influenced by French models highly saturated in decorative techniques, than in his later, more personally realized works.[3]

In his 1964 article, "A New Look at Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," James J. Murphy reconsidered Chaucer's poetry in terms of the historical transmission of school rhetorics. By asking what specific new sources may have influenced Chaucer, Gower, and other late medieval English poets, he concluded that the impact of classical rhetorical treatises on fourteenth-century poets must actually have been minimal since the teaching of such texts had as yet taken no strong hold on the English universities.[4]

In response to Murphy's conclusions, Robert O. Payne (1968) questioned such a limited view of influences which required a local English academic tradition to account for rhetorical usage in a poet as sophisticated and cosmopolitan as Chaucer. He also criticized Manly's 1926 essay for its concept of rhetoric as a collection of artificial stylistic devices which it was Chaucer's artistic greatness to overcome. He claimed, instead, that Chaucer was influenced by the more general goals of medieval rhetoric, goals not so readily accounted for by percentages of textbook rhetorical figures. Medieval rhetoricians such as Geoffrey de Vinsauf

defined the poet's task as selecting the most useful "sentence" and decorating it by attractive means conducive to persuasion. Payne argues that nearly all of Chaucer's own critical and theoretical statements either derive from or express a way of thinking similar to the school rhetoricians. In his opinion, Chaucer's awareness, of the relation of poetry to a generally persuasive enterprise is "omnipresent" in his work.[5] Chaucer explicitly states, for example, that "sentence and solas" are appropriate aims for poetry. He furthermore writes that the poet's task is to remake previous works to correct or reactivate their truths for a new audience (Prol. LGW, ll. 25-25).

In this paper I have expressed the opinion that Chaucer uses rhetorical conventions in a way similar to his use of conventional themes and settings, that is, to evoke previous contexts where such devices reflected the serious intention to convey a moral meaning. However, in each instance where rhetorical forms appear, Chaucer turns them to new account, either through irony or through contextual interplay with other elements in the poem. In relation to the early dream poems, therefore, I can agree with Manly's assessment that Chaucer was not merely "a disciplined imitator of a thoroughly artificial school of writing," but "a conscious exploiter of the formal rhetoric taught by the professional rhetoricians."[6]

FOOTNOTES

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

[1]Walter Clyde Curry, Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences (New York: Oxford University Press, 1926), pp. 195-218. Curry finds references in Chaucer's dream classifications and in his speculations on the origins of dreams to classic sources such as Macrobius as well as to a wide range of writings on dream psychology and the theory of sleep by medieval physicians, philosophers, and theologians.

[2]George L. Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915), pp. 66-67.

[3]James Winney, Chaucer's Dream Poems (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), pp. 18-19.

[4]Wolfgang Clemen, Chaucer's Early Poetry (London: Methuen and Company, 1968), p 10.

[5]See thesis, Chapter III, "The Means of Representation in Dreams and Allegory," for a more detailed treatment of these concepts.

[6]Clemen, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

[7]Ibid., p. 12.

[8]Walter Abell, The Collective Dream in Art (New York: Schocken Press, 1957), p. 5.

[9]Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (London: Edward Arnold, 1924), pp. 136-42.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

THE CONVENTION OF ALLEGORICAL DREAM VISION

[1]James J. Murphy (ed.), Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. ix.

[2]Cicero, De inventione, De optimo genere oratorium, topica, trans. H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), I, v, p. 15.

[3]St. Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1958), II, xl, p. 75.

[4]Ibid., II, vi 7, p. 38.

[5]Macrobius, Commentary on the Dream of Scipio, trans. W. H. Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 86-87. All quotes from Macrobius are from this translation.

[6]Alain de Lille, Anticlaudianus, trans. James I. Sheridan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1973), Prose Prologue, p. 41.

[7]Charles G. Osgood, Boccaccio on Poetry (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1956), p. 62. Boccaccio s "Defense of Poetry" forms the Preface and Chapters XIV and XV of his De genealogii deorum gentilium.

[8]Ibid., p. 62.

[9]Augustine, op. cit., III, x.16, p. 88.

[10]Ibid., III, x.15, p. 88.

[11]Ibid., III, xv, p. 93.

[12]Ibid., III, xii.18, p. 90.

[13]Robert P. Miller (ed.), Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), note, p. 57.

[14]Alain de Lille, The Complaint of Nature, Yale Studies in English, trans. D. W. Moffat (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1908), IV, 210, p. 40. This translation was taken from Bernard F. Huppé and D. W. Robertson, Jr., Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 5. Huppé and Robertson choose to emphasize the "shell-kernel" terminology for the sake of their critical argument. All further quotations from the Complaint of Nature will be taken from the Moffat translation.

