TIME, CONSCIOUSNESS AND NARRATIVE PLAY IN LATE MEDIEVAL SECULAR DREAM POETRY AND FRAMED NARRATIVES

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Abstract

This thesis considers time and narrative play in dream poems and framed narratives. It begins with a chapter on the history of time perceptions and time-telling, and explores how ideas about time influenced medieval writers. It also surveys some modern views on the history of time-measurement and its influences on culture and the collective consciousness. Chapter two, after analysing the treatment of time in the *Roman de la Rose*, surveys some of the ways in which modern criticism has evaluated and conceived the genre of secular dream literature that developed from the *Roman de la Rose*. Chapter three examines the innovative use of the convention of beginning a poem with a seasonal opening and theorises that this becomes a 'language' open to adaptation and variation. Chapter four looks in detail at Froissart's *L'Orloge amoureus* and discusses the clock as a new object which, contrary to the views of cultural historians, was embraced by medieval writers, religious and secular, to symbolise a range of virtues, qualities and ideas. I argue that the clock inspired creativity rather than heralding a rationalisation of the mind that would stifle imaginative responses to this new technology. Chapter five explores metafictional and self-reflexive devices in Froissart's *Joli Buisson de Jonece* and Chaucer's *House of Fame*. I consider how these texts play with narrative time and sequence by writing the genesis of the text into the poem. Finally, chapter six examines ideas of closure in medieval dream poetry and looks specifically at the reciprocity and inconclusiveness of the *Judgement* poems of Guillaume de Machaut. Because the second poem reverses the decision of the first poem, it brings into question the authority of the text and the unity of the authorial voice.

Research Objectives

1. To provide a survey of the history of time perceptions and time-measurement in western culture. To examine to what extent the invention of the mechanical clock in the Middle Ages affected these time perceptions and altered the cultural and artistic consciousness. To question to what extent the literature of the later Middle Ages was affected and influenced by this new technology, with its new mode of time-measurement, and to investigate its social and cultural implications. To explore the impact of the mechanical clock on the creative imagination of the period. To consider how far modern critical opinion has shifted away from a religious and imaginative approach to time to a rational and logical approach as a result of the technologisation of society that ensued from the invention of the mechanical clock.

2. To examine the genre of late-medieval dream poetry and analogous framed narratives and *dits amoureux* in their relation to time and subjectivity. To explore the many ways in which time is central to both the narrative structure and as a theme in the content of the poem itself in this genre.

3. To explore how the dream genre employed the tradition of beginning a poem with a seasonal opening with sophisticated variation, and to examine the relationship between this 'language' of seasonal openings and the themes within the individual poem.

4. To explore the relationship between the author of the poem, the 'I' that speaks, the dreamer, the characters and voices embedded in the text, and also the reader. To demonstrate the innovation and sophistication of the narrative structures and play within the dream poem genre, and to look at the ways in which these structures expose the artificiality of fictional time and experience in narrative construction.

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
(T.S. Eliot, 'Burnt Norton,' *The Four Quartets*)

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
(T.S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding,' *The Four Quartets*)

For Uncle Derek

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Contents

CHAPTER 1

TIME-TELLING AND TALE-TELLING

Introduction

Time-telling and tale-telling have a particularly dynamic relationship in the later medieval period. This thesis proposes to look at the equation between time and text in the Middle Ages. It considers time-telling and temporal reference in an era (*c.*1230 – *c.* 1500) that experiences a great variety of types of time-measurement and multiple cultural attitudes to time. Medieval writers seem to have been particularly inspired by time and its measurement and representation. The 'tale-telling' that I specifically refer to is that of late-medieval French and English dream poems and analogous framed narratives by Chaucer and his contemporaries.

It is unsurprising that time, temporal experience, and various associated subjects and themes should be foregrounded in literature. Time has been a subject of irresistible fascination to scholars and writers over the centuries. Many great minds have puzzled over what its essential nature is but they have all found it to be an elusive and mysterious subject. This perplexity is perhaps best illustrated in the oft-quoted passage from St. Augustine's *Confessions* (397-398): 'What, then, is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled.'[1] He claims to have an innate sense of what time is as an experience; the difficulty arises in speaking of it. Yet, if Augustine has an instinctive understanding of

time, why does time become a problem to him? Why should major philosophers such as Plato,[2] Aristotle,[3] Augustine[4] and in more recent times, Heidegger[5] concern themselves with an analysis of time? Clearly, there is more at stake than just an attempt to understand time either as a tangible entity, in terms of the planetary movements or the seasonal cycles, or as an abstract concept. Certain questions are repeatedly asked: What does time mean to the individual? How is time experienced? What does it mean to exist in time? Is it possible to assimilate an individual's experiences into a coherent whole without reference to a framework of time, sequence and narrative?

Amidst the numerous expositions of time there is a common theme: an attempt to bridge the gaps that open up as a result of human beings being subject to time and change. Time is central to an understanding of the cosmos and to any consideration of human experience and consciousness – subjects with which writers have always been concerned. It could be argued that time is the supreme mediator between mind and matter, offering the possibility of binding external experience to internal consciousness, and the individual experience to the world outside the individual. This central temporal interchange provides a framework in which various oppositions can be explored. The dislocation that ensues from the fragmentation of time-bound experience highlights the oppositions between inner and outer, the finite and infinite, the mutable and the immutable and the part and the whole. Once these oppositions are defined and deconstructed, there is the potential for the reconciliation of difference. If one thinks of time as fragmenting human experience, then temporality is all that separates objective reality and subjective experience, interior reflection and exterior signification. The interpretative act gives meaning to experience, but is always necessarily at least at one remove temporally from the event itself. Plato's description of time as 'a moving image

of eternity,'[6] is a visual means of situating the temporal within what is conceived as permanent reality. The time continuum acts as a connecting corridor between human beings and the universe. Thus, in order to trace humankind's relationship with time, it is necessary to trace its relationship with, and developing knowledge of, the universe.

What is there to gain by recognition of the space that both separates and unites human beings and the universe they inhabit? It is a means of examining the experience of being a consciousness and seeking to eliminate the distance between inner and outer. Time, therefore, is central to human consciousness. 'Time...does not exist independent of human life but is always socially constructed...time is always dependent on the meaning of time.'[7] The conversion of time into a noun is itself a conceptual fabrication to reify the temporal dimension of entities and events. The existence of the temporal dimension of consciousness as an external entity is an illusion. And so, to give time the sense of an independent existence and meaning, as if it is taken from outside and incorporated into the personal domain, elides the fact that time is dependent on somebody conceptualising it as an aspect of experience. Time requires consciousness and interpretation to situate it as a dimension of the consciousness. Time and consciousness are interlocked in our experience of the world. In *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (*The Consolation of Philosophy*, *c.* 523), Boethius addresses the temporal dimension of consciousness. He highlights a traditional dichotomy between being and becoming. Presented thus, eternity is seen as simultaneous experience and temporality perceived as fragmentation:

> Nam quidquid uiuit in tempore id praesens a praeteritis in futura procedit nihilque est in tempore constitutum quod totum uitae suae spatium pariter possit amplecti. Sed crastinum quidem nondum adprehendit, hesternum uero iam perdidit; in

> hodierna quoque uita non amplius uiuitis quam in illo mobili transitorioque momento. Quod igitur temporis patitur condicionem, licet illud, sicuti de mundo censuit Aristoteles, nec coeperit umquam esse nec desinat uitaque eius cum temporis infinitate tendatur, nondum tamen tale est ut aeternum esse iure credatur.
>
> ...for whatsoever liveth in time, that being present proceedeth from times past to times to come, and there is nothing placed in time which can embrace all the space of its life at once. But it hath not yet attained to-morrow and hath not lost yesterday. And you live no more in this day's life than in that movable and transitory moment. Wherefore, whatsoever suffereth the condition of time, although, as Aristotle thought of the world, it never began nor were ever to end, and its life did endure with infinite time, yet it is not such that it ought to be called everlasting.[8]

All religions are concerned with negotiating the relationship of temporal life to eternity. An essentially Christian attitude toward temporal experience, however, is clearly revealed by Boethius' choice of words: a creature 'suffers the condition of being in time'. It is interesting that in Boethius' attempts to define the world, he looks at it from the point of view of being in time, and that this condition is defined as one in which time imposes certain constraints and boundaries. In contrast to the limitations of being in time, eternity is the perfect state of being, allowing simultaneous possession of yesterday, today and tomorrow. The fact of living in time means that the subject is in a perpetual state of becoming. Temporality denies the possibility of simultaneity and, therefore, unity. Boethius' vision in the *Consolation* is itself offering arguments about how a promise of such unity with the spiritual world, beyond the vicissitudes of earthly time, exists for an individual, who comes to understand rightly the true distinctions between the inferior world of time and that of the eternal mind and spirit. Of course, this wonderful beyond-earth 'unity' may offer ultimate truth, but it also reduces individuality and that, even in late medieval literature, is a central subject for writers.

Augustine and Boethius both prioritise the world of the mind and attempt to resolve temporal problems with philosophical reasoning in narrative form. Boethius seeks the consolation of philosophy, the consolation of knowing that his mind remains free even when his body is imprisoned. The freedom of his mind is like an image of eternity. For Augustine, the confessional treatise is a way to engage with the various ways in which he had become a puzzle to himself.[9] He finds solutions to the problem of being in time through the intricacy of theological and philosophical argument. The *Confessions* is, at its core, a work from a Christian perspective tracing the relationship of an individual life and its faltering journey through the years, and the gradual discovery of eternal truths.

The first part of this chapter considers the status of early autobiography, looking at the examples of Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum*, (*The History of His Misfortunes, c.* 1132) Christina of Markyate's *Of S. Theodora, a Virgin, Who Is Also Called Christina* (*De S. Theodora, virgine, quae et Christina dicitur*), and St Augustine's *Confessions*. All of these texts are narratives about selves in time, all telling how their faith in God helped them to transcend temporal, worldly issues by reference to an eternal truth. Elizabeth Petroff identifies the common endeavour in medieval autobiographies as 'exemplifying an autobiographical impulse, that is, a desire to put into words the search for what we would call a self – to express not just a formed and discovered self but to put into language the process of discovering and locating that self in relation to God, to the world, to others.'[10] Although this is a perceptive comment, and certainly such narratives about selves in time do indeed satisfy a desire for autobiographical narrative, it does, however, remain true that these life narratives function in a radically different way from autobiography in the modern world, in the selective nature of their content and their

almost exclusive concentration on the relationship between the earthly world and the eternal. The history of autobiography and its slow evolution as a literary genre has a complex relationship to medieval dream poetry, and aspects of these relationships, especially the use of first person narrative, will be discussed in chapter 2.

This chapter then examines the history of time-measurement and time-telling, looking at the main instruments that humankind has devised and employed over the ages to keep track of, and represent, temporal passage. I will relate the sociological and cultural development of time-telling and time-consciousness in the Middle Ages to the creative expression of time perceptions and time-consciousness in late-medieval literary texts. The invention of the mechanical clock is bound up with the society in the age of its invention and, for this reason, I investigate the reasons and motives behind the creation of a machine that keeps regular time over the twenty-four hour day rather than just by daylight. This involves an analysis of monastic communities and their focus on time-management in order to follow a strict, communal timetable. Inevitably, the communal time-keeping of the monastery also influenced the outside world as the monastic bells rang continually for services and liturgical offices at set times each day, and the noise would carry resoundingly into the surrounding villages. The regular ringing of bells and the gradual introduction of mechanisms – clocks and clock automata – are crucial stages towards a new perception of time. During the late Middle Ages, there is a shift from the rhythm of life lived according to the natural cycle, and life lived by the clock, dissociated from natural signals. Time became more entrenched as a social and cultural phenomenon as this transition took place. An account of the changes in technology of time-measurement is necessary in this study because new technology seems, I shall argue, to have excited writers creatively. Moreover, historians such as Jacques Le Goff have

claimed that technological inventions radically altered the social and cultural consciousness during the period from *c.* 1250 to *c.* 1500. This thesis will, in part, query these arguments and assumptions.

This first chapter will also look at concepts of an original, natural sense of temporality that exists independently of human calculation. The motion of the heavenly bodies is only the basis of human calculation. The temporal cycle of the universe exists as the authentic source of movement. It is only measurable and quantifiable in human terms, as a second-hand evaluation imposed on the observed by the observer. The relationship of human affairs to the universe and to the movement of the planets was of great significance in medieval culture. The interest in this relationship itself encouraged writers to include notions of time, particularly layers of time framed within time, in dream poetry.

Finally, this chapter looks at the ways that language expresses temporal experience and the different ways that time was perceived and described in the medieval period. This includes a section on the Ages of Man and an introduction to ideas about the imaginative experimentation with narrative time in medieval literature, as a prelude to later chapters which will analyse in greater depth the narrative techniques used in late medieval dream poetry. However, for the reasons outlined above, that is the link between changing technologies and changing attitudes, it is essential to provide a study of the empirical knowledge and calculation of time through the medieval and pre-medieval centuries.

This thesis will consider in later chapters the role of perceptions of time in dream poetry and related framed narratives. Dream poetry presents a striking confirmation both of the perennial philosophical interest in questions about time, temporal movement and human consciousness, and also by its self-referential, self-conscious nature, it emphasises the special relevance of time to the genre of dream vision poetry. This interest in time is made evident in the most seminal of all medieval dream poems, the *Roman de la Rose* where there is a philosophical passage questioning the mystery of time near the beginning of the poem.

I. Early Autobiography: Time, Narrative and Individual Consciousness

Attempts to define autobiography have perhaps raised as many issues as those that they have sought to solve:

> However, autobiography has also been recognised since the late eighteenth century as a distinct literary genre and, as such, an important testing ground for critical controversies about a range of ideas including authorship, selfhood, representation and the division between fact and fiction. The very pervasiveness and slipperiness of autobiography has made the need to contain and control it within disciplinary boundaries all the more urgent, and many literary critics have turned to definitions as a way of stamping their academic authority on an unruly and even slightly disreputable field.[11]

It is not my intention here to address these specific problems of genre and definition in relation to autobiography, or to provide a history of autobiographical writing, as many of those issues go beyond the scope of my thesis. I am purely interested in autobiography in its relation to time and to narrative constructs of temporal experience.

However, it is important to note that not only did the term autobiography not exist in the Middle Ages, but that also the concept of autobiography was then very different to the modern understanding of autobiography. In the Middle Ages the narrative of a life was more exemplary and didactic in intention rather than necessarily an attempt to portray all aspects of a particular identity. Abelard's *Historia calamitatum* is written in the first person but with third person chapter-headings, such as 'Abelard's letter of Consolation to his friend', which may be authorial, but reflect the contemporary attitude to autobiography. This alternation between first and third person narration has the effect of both personalising and objectifying events in Abelard's life. The effect of this technique is perhaps consistent with his intention of teaching by example so that his personal experience of overcoming great adversity can provide a paradigm for universal suffering:

> Sepe humanos affectus aut provocant aut mittigant amplius exempla quam verba. Unde post nonnullam sermonis ad presentem habiti consolationem, de ipsis calamitatum mearum experimentis consolatoriam ad absentum scribere decrevi, ut in comparatione mearum tuas aut nullas aut modicas temptationes recognoscas et tolerabilius feras.[12]
>
> There are times when example is better than precept for stirring or soothing human passions; and so I propose to follow up the words of consolation I gave you in person with the history of my own misfortunes, hoping thereby to give you comfort in absence. In comparison with my trials you will find that your own are nothing, or only slight, and will find them easier to bear.[13]

Abelard's narrative of his personal misfortunes is autobiographical in the sense of it being an individual's experience through time, but it is guided by an altruistic aim: to provide consolation and edification, to strengthen and inspire the reader to endure the vagaries of time. As Abelard's opening statement illustrates, the whole narrative

enterprise is conceived as generalising from aspects of an individual's life for instructional purposes.

Although autobiography is not recognised as a genre in the medieval period, the visions of medieval mystics are sometimes accompanied by narratives of their own lives. The element of autobiography in these life narratives is shaped by the religious purpose of the whole narrative. The Middle Ages, more than other eras, made time and its effects central to Christian teaching. The didactic theme of mutability is a recurrent motif in medieval art and literature in images such as the *Three Living and The Three Dead*, or the contrast between rich *transi* and the bare corpse. The prominence of ideas of mutability and contempt of the world may be one factor that inhibits the development of autobiography during the Middle Ages. Life histories of this period trace the story and development of the soul, above all. The chief biographical form of the period is the saint's life. Whether authors who are describing their own lives use the first person or, like Margery Kempe, the third person, the purpose and structure of such narratives reflects the overriding concern with the unfolding life and the progress of a soul moving towards eternity.

In the twelfth century, Christina of Markyate narrates events from her real life in the third person. She tells how she escaped from an undesired marriage and found fulfilment in becoming a devoted disciple of God. Christina takes refuge in her imagination and overcomes her circumstances primarily through visionary revelation and detachment. The visions comfort and strengthen her and precede her real-life escape from the secular world. Medieval mystics vary between using the first and the third person to recount their story. The first person adds immediacy and authority to the

account, and the third person, being less self-centred, gives the impression that the person is being used by God to speak His truths. The use of the third person narrative in Christina's account could be described as 'pseudo-biographical', in that Christina is assuming the role of an objective narrator in order to tell her own subjective viewpoint. In this way, she is able to empower herself by writing herself as the heroine of her own story and by writing her mother as the would-be obstacle to the devotional life.[14] The guise of objectivity argues in her favour.

St Augustine's *Confessions* is one of the most influential examples of an autobiographical first person narrative in Western culture. The *Confessions* is also a major piece of philosophical and theological writing, engaging with profound ontological questions.[15] When Augustine wrote his *Confessions*, he intended that an account of his personal journey from a life of sin to a life of penitence would instruct and provide an example to others. While all narrative involves a temporal sequence, this kind of text demonstrates some very specific kinds of selection and generalisation from the individual. The story of Augustine's life concerns only those details and aspects which are relevant to his spiritual enlightenment and his faith in God. He describes his earlier life as a sinner and then sets this sense of wasted time against the righteous life he embraces in serving God. Augustine's conversion to Christianity prompts him to try and understand his experience of time on earth in relation to God's eternal time. Alternatively, perhaps his contemplation and musings on the imperfect, fragmentary nature of being in time instigated his conversion to Christianity? Christian eschatology and narrative constructs both offered solutions to some of the temporal dilemmas that trouble Augustine. He gives an example of a threefold present in relation to reading and consciousness:

> Suppose that I am going to recite a psalm that I know. Before I begin, my faculty of expectation is engaged by the whole of it. But once I have begun, as much of the psalm as I have removed from the province of expectation and relegated to the past now engages my memory, and the scope of the action which I am performing is divided between the two faculties of memory and expectation, the one looking back to the part which I have already recited, the other looking forward to the part which I have still to recite. But my faculty of attention is present all the while, and through it passes what was the future in the process of becoming the past. As the process continues, the province of memory is extended in proportion as that of expectation is reduced, until the whole of my expectation is absorbed. This happens when I have finished my recitation and it has passed into the province of memory. What is true of the whole psalm is also true of all its parts and of each syllable. It is true of any longer action in which I may be engaged and of which the recitation of the psalm may only be a small part. It is true of man's whole life, of which all his actions are parts. It is true of the whole history of mankind, of which each man's life is a part.[16]

In Augustine's example of reciting a psalm, the separate words that make up the whole psalm are unified as a whole by the process of recitation. The recitation is an event that occurs in time within the continuity of an individual consciousness. This foregrounds the issues of the relation between language and time and the relation of the individual to time.[17] Augustine's statement, does not, however, completely hold true. He is attempting to show how an individual consciousness is unified in time by comparing it to a reading of a known psalm. An individual consciousness exists in moments of time and the psalm consists of a flow of words. In both cases the whole experience is fragmented into discrete units of time but also in both cases this fragmentation is counterbalanced by the overriding consciousness that experiences these moments of time and language. The transcendent consciousness exists *in* time and *through* time, and unifies past, present and future experience by simultaneously engaging the memory with present attention and with future expectation. The analogy of reciting the psalm with the passage of time in an individual's life is an astute attempt to represent and resolve the aporias of time and temporal experience, but the two examples given by Augustine are not exactly analogous. The psalm is a familiar entity, with a definite and defined duration, already

experienced and memorised by Augustine, whereas the end point, that is the death, of an individual consciousness is unknown and undefined. Augustine's attempt to express something of the complexity of the relationship between the experience of time, consciousness, identity and the representation of these experiences through language and text is akin to the type of thought experiments that we find in medieval dream poetry. Augustine is trying to articulate what it is to be a consciousness in time but the articulation and exploration of that idea is necessarily a representation and a secondary consciousness. There is no way of articulating or representing pure consciousness or pure temporality, and perhaps these ideas and experiences are in some ways beyond language and thought. However, these problems of representation become interesting in their own right. The fact that Augustine resorts to analogy and to an imaginative resolution to the problem of time illustrates the elusiveness of the subject and its relative inexpressibility. The above quote supposedly provides answers about temporal experience, but it actually generates many more questions about the relation of the individual to the world and to language and the text, and problematises the extent to which it is possible to objectify and represent subjective experience.

The early autobiographical form is, on the whole, didactic and profoundly contemplative and philosophical. It attempts to transcend the personal and historical time and circumstances of its composition. It tries to speak across time, across boundaries and address the fundamental problems of being. Medieval autobiography is relevant to the study of dream poetry because of its use of the first person narrative. The confessional first person narrative approach in medieval literature, as we encounter it in love visions, echoes the style of religious *vitae*, but these fictional autobiographical accounts concentrate on secular concerns of life and love rather than the eternal life of the soul.

Guillaume de Machaut's *Voir-Dit* and Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune* are examples of late medieval narratives that present themselves in an innovatively autobiographical way.[18] It became quite common in late medieval courtly narrative for texts to contain material which appears to refer to the author's life outside the text. This tendency resulted in a new prominence of the author persona within the text. The conflation of real life detail and the fictional world produces a hybrid genre, the pseudo-autobiography as Laurence de Looze terms it. According to de Looze, the pseudo-autobiography is a work that eludes simple classification as either fiction or autobiography:

> My description of the pseudo-autobiography will be of a way of reading that shifts, or at least hesitates, between readings as "true," "historical," "autobiographical," and ones that receive a text according to known modes of fiction...this lack of definition – this potential confusion – that is the hallmark of the pseudo-autobiography appears to have been part of the pleasure fourteenth-century readers found in a whole series of important literary works. They came to like, it seems, texts that claimed to be autobiographical, in the sense of being retrospective first-person narratives about the author's life, but then also undermined that claim.[19]

This deliberate ambiguity concerning the authenticity and veracity of the 'I' of the narrative instigated a tension between the relationship of the author and the narrator. At times the narrator is aligned with the author and at other times a gap opens up and the relationship between the two is undermined. The 'I' who speaks is always a constructed self, and nowhere more so than in Medieval dream literature, as a whole wealth of criticism has explored. It has to be remembered though, that even when the text itself provides links between the narrator and the real life existence of the author, this is part of the fiction and specifically selected for the purpose of the artistic work as a whole. For example, in the *House of Fame* the narrator is called 'Geffrey' by the Eagle, who also

accuses him of being too bookish and living like a hermit. This may well be autobiographical disclosure by Chaucer, and it may be that this is how he saw himself, but what is certain is that this is the way he wanted to present the narrator in this particular narrative.

This thesis is not concerned simply with the first person narrative in medieval dream poetry but with the complex issues of time that are raised by these narratives. There are several levels of temporality in narrative: the time of the author/composition, the time of the narrator (fictional time) and the time of the reader. Medieval dream poetry seems to be a genre whose authors are particularly aware of the complexities of these interconnected narrative temporalities, and so we find the dramatisation of these various temporalities in writing as the author plays with, and shifts between, these different layers and dimensions of time. This genre, in particular, poses many questions for the critic regarding problems created by shifts in the temporal perspectives between the author, the narrator and the reader. As chapter 2 suggests, an awareness of the profound complexity of time and narrative arises in the conduct of the narrative in the *Roman de la Rose*, the original source of the whole genre. As subsequent chapters will show, the writers who developed the genre, especially after Guillaume de Machaut, often explored these narratological complexities more overtly and more playfully.

II. The History of Time: Time-Telling Through the Ages

In his 1975 study, *Four Phases of Time and Literary Modernism*, R. J. Quinones identifies four temporal phases in the genesis of particular examples of modernist literature, which are to do with the complex relationship between self, society and the historical context.[20] In the introduction Quinones articulates his intention to link literary attitudes to time with the social and cultural history of the era in which the texts were produced. For Quinones, time is a recurring theme in western literature throughout the ages, and one that reflects humanity's consciousness of its own history:

> Time has been, and should be, treated as a major theme of Western Literature; I can be more specific and refer to it as an *indicator-theme*, one that clearly points to and is even instrumental in the surges and sags of Western society.[21]

I am in agreement with Quinones when he identifies time as a major theme in Western Literature, as time has frequently appeared as a literary theme through the ages. A consciousness of time and a representation of that time consciousness in literature signifies an engagement with the age in which one lives. The storytelling impetus often relates to the specific historical setting and context. It seems strange then, that Quinones allows a breakdown in this implied continuity by excluding the Middle Ages from this double awareness of time and history:

> My own *The Renaissance Discovery of Time* shows the many ways that time entered quite specifically into the re-awakening and quickening of life among the European countries in the Renaissance, and retrospectively indicated how many of the Renaissance sources for their inspired addresses to time were from Roman Literature. One notices the gap of the Middle Ages; this is not because I deplore that period of our cultural history – quite the contrary is true (although it might

represent my ignorance of it) – but rather my scholarly belief, which has not yet been countered, that in the Middle Ages, this dynamic [dynamic of Time] lay fallow and, as a consequence, the concept of time as we have later come to regard it was largely non-existent.[22]

The aim of this thesis, however, is to show that, contrary to Quinones' belief, the dynamic of time in the Middle Ages was anything but fallow. In fact, the Middle Ages was a period of peculiarly heightened sensitivity toward temporal experience and the meaning of human life and consciousness. This arises from several central elements in medieval culture and society. Medieval Christian culture, by dint of its historical and teleological character, focused attention on the relationship between this world, the world of time, and the next world, the eternal Kingdom of God. The literature of the Middle Ages reflects the period's spiritual preoccupation and its strong awareness of a divide between the temporal and the non-temporal worlds. Medieval literature persistently examines this earthly and heavenly opposition in a variety of forms, often highlighting the tension between the subjectivity of personal, individual time as it is lived and known, and the objectivity of collective, historical time as it is perceived, recorded and understood. Late-medieval dream poetry, which is the aspect of the culture of the period which is the central subject of this thesis, is a literary form that frequently frames a profound and philosophical exploration of these very topics. Similar philosophical issues are fundamental to many medieval texts in other genres. An obvious example of a genre steeped in philosophical speculation is debate and dialogue literature. As the example of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* shows, various genres overlap. In many ways the *Consolation* functions like a dream poem, with personification figures appearing to a first person narrator in an almost dreamlike visionary revelation.

Medieval Literature abundantly disproves Quinones' claim that the Middle Ages was a period which was wholly impervious to ideas of time and history. Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* and *Troilus and Criseyde* are good examples of medieval texts that ask profound questions about the world of time in relation to the eternal.

No genre approaches questions and conundrums of time with greater sophistication than the dream poem. Late-medieval dream poetry is a genre that, in the hands of the authors discussed in this thesis, focuses on the text itself, drawing attention to the temporal dimension of the creation, production and reception of the written word. There is a sense of textual collusion between the writers and audiences in their joint awareness of the complexities of narrative time and various aspects of time and temporality raised by the experience of art and fiction. The dream narrative or framed narrative is an appropriate vehicle for such exploration because it is based on a situation where, allegedly, an experience that is out of time enters into the consciousness of a narrator who presents himself as otherwise living in a normal human environment in time.

The concept of time as we have come to know it, that is clock-time and numerical symbols for time-measurement, was developing in the Middle Ages alongside more ancient, non-mechanical methods, marking the emergence already of a new, standardised, technological world. The Middle Ages are distinct from other periods, both before and after, not because, as Quinones assumes, there were no technical or cultural developments in the area of time-measurement during the period, but rather because it was a time when older primitive systems and new mechanical systems coexisted and were interchangeable. This co-existence, as we shall see, left its mark on daily life,

culture and literature. It also appears to have become a creative impetus and stimulus to some late medieval writers. Chapter 4, in particular, will explore the way in which the technological development of the clock seems to have excited the poetic imagination in the age of Chaucer.

III. The Writer's Response to Multiple Forms of Time-Telling

There are so many ways in which Quinones' view of the Middle Ages is wrong that it is only possible to highlight a few. One of these is his view of the classical and pre-Christian past in relation to the Middle Ages. Quinones sees the Middle Ages as a period that remained uninterested in the classical past, whereas, in fact, medieval thinkers and writers were constantly trying to make sense of pre-Christian ideas for a Christian audience. There are several seminal studies of the medieval awareness, and evolving awareness, of the past of western culture that discuss the idea of a twelfth century renaissance, assimilating, in many fields, the rediscovery of classical literature and scholarship.[23]

It is also important to realise that, in contrast to Quinones' assertion that the time dynamic lay fallow in the Middle Ages, in this period, as in any age, the attitude towards time and history was not a rigid, static perspective. For example, the chroniclers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries displayed a change of attitude in their new contempt for myth and legends and their new concern for historical accuracy, seeking out government records and letters to provide authentication for their narratives of history.[24]

Jean Froissart's *Chronicles* were written between 1370-1400 and were constantly revised. The fact that Froissart was constantly revising and updating his *Chronicles* demonstrates a commitment to historical accuracy. It is notable that Froissart was both a chronicler and a poet. His poetry too shows that he was interested in imaginative representations of personal temporal experience while his chronicles attest to his interest in a communal historical memory and temporal experience. The titles of two of Froissart's poems indicate the prominence of time in his imagination – the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* and *L'Orloge amoureus* – with the idea of looking back to one's youth in the former, and assimilating the clock into the subjective realm in the latter. Chapter 4 will examine *L'Orloge amoureus* and present the argument that, contrary to views expressed by Jacques Le Goff and popular academic belief, the arrival of 'clock time' did not stifle or oppose creativity, but in fact stimulated it and excited the creative imagination.

In the *Prologue* to the *Parson's Tale*, Chaucer juxtaposes several different means of representing the time of day, which were current in contemporary society, drawing on astronomical beliefs, and natural and mechanical systems. Chaucer is always very interested in science and scientific knowledge so it is not particularly surprising that he writes about technological development. But, like Froissart, he responds to these scientific changes imaginatively and creatively, using the new technology alongside older temporal signs to enrich the imagery of temporal passage rather than diminish or replace it. It cannot be overestimated how much time-telling is a cultural and social experience as well as a practical, technological phenomenon. By bringing together a diverse range of time-indicators for comparison, notably both sacred and secular manifestations, he points to a society which was familiar with many methods of time-

telling and time-measuring, all of which could be, and apparently were, used simultaneously and interchangeably:

> By that the Maunciple hadde his tale al ended,
> The sonne for the south lyne was descended
> So lowe that he nas nat, to my sighte,
> Degreës nyne and twenty as in highte.
> Foure of the clokke it was tho, as I gesse,
> For ellevene foot, or litel moore or lesse,
> My shadwe was at thilke tyme, as there
> Of swiche feet as my lengthe parted were
> In sixe feet equal of proporcioun.
> Therwith the moones exaltacioun –
> I meene Libra – alwey gan ascende
> As we were entryng at a thropes ende.
> (X, 1-12)[25]

We are reminded of the passage of time in this digression just at the point when the previous tale has been narrated. The coincidence of several precise signs in this passage, such as the angle of the sun in the sky, the length of the Parson's shadow, the position of the zodiac and the time by the clock, mark the multiple dimensions of the moment when the storytelling event comes to an end. The hour according to the clock stands out as the only abstract symbol. In *The Cock and the Clock: Telling Time in Chaucer's Day*, Linne Mooney looks at contemporary almanacs as a site where natural signs of change and movement in the universe are converted into, and interpreted against, clock-time:

> The calendars of Somer and Lynn help us moderns better understand Chaucer's references to time. But perhaps what is most interesting about the calculation of time in the calendars is not that they employ side by side so many different systems for telling time, inherited from various classical, Christian, and scientific traditions, but that they so often take pains to explain to their readers how to convert these different systems to "clock time". The trouble they take over this suggests that, although clocks were still relatively rare – and, in our sense of the word, of a timepiece with face or dial, extremely rare – in Chaucer's time,

> nevertheless by the end of the fourteenth century "clock time" was apparently fast superseding the older methods of telling the time.[26]

'Clock time' may have filtered into the medieval consciousness as a new means of structuring and understanding the passage of the day, but was not necessarily superseding the older methods of telling the time. The passage from the *Prologue* to the *Parson's Tale* quoted on the previous page, shows that Chaucer was revelling in the multiple forms of time measurement without allowing 'foure of the clokke' to supersede the older methods.

The almanacs reveal the fourteenth-century confrontation between asymmetry, in the fluctuation of natural rhythms, and uniformity, in the artificial representations of time, instigated by the regularising influence of social organisation. Clock-time caught on quickly as an ideal way of structuring events and synchronising social participation. Apparently, those people involved in compiling almanacs perceived clock-time as an equivalent reference to the future astronomical phenomena they predicted. Yet, as we shall see, contemporary imaginative responses differentiate between different modes of representation and offer at times, an ambiguous and equivocal view about changing attitudes towards time-measurement and representation, and the increasing drive toward mechanisation. Chaucer and Froissart, among other medieval poets, display a complexity in their analysis of time that the almanacs do not reveal. Their poetry conveys a fear that accuracy and nuance will be lost, swallowed up and collapsed by the new mechanical world, which would function according to order and sameness rather than retaining the multivalency of degrees of difference. It is evidence of the collision of the old agrarian society and the new technological culture, and the resulting tension caused by this

collision. The medieval period was poised at a threshold of change; between calendar and seasonal time reckoning and a more precise technology: the mechanical clock.

By Chaucer's time, as the quotation above from the *Prologue* to the *Parson's Tale* shows, there is a range of contemporary registers relating to a newly enriched language of time, including both natural and mechanical vocabularies. Each register invokes a different world-view and different cultural assumptions. Chaucer indicates the time in four distinct ways in this passage. Thus, he is effectively referring to the same moment and saying the same thing four times. Yet, this is not precisely true, at least not in terms of differing cultural perceptions of the meaning of time, as each signifier amounts to a unique and specific definition. The height of the sun in the sky is an objective gauge of the time of day, but is presented as a subjective event, happening in the sight of the narrator ('to my sighte'). There is actually an illusion that time is measured between the observer or the vantage point and the sun. The narrator informs us that his shadow measures eleven feet, providing a direct correspondence between the heavens and the earth, the sun and the observer. It is the sun which causes shadows to appear, and the human shadow connects humankind back to the physical world and the natural cycle of birth and death. This particular language for measuring the time is both a factual and technical statement and, in its context, just before the arrival at Canterbury and just before a penitential tale, is also a highly emotive image, carrying associations of transience and human mortality. The lengthening and shortening of a shadow in Chaucer's lines is suggestive of the negotiation between life and death, and their reciprocity, as one gives way to the other. The reference to 'My shadwe' is evocative of the threat of death and the grave. While life is present, death is absent, but the inevitability of death at some unknown point in the future, follows each person like a

ghostly shadow. 'My shadwe' carries many different connotations. Once poets have multiple languages of time, each language carries its own stylistic, emotional and ideological associations.

There is a dynamic combination of spatial and temporal measurements in the opening of the *Prologue* to the *Parson's Tale*. At the same time as the Manciple is narrating his tale, the day is progressing and various natural signs signal this temporal movement, such as the sun descending in the sky, and the lengthening of shadows. Even the performance time of the story-telling is given as another means of marking time, and then related to cosmic time and the cycle of nature. Telling the time by the clock is so much a part of everybody's life in the modern world that it is necessary to remember that time-telling and time perceptions have changed considerably through the ages. Later in this chapter, I discuss how time-telling was largely an aural experience in the Middle Ages: the ringing of bells and the crowing of cocks audibly signalled and announced time. Here, in this passage from the *Prologue* to the *Parson's Tale*, time is a largely visual experience, although the performance time and space of the tale-telling, as a parallel to the visual waning of the day, is both aural and visual, linking language, time and consciousness. Chaucer uses spatial and geometrical descriptions to signal the time of day and to freeze an image of the particular visual position of the sun in relation to the earth and to the pilgrims. The term 'my shadwe' relates the narrator to time and to space in a very personal manner, with his own body being figured as a sundial. This is a particularly ingenious and powerful way of relating the microcosm to the macrocosm, and in so doing, juxtaposes a moment in time for an individual with a moment in time in the cosmos.

Imagine a time before mechanical watches and clocks. It is difficult for people in the western world today to envisage a time framework derived solely and directly from the external world. We are aware of each day passing from first light at dawn to fading light at dusk and darkness at night. These are perceptions that obviously do relate directly to the external world, to the rotation of the Earth and its position relative to the Sun, and contribute to an idea of movement, of change, of progression in time. However, in general, people in modern societies perceive the movement of the day and our progression in time in abstract terms. Time, for most people in their everyday lives, is thought of, and expressed, as numbers or as approximate periods of clock-time. Knowledge of time in the modern world is more often a private rather than public experience. Moreover, public clocks, which were such a far-reaching innovation in fourteenth-century towns, have become less common in the last fifty years. This is because time has become more personal with most people carrying time with them. Many people wear watches, and refer to clock-time to tell the hour, and to map out the day in terms of eating, working, meeting, scheduling, and socialising.

It is important to remember that clock-time is humankind's representation of cosmic time, or 'time out there' in the natural world. Chaucer alerts his audience to this by referring to visible natural signals of cyclicity in the passage from the *Parson's Prologue* quoted in full above: 'The sonne...was descended/ So lowe.../ Therwith the moones exaltacioun .../ alwey gan ascende.' This sense of an ever changing, mutable, external world is also understood as natural time or universal time. Natural and universal time are concepts used primarily in the context of the visible fluctuations of day and night and the round of seasons on earth. Cosmic time is a concept used with a rather wider application, embracing both the duration of cyclical periods of rotation and the

movement of the heavenly bodies, and also the age of the universe. Social time relates to cosmic time in that clock-time is derived from the movements of the earth and the solar system. However, because it is derived from time in the universe social time can only ever imitate, try to keep up with, or attempt to match cosmic time. It is not, and can never be, the real thing in itself: it is a signifier. The invention of the clock during the Middle Ages initiated a new era in the way that time was perceived and used in society. [27] It marked the reorientation of time, so that time, as we now know it, infiltrated all aspects of everyday life. Time, itself, was obviously not manufactured by people or clocks, but social and economic needs and dictates have manufactured our expression of it.

Throughout history humankind has devised a variety of ways of harnessing natural forces to mirror on a small scale the motion of the heavens. There are many practical reasons to explain this, but there exist also a number of psychological motivations. Practically, it was in the interest of all humankind to understand and make optimum use of the cycles of nature, by basing its activities on the time of day and the time of year, because these factors could obviously have an effect on performance and productivity. And by 'reading' the movement of the heavenly bodies into specific phases of the parts of the day from sunrise to sunset, it was possible to divide the day into convenient sections, providing demarcations for mealtimes, work, and other activities or events.

The psychological desire to connect human experience and consciousness with the external world evolved side by side with the practical need for social organisation. In order to make the transition from a hunting society to a settled farming community, it was necessary for humankind to take control of its environment in a new and more far-

reaching way. Settlers needed to be able to predict repetition within change. The Babylonians, who were primarily a farming community, kept charts tracking the cycles of the natural world.[28] Farmers needed to have knowledge of the patterns of the seasons and the weather, in an ongoing quest to control the environment. As a result there has been a tradition relating observation and astronomy to time measurement, tabulation and time telling from the earliest times in human society onwards. It is possible to trace this tradition from the rudimentary instruments of ancient civilisation through to the technological precision of modern day clocks. These methods of human time-keeping involve equating cosmological movement with lived experience and the sense of a historical continuum, and indicating this dynamic on a corresponding dial or time scale. The power of astrological allusions as a way of indicating a season or time, derives also from the belief that the heavenly movements affected human character, health and events. In addition, there was a rich heritage from classical mythology which attributed various gods as rulers of the planets. Temporal perceptions and methods of time measurement are deeply embedded in the cultural consciousness that creates and devises them.

There are evident natural indicators of change and movement in the universe, such as the daily alternation of day and night and the seasonal variations. Therefore, the first lessons of linear and cyclical movement and change were learned directly from nature. Isaac Asimov situates humankind's primary experience of time in its contact with, and observation of, its environment and the movement of the physical world. He describes the earth as the clock that we live on, the first clock that humankind ever knew and from which originates all concepts and calculations of time:

> It is the apparent motion of the heavenly bodies, in fact, resulting from the actual motion of the Earth, that gave mankind its first notion of time. For that reason, we can think of ourselves as living on a giant clock; the first clock mankind ever had and still the most important. [29]

Medieval literature, however, illustrates that perceptions of planetary movements are culturally imbibed and generated alongside the observation of the natural world. Inherited beliefs about the mythology and the influences of the universe create a very rich resource of images and ideas for medieval writers.[30] The beginning of the *Canterbury Tales* weaves together images of calendar and seasonal time with elemental conditions and with astronomical references and symbolism, linking this with the seasonableness of the social and spiritual activity of pilgrimage:

> Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
> The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
> And bathed every veyne in swich licour
> Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
> Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
> Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
> The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
> Hath in the Ram his half cours yronne,
> And smale foweles maken melodye,
> That slepen al the nyght with open ye
> (So priketh hem nature in hir corages),
> Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgramages,
> And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
> To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes.
> (I, 1-14)

The agrarian year is similarly revealed in medieval art and literature as a cultural experience as well as a physical experience. For example, the Labours of the Months bring together the symbolic aspects of the months and seasons with the corresponding human experience of physical labour. The April scene in *Les Très Riches Heures*, for example, depicts a betrothal presented as a season of human life, the Spring of one's

life.[31] The promise of human fertility is aligned with natural fertility. A further cultural aspect of these sequences of iconographical images is that they were often integrated into calendars of the church's year and introduced into the front of prayer books, books of hours, and for prayers at the 'canonical hours' during the day.

It is unsurprising that poets in the late medieval period found time and various methods of measuring and symbolising it such a stimulus to the creative imagination. This stimulation to the literary imagination was not only linked to new methods of measuring and perceiving time (mechanical clocks and scientific instruments), but also because these exciting new methods were co-existing with, and contrasting with old methods. Medieval writers were living in an era where the most technologically accurate instruments of the day overlapped with many other types of time measurement and with natural signs of time passage. It was this multiplicity and tension that aroused such a dynamic response in medieval poets.

The quotidian temporal divisions that we still use today, that is, hours, minutes and seconds, date back to the Babylonian civilisation. The earth spins at a regular rate, rotating steadily until it returns to its original position. Each period of rotation takes twenty-four hours. The word 'hour' is derived from a Greek word meaning 'time of day'. Thus, each hour is both a duration and a point in the daily rotation of the earth. The Babylonians divided the daylight part of the day into twelve hours, likewise the night. Twelve was chosen for its versatility because it can be divided by 2, 3, 4, and 6. Each hour was then sub-divided into sixty parts called minutes, from a Latin word meaning 'small'. Each minute was further divided into sixty parts and this *secondary* division of time is called a second. The use of the number sixty in further divisions of the hour is

known as the sexagesimal system and is an arbitrary division, again a Babylonian innovation. It is a useful number for measurement, because it is divisible by so many numbers (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 15, 20, and 30) and so eliminates the requirement of awkward fractions of time. The Babylonian system of temporal division and their reverence of significant numbers would have appealed to the medieval interest in number symbolism and numerology.

Equal and unequal hours may sound like a very technical feature of the history of time measurement but Chaucer refers to this and makes a comparison between temporal hours and mechanical time. Mooney provides an excellent summary of equal and unequal hours,[32] illustrating how Chaucer compares them in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*.

> Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge
> Than is a clokke or an abbey orlogge.
> By nature he knew ech ascensioun
> Of the equynoxial in thilke toun;
> For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
> Thanne crew he that it myghte nat been amended.
> (VII, 2853-58)

The cock is presented by Chaucer as being more reliable and accurate than the mechanical clock, which may be a mock-heroic exaggeration of Chauntecleer but also presents a deeper truth, because the cock faithfully follows the natural rhythm of the sun's ascent and descent, allowing for the fluctuations to this yearly cycle as the seasons pass. Medieval clocks could be occasionally unreliable, but in this comparison Chaucer is also pointing to the sense in which natural time – the first daylight to which a cock automatically responds – is more fundamentally real than the artifice of mechanical measuring devices. Unequal or common hours represent natural, 'real' time, taking into

account the varying length of hours throughout the year.[33] In the summer, the daylight period will last longer than twelve hours and in the winter, the natural day is less than twelve hours. Equal or artificial hours are the result of an averaging process of this seasonal difference, so that all year round an hour assumes the same duration. Asimov explains the relationship between temporal hours (hours that are allowed to vary) and the fictional compromise of mean time adopted by society.

> The time between one crossing of the meridian by the sun and the next is the *solar day* (from the Latin 'Sol' meaning 'sun'). Since the solar day varies a bit with the slight earliness and lateness of the sun from day to day, it is customary to average the length of the solar day over an entire year. This is called the *mean solar day* (the word 'mean' meaning 'average' when used in this sense), or the *civil day*. The *mean sun* would therefore be an imaginary sun at the place where the real sun would be if it went around the Earth as evenly as a star. Noon comes when the mean sun, not the real sun, crosses the meridian. Time based on the mean sun is called *mean time*. Time based on the real sun is *apparent time*. Thus, each day, there is a *mean noon* when the mean sun crosses the meridian and an *apparent noon* when the real sun does. These two noons may be as much as fifteen minutes apart, but four times in the year they coincide. The difference between the mean and apparent noon as this varies from day to day is called the *equation of time*.[34]

In this sense, even our modern primary base of time is arbitrarily constructed. We have created an imaginary sun in alternative time and space, in the pretence that the sun behaves with the total consistency and regularity of a clockwork system. As we shall see, time measurement in Chaucer's time was already moving from a system that acknowledged the seasonal inequality of hours to one that, erroneously, treated them all as equal: the modern system.

Chaucer seems to be intrigued by the natural ability of the cock to signal time as part of God's ordering of the whole of nature, and he draws the comparison of the cock to the man-made sophistication of the new mechanical clock. A modern consciousness

might assume that it was the clock that was the primary authority on time, while the cock provided a rather amusing approximation of a time-keeper. Whereas to a medieval audience, the cock would have been seen as a superior indicator of natural time because it has been created by God to fulfil its part in the natural order of the universe. Thus, the cock is more directly in tune with nature than the more fallible, artificial clock. And yet the clock is a human invention, displaying the fundamental nature of another of God's creatures, humankind, to use their intellect and consciousness to discover the secrets of the universe. There is, at times, a tension between a respect for nature and a desire for knowledge and scientific innovation. In his rather comic comparison between the cock and the clock, Chaucer is touching on some of the contemporary contrasting perceptions of time measurement of this period.

Further proof that our time scale is arbitrary is the arguably random nature of human genealogy. It is the fact that it is Earth, rather than any other planet, which is populated by conscious, sentient human beings that the Earth and its motions are the origin of time measurement. Planet Earth is the stable frame of reference because it is where human beings, the observers, are based and, therefore, as we align and equate the physical presence of the human body with the activity of the macrocosm, it is always the starting point for measurement and interpretation. We measure outwards from our immediate environment to each star or planet in space. All our measurements are derived from the rates of motion and radiation of various heavenly bodies relative to the position and rotation of the Earth.