[15]Hugh of St. Victor, Didascalicon, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies, 1961), VI, 8.

[16]Ibid., VI, 11.

[17]Ibid., V, 2.

[18]Bernard R. Huppé and D. W. Robertson, Jr., Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 9.

[19]Bernard Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry (New York: New York State University, 1959), p. 13.

[20]Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[21]See Appendix I, "Modern Critical Discussion of the 'Kernel-Shell' Approach to Medieval Poetry."

[22]Winthrop Wetherbee, Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 4.

[23]Although the concept of microcosm-macrocosm runs through the entire Timaeus, significant passages can be located in Francis MacDonald Cornford (trans.), Plato's Cosmology: The "Timaeus" of Plato (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), sections 30 B, 41-42 D, 44 D, 69 A-D. All further references to the Timaeus are to Cornford's edition.

[24]Wetherbee, op. cit., p. 34.

[25]Ibid., p. 34.

[26]Morton Bloomfield, "Allegory as Interpretation," NLH, 3 (1972), p. 317.

[27]John Matthews Manly, "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," reprinted in Chaucer Criticism: "The Canterbury Tales," ed. by Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960), p. 286. See Appendix II for a summary of the critical debate stemming fromm Manly's essay.

[28]Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. V. E. Watts (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), Introduction, p. 8. See introductory comments in John Leyerle and Anne Quick, Chaucer: A Bibliographical Introduction, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 66. According to Leyerle and Quick, the strong influence of the Consolation on Chaucer's thought stems from his careful translation of the work. Because

of the scarcity of previous translations of philosophical texts into Middle English, Chaucer was, in effect, required to create a new vocabulary to carry out his task.

[28]All quotations from The Consolation of Philosophy taken from Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. V. E. Watts (New York: Penguin Books, 1969).

[29]Anna Crabbe, "Literary Design in the De consolatione philosophiae," reprinted in Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence, ed. Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 214.

[31]Ibid., p. 250. See Plato's Republic, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: The Heritage Press, 1944), Book X, p. 521 ff.

[32]Metra which emphasize or exemplify philosophical points are Book I, 4, 6; II, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6; III, i, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12; IV, 2, 3, 4, 5; V, 1, 2, 4, 5. Metra which present a wider perspective are II 5, 8; III, 2, 9; IV 1, 6. Metra which refer back to other parts of the poem are II, 8; III, 2.

[33]For a discussion of this branch of rhetorical theory see thesis, Chapter II.

[34] Boethius, op. cit., p. 19.

[35]Ibid., p. 22. Plato's doctrine of anamnesis or recollection can be found in the Meno (82 B ff.) and the Phaedo (73 A ff.). The concept of the ascent of the soul from what is false to a realization that God is the true good is based on the Myth of the Cave (Republic, VII). See Plato, The Dialogues of Plato, trans. B. Jowett, Vol. I (New York: Random House, 1937).

[36]This analysis has been influenced by Winthrop Wetherbee's discussion, Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century, pp. 77-78. Wetherbee, in turn, cites his source as Peter Dronke, "L'amour che move il sole e l'altre stelle," Studi Medievali 6 (1965), pp. 389-422.

[37]A. C. Spearing, Medieval Dream Poetry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 20.

[38]R. H. Green, "Alan of Lille's De planctu naturae," Speculum, XXI (October, 1956), p. 657.

[39]Ibid., p. 649.

[40]See discussion in Chapter II of thesis where the quotation from Macrobius appears in full.

[41]R. H. Green, op. cit., p. 655.

[42]Alain de Lille, Anticlaudianus, Prose Prologue, pp. 41-42.

[43]R. H. Green, op. cit., p. 655.

[44]Macrobius, Commentary on the Dream of Scipio, II, 8, p. 90. For discussion of Macrobius' dream categories see thesis, Chapter III.

[45]C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 66. Lewis finds earlier, non-Christian roots for the visualized representation of mental states. In his view allegorical poetry reflects an historical process by which classical deities fade into lifeless abstractions and the abstractions, representing states existing in an inner world of mind or soul take on a new power approaching that of gods (p. 48-56). As an example, he points to Book XI of the Thebiad written by the first-century pagan poet, Statius (p. 54).

[46]Ibid., p. 44.

[47]Ibid., p. 72-73.

[48]Prudentius, Psychomachia, trans. H. J. Thompson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 309. All quotations from the Psychomachia are from this edition.

[49]Lewis, op. cit., p. 70.

[50]John Fleming, The 'Roman de la rose': A Study in Allegory and Iconography (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 30.

[51]Armand Strubel, Le 'Roman de la rose': Etudes Littéraires (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), pp. 11-12.

[52]This line is quoted from Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, Le Roman de la rose, ed. Ernest Langlois, 5 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1914). Because of the close connection to Chaucer's work, all further quotations from Guillaume's section of the poem are taken from Geoffrey Chaucer, The Romaunt of the Rose in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton

Mifflin Company, 1957), pp. 564-637.

[53]The contradiction between insomnium and oraculum has caused considerable critical controversy over Guillaume's intentions. D. W. Robertson ("The Doctrine of Charity in Medieval Literary Gardens: A Topical Approach Through Symbolism and Allegory," Speculum, XXVI, 1956, p. 43) argues that if Guillaume recognized this contradiction and wished to remain within Macrobius' trustworthy classifications, his dream must be a moral allegory with a deeper meaning than the psychological chronicle of courtly seduction and resistance; it must be a paradigm for the entire experience of submission to the senses and overthrow of reason associated with man's earthly existence. Following this reasoning, Robertson interprets the poem as "a humorous and witty retelling of the story of the Fall." His views are supported by John Fleming (The 'Roman de la rose': A Study in Allegory and Iconography, p. 59) who considers the garden a microcosm of the world, a "post-lapsarian terrestrial paradise," "a type of testing ground in which each man succumbs to the temptations of physical delights." Charles Dahlberg ("Macrobius and the Unity of the Roman de la Rose," Studies in Philology LVIII, 1961, p. 578) joins these critics by tracing the lover's fall through three stages of temptation: from sense, to delight, to the consent of reason. The alternative to these positions, in Robertson's view, is to regard Guillaume's poem as a nightmare dealing explicitly with the dreamer's progressive submission to the demands of sensual love.

[54]Armand Strubel comments in his study of the poem, p. 29: "A une époque où la littérature, la fiction, doit se défendre contre l'accusation de 'mensonge,' le songe est la ruse du discourse qui se sait porteur d'une form de vérité. Son ambiguité, le mélange de réalité et d'irréalité qui caracterise ses représentations, offre la meilleure image pour ce mond de fantômes, où les choses et les personnes ne sont pas ce que l'on voit, que l'allégorie met en scene."

[55]For a discussion of Chaucer's expansion of the waking frame see thesis, Chapters IV and V. Through Guillaume's suggestion, Chaucer is able to move beyond the conventional elegiac prologue of visionary poems to make the introduction of the problem part of the fictional motivation of the dream.

[56]Chrétien de Troyes, Cligés in Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes, Vol. I, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1971). The hero of Cligés, after

secretly acknowledging his love for the fair Fenice, avenges a rival suitor, rescues Fenice from her captors, travels abroad to the court of Arthur to be tested in knightly combat, returns to Greece, engages in an elaborate ruse to abduct and conceal his lady, and finally through fortitude and guile succeeds in possessing his love. At the same time, the Lady conceals her true passion which she confides only to her nurse, marries a man she does not love, drugs him with magic potion to preserve her chastity, endures prolonged separation from her desired lover, feigns death, is tortured by false doctors, and is buried alive before her wish to be united with her lover is fulfilled.

[57]Lewis, op. cit., p. 114.

[58]Ibid., p. 115.

[59]Strubel, op. cit., p. 31.

[60]See John Barsby, "Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris," in Ovid. New Surveys in the Classics No. 12 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 20. Barsby discusses Ovid's adaption of the elegiac attitude towards love to didactic poetry: "The traditional furor of the lover is scarcely susceptible to control by ars; Ovid specifically claims to have replaced impetus by ratio (Remedia, 10), and indeed the whole of the Ars depends on treating love as a game based on pretense and deception rather than on genuine emotion. The only concession to genuine feeling is the admission that pretence may lead to the real thing, which is explicitly stated in the Ars (1. 615 ff.) and is implied by the need for a Remedia."

[61]Chrétien de Troyes, Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain) in Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes, Vol. IV, 11. 374 ff. 408 ff.

[62]Some critics have regarded the instructions of the God of Love as the message of the allegory. See René Louis, Le Roman de la Rose: Essai d'interprétation de l'allégorisme érotique (Paris: Editions Honoré Champion, 1974), p. 24. In Louis opinion: "/Guillaume/ a conçu le projet ambitieux de tirer de son expérience vécue un véritable manuel de tactique amoreuse, une analyse méthodique des alternances de succès et de déboires par lesquelles l'amoreux s'achemie peu à peu, au prix d'une longue patience, vers l'épisode final de la possession."