The longevity of the earth and the galaxy, of which it is a part, lend it an authoritative base from which we measure time. The earth had been spinning on its axis

for approximately 4,000 million years before human beings arrived on the scene.[35] When one compares the length of time that human beings have existed and inhabited the Earth with the age of the universe, human time and history seems to dwindle in size and importance. There is a hierarchy implied by these dual timelines:

> The unquestioned rank of rotating heavens and of the changing of the seasons above all other cyclicities is probably responsible for the fact that we measure all human activities in terms of suns, moons, and seasons (days, months and years) and not vice versa. The origins of archaic time-keeping are indistinguishable from those of interpreting and measuring the motions of the stars, planets and the moon.[36]

The universe has precedence over human beings, and so we measure ourselves against the universe and not the universe against ourselves. Of course medieval attitudes to time included a very strong sense of such vast expanses of cosmic time, drawing from them the favourite medieval reflection that the universe and its time-span would hold relatively little value or importance for the humans upon it. We see this awareness of cosmic expanses of time in the *Parliament of Fowls*:

> Than bad he hym, syn erthe was so lyte,
> And dissevable and ful of harde grace,
> That he ne shulde hym in the world delyte.
> Thanne tolde he hym, in certeyn yeres space
> That every sterre shulde come into his place
> Ther it was first, and al shulde out of mynde
> That in this world is don of al mankynde.
> (PF, 64-70)

The 'great year' to which Chaucer refers here, which is the time it will take for all the planets to return to their original position, was calculated to be at least 15,000 solar years. Chaucer would have known the figure given by Macrobius in his *Commentary of the*

Dream of Scipio, where it is given as 15,000 solar years, and the figure given by Jean de Meun in his *Roman de la Rose*, where it is 36,000 years.[37]

The role of a clock is to keep time with the regular motion of the Earth as it revolves around the Sun. It is a substitute for natural signs of the passage of time. The evolutionary progress of the universe and the constant movement of the heavenly bodies have been constructed to represent the notion of an original, true chronometer. The numerous man-made clocks and calendars that have acted as representative models of the universe are also representative of the progress that human beings have made in their quest to comprehend the design and functioning of the cosmos. From the simplest shadow clock through to the complexity and unimaginable precision of the atomic clock, there has been a gradual progression in humankind's ability to understand and calculate the movements of the external world to ever more accurate degrees, and to express this understanding in tangible form. The sundial, the sand-glass, and the mechanical clock are all measuring instruments. They all measure movement and steady motions or beats and are capable of demonstrating and registering the passage of time. What we do find to distinguish between these instruments is an increasing independence from nature, indicating that human beings were continually trying to find a reliable way of telling the time without reference to the sun. The time-teller began as a mediator between nature and human beings. The act of measuring the passage of time is a means of relating cosmic activity and transition to the life cycle of a human being. However, over time, certain time-telling instruments became an accepted substitution for nature. The mechanical clock had the effect of psychologically distancing humankind from its environment and as such, presented a visible symbol of the human appropriation of cosmic time. Medieval literature, even for town-dwellers, presents the view of a Europe

that is still predominantly agricultural. At this time, the crow of the cock and the dawn of each new day are more present and familiar than the alarm clock.

In a similar way to clocks representing cosmic time, narratives act as representations of human experience and consciousness. Both time-telling mechanisms and narratives are artificial constructs and attempt to naturalise and embody something very complex and abstract into something meaningful and concrete within a linear framework. This fact illustrates why time is central also to any examination of narrative. Narrative represents human experience and presents it as a linear sequence.

Time has been measured, indicated, and recorded in many different ways, by many diverse cultures at different stages of history. In the same way, human experience has been recorded and memorialised in many different forms and genres throughout the ages. The act of measuring the passage of time is a means of relating cosmic activity and transition to the life cycle of a human being. Now, I shall discuss the main instruments that humankind has created to bring 'time out there' down to earth, to be comprehended on a referential level. It is perhaps relevant to the interest shown by late-medieval poets to time and issues related to time that their period was one when, more than any other, a range of different approaches to measuring, visualising and symbolising time co-existed. This thesis will argue, as one of its main themes, that the proliferation of ways of telling time and the advancements in the technologies for expressing time seem to have inspired medieval poets. The new technology of time, and its cultural manifestations, imparted the sense that something profound was occurring, with potentially far-reaching consequences for the social and cultural consciousness of human beings.

Early clock technology involved reading the shadows cast by the sun on a dial. The earliest surviving examples of shadow clocks and sundials date from 1500 B.C. Landes quotes a passage from a play by Plautus of the late third century B.C. featuring a complaint about the adverse effects of living life by the sundial rather than according to nature:

> The gods confound the man who first found out
> How to distinguish hours. Confound him, too,
> Who in this place set up a sundial,
> To cut and hack my days so wretchedly
> Into small pieces! When I was a boy,
> My belly was my sundial – one surer,
> Truer, and more exact than any of them.
> This dial told me when 'twas proper time
> To go to dinner, when I ought to eat;
> But nowadays, why even when I have,
> I can't fall to unless the sun gives leave.
> The town's so full of these confounded dials.[38]

This rather comic complaint reads like a slightly nervous premonition that the advent of the sundial represents a momentous change, as there is a sense that better time-measurement brings a loss of freedom for the individual. The arrival of time-keepers, such as candles, sand-glasses, water motives and mechanical clocks further emphasised the dissection and itemisation of units of time. It also wrought a cultural change to the notion of the hour as a time interval. From this point, the hour was characterised by a constant rate, regardless of the time of day or time of year.[39]

The sun has been perceived as a constant natural clock since ancient times and sundials are the oldest known forms of time-telling. A fragment of the earliest known shadow clock is housed at a museum in Berlin; it is Egyptian and is dated at about 1500

BC. The early shadow clocks were called 'gnomons' from the Greek word meaning 'one who knows'. At sunrise the base of the instrument was positioned in an East-West direction, so that the moving shadow of the raised crossbar indicated the six hours until noon. The shadow clock was then reversed to show the six hours from noon to sunset. Because the length of a day varies throughout the year, these early clocks would only be correct at the equinoxes. The length of the shadows cast by the sun depended on the height of the sun in the sky. The sundial read and used the shadows; the stylus cast a shade on the dial producing a sign to enable the shadow to be read off as time. The first sundial appeared in Rome *c.* 290 BC.[40] According to Derek de Solla Price, it was rare for these early sundials to bear hour numerals. A dial from Chios dating from the second-century BC. does not even have the hour lines marked. De Solla Price argues that the original purpose of sundials was to map the annual cycle of the solar calendar: '...in the beginning the sundial was devised as a means of modeling the path of the sun in its annual rather than its diurnal rotation.'[41]

The significance of sundials is that they chart the Earth's orbit around the sun and translate cosmic activity into human terms. Thus, time-telling by sundial bore a direct relation to the progression of the natural day. By Chaucer's time, measurement by shadow was, of course, only one of many techniques of time-measurement. As we have seen in the passage from the *Prologue* to the *Parson's Tale*, it is a method with rich potential to suggest all the symbolism traditionally associated with the sun rising and setting. Chaucer's reference to 'my shadwe' reminds us how, like other means of time measurement, the sundial has cultural and symbolic significance, as well as many technical and practical uses.

The Egyptians required a means of telling the time at night and so they invented the water clock. The Greeks called this clock the clepsydra, which means to 'steal water', as it indicated time by a leaking pot dripping water into a receptacle with a marked time-scale, containing a float which operated a more visible dial. The dial on a water clock begins to resemble our modern day clock-faces. This is a significant change, as it is the beginning of a move towards time-telling devices representing the perception of temporal passage as a visual experience. The water-clock was used in Greek and Roman law courts for timing speeches and, for this purpose, it did not need to register time accurately, it simply needed to indicate the passage of a known time, so that court cases did not go on interminably. Cicero mentions the practice of timing discourse by the clepsydra. He informs us that acts of requesting and granting permission to speak were described, respectively, as 'seeking the clock' and 'giving the clock'.[42] The invention of the water-clock marked the creation of an instrument which was self-contained. Even though the water-clock was developing a more accurate and perpetual form of measuring time, the hours did not correspond to the hours marked by the shadow clock, which, however inaccurate itself, was after all demonstrating an approximate correspondence to the revolutions of natural time. The water-clock or clepsydra was used primarily for measuring segments of time, instead of telling the hour. Medieval methods for time-measurement tended to be aural, for example the regular ringing of bells that marked the divisions of the monastic day. However, the visual awareness and expression of time, so central to modern life, was already present in the form of the sundial and the water-clock, and the visual potency of the hourglass was another advance towards man-made time-telling becoming a visual experience.

The hourglass, also known as the sand-glass, is believed to date back as far as *c.* 250 BC. However, the first reliable proof of its existence is in a fresco painted in 1338 by Ambrosia Lorenzetti, where the figure of Temperance is depicted holding a sand-glass.[43] We shall see later in chapter 4 the continued links in art and poetry between time (tempus in Latin) and the idea of Temperance. The hourglass was another contraption for measuring periods of time rather than telling the time of day. Like the clepsydra, it can be said to contain its own time and it can be used effectively without reference to the outside world once the times are measured and known for certain quantities of sand to pass through the narrow part of the glass. The use of half-hour hourglasses on board ship may have initiated the ritual of sounding a bell at sea every half-hour of a watch.[44] This shows how common it was for late-medieval people to mix different types of time-measurement devices. It also provides an illustration of how a device that contains its own time could be combined with a method that covers the whole twenty-four hour period and divides it into regular segments.

A powerful symbolic figure in western culture is that of Father Time. Erwin Panofsky highlighted the complex origins of Father Time in a seminal study of iconology. One of the examples he gives of a medieval visual depiction of Father Time and his symbolic resonance is of a fifteenth-century Flemish tapestry, 'where Time, seated on a chariot drawn by two deer, a cock and a raven, is characterized by an hourglass, a crutch and the zodiac.' He gives another example of an hourglass being used to symbolise Time, which is in a French sixteenth-century miniature, 'showing Time standing on the ground, characterized by an hourglass.'[45] These examples illustrate the multiplicity of ways in which the late Middle Ages perceived time. Panofsky traces the process of reintegration of classical motifs and classical themes in Renaissance art, and

he also shows how this process had already begun in the late-medieval period in the 'visual and emotional synthesis between the pagan past and the Christian present.'[46] Panofsky shows how this synthesis was largely achieved by the reinterpretation of classical images. The representation of the idea of Time in the late-medieval era accumulated a range of symbols and images from classical and ancient sources. The later associations of Time with decay and destruction (and an explanation for the depiction of Time with an hourglass, a sickle or scythe, crutches, or any sign suggestive of old age and the shadow of death), comes from the conflation of Chronos, the Greek expression of Time, and Kronos, the Roman Saturn, a formidable God, a patron of agriculture (hence the sickle) and as such, represented as professionally old. In the Middle Ages the figure of Saturn as a planetary ruler was portrayed as sinister, gloomy and melancholy. Thus Time became associated with Old Age and with Death:

> ...Time, having appropriated the qualities of the deadly, cannibalistic, scythe-branding Saturn, became more and more intimately related to Death, and it was from the image of Time that, about the last years of the fifteenth century, the representations of Death began to borrow the characteristic hourglass... [47]

The image of the hourglass is particularly evocative of transience and mortality, demonstrating as it does the flow of escaping time and the visualisation of the depletion of the time that remains. As Panofsky points out, not just hourglasses but all timepieces tended to become associated with Death because of the rich symbolic value of both the hourglass and the clock, which he likens to the symbolic potential and use of the mirror in the Middle Ages.[48]

Another means of measuring and visualising the passage of time was by burning candles marked with time divisions. Candles were used in a similar way to water-clocks

and hour-glasses in that they allowed time-telling when the sun was not present. However, in addition to being able to register the passage of measurable periods of time, a candle could also be marked with the hours of the day to give a relatively accurate guide to the time. A candle would be burned while a sundial was watched to see how much burns away each hour. Then candles of the same size, marked with these previously timed intervals, could act as a relatively accurate and independent clock.

IV. The Late Medieval Situation. The Excitement of the Clock

What is striking in late medieval European culture is that old methods of time-telling were not forgotten even as these new more accurate and sophisticated methods were introduced. Time keeping by the sun is introduced just before *The Parson's Tale*, but Chaucer seems to be using this motif as a symbol for the end of the journey, serving as a reminder of the mutable and finite nature of human life. Yet the multiplicity of time-telling methods in the passage cited on page 21 conveys a sense of the profound importance of time and its passing at this point in the *Canterbury Tales*.

The invention that most keenly affected the imagination of medieval writers was the clock. There is much speculation and debate as to when the first mechanical timepieces were designed and constructed. Various dates between the first millennium and the fourteenth century have been suggested as the time for the invention of the mechanical clock. David Landes speaks of the difficulty the historian faces when attempting to determine what kind of timekeeper is being described in references to clocks in surviving records, documents, and manuscripts from the Middle Ages. This difficulty arises mainly from the lack of a differential vocabulary. In Western Europe,

there was only one Latin word for a clock, *(h)orologium*. It referred to all timekeepers, irrespective of how basically or technically advanced the instruments were.

The word clock comes from the French "cloche" which means bell. This shows that the clock was originally a signalling device, ringing a bell to mark time rather than displaying a time to read. This means that the use of the word clock in literature does not necessarily communicate what kind of device it was. We think of clocks as being mainly visual devices, but the first mechanical clocks were more often aural experiences because they were primarily machines that rang bells.

There has been a tradition of attributing the invention of the mechanical clock to the canon Gerbert towards the end of the first millennium.[49] Richer, who had been a student of Gerbert, and was also a historian and a monk, provides the source of this theory. In his *Histoire de France (888–995)*, he recounts that Gerbert built a globe and an armillery sphere to demonstrate the movement of the planets, and another model showed the position of the stars.[50] Richer's narrative certainly indicates that Gerbert had the potential knowledge and skill to build a mechanical clock. However, apart from raising the possibility of sophisticated mechanical and technical knowledge long before it is generally allowed in our standard historical reconstruction of the Middle Ages, there is no conclusive evidence to prove that Gerbert was indeed the inventor of the first mechanical clock. Nonetheless, despite the lack of conclusive evidence to prove the existence of mechanical clocks before the thirteenth century, the elaborate nature of clocks in churches and public spaces in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries hints at a previous knowledge and technology. These early clocks display an unusual sophistication for such a supposedly new device. Whether or not the mechanical clock

was indeed invented by Gerbert, or at least invented earlier than our historical records show, for Landes, one major sticking point with this theory is that it leaves us with an unanswered question: namely that if the oscillating controller and mechanical escapement were known as early as 1000 A.D., why then is it that three hundred years elapse before clocks appear in city halls and churches?[51]

In addition, the commentary written by Robert Angelicus in 1271 would appear to indicate that clockmakers were still experimenting and developing suitable mechanisms to support a self-sufficient machine.

> Nor is it possible for any clock *(horologium)* to follow the judgment of astronomy with complete accuracy. Yet clockmakers *(artifices horologiarum)* are trying to make a wheel which will make one complete revolution for every one of the equinoctial circle [i.e. the celestial equator], but they cannot quite perfect their work. If they could, it would be a really accurate clock and worth more than an astrolabe or other astronomical instrument for reckoning the hours if one knew how to do this according to the method aforesaid.[52]

The above suggests that theoretical knowledge was in advance of practical application and that no form of mechanical escapement was known to the writer in 1271. However, within a few years, there are a number of documentary references to technical *horologia* and so it would seem that it was not much later that the mechanical escapement was created. As the next chapter will show, *horloges* were already familiar to Jean de Meun in the late thirteenth century. It will be necessary to consider there, however, whether the allusion to a clock in the *Roman de la Rose* is anything like the later sense of a mechanical clock.

By the fourteenth century we have irrefutable evidence of the installation and use of mechanical clocks. For example, the tower clock with an astronomical dial built by Roger Stoke for Norwich Cathedral (1321-1325), the astronomical mechanism begun by Richard of Wallingford at St. Albans around 1330,[53] and Giovanni de Dondi's famous astronomical clock built in the late fourteenth century.

According to C.F.C. Beeson, the mechanical clock was invented towards the last part of the thirteenth century.[54] He has asserted that the first known example in England of a clock with a mechanical escapement is in 1283, documented in the Annals of Dunstable Priory in Bedfordshire. Beeson also gives other examples of mechanical clocks detailed in the records of the following places: Exeter Cathedral (1284), Old St. Paul's, London (1286), Merton College, Oxford (1288), Norwich Cathedral Priory (1290), Ely Abbey, the Benedictine monastery in Cambridgeshire attached to the cathedral (1291), and Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury (1292). The evidence that Beeson has collected is persuasive in supporting the idea that the mechanical clock had indeed been introduced during the thirteenth century. These large and often very beautiful clocks, in important religious buildings, must have impressed contemporaries as mechanisms making visible the divine order of the cosmos, as well as practical indicators of the time of the day.

It would not be until the sixteenth century that technology developed sufficiently to make clocks accurate enough to give the time in minutes and seconds as well as hours. H. Alan Lloyd provides a succinct history of the evolution of divisions on clock faces:

> After the introduction of the quarters strike, it became not unusual to introduce a small dial marked 1-4, indicating the quarters, as well as the hour dial; later the figures 15, 30, 45, and 60 were added, and soon we find the minutes marked. They were first indicated without the separate minute-hand. The concentric minute-hand did not come into general use until after the invention of the pendulum. Tentative efforts were made to indicate seconds about 1550, but the seconds-hand was not regularly employed until after 1670, when William Clement introduced his anchor-escapement. This made the pendulum with a period of one second fully practicable for domestic clocks.[55]

The fact that early clocks only registered hours probably explains why there are few mentions of 'second' or 'minute' as a segment of time in medieval literature. References are generally to larger periods of time, such as hours or seasons, or to particular moments or instants in time which can be both vague and precise in their application.

In the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, generally believed by modern scholars to be the work of Geoffrey Chaucer, there is an explanation of the division of the hour into minutes and seconds:

> Thise degrees of signes ben euerich of hem considered of 60 Mynutes, & euery Minute of 60 secondes.[56]

This is a scientific work though, therefore it is not particularly surprising to find explanations of temporal calculations in relation to scientific models. However, it is remarkable to find two references to the minute as a unit of time in Langland's *Piers Plowman*:

> He mi3te amende in a Minute while all pat mys standeth.[57]

> Ysekeles in eueses porw hate of pe sonne,
> Melteth in a mynut while to myst & to watre.[58]

The second as a unit of time is even rarer in medieval literature. Apart from the example already given from the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, the Middle English Dictionary records only one reference to the second; from Lydgate's *Siege of Troy*:

> The Kyng...made...Astronomyens/ To fynde...the silf houre of his natyryte,/ Not for3ete the hevenly mansiouns/ Clerly cerched be smale fracciouns,/ First be secoundes, tiers, and eke quartes.[59]

Again, this reports a highly technical, scientific enterprise. Clearly, these two instances refer to the specialist scientific concerns of astrologers and astronomers. 'Second' is not found in medieval literature outside this specialist area. Chapter 2 will examine, however, an interesting passage in Guillaume de Lorris's early thirteenth century *Roman de la Rose*, where the idea of small divisions of time also appears, although without the specific designations of 'minutes' or 'seconds'.

Historically, humankind has been motivated by a desire for greater understanding of the external world and for greater accuracy in the aim to represent its activity. This involved, among other kinds of advancing technologies, developing techniques for more accurate time-measurement, thus dividing time into ever smaller units. Different levels of quantification existed, from years to seasons, months and weeks, days, hours, minutes and seconds. By the early twentieth century, Shortt's free pendulum clock had pinned time down to an ultimate accuracy. Macey stresses the extent of this inconceivable precision: 'In our day, the accuracy of time measurement has reached a variation of no more than one second in thirty thousand years.'[60] Technology has developed to such a degree that the accuracy of clocks actually shows up anomalies in the revolution of the sun and the rotation of the earth. There is an immense irony that machines can claim to

be an improvement on nature when social time is originally extracted from natural time. It is counterintuitive to claim that the mechanisms beating out social time are superior in accuracy and consistency to the natural time that beat is imitating.

IV. The Paradox of Monastic Time: Time-Keeping for the Cloistered Soul and the Outer World

The word 'monk' and, by extension, 'monasticism' derives from the Greek word *monos*, meaning 'alone'. The monastery offers a disciplined, communal lifestyle where the monks can contemplate and, through prayer, achieve union with God. It is a place of community in which its members can pursue a lone journey within a unified quest, as well as performing a communal programme of prayer for the societies in which they exist. Monastic life allows solitude within community, an abnegation of selfhood in uniformity. It also involves an abnegation of control over an individual's time. The monastery is a structure within which there is a communal control over time as the whole day is ordered and divided into fixed times and periods for services and other activities. The monks do not own their time any longer, but have instead to conform to the communal pattern laid down by the *Rule of St Benedict* (with variations for different religious orders).

The monastery is also a self-enclosed world set apart from society. Hallam describes it as a 'self-sufficient island', where 'those who had a vocation could take refuge from the sins and troubles of the time.'[61] In the sanctuary of the monastery, the monk was shielded from the distractions of ordinary life, so that he could concentrate his mind and energies on the religious life. The monks, who elect to live there in solitude,

have turned away from earthly experience and pleasure, and seek an alternative and purer way of life, a life of reflection and piety. The cloister provides a communal inner space for solitary meditation in unison, like the mind within the auspices of the body.

Like the revolutions in clock technology, the medieval institution of the monastic day, with its control over time in the service of eternity, has provoked considered discussion by modern cultural historians. In *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, C.H. Lawrence defines monks as 'people who have withdrawn from society to pursue the spiritual life in solitude.'[62] Like the desert hermits, monks have turned their backs on physical pleasure and the gratification of the senses. [63] After renouncing society, property, possessions, and personal ties, the coenobitic monks enter the hermitage and bind themselves to a life of asceticism and interiority.[64] They have chosen to undergo a spiritual pilgrimage and to abandon the ambitions and false (in the eyes of the ascetic) objectives of the world of action and competition. Yet, despite the rejection of the outer, material world as a potential snare and spiritually restrictive environment, and the positive intention to develop a divine realm which synthesises time and religious duty, paradoxically, the monastery's concentration on time-management, time-obedience, and subsequent productivity served to enhance the benefits of an efficient, time-consuming, corporate existence. Hallam emphasises the incongruous results of the religious community attempting to imitate eternity through time-discipline, when society turned this idea on its head and extracted their own meaning; with time, and its corresponding value, assuming a more potent currency and immediate power than the necessarily deferred promise of eternity: 'The irony of history is that the very nature of Benedictinism taught men to substitute measurement and time for the limitless expanses of eternity.'[65] Time was subsumed into

the social fabric and was transformed from a process into an entity, a commodity that could be bought and sold in the marketplace along with the other merchandise. Mumford recognises the new eagerness to measure and compute time, and echoes Hallam's view of time as the new God, usurping the previous supremacy of eternity. He details the co-modification of time as an evolution from measurement, to reverence, to translation and, finally, to control: 'Time-keeping passed into time-serving and time-accounting and time-rationing. As this took place, Eternity ceased gradually to serve as the measure and focus of human actions.'[66] Human beings had found a substitute power base of their own.

The monastery becomes an alternative community, functioning as a mini-society in its own right, simultaneously being affected by, and having an impact on the world it has tried to escape and dismiss. Straka points to this dilemma, showing the difficulties of adhering to such idealism:

> The paradox of medieval monasticism (and to some extent, of the medieval church in general) was that although it institutionalised otherworldliness, it never succeeded for any length of time in escaping from this world. The very reputation of a monastery or a monastic order for austerity and sanctity drew donations from high and low alike, with the result that St. Benedict's rule of poverty for the individual monk would be foiled by the accumulation of wealth by the monastic community. This wealth, most of it in the land, inevitably carried political and economic rights and obligations, so that the great monastic foundations came to play a key role as manorial landlords, feudal overlords, royal vassals, and patrons of growing towns.[67]

The solitude of the monastery was not as literal as the reclusive existence of the hermits and anchorites, who lived and meditated in absolute isolation. And yet, there is something about the regularity, the order of the monastic life that is suggestive of homogeneity and coalescence. It verges, one might say, on being a hypercommunity, rather than a withdrawal from, or negation of, community in favour of solitude. I have

coined the term 'hypercommunity' to indicate the extreme level of synchronisation and harmony that is achieved by a group of people living together and conforming to one code, while at the same time remaining concerned with the government of self over all else. Lawrence recognises the potential for the monastic community to serve as a model and to influence the outside community: 'St Benedict's Rule provided a model for a close-knit, well-organised ascetic community, following a carefully planned routine of prayer, work, and study.'[68] Although the monastic order is a retirement from the outside world, the monastery inevitably forms an alternative system and structure of its own. It has been suggested that, in its rejection of societal values and institutions, the monastery represents a counter culture.[69] The ultimate aim of the monastic community is not sociability or togetherness for the sake of companionship, but nonetheless, the monks do form a collective brotherhood in that they all obey the fixed order of the particular Rule. Each individual conforms to the routine and the rules of the order, so that, effectively, they all become merged into the greater organic whole of a perfectly regular, eternal body. Mumford compares the regimentation and synchronisation of activity to the efficiency of the machine and the regularity of the clock: 'the monasteries...helped to give human enterprise the regular collective beat and rhythm of the machine; for the clock is not merely a means of keeping track of the hours, but of synchronising the actions of men.'[70] The authority of a daily schedule establishes sameness, oneness.

The monastic community was the first example of a group living life according to a strict timetable. Time and time-keeping were central to the monastery's organisation of the day, providing the regular basis for the routine programme of prayer and work. Hallam recognises the significance of this new mode of living: 'perhaps the most famous characteristic of the Benedictine Rule, and most influential, was the division of the day

and night by the offices into periods, whether of rest or activity. The whole day was time-tabled and this time-tabling was the most novel feature of the Rule.'[71] There was an intention to account for every minute of every day. St. Benedict's perception of idleness as spiritually dangerous is expressed in his Rule. He believed that 'Idleness was the enemy of the soul'[72], and, as a result of this continual danger, he set out to establish a strict routine which would keep his followers occupied and diligent. He goes on to indicate his threefold solution: in addition to prayer, the monks will be expected to work and to study. 'And therefore, at fixed times, the brothers ought to be occupied in manual labour; and again, at fixed times, in sacred reading...'[73]

The bells rang eight times in every twenty-four hour period, marking the eight daily services of communal worship: Matins (sometimes called Lauds), Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline, and Nocturns.[74] The monastic day was divided up according to these canonical hours. Mumford sees the regular sounding of the bells as 'punctuation marks in the day'.[75] An interesting point to note is that the 'punctuation marks' were not yet seen as one and the same thing as the clock-hour that triggered the bell ringing. Both the Rule of St. Benedict and the Regularis Concordia accommodated the variation in the length of daylight hours in the regulation of the monastic schedule. For example, Prime was to be celebrated at 6.45 A.M. in winter and at 6.00 A.M. in summer.[76] The bells signal the time and prompt the monks to assemble to perform the respective office. As a by-product of the main significatory function, the bells do indeed serve as punctuation marks, as social signals which have the effect of artificially breaking up the day into a number of periods, entirely associated with the institutional system, and bearing no direct correspondence to the natural day.

Initially, the bells were a convenient and organised means of summoning the monastic community. Yet they also had multiple significance, expressing the disciplined regime of the monastic order, and conveying the most important aspect of the monastic life: the monks' surrender of their whole day to obedience, prayer, and contemplation. The monastery bells sounded at regular intervals and indicated that it was time for duty of one kind or another. In addition to providing cues in the daytime schedule, the bells were also a replacement clock during the night, when the monks could not rely on sunlight or natural time signals to stir and direct them. Because the liturgical offices were spread throughout the twenty-four hour day and not just the natural day, the monks required a reliable alarm to rouse them from sleep for the night services. Ringing bells at set times ensured that the community was bound together by a common code and a universal time. Signalling an event or an activity by the tolling of bells, was a means of imposing one time for all, an eternal time and space for a community to inhabit. It was the autonomous time of the monastery, the time as allocated by the Rule. Beyond that was God's eternal time and the continuity of the round-the-clock monastic routine sought to imitate that ubiquity. The Rule insisted that the individual's time belonged to God and by donating that time to the monastic community, each individual contributed to the pursuit of transcendence. The result of governing the self through obedience to, and integration into, an institution is also the concomitant creation of what is an effectively impersonal machine. The bells make an impersonal call to duty, and the system demands and produces an automatic, mass response. A precedent of regimentation, of mechanisation has been established. Landes comments on the role of the bells in creating a communal life, and analyses the immediate effects and the ultimate implications of working to order, of conforming to shared instructions, of obedience to centralised time:

> Bells, bells, bells. Big bells and small. Monasteries were beehives of varied activity, the largest productive enterprises of medieval Europe...They [the monks] lived and worked to bells. The big bells tolled the canonical hours and the major changes, and their peal carried far and wide, not only within the convent domain but as far and wide as the wind could take it. And the little bells tinkled insistently throughout the offices and meals, calling the participants to attention, and signaling the start of a new prayer, ceremony, or activity. All of this was part of a larger process of depersonalization, deindividualization. Monastic space was closed space – areas and corridors or collective occupancy and movement – so arranged that everyone could be seen at all times. So with time: there was 'only one time, that of the group, that of the community. Time of rest, of prayer, of work, of meditation, of reading; signaled by the bell, measured and kept by the sacristan, excluding individual and autonomous time.' Time in other words, was of the essence because it belonged to the community and to God; and the bells saw to it that this precious, indispensible resource was not wasted.[77]

Landes identifies here also the obvious way in which the monastic timetable impinged on the outside world, however remote and detached the monastery intended to be. The bells resounded for the monastic community and echoed within the walls of the monastery, but the sound also carried to the surrounding villages and towns and, as a result, 'a measure of regularity was imposed on society at large.'[78] The monastic divisions of the day were audibly and regularly communicated to the outside world, and these time intervals would have begun to have a meaning in relation to their daily life.

The use of bells to divide the day has been seen as initiating a profoundly important change in European culture and consciousness. It was the beginning of a process of separation, a break in the link between natural time and human events and a distancing of human events from the natural world. Le Goff explains this dissociation:

> What was clearly new, however, in the contribution of the work bell or the city bell used for purposes of work was that instead of a time linked to *events*, which made itself felt only episodically and sporadically, there arose a regular, normal time. . . Time was no longer associated with cataclysms or festivals but rather with daily life, a sort of chronological net in which urban life was caught."[79]

VI. Monastic Time in Chaucer: From Sacred to Secular Hours

Just as the monastery bells seeped into everyday life and consciousness, the names of the canonical hours entered the general vocabulary of the Middle Ages. There are examples in *The Canterbury Tales* of the application of certain periods in the monastic timetables in what is understood to be ordinary discourse. Clearly, Chaucer's audience was familiar with the times of day denoted. In the *General Prologue*, there is a reference to vigils:

> It is ful fair to been ycleped "madame",
> And goon to vigilies al bifore,
> And have a mantel roialliche ybore.
> (I, 376-78)

The night offices of the monastery were known as vigils and, by extension, this term also referred to the feasts held on the eve of a holy day by secular groups, such as civic fraternities. Here a religious and monastic service has become both a highly secular, fashionable event and a familiar term in everyday, lay-person's language. References to the first canonical hour, Prime, are also found in *The Merchant's Tale*, *The Squire's Tale*, and *The Pardoner's Tale*:

> I wol nat taryen yow, for it is prime
> And for it is no fruyt but los of tyme.
> (V, 73-74)

> And down he leyde his heed and sleep til prime.
> (IV, 1857)

> Thise riotoures thre of which I telle,
> Long erse er prime rong of any belle,
> Were set hem in a taverne to drynke.
> (VI, 661-663)

In the above examples, Prime is clearly a secular reference, to a time of day and not to a monastic service. Even the reference to the bell in the last quotation is referring to the bell ringing as a social marker of time, and not to its significance as a religious reference. Thus, the religious services and the bells that signal them have been culturally converted and reinterpreted into convenient markers for the secular community.

There are two references to the monastic canonical hours in the *Reeve's Prologue* and *Tale*, both of them with secular application. The first makes a loose reference to the hour of day, by notionally dividing a segment of time: Prime, the first part of the monastic day, usually between six and nine o'clock in the morning:

> Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme.
> Lo Depeford, and it is half-wey pryme!
> Lo Grenewych, ther many a shrew is inne!
> It were al tyme thy tale to bigynne.
> (I, 3905-08)

Toward the end of *The Reeve's Tale*, there is a reference to Compline which was the last service of the day. Thus, there is a correlation in the narrative between the story time of the Reeve, the intradiegetic narrator, who enters the narrative during Prime, and the hypodiegetic story-time of his tale.[80] The reader has progressed from the morning to the evening in the course of the Reeve's recounting of his tale, as if the embedded narrative is linked temporally to the extradiegetic narrative level:

> Lo, swilk a complyn is ymel hem alle.
> A wilde fyr upon thair bodyes falle!
> (I, 4171-72)

The service in the early hours of the day was known as Matins or Lauds. A reference to Lauds is made in *The Miller's Tale*, both to signify a period of time that has elapsed, and the beginning of that same period marked by the ringing of the monastery bells:

> And thus, lith Alison and Nicholas,
> In bisynesse of myrthe and of solas
> Til that the belle of laudes gan to rynge
> And freres in the chauncel gonne synge.
> (I, 3653-56)

Chaucer's juxtaposition of Alison and Nicholas's sinful pleasure with the church service shows an ironic clash of earthly temporal and physical experience and the promise of eternal transcendence. In all of these examples, the use of a religious vocabulary, in a secular setting, provides a contrast, and yet also constitutes a link, between worldliness and spirituality. Chaucer seems not just to be using the canonical hours as simple time indicators but with an awareness of their potential to carry ideas of spirituality and obedience to God's will in contexts where his characters are shown absorbed in worldly activities.

What the medieval monastery propagated, and the Middle Ages witnessed, was the embryo stage of social time as this gradually developed in importance and momentum, until, with the invention of the mechanical clock, it provided a comprehensive enough scheme to follow, instead of the rhythm of natural time. Regularity and order had become extremely desirable goals. There was a determination to dominate and control the environment in the secular and commercial world as well as in the monastic environment. Mumford sees this will-to-power as a backlash to a human

perception of inferiority and weakness, and the result of the painful gap which had opened up between humankind's aspirations and its actual achievements.[81] The resolution to bridge this gap and to counter the feeling of impotence and subordination, meant that human beings were predisposed to the possibilities of technological advancement and ready for the order and power that machines could offer. There was a culture already trained and receptive to the notion of a new, clockwork, more regular and systematised society when it came.

The practice of bells announcing the time began in the monastery, but the perception of time as a product of value that had to be managed responsibly for one's well-being and individual success was to permeate society as a whole. It is ironic that the monastic community was gradually established as a shelter from the temptations and distractions of societal life in order to serve the dictates of the next world, but that its manifestation of commitment to spiritual perfection should feed back into the cultural and economic structure of society.

VII. The Languages of Time

In his article 'The Origins of Time', Nathaniel Lawrence draws attention to the diverse ways that we conceptualise and express our sense of temporality:

> Time is a river, a flame, a thief, and a bestower of gifts. It is a god, a revealer of secrets, and a burier of secrets. It flies, it flows; it sometimes stops or drags or rushes... The common error is to make of time some kind of entity. It is isolable in language as a noun: *time*, when we refer to the concept; *temporality*, if we deal with it as an aspect of experience... We commit another abstraction when we detach "time" from its origins and try to resolve it into a property of mind or to reify it into some sort of *thing*, with a beginning and an end.[82]

Lawrence shows how the language we use to talk about time is metaphorical, symbolic, abstract in its attempt to represent and capture our experience of time which is dynamic and all-pervasive. Speaking about time and explaining what time is, is extremely difficult as Augustine acknowledges in his *Confessions*.

Now to return briefly to this very problem raised by St. Augustine in the *Confessions*, namely that there is a gap between the experience of time and the ability to understand and express it in all its complexity. St. Augustine seems to point to two problems: one is to try and relate observed natural phenomena with human experience and perception. The other is the language aspect of the equation, that is that if St. Augustine felt that he knew what time is, but that he could not explain this, then it indicates that there is an inadequate vocabulary of time and time consciousness. An analysis of time seems to get at the heart of language and indicates what is inexpressible – it shows up the gap between experience and reflection, reflection and language. Even in the most empirical and positivist descriptions of the machinery and technology of time, time is still being represented. In this sense, time-measurement and language are comparable, in that they are both always representative forms.

When considering time, it is impossible to ignore the reflexive nature of thinking about time within a consciousness that exists in, and is dependent on, time. Time-keeping is a double consciousness of time, an awareness of movement and a system for showing that awareness. It developed in relation to humankind's consciousness of being conscious, so that the progression from a mere awareness of existence to a consideration and commentary on the human condition led from a linear view of life to a cyclical, self-reflexive perspective. Thus, a number of cultural and religious factors, such as a

consciousness of mortality and a consciousness of history, contributed during the medieval period to the need to define and locate time and also to express and mark the passage of time. Whitrow sees the desire to measure time as a desire to transcend the limitations of selfhood as perceived at any moment in space and time, and, thus, to break free from the bondage of living in a continual present:

> The distinctions we make between past, present and future refer to the transitional nature of time. Although dependent on memory, our sense of personal identity is closely associated with the durational aspect of time. Man's discovery that he himself, like other living creatures, is born and dies must have led him intuitively to try and circumvent the relentless flux of time by seeking to perpetuate his own existence indefinitely. [83]

J.T. Fraser also links time measurement with the psychological and social development of individual human beings.

> There are good reasons to believe that man's awareness of time emerged simultaneously with – and is related to – such other capacities as those of extended memory and expectation, the identification of the self as individual, the realisation of the inexorability of death, and even the ability to separate the intelligible from the emotive in the structure of language...This particular gift, the knowledge of time, manifests itself through such skills as the purposeful imitation of natural cycles, and the derivation of certain advantages from use of such models. [84]

The determination to take possession of time seems to indicate a human desire to take control of nature and to subdue any feelings of inferiority, weakness, or dependence on nature. By creating a clockwork universe, humankind made the clock 'the measure of all things.'[85]

VIII. Medieval Representations of Time in the Human Life Span: The Ages of Man

There were a number of symbolic schemes adopted by scholars in the Middle Ages to try to reconcile personal history with the history of the universe. The idea of dividing the human life-span into stages or phases, with an analogous meaning, is an ancient one. In different guises and varying schemes, the ages of man are referred to from early to late Antiquity by, for example, Hippocrates, Aristotle, Ptolemy, Ovid, Dante, St. Augustine, Albertus Magnus, Macrobius, and Bede, to name some of the main exponents of these various theories. The tradition of relating stages of human life to natural changes in the macrocosm continued through to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. As Burrow says, 'The effect in each case was to integrate the life of man into the larger order of the natural world, as that was understood at the time.'[86]

The human life-span lends itself to division and classification. Language reflects the distinctions of age by offering a multiplicity of words to denote the period or time of life of the person in question, i.e. boy/girl, youth, adolescent, adult, middle-age, and old-age. And this is by no means an exhaustive list of age-related referents. The ages of man are apparent in an individual's physical growth and mental development, as well as within the social structure, where a person assumes specific roles in rituals and events according to age.

Numerous schemes were presented as bearing an appropriate correspondence to the natural pattern of human development. The natural order perceived in human life was variously divided into three, four, six, and seven ages. Aristotle proposed a threefold understanding of life - an age of growth, an age of stasis, and an age of decline: 'For

anything that has been born must have growth, maturity and decline'.[87] The alternative theory of the four ages of human life provided a convenient correlation between the life-span of a human being and the four seasons which make up a year of that overall timeline. The importance of the number four in nature was central to Pythagorean thought, and according to Diogenes Laertius, Pythagoras divided a man's life into four quarters:

> 'Twenty years a boy, twenty years a youth, twenty years a young man, twenty years an old man: and these four periods correspond to the four seasons, the boy to spring, the youth to summer, the young man to autumn, and the old man to winter, meaning, by "youth", one not yet grown up, and, by a "young man", a man of mature age.'[88]

The astrological interpretation of human life was expounded by authorities, such as Hippocrates and Ptolemy, and yet did not seem to influence Western thought until the twelfth century.[89] In this scheme, there are seven phases to an individual life and each phase is assigned to one of the seven planets, each planet possessing its own nature.[90] Froissart explains this theory in detail in the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* (The Handsome Bush of Youth), written in the late fourteenth century:

> La lune coustemierement
> Gouverne tout premierement
> L'enfant, et par .IIII. ans le garde,
> Et sus sa nourechon regarde.
> Tres qu'il est ou ventre sa mere,
> Le prent. Pas ne li est amere,
> Ains en pense moult justement
> Et le nourist tres muistement.[91]

> The moon customarily governs first of all, looking after the child until it is four years old and keeping an eye on its education as soon as it is out of its mother's womb. She is not cruel to the infant but takes care of it very justly and raises it in humid climes.[92]

It is notable in this system of thought that human time is set alongside, and equated with, cosmological activity and time. The elevation of human experience to cosmological stature transfigures temporal existence to eternal presence and dominance. The microcosm first identifies with the macrocosm and then discards it in an attempt to achieve independence from nature. This mentality, the gradual independence of concepts of time, from the natural to the mechanical, gains momentum through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and forms the basis of the quest to mechanise time measurement.

There was a further scheme which sought to interpret the individual life-span within the historical time-line of the universe, that of salvation history. The six ages of man relates the stages of human life to the six ages of history, 'as if each of us might experience in his or her own life-span something equivalent to the whole history of mankind.'[93]

Corpus Christi plays sought to represent the main stages of human history in one dramatic cycle, consisting of Seven Ages and aiming to provide an image of all human time. Thus the first play in the York Cycle, *God's Creation of the World*, would have been performed soon after the sun rose on the day of the plays, and the last play, at sunset, would have been *The Day of Judgement*. V.A. Kolve has most fully explored the Corpus Christi plays as a drama cycle which exemplify the medieval Christian model of historical time as a sequence of events expressing the relationship between God and humanity, and the processes of Creation, Fall, Redemption, Salvation and Judgement. Old Testament characters in this historical sequence are treated as figures – *figura*, 'symbols' – looking forward to the New Testament story of Salvation. Kolve explains that the plays represent this concept of time as a sequence of events and figures, whereby

the earlier, Old Testament figures prefigure the later, New Testament fulfilment of God's plan:

> Figures and their fulfillment, the mimesis of total human time - these are the core of the Corpus Christi cycle and the source of its formal shape.[94]

This 'figural' approach to biblical history before Christ treats the Old Testament events as simultaneously real – they literally happened – and as symbols. The model of the Seven Ages has its basis, essentially, in the same Christian interpretation of the Old Testament. The order of the ages of history begins with the creation of humankind and continues through to Judgement Day. Adam represents the age of creation and the fall from grace, Noah's flood is the second age, Abraham is the father of the third age, David is the fourth, The Transmigration is the fifth age, the sixth age is the coming of Christ and the time until the second coming. Doomsday is the seventh age, marking the end of the history of humankind and the beginning of the Kingdom of God.[95]

> Human time is the artifact of God; it is shaped by Him and expresses His truth, through a multitude of correspondences, congruences, and paradoxes. In imitating human time, the Corpus Christi drama imitated it as this sort of artifact, in seven ages answering to the seven ages of man and the seven days of creation: at the same time, it furnished a moral image of contemporary English society and instructed men in the instruments of man's salvation, his passage through time into eternity.[96]

The Christian era is part of the sixth age, which is understood in salvation history as including the present, existing in limbo between the first and Second Coming of Christ, and between the past and the future of revelation. Because the future age, the Second Coming of Christ, is already prefigured in the events and figures of the Old Testament, the past has, at its greatest meaning, this prefiguration of the future:

> Causality and chronological sequence supply the secular mind with an objective time-order, but for medieval Christian thought, the dignity of past time consists precisely in those traces of the future written, by God's shaping of events, upon it.[97]

It is this conflict between secular and religious thought and concepts of time that clashes in a particularly dynamic way in the Middle Ages. Perhaps it was a reaction against the apocalyptic anticipation, preceding the first Millennium, which turned to anti-climax when nothing momentous occurred. The concept of the Seven Ages of history clearly illustrates how readily the division and measurement of time acquired symbolic significance in medieval Christian culture.

IX. Experimentation with Narrative Time in the Literature of the Middle Ages

The history of time consciousness is bound up with the history of humanity itself. Temporal order and experience are central both to literary narrative and to chronicling human history. We cannot conceive of telling a story or a history without a framework of time or without some form of ordered chronology. For as long as humans have been conscious of their historical continuity and contingent identity, they have understood and expressed this relationship with the natural world in terms of external phenomena and symbols. Thus, there has been a continuous interchange between the microcosm and macrocosm, the subjective and objective, and the internal and the external, as human beings have attempted to define their place in the universe. Certainly, the history of time measurement seems to be inextricably linked with the collective human quest for knowledge and control of the external world and the cosmos at large, and a parallel discovery of the self in society. In order to measure oneself against the universe, it

becomes necessary to equate one's individual time and consciousness with the objective movement and passage of time in the macrocosm.

One of my primary focuses is narrative time in dream poetry. Dream poetry allows the poet to escape from the normal constraints of temporal direction and sequence. It is a way of posing various philosophical conundrums, because the use of the dream frame and allegory allows multiple dimensions and readings. The space between the described events and landscape, and the significance therein, enables the poet to reach beyond the confines of language. It means that often the poet is able to allude in metaphor and imagery to what perhaps cannot be expressed in words. Dream poetry plays with the mix of objectivity and subjectivity in identity as a result of humankind being in time. Thus, it confronts the dependence of identity on temporality.

Later chapters will look at the *Roman de la Rose*, begun in the early thirteenth century by Guillaume de Lorris, and completed in about 1275 by Jean de Meun, the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* and *L'Orloge amoureus* by Froissart, *The Parliament of Fowls, House of Fame*, and *Book of the Duchess* by Chaucer, and the *Judgement* poems by Guillaume de Machaut. In the *Roman de la Rose*, life is a state of prolonged anticipation (illustrated by the lover in pursuit of his beloved Rose). By contrast, death (consummation of desire in the poem's allegory) is so sudden, and when it comes it seems as though the anticipation of life has actually been about the anticipation of death. In the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*, the narrator writes of his difficulty in finding material to write about. In drawing attention to the subject matter and the problems and time of composition, the poem addresses the reading and writing process. The poem helps him and us to reconstruct his past. Through reminiscence, Froissart, in the guise of the narrator,

questions how the past relates to the future, and more specifically how past versions of himself relate to the present and future versions of himself. Chaucer looks at constructs of memory and selfhood in the *House of Fame* and *Parliament of Fowls*. The opening lines of *The Parliament of Fowls* sums up the poet's dilemma:

> The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,
> Th'essay so hard, so sharp the conquerynge,
> The dredful joye, alwey that slit so yerne:
> Al this mene I by love.[98]
> (PF, 1-4)

The contrast between the finite nature of human life, and the infinite capacity to desire, dream, and strive causes a tension between purpose and achievement. The tone conveys both despair and exhilaration; a vacillation between reverence for 'craft', which could equally connote the art of living, the art of loving, or the art of writing or creating, and a sense of the utter futility of attempting to construct something whole and durable in a mutable world.[99] To start anything that requires effort and long-term commitment demands an optimism in the future that the weary author-scholar is not sure he has. There is a definite trend in the dream poetry of this period, to problematise identity as a result of the fragmentation of time and consciousness that ensues from humankind being subject to temporality.