[63]Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love,

trans. John Jay Parry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), pp. 5-6. Parry writes that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Ovid's work including the Art of Love was highly popular and circulated in both Latin and the vernaculars. In Parry's estimation, "Much of the literature of France and England was colored by its ideas."

[64]Ovid, The Art of Love, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: The University of Indiana Press, 1957), p. 121. All quotations from Ovid are from this text.

[65]See D. W. Robertson, Jr., A Preface to Chaucer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962). Robertson describes Guillaume's poem as an "elaborate poetic integument" used "to adorn the procedure necessary for the abuse of beauty" (p. 91). In his view the love described in the Roman de la Rose is "passionate and unreasoning cupidity" (p. 84) as opposed to the Christian ideal of "caritas" described by Augustine. Guillaume's dream narrative dramatizes Andreas' three-stage definition of love (sight, excessive meditation, and passion), not to advocate success in love, but to condemn love's dangers as a disordering passion.

[66]C. S. Lewis, op. cit., p. 122.

[67]The pious palinode in Andreas Capellanus' The Art of Courtly Love throws the rest of the treatise into the same ambiguous light as we experience in Guillaume's poem. In John Jay Parry's opinion (The Art of Courtly Love, pp. 19-20), Book III represents the conventional lip-service to Christian doctrine required of a Chaplain. Andreas' main focus, however, is on the cult of love. D. W. Robertson, on the other hand (A Preface to Chaucer, pp. 447-48) sees Books I and II as ironic and the palinode in Book III as the undisguised statement of the author's orthodox views.

[68]Strubel, op. cit., p. 70.

[69]All quotations from Jean de Meun's portion of the Roman de la Rose from: Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, Le Roman de la rose, Vols. I-V, ed. Ernest Langlois (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1914).

[70]Fleming, op. cit., p. 52.

[71]Strubel, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

[72]Ibid., p. 80.

[73]Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, The Roman de la Rose, trans., Harry W. Robbins (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1962), Introduction by Charles W. Dunn, p. xx.

[74]Strubel, op. cit., p. 105.

[75]In Chaucer's time a great critical debate over the meaning and value of the Roman de la Rose occupied Parisian literary circles. A leading figure in this crusade was Christine de Pisan who condemned Jean's portion of the Roman as a mere "handbook for lechers" (Larry D. Benson, ed., The Riverside Chaucer, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1987, p. 686). See D. W. Robertson (A Preface to Chaucer, pp. 361-64) for a discussion of Christine de Pisan's objections to Jean's portion of the Roman de la Rose.

Armand Strubel attributes Jean's anti-feminist references to his immersion in a literary and clerical tradition which made it natural to include learned allusions to Valerius, Juvenal, and Theophrastus as well as to the famous examples of Lucretius, Hercules, and Samson. Strubel emphasizes, "La misogynie d'un discours n'implique pas l'adhésion de l'auteur" (89). He adds, "La conception de la femme et de l'amour qui se dégage de ces discours forme contrepoint, glose par les contraires, à cette image de la femme, source de toutes les vertus, et de l'amour comme perfectionment de soi, qu'incarne le verger de Déduit . . . L'antiféminisme de Jean est tradition littéraire et clérícale, réponse dialectique, jeu formal à l'intérieur d'un register thématique dominant" (80).

[76]Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, The Roman de la Rose, trans. H. W. Robbins, Introduction, p. xxv. See lines 22705-22725.

[77]Robertson, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

[78]Strubel, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

[79]See Winthrop Wetherbee, "Some Intellectual Themes in Chaucer's Poetry," in Geoffrey Chaucer: A Collection of Original Articles, ed. George D. Economou (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), 75-92. Wetherbee argues that although Chaucer used many of the same Latin sources as Jean de Meun, he refused to take Jean's largely "subversive" treatment of these sources as a definitive approach. Despite Chaucer's tendency to skepticism as profound as Jean's, he is nevertheless "deeply sympathetic with the intuitions of a potential fulfillment in nature which led the Latin poets to dwell so insistently on the tensions in experience" (p. 79).

[80]Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, trans. James Strachey (New York: Pelican Books, 1976), pp. 131-32. All quotations from Freud's are from this translation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

THE APPROPRIATENESS OF DREAM TO ALLEGORY

[1]Lewis, op. cit., p. 166

[2]Kittredge, op. cit., p. 68.

[3]Spearing, op. cit., p. 6.

[4]Ernest Langlois, Origines et sources du Roman de la rose (Paris: E. Thorin, 1891), p. 55.

[5]Howard R. Patch, The Other World (New York: Octagon Books, 1950), p. 91.

[6]Wetherbee, op. cit., p. 90.

[7]Curry, op. cit., p. 205. Curry refers to Avicenna, Libri Canonis quinque, Venetiis, 1564, lib. III, fen i, tract i, cap 7.

[8]Ibid., p. 205. Curry refers to Galen, Ex Galeni Libris De dignotione ex insomniis in Opera, Venetiis, 1609, IV, 213; and to Antonius Gaizo, De somno ac eius necessitate, Basileae, 1539, cap. x.

[8]Ibid., p. 207.

[10]All quotations from Chaucer's poetry are from F. N. Robinson (ed.), The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957). Line numbers from individual works are cited in the text preceeded by abbreviations of their titles.

[11]Robertson, op. cit., p. 277.

[12]Freud, op. cit., p. 66. See Lucretius, De rerum natura IV, p. 962.

[13]Cicero De divinatione, II, lxxi. 146, quoted in Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, footnote, p. 121.

[14]Freud, op. cit., p. 381.

[15]Ibid., pp. 223-25.

[16]Ibid., p. 381.

[17]Ibid., p. 382.

[18]Ibid., p. 422.

[19]Ibid., p. 422.

[20]Ibid., p. 420.

[21]Tzvetan Todorov, Theories of the Symbol, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 248.

[22]Emile Beneviste, "Remarks on the Function of Language in Freudian Theory," in Problems in General Linguistics (Coral Gables, Fla., 1971), p 75.

[23]Quintilian, The Institutio Oratoria III, ed. E Capps (Cambridge Harvard University Press, 1920), IX, i 4, p. 351

[24]Angus Fletcher, Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), p 136.

[25]Freud, op. cit., p 382

[26]Ibid., p. 389

[27]Fletcher, op. cit., p. 151

[28]Ibid , p. 32.

[29]Cicero, Ad Herennium: De Ratione Dicendi, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), IV, xxxiii. 44, p. 342.

[30]Quintilian, op. cit., VIII, vi. 19-21, pp. 311-13.

[31]Freud, op. cit., pp. 387-88.

[32]Howard Schless, "Transformations: Chaucer's Use of Italian," in Geoffrey Chaucer: Writers and Their Background, ed. Derek Brewer (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), pp. 184-223. Howard Schless discusses Chaucer's borrowing of the major descriptive outline for his temple image from Boccaccio's Teseida

(VII, 51-60, 61-64, 63-64) and his method of transforming specific details to redirect significance.

[33]Freud, op. cit., p. 415.

[34]Murphy, op. cit., p. 68.

[35]Freud, op. cit., p. 431.

[36]Fletcher, op. cit., p. 35.

[37]Freud, op. cit., p 455

[38]Fletcher, op. cit., p. 110.

[39]Ibid., p. 108.

[40]V. A. Kolve, "Chaucer and the Visual Arts," in Geoffrey Chaucer: Writers and Their Background, ed. Derek Brewer (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), p 297. Kolve notes that Chaucer's visual quality was recognized even by early readers. He quotes Francis Beaumont's inscription in Speght's edition of Chaucer: ". . . one gifte hee hath aboue other Authours, and that is, by the excellencie of his descriptions to possesse his Readers with a stronger imagination of seeing that done before their eyes which they reade, than any other that ever writ in any tongue."

[41]Ibid , p. 308.

[42]Ibid., pp. 309-10.

[43]Freud, op. cit., p. 429.

[44]Ibid., p. 440.

[45]Roman Jakobson, "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles," in Fundamentals of Language, Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle (Mouton: The Hague, 1971), p. 95.

[46]Freud, op. cit., p. 431.

[47]Quintilian, op. cit., VIII, vi. 4-8, pp. 303-305.

[48]Cicero, Ad Herennium, IV, xxxiv, p. 343.

[49]Quintilian, op. cit., VIII, vi. 44, p. 327.

[50]William Empson, The Structure of Complex Words

(London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), pp. 346-47.

[51]Rosemund Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), pp. 105-106.

[52]Freud, op. cit., p. 425.

[53]Roman Jakobson, op. cit., p. 90.