[1] St Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Penguin, 1961), Book XI p. 264. I refer to St Augustine's *Confessions* by the English title throughout this thesis as it is the title generally in use for this text. I have sometimes used a shortened form of the original title of a text; in some instances this is from the original Latin title and in other cases from the English translation. I have given preference to whichever title seems to be more in general use.

[2] Plato, *Timaeus* 37C-39E.

[3] Aristotle, *Physics* IV. 217b-224a, V. 233b-237a.

[4] St. Augustine, *Confessions.*

[5] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

[6] Plato, *Timaeus* 37D-37E.

[7] Barbara Adam, 'Social Versus Natural Time, A Traditional Distinction Re-examined', in *Rhythms of Society*, eds, Michael Young and Tom Schuller (London; New York: Routledge, 1988), 198-226 (p. 205).

[8] Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, with Eng. Trans. of I.T. (1609) revised by H.F. Stewart (London: Heinemann, 1918) Book V, p. 400 (text) p. 401 (translation).

[9] St Augustine, *Confessions*, IV, 4.

[10] Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 22.

[11] Linda Anderson, *Autobiography* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 1-2.

[12] J. Monfrin, *Historia Calamitatum* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1962), p. 63.

[13] *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, trans. Betty Radice (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 57.

[14] I have formulated the term 'pseudo-biography' here following on from Laurence de Looze's definition and discussion of the 'pseudo-autobiography', a genre which he identifies from the fourteenth century Medieval Literature. See Laurence de Looze, *Pseudo-Autobiography in Fourteenth Century: Juan de Ruiz, Guillaume de Machaut, Jean Froissart and Geoffrey Chaucer* (Gainsville: University of Florida Press, 1997).

[15] See Teresa Webber 'The Diffusion of Augustine's *Confessions* in England during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries' in *The Cloister and the World: Essays in medieval*

history in honour of Barbara Harvey, eds John Blair and Brian Golding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Webber argues that the *Confessions* were very important for medieval readers' exploration of their own inward feelings and their individual consciousness. Perhaps the dream poem and the lyric could be seen as fictional alternatives to autobiography in the period, in that they are also ways of exploring ideas of self, by examining both inner and outer experiences.

[16] *Saint Augustine: Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p. 278.

[17] See Eugene Vance, 'St Augustine: Language as Temporality', in *Mimesis: From Mirror to Method, Augustine to Descartes*, eds John D. Lyons and Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982), pp. 20-35

[18] Guillaume de Machaut, *Le Livre du Voir Dit*, ed. and trans. Paul Imbs, with Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1999). Christine de Pisan, *Le Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune. Publié d'après les manscrits*, ed. Suzanne Solente (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1959).

[19] Laurence de Looze, *Pseudo-Autobiography in the Fourteenth Century: Juan Ruiz, Guillaume de Machaut, Jean Froissart and Geoffrey Chaucer* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 2.

[20] R.J. Quinones, 'Four Phases of Time and Literary Modernism', in *The Study of Time II: Proceedings of the second conference of the International Society for the Study of Time*, eds J.T. Fraser and N. Lawrence (New York: Springer Verlag, 1975), pp. 122-135.

[21] Quinones, p. 122.

[22] Quinones. p. 122. In the last fifteen years, literary scholars have questioned the Burckhardtian assumptions that it was only with the dawning of the Renaissance that humankind developed a sense of individuality, subjectivity and temporal identity. Burckhardt's Renaissance 'essay' as he called it, was a landmark in the propagation of the idea of the Renaissance as a monumental rebirth of culture and personality. See Jacob Burckhardt, *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (London: Folio Society, 2004). For an excellent account of the 'New Philology', see Lee Patterson, 'On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History and Medieval Studies', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 87-108 (p. 92): 'While there are a number of local interests at work in the marginalization of medieval studies, the ultimate cause must be sought in the pervasive and apparently ineradicable *grand récit* that organizes Western cultural history, the gigantic master narrative by which modernity identifies itself with the Renaissance and rejects the Middle Ages as by definition premodern. According to this universal scheme, the Renaissance is the point at which the modern world begins: humanism, nationalism, the proliferation of competing value systems, the secure grasp of a historical consciousness, aesthetic production as an end in itself, the conception of the natural world as a site of scientific investigation and colonial exploitation, the secularization of politics, the idea of the state, and, perhaps above all, the emergence of the idea of the individual – all of these characteristics and many others are thought both to set the Renaissance apart from the

Middle Ages and to align it definitively with the modern world. As the name with which the Renaissance endowed it declares, the Middle Ages is a millennium of middleness, a space that serves simply to hold apart the first beginning of antiquity and the Renaissance rebeginning.'

[23] See C.N.L. Brooke, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), and C.H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth-Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927).

[24] For an account of this new concern for documentary evidence see Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: the writing of history in medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 2004), chapter 8.

[25] All quotations of Chaucer's works throughout this thesis, unless otherwise stated, are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[26] John Somer and Nicholas of Lynn compiled almanacs in 1380 and 1386, respectively, to cover the period 1387 to 1462. Like Chaucer, the almanac writers set several methods of signaling the time side by side. For an account of the full significance of this see Linne R. Mooney, 'The Cock and the Clock: Telling Time in Chaucer's Day', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 15 (1993), pp. 91-109 (p.109).

[27] General consensus dates the invention of the mechanical clock to the thirteenth-century. However there is disagreement and speculation as to the precise date.

[28] The Babylonian civilisation existed from the eighteenth-century to the sixth century B.C. The kingdom of Babylon was established in the valley between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers. The earliest systematic astronomical observations are the phases of Venus recorded during the reign of Ammi-Saduqa who was one of the kings of the first Dynasty of Babylon. There are clay tablets, known as astrolabes, which map various constellations. By 700 B.C. regular reports of astronomical observations were presented at court. For further information regarding archaeological finds relating to astronomical knowledge in Babylon see H.W.F. Saggs, *The Greatness that was Babylon: A survey of the ancient civilisation of the Tigris-Euphrates valley* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1962), pp. 445-459.

[29] Isaac Asimov, *The Clock We Live On*, revised edition (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1965), p. 13.

[30] See Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

[31] *The Très Riches Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry*. Musée Condé, Chantilly. Introduction and Legends by Jean Longon, Honourary Curator, Library, Institut de France and Raymond Cazelles, Librarian, Musée Condé. Preface by Millard Meiss, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, trans. by Victoria Benedict (New York: George Brazillier, 1969).

[32] Mooney, p.98.

[33] The monastic community presented an example of a community living by an artificial schedule but at the same time adhering to the natural irregularities of unequal, temporal hours.

[34] Asimov, p. 36.

[35] J.T. Fraser, 'The Empirical Search' in *Of Time, Passion and Knowledge: Reflections on the Strategy of Existence*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 48.

[36] Fraser, p. 48.

[37] See the note in *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 996.

[38] David S. Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Viking, 2000), pp. 13-14. The fragment is from a play called *Boeotia*, attributed by Roman authors to Plautus. The quote is taken from the translation of the fragment by J.C. Rolfe in the Loeb Library edition (New York: Putnam, 1927), p. 247.

[39] Asimov, p. 26.

[40] Samuel L. Macey, *Clocks and the Cosmos: Time in Western Life and Thought*, (Hamden: Archon Books, 1980), p. 21.

[41] Derek de Solla Price, 'Clockwork Before the Clock and Timekeepers Before Timekeeping', in *The Study of Time II*, eds J.T. Fraser and N. Lawrence (New York: Springer Verlag, 1975), p. 369.

[42] Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3. 34. 138.

[43] Macey, p. 21. Temperance is one of the four cardinal virtues, along with Fortitude, Justice and Prudence. Temperance is personified by Sophrosyne, a draped woman holding a catharos and ewer. The virtue has been variously symbolised by the azalea, a blue ribbon, an elephant, a lamb, a lettuce, the perpendicular shape and the colour purple. It seems natural that at some point the symbolic richness of the hourglass should be paired with the personification of the virtue, Temperance. The hourglass is a symbol of the eternal passage of time. It also carries the significance of a potential reversal of time and a return to one's origins. The steady flow of sand as it falls from top to bottom typifies the steadiness of moderation and mesure, imperative to the harmony and balance of Temperance.

[44] Asimov, pp. 21-22.

[45] Panofsky, p. 80 fn.

[46] Panofsky, p. 69.

[47] Panofsky, p. 82.

[48] Panofsky, p. 82, fn.

[49] The canon Gerbert later became Pope Sylvester II (999–1003).

[50] Richer [Richerus], *Histoire de France (888 – 995)* ed. Robert Latouche, in Louis Halphen, ed., *Les classiques de l'histoire de France au moyen age* vol. 2, *954-995* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1964), pp. 57-63. Cited by David S. Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 54.

[51] Landes, p. 54.

[52] Johannes de Sacrobosco, *The Sphere of Sacrobosco and Its Commentators*, trans. and ed. Lynn Thorndike (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949) pp. 180 (text) and 230 (translation).

[53] Wallingford's clock took 30 years to build and was completed in 1364.

[54] C.F.C. Beeson, *English Church Clocks, 1280-1850: History and Classification* (London: Antiquarian Horological Society, 1971), pp. 13-14.

[55] H. Alan Lloyd 'Mechanical Timekeepers' in *A History of Technology: From the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution, c.1500 – c.1700*, Charles Singer and Trevor I. Williams, eds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 658.

[56] Geoffrey Chaucer, *Astrolabe*, 1. 8.

[57] William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, B. XI. 372.

[58] *Piers Plowman*, B. XVII. 228. There are also references to the minute in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, II. 9, III. 77 and IV. 241.

[59] Lydgate, *The Seige of Thebes*. 375.

[60] Macey, p. 42.

[61] H. E. Hallam, 'The Medieval Social Picture,' in *Feudalism, Capitalism and Beyond*, eds, Eugene Kamenka and R.S. Neale (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1975), p. 31.

[62] C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of religious life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London: Longman, 1984).

[63] It is difficult to know when the first anchorites made their retreat into the desert. *The Life of St Anthony*, attributed to Athanasius, tells us that Anthony began his life as a

hermit a little before 270 A.D. and states that he was not the first to choose this way of life. See Lawrence, pp. 1-16.

[64] See Giles Constable, 'Eremetical Forms of Monastic Life' in *Monks, Hermits and Crusaders in Medieval Europe* (London: Variorium Reprints, 1988). The article deals with the range of hermetic lifestyles which were present in the Middle Ages. It may seem like a tautology to use the term 'coenobitic monk' but as Constable explains the tradition of 'eremetical cenobitism', p. 239, was a distinct mode of existence, used to define the monks who chose the solitude of an isolated community rather than independent solitude.

[65] Hallam, p. 35.

[66] Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilisation* (London: Routledge, 1934) p. 14.

[67] Gerald M. Straka (ed.), *The Medieval World and its Transformations 800 – 1650, Volume II* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) p. 143. Straka illustrates his point by including 'The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakeland' in this section, pp. 143–154.

[68] Lawrence, p. 33.

[69] Constable, p. 241.

[70] Mumford, pp. 12-13.

[71] Hallam, p. 32.

[72] Quotations from The Rule of St Benedict are taken from *The Rule of St. Benedict*, trans. Justin McCan (London: Sheed and Ward, 1976), chap. 48, p. 53.

[73] McCan, chapt. 48, p. 53.

[74] Janet Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000 – 1300* (Cambridge University Press, 1994) pp. 160-161. Burton gives a reconstruction of a typical monastic day in the first half of the eleventh century from the *Regularis Concordia*, a code of monastic law written in the tenth-century.

[75] Mumford, p. 13.

[76] See Mooney, p. 98, and David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England; a history of its development from the time of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council*, 940-1216, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 714-15.

[77] This reference is from David S. Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Viking, 2000), pp. 72-73. He cites Albert d'Haenens, 'La quotidienneté monastique au moyen âge; pour un modèle d'analyse et d'interprétation,' in Oesterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophische-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, vol. 367: *Klösterliche Sachkultur des Spätmittelalters: Internationaler*

Kongress Krems an der Donau 18. bis 21. September 1978, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Mittelalterliche Realienkunde Oesterreichs, no. 3 (Vienna: Verlag des Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980), p. 39.

[78] J.D. North, 'Monasticism and the First Mechanical Clocks' in *The Study of Time II: Proceedings of the Second Conference of the International Society for the Study of Time*, eds J.T. Fraser and N. Lawrence (NewYork: Springer-Verlag, 1975), pp. 381-398.

[79] Jacques Le Goff, 'Labour Time in the "Crisis" of the Fourteenth Century' in Jacques Le Goff, *Time, Work & Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 43-52 (p. 48).

[80] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cornell University Press, 1980). I am using Genette's terminology here. See p. 27 for the distinction between story, narrative and narrating, and pp. 228-31 for the explanation of diegesis.

[81] Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilisation* (London: Routledge, 1934), pp. 43-45.

[82] Nathaniel Lawrence, 'The Origins of Time' in *Time, Science and Society in China and the West. The Study of Time V*, eds J. T. Fraser, N. Lawrence and F. C. Haber (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), p. 25.

[83] G.J. Whitrow, *Time in History: The Evolution of our general awareness of time and temporal perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 23.

[84] J.T. Fraser, 'Clockmaking – The Most General Trade' in *The Study of Time II*, eds J. T Fraser and N. Lawrence (New York: Springer Verlag, 1975), p. 365.

[85] Le Goff, 'Labour Time in the "Crisis" of the Fourteenth Century', pp. 43-52, (p. 52).

[86] J.A. Burrow, *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1988), p.2.

[87] Aristotle, *De Anima*, Bk. III, Chap. 12 (434a 22-6).

[88] Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, p. 14.

[89] Burrow, pp. 38-39.

[90] The seven planets that were known at the time and therefore indicated in this scheme were the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

[91] Jean Froissart, *Le Joli Buisson de Jonece*, ed. Anthime Fourrier (Geneva: Droz, 1975) II. 1616-1623. I have quoted the first part of the explanation of this scheme, the passage continues to describe the role of the other planets until line 1704.

[92] My translation.

[93] Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, p. 2. For the full explanation of the six age scheme see chapter 2.

[94] V.A.Kolve, *The Play Called Corpus Christi*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 99.

[95] See Kolve, p. 89 for a table of the seven ages of history. See particularly chapters 4 and 5 for an excellent review of the tradition of salvation history in Christian theology, and how this affected Christian perceptions of worldly time and space.

[96] Kolve, p. 122.

[97] Kolve, pp. 118-19.

[98] *The Parliament of Fowls* in *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 385, 1-4.

[99] The opening line of *The Parliament of Fowls* is a reworking of an aphorism by Hippocrates : *Ars longa, vita brevis*. See the note in the *Riverside Chaucer*, p. 994.

CHAPTER 2

PLAYING WITH TIME IN THE *ROMAN DE LA ROSE*

Introduction

In the last chapter I examined changing technologies and perceptions of time and time-measurement in the Middle Ages, and touched on the impact on literary texts. Now, in the following chapters, I would like to look in detail at imaginative and philosophical responses to time and temporal experience in the literature of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Focusing on medieval dream poetry and *dits amoureux*, this study will explore the various ways that time was represented and figured in the dream poems and analogous framed narratives of this period.

Le Roman de la Rose: Time

In the first part of this chapter, I focus on the significance of time in the seminal medieval dream vision poem, the *Roman de la Rose*, and the second part of the chapter will examine critical approaches to the dream poem tradition after the *Roman de la Rose*. The *Rose* was certainly one of the most significant and influential works of all medieval texts. Well over 250 manuscripts of the *Rose* are extant, which is a huge number of manuscripts to survive for any text of this period, and particularly for a secular text, testifying in part to its popularity and wide readership.[1] Many later love visions acknowledge its importance, either by explicit reference and allusion, such as the painted walls in the *Book of the Duchess* (ll. 332-34) depicting the text and gloss of the *Romance of the Rose*, or by imitation with scenes and motifs that recall it. The

subsequent chapters will explore the genre that descended from the *Roman de la Rose*, the courtly love vision, and accordingly, the second part of this chapter surveys some of the critical history of this genre.

The following section will explore the ways in which time and temporal issues permeate the text of the *Rose*. Temporal themes which have a place in the content of the *Roman de la Rose* include the natural cycle of the seasons, beginnings and endings, life and death, the transient nature of human existence, mutability, the body and the soul, dissolution and continuity, the finite and the infinite. It will be argued, however, that time is also an important structural element in the narrative design of the *Rose*. The textual focus on temporality and the innovative experimentation with narrative time in the *Roman de la Rose* both signify a new mode of prolonged and shared subjectivity, whereby the author attempts to create a continuous textual present where readers across the ages can coexist. Four different processes happening in four distinct times – the dream, the dreamed events subsequently unfolding in the dreamer's real life, the time of writing about the dream experiences, and the time of reading – are unified in some kind of timeless narrative consciousness. This, to my knowledge, had not been achieved before. Previous dream literature had concentrated mostly on revelations about the next world. Of course this is a subject concerned with aspects of time, especially the relationship of human lives in time to the eternal realm and the future fate of souls in the next life, but such visions do not seem to experiment with issues of narrative time and consciousness in the innovative and avant-garde ways we find in the *Roman de la Rose* and much of the subsequent poetry inspired by it.

The *Roman de la Rose* uses the dream form for the first time to engage in a sustained exploration of emotional states and subjective experience. It depicts the transformative experience of falling in love in order to examine changing states of individual consciousness in the movement between self and other. To take one significant moment in the poem, it is just after looking into Narcissus' spring, the lover sees the reflection of the rose bush there and is overcome with desire as he is drawn to one rose bud in particular. This movement from immersion in self to absorption in other implies the experience of love is a process of self-discovery.

The text deconstructs individual consciousness and reconstructs it as universal subjectivity. By that I mean that instead of the reader observing the experiences of the dreamer/narrator as an outsider, the reader's time and consciousness has been incorporated into the text so that the reader is a participant in this all-embracing narrative consciousness. J. Stephen Russell has referred to this shared textual presence as 'a special sort of psychic communion between reader and dreamer.'[2] This is largely achieved by the direct addresses to the reader from the first-person narrator and also, even more significantly, from the personifications, characters and voices embedded within speeches in the narrative. Thus, this very first major love vision handles the complex nature of narrative, and the roles of author, narrative voice and reader, with great subtlety, and, as this chapter will show, with evidence of specific interest in the relationship between narrative and time.

I. *Le Roman de la Rose*: One Text, Two Authors

The history of the composition of the *Roman de la Rose* is well-known and well-documented, but is, nonetheless, of particular interest from the point of view of this

subject of fictional time and narrative consciousness, for a variety of reasons.[3] The *Roman de la Rose* is the work of two authors and two different generations. Guillaume de Lorris began the poem in the first part of the thirteenth century and Jean de Meun wrote a continuation in the latter part of that century. In a literal sense therefore, it is itself a text of two ages and two authorial consciousnesses. Yet, in many more subtle and provocative ways, both writers raise questions about narrative time and the consciousness of the author and reader, and, at times, both discuss the conduit of their narrative as a structure existing in a linear progression.

The *Roman de la Rose* was begun by Guillaume de Lorris between 1225 and 1230. The original poem written by de Lorris consisted of 4028 lines. At this point, it breaks off without reaching a satisfying conclusion to its narrative quest: there is no achievement of the lover's goal. Therefore, it would appear that Guillaume de Lorris had a longer poem in mind. A larger structure is certainly implied within de Lorris' poem. Early in the poem, he directs the reader's attention to the promise of both closure and elucidation:

> Des or le fet bon escouter,
> s'il est qui le sache conter,
> car la fin dou songe est mout bele
> et la matire en est novele.
> Qui dou songe la fin ora,
> je vos di bien que il porra
> des jeus d'Amors assez aprendre,
> puisque il veille tant atendre
> que je die et que j'encomance
> dou songe la senefiance.[4]
> (2061-70)

> From now on it will be well worth listening to, if there is anyone to recite it, for the end of the dream is very beautiful and the matter of it is new. I can assure you that whoever hears the end of the dream will be able to learn a great deal about the games of Love, provided that he is willing to wait until I have begun to expound the significance of the dream.[5]

Because of his textual promises of eventual elucidation which does not, in fact, materialise, it is a reasonable assumption that de Lorris' extant poem is a fragment and only the first section of a larger poetic project, which for some reason Guillaume de Lorris did not complete. One critical point of view could be that de Lorris considered his poem to be finished, and this is certainly a possibility, although the fragment itself suggests otherwise. Such a suggestion has also been made about Chaucer's unfinished *Squire's Tale*. The *House of Fame*, discussed in detail in chapter 5, is an example of a medieval text, apparently unfinished, which does not offer the promised revelation, yet is perhaps complete. These texts challenge our idea of what constitutes a finished text. Closure in the dream genre will be discussed in chapter 6.

Some fifty years or so later, the *Roman de la Rose* was given an ending by a second author Jean de Meun. He expanded the poem vastly, writing a further 18,000 lines. Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman* has variously been seen as a critique of Guillaume de Lorris's original enterprise, as an encyclopaedic treatise on medieval life and culture, or as an attempt to explore the narrative possibilities set up by Guillaume de Lorris but hitherto left unfulfilled.[6]

In the Middle Ages it was not an uncommon practice to continue or add on to another author's work. For example, in the twelfth century Chrétien de Troyes' *Le Chevalier de la Charette* was completed by another writer and Chrétien's *Conte del graal* inspired other writers to compose sequels. There were also other continuations and adaptations of the *Rose*. Gui de Mori penned his own continuation to the *Rose*, which he then adapted after discovering Jean de Meun's continuation.[7] Statements by second authors can challenge the reader's sense that either the narrative or a first-

person narrator is a unified entity.

The practice of one writer supplementing and completing the work of another writer may seem strange and presumptuous to the modern mind, but to the medieval mind the concept of originality, that is central to nineteenth and twentieth century conceptions of literature, did not have such strict rules and boundaries. In medieval culture it was perfectly possible and acceptable to be original within a familiar form. By contrast, in modern times, originality of subject and individual ownership of the text by the author are considered to be essential, hence our stringent copyright laws. Texts in medieval culture were more fluid and open, therefore a creative reworking of a pre-existent text by a subsequent author could still be admired as something new and innovative. Cynthia Brown has written about this fluidity and points to the active and 'alive' nature of vernacular medieval texts:

> [M]edieval writers participated in an extensive network of intertextual relations, resulting in a more or less free exchange and appropriation of literary ideas, which anyone could adapt and rework. These authors did not strive to be "original" in the modern sense of the term: originality consisted of adapting, imitating, or re-presenting well. Since invention was not dependent on a single author's originality, medieval writers and readers did not consider the re-creation of a text to be a deformation of an original; rather it was an attempt to expand the volume and meaning of an earlier work. Thus, interest lay less in the author and his identity than in his work and the intertextual web of which it was a part. In other words, plagiarism, or the unlawful appropriation of another's ideas, could not have existed in medieval times. What eventually became illegal was what originally constituted to a great extent the very nature and substance of medieval literary creation.[8]

These practices of adapting, imitating, continuing or re-presenting texts dislodge the myth that narratives exist definitively in their own fictional time and unity, and highlight how they are themselves products of time and also subject to variation and revision. The nature of manuscript culture itself encourages this 'mouvance' in a text as it was copied and recopied by scribes.[9] Printing, from the late

fifteenth century encouraged a new fixity and stability in the text after it went into the hands and minds of its public.

It is noticeable that, where there are several endeavours to extend or expand upon a fragmentary or unfinished text, surviving manuscript evidence shows that one continuation is usually preferred to all other attempts (as with the *Roman de la Rose*) and this then generally becomes the accepted ending. This is an interesting example of the readers deciding what constitutes a complete text and which ending is the most enjoyable and satisfactory.

Texts like this, that appear to be left unfinished and then completed by another author (in de Meun's case with very different elements in his continuation of the narrative begun by Guillaume de Lorris) raise questions about modern assumptions concerning the unity of a literary creation and the individual artist.[10] Ideas about literary unity are themselves issues about authorial identity, time and the text. A sense of textual unity derives from how linear progress through the reader's time and fictional time are perceived by both authors and by the culture in which they write.

II. The Dream as a Framing Device

The popularity of dream vision poetry in the Middle Ages is evidenced by the sheer volume of extant poetry in this tradition of writing. Dream vision poetry has an impressive and extensive lineage, which has been widely commented upon.[11] Falling asleep, dreaming, dream visions, prophetic visitations and oracular guidance are familiar motifs from a number of widely known literary sources, for example, in the Bible, from Greek and Latin classics, continuing into late antiquity and into the

medieval period. Biblical dream visions include the dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh (Gen. 37, 41) and the visions in the Book of Daniel. The classical period made wide use of the dream, most obviously in the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid*, where messages were often sent by God to humans as they slept. The dream vision continued to be popular with authors in late antiquity and on into the Middle Ages. In late antiquity, we have Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* ('Dream of Scipio'), composed *c.* 55 BC but presented to the Middle Ages within a Commentary by Macrobius, *c.* 400, and also, notably, we have Boethius' *Consolation.* Medieval dream poetry draws on numerous literary sources and classical texts, such as those above, either directly or indirectly.

Already, by late antiquity, there was some degree of flexibility within the dream vision tradition. This flexibility will develop further later in the medieval dream, where not all texts explicitly describe what they reveal as a dream. In Boethius' *Consolation*, the author presents a vision and a dialogue with personification figures but he does not directly state that these are visions which have occurred within a dream. In epic poetry, such as the *Aeneid* and the *Odyssesy*, heroes physically travel to places where they see the world of the dead. Later medieval writers present visions of heaven, hell or purgatory but often as dreams or part of an internal landscape. Clearly, the tradition of a genre we might usefully define as a framed narrative is sufficiently established at this point, that it now allows the author to adopt a more fluid approach in their selection of particular aspects of the convention. I will look further at the various narrative conventions that characterise the medieval dream vision genre in chapter 5.

Why was the dream so popular with authors? For a number of reasons: it allows the author a larger degree of freedom than is usually granted in storytelling, particularly in medieval times when fiction was frowned upon unless it purported to educate and impart wisdom and spiritual guidance. A dream vision closes the gap between fact and fiction in that if the vision comes from a divine source, and claims to be prophetic, the idea of a knowable truth becomes more shadowy. It becomes more a question of what we know and what we do not yet know, the gap between the present and the future. This merging of present time and future time, and the relationship between the timeless realm and temporal experience, are central to the genre from its origins.

Medieval dream visions open up the potential for narrative flexibility and experimentation. The author is able to create ambiguity between the authorial presence, the narrator and the protagonist and doing so becomes a tradition of the genre. Julia Boffey has expressed this well:

> the visionary mode in these works allow freedom for imaginative speculation, without insisting on the necessity for provision of authenticating detail about the dream-narrator's waking existence.[12]

The *Roman de la Rose* can be regarded as heralding a new stage in the writer's use of the dream as a framing device. And this thesis is concerned with texts that can be seen as following on directly or indirectly from this great poem. One of the most obvious and fruitful aspects of the *Roman de la Rose* that was developed with sophistication by later love visions is the handling of the first-person narrator. This raises issues both of types of consciousness and also the literary representation of the self.

The dream vision frame, from its beginnings in the religious vision, provides a structural interface between two parallel realities, one being the earthly realm of human existence, the other being a heavenly realm of eternal consciousness. It achieves this movement between immediate reality and an alternative, spiritual reality through the medium of the dream, which allows a separation between the outwardness of social existence, the waking self, and the inwardness of subjective consciousness, the sleeping self.

In the *Roman de la Rose*, however, the dreamer presents his secular existence in the here-and-now in the form of a dream. The timeless central narrative, full of divine powers like Reason, Nature and Genius, set in a paradisal landscape is here also a narrative of a love story which, we are told, is also – in another time (the future, after the book) the real-time, real-life experience of the speaker. This creates a complex use of present and future time in the *Roman de la Rose*, which will be discussed later in this chapter. His courtly life and pursuit of romantic love is fictionalised in a dream rather than presented in an autobiographical style. The dream of an earthly paradise where erotic love takes precedence elevates the status of love to a divine level.

The dream vision poem was traditionally used as a forum for intellectual and philosophical discussion, and in this, the *Roman de la Rose* is no exception from the Latin dream poems that had gone before, raising and debating a number of ontological, theological and moral issues. Where the *Roman de la Rose* does differ from its classical and medieval predecessors is in its focus on a love affair. The subject of love, and the experience of being in love are treated as an important and serious topic, thus worthy of analysis. The poem is presented as a both a story about

love and a study of love. It is a romance, a dream of ideal love, told to entertain and to give pleasure: 'Pour noz cuers faire aguissier' (in order to excite your hearts).[13] In addition, the *Roman* is a kind of manual to instruct would-be lovers in the mores of courtly love: 'Ou l'art d'amours est toute enclose' (where the whole art of love is contained).[14] The *Roman de la Rose* was the first important secular dream poem, and it took the genre in a new direction as a substantial text. Suddenly, romantic love was presented as a serious topic, worthy of philosophical interest and of intellectual discussion. Of course, this means that a substantially temporal subject, romantic and erotic love, is treated in a style and a mode which had previously been associated with the next world, eternal verities and the realm of timeless, spiritual truths.

III. Time and Consciousness

The allegorical dream vision creates an otherworldly realm where consciousness can roam free of temporal constraints. By constructing a landscape of the imagination, the allegorical poet is able to survey many subjects and intellectual ideas but amidst this there is a distinct tendency to consider and play with ideas of time, consciousness, subjectivity, identity and reality. This is perhaps why the dream poem was such a popular genre in the Middle Ages, as it allowed extraordinary scope for philosophical exploration and speculation, and also for artistic experimentation. Helen Phillips emphasises the versatility and the wealth of possibilities offered by the dream poem:

> No literary genre, with the possible exception of the romance, was more popular than the dream narrative with medieval writers, and none was employed with more versatility and creativity. This must be to a great extent because of the opportunities it offered not only for variety of subject but also for sophistication of structure: for playing with different frames and narrative levels within the same work. It is easy in dream poems to move between narrative and lyric, or between narrative and debate or didactic speeches, and

> dreams readily accommodate both allegorically and realistically conceived characters and landscapes.[15]

The allegorical dream is an ideal mode for subverting chronological expectations. Dreams and allegories both demand a suspension of a normal sense of cause and effect, sequence and time. In using framing devices such as dreams and allegories in the narrative, the author is able to deconstruct time and consciousness by distorting the usual logic and order of events.

The narrator asserts a validation of the author's intention to write and to externalise the life of the imagination. The narrator is offering the life of the subject for consideration as other. There is an exchange of identity and of temporalities between the writing subject and the reading other. In accessing a past version of himself, the narrator brings forth another 'I' which is the narrator and yet not him, separated by both time and space. The narrative interplay attempts to find the point where the past and present merge, where the present narrator and his past self converge, where the experience and the representation of that experience collide, and a space where the author and reader collude. By re-experiencing the past in the present, the narrator creates a narrative space for the textual conjoining of the fragmented self. The narrator seeks access to his past through the recollection of intense feelings of love, as if intensity of feeling provides a pure subjectivity, pure enough he hopes to bring his past to life. What the narrator comes to learn is that the past is as impenetrable to him as it is to the reader. The description of an event that happened can only ever be retrospective and secondary to the original experience. The text is seen to be derivative and representative, the subject reinvented as object, so we have a temporally distant appreciation and assimilation of subjective experience. Thus, writing about the past is a means of signifying the irreducible time-lag between the signified, the experience, and the signifier, the text as experience that

knows itself (self-reflexivity). The narrator is demonstrating the same dilemma regarding his past persona as the reader who attempts to assimilate and inhabit the psychological space of another. As this thesis shows, medieval dream poetry at its most sophisticated demonstrates both awareness of these temporal elements in narratives and a taste for playing with them.

Vitz writes about the multiplicity of *I*'s present in the *Roman de la Rose* in her chapter 'The "I" of the *Roman de la Rose* of Guillaume de Lorris':

> Inherent in the literary – and linguistic – existence of autobiography is a paradox, for autobiography is a genre based on two mutually contradictory uses of language – discourse versus history... Autobiography is thus a genre characterized by an underlying tension, for the "I was" on which it is based means that the I who speaks, speaks of himself as another. The *me* to whom the *I* refers is someone else: a past self, someone who no longer exists.
> This underlying split in the identity of the hero-narrator, who is both the subject and object of his own verb, suggests that the autobiography is a literary form with definite potential for irony.[16]

IV. Time and Narrative

The opening of the *Roman de la Rose* in Guillaume de Lorris's hands presents a narrative clearly anchored in a temporal sequence of events. A dream sequence unfolds that we are told will parallel a real-life sequence of events. In contrast to this illusion of an individual story, Jean de Meun's narrative expands to cover more timeless events and figures. The *Roman de la Rose*, especially in Jean de Meun's hands, is indeed an encyclopaedic work, embracing a variety of subjects and ideas relating to human behaviour, human relationships and the relevance of human life to the cosmos as a whole. All human activity and experience is contextualised within a temporal framework inherited from Guillaume de Lorris. Although on the one hand, time is essential to any form of narrative because narrative tells a sequence of events

in a particular order, the encyclopaedic nature of the *Rose* means that many aspects of medieval attitudes to time, both religious and secular, come into the scope of this poem. Like many dream poems that followed in its wake, the *Rose* wanders freely across the eras including anecdotes and stories from classical legend and history, and also from more recent times, yet in addition, moves seamlessly into timeless realms, where ahistorical abstractions such as Reason, Nature and Atropos are encountered.

Both Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun seem to have been interested in the possibilities of narrative for expressing something of the complexities of temporal experience. For example, in Guillaume de Lorris' poem there is a twenty-five line digression on the elusive and intangible nature of time (ll. 361-86) at a point where he is describing several portraits painted on the crenellated wall surrounding the garden. Admittedly, the figure that he has just described is Old Age, and evidently this triggers a logical thought process about the relentlessness of passing time and the brevity of human existence. Therefore, in this sense the passage on time does not seem to be so much a digression but a sustained musing on ageing, mutability and mortality:

> Li tens, qui s'en vet nuit et jor
> sanz repox prendre et sanz sejor,
> et qui de nos se part et emble
> si celeement qu'il nos semble
> qu'il s'areste adés en un point,
> et il ne s'i areste pointe,
> ainz ne fine de trespasser,
> que l'en ne puet neïs penser
> quel tens ce est qui est presenz,
> sel demandez a clers lisanz,
> qu'ençois que l'en eüst pensé
> seroient ja .III. tens passé;
> li tens, qui ne puet sejorner,
> ainz vet torjorz sanz retorner
> con l'eve qui s'avale toute
> n'il n'en retorne ariere goute;

li tens, vers qui neant ne dure,
ne fers ne chose tant soit dure,
car tens gaste tot et menjue;
li tens, qui tote chose mue,
qui tot fet croistre et tot norist
et qui tot use et tot porist;
li tens, qui envellist noz peres,
qui vellist rois et emperieres
et qui trestoz nos vellira,
ou morz nos desavancera;
li tens, qui tot a em ballie
de gent vellir.

(361-86)

Time, which hurries on, day and night, without resting or pausing, and which leaves us and flees away so stealthily that it seems to us always to be standing still, but does not stop there at all, nor ever halts in its progress, so that one can never think of what the time is – ask any learned clerk – for before one had thought of it, three seconds would already have passed; time, which cannot linger but always advances, never turning back, like water which always flows downhill, never a drop going back the other way; time which outlasts everything, even iron and the hardest substances, for time spoils everything and devours it; time which changes everything, which nourishes everything and causes it to grow and which also wears everything out and rots it away; time, which made our ancestors old, which ages kings and emperors, and which will age all of us, unless death claims us early; time which has total power to make men old.[17]

However, there seems to be rather more to this passage than that. First, it provides an echo of St Augustine's famous musing on the nature of time in his *Confessions*, and in so doing reopens the issue of understanding and explaining time. Augustine said that he knew very well what time is, but that he became entangled when he tried to write about or to express what time is. This impossibility of stopping time in its tracks, or of discretely defining the past, the present and the future, also appears to be of interest to Guillaume de Lorris. Narratologically, the emphasis on the idea of time passing is interesting because it forces us to think about the words in time as we read them. It is literally describing and marking that passage of time. The repetition of 'li tens' lends a certain rhythm to the words in this passage. The words are equated to units of time and fly by as quickly as the seconds that it takes to read them. Is Guillaume perhaps signalling his interest in the potential for the narrative to capture

something of the fleeting nature of time, consciousness and human existence?

Jean de Meun also showed a strong interest in narrative time and narratological games. In his poem there is an extraordinarily complex example of narratological play where Jean writes about his own part in the writing of the poem:

> Puis vendra Johans Chopinel,
> au cuer jolif, au cors inel,
> qui nestra seur Laire a Meün,
> qui a saoul et a geün
> me servira toute sa vie,
> sanz avarice et sanz envie...
> Cist avra le romanz si chier
> qu'il le voudra tout parfenir,
> se tens et leus l'en peut venir,
> car quant Guillaume cessera,
> Jehans le continuera,
> enprés sa mort, que je ne mante,
> anz trespassez plus de .XL.
> (10535-40, 10554-60)

> Then will come Jean Chopinel, gay in heart and alert in body, who will be born in Meung-sur-Loire and will serve me, feasting and fasting, his whole life long, without avarice or envy... This romance will be so dear to him that he will want to complete it, if he has sufficient time and opportunity, for where Guillaume stops, Jean will continue, more than forty years after his death, and that is no lie.[18]

In this passage, the writing of the poem is seen as pre-destined, yet when he was writing about the destiny of the poem, it was yet to be finished and whole. He goes even further when the God of Love prays to Lucina, the goddess of childbirth, to oversee Jean's birth and ensure that he is born safely and granted a long life:

> Et por ce que bien porroit estre
> que cil Jehans qui est a nestre
> seroit, espoir, enpeeschiez,
> si seroit ce deaus et pechiez,
> et domages aus amoureus,
> qu'il fera mout de biens por eus,
> pri je Lucina, la deesse

d'enfantemant, qu'el doint qu'il nesse
sanz mal et sanz enconbrement
si qu'il puit vivre longuement...
Et se por lui ne vos prioie,
Certes prier vos en devroie
Au mains por Jehan alegier,
Qu'il escrive plus de legier,
Que cest avantages li fetes
(car il nestra, j'en sui prophetes),
et por les autres qui vendront,
qui devotement entendront
a mes commendemanz ensuivre
qu'il troveront escriz ou livre.
(10587-96; 10631-40)

And since something could perhaps happen to hamper this Jean who is yet to be born, which would be a great loss for lovers, for he will do them a great deal of good, I pray Lucina, goddess of childbirth, to grant that he will be born without difficulty or mishap and that he will have a long life... If I did not pray to you on his behalf, I certainly ought to pray you at least to relieve Jean and make it easier for him to write; you confer this benefit upon him (for he will be born, I prophesy it) for the sake of those who will come after, who will dedicate themselves to the task of following my commandments, which they will find written in this book.[19]

This is a remarkable example of the text playing with the chronological sequence of events in order to give a sense that the text was written before the dream, that is before the ideas came into Jean de Meun's mind, before even he was born. The text prophesises his birth as a future event even as we read the text that Jean de Meun has written. This kind of prophecy is assured to come true as the text itself testifies to the birth that it predicts. The self-fulfilling prophecy of Jean de Meun's narrative device here possibly provides a model for the ideal of a prophetic dream vision which could somehow verify the truth of its own prophecy before the event that it prophesises actually occurs.

Apart from these specific points where time is the subject or theme of a passage in the poem, the *Roman de la Rose* manifests some of the ways in which dream narratives exemplify aspects of time, linearity, and narrative that may be

common to all fiction, but are brought to the surface especially by this genre. The poem is structured by a series of interconnected temporal dimensions such as: the time of the dream; the time of the real-life experience prefigured by the dream; the time of the narrator; the narrative time of the dream; the time of writing; the temporal space of the text; and the time of the implied audience who are frequently addressed by the narrator. These are the kind of complexities, including narratological complexities, which create such dynamism in the text and seem to have inspired later writers of dream poems to experiment adventurously with these aspects of time in the narrative.

This is a text too, of course, about the world of time and the world of eternity. It explores the many ways that human beings relate to temporal reality and how the human mind seeks to break the confines of mortality and temporality by imagining and encompassing eternity. The vast scope and potential of human consciousness is indicated by the sheer space and scale of the dream landscape. This is also a narrative of many voices even though there is actually only one real protagonist in the poem: the first-person narrator. While the first-person narrator/dreamer gives an impression of linear fictional time and sequence, the other voices and imagined encounters open up the narrative to more complex temporal relations, and in so doing create a more dialogic narrative. As well as the narrator's voice, the dream and the narrative is populated with characters representing the thoughts, feelings, qualities and influences of the dreamer and his particular social milieu. These other characters and voices are usually present as personifications, or they are manifest as characters within the long speeches made by the personifications. Within these speeches, characters such as Nature, Genius and The Old Woman expound their opinions and theories on miscellaneous subjects and include material derived from various sources and texts.

Examples of the types of sources quoted are characters and stories from Ovid and Livy. The central narrative thus becomes, especially in Jean de Meun's hands, one that encompasses a wide temporal range from the classics to modern figures.

V. Time and Prophecy: The Prologue to the *Roman de la Rose*

It is interesting to look in detail at how the *Roman de la Rose* begins. The prologue to the dream vision (ll. 1-45) achieves a number of different objectives. First of all, it legitimises the use of the dream-frame to discuss serious philosophical matters, by allying itself with the tradition of dream literature and dream theory authorised by Macrobius in his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*.[20]

> Un auctor qui ot non macrobes,
> Qui ne tint pas songes a lobes,
> Ançois escrit l'avision
> Qui avint au roi scipion.
> (7-10)

> In support of this fact, I can cite an author named Macrobius, who did not consider that dreams deceived, but wrote of the dream that came to King Scipio.[21]

Macrobius was the authoritative source on dream theory in the Middle Ages and a proponent of the idea that certain dreams could indeed have prophetic value. In his *Commentary*, Macrobius attempts to catalogue dream experiences according to their origins and therefore their prophetic significance. The most significant dreams are those with divine influence, the least significant are those that stem from psychological causes. Therefore, by citing Macrobius, Guillaume de Lorris implicitly defines his dream as belonging to the significant and prophetic categories of dreams, as outlined in Macrobius's schema, and not to the categories of dreams that contain no truth or meaning.[22] The primacy of important dreams as specifically prophetic

early in the *Roman de la Rose*, is in keeping with the text's general interest in time and the idea of presenting the text as prophecy. The dream which will form the subject of the narrative we have not yet read will itself take place in reality, but the real life love affair will occur chronologically *after* the dream but chronologically *before* the writing or the reading of it.

The inclusion of Macrobius in the prologue has further significances. Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, discusses the dream of Scipio in relation to the work of which it forms the conclusion, Cicero's *De Re Publica.* Macrobius began his *Commentary* by justifying Cicero's decision to use a fictional dream to convey profound philosophical and political ideas. Now Guillaume de Lorris echoes this argument, justifying his own use of a dream vision and adding further weight to his own justification by assimilating both Macrobius and Cicero into his design.

Furthermore, the prologue to the *Roman de la Rose* can be read as an abbreviated commentary on, and defence of, the *Roman de la Rose*, and it is the reference to Macrobius that allows the commentary to be so abbreviated. Guillaume de Lorris appropriates Macrobius's *Commentary* and gives it a new resonance within his own forthcoming poem. In Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, the dream was a means of imagining an ideal world for humankind in the future. Correspondingly, but from an individual point of view, the dream vision in the *Rose* is a means of imagining an ideal world for the lover-poet. Thus, in the poem, the dream vision is a prefiguration of the lover-poet's destiny, to be fulfilled in real life and then in literature.

The *Commentary* is significantly longer than the *Somnium Scipionis*, the dream vision to which it refers. Could it be that Jean de Meun had this model in mind when he continued and vastly expanded Guillaume de Lorris' original poem?

The author uses the prologue to establish the end-oriented nature of human experience and desire, of dreams, and of narratives. He tells us as readers that we are going to experience fictional adventures in the future, which describe events that have already happened before the prologue was even penned. So, here at the very beginning of the prologue, the author plays in a very complex and provocative manner with our concept of time in a narrative, both past, present and future time, and real and fictional time also.

In the opening lines, the narrator justifies the use of the dream in the poem by claiming the revelatory potential of the dream. He asserts that dreams can indeed be truthful and meaningful, and that the meaning of these true dreams is disclosed at some point afterwards:

> Aucunes genz dient qu'en songes
> n'a se fables non et mençonges;
> mes l'en puet tex songes songier
> qui ne sont mie mençongier,
> ainz sont aprés bien aparant.
> (1-5)

> Some say that there are nothing in dreams but lies and fables; however, one may have dreams which are not in the least deceitful, but which later become clear.[23]

The prologue indicates the ambiguous status of dreams and the problems inherent in dream interpretation, with its careful balance between negative and positive paradigms. Two opposing attitudes to dreams are present in the five lines

quoted above. One view is that dreams are nothing but lies: '*mençonge*', in which case, imaginative expression is relegated to inconsequential status. This opinion is attributed by people external to the narrative, identified vaguely, if numerously, as '*Aucunes genz*', undefined and obscured they are *referred to*, represented only in order to be refuted: '*mes l'en puet tex songes songier/ qui ne sont mie mençongier*'. This other view, clearly the theory put forward by the narrator, allows the possibility that some dreams may contain and convey a truthful message to be validated in and by the future. The first view could be said to represent the uncertainty of the time before prophesised events occur – a time of potential occurrence. The second view represents the time of proof – the time of actual occurrence. In order to transcend the normal pattern of event followed by meaning, one must have faith in the meaning before the event.

Because of the use of the word '*fables*' in the second line, fiction is placed somewhere between dreams and lies. We shall trace in this and subsequent chapters some aspects of medieval dream poets' interest in examining parallels between fictional time and other experiences of time.

In the poem, the dream experience is the event, and the writing down of that dream experience is the meaning. Now, the narrator tells us that the dream subsequently came true. There is an inherent impossibility to this attempt to know something for sure before the proof is given. However, there is a definite attempt in the *Roman de la Rose* to create the illusion of destiny: the existence of knowledge and experience that was always going to be, and so to imply that the reader is participating in something that pre-existed the written text.

The dream experience comes first; the meaning, or the perceived meaning, will always lag behind. The fact that the meaning of the dream is deferred, and only becomes clear at a later time, requires that the future the dream predicts is used to authenticate the dream. A prophetic dream can only be validated by the eventual occurrence of the prophesied events. Hence the implicit ambiguity: if all dreams are potentially truthful and prophetic, how does the dreamer know that any particular dream is more significant, or capable of revealing the future, rather than another? In addition, anything that requires interpretation is open to misinterpretation. The ambiguity and uncertainty at the heart of dream divination probably explains why dreams and dreaming received such a lot of attention in medieval literature.

In the Middle Ages, dreams and their meaning became an endless source of fascination and debate, and arguably, the interest in dream poetry and prophecy expresses a contemporary anxiety about knowing truth from falsehood. Richard Firth Green has written specifically about the manifestation of this anxiety in the fourteenth century in his excellent book, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England.*[24] Using the dream-frame in narrative poetry provided a useful model for exploring the boundaries between appearance and reality, truth and falsehood. As we have just seen in the opening lines of the *Rose*, the vocabulary with which the narrator frames the telling of the dream indicates this defensiveness and anxiety: it talks about 'fables' and 'mençonges' (2), and 'folor et mustardie' (12), as well as asserting the potential for truth in dreams and in fiction, and emphasising the true prophecy of the future.

The play on '*mençonges*' and '*songes*' seems to place them at different ends of the spectrum. Line 3 following line 2, with such emphasis on the rhyming pattern,

creates a subliminal impression that dreams, that is, the right types of dreams, are the absolute opposite of lies and fables. The rhyming of alternate lines '*songe*', '*mençonge*', and '*songier*', '*mençongier*' reinforces this dichotomy.