[54]Morton Bloomfield, "The Syncategorematic in Poetry: From Semantics to Syntactics," in To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday, Vol. I (Mouton: the Hague, 1967), p 309.

[55]Northrop Frye, "Allegory," in Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p 12.

[56]Ibid, p. 12.

[57]Lewis, op. cit., pp 44-45.

[58]Paul Piehler, "Myth, Allegory and Vision in The Parlement of Foules," in Allegoresis, The Craft of Allegory in Medieval Literature, ed. J. Stephen Russell (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987)

[59]Fletcher, op. cit, pp. 105-107.

[60]Robertson, op. cit., p. 56.

[61]Statements from these critics can be found in the opening sections of Chapters IV and V of the thesis.

[62]Beryl Rowland, Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1971). Rowland remarks that dogs were traditionally associated with affection, fidelity, long memory, and intelligence (p. 161). She speculates that Chaucer may have selected a dog for the Book of the Duchess because of its appropriateness to the hunting scenes in an English forest (p. 163). She adds, it is also possible "that Chaucer was thinking of the dog in its ancient role of guide from this world to the next" (p. 163).

[63]Lewis, op. cit., p. 48.

[64]Ibid., p. 166.

[85]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 90.

[86]Fletcher, op. cit., p. 322.

[87]Freud, op. cit., p. 382.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS

[1]Kittredge, op. cit., pp. 67-69.

[2]John Livingston Lowes, Geoffrey Chaucer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), p. 94.

[3]Kittredge, op. cit., p. 58

[4]Bertrand Bronson, "The Book of the Duchess Re-Opened," in Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed Edward Wagenknecht (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 271-94.

[5]R K Root, The Poetry of Chaucer (New York, 1950), p 61.

[6]J S P Tatlock, The Mind and Art of Chaucer (Syracuse, 1950).

[7]Charles Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 102.

[8]Robertson, op. cit., p. 284

[9]Freud, op. cit., p. 178.

[10]In the Middle Ages a pool of ideas and images as well as literary genres was common property of poets. "Borrowing" from previous writers was at that time a highly acceptable practice. Nevertheless, Chaucer's early poems have been criticized for being little more than a "mosaic of borrowed passages" (Albert C. Baugh, Chaucer's Major Poetry, New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, 1963, p. 4). In my opinion, Chaucer realized the associative potential of this "intertextuality" and deliberately left a recognizable echo of his sources in certain phrases and imagery. By retaining their link with previous contexts and ideologies, the borrowed images could carry on an implicit dialectic on

such issues as worldly versus heavenly love without the need for direct discourse.

[11]B. A. Windeatt, Chaucer's Dream Poetry: Sources and Analogues (Cambridge: Rowan and Littlefield, 1982), p. ix. Windeatt describes Machaut's style as courtly, sophisticated, poised, and technically accomplished. It "gracefully celebrates" and delicately explores" the world of courtly love.

[12]Michael D. Cherniss, "The Boethian Dialogue in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess," JEGP (1969), pp. 653-665. Cherniss uses an involved system of parallels to show that Chaucer's Book of the Duchess closely follows the consolatory pattern of Books I and II of Boethius' Consolation.

[13]For the "amie" as physician see Machaut's Remede de la Fortune, ll 1467-1469, and Machaut's Dit dou Lyon, ll. 57-68, printed in Guillaume de Machaut, Oeuvres de Guillaume de Machaut, Vol. I-III, ed. Ernest Hoepffner (New York: Johnson Reprint Co., Ltd., 1965).

[14]Boethius, op. cit., I, pp. 51-52

[15]All of the preceeding are so traditional as to have generated critical adherents for each point of view. For a courtly interpretation, see John Lawlor, "The Pattern of Consolation in The Book of the Duchess," Speculum, XXXI (Oct., 1956), pp. 626-647. For the Boethian perspective, see Michael D. Cherniss, "The Boethian Dialogue in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess," JEGP 68 (1969), pp. 653-665. For a patristic allegorical reading see Bernard Huppé and D. W. Robertson, Fruyt and Chaff: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 33-34.

[16]George Lyman Kittredge, "Guillaume de Machaut and The Book of the Duchess," PMLA, XXX (1915), p. 1.

[17]Jéan Froissart, Oeuvres de Froissart: Poésies I, ed. Auguste Scheler (Geneve: Slatkine Reprints, 1877), p. 1.

> Car ne voeil la belle oublyer
> Pour quele amour en ce traveil
> Je sui entres et tant je veil.

[18]See discussion Chapter II, sections 2 and 3.

[19]A. J. Minnis, "A Note on Chaucer and the Ovid Moralisé," Medium Aevum, 48 (1979), p. 258. Minnis argues that the term, "romance" fits the Ovid moralisé better than Ovid's Latin version.

[20]Clemen, op. cit., p. 33.

[21]Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), p. 279.

[22]See Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (New York: Harper and Row, 1953), pp. 195-200. Curtius describes the locus amoenus ("Pleasance") as a clearly defined topos of landscape description. Late Latin poets such as Tiberianus (Constantine Period) employed six "charms of landscape": springs, plantations, gardens, soft breezes, flowers, and birdsong. Models for the ideal landscape appear in the medieval poetical arts from 1170 onwards. Matthew of Vendôme, for example, adds rhetorical amplificatio to each item and extends the list of "charms" to seven. The number of delights of the "pleasance" could be increased indefinately as illustrated by later poetry.

[23]O. F. Emerson, "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting," in O. F. Emerson, Chaucer Essays and Studies (Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1929), pp. 320-377.

[24]Alfred C. Baugh (ed.), Chaucer's Major Poetry (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, Inc., 1963) note, p. 10.

[25]Michael D. Gherniss, "The Boethian Dialogue in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess," JEGP 68 (1968), pp. 653-665.

[26]See Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, note to l. 455 ff., p. 775.

[27]Quotations from Boethius' Consolation taken from Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. V. E. Watts (New York: Penguin Books, 1969).

[28]All thematic similarities to Boethius are given an elegant veneer of courtly phraseology from the French poets. For comparisons between the Knight's speech and excerpts from Le Jugement dou Roy de Behainge and Le Remede de Fortune see G. L. Kittredge, "Guillaume de Machaut and the Book of the Duchess," PMLA, XXX (1915), pp. 16-23. Kittredge's parallels reveal that the Knight's overheard complaint about the loss of his "lady bryght" and his near fainting from sorrow (ll. 487-88)

clearly reflect a synthesis of the Knight's complaint (l. 193-200) and the lady's swoon (l. 208 ff.) of Machaut's Behaingne with the lover's overheard complaint in Remede de Fortune. Furthermore, the portrayal of the mind dulled by grief shown in the Man in Black's failure to notice the Dreamer, recalls the scene in Machaut's Behaingne where the lady is so distracted by sorrow that she ignores the Knight's greeting (l. 70), is addressed again, and finally gives an apologetic response.

[29]Kittredge, op. cit., p. 38.

[30]The Dreamer's interruptions occur at five points: l. 714-741, 745-748; ll. 1042-1051; ll. 1112-1114; ll. 1126-1143; ll. 1298, 1310.

[31]The ensuing catalogue of oxymorons in the Knight's speech recalls the lament of the lady in Machaut's Behaingne (ll. 177-87), Reason's oxymorons of love in the Roman de la Rose (ll. 4293), and ultimately the opening of Alain de Lille's Complaint of Nature.

[32]The image of the game of chess in which Fortune's "checkmate!" deprives the Knight of his "fers" can find precedent in Machaut's Remede de Fortune (ll. 1190-91), in the Roman de la Rose (ll. 6620 ff.) where Reason uses the metaphor of chess to describe military defeat, and in the medieval French allegory, Les Echecs Amoreux.

[33]John Speirs, Chaucer the Maker (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 86.

[34]For a discussion of the conventional descriptio see Benjamin Harrison, "Medieval Rhetoric in The Book of the Duchess," PMLA 48 (1934), pp. 429-442.

[35]James I. Wimsatt, "The Apotheosis of Blanche in the Book of the Duchess," JEGP, 66 (1967), p. 28.

[36]Harrison, op. cit., p. 441.

[37]Kittredge, op. cit., p. 66. See also Clemen, op. cit., pp. 52-56.

[38]Wimsatt, op. cit., p. 32.

[39]Ibid., p. 32.

[40]Ibid., p. 35.

[41]Quoted in Wimsatt, op. cit., p. 35.

[42]John Lawlor, "The Pattern of Consolation in the Book of the Duchess," Speculum, XXXI (1956), p. 647.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS

[1]Tatlock, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

[2]Root, op. cit., p. 66.

[3]Winney, op. cit., p. 117.

[4]Bertrand H. Bronson, "In Appreciation of Chaucer's Parlement of Foules," California University Publications in English, III (1935), p. 203.

[5]R. M. Lumiansky, "Chaucer's Parlement of Foules: A Philosophical Interpretation," The Review of English Studies, XXIV (April, 1948), p. 83.