Dreams were also problematic because they crossed the supposedly clear-cut boundary between the culture of paganism and the orthodoxy of Christianity. It is as Steven F. Kruger says that 'Writers of the high and Middle Ages treated the experience of dreaming with simultaneous anxiety and fascination. On the one hand, they saw dreams as dangerous, associated with pagan practices and demonic seduction. On the other, they claimed that dreams could be divinely inspired and foretell the future.'[25]

Part of the problem here is the lack of an objective witness or authority who can observe and corroborate the dream vision as divine prophecy. After all, who decides which dreams are the significant ones? By what authority is a dream to be declared to be an important vision or prophecy? The *Rose* seems to claim that the truth of the dream can be proved by reading the fiction because, according to the narrator, the end of the linear story reveals the truth:

> mes en ce songe onques riens n'ot
> qui tretot avenu ne soit
> si con li songes recensoit.
> (28-30)
>
> But there was nothing in the dream that has not come true, exactly as the dream told it.[26]

The prophetic power of the dream can then be validated by the reading of the text. In some way, the unfolding of the text becomes its own self-fulfilling prophecy. The fifth line of the poem: '*Ainz sont après bien aparant*', is pivotal to the reading of the

Roman de la Rose that I would like to propose. It introduces the subject of time in relation to dreams, meaning and authority. The poem is concerned with the mechanics of storytelling and the levels of mediation standing between the author and the reader, and between the experience and the text. These levels of mediation are identified as temporal margins and hiatuses. While the poet points to the inevitable existence of temporal boundaries between reality and representation, he also tests and manipulates those boundaries, first by exposing them and then by playing with them.

The prologue introduces the *matière*[27] to the reader while also temporally and spatially orienting the reader by directing us from past waking consciousness into dream-time and dream-space. The introduction moves from the present time of narration into the past of the dream, leading the reader through a number of temporal levels, and levels of subjective consciousness, from the waking consciousness of the poem's 'I', to the sleeping self and then to the transition into the dreaming self who enters the dream world. The narrator describes the progression of an individual consciousness through time. It outlines the evolution of the narrator as a young man to the narrator at the time of writing who feels that his journey from that point then to this point now is a worthy subject for a poem. This temporal movement begins on one particular May evening, when the narrator as a young man went to bed where naturally enough, he falls asleep. While sleeping he has a dream. Then he lives the events of the dream at a later time and afterwards he writes of the dream experience and its meaning. Finally, the text exists in its own right. Obviously the existence of the text as a whole and finished work can only ever be imagined during the period of writing, although its conceivable existence can perhaps be conveyed within the text as a future idea.

The narrator begins his narration from a retrospective position of knowledge, which has been imparted by the dream vision and the following real-life experience prefigured by the dream. The prologue begins at the end, in that the time of the introduction is the nearest to the time of the text and therefore to the reader's time. The inversion of this temporal sequence in the narrative order, results in an initial parade of all the various selves who form part of the chain. The narrator is seen to be a multitude of people all at once. He is the young man in his twentieth year, the sleeper, the dreamer, the lover, the poet, the fictional dreamer and the fictional lover. All of these personae emerge logically and sequentially as part of one unified identity but in narrative time they all coexist on a horizontal plane. And of course, the first person narrative pulls in the reader to participate in the textual experience. The reader while reading becomes a participant in the fictional consciousness and the linear sequence of fictional adventures.[28]

The prologue fixes the time of writing so that the reader is able to start from a stable present, which is the permanent present of the text. The prologue achieves this sense of the 'now' of writing by asserting the primacy of the speaking voice. In the poem, the narrator establishes himself as being in the present. That present is the moment of writing. Then he clarifies that the subject of his poem is to be his past, and he intimates that he will show how the events of the past relate to his present circumstances. Before the narrator situates us in his past, he explains that his past was actually his future. The dream is now a memory of past experience, but because it foretold the future, temporal sequence has been reversed. The narrator did not know that when he dreamt the dream vision he was dreaming his future, until that dream came true and he re-experienced the dream and his past. Thus, the future that the dream vision predicted was suddenly relegated to past experience in the form of a

ghostly *déjà vu*. He had already experienced the present, which was the future, in his prophetic dream. When the text raises questions about time like this, it also foregrounds narratological questions about the relation of the author to the narrator, and of the relation of the reading experience to the time of composition and to the fictional time of the dream.

VI. Time and Subjectivity

It seems that the contemplation of the vicissitudes of love frequently led the poet to address the fundamental conflicts of life in a mutable world. Thus, there appears to be a particular association between being in love and being in time in this poem. The treatment of the love quest in the late medieval dream poem is frequently suggestive of an authorial awareness of the rich potential of combining ideas of being in love, being in time and being in literature. The heightened state of consciousness and sensibility that can arise from being in love perhaps resulted in a growing awareness of temporal boundaries and limits and of the mutable nature of life. In different ways, these are all important subjects in the dream poem tradition after the *Roman de la Rose*.

Very early on in Guillaume de Lorris's poem, there is a detailed description of a portrait of Old Age. The portrait is one of several figures that are painted around the walled enclosure to the garden. The dreamer is a young man of twenty looking for love and pleasure. He intuitively feels that the garden is a place where he might find aesthetic pleasure and erotic love, thus he seeks entry to this earthly paradise. Yet, the cruel depiction of Old Age makes it clear that she is excluded from this beautiful, fertile, happy realm. Not only is she forever trapped on the outside but she is a static

image, flat, miserable and totally unappealing:

> Aprés fu Vielleice portete,
> qui estoit bien un pié retrete
> de tele come el soloit estre,
> qu'a poine qu'el se peüst pestre,
> tant estoit vielle et redotee.
> Mout estoit sa biauté gastee,
> mout estoit laide devenue.
> Toute sa teste estoit chenue
> et blanche com s'el fust florie.
> Ce ne fust mie grant morie
> s'ele morust, ne granz pechiez,
> car toz ses cors estoit sechiez
> de velleice et aneantiz.
> Moute estoit ja ses vis flestiz,
> qui fu jadis soés et plains:
> or estoit toz de fronces plains.
> Les orelles avoit velues,
> et toutes les denz si perdues
> quar ele n'en avoit pas une.
> Tant par estoit de grant vellume
> qu'el n'alast mie la montance
> de quatre toises sanz potence.
> (339-60)

> Old Age was pictured next, who was at least a foot shorter than she used to be, and so childish in her dotage that she could scarcely feed herself. Her beauty was quite spoiled, and she had become very ugly. All her head was white and bleached, as if with blossom. If she had died, her death would not have been important or wrong, for her whole body was dried up and ruined by age. Her face, once soft and smooth, was now quite withered and covered in wrinkles. Hair grew in her ears, and she had lost all her teeth, for she had not a single one left. She was so extremely aged that she could not have gone eight yards without a crutch.[29]

It is as if Old Age represents a shadow of the dreamer in the future except he seems impervious to her as a threat of time's ravages. The dreamer does not appear to see himself as a part of this temporal process, he is the archetypal lover frozen in time and invulnerable to its mutability. Thus in this example, it would seem that Youth is challenging Old Age and Death rather than Death challenging the Youth as would have been the normal order of things. It is an inversion of the *Three Living and the Three Dead* encounter. The poem takes the side of Youth and represses the important

medieval ideology that human beings have to take account of mutability and mortality, and prioritise the life of eternity over the temporal life of earthly pleasure. Because this poem is a secular poem about love, consciousness, and individual experience, it is challenging the religious view that human time and existence is subject to God's rule. The text's positioning of Old Age outside the garden and as a flat and static image helps to create the reversal of the usual order of priority between religious concerns and the impulses of temporal desire.

VII. Time and Intertextuality

While some of the *Rose*'s characters and voices seem not to have a particularly significant literary history, some clearly come from well-known earlier works, for example Jean de Meun cites the historian Livy at the beginning of his story of Virginia (l. 5564). Another recognisably intertextual element is included in Jean de Meun's introduction of the Old Woman. Her most identifiable literary source is Ovid's Dipsas from the *Remedy of Love*. The origin of Jean de Meun's Fortune is obviously from Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* and the figure of Nature in the *Rose* comes primarily from Alain de Lille's twelfth century poem, *De planctu naturae* (*Plaint of Nature*).

The intertextual layers within the *Roman de la Rose* help to create an impression that the text is not simply linear and part of a linear structure extending through fictional time (the time of the lover's story unfolding). By constantly drawing on fictional and historical experiences, and indeed voices from earlier eras, this poem situates itself in 'literary time' amongst prior texts and literary characters or consciousnesses that belong to no particular time or place.

Intertextual voices within the dream narrative bring into the poem a multiplicity of experiences, belonging to different eras, and dealing both with the mundane world of time and the realm of eternal truth. The voices provide commonplace evocations of everyday life and experience in medieval society, as well as thoughts and questions about nature and the truth of a divine plan for humankind. These other voices in the narrative add a certain dynamic and universality to the first person narrative. Fictionally, as readers, we are in the mind of one individual at one time in his fictional life, but other people, and other voices from authors of the past are present to us in the dreamer's consciousness. The allegorical dream vision mode allows the text to depict the landscape of an individual consciousness existing in the court society of the thirteenth century, and also ranging freely across the learned and literary cultures of other eras. Part of the complexity of this narrative structure is that it depicts both an allegory of thirteenth century court life, a young man's personal experience and the wealth of inherited Western European literature and learning.

This, then, is a polyphonic text. There are multiple voices and multiple layers in the narrative. For example, the consciousness of the Jealous Husband is inserted within the lengthy speech of the Old Woman. These voices within voices cause the reader to experience a certain dizzy, disoriented feeling, and at times, the narrative is so dialogic and polyphonic that the first-person narrator is so far-removed, he actually becomes invisible.

There is a blurring of the narrative voice, which gives an interesting ambiguity and uncertainty. We experience in the course of the reading experience a mixture of vagueness and specific and often elaborate detail.

VIII. Time as a Topos in Medieval Literature

The *Roman de la Rose* contains such a large variety of subjects, themes and topoi, that the critic who attempts to identify a main theme or argument at the heart of the poem, may possibly face accusations of taking rather a reductionist approach. Bearing this caveat in mind, my thesis will, as I have said, focus on the subject of time and temporality in the *Roman de la Rose*, but the theme of time, in all its forms, will be addressed contextually and in connection with other major themes and topoi. The textual awareness of time, mortality and mutability are, for me, the most fascinating and the most elucidating aspects of the *Rose*, but by acknowledging the connectedness of the various topoi and themes with narratological devices and ploys, this thesis aims to illustrate the complexity and dynamics of the poem. Time proves thus to be a multifunctional, multivalent aspect, of both the content and the style of this narrative, and approaching the complexity of this text through the examination of its treatment of time opens up many central concerns of the poem.

In *European Literature and the Middle Ages*, Ernst Curtius wrote a comprehensive account of the influence of antique prose and poetry on medieval literature in Europe.[30] The scope of this study is impressively all-encompassing. Curtius shows how many types of discourse from the classical and the antique eras, such as oratory and written prose and poetry, shaped and developed poetic technique through the ages. Conventions of writing and speaking were established in Latin scholarship, and incorporated the arts of rhetoric and metaphoric, as well as a number of well-established topics and formulas. There were traditional topics from rhetoric, which included formulas of modesty, introductory formulas and concluding formulas, but also there were various topics derived from poetics. Poetic topoi are largely

concerned with archetypes and themes, for example the ideal landscape, the boy and the old man, the old woman and the girl.

Curtius discusses several major topoi. Among the paradigms he identifies, are various rhetorical conventions and modes of discourse, ('Topics of Consolatory Oratory', 'Affected Modesty' and 'Topics of the Conclusion'), and various framing fictions, metaphorical worlds and recurring motifs ('The Ideal Landscape', 'Invocation of Nature', 'The World Upside Down', 'Youth and Old Age', 'Inexpressibility' and 'Outdoing'). In this study, Curtius selects a number of fundamental literary topoi with significant history and tradition. However, such a list does not have to be considered as being exhaustive.

Curtius does not identify time as one of the major discrete topoi of medieval literature. There are, however, certainly arguments for its inclusion in such a list. Time and temporality would happily sit among the other main topics that he specifically identifies. In fact, time and temporality are, I would argue, to a greater or lesser extent, an interesting component of virtually all the topoi that Curtius does identify. The trouble with studying large topoi, such as time in literature, is that these categories inevitably connect and overlap with many other important subjects. As well as examining time as a major topoi in its own right, I will also be looking at some of the other topoi identified by Curtius, and mentioned above, in the course of this chapter, in particular the inexpressibility and the outdoing topoi.

IX. Dream Literature in Modern Criticism

The *Roman de la Rose* created a new genre of non-religious love vision poems. This genre continued to develop from the mid-thirteenth century to the sixteenth century. The literature of this development, a selection of poems written during this period and influenced by the *Roman de la Rose*, forms the material for remaining chapters of this thesis. The first chapter has included a survey of writings on the history of time-telling and time measurement in order to contextualise medieval interest in philosophical and literary speculation about temporal experience and its narrative representation. This chapter has identified the various ways that the *Roman de la Rose* shows an interest in time and temporal issues. The rest of this chapter will survey the critical history of writings about the post-*Roman de la Rose* dream poem, in scholarly debate and discussion from the early twentieth century through to contemporary critical thought.

The *Roman de la Rose* remained a dominant influence on subsequent poetry throughout the Middle Ages. James Wimsatt remarks in *Chaucer and the French Love Poets* that French poets imitated parts of the *Rose* for a hundred years after its composition without establishing a consistent mode in their love narratives. These imitations superficially engaged with isolated aspects of the poem and failed to creatively develop the major themes and structures. Wimsatt locates the continuation of this creativity in the fourteenth century in the innovative love poetry of Guillaume de Machaut:

> It remained for Guillaume de Machaut to develop from the *Rose* and its progeny a mode which other poets could and did utilize. Poets in France, most notably Froissart, Christine de Pizan, and Alain Chartier used Machaut's

> works as models in their composition of their *dits*, and so also did Geoffrey Chaucer in his first long poem, the *Book of the Duchess*.[31]

These framed narratives and lyrico-narrative *dits* examine self-reflexively modes of literary consciousness: the role of the fictional narrator, the act and the time of writing itself, a typically late-medieval awareness of the status of the author and secular experiences of love and time.

X. Early Twentieth-Century Critical Approaches to Dream Literature: The Case of Chaucer

Broadly speaking, the main difference between early twentieth century critical responses and mid-to-late twentieth century approaches to dream literature in the tradition of the *Roman de la Rose*, is that earlier critics tended to see the dream poem after the *Roman de la Rose* as being derivative and imitative, whereas later critics seemed to appreciate the creative and innovative reconfigurings and reworkings of the dream vision form produced by Chaucer and his contemporaries and successors.

Early twentieth century critics such as George Kittredge, Emile Legouis, C.S. Lewis and John Livingstone Lowes concentrate on the allegorical aspect of Chaucer's early poetry rather than critiquing the dream vision framework. The general view is that Chaucer's allegorical poems are inferior in design and achievement to the realism of his later work: *The Canterbury Tales*. Indeed, Kittredge characterises Chaucer's later work as being more "virile" than his earlier poetry.[32] Generally, critics of the post-Victorian era placed a high importance on literature's ability to evoke real life and to be true to actual lived experience. Thus, in contrast to the realism that the

criticism and taste of the period valued so highly, allegory and personification were perceived as being artificial and therefore weak in imaginative power.[33]

In *Chaucer and His Poetry* (1920), George Kittredge reads Chaucer's early work in the light of a poetic apprenticeship, whereby he is learning his craft and gradually finding his own poetic voice. Although Kittredge does express certain reservations about the tendency to divide Chaucer's writing career into three distinct periods, he does, however, acquiesce to this point of view to a large degree in his assessment of Chaucer's poetic development:

> It has long been the fashion to divide Chaucer's poetical activity into three periods, - the French, the Italian, and the English... In the French period, Chaucer was literally under the control of French methods and French conventions, - a disciple of Guillaume de Lorris and Guillaume de Machaut. He was to all intents and purposes, a French love-poet writing (so it happened) in the English language. In the Italian period, on the contrary, Chaucer was nobody's disciple. Dante and Petrarch and Boccaccio did not control him: they were his emancipators. They enlarged his horizon. They awoke him to consciousness of power that was his own. Boccaccio, in particular, did him the priceless service of stirring him to emulation... And finally, the third period is called "English" (with still another shift in the application) not because Chaucer was ruled by English fashions (as by French fashions in the French period) nor yet because he was inspired and emancipated by English writers (as by Italian in the Italian period), but because his genius turned to English life and English character.[34]

Kittredge's own caveat about the possible inadequacies of systematising a poet's cultural and creative influences into discrete, sequential phases is enough to undermine his careful explanations of these supposed phases in Chaucer's writing career:

> Besides, this neat triplicity obscures the whole process of Chaucer's career, which of course was cumulative.[35]

Chaucer's writing is inevitably informed by the intellectual stimulation of his reading. But as Kittredge acknowledges, Chaucer's writing career, like his intellect, was cumulative and cannot be explained on a simple linear temporal plane.

Emile Legouis lacks Kittredge's sense of the complexities relating to Chaucer's influences and originality throughout his literary career. Whereas Kittredge displays an uncomfortable awareness of the complexity of the situation in presenting his argument, Legouis further simplifies the tripartite schema expounded by Kittredge and just divides Chaucer's œuvre into two periods. The early work is seen as being submissive to French conventions and the later work is seen as having shaken off the restrictions of dominant conventions. In *Geoffrey Chaucer* (1913), Legouis outlines this theory:

> Apart from this narrow fringe of lyrical verse, Chaucer's work appears as purely narrative, and falls into two clearly defined groups. In the first part of his literary career, he submitted to the restrictions of a style which had been popularised by the *Roman de la Rose*; in the second part he freed himself from them.[36]

As far as Legouis is concerned, Chaucer's dream poetry is a futile enterprise because it attempts to continue an already defunct style of writing, the allegorical tradition. Legouis sees this style as being fatally restrictive and limiting. By contrast, he views the realism of the *Canterbury Tales* as a sign of Chaucer discovering his own individuality and freeing himself from the constraints of the French tradition:

> It was only when he chose an English subject that he became a European poet. He became such by forcing his true nature from thraldom. When he had gained significant confidence in his own powers, he used his observations for the basis of his work; he told what he himself had seen, and expressed directly his personal vision of life and of men and women.[37]

There is an underlying assumption here, that because Chaucer has written a narrative featuring realistically drawn English characters in a realistic context in England, the *Canterbury Tales* is therefore more representative of Chaucer's true poetic voice. This is a rather simplistic view, assuming that somehow literary realism allows for a truer, unmediated account of the writer's experiences and perceptions. The pilgrimage in the *Canterbury Tales* works as a framing fiction in the same way, one might argue, as the dream vision operates as a framing device in the *Roman de la Rose* and in Chaucer's dream poems. There are differences between the two, but important similarities too. The main difference is that the *Tales* attempt to represent a potentially real pilgrimage, whereas the dream poems attempt to self-consciously and overtly represent a representation of fictional creation. The clue here though to the connectedness of Chaucer's œuvre, rather than the disconnectedness proposed by early twentieth century critics, is that whichever genre Chaucer employs, he persistently contemplates and explores many common themes: time, mutability, temporal aspects of storytelling and writing to name a few significant and relevant subjects to this thesis.

John Livingstone Lowes also subscribes to the view that Chaucer's dream poetry is overly conventional within an overly determined form. In *Geoffrey Chaucer* (1944), Lowes describes Chaucer's early work as being "saturated with the courtly poetry of France."[38] However, he does recognise Chaucer's ability to breathe new life into an old form: "...in Chaucer's hand a form upon which *rigor mortis* had already almost supervened became once more a thing instinct with life and capable of hitherto undreamed variety."[39] According to Lowes, Chaucer uses the dream tradition from the French as an opportunity to think about dreams. It is Chaucer's philosophical questioning about the real nature of dreams that impresses Lowes. Lowes identifies

Chaucer's interest in real life dreams as bringing a saving realism into the dead conventions of French dream poems:

> But Chaucer, quite characteristically, was not content to accept the dream convention as an act of faith. Why *does* one dream? And what are the phenomena of dreaming which give verisimilitude to an invented vision? Chaucer pondered the first question at intervals throughout his life, and in the Proem to the *House of Fame* enumerates fifteen different causes of dreams... But the accepted conventional cause of such dreams as found vent in verse was melancholy – the melancholy *par excellence* which arises from unrequited or otherwise unhappy love.[40]

There is an acknowledgement here that Chaucer uses the dream poem imaginatively and intelligently to pose questions about human consciousness and the origin of dreams and visions. Yet the praise seems to rest upon the textual analysis of dream theory to provide verisimilitude to the fictional vision. However, Lowes does appear to appreciate that Chaucer is trying to create a new dialogue within a conventional form, rather than dismissing Chaucer's dream poetry as imitative.

XI. C.S. Lewis and the Rehabilitation of Allegory: Allegory and Consciousness

Allegory is very close to one of the main themes of this thesis, the exploration of individual consciousness. As C.S. Lewis points out in his study of the tradition of allegory in the Middle Ages, *The Allegory of Love* (1936), it was natural to turn to the allegorical form when trying to represent the psychological realm.[41] Allegory is very often clearly about states of mind and emotions and attempts to give this invisible inner life palpable and visible form:

> Allegory, in some sense, belongs not to medieval man but to man, or even to mind, in general. It is of the very nature of thought and language to represent what is immaterial in picturable terms.[42]

Therefore, when the *Roman de la Rose* used the dream vision to represent an alternative spatial and temporal sphere in order to explore the psychological experience of love, of time, and of consciousness, the allegorical mode was an ideal means of representing subjective experience as something objective and visual. It is the externalisation of internal experience. Lewis makes this point and observes:

> Allegory, besides being many other things, is the subjectivism of an objective age.[43]

The mingling of subjective and objective experience is a prime element in the genre of allegorical narrative. Such narratives, with the *Roman de la Rose* as an obvious example, also mingle a particular story of individual events with personification which seem to draw on general and universal human qualities, such as Reason, Fair Welcome, False Seeming, abstractions which are presented as timeless. The early critics' distaste for Chaucer's allegory and allegory in general probably goes back to the Romantic dislike of it, and the preference of the Romantics for realism and symbolism. C.S. Lewis was influential in changing critical attitudes by asserting the positive qualities and the potential sophistication of allegory. In contrast to the very negative view of Coleridge and the romantic poets, allegory can be a very rich form for recording individual consciousness and emotional experience and also for generalising and universalising these inner sensations.

Although Lewis promotes the use of allegory in literature to attempt to express the inexpressible, he seems to elevate the purity of allegory in the *Roman de la Rose* above the modified version of the allegorical tradition found in Chaucer's dream visions:

> The poem of Guillaume de Lorris is a true allegory of love; but no poem of Chaucer's is. In Chaucer we find the same subject-matter, that of chivalrous love; but the treatment is never truly allegorical. Traces of the allegorical poem survive. Thus we have poems set in the framework of a dream after the manner of Guillaume; but what happens in the dream is not allegorical. Or we have allegory itself used as a framework for something else.[44]

XII. The Development of Growing Critical Respect for Chaucer's Dream Poetry

In the latter part of the twentieth century, critics seemed to show more of an interest in the dream framework, and specifically questioned why the dream poem was such a popular and useful vehicle for medieval poets. For example, in *Chaucer's Early Poetry*, published in an English translation in 1963, Wolfgang Clemen explores why medieval poets made use of the dream as a framework for their works and looks at medieval dream theories in order to speculate what the medieval mind might have thought about dreams:

> The use of the dream as a convention originated in the medieval poet's need to present his poem as possessing objective truth and not as his own invention. For the medieval Christian mind saw certain dreams as sent by God and thus as revealing objective truth. Besides this, the allegorical poem introduced strange, fantastical figures and images, possible against a dream background but hardly credible as actual experience. Moreover, the language of the dream and that of the allegory are closely akin; the images and events in them have an inner significance, they always 'mean' something, and therefore require some explanation if they are to be rightly understood.[45]

It no longer seems to be a problem that the allegorical dream poem has evolved into something looser than the 'perfect' allegory offered by the *Roman de la Rose*. In fact, Clemen sees this as a positive development and a sign of Chaucer's innovative objective:

> It was becoming progressively rarer for French dream-poetry of the fourteenth century, which carried on the tradition of the *Roman de la Rose*, to be consistently allegorical. Real persons were now being introduced as well as

> personified abstractions... the dream has dropped the allegory altogether, and what we have is a meeting between real people. This turning away from the artificial world of personified abstractions engaged in didactic disputation to a dialogue between real people is a significant feature of Chaucer's novel aim.[46]

Clemen shows a new awareness that perhaps Chaucer was actually trying to do something interesting within an already established tradition. Whereas C.S. Lewis perceives Chaucer's dream poetry as failing to be truly allegorical, Clemen engages with the idea that the dream and the allegory live on but in an adapted formula. Instead of dismissing the allegorical dream as an inherited form, Clemen speculates about why medieval poets made use of the dream as a framework for their work.

One of the reasons that the dream frame appealed to medieval poets was possibly that it allowed a multiplicity of selves to enter the text, temporally distinct, while at the same time there was an overall unity provided by the first person narrative. Both Wolfgang Clemen and John Lawlor see the dream as being used to achieve a form of distance and detachment. Lawlor, in *Chaucer* (1968), recognises the scope within the dream poem for movement and slippage between the various personae:

> The form which will above all others sanction a departure from actuality, cushion any shock of self-recognition, and finally allow the 'I' of the story to dissolve back into the familiar figure of the poet, is of course the dream-poem.[47]

This idea of the detached narrator who can both own and disown his subject matter is expounded by Dorothy Bethurum in her 1959 essay 'Chaucer's Point of View as Narrator in the Love Poems':

> This withdrawal of the narrator from love constitutes not merely the only possible position for a bourgeois poet writing for a courtly and largely

> feminine audience, but it allows him increasingly his own ironic and realistic comment on the fashionable subject.[48]

Interestingly, Bethurum connects the detached narrator to issues of class and social position. She does not see the withdrawal of the narrator as a purely aesthetic feature of the dream poem but as a product of the poet's relationship to his/her patron, to courtly society, and to the expectations of his/her audience.

However, literary criticism, like the literary genres on which it commentates, does not always fit neatly into chronological sequence. The Leavisite critic, John Speirs published his study of Chaucer's œuvre in the 1960s, the same decade in which Clemen and Lawlor were writing their critiques of Chaucer, and yet he expresses very similar views in his approach to dream poetry as Kittredge and Legouis, even though they were writing half a century earlier. Like these earlier critics, in *Chaucer the Maker* (1964), Speirs sees Chaucer's dream poems as merely representing the early stage in his progress from the inexperienced poet who follows the tradition of continental allegory, to the mature poet who embraces English realism:

> Regarded as nearly as possible in the order in which they were composed the poems of Chaucer, like the plays of Shakespeare, are seen to form a pattern which is the pattern of a continuous process of growth. In that process each successive poem marks a stage. Chaucer's poetry as a whole may be understood as that process of growth which culminates in the *Canterbury Tales*.[49]

Like critics of an earlier generation, Speirs perceives Chaucer's dream poems as French and *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Canterbury Tales* as English. Clearly, Speirs admires the distinctly English character of *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Tales* as,

enthusiastically, he commends these works as embodying "the creativeness of Chaucer's English" and "Chaucer's English genius".[50]

> The process of growth of Chaucer's art is the process by which the personifications of the *Romaunt of the Rose* grow into the persons of the *Canterbury Tales*.[51]

Speirs values the realistic representation of characters in literature above the symbolic figures to be found in allegory. The juxtaposition of 'personification' and 'persons' here is presented as a definite improvement: a 'growth'.

In contrast, James Winny, in *Chaucer's Dream-Poems* (1973), suggests that Chaucer's dream poems are effective precisely because he mixes the fantasy element of the dream genre with the realism of everyday life:

> By admitting representative ideas and figures of common life to his dreamer's experience, Chaucer sets up tensions between the courtly and the plebeian, and between fantasy and the actual, which give his poems an intellectual interest generally lacking in the love-vision.[52]

XIII. New Critical Interest in the Genre of Dream Poetry 1970s-1990s

In the 1970s, three critics, Paul Piehler, P. M. Kean and A. C. Spearing, all examined in more detail the learned traditions that lay behind the fiction of the dream poem genre. In *The Visionary Landscape: A Study in Medieval Allegory* (1971), Piehler focuses on the history of the 'authority figure' in western literature.[53] Medieval dream poetry is examined within a larger context of visions with significant figures and guides, often divine, who instruct the narrator.

P. M. Kean sees the development of Chaucer's dream poems, after the *Book of the Duchess*, as providing a vehicle for his philosophical interests. The title of Kean's 1972 book, *Love Vision and Debate*, indicates her interest in the dialogic potential in dream poetry. Kean has a preference for the dream poems that are overtly and explicitly philosophical, where profound ideas from the great philosophers are foregrounded and debated:

> The *Book of the Duchess* does not offer any profound solution, either philosophical or religious, to the problem of mortality. Christian consolation, as a matter of fact, is not proposed; and the consolation of philosophy remains a minor theme... In the *Parlement of Foules*, however, this philosophical material is brought into the foreground and is fully deployed in both sections of the poem, in the introductory one based on the *Somnium Scipionis*, and in the vision itself.[54]

Kean asserts that the philosophical ideas that preoccupy Chaucer's poetry play a peripheral part in the *Book of the Duchess*, which is why she is more enthusiastic in her appreciation of Chaucer's other work where philosophical debate predominates.

A.C. Spearing's detailed study of medieval dream poetry is testament to a growing interest in the complexity and profundity of the dream vision genre in the 1970s. In *Medieval Dream Poetry* (1976), Spearing provides a survey of the whole history of dreams in literature, from biblical and classical dreams through to the late medieval use of the dream vision frame.

In tracing the development of the dream vision after the *Roman de la Rose*, Spearing, like many other critics, also identifies the movement towards realism, although he remarks that it is a surface realism rather than truly mimetic:

> As the [fourteenth] century proceeded, there was a tendency for allegory to move into the background, to be replaced by persons and scenes taken from real life, whose function is no longer illustrative, as it is in the *Roman de la Rose*. This movement towards a kind of realism, at least of surface, is typical of the later medieval arts in general, and it 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.[55]

Interestingly, Spearing argues that Chaucer's dream poems can be read as interrelated works, as well as each dream poem being an individual poem in its own right:

> [A]lthough each of these poems has an independent existence as a work of art, they also form an intelligible sequence, in which certain leading themes are carried from one poem to another, and are not merely repeated but developed. The existence of this series of related dream-poems is of great help in our understanding of any one of them, because each throws light on the others.[56]

Although these critics of the 1970s had placed the late-medieval dream poem in a learned historical tradition, few if any critics had considered dream poems within the author's own political context. In *Geoffrey Chaucer* (1986), Stephen Knight considers the political dimension and reads Chaucer's dream poems as an expression of his historical imagination and his class status and allegiance:

> [T]he sophisticated romances of earlier centuries had been displaced in French aristocratic circles by dream allegories about love. Since Chaucer was a court official with aspirations to be a serious poet, the French dream poems provided the obvious path for him to follow in English... When he adopted the dream mode Chaucer was not only using a form appropriate to a leisured aristocracy: he was enabling himself to adventure into the highest ranges of medieval art and social analysis.[57]

However, political approaches to dream poetry remained rare, as other critics of the period (Edwards, Russell and Kruger – all Americans) continued to see the interest of the genre as lying in form and aesthetics. For example, Robert Edwards regards Chaucer's dream poems as providing a commentary on their own

composition and creation. In *The Dream of Chaucer: Representation and Reflection in the Early Narratives* (1989), Edwards discusses this element of self-conscious reflection and speculation in Chaucer's dream poetry:

> My contention is that, although Chaucer wrote no formal, discursive treatise on poetics, he conducted an extensive practice of aesthetic speculation. The poems are means of representation and artistic self-consciousness. But if what Chaucer has to say about art is always embedded in a poetic context, it follows that his critical reflections are necessarily part of the imaginative discourse of his poems. His practical theorizing incorporates a subtle and carefully balanced play of assertion and negation, and like the stories and characters depicted in the poems, it cannot be reduced to a simple or even a single meaning.[58]

Edwards identifies the self-reflexive interest in representation and meaning in Chaucer's early work. He sees the dream poems as problematising the situation of the knower rather than asserting the impossibility of the knowable:

> The early narratives assert the mysterious powers of representation and meaning; and like the *Consolation of Philosophy*, one of Chaucer's most important sources for later poems, they dramatize the problem of the knower rather than the impossibility of the knowable. In this way the poems embody a profound commitment to critical analysis and reflection, to a process of understanding that goes forward amidst indeterminancy and partiality. As they tell the narrator's story of his dream, the poems explore the complications of aesthetic systems, including foremost those that Chaucer sets out himself.[59]

In this analysis, the importance of the dream poems is their ability to represent the difficulty of transforming subjective experience or knowledge into objective form.

According to J. Stephen Russell in his study of English dream poetry, *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form* (1988), the dream vision arose out of late medieval scepticism. This scepticism involved "a profound distrust of language and its ability to represent phenomenal reality (to say nothing of the other world), and an equal distrust of the knowability of that reality."[60]

In *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (1992), Steven Kruger has explained the medieval fascination with dreams and dream theory as a means of representing ideas of in-betweenness. The dream seems to occupy a privileged position between our earthly existence and something beyond, something divine and transcendental:

> As demonstrated by medieval dream theory, the dream remained, throughout the Middle Ages, associated with both earth and heaven. In choosing to represent a dream, an author also chose to depict a realm located between the divine and mundane. Definable as neither a miraculous revelation nor merely a psychosomatic dream, the middle vision involves both higher and lower portions of the cosmos, taking place on a field of action neither confined to earth nor hopelessly beyond human reach. Navigating a course between unambiguously upward- and downward-looking visions, the middle vision offers a way of exploring the connections between the world in which we find ourselves and the transcendent realm for which we yearn.[61]

In *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form* (1988), Kathryn Lynch, like Russell and Kruger concentrates on the aesthetic aspects of the genre and relates these to medieval philosophical ideas. She explores the relationship between matter and form in late-medieval philosophy and poetics and presents a grammar of dream and vision. Also, like Kruger, Lynch is interested in the dream vision's potential to represent liminality and states of in-betweenness:

> [T]he medievals were quite interested in the marginal relationship of body and soul during vision; it was this aspect of the dream or vision's liminality that seems to have occupied their thought and commentary more than any other, thus making the fictional vision the perfect literary form for poets seeking to explore the philosophical issues that were so urgent to this age...[62]

XIV. New Directions from French Criticism

Historically, in French literary criticism there was a tendency to focus on the great romances of the twelfth century, like the Arthurian adventures of Chrétien de Troyes, which had the result of removing the dream poetry of the thirteenth to the fifteenth

centuries from the mainstream of criticism. This imbalance of critical interest was corrected by the seminal work of Daniel Poirion in the 1960s, which marked the beginning of a renewed interest in dream poetry.

The profound insights into dream poetry and *dits amoureux* that originated from the new wave of French criticism demonstrated the potential sophistication of the dream poem and related framed narratives. Critics such as Daniel Poirion, William Calin, Jacqueline Cerquiglini, Kevin Brownlee, Sylvia Huot and Catherine Attwood have all directed attention to the complex figure of the author/narrator/dreamer. These critics have all signalled the importance of the relationship between medieval poets and their patrons. There is a new emphasis on the individual poet and his/her career.

William Calin, in *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England* (1994), examines the figure of the narrator with more subtlety than previous critics:

> The Narrating persona, both as a dreamer within the diegesis and as an implied author recounting it later, accepts the objective reality of the dream. Yet the real author – Machaut, Froissart, Chaucer – remains skeptical. The real author has created fictional characters and a narrating voice that are illusion; their experience is fictional; and the author's complex, ambivalent representation of the dream calls attention to this very literariness. All three poets explore the limits of dream knowledge and dream psychology, questioning both, because they have read Macrobius and also have lived in an experiential world.[63]

This separation of the fictional narrator and the real-life author proved a very effective approach. Kevin Brownlee examines the relationship between the author and the protagonist in Machaut's poetry, also drawing attention to some of the temporal peculiarities that arise from the evolution of the poet-narrator into the

participant of his own love poem. In *Poetic Identity in Guillaume de Machaut* (1984), Brownlee describes this textual fusion of narrative stance, voice and time:

> *Le Livre du voir-dit* may be viewed as a kind of culmination – the fullest development possible for the narrative stance of poet-narrator as lover-protagonist. We have what appears to be an almost complete fusion of lover, protagonist, narrator, and poet. It is as if a troubadour were to write his own *vida*. Further, there is a progressive reduction of temporal distance between the time of writing and the time of the narrative, until the story is told almost as it happens. This is done with a high degree of literary self-consciousness: one of the principle themes of the *Voir-Dit* is the story of the writing and construction of the book itself, the first time in Machaut's œuvre that this takes place *explicitly*. The composition of poetry and the craft of writing (including the making of the codex and the business of patronage) here become thematized and linked to the portrayal of love as experience and as poetic inspiration.[64]

In *Dynamic Dichotomy: The Poetic 'I' in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century French Lyric Poetry* (1998), Catherine Attwood has examined the dynamic relation between the various personae in late-medieval French poetry to highlight the metafictional effect:

> In the case of the earlier *trouvères*, the reader had been invited to identify with, or at least to learn from, the poet-figure as the creature of his circumstances, one who has undergone, more or less involuntarily, the experiences which subsequently determined the form and content of his text. With Machaut, Froissart and their successors, this figure, in his capacity of creator, has become the sole instigator of his text, so that all experience other than that of writing is subordinate to his creative selectivity...Such writing about writing – 'écriture hermaphrodite' – greatly enhanced the status of the poet-figure by stressing the primacy and self-fulfilling nature of his task. A further operation of the poet's 'creative' example was to appeal to the reader, whether directly or indirectly, as one who was in some degree involved in the same literary undertaking as himself.[65]

The phrase 'écriture hermaphrodite' quoted above was formulated by Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet in her important study of Guillaume de Machaut's poetry, *"Un engin si soutil": Guillaume de Machaut et l'écriture au XIVe siècle* (1985).[66] It represents the self-reflexive tendency in writing of the later Middle Ages, and

demonstrates the sophistication of these poets in their endeavours to write the genesis of the text into the poem itself: a very postmodern aim.

XV. Narratological Approaches

One of the great advances by French criticism has been to focus attention on narratological approaches to literature. The work of narratologists has been as important for the subject of this thesis as the various studies and criticism of dream poetry. Time as an aspect of narrative structure is a subject which has been examined by a number of narratologists, such as Gérard Genette, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Mieke Bal,[67] and in great depth by Paul Ricoeur.

Paul Ricoeur provides a basic hypothesis for the significance of the relationship between time and narrative in his seminal study of this subject:

> [B]etween the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience there exists a correlation that is not merely accidental but that presents a transcultural form of necessity. To put it another way, *time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of human existence.*[68]

Leo Spitzer was an early pioneer in examining the poetic 'I' as being something more than a direct expression of the literal author.[69] This had the salutary effect of discouraging critics from seeing the narrator of Chaucer's dream poems as being directly identifiable with Geoffrey Chaucer.

In *English Medieval Narrative in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (1986), Piero Boitani has looked at spatial relations in the narratives of Chaucer's

dream poems. He uses diagrams to visualise the spatial dimensions and structures of the dream world in order to identify the diegetic levels within these constructs.

> The dream, far from being an illusion, proves to be a sort of litmus paper that measures the deepest reality... But the final step remains to be carried out: the protagonist who, departing from the book, has learned through his dream the reality of the complete experience of love and death, decides to transform his dream into a poem. The reader becomes... a dreamer and a poet. Or, in conclusion: the book is transformed through the dream-reality, into the Book: the *Book of the Duchess*.[70]

Interestingly, Boitani's interpretation of the narratological devices at work in Chaucer's dream poetry illustrates the interconnectedness of spatial and temporal dimensions in these narrative structures.

In *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology* (1989), Evelyn Birge Vitz describes the multiplicity of 'I's' that appear in the *Roman de la Rose* as being like a series of flashbacks as used in modern films and novels. This shows the extent to which de Lorris and de Meun were aware of the visual aspects of the time and space of the text, and the dynamic effect that they created for it to be perceived in this way:

> The innumerable first-person pronouns in the *Roman de la Rose* thus converge into four distinct identities, covering a period of five or more years... It might, of course, be said that in any autobiographical work, indeed any work revolving about a hero who exists over a period of time, there are a number – indeed an infinite number – of different identities corresponding to the different moments of the story. In a sense, this is true. What is most curious here, though, is that these different *I*'s are discontinuous, discrete, and cut off from one another. This technique is similar to the flashbacks utilized in contemporary films and novels. And such a technique, as employed in both modern narrative art and the *Roman de la Rose*, would seem to reflect a cetain view of human personality and experience: rather than extending along a simple, linear time axis, life is continuously re-viewed and relived, in a time dimension which is both discontinuous and nearly circular.[71]

In *Allegories of Reading* (1979), Paul de Man has offered metaphorical definitions of the reading and writing process and also for the time of 'now' as captured in narrative structure which seems to express the design and experience of reading medieval dream poetry:

> The transposition of the present moment into a consecutive sequence would correspond to the act of fiction-writing as the narration of the moment. This act would be coextensive with the act of self-reading by means of which the narrator and the writer, now united in one, fully understand their present situation... by means of the retrospective recapitulation of its genesis... The 'moment' and the 'narration' would be complementary and symmetrical, specular reflections of each other that could be substituted without distortion. By an act of memory or of anticipation, the narrative can retrieve the full experience of the moment. We are back in the totalizing world of the metaphor. Narrative is the metaphor of the moment, as reading is the metaphor of writing... The continuous flow ('jaillissement') of the narrative represents an identity that is beyond the senses and beyond time as something accessible to sight and sensation and therefore comprehensible and articulated, just as the unique and timeless fascination of reading can be divided into consecutive layers shaped like the concentric rings of a tree trunk. Within a closed system of part and whole, the complementary of the vertical juxtaposition and the horizontal succession is firmly established.[72]

Ideas of time and narrative have been explored in narratology but there has been no comprehensive study of time and narrative in relation to medieval dream poetry and framed narratives. Yet, this genre is of particular interest from this point of view.

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[1] The number of surviving manuscripts for the *Roman de la Rose* testifies to its extraordinary popularity, especially when compared with the 84 extant manuscripts for the *Canterbury Tales*, itself an extremely popular text.

[2] J. Stephen Russell, *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988), p. 139.

[3] See Sarah Kay, *The Romance of the Rose* (London: Grant & Cutler, 1995), chapter 1.

[4] Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, Felix Lecoy ed., 3 vols. (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1965-70), ll. 2061-70. All quotes from the *Roman*

de la Rose in French are taken from the Felix Lecoy edition of the poem, and all quotes in English are taken from the Frances Horgan edition, unless otherwise stated.

[5] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. by Frances Horgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 32.

[6] Of over two hundred and fifty extant manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose*, only one does not have the continuation after Guillaume de Lorris, although not all of them are complete. One manuscript has a short anonymous continuation, see Sarah Kay, *The Romance of the Rose* (London: Grant & Cutler Ltd, 1995), p. 9.

[7] On Gui de Mori's remaniement see Lori Walters, 'Illuminating the *Rose*: Gui de Mori and the Illustrations of MS 101 of the Municipal Library, Tournai' and Sylvia Huot, 'Authors, Scribes, Remanieurs: A Note on the Textual History of the *Romance of the Rose*' in *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception*, eds. Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

[8] Cynthia J. Brown, *Poets, Patrons, and Printers: Crisis of Authority in Late Medieval France* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 29.

[9] Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 70-75, p. 507.

[10] See Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*, ed. Sean Burke (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 125-30.

[11] See A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) and Steven Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[12] Julia Boffey, ed., *Fifteenth-Century English Dream Visions: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 3.

[13] Lecoy, l. 32.

[14] Lecoy, l. 38.

[15] Helen Phillips and Nick Havely, eds., *Chaucer's Dream Poetry* (London: Longman, 1997), p. 3.

[16] Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology: Subjects and Objects of Desire* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), p. 38.

[17] Horgan, p. 8.

[18] Horgan, p.162.

[19] Horgan, p. 163.

[20] Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952).

[21] Horgan, p. 3.

[22] For Macrobius's dream typology see pp. 87-92 of the *Commentary*. Macrobius states that all dreams may be classified under five main types. The three types of dream which he identifies as having prophetic value are the *somnium*, the *visio* and the *oraculum*. The *somnium* is an enigmatic dream which 'conceals with strange shapes and veils with ambiguity the true meaning of the information being offered, and requires an interpretation for its understanding.' The *visio* is a prophetic vision which shows something that 'actually comes true'. Thirdly, the *oraculum* is a dream in which 'a parent or a pious or revered man, or a priest, or even a God' appears and gives information or advice.

[23] Horgan, p. 3

[24] Richard Firth Green, *A Crisis of Truth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

[25] Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, p. 7.

[26] Horgan, p. 3.

[27] I am using the word *matière* in the sense which has become established by French literary critics, drawing particularly on the use of the word in the prologue to Chrétien de Troyes' *Le Chevalier de la Charette*, where Chrétien makes a distinction between *matière* and *sens*.

[28] The first modern critic to examine the use of the first person narrative in medieval poetry was Leo Spitzer in his article 'Note on the Poetic and Empirical 'I' in Medieval Authors', *Traditio*, 4 (1940), pp. 414-22.

[29] Horgan, p. 7.

[30] Ernst Robert Curtius, *Euopean Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. William R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[31] James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the French Love Poets: The Literary Background of the Book of the Duchess* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 70.

[32] George Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915) p. 76.

[33] This distaste for allegory can be traced back to the romantic poets and in particular back to Coleridge who wrote disparagingly about allegory as opposed to symbol which was seen as being an acceptable means of representation: 'An allegory is but a translation of abstract notions into a picture-language, which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses; the principal being more worthless than its phantom proxy, both alike unsubstantial, and the former shapeless to boot. On the other hand a symbol... is characterized by a translucence of the special [the species] in the individual, or of the general [the genus] in the special, or of the universal in the general; above all by the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal'.

Cited in William K. Wimsatt, Jr. & Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History*, Vol. III, Romantic Criticism (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1957), p. 400.

[34] Kittredge, pp. 26-27.

[35] Kittredge, p. 27.

[36] Emile Legouis, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (London: Dent, 1913), p. 71.

[37] Legouis, p. 136.

[38] John Livingston Lowes, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944), p. 92.

[39] Lowes, p. 92.

[40] Lowes, pp. 93-94.

[41] See C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1936), p. 113-14. 'The two threads of our story come together in Chrétien. We found that Chrétien was psychological. And this we could explain by the whole history of courtly love. But we also found that where Chrétien became psychological he became allegorical. Chrétien combined two methods in his work because he combined two different appeals. He wished to satisfy the taste for marvellous adventure... But he also wished to satisfy the taste for refined emotionalism, and he did this by interrupting his objective story from time to time with those long passages of soliloquy or analysis in which , as we noticed, he is always slipping into allegory.'

[42] C.S. Lewis, p. 44.

[43] C.S. Lewis, p. 30.

[44] C.S. Lewis, pp.166-167.

[45] Wolfgang Clemen, *Chaucer's Early Poetry* (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 26.

[46] Clemen, pp. 24-25.

[47] John Lawlor, *Chaucer* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1968), p. 20.

[48] Dorothy Bethurum, 'Chaucer's Point of View as Narrator in the Love Poems' *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, LXXIV (1959), 511-20.

[49] John Speirs, *Chaucer the Maker* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 35.

[50] Speirs, p. 36.

[51] Speirs, pp. 36-37.

[52] James Winny, *Chaucer's Dream-Poems* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), p. 17.

[53] Paul Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape: A Study in Medieval Allegory* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1971).

[54] P. M. Kean, *Love Vision and Debate* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 66-67.

[55] A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 42.

[56] Spearing, p. 48.

[57] Stephen Knight, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p.7.

[58] Robert R. Edwards, *The Dream of Chaucer: Representation and Reflection in the Early Narratives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), p. 2.

[59] Edwards, p. 2.

[60] J. Stephen Russell, *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988), pp. 140-41.

[61] Steven Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 130.

[62] Kathryn L. Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), p.49.

[63] William Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 281.

[64] Kevin Brownlee, *Poetic Identity in Guillaume de Machaut* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), p. 94.

[65] Catherine Attwood, *Dynamic Dichotomy: The Poetic 'I' in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century French Lyric Poetry* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), pp. 15-16.

[66] Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, *"Un engin si soutil": Guillaume de Machaut et l'écriture au XIVe siècle* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1985).

[67] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980). Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983). Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

[68] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, trans. by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 52.

[69] Leo Spitzer, 'A Note on the Poetic and Empirical 'I' in Medieval Authors', *Traditio*, 4 (1940), 414-22.

[70] Piero Boitani, *English Medieval Narrative in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. Trans. J. K. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 148-49.

[71] Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology: Subjects and Objects of Desire* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), p. 47.

[72] Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 67-68.

CHAPTER 3

THE 'LANGUAGE' OF SEASONAL OPENINGS IN DREAM POETRY

Introduction: Seasonal Openings as a Language

Seasonal openings in medieval dream poetry and analogous framed narratives underline the concentric structure of the dream genre. The dream genre is structured on a central narrative that takes place in a generally timeless realm of some kind and, around this central narrative, there is an external framing narrative that describes an individual, in a particular place and time. This framing narrative typically gives details of the season, the time of day or even, in some poems, a specific date. These temporal settings become part of the structural language of this genre and late medieval poets use and adapt this language with a great deal of imagination and creativity.

The springtime setting is a part of the allegorical landscape and, like the garden of pleasure and the personification figures, is figurative. The personifications that populate the allegorical world are symbolic abstractions. They represent subjective aspects and qualities of the inner landscape made real and objective in allegory. However, the landscape and seasonal descriptions have a dual significance as they are also literal as well as figurative. The seasonal openings are literal in that they are realistic portrayals of the natural world, but because of the thematic development of the language of seasonal openings they also become motifs and 'loaded' signs, which are used symbolically. Seasonal descriptions and motifs contribute to the ideas and themes in the text. For example, in *Pearl* it is August and the corn is being cut, acting as a

parallel to the main theme of the poem, the death of a young girl. The time of the year, harvest time, is both a literal and allegorical detail and the reader would be expected to interpret these motifs.

In *Course in General Linguistics* (1983), Ferdinand de Saussure has written about the invariability and variability of language and the linguistic sign. Language is structured by and evolves from the society that creates it. However, it is not a simple one-way process: language is in turn capable of evolving to shape thought and culture. Thus language and consciousness are mutually reinforcing factors. Saussure indicates how language develops and changes over time, but he argues that these changes are not arbitrary or random but in fact negotiated. Saussure is a structuralist and he examines the evolution of words in language from this specific critical perspective, but I find his argument about the dual variability and invariability of language valuable to signs, to literary symbolism and to the development of language in general:

> At any given period, however far back in time we go, a language is always an inheritance from the past...Any given linguistic state is always the product of historical factors, and these are the factors which explain why the linguistic sign is invariable, that is to say why it is immune from arbitrary alteration...
> Ultimately there is a connexion between these two opposing factors: the arbitrary convention which allows free choice, and the passage of time, which fixes that choice. It is because the linguistic sign is arbitrary that it knows no other law than that of tradition, and because it is founded upon tradition that it can be arbitrary...The passage of time, which ensures the continuity of a language, also has another effect, which appears to work in the opposite direction. It allows linguistic signs to be changed with some rapidity. Hence variability and invariability are both, in a certain sense, characteristic of the linguistic sign.[1]

In the same way that rules govern language so that it is both fixed and fluid, stable and unstable, the structural language of seasonal openings is both conventional and fixed but also allows for a degree of manipulation and adaptation within the tradition. The literary

language of seasonal openings develops into a rich repository of symbols which is both conventional and traditional, yet endlessly creative.

I. Seasonal Openings

Framing devices in the dream genre are very time-conscious. They usually begin by situating the reader in the present time of the poet-narrator, a time separate from the dream experience which has usually already occurred. The framing device often attempts to represent the time before the conversion of the dream experience into a written account, thus the poet is providing a visible trail of the creative process. However, the natural ordering of this process from inspiration, to composition, to reception, is re-presented out of sequence in order to instigate a sense of temporal dislocation in the mind of the reader. As the dream genre developed, so too did the sophistication and significance of the framing fiction. These framing sections may mention times of day or a date, which are perhaps devices to connect the time of the poet-narrator to the time of the dream and the poem. The use of times of day or dates is usually another means, along with astrological references and seasonal activities, to indicate the month and season of the year. The time of the year and the seasonal landscape is used to mirror the themes and the mood of the poem. Thus the seasons of the year reflect the seasons of the mind. It is the seasonal motif that attracts the most interesting variations in the dream frame and I will concentrate on these variations in this chapter.

This chapter will look at the convention of opening a poem with a seasonal setting, traditionally springtime, although summer, autumn and winter settings can also be found at the beginning of various medieval poems. The seasonal opening of a poem

was one of many conventional framing devices employed to signal entry into a fictional, literary world. In addition, the seasonal setting was used to create a particular landscape or mood. It is one of the most characteristic devices found in dream poems and related structures. Seasonal openings and descriptions are also very common in lyrics, perhaps because such an effective and economical way to create a scene and establish a mood. This chapter will consider the device of including a seasonal opening and its apparent conventionality. It will also examine the seasonal opening not just as a framing device but explore how extensively it is used with reference to the whole structure of poems of this type.

The traditional springtime opening carried particular images and associations; of fertile and fecund land, of new growth, of lush colours, of nature in fresh bloom, and in the human realm, of young people engaging in courtship and the first flushes of erotic love. These associations between natural seasons and aspects of human life were well-established by the thirteenth century when the *Roman de la Rose* was written and would have been familiar to medieval readers. Arguably, however, the very conventionality of the feature also became a tool writers used for innovative and creative approaches to dream poetry and other poetic designs which rely heavily on the reader's co-operation in the literary experience. Typically, the author invites the reader to participate in the process of creating meaning through a gradual experience of a linear, yet often puzzling, sequence of scenes. Helen Phillips discusses the inventiveness of late medieval poetry in experimenting with familiar forms:

> Chaucerian poetry creates originality from conventionality, working variations on familiar motifs, often with unostentatious sophistication.[2]

Because of the familiarity readers had with the motif of the seasonal opening, if the tradition was modified or subverted in any way, then the reader would recognise this change as an invitation to interpret and to reinterpret by reading against the grain. It alerts the reader to the task of uncovering meanings in the structure that will follow as its sections unfold. By the late medieval period, seasonal references and landscape descriptions had become a type of symbolic language within framed narratives, and this symbolism was often employed with great skill and inventiveness.

II. Source Studies Iconographical Criticism: Identifying Some Problems

The archetypal May setting was not born with the medieval dream poem: the ideal springtime landscape has its origins in classical literature. A number of notable scholars have thoroughly traced the history of the foregrounding of landscapes and seasons in medieval English literature. Four critics in particular stand out for the importance of their work and its influence: Ernst Curtius, Rosemond Tuve, Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter.

In *European Literature and the Late Middle Ages* (1953), Curtius notably drew attention to, and identified the use of various topoi or intellectual themes, originating in the classical system of Rhetoric and subsequently filtering into all literary genres:

> Its [Rhetoric] elaborately developed system became the common denominator of literature in general. This is the most influential development in the history of antique rhetoric. By it the topoi too acquire a new function. They become clichés, which can be used in any form of literature, they spread to all spheres of life with which literature deals and to which it gives form.[3]

Curtius identified the idealised springtime landscape as one of these topoi:

> To poetic topics belongs the beauty of nature in the widest sense - hence the ideal landscape with its typical equipment. So do dreamlands and dream ages: Elysium (with eternal spring without meteorological disturbances), the Earthly Paradise, the Golden Age.[4]

With particular reference to Homer, Theocritus and Virgil, Curtius showed how classical literature was suffused with natural imagery and ideal spaces, and indicated how this natural imagery and these idyllic allegorical locations accumulated meaning and resonance over time. Medieval poets inherited these literary landscapes and worlds with all their associations and meanings. These allegorical worlds and locations became more systematic and defined through usage:

> What types of ideal landscape could late Antiquity and the Middle Ages get from these poets - we cannot but answer: the mixed forest and the *locus amoenus* (with flowery meadows *ad libitum*). This heritage was twice subjected to conceptual schematization: in late antique rhetoric and in twelfth-century dialectics. Both processes worked in the same direction: toward technicalization and intellectualization. A series of clearly distinguished nature topoi was developed.[5]

Curtius described a variety of recurring themes and topics as being fixed literary conventions which are handed down from generation to generation of poets. By modern critical perspectives this is an old-fashioned view, based essentially on the idea of imitation and respect for tradition as a characteristic of medieval aesthetics. This thesis argues that writing in the late medieval era, especially in the framed narratives of this period, could be much more creative and innovative than this. The conventions were the starting point for the imagination. The springtime setting became one of the established motifs which poets liked most to reformulate and rework. May was the default position, so by using this creatively and challenging the archetype, poets were able to suggest

further moods and meanings. As this chapter shows, the seasonal opening is not merely a fixed, inherited convention but much more like a highly flexible language, which the authors of dream poems use with increasing creativity and variety.

Rosemond Tuve comprehensively explored the background and character of traditional descriptions of seasons and months in Middle English poetry in *Seasons and Months; Studies in a Tradition of Middle English Poetry* (1933), but by her own admission, she does not look at causal sequences within the tradition.[6] While it is, of course, important and interesting to examine analogues and influences behind the widespread use of seasonal and temporal references in late medieval poetry, this approach does not question why this tradition became so integral to the framed narratives of this period.

Tuve draws attention to the interweaving of images and motifs associated with nature, temporality and mutability in her broad survey of seasonal imagery in literature from the classical period to the Middle Ages. The various traditions which she brings together, such as Venus and Natura, the Georgic tradition, the Ovidian tradition and the French courtly tradition, to mention a few, demonstrate the flexibility and proliferation of seasonal imagery in art and literature across the ages:

> The different elements in the tradition are variously stressed and developed, become barren or fruitful, lose old meanings and take on new ones, reiterate the old phraseology or develop a different one, lose themselves in unimportant elaborations or take on larger meanings, relate themselves to literary tastes, habits, fashions, to new scientific interests and to the making of philosophical syntheses, to the history of art as well as to that of taste. To follow the development of the seasons-tradition is to see, from one particular point of view, some at least of what composes the history of thought.[7]

By focusing on the history of the seasons-tradition as a linear development, I would argue that Tuve neglects the way variation in the seasonal opening relates, often very subtly, to the individual poem which it prefaces. Tuve's study recognises the importance of seasonal imagery in literature but further analysis is necessary to explain the growing self-consciousness in the use and development of seasonal openings in late medieval literature. Writers apparently discovered a useful equation between visible aspects of mutability and invisible aspects of mutability: by describing the changing seasons, astronomical events and weather conditions in the context of a fictional dream experience, they were able to suggest the intangible, yet painfully real, emotional fluctuations of being in love and thus becoming entrenched in one's own consciousness. The seasons, seasonal landscapes, labours of the months and specific calendar dates became a creative and versatile shorthand to mirror the mood and the content of the narrative topic.

Taking a wider range of themes as their subject, in *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (1973), Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter provided a detailed genealogy of the use of particularly resonant temporal and spatial imagery in classical literature through to its medieval counterpart.[8] They trace the history of landscape and seasonal descriptions from Hellenistic and Roman art, through to the art and literature of late antiquity and the Middle Ages, picking out various landmark works in the development of this motif along the way. For example, Pearsall and Salter ascribe the introduction of the idealised landscape into Western literature to the *Odyssey*, and then credit Virgil with the development of these themes and images into a coherent poetic design: 'Virgil develops in a consciously "poetic" manner all the themes of landscape description present in Homer.'[9]

Virgil gave prominence to place and time in the *Aeneid.* There was a movement away from a purely ornamental description of landscape to a more purposeful use of landscape and seasons to achieve a particular effect. This is a development relevant to the later uses of seasonal description to prefigure themes, moods and ideas in medieval dream poetry. As Pearsall and Salter observe:

> The blending of landscape reality into a comprehensive poetic vision seems therefore to be Virgil's peculiar achievement; for other poets landscape provides a series of motifs for poetic ornamentation and elaboration.[10]

According to Pearsall and Salter, from the fourth century landscape is no longer subordinate to narrative – it has an 'independent poetic existence.'[11] An important transition has taken place whereby seasons and landscapes have become integral to the literary discourse in addition to being structuring devices.

Pearsall and Salter's study is both thorough and interesting in many ways but leaves certain questions unasked. It is necessarily a chronological survey of landscape and seasons in literature and art and while this provides a useful background it does not attempt critical investigation to any great extent. The problem with any chronological study is that it depicts a linear development through time, which emphasises the influence of the past over the dynamism of new directions and new innovations. Although source studies by Curtius, Tuve, Pearsall and Salter effectively explained the pre-history of the spring time tradition in the *Roman de la Rose*, they do not offer adequate critical tools for explaining the innovative and creative use of seasonal settings in the poetry of the following three centuries. Late medieval poets inherited the convention of the May morning seasonal opening and the idea of the *locus amoenus*, but a period of experimentation and transformation followed.

III. Using the Language: Delaying the Seasonal Opening

The ideal landscape was based on a Mediterranean landscape and climate. The *Roman de la Rose* followed this example of the ideal landscape and the *locus amoenus* from classical literature. I will examine in detail the development and use of the symbolic language of seasonal time and landscape from the *Roman de la Rose* to the dream poetry and framed narratives of late medieval England and Scotland. Late medieval dream poets often experiment with natural descriptions and seasonal references that differ from the ideal model, adapting the classical landscape for symbolic effect. It has often been noted, as the language of the seasonal opening develops, that late-medieval poets, especially in Scotland, adapt this tradition very specifically to describe their own, northern conditions and landscape. The descriptions therefore become more realistic to the literal surroundings of the poet rather than always following the conventional descriptions of the idealised landscape.

While the *Roman de la Rose* is not the first piece of literature to use seasonal references to herald the beginning of a narrative, it is certainly a significant landmark because of its unparalleled influence. In addition, the poem's innovative treatment generally of external time and seasons and internal experience and consciousness single the *Rose* out as marking a paradigm shift in literary expression. Essentially, the interweaving of temporal experiences and associations in the *Roman de la Rose* provided inspiration for later dream poetry and first person narratives. The May opening proves not to be an isolated preliminary ornament. A tradition developed of using the seasonal setting as an implicitly structural device which prefigures important aspects of the subsequent text:

Avis m'iere qu'il estoit mais,
il a ja bien .v. anz ou mais,
qu'en may estoie, ce sonjoie,
el tens enmoreus, plain de joie,
el tens ou toute rien s'egaie,
que l'en ne voit buisson ne haie
qui en may parer ne se veille
et covrir de novele fuelle.
(*Roman de la Rose*, 45-52)

It seemed to me that it was May, five years ago or more; I dreamed that it was May, the season of love and joy, when everything rejoices, for one sees neither bush nor hedge that would not deck itself for May in a covering of new leaves.[12]

The allegorical dream vision in the *Roman de la Rose* takes place in May, which is described as the season of love and joy, a time when everything rejoices. This must draw in part on the popular and courtly tradition of Mayday as a day of celebration. The *Roman de la Rose* originated these particular associations of May with love, with new beginnings, with the dream vision, and with a fictional retelling of the dream. The seasonal opening marks both the beginning of the dream and the recounting of the dream. The association of May and springtime with rebirth, rejuvenation and with new beginnings becomes synonymous with the idea of literary inspiration, with the creative imagination and with the image of the beginning of a new poem, and a new book. In the language of seasonal openings, Maytime symbolises beginning to dream, beginning to write, and beginning to read. As the dream poem genre developed, the idea of the dream gradually merged into the idea of the poem or the book, and the seasonal opening, through the medium of the mood or emotional state it generated, provided a connection between the poet and his poem.

The dream vision occurs within the consciousness of the dreamer-narrator and in this sense the temporal experience is inner and subjective rather than being an objective social time. And yet, the dream and the fiction are tied to a semblance of real time by

the inclusion of a calendar month and season. Ostensibly, Guillaume de Lorris is writing about the outside world, as he describes a particular seasonal time with corresponding natural references relating to spring, however, these references are also deeply literary. The seasonal opening of the *Roman de la Rose* proved to be an inspiration for later dream poems. Thus the relationship of the *Roman de la Rose* to future poetry is more important than its relationship to its literary past. The *Roman de la Rose* and future poems experimented with variations on seasonal openings and references. These variations proved to have profound and interesting relationships with different imaginative worlds in dream literature.

IV. Delaying the Spring Openings

In the *Book of the Duchess* (*c.*1368-1372), Chaucer plays with the position of the seasonal opening in the sequence of the poem, rather than varying the traditional May setting of love poetry and framed narratives. The May setting is deferred until after an extended prologue but once the seasonal time is established the narrator enters the dream world at exactly that point. This delay in the positioning of the seasonal landscape indicates the extent to which the idealised spring opening has become standardised as a symbol of love and joy, and also as a symbol of beginning: in the *Book of the Duchess*, the conventional seasonal description only appears once the narrator has been granted relief from his death-like gloom by the gods. Therefore, in the *Book of the Duchess* the delayed seasonal opening constitutes a new beginning within the poem. The preamble to the poem describes the narrator's sleeplessness and introspection which represents his inability to write. Thus the prologue to the poem focuses on the narrator's state of mind and his insomnia before the dream experience is recounted. There are

interrelated themes of reading, dreaming and writing. Finally the deferred seasonal opening leads the reader into the dream landscape at line 290:

> Loo thus hyt was: thys was my sweven.
> Me thoght thus: that hyt was May,
> And in the dawnynge I lay –
> Me mette thus – in my bed al naked,
> And loked forth; for I was waked
> With smale foules a grete hepe,
> That had affrayed me out of my slepe,
> Thorgh noyse and swettenesse of her songe.
> (*Book of the Duchess*, 290-97)

These lines echo the narrative voice in the *Rose* at the point when the narrator recreates his dream experience and his dream persona for the reader. The *Book of the Duchess* both depicts and references the *Romance of the Rose* in the text, reminding the reader of the earlier poem and of its influence on subsequent poetry:

> And alle the wallys with colouris fyne
> Were peynted, bothe text and glose,
> [Of] al the Romaunce of the Rose.
> (BD, 332-34)

Chaucer's private reading which informs and inspires him as a poet becomes concretised within his own work, not just subtly as passing references but as extended intertextual snapshots. In the *Roman de la Rose*, the May setting is used to symbolise a time of love and joy. By echoing the seasonal opening from the *Rose*, Chaucer incorporates the eternal springtime into his contemplation of loss and grief in the temporal world. As the *Book of the Duchess* is a poem about death and bereavement, the use of a springtime description seems to be strategic, and matches the way the poem generally transforms a tragic subject into a glorification of the dead lady. The spring setting, signifying rebirth and renewal, portrays love as a transformative and

transcendental experience, even when death intervenes, because the loved one lives on in the remembrance of that love. Thus death is not seen as the end but as another beginning. In this particular case, the lady also lives on in the cultural memory, as the poem commemorates her life and the love she inspired.

Some French poems, for example the *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre*, also do not put the spring opening absolutely at the start of the text, but none use the delayed description as vividly as Chaucer does to suggest the dream offers a new beginning, after the evocation of a near-deathlike state in his opening prologue of the *Book of the Duchess*. Chaucer repeats this delay of the spring opening in the *Parliament of Fowls* too (ll. 295-315):

> For this was on seynt Valentynes day,
> Whan every foule cometh there to chese his make.
> (309-10) [13]

One of the reasons for the delay of the seasonal opening in these poems is that it enables Chaucer to insert a reference to reading a book, which happens in both the *Book of the Duchess* and the *Parliament of Fowls*. It is interesting that in the *Legend of Good Women*, Chaucer brings together the two themes of the seasonal reference and the reading of books when the narrator says that nothing makes him abandon his books except the springtime (ll. 29-39). This example in the *Legend of Good Women* clearly demonstrates the capacity of the language of seasonal openings to become figurative, because in this poem the springtime motif becomes, when contrasted with reading books, a symbol of 'experience' or 'nature' in opposition to 'auctorite'.

Seasonal openings in medieval poetry describe the natural world and its changing features and textures throughout the year. In one sense these descriptive passages of landscape and weather refer to the outside world, but in another sense these seasonal references are deeply literary. The poet is intensely aware of the dream vision tradition and its literary heritage. There is also an awareness and an interest in the new poem's place within that heritage. Thus, the poet is consciously relating the poem to what has gone before, the texts that have already been written, by alluding to these previous texts with echoes of particular lines and with intertextual references.

As well as drawing on literary tradition, the vivid imagery of seasonal openings and seasonal descriptions arguably reflect the popularity of the visual depiction of the twelve months of the year, which were so common in medieval prayerbooks.

V. Seasonal Openings – The Language of Spring

The fifteenth century *Floure and the Leafe* is set in springtime and opens with a precise astronomical time reference:

> When that Phebus his chaire of gold so hie
> Had whirled up the sterry sky aloft,
> And in the Boole was entred certainly.
> (1-3)[14]

This is itself a literary reference as these lines echo the closing lines of Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*:

> Appollo whirleth up his chaar so hye
> Til that the god Mercurius hous, the slye.
> (V.671-72)

Astronomical time reference had become a conventional way to signal the season in courtly love poetry and readers would be familiar with these references from the calendars in their Books of Hours. It was also a familiar visual topos. Thus, the image of Phoebus passing across a starry sky in his golden chariot, is a reference to the northbound journey of the sun through the zodiac into Taurus. This charting of the stars provides an exact temporal reference: April 12 in Chaucer's time.[15] *The Floure and the Leafe* opening continues with a reference to seasonal weather and seasonal growth:

> When shoures sweet of raine discended soft,
> Causing the ground, fele times and oft,
> Up for to give many an wholsome aire,
> And every plaine was clothed faire
>
> With new greene, and maketh small flours
> To springen here and there in field and in mede –
> So very good and wholsome be the shoures
> That it renueth that was old and deede
> In winter time, and out of every seede
> Springeth the hearbe, so that every wight
> Of this season wexeth glad and light.
> (4-14)

These lines recall the opening lines of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*:

> Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
> The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
> And bathed every veyne in swich licour
> Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
> Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
> Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
> The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
> Hath in the Ram his half cours yronne.
> (I, 1-8)

Although it is often possible to deduce a specific date from an astronomical reference (see above), some seasonal openings explicitly give a specific date within the text. Clanvowe's *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, also known as *The Book of Cupid,*

God of Love, is set in spring and on a specific date also: May 3.[16] The springtime details, alongside the early reference to lovers, convey expectations of a poem about love:

> But as I lay this other night wakinge,
> I thoghte how lovers had a tokeninge,
> And among hem it was a comune tale,
> That it were good to here the nightingale
> Rather than the lewde cukkow singe.
>
> And then I thoghte, anon as it was day,
> I wolde go som whider to assay
> If that I might a nightingale here;
> For yet had I non herd of al this yere,
> And hit was the thridde night of May.
> (46-55)

As well as the specific date reference, the symbolic appearance of the cuckoo and the nightingale further anchors the dream vision to a traditional spring setting with archetypal associations from the natural world. Both the cuckoo and the nightingale were traditionally associated with the arrival of spring. The cuckoo's distinctive cry has been the harbinger of spring for centuries in Western Europe. This association of the cuckoo with the coming of spring can be seen in the Middle English lyric, the 'Cuckoo Song'.[17] Similarly, the fervent song of the nightingale has long been seen as the herald of spring, and is associated with the May morning and the inspiration of romantic love and sexual desire. Both birds have a mythical and religious symbolic history, and both birds were appropriated as secular voices of spring in Clanvowe's poem and elsewhere. Although, despite their common association with spring, in Clanvowe's poem the narrator differentiates between them in their relationship to love, affirming that lovers prefer to hear the nightingale sing than the 'lewde cukkow'. In the later Middle Ages, the cuckoo was perceived as being an unnatural bird and it became associated with deceit and adulterous love. The nightingale can represent both happiness and

unhappiness in love, its song being capable of expressing ecstasy or pain yet, in contrast to the unnatural cuckoo, it is generally perceived to be in tune with nature and the true lover's consciousness.

Wendy Pfeiffer has examined the appearances and complex functions of the nightingale in medieval literature, and has identified a wide variety of meanings and associations as the nightingale passed through time and from author to author.[18] There is also a history of associating the nightingale with the poet whereby the nightingale is a figure for the poet and his book. In Middle High German poems the nightingale is the poet's messenger. This is an intriguing association, particularly when applied to dream poems where the vision itself, and then the book that results from that vision, can be seen as a message from an external source, divine or otherwise. Within the context of Clanvowe's poem, if the nightingale can be associated with the poet, as well as with springtime and with romantic love, then the poem shows the poet searching for himself and his future poem. In the poem the narrator goes out in search of the nightingale's song. If the nightingale symbolises the poet and the nightingale's song then represents the poem, then the narrator is going out to search for the poet's inspiration. Thus, the poet's envoy, the narrator, is enacting the poet's creative journey.

In the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* (*c.* 1342), a nightingale also figures within the springtime seasonal opening of the poem, although Guillaume de Machaut does not explicitly name the birds that sing as nightingales, but he represents the sound of the cry of a bird in flight as 'Oci! Oci!' which is conventional onomatopoeia for the nightingale's cry. It also means 'kill' and provides a sense of the intensity of the lover's pain.[19]

Michael Ferber states in *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* that traditional symbols, such as the nightingale, carry with them their ancient associations and that even when these symbols are invoked in new ways, those old connotations may still be present. He suggests that the ideal position for a reader is to be aware of the whole tradition and then decide in each case to what extent elements of the tradition are still in play.[20] The same approach could be applied to reading seasonal openings. The conventional language and associations of the ideal spring landscape comes to represent so much more than a pleasant day in May. It evokes ideas and associations of new beginnings, natural beauty, fertility, rebirth, spiritual awakening, romantic or sexual awakening, the *locus amoenus*, and in its reminiscence of the ideal landscape it is suggestive of eternity and the heavenly perfection of the next world. Once all these associations are accepted as a figurative language, the poetic variations express a network of allusions and meanings within, and in contrast to, the architecture of that symbolic language.

The date of *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* seems to have had a literary history and significance as Chaucer mentions May 3 in *The Knight's Tale*, *The Nun's Priest's Tale* and in *Troilus and Criseyde*. This seems to be an appropriate place to examine these briefly. In *The Knight's Tale*, the date is given as the day that Palamoun escaped from prison. The real calendar date is inscribed with literary significance here, because the source for this date is from 'olde bookes':

> It fel that in the seventhe yer, of May
> The thridde nyght (as olde bookes seyn,
> That al this storie tellen moore pleyn),
> Were it by aventure or destynee.
>
> (I.1462-65)

A sense of authority is added to the story, not only because of the 'auctoritee' of 'olde books' but also because a specific date and a significant event has been recorded and memorialised.

The Nun's Priest's Tale refers to May 3 in a curiously convoluted manner. The date of the tale is located as being thirty-two days after the end of March. The specific astronomical references which appear immediately afterwards are accurate to those present on May 3, and are verifiable from the *Kalendarium* of Nicholas of Lynn:[21]

> Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
> That highte March, whan God first maked man,
> Was compleet, and passed were also,
> Syn March [was gon], thritty dayes and two,
> Bifel that Chauntecleer in al his pryde,
> His sevene wyves walkynge by his syde,
> Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
> That in the signe of Taurus hadde yronne
> Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat moore,
> And knew by kynde, and by noon oother loore,
> That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.
> "The sonne", he seyde, "is clomben up on hevene
> Fourty degrees and oon, and moore ywis.
> (VII. 3187-89)

The opening of the second book of *Troilus and Criseyde* is also set on May 3. This is explicitly stated as well as being accompanied by further associations with May and springtime, fresh flowers of many colours and the sun being in the zodiacal sign of Taurus:

> In May, that moder is of monthes glade,
> That fresshe floures, blew and white and rede,
> Ben quike agayn, that wynter dede made,
> And ful of bawme is fletyng every mede,
> Whan Phebus doth his bryghte bemes sprede
> Right in the white Bole, it so bitidde,

As I shal synge, on Mayes day the thrydde.
(Tr II, 50-56)

Again, like some of the examples shown above, these are further instances of literary echoing with the seasonal and calendar references in Chaucer finding a parallel in Clanvowe's poem, although we can not be sure who is echoing whom here as Chaucer and Clanvowe were writing contemporaneously. Whether or not May 3 did have some cultural or historical significance is largely irrelevant to the questions discussed in this thesis: it is the fact that the date assumes a kind of literary identity and resonance that is important. The emphasis on a particular date within the calendar year looks like a reference to real life timekeeping but the literary reader recognises that the temporal references are actually book-based, and have acquired symbolic meaning through intertextual association.

The appearance of the nightingale in Clanvowe's poem is an analogous type of intertextual referencing, which alludes to the symbolic use of the nightingale in French medieval poetry and also to its literary heritage beyond that. Although the nightingale is not itself a date reference, it can have a similar function, connoting a similar time of year because the bird is migratory and therefore its arrival (mid-April) and its departure (August) represents a very specific time period.

There is an obvious significance to some of the specific date references given in some poems, for example May Day or St. Valentine's Day, which are festival days. Some dates, however, have no clear significance and are perhaps open to interpretation within the context of the poem and its subject. For instance, despite the fact that May 3 was referred to with some regularity, the significance of this date is not clear. In the late

Middle Ages, it became fashionable to refer in this way to actual calendar dates within the poem as if to tie the poem down to a specific moment of creativity or a specific moment within the poet's life. These dates do not generally seem to be related to widely known courtly festivities. In some cases the use of the date is still formulaic even if inventive within that formula, but in others there is perhaps an attempt to transcend the convention of the seasonal opening and calendar reference. This device of giving a particular date is found in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, where the dream is anchored firmly to a specific day in the life of the narrator: Dec 10 (l. 111) and in Froissart's the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* we are given not just a date but a year as well: November 30 1373. These two poems will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 5.

Lydgate's *The Complaint of the Black Knight* is another example of a conventional May seasonal opening:

In May, whan Flora, the fresshe lusty quene,
The soile hath clad in grene, rede, and whyte,
And Phebus gan to shede his stremes shene
Amid the Bole, with al the bemes brighte,
And Lucifer, to chace awey the night,
Ayen the morowe our orizont hath take
To bidde lovers out of hir sleepe awake,

And hertes hevy for to recomforte
From dreriheed of hevy nightes sorowe,
Nature bad hem ryse, and hem disporte,
Ayen the goodly, gladde, greye morowe;
And Hope also, with seint Johan to borowe,
Bad, in dispyt of daunger and dispeyre,
For to take the hoolsom lusty eyre:

And with a sigh I gan for to abreyde
Out of my slombre, and sodainly up sterte
As he, alas! That nigh for sorowe deyde,
My sekenes sat ay so nigh my herte.
(1-18)

Here, clothed Flora has clothed the earth in many colours, an image which alludes back to the *Roman de la Rose*:

> Et quan li air iert apesiez
> et li tens douz et aesiez
> et li vent moul et delitable
> si con en printens pardurable,
> que cil oisel chascun matin
> s'estudient en leur latin
> a l'aube du jour saluer,
> qui touz leur fet les queurs muer,
> Zephyrus et Flora sa fame,
> qui des fleurs est deesse et dame,
> - cist dui font les floretes nestre;
> fleurs ne connoissent autre mestre,
> car par tout le monde semant
> les va cil et cele ansemant
> et les fourment et les colorent
> des couleurs don les fleurs honorent
> puceles et vallez praisiez
> de biaus chapelez ranvaisiez.
> (8373-90)

> And when the air was calm, the weather mild and fine, and the breeze soft and pleasant, as if in an eternal springtime, and every morning the birds were at pains to greet the dawn, which stirred all their hearts, in their own language, then Zephyrus, with Flora, his wife, who is goddess and lady of the flowers, would spread out their quilts of flowers for men. These two bring the flowers to birth and the flowers know no other master, for he and she go throughout the world together, sowing flowers; they give them their shape, and colour them with the colours which the flowers use to honour maidens and favoured young men with lovely, gay chaplets.[22]

In *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, Lydgate is bringing together the classical image of Flora with the idea of the landscape acquiring a colourful new dress. Flora became a popular figure in fifteenth century poetry, representing a classicising trend in the early Renaissance. There is also another astronomical time reference to Phebus and the Bole, as seen already in *The Floure and the Leafe*, the opening to the *Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. This was obviously a very popular image and commonly associated with Spring.

In the *Isle of Ladies* set in May, there is another reference to Flora, the classical goddess of Spring:

> When Flora, the Quene of Pleasaunce,
> Had hol acheved th' obessiaunce
> Of the freshe and new season
> Thorowte every region,
> And with her mantell hol covert
> That winter made had discovert,
> Of aventure, without light,
> In May I lay uppon a nyght
> Allone, and on my lady thowght.
> (1-9)[23]

Flora now wears a 'mantell', she is herself dressed in a cloak, which perhaps merges together two images from the *Roman de la Rose*. In Guillaume de Lorris's poem, nature responds to the arrival of spring by decking itself with a colourful dress of new leaves and flowers. There is no mention of Flora in this part but the classical idea of Flora clothing the earth in a beautiful array of colours and fresh blooms would seem to be implicit:

> lors devient la terre si gobe
> qu'el velt avoir novele robe,
> si set si cointe robe feire
> que de colors I a .c. peire;
> l'erbe et les flors blanches et perses
> et de maintes colors diverses,
> c'est la robe que je devise,
> por quoi la terre mielz se prise.
> (59-66)

> this is the time when the earth becomes so proud that it desires a new dress, and is able to make a dress so lovely that there are a hundred pairs of colours in it. The grass, and the flowers, which are white and blue and many different colours, these are the dress that I am describing, and in which the earth takes pride.[24]

In Jean de Meun's poem, as we have seen above, Flora is seen to be responsible for clothing the earth in flowers but it is not described as a dress here, it is seen as a quilt.

This different way of depicting the same image is perhaps typical of the two different styles of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun. De Lorris uses a less learned, less classical description of the spring landscape, whereas de Meun draws on the classical past for his depiction of spring.

In the *Isle of Ladies*, Flora is notably described as 'the Quene of Pleasaunce' and this association of spring with 'Pleasaunce', responsible for the dispersal of the winter's gloom (found also in the *Book of the Duchess*), contrasts with the narrator's sorrows.[25] This contrast can also be seen in the Lydgate passage quoted above.

The seasonal opening was established during the fourteenth century as the most common of all framing devices. We can see how powerful this tradition has become when Gavin Douglas employs seasonal descriptions to provide frames (as if for a dream vision) for his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In her critical study of the poetry of Gavin Douglas, Priscilla Bawcutt discusses the division of each book of the *Eneados* into chapters. She identifies 'transition-formulas' or 'signposts' at the beginning of each book of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Douglas's *Eneados* which punctuate and highlight each new stage of the narrative. In this way, Bawcutt shows how Douglas remains faithful to Virgil's text; yet she also indicates how Douglas emphasised time and seasonal setting in a particularly medieval way:

> Yet Douglas's chapters also reflect medieval methods of composition. His favourite way of opening a chapter is to refer to the passage of time, more particularly the coming of night or dawn...But in placing such descriptions so often at the beginning of his chapters Douglas was clearly influenced by the popularity of the season-opening with medieval poets. Chaucer, Lydgate, and some romance-writers used this same device to introduce a new stage in their narrative.[26]

Douglas matches his seasonal prefaces to the overall mood of each book, as dream poetry had long been doing. The extent to which the dream genre provides his inspiration is suggested by his introduction of a dream into his final book's preface.

In *The Palis of Honoure* (*c.* 1500-01), Douglas uses the language of seasonal openings to indicate that his poem is following the dream poem tradition of a dream occurring in May. However, he opens with a May scene which is a variant on the *Roman de la Rose* tradition in that the day dawns with a gloomy and 'lamentable' face:

> Quhen pale Aurora with face lamentable
> Hir russat mantill, borderit all with sable,
> Lappit about be hevinlye circumstance
> The tender bed and arres honorable
> Of Flora, quene till flouris amyable
> In May, I rays to do my observance
> And entrit in a garding of plesance
> With Sole depaint, as Paradys amyable,
> And blisfull bewes with blomed variance.
> (1-9)[27]

VI. Seasonal Openings – The Symbolism of Autumn

Regarding autumn seasonal openings, Priscilla Bawcutt quite rightly points out their rarity in comparison with the frequency of spring openings:

> The autumn opening is rare in comparison with the spring opening...but was developed because of its appropriateness to rather sad and somber poems.[28]

However, the range of ideas associated with autumnal openings seems wider and more sophisticated than she suggests. Both autumn and winter poems seem to mark a movement away from the narrator as the lover in the midst of his own dream experience. The narrator in late autumn and winter tells a different kind of story and

from a different viewpoint. He is often a bookish figure, has usually been reading and contemplating the literary worlds he has recently entered, he is unable to sleep, troubled, melancholic, restless and pensive. There is a tendency for the narrator to distance himself from the love experience. Thus he becomes more a spectator than a participant in the dream fiction.

In *La Couleur de la Mélancholie* (1993), Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet has written about the variation to the conventional seasonal opening and recognises the subtlety and potency of these new formulations. She sees that not only do they work within the thematic context of the poem they frame, but that they connect with, and frame, the older associations:

> Des lieux, des saisons, des objets se substituent à d'autres commes motifs topiques, ou plus subtilement les encadrent, les décentrent. La lande incertaine remplace le verger d'amour; l'automne, le printemps;[29]
>
> Certain places, seasons, and objects replaced others as topical motifs, or, more subtly, they framed the older motifs, throwing them slightly off kilter. The barren plain replaced the orchard of love; autumn replaced springtime;[30]

Pearl (*c.* 1360-95) is set at harvest time and so straddles the end of summer and the beginning of autumn:

> That spot whereof I speak I found
> When I entered in that garden green,
> As August's season high came round
> When corn is cut with sickles keen.
> (37-40)[31]

The temporal references and symbolic associations of harvest are appropriate to the subject of the poem because *Pearl* is about untimely death and the cutting down of a young life.

The Assembly of Ladies (*c.* 1470-80) is another pensive poem set in autumn, in September, about infidelity and the sorrow of women:

> In Septembre, at fallyng of the leef,
> The fressh season was al to-gydre done
> And of the corn was gadred in the sheef;
> In a gardyn, abowte tweyne after none,
> There were ladyes walkyng, as was ther wone,
> Foure in nombre, as to my mynde doth falle,
> And I the fift, symplest of alle.
> (1-7)[32]

This is a very good example of the fusion of literal and figurative imagery. The ladies in the poem are walking in a literal time and place. It is September, at two o'clock in the afternoon, and the leaves are falling, all growth has come to an end.[33] The seasonal reference to endings provides an allegorical parallel to the thematic element of the poem as the assembly of ladies will tell of their unhappy love affairs coming to an end.

In John Skelton's *The Bouge of Court* (*c.* 1498) the astrological sign of Virgo is included in the seasonal description, although Skelton uses the latinate name 'Vygyne' perhaps to give a classical tone to the poem. The sun is in Virgo from about 22 August to 22 September. [34] He explicitly tells us it is autumn, and then further emphasises the season in his allusion to the ripe corn and to the harvest. The same sun that has entered Virgo, and given a precise astrological time reference, has, with its radiant heat, ripened the corn. The heavens and the earth are interconnected in the seasonal cycle. This time of change is symbolised by the mutability of the moon, who smiles at our 'foly and our unstedfastness':

> In autumpne, whan the sonne *in Vyrgyne*
> By radyante hete enryped hath our corne,
> Whan Luna, full of mutabylyte,
> As emperes the dyademe hath worne

Of our pole artyke, smylynge halfe in scorne
At our foly and our unstedfastnesse;
The tyme whan Mars to were hym dyd dres.
(1-7)

VII. Seasonal Openings – Winter, Mutability and Books

In Chaucer's *House of Fame* the dream is given a specific date, it is December 10th in the evening. We are told the date twice, once in the framing device before the Invocation and then again at the beginning of the central poem.

For never sith that I was born,
Ne no man elles me beforn,
Mette, I trowe stedfastly,
So wonderful a drem as I
The tenthe day now of Decembre,
The which, as I kan now remembre,
I wol yow tellen everydel.
(59-65)

Of Decembre the tenthe day,
Whan hit was nyght to slepe I lay
Ryght ther as I was wont to done,
And fil on slepe wonder sone.
(111-14)

Chaucer provides an exact calendar date to situate the dream in real time, albeit a fictional real time, and it is interesting that the date he chooses is in Winter rather than the conventional spring setting, but in neither of the two references to the date does he elaborate with an appropriate seasonal description. In the *House of Fame* the narrator says he lacks a subject, specifically an amorous subject. Perhaps the winter date reflects the *Roman de la Rose* tradition of linking May with the season of love? Therefore, in winter new life and creativity is not something which comes naturally, but is something that has to be sought, hence the poet has to go out in search of new material. In *Chaucer's Gardens and the Language of Convention* (1997), Laura L. Howes makes

this link between the barrenness of the winter landscape and the elusive nature of literary inspiration and creativity:

> As the writer of dream-poems needs dreams in order to write, it is possible to read the narrator's initial insomnia as a kind of literary barrenness, or writer's block. He cannot sleep, therefore he cannot dream, and therefore he cannot write.[35]

The winter setting in the *House of Fame* represents and dramatises this conflicted state of artistic consciousness.

In *The Temple of Glass*, John Lydgate begins the poem by giving the mood and then provides the seasonal opening that relates thematically to that mood.[36] This is an interesting reversal of the usual form where the season is given first and then often reinforced by a description of a mood or state of mind. The astrological reference to the sun in Aquarius dates the seasonal reference to mid-December, probably December 14.[37]

> For thought, compleynt and grievous hevynesse,
> For pensyffhed and for hye distresse,
> To bed I went nou this other night,
> Whan that Lucyna with hir pale light
> Was joyned last with Phebus in Aquarye –
> Amiddes Decembre, whan of Januarye
> Ther be kalendes of the new come yere.
> (1-7)

Robert Henryson's *The Testament of Cresseid* is also set in Winter, and like *The Temple of Glass*, it establishes the mood first and the season afterwards.[38] The poem starts with a reference to the bitter Scottish weather, the 'doolie sessoun', and it is these harsh elemental conditions which make the narrator read the book: it's so cold he withdraws ('remufe', l. 21) and sits by the fire and reads:

Ane doolie sessoun to ane cairfull dyte
Suld correspond and be equiualent:
Richt sa it wes quhen I began to wryte
This tragedie; the wedder richt feruent,
Quhen Aries, in middis of the Lent,
Schouris of haill [gart] fra the norh discend,
Tha scantie fra the cauld I micht defend.

ȝit neuertheless within myne oratur
I Stude, quhen Titan had his bemis bricht
Withdrawin doun and sylit vnder cure,
And fair Venus, the bewtie of the nicht,
Vprais and set vnto the west full richt
Hir goldin face, in oppositioun
Of God Phebus, direct discending doun.

Throw out the glas hir bemis brast sa fair
That I micht se on euerie syde me by;
The northin wind had purifyit the air
And sched the mistie cloudis fra the sky;
The froist freisit, the blastis bitterly
Fra Pole Artick come quhisling loud and schill,
And causit me remufe aganis my will.
(1-21)[39]

Although Thomas Hoccleve is earlier than the other poets discussed in this section on poets using seasonal descriptions from later in the year, he belongs here because of the thematic concern with the passing of autumn into winter. In Hoccleve's *Complaint* (1421), he emphasises the end of vigour and fertility. The leaves have dropped and his heart has sunk low too. There is a clear correspondence between gloominess and mutability, and autumn seems to capture evocatively this melancholy sense of the mutability and transience of life:

Aftir that hervest inned had hise sheves,
And that the broun sesoun of mihelmesse
Was come and gan the trees robbe of her leves
That grene had ben and in lusty freisshenesse,
And hem into colour of yelownesse
Had died and doun throwen undir foote,
That chaunge sanke into myn herte roote.

For freisshly broughte it to my remembraunce
That stablenesse in this worlde is ther noon.

Ther is no thing but chaunge and variaunce.
How welthi a man be, or wel be goon,
Endure it shal not: he shal it forgoon.
Deeth undir foote shal him thriste adoun;
That is every wightes conclucioun,

Wiche for to weyve is in no mannes myght,
How riche he be, stronge, lusty, freissh and gay.
And in the ende of Novembre, uppon a night,
Sighynge sore as I in my bed lay
For this and othir thoughtis wiche many a day
Byforne I tooke, sleep cam noon in myn ye,
So vexid me thoughtful maladie.
(1-21)[40]

The Kingis Quair by James I of Scotland references the astrological signs of Aquarius and Capricorn in his seasonal opening, which gives a winter setting in either January or February:[41]

Heigh in the hevynnis figure circulere
The rody sterres twynklyng as the fyre;
And in Aquary, Citherea the clere
Rynsid hir tressis like the goldin wyre,
That late tofore in faire and fresche atyre
Through Capricorn heved hir hornis bright
North northward; approchit the mydnyght.
(1-7)

Once again, we find the two themes of the seasonal opening and the reading of books in this poem. The book that the narrator is reading is Boethius, so the author is situating himself in natural time, fictional time, and literary time. Books are often portrayed as offering a refuge from the cold, gloomy weather of winter in these poems with winter openings:

Quhen as I lay in bed allone waking,
New partit out of slepe a lyte tofore,
Fell me to mynd of mony diverse thing,
Off this and that – can I noght say quharfore –
Bot slepe for craft in erth myght I no more,
For quhiche as tho coude I no better wyle

Bot toke a boke to rede apon a quhile.
(8-14)

This chapter has concentrated on late medieval English and Scottish dream poetry, but there are similar examples of seasonal and temporal references in medieval French poetry. For example, in Froissart's the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* the narrator gives a specific calendar date of November 30 1373 for his vision and juxtaposes the Winter weather and landscape with his creative block:

Car, ensi que ja me navrai
Par penser souvent a ma dame,
M'en est il avenu, par m'ame,
Et par pensees qui ou chief
Me sont entrees de rechief,
Et des queles bien me ramembre
Le trentisme nuit de novembre
L'an mil .CCC.XIII. et sissante,
Que nuls gais oiselés ne chante
Pour le cause dou tamps divers,
Car lors est plainnement yvers:
Se sont les nuis longes et grans,
S'est Nature encline et engrans,
Ce poet on moult bien supposer,
De dormir et de reposer.
Et je qui volentiers m'aheure,
Me couchai ce soir de haute heure,
Si m'endormi en un tel songe
Ou nulle riens n'a de mençonge.
(853-871)[42]

Because I was torturing myself in this manner by thinking often of my lady, this came to me, through my soul, and through thoughts which came to me, and which I remember well: It was the night of 30 November in the year 1373, when no birds sing gaily because of the bad weather, for it is deep in winter, the nights are long and dark and nature has only one desire, one can indeed imagine it, it is to sleep and to rest. And I who like regular hours, went to bed early. Thus in sleeping I had such a dream where nothing was a lie.

Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet has written about the melancholy that, she argues, enters French literature in the later Middle Ages. She ascribes a large element of this

melancholy to an anxiety that there is nothing new to say, that the well of poetic inspiration has run dry. One chapter title identifies this melancholy as 'La tristesse du "déjà dit"', a feeling of despondency because everything has already been said.[43] This anxiety about finding new and original material is found in both the *House of Fame* and the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*. In the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*, Froissart writes:

> Que porai-je de nouvel dire?
> (433)
>
> What new could I say?

The November night, the wintry weather and the long, dark nights of this season support the fictional presentation of the poet in the late years of his life. The barrenness of the season and the lack of bird song signifies the lack of poetic inspiration and novel material.

In *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* (1924), Johan Huizinga has also commented on the melancholy mood that can be found in the poetry of the late-medieval period, and notes that it is connected with the idea of an aged, weary world:

> Every Age yearns for a more beautiful world. The deeper the desperation and the depression about the confusing present, the more intense that yearning. Towards the end of the Middle Ages the ground tone underlying life is one of bitter despondency... Those who express that deep melancholy, so characteristic of that time, most vigorously, are not primarily those who have permanently retired from the world into monasteries or scholarship. Mostly they are the chroniclers and the fashionable court poets...who never tire of lamenting the debilities of an aged world and despairing of peace and justice... Isn't it strange that during this time, in the word 'melancholy', the meanings of depression, serious contemplation, and imagination come together?[44]

VIII. Seasonal Openings – Summer: Not the Time for Dreaming

It is very rare to find summer openings in framed narratives and dream poetry. This is in contrast with Robin Hood ballads, which also start with seasonal openings, but the season is not Spring, it is Whitsuntide. Whitsuntide being a moveable feast falls either in late spring or early summer, but by this time the leaves are fully out, and nature is definitely in full bloom rather than poised at the beginnings of new growth as in spring. The summer opening occurs in both *Robin Hood and the Monk* and also in *Robin Hood and the Potter*, the two earliest surviving Robin Hood ballads.[45] In *Robin Hood and the Monk*, the summer season is used to indicate the mood of everyone in the forest, which is merry and festive. The leaves are fully out, described as "large and long" and the birds are singing, adding to the general feeling of merriness:

> In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,
> And leves be large and long,
> Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
> To here the foulys song.
> (1-4)

Clearly the Summer setting suited the mood and thematic content of the Robin Hood ballads, and was perhaps used to emphasise the harmony and health of communal life in the Greenwood forest.

The summer setting was obviously not a popular choice for dream poems, hence their scarcity. Perhaps this is because summer represents a middle ground: it is neither the joyfulness of growth and new beginnings that are associated with spring, nor is it the gloomy melancholy of mutability and of things coming to an end as in autumn and winter. However, there is at least one example of a dream poem set in summer and that

is William Dunbar's *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* which has a Midsummer seasonal opening:

> Apon the midsummer evin, mirriest of nichtis,
> I muvit furth allane neir as midnicht wes past
> Besyd ane gudlie grein garth full of gay flouris
> Hegeit of ane huge hicht with hawthorne treis
> Quhairon ane bird on ane bransche so birst out hir notis
> That never ane blythfullar bird was on the beuche hard.
> (1-6)[46]

This is a bawdy poem and so perhaps the association of midsummer with 'Summer games', parish celebrations, merriment, and light-hearted play explains Dunbar's decision to set the poem at this time.

In John Gower's *Vox Clamantis* there is a Summer opening which relates to the Peasant's Revolt of 1381. The year is given in the opening line but in the form of the regnal year, it is the fourth year of King Richard's reign.

> Contigit vt quarto Ricardi regis in anno,
> Dum clamat mensem Iunius esse suum.
> (*Liber Primus*, 1-2)[47]

The month is June and the sun is shining brightly, the meadows are full of flowers and the birds are singing. Ostensibly it is a perfect summer's day. In this case the summer opening has not been chosen to represent the mood or themes of the poem, the date relates to the socio-political events of the time, specifically to the Peasant's Revolt. Thus the inclusion of the date as a real historical reference dictated the choice of a summer opening to the poem. The contrast of the glorious summer landscape and the violence of the Peasants Revolt is suggestive of the unnaturalness of the peasant's behaviour. The peasants are described as wild beasts and their behaviour is in stark

contrast with, as the poem implies, the seasonally appropriate behaviour of the narrator who had set out to pick flowers in the field. The summer opening is ironic in its use here.

Coda: Seasonal References in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Although *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is obviously not a dream poem, it can be read as an allegory, and it could be argued that the *Gawain*-poet was influenced by the dream genre, and specifically by the convention of a seasonal opening in a dream poem. He wrote a dream poem himself, *Pearl*, and as we have seen in that poem, he used the seasonal opening to emphasise the poignancy of a young death. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the poet provides seasonal references at the opening of each Fitt to remind the reader of the passage of time. He has used the evocative seasonal vocabulary established by the dream genre to both frame the events of the poem, and to amplify the themes and concerns of the poem:

A 3ere 3ernes ful 3erne, and 3eldez neuer lyke,
Þe forme to þe fynisment foldez ful selden.
Forþi þis 3ol ouer3ede, and þe 3ere after,
And vche sesoun serlepes sued after oþer:
After Crystenmasse com þe crabbed lentoun,
Þat fraystez flesch wyth þe fysche and fode more symple;
Bot þenne þe weder of þe worlde wyth wynter hit þrepez,
Colde clengez adoun, cloudez vplyften,
Schyre schedez þe rayn in schowrez ful warme,
Fallez vpon fayre flat, flowrez þere schewen,
Boþe groundez and þe greuez grene ar her wedez,
Bryddez busken to bylde, and bremlych syngen
For solace of þe softe somer þat sues þerafter
Bi bonk;
And blossumez bolne to blowe
Bi rawez rych and ronk,
Þen notez noble inno3e
Ar herde in wod so wlonk.

After þe sesoun of somer wyth þe soft wyndez
Quen Zeferus syflez hymself on sedez and erbez,
Wela wynne is þe wort þat waxes þeroute,
When þe donkande dewe dropez of þe leuez,
To bide a blysful blusch of þe bry3t sunne.
Bot þen hy3es heruest, and hardenes hym sone,
Warnez hym for þe wynter to wax ful rype;
He dryues wyth dro3t þe dust for to ryse,
Fro þe face of þe folde to fly3e ful hy3e;
Wroþe wynde of þe welkyn wrastelez with þe sunne,
Þe leuez lancen fro þe lynde and ly3ten on þe grounde,
And al grayes þe gres þat grene watz ere;
Þenne al rypez and rotez þat ros vpon fyrst,
And þus 3irnez þe 3ere in 3isterdayez mony,
And wynter wyndez a3ayn, as þe worlde askez,
No fage,
Til Me3elmas mone
Watz cumen wyth wynter wage;
Þen þenkkez Gawan ful sone
Of his anious uyage.
(498-535)[48]

This is an extraordinarily interesting passage from the point of view of time and narrative, and also in relation to the language of seasonal references. The seasons of the year are described in turn but accelerated like a visual fast forward to illustrate the cyclical nature of time and the speed and regularity with which one season gives way to the next. Narratologically, this is an interesting device to compress the duration of a year into a small narrative space and time, in order to reflect and emphasise the temporal themes of *Gawain*, such as mutability, transience and the cyclical nature of time and experience of time.

J. A. Burrow has commented on the time-consciousness in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*:

> *Sir Gawain* is in general a very time-conscious romance: the prologue and epilogue place the story in historical time and the body of the text keeps us constantly informed of the season of the year and the hour of the day.[49]

In describing the poem as 'time-conscious', Burrow implies that the text is doing more than making temporal references in order to orientate the reader, but that in fact there is a deliberate reflexivity in its use of time. I would also argue that the narrative focus on temporality is intentional and for specific effect rather than it being a purely general and functional aspect of the plot. Time permeates the narrative of *Sir Gawain* more pervasively and with more resonance than the standard temporal co-ordinates used to situate a story in a particular context. The language of the poem is suffused with temporal references as the passage above illustrates. There is a recurrent idea of new beginnings coming out of endings. From the very first lines, the poet indicates this cyclical view, describing the new life and fresh beginnings that can emerge out of destruction. This in itself relates perfectly to the passage from Fitt 2 in *Gawain* quoted above, which acts as an ideal model for the themes within the model, in the same way that the language of seasonal openings functions as an echo for the themes and ideas often explored in late-medieval dream poetry and framed narratives.

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[1] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 71-74.

[2] Helen Phillips, 'Frames and Narrators in Chaucerian Poetry,' in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray* ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 72.

[3] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 70.

[4] Curtius, p. 82.

[5] Curtius, p. 193.

[6] Rosemond Tuve, *Seasons and Months; Studies in a Tradition of Middle English poetry* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1974). p. 3.

[7] Tuve, pp. 4-5.

[8] Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

[9] Pearsall and Salter, p.5.

[10] Pearsall and Salter, p.9.

[11] Pearsall and Salter, pp. 20-21.

[12] Horgan, p. 3.

[13] Helen Phillips and Nick Havely, eds. *Chaucer's Dream Poetry* (London: Longman, 1997) p.249, fn. "Set on 'Seynt Valentynes day', l. 309, possibly the present Feb 14, Oruch (1981: 556). Kelly (1986: 157) says Chaucer connected Valentine's Day with the Maytime feastday (2 May) of the Genoese saint of the same name."

[14] Derek Pearsall, ed., *The Floure and the Leafe, the Assembly of Ladies, the Isle of Ladies* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1990).

[15] See the notes to *The Floure and the Leafe*, ed. Derek Pearsall, p. 22.

[16] Walter W. Skeat, ed., *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, Vol. 7 (London: Oxford University Press, 1894).

[17] The 'Cuckoo Song', Anonymous. *c.* 1250 in Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, ed., *The Oxford Book of Literary Verse: 1250-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939).

[18] Wendy Pfeiffer, *The Change of Philomel: The Nightingale in Medieval Literature* (New York, Bern, and Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985). See also Jeni Williams, *Interpreting Nightingales: Gender, Class and Histories* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

[19] *Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*, l. 27. In his textual notes to his edition of *Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*, R. Barton Palmer notes that, according to the lexicographers, *oci* is conventional onomatopoeia for the nightingale's cry and so he has left the word untranslated. However, he does point out that the word could also be interpreted as the second person singular imperative of *ocire* and he suggests that we should perhaps translate *oci* as 'kill'. However, perhaps it is enough to be aware of the possible double meaning here.

[20] Michael Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[21] See the footnote on this in the *Riverside Chaucer*, p. 939. Benson suggests here that Chaucer probably used the Kalendarium of Nicholas of Lynn to provide these astronomical references.

[22] Horgan, p. 129.

[23] *The Isle Of Ladies* in *The Floure and the Leafe, the Assembly of Ladies, the Isle of Ladies*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1990).

[24] Horgan, pp. 3-4.

[25] The date of composition is unknown but it probably dates to some time in the fifteenth century.

[26] Priscilla Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), pp.137-138.

[27] Gavin Douglas, *The Palis of Honoure*, ed. David Parkinson (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992).

[28] Bawcutt, p. 56.

[29] Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, *La Couleur de la Mélancholie: La fréquentation des livres au XIVe siècle 1300-1415* (Paris: Hatier, 1993), p. 93.

[30] Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, *The Color of Melancholoy: The Uses of Books in the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 89.

[31] J.R.R Tolkien, ed., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Sir Orfeo* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975).

[32] *The Assembly of Ladies* in *The Floure and the Leafe, the Assembly of Ladies, the Isle of Ladies*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1990).

[33] It is interesting that such a specific time is given here. It is ambiguous whether 'none' refers to noon or to Nones, the canonical hour. Either noon or Nones would give the same time of two o'clock though.

[34] John Skelton, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. John Scattergood (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983).

[35] Laura L. Howes, *Chaucer's Gardens and the Language of Convention* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 51.

[36] The precise date of composition for Lydgate's *Temple of Glass* has not been ascertained. It has been suggested that it was probably written in the early fifteenth century, this is in conjunction with some of the precise astronomical details given in the poem itself.

[37] John Lydgate, *The Temple of Glass* in *Fifteenth-Century English Dream Visions: An Anthology*, ed. Julia Boffey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 15-89.

[38] The date of composition is unknown but was probably in the latter part of the fifteenth century.

[39] Robert Henryson, *Testament of Cresseid*, ed. Denton Fox (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1968).

[40] Thomas Hoccleve, *Selected Poems*, ed. Bernard O'Donoghue (Manchester: Carcanet New Press Ltd, 1982).

[41] James I of Scotland, *The Kingis Quair* in *Fifteenth-Century English Dream Visions: An Anthology*, ed. Julia Boffey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 94-157. Aquarius: between 11 January and 10 February according to McDiarmid (James I, 1973) and 21 January – 18 February according to Norton-Smith (James I, 1981).

[42] Jean Froissart, *Le Joli Buisson de Jonece*, ed. Anthime Fourrier (Geneva: Droz, 1975).

[43] Cerquiglini-Toulet, 1993, pp. 57-88.

[44] Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 30-34.

[45] Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, eds., *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, TEAMS (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997).

[46] James Kinsley, ed., *The Poems of William Dunbar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

[47] John Gower, *The Complete Works of John Gower. Edited from the manuscripts with introductions, notes, and glossaries*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, 4 Vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902).

[48] J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, eds., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 2nd ed., revised Norman Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

[49] J. A. Burrow, *A Reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 73.

CHAPTER 4

'NUIT ET JOUR': LOVE AND TIME IN FROISSART *L'ORLOGE AMOUREUS*

Introduction: The Clock and the Creative Imagination

This chapter will focus on aspects of love and time, and the symbolic potential of the clock in Jean Froissart's poem, *L'Orloge amoureus* (*The Clock of Love*, *c.* 1368). More than any other chapter in this thesis, this chapter considers how the developing technology of the mechanical clock affected European consciousness in general and inspired a new creativity amongst writers. The mechanics of the clock actually inspire poetry about the emotions. Writers used a technical vocabulary as metaphors for states of mind, the heart and the soul, to somehow try to express the complexity and the mysteries within. The argument that clocks and automata stimulated the creative imagination, as I will explore in this chapter, runs counter to a widespread contention by cultural historians such as Mumford and Le Goff, who asserted that the advent of the clock changed western perceptions and experience, from a more spiritual view of human life and thought to a more ordered and regimented 'clock world'.

The excitement and interest generated by the new clock technology is clear already in the reference to an *horloge* in the thirteenth century *Roman de la Rose*. This is the first known literary reference to a mechanical clock. Clocks were still relatively rare in the mid-fourteenth century when Froissart wrote *L'Orloge amoureus*, and yet they had made

enough of a cultural impression to inspire a poem dedicated to this new technology. Froissart's narrative *dits* and lyric poems are conserved as a body of work in two independent manuscripts: designated as manuscripts A and B in Peter Dembowski's edition of *Le Paradis d'Amour* and *L'Orloge amoureus*. It is interesting to note that both manuscripts were prepared according to Froissart's instructions and dedicated to a patron, as this provides an early example of authorial self-fashioning with the author being actively involved in the organisation of important editions of his œuvre. *L'Orloge amoureus* appears only in manuscript B, which makes the job of dating the poem even harder than usual, but through a logical piecing together of clues, Dembowski arrives at a probable dating of the middle of 1368. Interestingly, Dembowski's reasoning involves a close examination of the type of clock mechanism described by Froissart in *L'Orloge amoureus*, in an attempt to trace a connection between the fictional clock of the poem and an actual, historical clock that Froissart may possibly have seen and had in mind.

In the introduction to his edition of *L'Espinette amoureuse*, Anthime Fourrier argues that the sequence of the major poems in the two manuscripts is chronological.[1] The order of the major poems is identical in manuscripts A and B, except for a reversal in the order of *La Prison amoureuse* and *L'Espinette amoureuse*. Both manuscripts begin with *Le Paradis d'Amour*, the writing of which coincided with Froissart's installation at the court of Phillipa de Hainaut in London in 1362. Obviously, as I am focussing on *L'Orloge amoureus* in this chapter, it is manuscript B that interests me here. *L'Orloge amoureus* is the fourth poem in manuscript B. *L'Espinette Amoureuse*, dated about 1370, and *Le Joli Buisson de Jonece*, dated 1373, appear in eighth and tenth position respectively. Therefore, a dating of 1368 for *L'Orloge amoureus* fits the chronological arrangement of the manuscript contents.

A list of Froissart's poems appears in *Le Joli Buisson de Jonece* which resembles Chaucer's list of his works to date in the first version of the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* written in the 1380s. The list appears in both the F and G versions of the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, but in the later G version, dated to the 1390s, a work has been added indicating Chaucer's awareness of his literary status. By recording his literary achievements within a literary work, he is keeping an up-to-date 'curriculum vitae' of his poetic output, and therefore closing the gap between fiction and reality. Perhaps the move away from oral literature encouraged the poet to think more self-consciously about his/her role as poet, and his/her relationship to the finished text. Clearly this self-fashioning and self-advertising was prevalent in the later Middle Ages in both England and France.[2] Froissart lists his works to date in chronological order:

> Voirs est qu'un livret fis jadis
> Qu'on dist *l'Amoureus Paradis*
> Et ossi celi del *Orloge*,
> Ou grant part del art d'Amours loge;
> Apriés, *l'Espinette amoureuse*,
> Qui n'est pas al oÿr ireuse;
> Et puis *l'Amoureuse Prison*,
> Qu'en plusiers places bien prise on,
> Rondiaus, balades, virelais,
> Grant fusion de dis et de lais.
> (*Joli Buisson de Jonece*, 443-52)

> It is true that I have already written a little book called the *Paradise of Love*, and also this one about the *Clock*, in which there is a great deal about the art of Love; then, the *Thorn-bush of Love*, which is not disagreeable to hear; and then the *Lovers' Prison*, which is well thought of in several places, and there are rondeaux, ballads, virelays, and a large number of *dits* and lays.

This illustrates that Froissart's perception of himself is as a professional writer and author. He advertises his œuvre for his own time and for future posterity. The poet's life, presented as a writing career, is here offered in a chronological order of poetic achievement. It

suggests both an increased confidence in the vernacular poet, and perhaps a growing sense that the poet had an identity distinct from that of a mere servant to a royal or aristocratic patron.

L'Orloge amoureus presents the mechanical clock virtually as an animate object to its fourteenth century readership, and in so doing humanises and personalises this new machine. Froissart's choice of a clock to symbolise love, passion, the lover-poet and his time and consciousness, demonstrates how the invention and idea of the mechanical clock had stirred the imagination of medieval thinkers and writers. The clock as both object and symbol initiated a psychological and cultural transformation.

I will look at how Froissart uses the two central themes of love and time to examine and problematise a wide range of subjects, such as: definitions of natural and artificial, subjective and objective existence and experience, the external and the internal, the relationship between signs and what they represent, the temporal aspect of the writing process, various reasons for poetic writing, and the role of the poet in society. These authorial and poetic concerns are expressed explicitly within Froissart's œuvre as a whole, and are clearly present in *L'Orloge amoureus*.

Considering the richness of the ideas and the imagery in *L'Orloge amoureus*, it is surprising to discover that the poem has received very little critical attention, despite a resurgence of interest in Froissart as a poet and not just as a chronicler. Too often Froissart is dismissed as being frivolous and superficial, 'merely trifling with life and love', in the words of John Fox, rather than delving into subtle philosophical issues:

> Superficial as in his chronicles, merely trifling with life and love, titillating the emotions but rarely stirring them, Froissart, in common with other French poets of his century, made no pretence at philosophical implications, and precious little at aesthetic achievement beyond the outward poetic forms and conventions, contrasting in this respect with his more ambitious and gifted Italian contemporaries.[3]

Contrary to general opinion, Froissart is an extremely original, deeply philosophical poet. On reading and rereading *L'Orloge amoureus* the reader encounters layer upon layer of complexity and ingenious subtlety. The mechanical clock is chosen to represent Froissart as a lover and a poet. In the fourteenth-century, this comparison would have been extremely novel and compelling, as the mechanical clock was still a relatively new invention at this point. Froissart appears to recognise the symbolic and multivalent potential of the clock and uses these factors as a framework to explore various philosophical issues concerning humankind's relationship to love, time, consciousness, nature, society and creativity.

I. The Clock and the Poet

L'Orloge amoureus begins with a striking simile, which introduces the central structural theme of the poem, namely, that Froissart, as the lover-poet, can compare himself to a mechanical clock:

> Je me puis bien comparer a l'orloge.
> (1)[4]
> I may indeed compare myself to the clock.

The perpetual motion of the 'noble' clock and the constancy of a 'vrai amant' are presented as analogous. Froissart justifies this comparison by presenting it as a revelation granted to

him by love (Amours). He states that love has made him contemplative and inspired him to perceive the similarity between himself and the clock:

> Car quant Amours, qui en mon coer se loge,
> M'i fait penser et mettre y mon estude,
> G'i aperçoi une similitude.
> (2-4)
>
> For when Love, which is lodged in my heart,
> Makes me think and causes me to study the matter,
> And there I see a similarity.

What, then, is the nature of this perceived similarity? It is not simply a resemblance between the lover and the clock, but more specifically a connection between the lover-poet and the clock. In the poem, it is the particular combination of being in love and attempting to describe the experience of being in love, which identifies the poet with the mechanical clock. Clearly, in this comparison, Froissart is elevating the poet to the same stature and prestige that is associated with the mechanical clock. According to Froissart, the clock is a beautiful, notable, pleasing and profitable instrument:

> Dont moult me doi resjoïr et parer,
> Car l'orloge est, au vrai considerer,
> Un instrument tres bel et tres notable
> Et s'est aussi plaisant et pourfitable,
> Car nuit et jour les heures nous aprent
> Par la soubtilleté qu'elle comprent,
> En l'absense meïsme dou soleil.
> (5-11)
>
> Which makes me rejoice and take great pride, because the clock is, if truly understood, a very beautiful and very beneficial instrument, and it is also pleasing and useful, because night and day it tells us the hours by the subtlety of its mechanism, even in the absence of the sun.

He states that night and day the clock teaches us, or tells us, the hours, through the subtlety that it understands. By association, it is implied that the poet is equally noble, entertaining and worthwhile; occupying a special place in society because of the subtlety of his understanding and expression. Just as the clock is programmed to tell the time night and day, the poet is programmed or destined to tell of emotions:

Premierement je considere ensi,
Selonc l'estat de l'orloge agensi,
Que la maison qui porte et qui soustient
Les mouvemens qu'a l'orloge apertient
Et le fais, dont on doit mention faire
De tout ce qui poet estre neccessaire,
Et li quels a matere, par raison,
De servir a sa composition,
Proprement represente et segnefie
Le coer d'amant qui Fine Amour mestrie.
Car la façon de l'orloge m'aprent
Que coers d'amant, qui Bonne Amour esprent,
Porte et soustient les mouvemens d'amours
Et tout le fais, soit joie, soit dolours,
Soit biens, soit mauls, soit aligance ou painne,
Que Bonne Amour li envoie et amaine.
Briefment, qui voelt bien parler par raison,
Le coer loyal est la droite maison,
Au dire voir, et la principal loge
Ou quel Amours plus volentiers se loge.
(51-70)

First, I consider in this way, the status of the clock's arrangement, how the house which carries and sustains the movements that pertain to the clock, and the activities, of which one must mention everything that is necessary, the qualities of which naturally serve its composition, properly represent and signify the heart of the lover which True Love rules. Because the manner of the clock teaches me that the heart of the lover, which Good Love has seized, carries and sustains the movements of love and all its states, whether it be joy, or sorrow, or good, or bad, or relief or pain, which Good Love sends to, and provides for, him. Briefly, one wishes to speak well naturally, the loyal heart is the true house, this is the truth, and the main lodge where Love willingly houses itself.

The act of writing ennobles the poet and the feelings he describes. Froissart represents himself as a machine filtering human consciousness and experience, and trying to find a

means of deeper understanding. He is essentially a speaking clock, telling his own time and registering the 'mouvemens' of his subjective life:

> Car la façon de l'orloge m'aprent
> Que coers d'amant, qui Bonne Amour esprent,
> Porte et soustient les mouvemens d'amours
> Et tout le fais, soit joie, soit dolours,
> Soit biens, soit mauls, soit aligance ou painne,
> Que Bonne Amour li envoie et amaine.
> (61-66)
>
> Because the manner of the clock teaches me
> That the heart of the lover, which Good Love has seized,
> Carries and sustains the movements of love
> And all its states, whether it be joy, or sorrow,
> Or good, or bad, or relief or pain,
> Which Good Love sends to, and provides for, him.

This is an example of Froissart's spatiotemporal representation of fluctuating states of consciousness. The clock and its movements are representative of both the time and location of the lover's emotional state and conscious mind.

Michel Zink explains in the introduction to his book, *Froissart et le temps*, that originally he planned to entitle his work 'Froissart et *son* temps', until he noticed Froissart's persistent interest in temporality itself and so then he shifted the focus of his study. Zink includes a chapter on *L'Orloge amoureus* in this book, entitled 'L'Horloge amoureuse ou la machine à tuer le temps'. He makes a number of interesting observations about how Froissart aligns time, poetry and love in *L'Orloge amoureus*. He identifies various narratological devices that create a fixed duration of 'the now':

> L'habileté de Froissart est donc de revenir pour finir sur sa proposition initiale et d'en transformer l'affirmation métaphorique – "Je suis l'horloge" - en suggestion ontologique: je suis le présent de mon être amoureux, la durée de ma conscience et

le mouvement du souvenir par lequel j'éprouve à la fois cette conscience et le mouvement du temps. A l'heure de ma mort, serai-je ce maintenant de l'amour toujours maintenu (v. 1112-1136)? Le temps objectif mesuré par l'horloge ne joue là aucun rôle, sinon celui de "fixer durablement le maintenant", ce maintenant qui échappe au temps subjectif de la conscience amoureuse et serait, s'il pouvait exister, quelque part dans le futur de l'*Espinette amoureuse* et dans le passé du *Joli Buisson de Jeunesse*.[5]

Froissart's skilfulness is therefore to come full circle on his initial proposition and in transforming the metaphorical affirmation "I am the clock" to the ontological suggestion: I am the present of my amorous being, the duration of my amorous consciousness, the movement of my memory through which I simultaneously feel this consciousness and the movement of time. At the hour of my death, will I have this now of suspended love? The objective time measured by the clock plays no role here, except "to freeze the duration of the now", this 'now' which escapes from the subjective time of amorous consciousness and would be, if it could exist, somewhere in the future of *L'Espinette amoureuse* and in the past of the *Joli Buisson de Jeunesse*.[6]

Zink takes the idea of 'freezing the duration of the now' from Heidegger's book *Le Concept du temps*. This fixed present time of 'the now' is an ongoing present between author, text and the reader. We have already seen in the previous chapter the prevalence of exact dates and times in the preliminary framing sections which indicates a common interest in creating a strong sense of a fictional, personal 'now' of the narrator, blurring into the 'now' of the author and the 'now' of inspiration and composition. Froissart's creation of a fictional 'now' where all these planes collide far exceeds these limited effects however.

Froissart declares that it is his destiny to contribute to a refined literary aesthetic of love, wisdom and nobility, as in the *Roman de la Rose*, where Jean de Meun presents himself as the God of Love's appointed poet to write of love:

Au gré d'Amours et a son plaisir rendre,
Car il m'a fait si noble estat emprendre
Qu'il m'est avis que, quant je le recite,
Que tout mi mal ne sont que grant merite.
(77-80)

According to Love's will and to give him pleasure,
Because he has made me undertake this noble enterprise
It is my opinion that, as I recite this poem
That all my pain becomes great merit.

II. A New Instruction-Book of Love

L'Orloge amoureus continues in the tradition of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, (The Art of Love) and *De Amore* (On Love) by Andreas Cappellanus, where love and the art of loving is presented as something teachable and indeed as something worth learning. It also plays with many of the themes elaborated by the dream-vision genre, established by the seminal *Roman de la Rose* in the fourteenth-century. In the *Roman de la Rose*, Guillaume de Lorris promises to disclose the whole art of love to the dutiful reader who will follow the text to the end. Thus, love is presented as a self-contained system, with a structure and a code, much like language, and also much like a text. The *Roman de la Rose* depicts the progress of a love affair within an allegorical, dream world. Subjective experience is objectified by creating an alternative time and space where the various events and emotions can unfold. The ultimate allegory that emerges from the *Roman de la Rose*, and one that is consistently pursued by Froissart in his narrative *dits*, (dream poems and in *L'Orloge amoureus*) is that of the existence and consciousness of the lover, and of the author, as a text.

Froissart gives a very modern version of a treatise on love. He takes the tradition of the love manual one step further by offering a technical manual of the workings and the physical movements of love. As we have seen above, he describes the *Orloge* in *Le Joli*

Buisson de Jonece as the place where the art of love resides, both in the actual clock and his poem about the clock:

> Et ossi celi del *Orloge*,
> Ou grant part del art d'Amours loge.
> (*Joli Buisson de Jonece*, 445-46)

Ovid's techniques of loving have evolved into a complete technology of love. The clock provides a new technology for recording time and Froissart pioneers new technologies and texts of love. We must remind ourselves that in the fourteenth century, the mechanical clock with a verge and foliot escapement represented something very new. It created a new means of visualising and registering time. Dividing the day into twenty-four equal hours, it united the day and night into one whole period, which then circles and repeats itself in an imitation of eternal time. There are no breaks to this cycle apart from the divisions of calendar time. Clock time is as relentless as the individual consciousness. Froissart emphasises the continuity and perpetuity of the clock by drawing attention to the uniformity of artificial time-keeping:

> Dont nuit et jour les heures dessus dittes
> Sont sonnees, soit estés, soit yvers
> Ensi qu'il apertient, par chans divers.
> (*L'Orloge amoureus*, 612-614)

> By which night and day the hours mentioned above
> Are rung out, whether it be summer or winter
> Thus as it is right, through diverse song.

The repetition of 'nuit et jour' as a type of refrain stresses the relentlessness of temporal passage and aligns this with the ceaseless nature of individual emotion and consciousness:

> Nuls ne me poet ce Doulç Penser tollir,
> Ains prent en moi ordenance si vraie

Que nuit et jour, sans point cesser, l'assaie.
(517-518)

Nothing can remove this Sweet Thought from me,
Now that I have taken such a true rule in myself
So that night and day, ceaselessly I undertake it.

Froissart attempts a demystification of the inner sensations of love by organising emotions and desires into a logical and concrete system. Thus, the subject matter is subjective experience but the vehicle for carrying this material is an objective form: the workings of the clock. The clock is expressing an abstract concept: time. The lover-poet is also expressing an abstract concept: love. The paradox is that something immaterial can be contained and registered within a material process.

In the case of both the clock and the poet, there is a material body or 'maison' (this is an horological term for the house or case of the clock) which carries and sustains the movements or emotional states, but it is the movements and modes of consciousness which have primacy because it is here that external and internal, objective and subjective temporality converge. Thus, identity is revealed as a process rather than as any particular point or location in time.

Catherine Attwood points to the plasticity and mutability of identity in her discussion of substitution and displacement in Froissart's poetry:

> In order to compensate...for the inexorable march of time, the 'I' contrives, through a series of varied manoeuvres, to displace his identity, projecting it onto another person, another time or another place.[7]

In *L'Orloge amoureus*, the displacement of identity is the projection of the poet into a

machine. The clock provides a locus where subjective and objective time can interact. By shifting his identity into that of the clock, Froissart is able to examine concepts of selfhood and subjectivity. Within this framework, Froissart brings together common features of time, love and selfhood. He tries to work out the location for each of these entities and asks to what extent any of them are really measurable or representable? Neither time, nor love, nor identity can be understood or represented as a specific or concrete moment, nor can they be separated from their context. All are only imaginable and representable as something fluid and ongoing, dependent on the individual consciousness and an objective viewpoint for interpretation and expression.

In attempting to anatomize the experience of love, the very essence of what the writer is trying to express and pin down proves to be somehow elusive. Because, like time, love and subjective experience escapes representation, Froissart is trying to write about the inexpressible and the indescribable.

The experience of being in love is described and codified in mechanical terms. The poem alternates between technically accurate descriptions of the function of individual components of the clock, and imaginative explanations of what each function signifies in relation to the experience of love and desire situated in the heart of the lover. Thus, for every aspect of the clock and its mechanisms, Froissart identifies a parallel aspect of how love is operating within the lover. In this manner, emotions are mechanised using a technological vocabulary.

III. Mechanised Desire

Lewis Mumford has emphasized the importance of the mechanical clock in the development of the modern industrialised world:

> The clock, not the steam-engine, is the key-machine of the modern industrial age... the clock has been the foremost machine in modern technics; and at each period it has remained in the lead; it marks a perfection toward which other machines aspire.[8]

David S. Landes has also recognised the momentous impact of the mechanical clock; he sees it as a revolutionary invention because of its huge technological potential. Why was the mechanical clock so influential?

> The mechanical clock was self-contained, and once horologists learned to drive it by means of a coiled spring rather than a falling weight, it could be miniaturized so as to be portable, whether in the household or on the person... The mechanical clock was weight-driven. This made it (unlike the water clock) impervious to frost, which was no small matter in Northern climes, and kept it (unlike the sundial) working through the night and on cloudy days, an immense advantage in a region where it was not uncommon to go weeks without seeing the sun.[9]

It is a self-contained, man-made system – the clock is entirely self-sufficient:

> Par la soubtilleté qu'elle comprent,
> En l'absence meïsme dou soleil.
> (*L'Orloge amoureus*, 10-11)
>
> By the subtlety of its mechanism
> Even in the absence of the sun.

The mechanical clock can operate continuously throughout the day and night as the mechanism holds its own time. It does not require the sunlight to refer to as a present indicator. The clock possesses the ability to work in the absence of its referent: the original

source of the time it imitates. Thus a clock is like the lover who does not need the object of desire to be present to feel love and desire. There is also a parallel here with the written text, which does not require the author/poet to be present for the text to be understood. The text, once written, exists independently of its creator.

According to the cultural historians who have explored the consequences of the coming of the clock, the world becomes more abstract.

> The clock, moreover, is a piece of power machinery whose 'product' is seconds and minutes: by its essential nature it dissociated time from human events and helped create the belief in an independent world of mathematically measureable sequences.[10]

Time is now dissociated from human events. Human events become dissociated from nature.

> Time took on the character of an enclosed space: it could be divided, it could be filled up, it could even be expanded by the invention of labor-saving instruments.[11]

L'Orloge, however, shows how this invention could feed the Middle Age's interest in celebrating the life of the emotions, as well as these more rational, logical preoccupations. Froissart describes the mechanics of the clock in intricate detail, using a highly technical vocabulary. There is nothing vague or impressionistic about his writing. He names every part of the verge and foliot clock and explains how each part functions within the whole mechanism. Then he correlates each part and function with its equivalent feature within the theatre of love and its drama of emotions.

It is in the fifth verse that Froissart begins his graphic representation of the inner

parts of the mechanical clock and the corresponding personified abstractions from the experience of being in love. First of all, there is 'La premerainne roe' (the first wheel) which is 'la mere' (the mother wheel) and therefore the origin of all movement. The first wheel sets all the other parts in motion, and in Froissart's scheme represents Desirs (Desire) which is 'la premiere racine' (the first root or origin) of love. It is notable that the description of this mechanised system has an organic vocabulary of birth and life-force, hence the mother wheel and the references to beginnings, roots and origins. 'Le plonk' (the motive weight which drives the first wheel) represents Beauté (Beauty), because it is Beauty that stirs and activates Desire. 'La corde' (the cord) signifies Plaisance (Joy). When the motive weight moves, it pulls the cord to it and this corresponds to Beauty waking Joy in the heart. Then there is 'la roe seconde' (the second wheel or wheel of the foliot) which acts as a restraint or check, to regulate and adjust the movement of the first wheel. In love, the second wheel signifies Attemprance (Moderation).

This allegorical schema makes love sound mechanical, yet Froissart explains that Desire is unruly and exists without control or measure. Moderation is required to temper and control the passions of Desire. Without the help of Moderation, the lover would be in danger of breaking social codes, and would then be vulnerable to the slanderous assaults of Male Bouche (Bad Mouth/Slander), the interference of Jalousie (Jealousy) and the resistance of Dangiers (Rebuff).

The last movement is 'la sonnerie', the striking mechanism. The second wheel of the striking mechanism is called 'la roe chantore' (the singing wheel). It is this mechanism which most directly matches the activity of the poet. When the clock chimes the hours, it punctuates time and audibly sounds its passage. Similarly, the poet attempts to somehow

externalize and give objective form to his inner life and consciousness.

L'Orlogier keeps the clock running efficiently. L'Orlogier is equated to the memory. Thus he is a technician and a regulator. Is L'Orlogier an image of the poet? The analogous regulatory function that the poet performs is to interpret the essence of life and preserve an image of that essence for the cultural memory.

IV. Metaphysical Poetry

The abstract nature of Froissart's opening proposition introduces an innovative style of metaphysical argumentation to the poem (I am using 'metaphysical' in the literary, historical sense, in line with Coleridge's definition of the 'supernatural' which he used to describe the seventeenth-century Metaphysical poets).[12] An individual's subjective experience and emotions are compared and equated to the regular movements and mechanisms of an inanimate, technical object. Thus, passion and love become part of a scientific, technological equation.

L'Orloge amoureus bears a striking resemblance to John Donne's *A Valediction forbidding Mourning*. The basic idea of expressing feeling through an intellectual concept is common to both. Donne, like Froissart, uses a scientific and technical instrument – the compass – to embody the central conceit of his poem. The compass is one instrument with two arms. Thus it is able to represent each of the lovers, their permanent union and temporary separation:

> Our two souls, therefore, which are one,
> Though I must go, endure not yet

A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth if th'other do.
(*A Valediction Forbidding Mourning*, 21-28)

The compass acts as a navigational aid to establish position, direction and distance. It is able to define and chart space. By comparing the lovers to the compass he envisages them as permanently connected at one level even when they are apart. He makes physical distance a plus rather than a minus, as the distance between the lovers is seen as an extension of their love rather than an unbreachable space. The inner and outer realms are seen to operate together as Donne creates a metaphysical bond between two people with a physical allusion. In his *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge describes how the poet uses the power of the imagination to harmonise oppositions in order to transform perception:

> He [the poet] diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which I could exclusively appropriate the name of Imagination. This power, first put into action by the will of the understanding... reveals itself in the balance of reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and *harmonizes the natural and the artificial* (my italics), still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry.[13]

In 'The Metaphysical Poets', T.S. Eliot writes about the chaotic, fragmentary nature of human life, and how the poet synthesises these disparate experiences into something transcendental.[14] Ironically however, this transcendental clarity is often achieved by indirect and allusive means:

> Our civilisation comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, dislocate if necessary, language into meaning.[15]

Eliot highlights the paradox inherent in trying to express abstract ideas, psychological states and intangible emotions, that it is necessary to become more abstract and tangential in order to create meaning from new relations. The Metaphysical poets attempted to use language to mirror consciousness and emotions:

> But they [the metaphysical poets] were, at best, engaged in the task of trying to find the verbal equivalents for states of mind and feeling.[16]

This is precisely the aim of medieval dream poetry and allegory. If we read *L'Orloge amoureus* as an early example of the Metaphysical genre, then Froissart's intention seems particularly radical and extremely innovative. Two centuries earlier than the Metaphysical poets, Froissart was dealing with the impact of new technology on society, culture and humankind. Clearly, new machinery and technological apparatus affected the pre-modern consciousness and artistic imagination as much as it does the modern.

V. Representation and Signification

L'Orloge amoureus places a particular emphasis on words in the semantic field of representation, similitude and signification, which continues to be foregrounded throughout the poem, for example, in the first fifty lines: *comparer, similitude, soubtilleté, samble, imagination, signification, represente, segnefie, paree.*

In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault alludes to the pre-modern use of resemblance to bring ideas together and to form knowledge about the true nature of things:

> Up to the end of the sixteenth century, resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture. It was resemblance that largely guided exegesis and the interpretation of texts; it was resemblance that organized the play of symbols, made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible, and controlling the art of representing them. The universe was folded in upon itself: the earth echoing the sky, faces seeing themselves reflected in the stars, and plants holding within their stems the secrets that were of no use to man. Painting imitated space. And representation – whether in the service of pleasure or of knowledge – was posited as a form of repetition: the theatre of life or the mirror of nature, that was the claim made by all language, its manner of declaring its existence and of formulating its right of speech.[17]

Foucault identifies four essential figures of similitude: *conventientia*, *aemulatia*, *analogy* and *sympathy* (decorum, emulation, analogy and sympathy). The point is that these are all conventional rhetorical tools and Froissart employs aspects of all of these schemes in *L'Orloge amoureus*.

The poem concentrates on two principal objects: the clock and the poet. These symbols allow a meditation on time, love and the connecting point between the two, human consciousness. However, there is a consistent attempt to get behind the signs, symbols and ciphers, to try and touch the essence within. Froissart tries to show that time and love transcend all confines and boundaries. Both time and love are observable and measurable by human consciousness but neither of them is physically tangible or verifiable. The clock does not actually contain time, it just measures regular movement giving a visible sense of the passage of time. Similarly, love does not actually live in Froissart's heart, nonetheless the feelings are present somewhere within his consciousness. He is touched and transformed by his emotional experience, and is able to objectify this experience by translating feeling into written text.

Reading emphasis into the first words of the poem: 'Je me *puis* bien comparer a l'orloge', one feels that Froissart is asserting the power of the poet to designate meaning through the force of imagination. According to this idea, a perceptive poet has the ability and the authority to reinterpret signs and to describe the world anew. By proposing a correspondence between two such disparate topics, Froissart's opening thematic declaration encourages the reader to think about the relation of signified to signifier. In this case, love is the signified, and a mechanical clock the signifier.

The use of the clock metaphor raises a number of complex questions about where meaning resides. Meaning is a matter of interpreting signs, thus the interpreter plays a large role in the understanding of signs. In *L'Orloge amoureus*, comparison is used to examine meaning. Froissart compares two systems: one physical, the other metaphysical. He presents the two systems as interchangeable. The reader is repeatedly told that one thing signifies another, that one sign represents another. The poet is playing with interpretation and meaning and the reader is invited to do the same. The opposition of the clock's technical workings and function, and the allegorical significance ascribed to these 'mouvemens', opens up a space between function and meaning, or sign and meaning. If Froissart can freely and plausibly re-ascribe meaning, then all meaning becomes relative and subjective, and therefore open to interpretation. This implies that there is a gap between the experience of the object itself and the visual or verbal representation of that object. Meaning, then, does not appear to be contained within the object itself, but is conferred by the subject who describes that object.

In *The System of Objects*, Jean Baudrillard discusses the clock as a familiar domestic object and considers what the clock represents:

> The clock is to time as the mirror is to space. Just as the relationship to the reflected image institutes a closure and a kind of introjection of space, so the clock stands paradoxically for the permanence and introjection of time... The measuring of time produces anxiety when it substantializes time and cuts it into slices like an object of consumption. Everyone knows from experience how intimate a ticking clock can make a place feel; the reason is that the clock's sound assimilates the place to the inside of our body. The clock is a mechanical heart that reassures us about our own heart. It is precisely this process of infusion or assimilation of the substance of time, this pretence of duration, which is rejected, just like all other returns to inwardness, by a modern order based on externality, spatiality and objective relationships.[18]

Baudrillard equates the symbolic potential of the clock to that of the mirror in its replication of the environment that surrounds it. The clock, however, has a spatial and temporal being, and so has a dual introjection, whereas the mirror only absorbs spatial dimensions.

Françoise Paheau discusses the proliferation of clock imagery and its iconic significance in the medieval west in her article 'Scientific allusions and intertextuality in Jean Froissart's *L'Orloge amoureus*':

> Few inventions have produced a more profound and sustained cultural transformation than the mechanical clock... The frequent employment of clock metaphors in scientific, devotional, and political texts, as well as in religious and secular iconography, attests to the immediate impact of this new technological marvel on late medieval society.[19]

Paheau proceeds to comment on the surprising portrayal of affinity and harmony between the mechanical clock and human beings in *L'Orloge amoureus*, because later, modern responses to machines and technology have been far more negative and suspicious. Instead of engendering fear and hostility, the clock became an ideal symbol for human morality, aspiration and achievement. By use of symbolism, metaphor and allegory, writers related and assimilated the mechanical clock to the natural world, to the cosmos and to medieval

society, thus incorporating this new technology and all that it represents into the fabric of the old order. The mechanical clock is seen to uphold wisdom, virtue and *mesure*, a highly valued quality. The mechanism of the clock works by motion and regulation. In Froissart's conceit the motion is personified as Desir, and the regulation is personified as Attemprance. Thus, temperance and moderation regulates desire and passion:

> On the basis of this simple *psychomachia*, Froissart created a poetic *concordia discordantium*, an emblematic synthesis of passion and virtue, heroism and wisdom, occult qualities and natural laws. In order to account for these aspects and their ideological implications, we must consider the poem's intention in the context of the clock's technological and scientific significance, as well as its place in the allegorical and courtly intertext. This approach reveals how literature helped to integrate new technology into the medieval ethos through the practice of intertextuality, or, in medieval terms, *correctio*, that is, 'the reinterpretation, the new conception of a *matière*,' which is 'the foundation of medieval poetics.'[20]

VI. Reconstructing and Transforming Time

Peter Ainsworth explores Froissart's attitudes to history, truth, myth and fiction, specifically in connection with his *Chronicles*, but the analysis is equally relevant to Froissart's poetry. This may be largely because the boundaries between history and fiction were not so clearly defined in the Middle Ages as they are now. Telling the truth and stating the facts were considered to be the intention of narrative discourse, whether the discourse was an attempt at historical documentation or poetic vision:

> So the first *romans* were endowed with a historical meaning not perceived in any way incompatible with the imaginary. Throughout the Middle Ages, however, the duty and function of the historian were to establish and narrate *facts* from the recent or more distant past.[21]

The first vernacular French historians derived their information from a variety of sources, such as oral tradition, myth, legend, genealogy and written testimony. Therefore the overlap between stories and histories was quite significant:

> Historical 'fact' was thus inextricably intertwined with fictions of various kinds, but in a manner that did not preclude the emergence of texts witnessing to a certain reality.[22]

Ainsworth promotes the subtlety and quality of Froissart's writing across the genres and argues that at its best it provides 'a *texte-palimpseste* or *texte-feuilleté* whose different layers of potential significance are set in a fruitful relationship of dialectical opposition. More simply, the text we are about to read: historiography, moral tale, *exemplum nouvelle*, is marked by the presence of what might be termed a tendency to provoke fruitful reader-hesitation.'[23]

For all his praise, Ainsworth is unimpressed with Froissart's vision and success in breathing poetic life into the clock in *L'Orloge amoureus*:

> The poetic motivation of objects is often much less compelling in his verse than it is in the passages of the *Chroniques*. The allegory of the *Orloge amoureus* is arguably contrived and over-elaborate, even by fourteenth century standards.[24]

By contrast, John Scattergood praises Froissart's skilful use of comparison in order to illuminate the mysterious impulses and desires of love:

> Some of the comparisons are truly ingenious, as when the foliot - the oscillating bar which regulates the escapement - is made to stand for 'paours' [fear].[25]

John Scattergood examines the cultural importance of the development of the mechanical

clock and the subsequent reconstruction of time in the late Middle Ages:

> Time and its proper use became important moral matters too, and the clock became an image for the well-regulated behaviour of people. As early as 1369 Jean Froissart explored the possibilities of the comparison in *L'Orloge amoureus*... The development of the mechanical timekeeper altered the culture of Western Europe. It brought with it a heightened sense of time and privileged virtues such as regularity, constancy, punctuality, exactness. It enhanced the sense - on a spiritual, social and personal level - of the value of time. It suggested ways in which one might organize one's life by dividing it up into compartments - so much time for work, so much time for study, so much time for recreation and rest. And writers reflect about, and meditate upon, these issues, absorbing the new machine into their literary consciousness.[26]

VII. Memory and Posterity

Chaucer asserts the importance of books as a storehouse of knowledge in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*:

> And if that olde bokes weren aweye,
> Yloren were of remembrance the keye.
> (G. 25-26)

Books are a means of preserving the past. They constitute a cultural memory, and this cultural memory is presented as the key of remembrance. Robert Payne derives the title of his study, *The Key of Remembrance: A Study of Chaucer's Poetics* (1963), from the above lines in Chaucer:

> The key term in Chaucer's attempted synthesis of art, experience, and history is 'remembrance.' Both the reason for art and its purpose derive from the relationship between the past and present consciousness expressed in the word 'remembrance'... for Chaucer and his contemporaries books were very nearly the sole source of historical knowledge, so that the past is inevitably the literary past.[27]

Froissart tells us through his narrator that one of his motivations for writing is to alleviate the pain of his emotions and the intensity of his consciousness. Furthermore, he declares that he is recording his feelings for posterity, so that his personal story will be known in the future:

> E pour ce qu'en imaginations
> Est tout mon coer et mon intentions,
> Imaginé ai en moi de nouvel,
> A trop petit de joie et de revel,
> Que je ne sçai au monde au jour d'ui chose
> Point plus propisce, assés bien dire l'ose,
> Com ma vie est justement figuree,
> Ensi qu'elle est par ci devant monstree,
> A un orloge et a la gouvrenance
> Qu'il apertient a yceste ordenance.
> (1137-43)

'Com ma vie est justement figuree' indicates Froissart's concern for an accurate representation of his life. Therefore, he writes his own story within his poetry so that his life is properly and justly figured. This is similar to Chaucer's concern in the *House of Fame*, where he states that he does not want to relinquish control over the representation of his own life for posterity (ll. 1875-82). He asserts that he is the best judge of what he has experienced and thought. In *L'Orloge*, Froissart combines the historian's pursuit of truth, and the poet's desire for artistic glory. He does not trust anyone else to write truthfully about him and his work. Obviously, nobody else can write about him from a subjective viewpoint. In his dream poetry, Froissart, the great chronicler, explores also the relationship of time to human experience in his own personal, professional, and emotional life.