[6]John P. McCall, "The Harmony of Chaucer's Parliament," Chaucer Review 9 (1974-75), pp. 20-21.

[7]H. M. Leicester, Jr., "The Harmony of Chaucer's Parlement: A Dissonant Voice," Chaucer Review 9 (1974-75), pp. 20-21.

[8]James J. Wilhelm, "The Narrator and his Narrative in Chaucer's Parlement," Chaucer Review 1 (1966-67), pp. 205-206.

[9]Larry Sklute, "The Incohclusive form of The Parliament of Fowls," Chaucer Review 16 (1981-82), pp. 119-128.

[10]Robinson, op. cit., p. 792.

[11]E. R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational, (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1951), pp. 102-34.

[12]Spearing, op. cit., p. 19.

[13]Stahl, op. cit., pp. 71-73.

[14]Chaucer, "Boece," in The Works of Geoffrey

Chaucer, ed. Robinson, p. 343.

[15]Freud, op. cit., p. 249.

[16]Bronson, op. cit., p.. 207-208.

[17]Robinson, op. cit., p. 793.

[18]Kittredge, op. cit., p. 68.

[19]Ibid., p. 60.

[20]Curry, op. cit., pp. 233-36.

[21]See thesis, Chapter III for further discussion of Freud's dream theory

[22]Freud, op. cit., p 383 ff

[23]Kittredge, op. cit., p. 60. also John Livingston Lowes, Geoffrey Chaucer (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1944), p. 121

[24]Winney, op. cit., p 113.

[25]Robinson, op. cit , p. 793.

[26]Constance B. Hieatt, The Realism of Dream Visions (The Hague. Mouton and Co., 1967), p. 54.

[27]McCall, op. cit., p. 26.

[28]Charles O. McDonald, "An Interpretation of Chaucer's Parlement of Foules," Speculum XXX (1955), pp. 444-457.

[29]see Howard Schless, "Transformations: Chaucer's Use of Italian," in Geoffrey Chaucer: Writers and Their Background, ed. Derek Brewer (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), pp. 184-223.

[30]Winney, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

[31]Robinson, op. cit., p. 791.

[32]Freud, op. cit., p. 414.

[33]J. A. W. Bennett, The Parlement of Foules (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 134.

[34]James J. Sheridan (trans.) Alan of Lille:

Anti-claudianus (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1973), p. 111.

[35]Summa contra gentiles, ii, 45, as quoted in Bennett, op. cit., p. 141.

[36]Carl Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, pp. 171-72, as quoted in Hieatt, p. 59.

[37]J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, Ltd., 1924), p. 195.

NOTES TO APPENDIX I

[1]Robert O. Payne, "Book Reviews: A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives and Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories," Comparative Literature, XV, p. 271.

[2]Morton Bloomfield, "Symbolism in Medieval Literature," Modern Philology, LVI, 2 (1958), p 74.

[3]Jean Misrachi, "Symbolism and Allegory in Arthurian Romance," Romance Philology (XVII), p. 557

[4]Francis Lee Utley, "Robertsonianism Redivivus," Romance Philology XIX (1965), p 250

[5]Bloomfield, op. cit , p. 76.

[6]E. T. Donaldson, "Patristic Exegesis in the Criticism of Medieval Literature: The Opposition," in Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature ed. by Dorothy Bethurum (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 4.

[7]Utley, op. cit., p. 256.

[8]Bloomfield, op. cit., p. 75.

[9]Ibid., p. 76.

[10]V. A. Kolve, "Chaucer and the Visual Arts," in Geoffrey Chaucer: Writers and Their Backgrounds, ed. by Derek Brewer (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), p. 315.

[11]Payne, op. cit., p. 276.

[12]Kolve, op. cit., p. 318.

NOTES TO APPENDIX II

[1]John Matthews Manly, "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," reprinted in Chaucer Criticism: "The Canterbury Tales," ed. by Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960), p. 271.

[2]Manly, op. cit., p. 286.

[3]Helge Kokeritz, "Rhetorical Word Play in Chaucer, PMLA 69, (1954), pp. 937-952.

[4]James J. Murphy, "A New Look at Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," Review of English Studies XV (1964), pp. 1-20.

[5]Robert O. Payne, "Chaucer and the Art of Rhetoric," in Companion to Chaucer Studies, ed. by Beryl Rowland (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 41. See also Payne's The Key of Remembrance: A Study of Chaucer's Poetics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

[6]Manly, op. cit., p. 290.

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