VIII. Kinds of Epitaphs

The last aspect of temporal correspondences to be discussed in this chapter in relation to *L'Orloge amoureus* is one that moves outwards to the poem itself and its fate in time. Having started with the clock, the poem ends with a tombstone, more specifically it is the poet's own tombstone and epitaph; whereas the clock represents continuity and timelessness, the tombstone represents the definite end of the poet's life and his subjective experience. The engraving on the tombstone, like the poem, ensures that a record will be preserved for posterity:

> Et quant vendra de Dieu la saintisme heure
> Que de mon corps il vodra oster l'ame,
> Je voeil qu'il soit escript dessus la lame
> Que par amours amer, non estre amés
> - Se l'ai esté, petit amans clamés -
> Avec les amoureus dors et repose.
> (1112-1115)
>
> Car je sui la chambre et la maison
> ou mis est li orloges amoureus.
> (1147-1148)

> And when shall come from God the most blessed hour
> That my soul departs from my body,
> I wish that it will be written on my tombstone
> That having loved sincerely without being loved in return
> - If I have been loved in return, I have little received the name of lover -
> I sleep and rest with the true lovers.
>
> Because I am the chamber and the house
> Where *L'Orloge amoureus* is found.

In conclusion: the poem deploys a series of oppositions – natural and artificial (soubtilleté had several different senses in Medieval French: for example, subtlety and concealed

meaning, but it also meant art or artifice), subjectivity and objectivity, signified and signifier. The whole is held in a frame that considers the temporal aspect of the subject, the role of the poet in society and contemplation of the act of writing. The poem offers a philosophical meditation upon the way that one sign can represent and suggest another. It is not only a poem about the vagaries of time and love, but also about the vagaries and problems of representation.

IX. The Clock as Symbol

There are several fourteenth and fifteenth-century examples of interest in the clock as a symbol which are not interested in it as a metaphor of love, whether sacred or human: Nicholas Oresme in his translation of Aristotle's *De caelo et mundo* and his commentary upon this and Christine de Pizan's *Epistre d'Othéa*.[28]

Christine de Pizan uses the iconography of Temperance with a clock in the *Epistre d'Othéa* composed *c.* 1400:

> Attrempance estoit aussi appellee deese; et pour ce que nostre corps humain est composé de diverses choses et doit estre attrempré selon raison, peut estre figuré a l'orloge qui a plusieurs roes et mesures; et toutefoiz ne vault rien l'or<lo>ge, s'il n'est attrempré, semblablement non fait nostre corps humain, se attrempance ne l'ordonne. [29]

Les Lamentations de Mathéolus (c.1371-72) by Jehan Le Fèvre is a translation of the *Liber lamentationum Matheoluli*, a thirteenth-century poem by Mathieu of Boulogne.[30] The poem purports to be an autobiographical account of Mathieu's misfortunes and unhappiness following his marriage to a widow. One of the images that is employed in Le Fèvre's work is the comparison of a nagging wife with the continuous ticking of the mechanical clock:

> The Dominating Clock
> I (I. 732-64) This female clock is really driving me mad, for her quarrelsome din doesn't stop for a moment. The tongue of a quarrelsome wife never tires of chiming in. She even drowns out the sound of the church bell. A nagging wife couldn't care less whether her words are wise or foolish, provided that the sound of her voice can be heard... So anyone who wishes to immolate himself on the altar of marriage will have a lot to put up with. Fifteen times, both day and night, he will suffer without respite and he will be sorely tormented. Indeed, I believe that this torture is worse than the torments of hell, with its chains, fire, and iron.[31]

This is a good example of the interest provoked by the clock. It also illustrates how prominent was the noise of the clock, and the perception people had of it as a sound-producing mechanism. Before this, the noise of chatter had already been regularly compared to the 'clapper' of a mill. Perhaps the clock image is a descendent of this earlier technological analogy? The clock has become another means of personifying time and its relentless movement forwards. The analogy of the clock and speech as both marking time follows St Augustine's example of language as temporality in his example of reciting a psalm, discussed in chapter 1.

X. The Clock and Sacred Love

The clock was seemingly such a versatile symbol that it was incorporated into both secular and sacred texts. There are a number of examples of the use of the clock as a symbol of sacred love in medieval writing. Nothing disproves the received modern belief that 'clock time' and the advent of precise machinery destroyed a religious and spiritual world view more than the enthusiasm with which religious, and even mystical writers, responded to the symbolic potential of this new technology. Henry Suso (*c.*1300-1366) composed the *Büchlein der ewigen Weisheit* (*Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*) *c.*1327-34, which uses the

love mysticism common in the period, inspired by Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) a brilliant German Dominican who taught Theology in Paris.[32] This text was translated into Latin *c.*1334 as *Horologium Sapientiae (The Clock of Wisdom)* and subsequently it was translated into French in 1389 as *L'Orloge de sapience* and into English as *The Seven Poyntes of Trew Love.*[33] Suso's *Horologium* sees a reworking of ideas that also appear in his German *Büchlein der Wahrheit* (*Little Book of Truth*) c. 1328, which does not, however, use the clock image.[34] It is divided into twenty-four chapters, corresponding to the hours of a twenty-four hour day. The divisions of the day are being related to the divisions of a book, which connects real time and consciousness to textual time and the temporal experience of reading. It is interesting that the clock is being assimilated into religious and secular literature as, in the main, a positive symbol of wisdom, of temperance, of spiritual activity and of love.

The interest of devotional writers in the clock not only counters the historians' arguments that the mechanical clock replaced a spiritual view of experience with a more logical, ordered, and potentially industrial mentality, but it also shows how much medieval spiritual life was already a conquest of daily time. The clock simply builds on the existing religious practices of using bells to signal time periods, and dividing the day and the night into a strictly regulated schedule of hours dedicated to serving God. By the fourteenth-century, devout lay-people were similarly attempting to regulate each period of the day with prayers, devotions, and religious reading, interspersed among their secular tasks and chores.

The Abbey of the Holy Ghost is a late fourteenth-century Middle English religious treatise.[35] It is a translation of a French treatise, *Li Liure du cloister de l'âme*, *c.*1300. It is

not a dream or vision but it is in the form of an intricate allegory. The narrative uses the buildings and offices of an abbey as the basis of an allegory about the Christian life. The poem seeks to compare 'the spiritual composition of the soul or conscience with the physical composition of an abbey or cloister.'[36] Like the *Horologium* and its vernacular versions, this poem is concerned with divine love, and with finding new ways of symbolising the relationship of the body to the soul. Within the cloister resides the abbey clock, and the clock appears to be the soul of the cloister. The mechanical clock presents a new symbolic aspect of the metaphorical description of the Christian soul. *The Abbey of the Holy Ghost* testifies to the interest in using the clock as an image or symbol by religious writers. As Christiana Whitehead has indicated, *The Abbey of the Holy Ghost* was 'envisaged for an audience of pious laity and para-monastics, in which the specific virtues of monasticism are deleted and replaced by virtues of a more interior, more flexible kind, suited to cohabitation with the secular life.'[37] Perhaps that is why the symbol of the clock was so appropriate at the heart of this poem, as the clock represented something that was man-made, but in the perpetuity of its time-telling mechanism it reflected an idea of eternity. Thus, in the clock there is the potential to marry the secular with the sacred. *The Abbey of the Holy Ghost* also uses the clock as an image for fervent love: 'þe orloge of lufe'.[38] This is another clock of love, but this is sacred love and not amorous love as in Froissart's clock. What this illustrates is not only how much the clock and a regulated day were in tune with, rather than inimical to, the life of the spirit, but also how the mechanical clock was a readily-used metaphor for love – both sacred love and erotic or romantic love.

The popularity of the clock as a symbol and a metaphor for various human characteristics and virtues, aspects of being, and ideas in medieval art and literature is possibly due to the newness of the mechanical clock. As a new invention and a new object,

the mechanical clock was an open symbol ready to be integrated and interpreted into any particular design or system of thought. Because of the intertextual nature of medieval culture, this new clock symbol would then be revisited and reinterpreted according to the purpose of the text.

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[1] Jean Froissart, *L'Espinette amoureuse*, ed. Anthime Fourrier. 2nd edn (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972), pp. 32-34.

[2] See Laurence de Looze, *Pseudo-autobiography* for Juan Ruiz and examples of self-fashioning by a Spanish poet. No doubt there are other European examples of this type of authorial self-consciousness in the later Middle Ages.

[3] John Fox, *A Literary History of France: The Middle Ages* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1974), p. 301.

[4] Jean Froissart, *Le Paradis d'amour*, *L'Orloge amoureus*, ed. Peter F. Dembowski (Geneva: Droz, 1986). All French citations in reference to *L'Orloge amoureus* are taken from Dembowski's edition. The English translations are my own.

[5] Michel Zink *Froissart et le temps* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France,1998), p. 178. In this paragraph, Zink quotes Martin Heidegger from *Le concept de temps*, trans. Michael Haar and Marc B. de Launay (Paris: Cahier de l'Herne, 1983, reissued by Le Livre de Poche, Biblio Essais), p. 37.

[6] My translation.

[7] Catherine Attwood, *Dynamic Dichotomy: The Poetic 'I' in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century French Lyric Poetry* (Amsterdam: Rodophi, 1998), pp. 113-14.

[8] Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilisation* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1934), p. 14.

[9] David S. Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Viking, 2000), p. 6.

[10] Mumford, p. 15.

[11] Mumford, p. 17.

[12] S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), chap. XIV.

[13] Coleridge, chap. XIV.

[14] T. S. Eliot 'The Metaphysical Poets' in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 59-67.

[15] Eliot, p. 65.

[16] Eliot, p. 65.

[17] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London and New York: Routledge, 1970), pp. 17-24. Four similitudes: *conventientia* – 'convenient' intermingling of aspects, adjacency of places, e.g. body and soul. '...the extremity of one also denotes the beginning of another. In this way, movement, influences, passions, and properties too, are communicated.' *aemulatio* – (emulation) '...a sort of "convenience" that has been freed from the law of place and is able to function, without motion, from a distance. Rather as though the spatial collusion of *conventientia* had been broken, so that the links of the chain, no longer connected, reproduced their circles at a distance from one another in accordance with a resemblance that needs no contact.' e.g. reflection in a mirror – abolition of distance and proper place/space. *analogy* – '...*conventientia* and *aemulatio* are superimposed. Like the latter, it makes possible the marvellous confrontation of resemblances across space; but it also speaks, like the former, of adjacencies, of bonds and joints. Its power is immense, for the similitudes of which it treats are not the visible, substantial ones between things themselves; they need only be the more subtle resemblances of relations.' *sympathies* – 'Sympathy is an instance of the *Same* so strong and so insistent that it will not rest content to be merely one of the forms of likeness; it has the dangerous power of *assimilating*, of rendering things identical to one another, of mingling them, of causing their individuality to disappear – and thus of rendering them foreign to what they were before. Sympathy transforms. It alters, but in the direction of identity, so that if its power were not counterbalanced it would reduce the world to a point, to a homogeneous mass, to the featureless form of the Same: all its parts would hold together and communicate with one another without a break, with no distance between them...This is why sympathy is compensated for by its twin, antipathy. Antipathy maintains the isolation of things and prevents their assimilation; it encloses every species within its impenetrable difference and its propensity to continue being what it is...'

[18] Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 1996), p.24.

[19] Françoise Paheau 'Scientific allusions and intertextuality in Jean Froissart's *L'Orloge amoureus*' in *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 20 (1990) 2, p. 251.

[20] Paheau, p. 253.

[21] Peter F. Ainsworth, *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History: Truth, Myth, and Fiction in the Chroniques* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 24.

[22] Ainsworth, p. 23.

[23] Ainsworth, p. 125.

[24] Ainsworth, pp. 168-69 fn.

[25] John Scattergood, 'Writing the clock: the reconstruction of time in the late Middle Ages' in *European Review*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 453-474 (2003), p. 468.

[26] Scattergood, pp.468-69.

[27] Robert Payne, *The Key of Remembrance: A Study of Chaucer's Poetics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963), pp.63-64.

[28] Nicholas Oresme, *Le Livre du ciel et du monde*, ed. and trans. A. D. Menut (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968).

[29] Christine de Pizan, *Epistre Othéa*, ed. Gabriella Parussa (Geneva: Droz, 1999) 2. 1-7. For the English translation of this text see *The Epistle of Othea*, trans. Stephen Scrope, ed. Curt F. Bühler, *EETS* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[30] *Les Lamentations de Mathéolus, et le Livre de Leesce de Jehan Le Fèvre*, ed. A. – G. Hamel, 2 vols. (Paris: Émile Bouillon, 1892-1905).

[31] The English translation is by Karen Pratt and is in *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, ed. Alcuin Blamires (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 178.

[32] Henry Suso, *Das Büchlein der ewigen Weisheit* (*The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*), in *Heinrich Seuse. Deutsche Schriften*, ed. Karl Bihlmeyer (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1907).

[33] Henry Suso, *Heinrich Seuses Horologium Sapientiae.* ed. P Künzle (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1977). Henry Suso, *L'Horloge de Sapience. Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royal, MS IV. III*, ed. Eleanor P. Spencer ([S.I.]: Bibliothèque Royal de Belgique, 1964).

[34] Henry Suso, *Das Büchlein der Wahrheit* (*The Little Book of Truth*), in *Heinrich Seuse. Deutsche Schriften*, ed. Karl Bihlmeyer (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1907).

[35] 'The Abbey of the Holy Ghost', in *Religious Pieces in Prose and Verse*, ed. George G. Perry, EETS 26 (1867, 1914), pp. 51-62. See particularly pp. 60-61 for the clock allegory.

[36] John Conlee, 'The *Abbey of the Holy Ghost* and the *Eight Ghostly Dwelling Places* of Huntington Library HM 744', *Medium Ævum* 44:2 (1975) 137-44.

[37] Christiana Whitehead, 'Making a Cloister of the Soul in Medieval Religious Treatises', *Medium Ævum* 67:1 (1998) 1-29.

[38] Perry, p. 60, l. 29.

CHAPTER 5

CREATING A PRETEXT: WRITING ABOUT WRITING. FROISSART'S *JOLI BUISSON DE JONECE* AND CHAUCER'S *HOUSE OF FAME.*

Introduction

This chapter will focus on Jean Froissart's the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *House of Fame*. The two texts are virtually contemporaneous, possibly separated by only several years; the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* is dated 1373 and the *House of Fame* has been variously dated between the late 1370s and the early 1380s. Froissart, like Chaucer, was a member of a royal household. He was the secretary to Edward III's wife, Queen Philippa of Hainault (1361-1369), and so it is a fair assumption that Froissart and Chaucer would surely have known one another. The fact that these two dream poems were written in the same period perhaps accounts for some of the similarities that we see in Chaucer's and Froissart's use of the dream vision poem. However, as well as identifying the similarities between the *Joli Buisson* and the *House of Fame*, I would also like to attempt to identify their various nuances and differences, and to possibly elucidate the differences between the English and the French interpretation and use of the dream vision genre. In the next chapter I will also look at Guillaume de Machaut's dream poetry in relation to, and in comparison with, that of Chaucer and Froissart.

Both the *Joli Buisson* and the *House of Fame* give a specific date in winter as the time of the dream. Both poems describe a poet in search of material, but present this search in different ways and at different times within the time-frame of the poem and the dream. They are both preoccupied with many of the same themes concerning time and temporal experience, texts as experience, memory, and identity but they use ideas about time differently. The *Joli Buisson de Jonece* is interested primarily in the relationship between the past and present, and the relationship between the experience, the memory and the text. This is explored in the temporal process of imagining and writing which is translated into the text as remembering and dreaming. In the *House of Fame*, the dream is also an allegory of the writing process but Chaucer is very much interested in the relation of his text to previous texts, and how his poem will be judged in the future when it too is a literary text of the past. Michel Zink has discussed this change in literary consciousness which results in the poet repositioning himself in time:

> Le romancier ne se tourne pas vers le passé, dont son œuvre entendrait garder la mémoire, mais vers l'avenir qui gardera la mémoire de son œuvre.[1]
>
> The author was turning not to a past that his work was supposed to recall but to a future that would recall his work.[2]

As this complex narratological play with temporal relations illustrates, the *Joli Buisson* and the *House of Fame* are both adventurous texts, which are interested in the role of the poet in reference to time, and the relationship between time and narrative.

What particularly interests me in these poems is their fascination with the writing process, the ways in which they engage with the past, literary or experiential, their concern with memory and the temporal conundrums that are manifest in the written text.

As the title of this chapter suggests, I intend to examine the reasons given in each text for that very text's existence: the pretext for writing. The text itself declares the pretext for writing and through intertextual reference places itself within a tradition of textual critique. In this way, we are given the impression of an endless multiplication of words and texts, very like Chaucer's hall of Fame.

I. Metafictional Narrative

Both Froissart and Chaucer attempt to write the reader into the text, forming an impression that the text is evolving simultaneously in the minds of the author and the reader. The poets focus attention on the writing process by placing particular emphasis on the presence of the narrative voice and by including explanations of the circumstances and the moment of composition. The temporal dimensions of self-conscious, self-referential discourse of this kind are particularly interesting for the questions raised in this thesis. What is the function of this self-begetting, self-referential level of discourse? It is there to expose the artificiality of the treatment of time and process in fiction, emphasising the presence of the 'I' of the poem and the replication of this 'I' figure in the construction of the narrative. By self-begetting fiction, I mean the way in which a text, paradoxically, claims to give birth to itself. For example, at the end of the *Book of the Duchess* a poem has still to be written, even as we finish reading that future poem:

> That I wol, be processe of tyme,
> Fonde to put this sweven in ryme.
> (1331-32)

Thus, the text we have read begets the text still to be written. Stephen G. Kellman describes this circular form in 'The Fiction of Self-begetting':

> Like an infinite recession of Chinese boxes, the self-begetting novel begins where it ends... This device of a narrative which is in effect a record of its own genesis is a happy fusion of form and content. We are at once confronted with both process and product, quest and goal, parent and child.[3]

In both poems, there is a continuous metafictional commentary, which makes the narration of events a part of the event. The term 'metafiction' is a modern label, first coined by the American critic and self-conscious novelist William H. Gass:

> There are metatheorums in mathematics and logic, ethics has its linguistic oversoul, everywhere lingos to converse about lingos are being contrived, and the case is no different in the novel. I don't mean merely those drearily predictable pieces about writers who are writing about what they are writing, but those, like some of the work of Borges, Barth, and Flann O'Brien, for example, in which the forms of fiction serve as the material upon which further forms can be imposed. Indeed, many of the so-called antinovels are really metafictions.[4]

So what exactly do we mean when we speak of metafiction? In her study on the theory and practice of self-conscious fiction in the novel, Patricia Waugh describes metafiction as being 'a celebration of the power of the creative imagination together with an uncertainty about the validity of its representations; an extreme self-consciousness about language, literary form and the act of writing fictions; a pervasive insecurity about the relationship of fiction to reality; a parodic, playful, excessive or deceptively naïve style of writing.'[5] She goes on to say that '*Metafiction* is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.'[6]

Medieval dream poetry displays similar characteristics to metafictional approaches found in the modern novel. Yet metafiction in medieval dream poetry deals with different kinds of uncertainties and crises, concerning scholasticism and authorship, language, representation, and truth. Froissart and Chaucer both chose to write in the vernacular rather than in Latin, which in itself, in a fourteenth-century context, raises issues of legitimacy and authority. Metafiction in the medieval dream poem engages with specific crises of authorship, subject matter and representation.

A.C. Spearing says of the dream poem that it is '...a poem which has more fully realised its own existence as a poem.'[7] The dream poem is self-consciously aware of its own status as a poem. It usually has a beginning frame and an end frame, with the central part of the poem presenting the dream that has inspired the poet to write. This is because the dream experience, in the hands of many of the most sophisticated writers in the *Roman de la Rose* tradition, is also an allegory of the process of the creative imagination. The aspect I would like to stress here, in this general tendency towards metafictional devices in the dream tradition is its focus on the writer's own role in the processes of invention and composition. Even though the poem declares itself to have come into being because of the dream that preceded it, we are aware that this is a narratological device to create the impression that poetic material already exists in a text that just has to be written. Dream poems present both the dream and the poem as events that occurred to the writer – as acts of spontaneous composition. This involves the paradox that inspiration, and the particular subject matter of the poem, have been given to the poet from outside himself, by the dream, while at the same time, focussing our attention on the individual writer and the sources and processes of his discovery of his topic.

As Spearing explains 'In many different ways, then, the dream poem becomes a device for expressing the poet's consciousness of himself as a poet and for making his work reflexive.'[8] It is, however, a device which both represents the poet's personal processes of artistic creation and composition, and fictionally attributes them to an external source.

The structure of the dream poem can also raise implicitly philosophical questions, such as the concern we have already identified in the *Roman de la Rose* with whether or not dreams, and fiction, are true and have significant meaning. The dream-frame creates an alternative, fictional world as opposed to the 'reality' of the narrator's waking life. What we, the readers know though, is that the supposed 'reality', the time outside the dream-frame, is actually a fiction also. The real reality is extra-textual. But by setting up these layers of fiction within the narrative, the author has already called into question the idea of some ultimate, provable reality.

II. A Poem about Nothing

Before I discuss the *House of Fame* and the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* in detail, I would like to skip back further in time to the twelfth-century to look at a Provençal poem which was composed by the first known troubadour and lyric poet in any modern European language, William, the ninth duke of Aquitane (1071 - 1127). It is a remarkable poem which declares itself to be about nothingness, and which repeatedly denies that it is about any conventional literary themes:

Farai un vers de dreyt nien:

Non er de mi ni d'autra gen,
Nor er d'amor ni de joven,
Ni de ren au,
Qu'enans fo trobatz en durmen
Sobre chevau.
(1-6)[9]

I shall write a poem about pure nothing:
Not about me or any other men;
Not about love, and not about youth,
Or anything else,
Because I just composed it asleep
On horseback.[10]

Paradoxically, at the same time as William denies the existence of either subject matter or meaning in his poem, he is unavoidably creating a subject just by writing. The emphasis is on what the 'I' persona can do. What he actually writes seems to be less important than the fact that he is writing. The time and place of composition is also given prominence. It is notable that he tells us that he composed his poem while sleeping and while riding. Therefore, composition is not presented here as a sustained act of concentration or as a scene of scholarly endeavour. Rather, William indicates the casual and incidental nature of his composition. There is no sense of the 'blank page syndrome' or the writer's block that we see in the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* when the narrator worries he has nothing new to say, or in the *House of Fame* when Chaucer's narrator lacks a subject matter and so enters into the desert landscape of his own imagination once he leaves Virgil and Dante behind.

William may have composed a poem about nothing but he certainly did not consider himself to be nobody. As scholars such as James J. Wilhelm[11] have suggested, William's pride and arrogance was a necessary factor in the transition from anonymous poets and performers, to the modern idea of the author who is fully present in his or her

composition. The kind of posing and self-fashioning that is evident in William's compositions is something that becomes more and more common in the literature of the later Middle Ages, as writers become increasingly self-conscious of the written word and its historical implications. We could also link the cultivation of a first person persona in such 'pseudo-autobiographies' as dream poems to both the increasing confidence of the vernacular poet, who now seems to see himself as the equal of renowned classical poets of the past, and perhaps also to the slow emancipation of the individual poet, as artist, from his earlier role as a servant of a royal patron.

III. Froissart's *Joli Buisson de Jonece*

Froissart was thirty-five years old when he wrote the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* in 1373, the year given in the text which is accepted as the date of composition (l. 794). By this time, he had already written *Le Paradis d'Amours*, *L'Orloge amoureus*, *L'Espinette amoueurse*, *Le Prison amoureuse* and a variety of rondeaux, ballads, virelays, *dits*, and lays as he himself tells us in the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* (ll. 443-52). His writing career is included in the narrative so that essentially, he is not just writing about past adventures but also about the experience of writing about these past adventures. Indeed, his poems themselves have become the past adventures in these intertextual references to his own literary work. Listing his poems in this way is a confirmation of a subjective life recorded in literary texts. Around 1370, Froissart had also started to write his *Chronicles*, a historical account of the Hundred Years War (1337-1453). This endeavour was even more a work-in-progress than a piece of writing is bound to be, in that the war was both past and present, intermittent and ongoing. It was recent history and a contemporary

reality, becoming history even as Froissart attempted to capture its progress in journalistic reportage.

The writing of the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* coincided with the beginning of a new enterprise; the *Chronicles* signalled a new style of writing in Froissart's career, a revised set of objectives and a new role for Froissart as a contemporary historian and chronicler of both personal history and collective history. Michelle A. Freeman has argued that *Joli Buisson de Jonece* was Froissart's farewell to poetry:

> In bidding a final *adieu* to the poetic world we have analyzed here, Froissart will remain the traveller, the witness, and the transcriber he showed himself to have been; he will continue to concern himself with power, wealth, and conflicts. But his witness and his transcriptions will deal with *others*, not himself *as such*. The roots of Froissart the *chroniqueur* lie deeply embedded in the experience of Froissart the poet; I suspect that he was very much aware of this...We recall the ink, paper, and pen imagery with which Froissart opens the *Buisson de Jonece*. Let us not forget that throughout the history of medieval French poetry...this set of images has been used to indicate the transcription of the writer's (or the character's, or the poem's) last will and testament.[12]

As a professional writer, and apparently conscious of moving into a different era in his life and work, Froissart presents and codifies his entire literary œuvre. He attempts to bring together multiple themes and multiple personae into a climatic synthesis of self in relation to his works of fiction and the narrative levels within:

> Si vous suppli, tres chiere dame,
> Laissiés moi dont penser pour l'ame
> J'ai eü moult de vainne glore
> S'est bien heure de che tamps clore
> Et de criier a Dieu merchi,
> Qui m'amené jusqu'a chi.
> (385-90)

> So I beg you, my very dear lady, leave me to think of my soul. I have had much vainglory, it is the right time to close this period and to give thanks to God, who has granted me to live until now.

Froissart writes the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* at a point of transition in his life and this poem marks a before and after in his writing career. The poet is reborn as a historian and intends to tread a more serious and enlightened path. Thus, he is thinking of his eternal soul rather than the transient vainglories of this world, and he designates this point in time as the 'bien heure' – the appropriate time to close a phase in his life and move on to another. This self-examination and introspection is like a literary confession following Augustine's model. Instead of presenting a conversion from a life of sin to a life of penitence, Froissart presents a conversion from poetic endeavours to the role of the chronicler. He justifies his life and work so far and attempts to demonstrate the potential of fictional narrative frameworks to expand the boundaries of language, knowledge and philosophical understanding, but also in this 'confession', Froissart acknowledges the failures and limitations of language and narrative either to represent and recreate subjective experience, or to cross over the border that separates subjective and objective experience.

The *Joli Buisson de Jonece* is a reasonably long poem: there are 5442 lines, and they are rich with imagery and ideas. The structure of the poem is tripartite. The first section is in the form of a prologue, where the poet takes us through the various preparatory stages of composition. Before he begins the poem itself, he recounts to us the intellectual and spiritual process that preceded it. He is externalising an internal crisis. Therefore the prologue acts as a model for first person narration, in that it translates psychological experience into concrete form. After this section comes the main body of

the text which contains the dream allegory and Froissart's journey to the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*. The dream is a figure for the space of the text. Finally at the end, there is the awakening and a return to reality, which helps the reader to exit the text and acts as a kind of epilogue, joining the fragmented narrative back into the wider picture.

In the dream allegory, the narrator (Froissart's alter ego) tells us how he dreamed that he had visited the Bush of Youth, how he encounters there a personification of Youth, a young man strangely similar to himself, who becomes his companion and instructs him about the meaning of the Bush. The dreamer also sees the lady that he loved some ten years ago; she has not aged at all but looks exactly as she did when he knew her and loved her before. She rejected him then, but now that he sees her again it is as if he imagines he has been given a second chance to woo her. He writes a ballad for her that tells of his devotion and his suffering, Youth acts as an envoy and delivers this poem to the lady. This part of the poem is presented as, in several different ways, a highly personal meditation on time, and specifically time within an individual's experience. An allegorical drama now unfolds where various personification figures, such as Desire, Fair Seeming, Pity, Franchise, Pleasure, Humility, Youth, Moderation, Resistance and Rebuff play out their parts in the theatre of courtly love. The lady makes it quite clear that she will not reciprocate the feelings of the dreamer-poet. Seemingly unperturbed, the dreamer agrees to a poetry competition for the amusement of his lady. All of the personified figures of courtly love will recite a *souhet*, a sort of wish-poem, and the God of Love will be the Judge. All the poems are recited, but before a judgement is given and a winner declared, the dreamer is pushed and he wakes up. With no resolution to the problems of secular love in the world of time, Froissart turns his attention to religious devotion. The poem concludes with a lay dedicated to 'Our Lady'

the Virgin Mary. Therefore the poem gives us an ending, but it has changed the subject matter to a quite different sphere: divine love in eternity. Like many dream poems, there is no resolution to the main problem raised by the first person narrator, namely how to recapture the past, partly because dream poems, as in this case, are often posing insurmountable, impossible and ambiguous questions. Thus, just at the point in the poem that we expect an answer or solution, the dream poem often breaks off abruptly and denies the conclusion to which it has been leading. In chapter 6, I will consider this tendency in medieval dream poetry to circumvent closure.

The *Joli Buisson de Jonece* also belongs to the genre of poetic *dits*, where narrative verse alternates with lyric poems. Here, Froissart is following in a tradition which can be traced ultimately back to Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. This technique of alternating between narrative and lyric has a temporal function within the narrative, in that it gives the impression that the lyrics are being composed on the spot. This then adds a further directness to the first person narrative, which confers a sense of 'presentness' to the text and allows a feeling of coexistence between the writer and the reader. This effect is particularly applicable in both cases, as the *Consolation* and the *Joli Buisson* describe an inner conflict which has actually been resolved before the text begins. Rather than attempting to hide the fact that the text is post-conflict, the inner conflict or crisis is written into the text so that the text more closely mirrors the mind of the author who produced it. The fiction that the lyrics are being composed on the spot is also typical of the ways in which the dream genre, as just explained, shows repeated interest in examining the processes of the poet's literary inventions.

At the beginning of the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*, Froissart draws our attention to the physicality of the act of writing by listing the necessary instruments and material to make a written record of his personal memories of times past. Instead of being hidden behind the scenes, the tools and material craft of writing are exposed and written about, participating in the text that they create. The whole atmosphere of the writing act is evoked in these opening lines:

Des aventures me souvient
Dou temps passé. Or me couvient,
Entroes que j'ai sens et memore,
Encre et papier et escriptore,
Kanivet et penne taillie,
Et volonté apparellie
Qui m'amonneste et me remort,
Que je remonstre avant me mort
Comment ou Buisson de Jonece
Fui jadis, et par quel adrece.
Et puis que pensess m'i tire,
Entroes que je l'ai toute entire
Sans estre blechie ne quasse,
Ce n'est pas bon que je le passe;
Car s'en non caloir le mettoie
Et d'aultre soing m'entremettoie,
Je ne poroie revenir
De legier a mon souvenir.
Pour ce le vorrai avant mettre
Et moi liement entremettre
De quanq que me memore sent
Dou temps passé et dou present.
(*Joli Buisson de Jonece,* 1-22)[13]

I remember adventures of past times. Now it is fitting that, while I have sense and memory, ink and paper and writing desk, a knife and quill, and a ready will, which encourages and warns me, that I show before my death how I went formerly to the Handsome Bush of Youth, and by what means. And since reason directs me, while I have all my faculties intact, neither damaged nor broken, it is not good that I let this adventure pass in silence. Because if I do not take it into account, if I devote myself to other things, I could no longer return so easily to these memories. This is why I would like to make these memories known, and to occupy myself joyously with everything that my memory knows of the past and of the present.[14]

Narratologically, this is an ingenious attempt to fictionalise a perfect linearity and parallel simultaneity to the acts of writing and reading, almost as mirror images of one another. The two temporalities are simplified to one moment in time as if to try to imitate the oral tradition of the performance of a text, where the performance is a shared time for all present. The image of the poet at his desk instigates a sense of the collusion between author and reader, as the scene of literary creation is visualised and located in practical terms, and becomes a part of the reading experience. This creates a particularly strong impression of the 'now' of literary experience, the specific time and place (sometimes the actual date) in which the text itself claims it starts. The actuality of the moment of beginning a composition is very strongly conveyed by 'encre', 'papier', 'escriptore', 'kanivet', and 'penne taillie'. We have the literal scene of the writer's tools, materials and work space at the beginning of the text to signify the beginning of the writing of that text, the poem that follows is seen to evolve from this time and space. Thus, the poem provides an allegory of the writing process and, by extension, offers an insight into the creative interpretation involved in the reading process. The reader is reading the text which describes the writer sitting at his desk writing that very text. This temporal circularity is a common trait of the dream poem which seeks to describe its own genesis.

In addition to the tools that will visibly inscribe his words on paper, the narrator relies on his memory and on the recollection of his own past. His memory is where the first inscription of experience is made, but in order that these memories do not 'pass in silence', the subjectivity and interiority of memory has to be made objective and exterior in the written text. This justification for writing is further emphasised a little later in the poem when Nature argues that if somebody had not recorded the adventures of King Arthur, or the events of the Bible, then we would never have known these stories. The

written text prevents important experiences from being forgotten and obliterated from the cultural history. Thus, the process of writing allows the past to be present in a later age.

In the opening to the poem, it is possible to detect a certain anxiety about the reliability and longevity of memory. The potential of the text to circumvent time and mutability, seems suddenly to devalue the status of memory as the arbiter or keeper of either personal experience or cultural heritage.

One of Froissart's topics in the *Joli Buisson* is that he feels he has nothing new to say. As we have already seen in chapter 3, this is something that Jacqueline Cerquiglini has identified as a recurring theme in medieval literature in her book *La Couleur de la Mélancholie*. She names this melancholy feeling of literary exhaustion 'La tristesse du "déjà dit"' (The sadness of what has already been said).[15] It is also a sense of the burden of the past, as medieval poets felt themselves to be overshadowed by the poetry of the classical period. Indeed, the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*, as well as the *House of Fame* are full of references to classical literature and mythology. Yet still there continued a search for novelty, for something new to say, but this something new was often found by turning back and using past models, past texts. Intertextuality was a means of appropriating old material for a new purpose. Froissart clearly wants to write, hence his dialogue with Philosophy. He asks Philosophy 'What could I say that is new?' In this sense he is expressing the same point as William, duke of Aquitaine. However, William does not present his lack of subject as a problem but as a poetic goal. By contrast, Froissart perceives his lack of subject and inspiration as a crisis that has to be resolved, both psychologically and textually. In writing the poem, he lays bare the fears and crises of the writing process and maps the transition from author-as-text to text-as-author. The

paradox is that by asking questions about whether he has anything worthwhile to write in a text that is already completed, the poet demonstrates the fact that this reticence to write had already passed prior to the existence of that text. He is writing in the present tense about an inner conflict which has already passed and been resolved, however he uses the narrative as a means of demonstrating that resolution and revealing the process of composition. By the time he has overcome his reticence to write, his fears and initial conceptual and creative paralysis are obsolete and the questions he asks are, in one sense, redundant. Yet, he does not abandon nor hide the process from the reader. It is all unveiled as part of the fabric of the text. The genesis of the text becomes as important as the text itself, and subsequently, as much what is being said as the ostensible topic and central theme of the text.

Philosophy urges the poet-narrator to keep writing and advises him to look to his past for new material. The narrator acts on this and looks at a portrait of the lady who he loved ten years ago. Significantly, the portrait is locked away in a chest, one of numerous medieval metaphors for the memory, as Mary Carruthers has detailed in her seminal study of memory in the Middle Ages: *The Book of Memory*.[16] As soon as the narrator looks at the portrait, old memories come to life, and in a virelay which he tells us that he was inspired to write on the spot, he describes himself as being rejuvenated, 'resuscitated and out of danger'. Immediately after reciting the virelay, he describes his feelings, and it seems that his memory has acted as a bridge between his past and present self:

En recordant ce virelai,
Tout ensi que droit chi mis l'ai,
Et en regardant mon ymage,
Grandement mon entente y ma ge
Ce me remoet un souvenir

Qui me fait moult bien souvenir
Dou temps passé et de mes fes...
Quant je l'ymagine et regars,
Le tamps passé me ramentoit
Et tout ce que mon coer sentoit
Lors que ma dame regardoie
Pour la quele amour tous ardois.
(592-98, 615-19)

In saying this virelay, exactly in the terms that I have just cited, and in regarding the portrait, I concentrate all my attention. This attitude stirs a recollection in me which puts me well in memory of time past and my ancient actions...And as I concentrate my imagination and attention on the portrait, it recalls time past to me and everything that my heart felt when I saw my lady, for whom I burned entirely with love.

However, this seeming fusion of past and present time is merely an illusion, one that can be likened to the reading process. Froissart's past is only available textually now, even to him. His memory is accessed like a text, and then within a text: the poem itself. Through memory he recalls past emotions and a past state of consciousness, and even though he can re-experience those feelings, and describe them to the reader, the text, like memory will always be one remove away from the events and feelings themselves. What we access is the feeling of thinking about the feeling. Memory and texts recreate the mood, the residue of experience, but not the essence of experience. Although, it could be said that Froissart is questioning, what is this essence of experience, this acute reality that we associate with the present time? The experience of being in love in the past is described in order to express the inevitable fragmentation of the consciousness that ensues from being in time. The poet-narrator seeks access to his past self through the recollection of love. In an attempt to re-experience the past in the present, thus attempting a textual conjoining of the fragmented self, he finds that time is ultimately more elusive than love. He is forced to accept the impenetrability of the past. His own history is as inaccessible to him as it is to the reader. Froissart indicates that writing about love, subjective

experience and states of consciousness is a means of signifying the fundamental and irreducible time lag between the signified – the experience – and the signifier – the text – as a temporally distant representation and assimilation of that experience.

Froissart juxtaposes a number of overlapping themes in the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*, such as: time, history, consciousness, subjective experience, memory, processes of creativity and composition and problems of representation, in order to explore the function of narrative in relation to the events and experience it describes. The *Joli Buisson* contains many references to time passing. The anxiety seems to be that as time passes, all trace of that time and of subjective consciousness will disappear and be forgotten:

> Mes temps s'en fuit ensi qu'uns ombres:
> Vis m'est de quanq que j'esté
> Que j'aie noient aresté,
> Ensi que dist ens ou psautier
> David. Je l'i lisi l'autre ier,
> Si le retins pour valoir mieuls:
> "Homs qui vis, vois devant les yeus
> Mille ans amoncelés ensamble:
> C'est li jours d'ier, il le te samble."
> (376-384)

> My time passes like a shadow: it seems to me that I have retained nothing of what I have experienced, as it is written in the Psalter of David. I read it there the other day, and remembered it in order to be enriched: 'For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.'

If the poet-narrator retains nothing of his experience except for what he has read, then does this mean that everything becomes intertextual? Once again, the author of a dream poem seems to be prompted to thoughts of time and its mysteries, as with the discussion of time in the *Roman de la Rose* noted in chapter 2.

IV. Chaucer's *House of Fame*

Now I will turn to the *House of Fame*, and look at how literary self-consciousness and intertextuality raise interesting questions about the relationship between reading and writing and the relationship between memory and text. In the *House of Fame*, Chaucer emphasises the interconnectedness of past, present and future, both in terms of human consciousness and in the content and structure of narrative discourse. The foregrounding of other texts, and particularly the foregrounding of Virgil's *Aeneid*, as a means of creating a new text, allows Chaucer to portray the search for his subject matter and ultimately for the realisation of his own poem. The quest for suitable poetic material is deliberately visible in the text; it is in fact the writing of the poem that is the subject of that poem.

Chaucer, like Froissart in the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*, also demonstrates the thought process that preceded the text by writing the genesis of the text into the narrative. Again, this gives the reader the feeling that the text is unfolding concurrently with the reading time, because by the time of writing, the thought process is usually hidden behind the ideas that have been kindled.

Throughout the *House of Fame*, the narrator constantly punctuates the narrative with direct addresses to the reader about the difficulties of description and representation, about the equation between the time of experience and feelings and the time of the narration of these things. Coupled with the invocations to various Muses to help the narrator tell his story well, these techniques and literary devices give the impression that Chaucer is writing *now*, *now* being the present time of reading, whenever that may be.[17]

Yet obviously we know that the feat of writing has already been accomplished because the text is complete before us. Thus, the text inhabits an indeterminate, liminal time – an experience that is simultaneously not yet begun, ongoing and complete. This creates the illusion of a suspended, perpetual presence where the reader participates in a shared moment of consciousness with the writer.

Chaucer depicts the writing and reading process as being inextricably entwined in narrative time and space. Before dreaming and before writing, Chaucer had been reading Virgil's *Aeneid.* Reading stirred his imagination and encouraged him to produce his own poem. Chaucer the reader enters the world depicted in Virgil's *Aeneid.* Then, Chaucer the writer reflects upon his interpretation of the text and recreates his reading experience in his own poem. Chaucer enters into, and describes, an intertextual community that in its potential openendedness seems to imitate eternity.

Marilynn Desmond emphasises the symbiotic relationship between reading and writing in Chaucer's dream poems in her book, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality and the Medieval Aeneid*:

> In the dream visions especially, Chaucer's narrators meditate obsessively on the relationship between reading and writing, thereby thematizing the act of reading. In addition, these narrators explicitly present themselves as readers of classical Latin texts, texts whose authors and titles they often name... In the dream visions, the Chaucerian narrator characteristically foregrounds the reading of classical texts as significant pre-texts for vernacular narratives.[18]

The foregrounding of reading in the *House of Fame* represents the pre-text experience, the pre-dream experience within the textual world, the pretext for writing the poem and

in addition, anticipates the post-text experience, providing a mirror to Chaucer's future readers.

Chaucer's opening line in the *House of Fame*: 'God turne us every dreme to goode!' expresses an anxiety that permeates the poem. The anxiety relates to the mutable nature of human life and consciousness. Time is fleeting and there seems to be no way of holding onto it. As Chaucer asks in the poem: 'What may ever laste?' (l. 1147) The best that can be hoped for is a means of freezing time, of finding a way of capturing a moment. Chaucer's narrator asserts that 'For tyme ylost, this knowen ye, / Be no way may recovered be.' (ll. 1257-58) And yet there remains a hope that dreams may come true, that books will be written and will endure, that memory will be preserved, and that time, or at least the representation of it will somehow survive, be recovered and recreated.

The possibility of dreaming a prophetic dream, of gaining an insight into the future represents for Chaucer the idea of writing a poem that will be read in the future long after his death. In some way, he will live on, and it is this elision of mortality which indicates the elasticity of time. A dream coming true is a metaphor for stepping out of mortal, time-bound experience and achieving a sense of timelessness, of something beyond. It is also a metaphor for the poet imagining his poem and finally writing it. The writing of the poem is the dream or the imagination coming true, being made real and external. Writing is a means of controlling time and a possible means of transcending time. The book exists independently of its author. Unlike oral narrative which exists in the memory and in the time of each performance. Speech is ephemeral, the written word is durable.

The Eagle tells the dreamer that all speech is eternal (ll. 782-803) and sets out to prove this hypothesis by skilful rhetoric. What he actually describes though is a powerful fantasy where individual identity and expression are synthesised and immutable in the living words of the author:

> Whan eny speche ycomen ys
> Up to the paleys, anon-ryght
> Hyt wexeth lyk the same wight
> Which that the word in erthe spake,
> Be hyt clothed red or blake.
> (1074-78)

Essentially the *House of Fame* contains embodied books. It recalls John of Salisbury's description of writing in the *Metalogicon*. There, he says that written words are 'shapes indicating voice' and letters are seen as media that 'speak voicelessly the utterances of the absent.' It has also been suggested that the *rede* or *blake* in which the words may be clothed, could refer to 'manuscript with red capitals and rubrics.'[19]

Earlier in the poem, Chaucer mentions the river of Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, which flows below the cave where the God of Sleep slumbers (ll. 69-71). The river of Lethe represents the fear of everything passing away once sleep or death interjects. However, it is not just a fear of death, but a fear of complete oblivion, of leaving no trace. As I said earlier, we find this same anxiety in the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*. This anxiety relating to the memory and the ability to tell a tale faithfully is a common motif. Dream poems often start with seasons, but, as chapter 3 has also shown, a tradition developed of beginning them with an individual mood, often of anxiety, puzzlement, melancholy or longing: states presented in the frame narrative that seem to call for some resolution in the dream.

What is the solution to the danger of forgetfulness? Perhaps Chaucer states his solution a little more clearly in the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women*, where he refers to books as being the key of remembrance (25-26). Books provide a record of the past, memorialising events so that they can be remembered in the future. Yet, the *House of Fame* contemplates the problematic aspects of books as permanent relics and authoritative accounts. Chaucer illustrates the confusion the reader may feel when confronted by many books containing many different versions of the past, with each book claiming to tell *the* truth. Indeed the *House of Fame* begins with the bewildered narrator finding himself swamped in differing sources and opinion on dream theory and dream categorisation (1-58). The narrator finds himself unable to come to any conclusion about the causes, effects and meanings of dreams. What he does instead is to tell his own dream, offer his own truth, based on the certainty of subjective experience. According to the narrator, there has never been such a marvellous dream before the one he experienced:

> For never sith that I was born,
> Ne no man elles me beforn,
> Mette, I trowe stedfastly,
> So wonderful a drem as I
> The tenthe day, now, of Decembre –
> The which, as I Kan now remembre,
> I wol yow tellen everydel.
> (59-65)

As if to more firmly anchor his dream experience to the authenticity of real experience, Chaucer gives his dream a specific calendar date: December 10th. It is noteworthy that the date given is in December, subverting the usual convention of a springtime setting for dream visions. Froissart does the same in the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* where he tells us

that he went to bed on the 30th November 1373 where he dreamed that he journeyed to the Bush of Youth (859-860).

Why winter instead of spring? Why specific dates instead of generic seasons? My theory is that it is all part of the metafictional enterprise that both poems appear to undertake; there is a real time to refer back to. However this is reversed once the recounting of that real time commences – we will forever be referring forward to the time of the event.

If we take the first two lines of *Le Joli Buisson de Jonece* for example:

> Des aventures me souvient
> Dou temps passé.

The use of 'aventures' allows an interesting juxtaposition between the past and the future. *Aventure* is derived from *avenir*, which as well as meaning the future, also means what may happen or what will come to pass. Thus we have an interesting situation where the narrator is remembering what is yet to happen, he is remembering the future. Is this the essence of medieval metafiction? That the future has been assigned to the past? There is a curious paradox inherent in self-conscious writing, that the author is referring to a past which is yet to be written. It is the past of memory which does not exist until it is externalised and objectified.

In the *House of Fame*, there is a particular focus on Dido and her fate. Her identity has been appropriated by others in the way that she is remembered and depicted in texts. Chaucer draws our attention to the ways that different authors of the past such as

Virgil and Ovid have written about Dido. Just as he adopts a confused stance by the often contradictory theories and categorisations of dreams, he hints at a similar confusion toward contradictory histories and fictions recounting the same events. We have seen (p. 221) a medieval sense that the past would be lost if it were not for writers, but here Chaucer raises the problem that the 'memory' of the past in texts may itself be subject to variation and falsity. Dido's speech clearly expresses her distress at being forever remembered by association with Aeneas:

> O wikke Fame! – for there nys
> Nothing so swift, lo, as she is!
> O, soth ys, every thing ys wyst,
> Though hit be kevered with the myst.
> Eke, though I myghte duren ever,
> That I have don rekever I never,
> That I ne shal be seyd, allas,
> Yshamed be thourgh Eneas –
> And that I shal thus juged be.
> (349-57)

The inability of the dead, written about subject, to influence or change the way that they are perceived can be seen in contrast with the power of the writing subject to propagate their own image, as when the poet-narrator speaks to a man in the *House of Fame*, and asserts himself as the best authority of what he experiences and thinks.

Chaucer realises the ambiguity of fame (even though the first line of the poem 'God turne us every dreme to goode' indicates his desire for his poetry to live on) – posterity will not always be kind. The idea of sending forth a 'little book', a book that might survive beyond the lifetime of the author, means relinquishing control over the text and of one's name. Once in the *House of Fame*, the narrator declares that he does not want anybody to have the power to decide how he will be remembered:

Sufficeth me, as I were ded,
That no wight have my name in honde.
I wot myself best how y stonde;
For what I drye, or what I thynke,
I wil myselven al hyt drynke,
Certeyn, for the more part,
As fer forth as I kan myn art.
(1876-82)

As well as a concern for his reputation in the present, and potentially in the future, Chaucer is talking about the ownership of his name, effectively the copyright of the author, a particularly modern concern.

To conclude, what we find in these texts, and also in many other late medieval dream poetry, is an attempt to make the text live by creating a dynamic interplay between the temporal shifts of the writing and reading process, and of the multiple narrative selves that appear when the genesis of the text are present in that text. Dream poetry self-consciously examines the text in relation to experience, memory, identity and representation. Memory and texts are both seen to be problematic and unstable.

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[1] Michel Zink, *La Subjectivité Littéraire: Autour du siècle de saint Louis* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), p. 39.

[2] Michel Zink, *The Invention of Literary Subjectivity*, trans. David Sices (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 29.

[3] Stephen G. Kellman, 'The Fiction of Self-begetting' in *Modern Language Notes*, 91 (1976) 1243-1256 (pp. 1245-46).

[4] William H. Gass, *Fiction and the Figures of Life* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1979), pp. 24-25.

[5] Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Self-Conscious Practice of Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1984), p. 2.

[6] Waugh, p.2.

[7] A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.6.

[8] Spearing, p.7.

[9] L. T. Topsfield, *Troubadours and Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 31.

[10] James J. Wilhelm, *Seven Troubadours: The Creators of Modern Verse* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1970), p. 55.

[11] Wilhelm, p.23.

[12] Michelle A. Freeman, 'Froissart's *Le Joli Buisson de Jonece*: A Farewell to Poetry?' in *Machaut's World: Science and Art in the Fourteenth-Century*, ed. Madeleine Pelner Cosman and Bruce Chandler (New York: Annals of the New York Academy of Science, 1978), pp. 235-247 (p. 243).

[13] All French quotations of this poem are from the following edition: Jean Froissart, *Le Joli Buisson de Jonece*, ed. Anthime Fourrier (Geneva: Droz, 1975).

[14] My translation.

[15] Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, *La Couleur de la mélancholie: La fréquentation des livres au XIVe siècle 1300-1415* (Paris: Hatier, 1993), pp. 57-84.

[16] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), chapt. 1 'Models for the Memory' pp. 16-45.

[17] This is the first known address to the classical Muses in a vernacular English poem.

[18] Marilynn Desmond, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and the Medieval Aeneid* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 128-129

[19] See Nick Havely p.169 fn. 1073-83 in *Chaucer's Dream Poetry*, ed. Helen Phillips and Nick Havely (London: Longman, 1997).

CHAPTER 6

RECIPROCITY IN THE *JUDGEMENT* POEMS OF GUILLAUME DE MACHAUT

Introduction

As we have already seen in previous chapters, late-medieval framed narratives actively play with aspects of time and narrative in order to expose some of the structures in texts, processes of reading and writing that are usually hidden from the audience. In their innovative treatment of time and narrative structure, dream poems and analogous framed narratives provide many shifts in, and at times, dislocations of perspectives, temporalities and relationships that all participate in revealing the artificiality of textual experience. Dream poems examine the relationship between text and experience and question whether the audience is merely reading a text or sharing an experience. The various levels of subjectivity: memory, dream, fiction – all contribute to this ambiguity. The effect of this narrative play with temporal sequence and levels of mediation is that it encourages the reader to challenge the artificial structures that govern textual experience and relations. The linear unfolding of a narrative in fictional time is one of these artificial constructions and 'closure' is another. Real-life operates in a more dynamic, complex, multi-dimensional, and indeterminate manner and does not ever stop nor provide definite solutions and conclusions in the way that texts do and can. The dream frame creates a model of the ideal narrative construct with a beginning (pre-dream), a middle (the dream), and an end (post-dream), but the end frame does not necessarily provide answers

to whatever problems have been set up in the text, and often it just signals the end of the dream. What the dream poem and framed narratives seem to develop is a taste for denying closure and leaving the text open-ended. This reluctance to give a definitive ending or to reach a conclusion conveys a sense of the arbitrary nature of meaning, interpretation and authority.

Guillaume de Machaut's *Judgement* poems (*Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne, c.* 1342; *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre*, 1349) form the subject of this chapter both because they bring to the fore the issue of narrative closure and because they embody the idea of rewriting and refashioning a pre-existent text, and in this case, the reworking of Machaut's own text. Machaut is very aware of his identity as a poet. He appears to be interested in how his poem will be received and interpreted over time, and by responding to his first poem in a second linked poem, it is a means of Machaut, the poet, participating in this interpretative process. The second poem is both a reversal of the conclusion of the first poem and also a critique.

I. Closing Time – Inside and Outside the Text

In my final chapter my subjects are, somewhat appropriately, endings, conclusions, resolutions and degrees of closure. I refer to closure in its accepted sense as a critical term in literary theory, essentially meaning the degree to which a literary text is perceived to be complete and whole. Chris Baldick defines closure thus: 'the sense of completion or resolution at the end of a literary work or part of a work...'[1] This definition, with its emphasis on the degree to which a literary text is *perceived* to be

finished is important, as it points to the fact that it is the interpretative act of the reader which will ultimately decide whether a text is construed as complete or resolved.

In the last few decades there has been an increasing interest in the subject of closure. Various critical theorists have explored concepts of endings and wholeness in relation to many disciplines such as, literature, art, psychology, and history. In 'First Thoughts on Closure: Problems and Prospects', Don Fowler has identified five ways in which the word closure has been used in modern criticism:

1. The concluding section of a literary work;
2. The process by which the reader of a work comes to see the end as satisfyingly final;
3. The degree to which an ending is satisfyingly final;
4. The degree to which the questions posed in the work are answered, tensions released, conflicts resolved;
5. The degree to which the work allows new critical readings.[2]

In Fowler's five step guide to ideas of closure, we see the spectrum of closure from basic ideas about closure as the literal end of the text, i.e. the fact that all texts will have final words even if the text is obviously fragmentary or cut short, to more complex interpretations regarding the degree to which a text seems to provide a satisfactory resolution. The problem that is evident from these definitions of senses of closure is that they are inherently personal and subjective evaluations – who is to say what constitutes 'satisfactory'? In addition, a text may provide a conclusion but it might not resolve for all readers all the issues, explicit and implicit, that are raised in and by that text.

In 'Second Thoughts on Closure' Fowler offers a detailed definition of closure which considers both authorial technique and the perceptions of the reader:

> Where the concluding section of a work makes the reader feel that it has closed satisfactorily by resolving all the conflicts of the work, the reader will tend to see the meaning of the work in that resolution. A work on the other hand which leaves questions unanswered will be "open" to different interpretations, and may leave the reader feeling that where the work stops is not really The End.[3]

But then, he counters his own argument by acknowledging that there is a problem in assuming that the text has an objective truth that everybody can equally participate in and interpret:

> [W]hether we look for closure or aperture *or a dialectic between them* in a text is a function of our own presuppositions, not of anything "objective" about the text.[4]

This issue of subjectivity and multiple viewpoints is something that particularly interests medieval writers: the proliferation of meaning and interpretation, and the plurality of different subjective positions. Guillaume de Machaut is so aware of the different critical reactions which may be generated from his text, that he responds to these imagined critical readings within a second text which interrogates, critiques, and then reverses the original poem. Interestingly, the fluidity that results from the interaction between the two *Judgement* poems is comparable to the kind of open textuality that the modern era now experiences in cyberspace.[5] Fowler indicates the change that the internet represents to notions of textuality in the postmodern age:

> The fixed text in a book, read serially from beginning to end by a solitary reader, has become the marker of that "closed" textuality that is being replaced by the fluid openness of developments such as hypermedia and cyberspace, in which there are "no conventional endings, or beginnings or middles." [6]

Before I proceed to discuss these theories further, and their place in late medieval dream poetry, framed narratives, and *dits amoureux*, it is necessary to be absolutely clear

about the difference between the ending of a text and the semblance of completeness and the degree of closure that the ending is deemed to offer, as I have mentioned above. The first and last words of a narrative mark the boundaries of textual time and space, and of the reading experience, but the end point that we reach in any given text will not necessarily resolve all or any of the issues raised in that text. What we might consider to be satisfactory resolution or ultimate closure may be withheld or denied for many reasons and in various ways. For example, ambiguity and indeterminacy can be employed and tend to result in an 'open' text which gives rise to multiple interpretations and ways of seeing.

In her study, *Poetic Closure*, Barbara Hernstein Smith attempts to tease out the difference between ending and concluding in narrative:

> There is a distinction, however, between concluding and merely stopping or ceasing... We tend to speak of conclusions when a sequence of events has a relatively high degree of structure, when in other words, we can perceive these events as related to one another by some principle of organization or design that implies the existence of a definite termination point. Under these circumstances, the occurrence of the terminal event is a confirmation of expectations that have been established by the structure of the sequence, and is usually distinctly gratifying. The sense of stable conclusiveness, finality, or "clinch" which we experience at that point is what is referred to as *closure*.[7]

While it is helpful to distinguish between endings (cessation of text) and conclusions (inherent meanings and coherent messages within the text), a text can provide a high level of structure, heading towards a sense of 'stable conclusiveness', suggestive of closure; and yet simultaneously that text can be destablised by intratextual and extratextual influences so that closural structures and assertions can be undermined. Closure becomes a particularly complex subject when you are examining texts within an

entire œuvre of an author, as I will be doing below when I look at two works by Guillaume de Machaut which stand as independent texts in their own right, but also clearly relate to, and interact with, each other. Thus, Machaut presents a poem which comes to a conclusion and provides an answer to the debate initiated in the narrative and then later in time (real and fictional) opens up a second text which denies the validity of the original conclusion. In this way, the conclusions are temporary and the writing seems never to be finished, it is an ongoing text, open to the circular possibilities that its own structure sets up, to perpetually repeat itself in an infinite loop.

Several critics have explored the challenges to closure instigated by medieval courtly poets, in particular this idea of circularity, where the poem keeps referring back to itself. One of these critics is John Burrow who, interestingly, has also investigated a fashion in Ricardian poetry for texts that end with the same line they used to begin, for example *Pearl* and *Gawain*. This technique of *mise en abyme*, or reciprocity, where the text creates an image of itself within the work was considered by André Gide to be a desirable aim of literature and art, to capture an image of itself.[8] Lucien Dällenbach refers to the *mise en abyme* device as potentially an image of the vicious circle and describes the effect of this never-ending circularity as providing 'time depth and vertigo' which is in turn 'associated with paradox and aporia'.[9]

The perception of Machaut's *Judgement* poems as reflexive narratives which will endlessly relate to and refer to one another, both validating and negating each other's existence provides this very time depth and vertigo which Dällenbach identifies as a characteristic of the reciprocity of the mirror image. How interesting that a technique

which would generally be perceived as postmodern was employed with such creativity and innovation by late-medieval poets such as Machaut, Froissart and Chaucer.

Are we to regard such circular designs as constituting a particularly visible device to imply closure – the finality with which the text is completed – or do they challenge closure by returning the text at its end to where it began? I would argue that they do both. Certainly, 'circular poems' strengthen the illusion that the text is jewel-like, self-sufficient, cut off and separate from the rest of experience, impermeable by its audience, its own closed fictional world, its own fictional sequence of time. In contrast, several medieval courtly poems deny this permanence of the closure.

The presentation of two interconnected narratives dealing with the same issue but offering two different conclusions raises questions about the status of fiction and its ability to offer a coherent and authoritative resolution. Machaut creates a discourse between the two *Judgement* poems which is both linear and circular. The poems follow a linear sequence in time and space, but there is also a structural circularity between the works. We could say that there is an eternal dialogue between the two texts. The creation of this linear relation between the two poems, separated by approximately seven years in real time, helps to dispute the myth or fiction that a text can provide an ultimate, incontrovertible answer or conclusion. This is testament to an interest in questioning closure. The authority of the text, the word of the author, and the written word is being problematised and, as a result, partially eroded.

All narratives trace a linear pattern arranged and ordered in fictional time. Mieke Bal draws attention to this linearity in her book on narratology:

> As against various other art forms – architecture, visual arts – a written linguistic text is *linear*. One word follows another... In a narrative text, it is even possible to speak of a double linearity: that of the text, the series of sentences, and that of the fabula, the series of events.[10]

Bal proceeds to detail how the linearity of writing can be subverted by playing with the chronological order of events and eliding a sense of sequence and simple succession:

> There are various ways of breaking such strict linearity, forcing the reader to read more intensively. Deviations in sequential ordering may contribute to intenser reading... Playing with sequential ordering is not just a literary convention; it is also a means of drawing attention to certain things, to emphasize, to bring about aesthetic or psychological effects, to show various interpretations of an event, to indicate the subtle difference between expectation and realization, and much else besides.[11]

How do medieval dream poems and *dits amoureux* typically signal closure? There are three obvious motifs of conclusion which act as closure signals:

> **1.** The end of the dream. This is signalled in several ways: the dreamer wakes up, bells ring, lovers offer a promise, a poem is recited, a judgement is given.
>
> **2.** The end of the story (which may or may not be the end of the text).
>
> **3.** A solution offered to a dilemma or a question.

The dream genre often incorporates a debate and sometimes these debates end with a decision, or a judgement by a real or fictional authority figure. Texts that employ the tradition of debate poetry may offer an internal decision or resolution. Some leave the decision to be decided at a future time outside the linear text. Deferred decisions can be an invitation to the audience to contribute their own resolution to the text. In other examples the text specifically names somebody who is going to arbitrate and provide a resolution, such as in the *Owl and the Nightingale* (composed between 1189 and 1216) where the poem appoints Nicholas of Guildford to be the judge. However, despite the

appointment of the judge, a judgement is not given as the poem ends before the judge appears:

> But how they fared
> I cannot tell: it all depends.
> For this is where my story ends.[12]

Similarly, in the *Parliament of Fowls*, Chaucer also uses this technique of situating the judgement outside the text. Just as the poem seems to be building up to an ending and a resolution, and the formel is expected to make her choice from the three tercels who are vying for her affections, she chooses not to choose at this time and her decision is deferred until the following year. Again, this is an example of harking forward to a time beyond the text. The poet then ends with the noise of the birds waking the poet-narrator who then resumes his reading of 'othere bokes' (l. 695) which represents the openendedness of textual experience. There will be no closure in this intertextual world where processes of reading and writing inform and perpetuate each other. In the *House of Fame*, again at the point when the reader is led to expect answers and words of wisdom from 'A man of gret auctorite...' (l. 2158) the text breaks off, and no such authoritative opinion is given. These texts all subvert our expectations, expectations which the text has itself created. In this way, the poem leaves us, at the point that we exit the fiction, envisaging an image of fictional time that exists outside the space of the text – but nonetheless, because of this textual foregrounding, it does have a space and a time within the reader's consciousness, beyond the boundaries and confines of the written text.

In *The Sense of an Ending* (1968), Frank Kermode examines various end-oriented perceptions and structures in Western culture and society. He gives numerous examples of humankind's need to trace and recreate beginnings and endings in imitation of our search for the origins and destiny of human life and the universe. In one example, he discusses a simple unit of time as encapsulating this process of telling and retelling beginnings, middles and ends:

> Let us take a very simple example, the ticking of a clock. We ask what it *says*: and we agree that it says *tick-tock*. By this fiction we humanize it, make it talk our language. Of course, it is we who provide the fictional difference between the two sounds; *tick* is our word for a physical beginning, *tock* our word for an end. We say they differ. What enables them to be different is a special kind of middle. We can perceive a duration only when it is organized... The fact that we call the second of the two related sounds *tock* is evidence that we use fictions to enable the end to confer organization and form on the temporal structure. The interval between two sounds, between *tick* and *tock* is now charged with significant duration. The clock's *tick-tock* I take to be a model of what we call a plot, an organization that humanizes time by giving it a form; and the interval between *tock* and *tick* represents purely successive, disorganized time of the sort that we need to humanize... *Tick* is a humble genesis, *tock* a feeble apocalypse.[13]

This is an extraordinarily interesting example of our fixation with time and narrative in, as Kermode puts it, our end-oriented western culture. Even in the sound of the ticking of a clock, we find a way to humanise the sound of a moment in time and convert that experience into a narrative construct. The sound begins and then ends and then is repeated endlessly, each tick and each tock becomes united into a miniature experience, a microcosm of a story in time.

II. Guillaume de Machaut's *Judgement* Poems: The Instabilty of Authority

There are many medieval literary texts that play with ideas and structures of temporality in order to challenge the illusion of neat beginnings and conclusive endings. For example, as we have seen in previous chapters, the *Roman de la Rose*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the *House of Fame*, the *Parliament of Fowls*, and the *Joli Buisson de Jonece* all show an interest in temporal themes of mutability and transience, and also in narrative time and sequence. Two other such interesting examples are, as I have indicated above, the *Judgement* poems of Guillaume de Machaut. By 1342, Machaut had written the first of his two *Judgement* poems, the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* (*The Judgement of the King of Bohemia*). He followed this by writing a second *Judgement* poem in 1349, the *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* (*The Judgement of the King of Navarre*).

There is real-life autobiographical significance in the titles. When Machaut wrote the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*, he was in service to John of Luxembourg, the King of Bohemia. Machaut had entered King John's household by 1323 and continued serving him in various capacities (surviving documents identify Machaut variously as 'cleric', 'familiar', 'domestic', 'secretary') until the King's death at the Battle of Crecy in 1346. Machaut maintained a link to his former patron until the death of King John's daughter, Bonne of Luxembourg, in 1349. Then in 1349, Machaut found a new patron in King Charles II of Navarre. At about this time, he wrote the second poem, the *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre*, where he readdresses the subject of the first *Judgement* poem, only this time he appoints his new patron, the King of Navarre, to be the wise and honest Judge.

Machaut reflects the changes in his own personal and professional circumstances by writing his patrons into the poems as the Judges. The substitution of one ideal Judge for another suggests the interchangeability of literary patronage as well as the instability of authority and hierarchy. The relationship between poet and patron may be one of mutual respect and friendship but it is also a business arrangement founded on money, power and prestige. Guillaume de Machaut is an intellectual and a poet; the King who employs him in effect buys the poet's words and creative power in order to confer honour and fame on his house and the court.[14] The substitution of judges in the poems has another effect; it indicates the subjective nature of the word and the arbitrary power of the one who speaks, who rules, who judges.

There is something new and innovative in Machaut's self-presentation and confidence in his identity as a poet. It marks a new tendency for the poet to name himself/herself and to list their poems in their work. In this way, personal time and identity enters into the equation.

In writing a second poem that continues the themes of a previously written narrative, Machaut is perhaps mirroring the self-conscious process of continuation that Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* initiated. In her article 'Froissart's *Le Joli Buisson de Jonece*: A Farewell to Poetry?', Michelle A. Freeman puts forward an interesting argument about the interrelationship between two of Froissart's poems, *L'Espinette Amoureuse* and the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*, and suggests that their relationship provides a reiteration of the structure of the *Roman de la Rose*:

> By commenting in the *Buisson* on his previous poem, the *Espinette*, i.e., by answering it, reversing it, and reworking it so as to arrive at a definitive response, Froissart reenacts, to all intents and purposes, the poetic example of the *Romance of the Rose*. A love-dream poem is continued and completed by a second such

> poem; the characters are the same in both, but the perspectives have shifted radically; in Froissart's case, of course, the two poems constitute one œuvre created by a single poet (not by two poets, as in the *Rose*).[15]

This is a compelling idea and I would argue that Machaut's *Judgement* poems were undertaking a similar re-enactment of the shift in perspectives found in the *Roman de la Rose*. The *Roman de la Rose* presents an interesting case as a poem; it has two authors, and two titles written into the text, but still coheres as one complete work. It is highly possible that Machaut is making an implicit intertextual reference to this doubling in his *Judgement* poems. In different ways both texts (the *Roman de la Rose* and the *Judgement* poems) allow their audience to become aware of the artificiality of the normal belief in the unity of a narrative and the unity of authorial identity with the 'I' who speaks in the text. One text, with two authors, upsets our sense of the unity of the first-person story and subjective experience it purports to tell; the other 'text' consists of a pair of linked texts with one author but two different judgements. Therefore these linked texts re-open issues already concluded in the first text, emphasising the artificiality of the impression that the progress of the narrative, and the conclusion it comes to, is immutable.

III. *Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*

There is evidence of the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* being an important influence on both contemporary and subsequent poets, as well as being popular with readers and admirers. R. Barton Palmer gives this poem special recognition based on its manuscript history:

[T]he poem of Machaut's most valued by his contemporaries, to judge from its influence on poets to follow and from its manuscript tradition (it is the only Machaut narrative poem to be found in manuscripts outside those devoted exclusively to the poet's works.)[16]

The *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* begins like a typical dream-poem, with a Springtime setting, an idealised image of nature and an association of this season with romance and love:

Au temps pascour que toute riens s'esgaie,
Que la terre de mainte colour gaie
Se cointoie, dont pointure sans plaie
Sous la mamelle
Fait Bonne Amour a mainte dame bele,
A maint amant et a mainte pucele,
Dont il ont puis mainte lie nouvelle
Et maint esmay,
A ce dous temps, contre le mois de may,
Par un matin cointement m'ácesmay,
Com cils qui trés parfaitement amay
D'amour seüre.
(1-12)[17]

In the Easter season, when every creature takes heart,
When the earth with many joyful colours
Adorns herself, when Good Love without a wound
Pierces
Beneath the breast of many a pretty lady,
Of many lovers and many young girls,
And from his prick they have many new joys
And also many cares,
At this sweet time, close to the month of May,
One morning I elegantly dressed,
Like one who has loved most perfectly
With a love secure.

This beginning recalls the opening of the *Roman de la Rose* when the lover-poet recounts his awakening within the dream vision. The first *Judgement* poem is set at Easter time, in

the month of May. Christian and Pagan associations intertwine here with the reference to 'pascour', the season which embraces Easter time and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the pagan celebration of Spring as a time of rebirth and renewal. However, it is the pagan viewpoint which is expressed most powerfully. There is less of a sense of the Christian God here than there is of pagan, or at least secular, and classical deities such as Nature and Bonne Amour (suggestive of the God of Love figure we find in the *Roman de la Rose).* Following the tradition of the *Roman de la Rose* and Alain de Lille's *De Planctu Naturae* (*Plaint of Nature, c.* 1160-1170), Nature is portrayed as a dynamic force, influencing and shaping human life and experience.[18] The landscape depicted by Machaut is colourful and decorative. The earth has a will of its own, Nature's will, hence "se cointoie", adorning itself. Nature has decked the earth out in all its grandeur and finery in order to celebrate spring and to harmonise with the blossoming love in the hearts of young lovers. Nature and Love are allies here.

As we have already seen in chapter 2, in a dream poem, the poem is usually divided into a prologue, the dream vision, and a conclusion, which generally takes the form of an awakening. In the *dits amoureux*, there is a structural and thematic imitation of the dream poem form, in that they tend to consist of a prologue, a main narrative which recounts a courtly love experience or dilemma, followed by a conclusion. Like the dream vision, the *dits amoureux* often includes personification figures. Although the *dits amoureux* do not always portray the love narrative as a dream, the situations and events depicted are very similar to those we find in dream vision poetry. The main difference is that the narrator does not necessarily fall asleep in the *dits amoureux*, so the visible symbol of the creative process and the recreation of a fictional past begins to be obscured (falling asleep is an obvious metaphor for a poetic trance or creative mood where the

poet retreats into his or her mind in order to find poetic material), instead the narrator describes a real-life adventure, or at least an adventure that is presented as a real-life occurrence. The pretence of dreaming is dropped but what we are left with seems to be just as fictional and stylised as the dream world.

Machaut introduces a further innovation in the *Jugement de Roy de Behaingne* by having a narrator who presents himself in the conventional role of courtly lover, only to take a step back and assume the role of the observer. When the narrator spies a lady approaching by a narrow path from one side, and a noble knight walking toward her from the other direction, he tells us that he hides himself in the foliage so as to watch the two courtly people who he initially supposes to be lovers:

> Je vi venir par une estroite voie,
> Pleinne d'erbette,
> Une dame pensant...
> Et d'autre part, un petit long de moy,
> Uns chevaliers de moult trés noble arroy
> Tout le chemin venoit encontre soy...
> Lors me boutay par dedens la fueillie
> Si embrunchiez qu'il ne me virent mie.
> (Barton Palmer, 43-45, 49-51, 54-55)
>
> I saw approach by a narrow path,
> Full of short grass,
> A lady deep in thought...
> And on the other side, a little distance from me,
> A knight of very noble array
> Came right toward her down the path...
> Then I pushed myself inside the leaves,
> So hidden I was that they could not see me at all.

The 'I' of the narrative is no longer a direct participant in the main love drama. This is a very new development and allows a certain distancing between the narrator and the narrative which does not exist explicitly in the dream poem. The description of the

narrator literally hiding himself behind the leaves could symbolise the disappearance of the storyteller behind the story.[19] The narrator seeks to align himself closely to the action and to the reader. Machaut manages this subtle mediation by using the first person narrative to directly address the reader. The narrator's present time seems to be at one with the presence of the narrative which seems to unfold before the reader's eyes. This is therefore a device which makes the 'I' of the narrator seem like a surrogate for the audience, watching, observing, unknowing, and puzzled.

The *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* is a debate poem in that the narrative is structured around a central argument. The literary genealogy of debate poetry or *débats amoureux* is complex and diverse and represents a crossing over of several traditions. Poetry debating the nature of love evolved from long-established literary traditions such as the formal poetic contest, the philosophical dialogue, the contention eclogue and the formalised exchange of abuse known as flyting; other possible influences have also been suggested: medieval religious instruction and didacticism, the writing of catechisms and expositions of doctrine, Aristotelian scholasticism and legal argumentation. In *Middle English Debate Poetry: and the Aesthetics of Irresolution* (1990), Thomas Reed has drawn attention to the radical nature of debate poetry, which he identifies as a form often employed in opposition to restrictive ideologies:

> ...the debate genre was often during the Middle Ages a reactionary genre (Bakhtin's 'novel'), a form to which authors quite naturally turned when they somehow heard within themselves a voice or voices that countered the dominant ideologies or literary conventions of the age: a 'debate' in the mind perhaps unavoidably occasioned a debate in the text.[20]

Certainly, the late-medieval framed narratives with which this thesis is concerned seek to redefine, rework, and reformulate literary conventions in creative and novel ways.

I will move on now to look at the central theme of the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*. The subject of the poem concerns two kinds of tragic experience created by time: the debate is whether bereavement or betrayal causes more pain and suffering. The poem presents two examples of loss in love. The first type of loss is that suffered by the lady: loss of love through bereavement. The second type of loss is represented by the noble knight: loss of love through betrayal. The lady and the knight then become engaged in a debate about who has suffered the most through their tragic loss. Both tell how they are tormented by the memory of a love that is no longer there in any physical sense. Both describe a love that gave joy and fulfilment while it endured and both register the sadness and melancholy of losing a loved one.

The lady tells her experience of loss first. She describes the joy and fullness that love brought her and the pain and emptiness of her now bereaved state:

Qu'en li estoit m'esperence, ma joie,
Et mon plaisir,
Mon cuer, m'amor, mon penser, mon desir...
...Or est bien a rebours.
Car mes douceurs sont dolereus labours,
Et mes joies sont ameres dolours,
Et mi penser,
En qui mes cuers se soloit deliter...
Sont et seront dolent, triste.
(Barton Palmer, 151-53, 177-81, 183)

So that in him was my hope, my joy,
And my pleasure,
My heart, my love, my thoughts, and my desire...
...Now the opposite is true.
For what was sweetness now is painful suffering,
What was joy is now bitter hurt,
And my thoughts,
In which my heart did once take delight...
Are painful, bitter, sad.

Being in love provides an alternative realm of consciousness. The lady locates her hope, her joy and her pleasure in her beloved (Qu'*en* li estoit m'esperence, ma joie,/ Et mon plaisir) rather than in herself. For a while she had the freedom to wander beyond the confines of her own subjectivity, she was able to project all her hopes, desires and feelings outwardly. Once her beloved died, his physical presence is denied to her along with the metaphysical *locus amoenus*, thus there is no longer anywhere for her love to go. Suddenly she is forced to retreat back into self, and after the expansiveness of love, selfhood becomes an extreme kind of prison, narrow and inescapable. Her loss is both material and abstract. The love experience allows an escape from self, from the individual consciousness. Ironically, the very immersion in 'Other' that provides such blissful joy and union becomes the cause of torment and pain when the Other disappears.

While the knight's experience of loss is different in kind, it is very similar to the lady's experience in effect. It is noticeable that their language is analogous throughout their speeches. For example, as I have indicated above, the lady located her happiness in her beloved, and the knight similarly creates a spatial dimension to his love. He has given himself completely to his lady, and the gift of his reason, heart, time, life and love resides *in* her (*Enqui*):

"Dame que j'aim plus qu'autre, ne que moy,
Enqui sens, temps, cuer, vie, amour employ."
(Barton Palmer, 637-38)

"Lady, whom I love above all others, indeed myself,
In whom I have placed all my reason, heart, time, life, and love."

Despite speaking from personal experience, the lady and the knight register a universal paradigm of the love experience. Obviously this is partly because of the conventions of courtly love poetry which is formulaic to some extent, but it is also because the lady and the knight represent types of experience common to lovers of all times and all places. Both of them have loved and lost, and though their loss is different, they describe their loss in almost identical terms. The knight contrasts the joy of love with the intensity of pain now suffered, highlighting the connection between the two:

Car je me mis de richesse en essil,
De seürté en un mortel peril,
De joie en dueil, par son regart soutil,
Et de franchise
En servitude...
Mais ce n'est pas tout d'or quanque reluit
N'on ne doit pas tant amer son deduit
Qu'on ne s'en puist retraire, quant il cuit.
(Barton Palmer, 825-29, 841-43)

For I exiled myself from riches,
Went from safety into mortal peril,
From joy to pain, through her subtle look,
And from freedom
Into a slavery...
No, all that glitters is not gold,
And one should not love his joy so much
That he cannot abandon it, when he thinks to.

The lady's speech also uses contrast to show how fortune's wheel has come full circle; once she was supremely happy, now she is desperately and intensely miserable and tormented: 'Car mes douceurs sont dolereus labours, / Et mes joies sont ameres dolours,'

There has been a complete reversal of fortune which has seen the lady's 'Doux Penser' (Sweet Thoughts) become the very form of torture and punishment which plagues and wounds her. Because the pleasure of love is created, nurtured and located within an individual's consciousness, it is at first the origin and location of all the delights and joys of love. The lover's consciousness is a pleasure dome of sensation, desire, and happiness. By cruel contrast, the unfortunate lover is tormented and shadowed by the memories of a time that has already passed. The pleasure dome has become a torture chamber.

Although the lady and the knight are portrayed as real people encountered by the narrator on this particular day in springtime, in many ways they are there purely for symbolic value in much the same way as personification figures embody various virtues, vices and characteristics. The lady and the knight are relatively one-dimensional characters and their importance lies in their representation of "the bereaved" and "the betrayed" respectively. They are there to characterise the spectrum of love's effects and to initiate a debate about gradations of suffering. Interestingly, the narrative does not ask if it is possible to grade emotional distress and pain, although this question is surely implicit given the fact that both the lady and the knight express their inner torment in such comparable terms. The *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* progresses unswervingly to a final judgement suggesting that it is possible to make objective judgements about subjective issues. However, if we take the two *Judgement* poems together, the very fact that the second poem is revisiting the subject matter of the first explodes the certainty of the resolution reached in the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*. The second poem claims to be responding to critical readings and disapproval of the first *Judgement* poem. A fictional Guillaume de Machaut is made to reassess what he has written and decreed in *Behaingne*. Suddenly, the idea of the text as stable, fixed and authoritative is destroyed.

Thus, ideas of resolution, objective truth, and authoritative judgement are shown to be problematic.

IV. Tellings and Retellings in the *Judgement* Poems

The Second Recounting – The Observer-Narrator tells Characters what has happened:

The narrator becomes at this point a figure who both 'hears' and also 'tells' a narrative, which is a self-reflexive way of representing the temporal process of the reception of the text. The poem here demonstrates in the text itself a mirror of the relationship between the audience/reader and the author:

> Et je qui fui desirans d'oïr la,
> La verité
> De chief en chief li ay dit et compté,
> Comment la vins et ou j'avoie esté.
> (Barton Palmer, 1259-62)

> And I who was desirous to hear her,
> Related and told
> Her the truth of it from beginning to end,
> How I had come there and where I had been.

The Narrator suggests a Judge:

The structure now creates an outsider – not the 'I' representing the author – but a fictional, external authority figure who will carry out the office of providing the answer, the interpretation. Therefore meaning is represented as not coming from the author, but is been given from outside his dominion:

Or m'est avis que de vostre meschief,
Et ma dame qui tient enclin son chief
Dou sien, sauriez volentiers le plus grief
Par jugement.
Si ne volez penre premierement
Vostre juge, ne ma dame ensement.
Pour ce venus sui aviséement,
Pour vous nommer
.I. chevalier qui moult fait a amer;
Car de ça mer n'a pas, ne de la mer,
Plus gentil cuer, plus franc, n'a meins d'amer.
(Barton Palmer, 1285-95)

Now it seems to me that you would
Willingly know which is the more grievous,
Your mischance, or that of the lady who holds her head down,
Through a judgment.
You don't wish to be the first to
Select a judge, and neither does my lady.
So, under advisement, I came forward here
To name for you
A knight who does much for love's sake;
For on this side of the sea or on the other
There is no heart nobler, none more generous, none less cruel.

This figure seems to have more authority than the 'I' who represents, in some ways, the author. How interesting then, that the authority figure is the King of Bohemia, onetime literary patron of Guillaume de Machaut. Is Machaut questioning here where the power truly lies in this relationship of poet to patron?

The Third Recounting – The Knight tells the King:

With the third recounting of the issues of the poem, it becomes very clear that this is a text about telling and retelling a story. Evidently, the text is interested in the mechanics of narrative structure and the relationships of the various subjectivities which contribute to the experience of its presence: the author, the narrator, the characters and voices embedded within the text, and of course, the audience/reader:

Li chevaliers a la dame requist
Qu'elle li vosist dire; et elle dist
Que non feroit;
Einsois deïst, que miex li afferoit.
Il respondi adont qu'il li diroit
De chief en chief tout einsi qu'il estoit,
Jusqu'a la fin.
(Barton Palmer, 1502-08)

The knight asked the lady
If she would speak to the king; and she said
That she would not do it;
Instead he should speak, since this would impress him more.
He answered then that he would tell him
Everything step by step, just how it stood,
Until the end.

The Judgement:

Finally, the poem provides a resolution and conclusion to the problem set up by the text, but the fact that the judgement emanates from an outside authority allows Machaut the freedom to distance himself from this judgement in that he can disown this verdict as being an external viewpoint:

Car longuement
Avoit duré de nous le parlement,
Et si aviens fait meint arguement,
Si comme il est escript plus pleinnement
Ici dessus....
...Si que ce plait
Povez tantost terminer, s'il vous plaist;
Car nous avons de vous no juge fait.
(Barton Palmer, 1592-96, 1600-02)

For our discussion
Had lasted a long time,
And we had made many arguments,
Just as it is written more fully
Here above...
...And so this debate

You can end at once, if it pleases;
For we have made you our judge.

The Narrator Provides an End Frame:

Here the story ends and the text makes us aware that it is ending. As the audience/reader comes to the end of 'this little book', and exits the fictional world, it is also an exit point which takes the audience/reader back to real-life and to the physical page in front of him/her. This is an example of how endings in medieval dream poems and framed narratives are often manipulated to draw our attention to the artificial, illusory nature of the fictional world which has persuaded us that we are in the middle of real time, real space, real experience and not simply reading a text. This manipulation results in a sense of merged subjectivities and temporalities:

Ci fineray
Ma matiere, ne plus n'en rimeray;
Car autre part assez a rimer ay.
Mais en la fin de ce livret feray
Que qui savoir
Vorra mon nom et mon seurnom de voir,
Il le porra clerement percevoir
En darrein ver dou livret et vëoir,
Mais qu'il dessamble
Les premieres .vij. sillabes d'ensamble
Et les lettres d'autre guise rassemble,
Si que nulle n'en oublie ne emble...
Et ce mon cuer conforte en ses dolours
Que, quant premiers senti les maus d'amours,
A gentil mal cuide humble secours.
(Barton Palmer, 2051-63, 2077-2079)

Here I will end
My story; I'll rhyme no more of it.
But I have yet another part to rhyme.
For at the end of this little book I'll see to it

That whoever
Would like to know truly my name and surname
Will be able to recognize it clearly
In the last verse of the book and see it;
Just let him remove
The first seven syllables from the whole
And reassemble the letters in another fashion,
So that none's forgotten or hidden...
And this comforts my heart in its misery,
Namely that, when first I felt the pangs of love,
I expected a humble relief for a noble ill.
(my italics)

Machaut plays a game with the reader here and encodes his name into the text. This then raises the question of whether the sign of his name in the text is related in any meaningful way to Guillaume de Machaut, the man in real-life, and whether, or to what extent, this identity is merged into the various representations of him in the text. The closing lines stress the conclusion of the fictional sequence ('ma matiere') and then add, within the text, a statement of the poet's real-life identity.

V. *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre*

At the end of the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* the reader has been given a judgement by the King of Bohemia which, ostensibly, provides a textual resolution to the debate between the lady and the knight. However, the *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* controversially reopens the debate and in so doing, raises many interesting questions about textual authority, textual boundaries, authorial power and the power of the reader.

The *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* begins in a similar style to the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*, with a prologue which provides a seasonal setting and context for the narrative that will follow:

Au departir dou bel esté
Qui a gais et jolis esté...
Un po après le temps d'autonne...
Et que la fueille chiet dou cherme,
Par nature, ou dou vent qui vente,
L'an mil .ccc. nuef quarente,
Le .ix. jour de novembre,
M'en aloie par mi ma chambre...
Pour ce me tenoie a couvert;
Quar ce qu'estre soloit tout vert
Estoit mué en autre teint,
Car bise l'avoit tout desteint,
Qui mainte fleur a decopée
Par la froidure de s'espée.
(Barton Palmer, 1-2, 15, 22-26, 31-36)

At the passing of a beautiful summer
Which had been pleasant and joyful...
A little after fall comes...
And when the leaf falls from the tree,
By nature, or by the wind that blows ,
In the year thirteen hundred forty-nine,
On the ninth day of November,
I was walking around in my room...
And so I stayed inside;
For that which ordinarily was all green
Had been changed into another hue,
For the north wind had discolored everything
And had cut down many a flower
With the coldness of his sword.

There are several interesting differences between the prologues to the two *Judgement* poems. Although both have seasonal settings, the first *Judgement* poem follows the conventional springtime setting of courtly love poetry, whereas the second *Judgement* poem breaks this tradition and opens the poem in Winter. Not only is there a change of season, but we are also given a specific date and time in history: 9th November 1349. The change in season and mood from the traditional spring scene of newness and hopefulness, to the winter scene of death and decay is, I would argue, a deliberate ploy in

order to represent the passage of time in Machaut's own real life between the writing of the two texts.

As I have already discussed in chapter 3, it is possible to find other examples of love poems set in winter, for example, the *Joli Buisson de Jonece*, *House of Fame*, *The Kingis Quair*, etc, but as it goes against the established convention of setting love poems against a spring or summer background, any deviance is usually a deliberate act for a particular purpose or effect. In the case of the *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre*, there are several possible reasons why Machaut might have elected to set his poem in early winter. One reason is to give temporal consistency and continuity between the two *Judgement* narratives; the first *Judgement* poem is set in May, so by setting the second *Judgement* poem in November it gives the impression of (internal) fictional sequentiality as well as providing a literal sequel.

A further reason why the second *Judgement* poem is set in winter is perhaps found in the long prologue to the poem. The narrator (who is identified a little later in the text as Guillaume de Machaut) discusses the fear and sense of foreboding of the plague years. At the time of writing, the country was severely affected by the Black Death. The plague was responsible for the deaths of thousands upon thousands of people, and nobody knew whether or not they would be the next victims of the disease. This uncertainty caused great terror and paranoia, creating an atmosphere of superstition and religious sanctimony. Machaut's introduction to *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* reflects some of the fears and anxieties of the time, and records the doom-filled thoughts and prophecies engendered by this shadow of death. The plague is interpreted as God's

punishment for the general moral decline of human beings. Machaut lists the ways in which Nature has been disrespected and transgressed.

Another reason why the poem has a November setting might be simply to mark it out as being different from a typical love poem. This poem examines the afterlife of the first *Judgement* text and the seasonal variation between the poems perhaps signifies the temporal distance between author and text, once the text has been completed and disseminated. The *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre*, in its relation to *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*, exposes how artificial is the 'sense of an ending' that is such an essential element in fiction. Machaut created a fashion for poets writing works that revised and reversed the sentiments of an earlier work: such as in the example of the *Legend of Good Women*, where Chaucer claims that it is a work written to rebut the misogynist material in the *Roman de la Rose* and in his own *Troilus and Criseyde*.

Conclusion

Medieval dream poems and framed narratives explore the many different ways in which time is central to narrative structure, but they also give prominence to ideas and images of time and temporal passage as a subject for consideration in the content of the poem. This playfulness with time and sequence within the narrative, shows time to be an essential aspect of the construction of narrative itself. This genre developed a number of narratological devices, specifically involving the treatment of time in the narrative, designed to expose to its readers some of the complex aspects of fiction and narrative which are usually concealed behind the text. Examples of the structures that these texts play with are, as we have seen, questions about whether the first-person narrator is

related to the author and/or to the dreamer, and also to what extent the linearity of the narrative is transcended by exposing its artificiality in the text. Very often, dream poets play with the fact that a fiction appears to be a discovery for the narrator-dreamer as well as for the reader. The narrator is frequently presented as being confused and not understanding his own dream or his own poem, and in this way, the unknowing narrator is acting as a surrogate for the unknowing reader who is waiting to be enlightened. Through the use of the language of seasonal openings and references, the author is able to create a particular mood, and to express a sense of real time interacting with fictional and literary time, whilst simultaneously referencing a variety of intertextual allusions, relations, and meanings. Medieval dream poems display a liking for indeterminancy, ambiguity, and multiplicity of meaning. They seek to situate themselves in relation to past and future texts in an image of eternal intertextual relationships. In this design there is no ending, just words in time.

[1] *Closure.* Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 43.

[2] Don Fowler, 'First Thoughts on Closure: Problems and Prospects', *Materiale e discussione per l'analisi dei testi classici* 22 (1989), 75-122. (pp. 78-79).

[3] Don Fowler, 'Second Thoughts on Closure' in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature*, eds. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 4.

[4] Fowler, 1997, p. 5.

[5] For an excellent discussion about Chaucer's *House of Fame* and the relationship between medieval technologies of memory and modern technologies in cyberspace see Ruth Evans, 'Chaucer in Cyberspace: Medieval Technologies of Memory and the *House of Fame*' in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 23 (2001), 43-69.

[6] Fowler, 1997, p. 11. In this reference Fowler quotes an essay by Richard A. Lanham originally published in 1989 (p. 269). This is now published as *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology and the Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[7] Barbara Hernstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 1-2.

[8] Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text*, trans. Jeremy Whitely with Emma Hughes (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 7 and pp.14-15.

[9] Dällenbach, p. 24.

[10] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Christine van Boheemen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p.52.

[11] Bal, pp. 52-53

[12] *The Owl and the Nightingale. Cleanness. St. Erkenwald.* trans. and ed. by Brian Stone, 2nd edn. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), p. 244.

[13] Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 44-45.

[14] For the evolving relationship between the poets and their literary patrons see Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) and Daniel Poirion, *Le Poète et le Prince, l'évolution du lyrisme courtois de Guillaume de Machaut à Charles d'Orléans* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965).

[15] Michelle A. Freeman, 'Froissart's *Le Joli Buisson de Jonece*: A Farewell to Poetry?' in *Machaut's World: Science and Art in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Madeleine Pelner

Cosman and Bruce Chandler (New York: Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1978), pp. 235-47 (p. 243).

[16] R. Barton Palmer, *The Judgment of the King of Bohemia. Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* (New York: Garland, 1984), pp. xxiii.

[17] All quotations of the *Judgement* poems in French and English are taken from R. Barton Palmer's editions of the two poems. Guillaume de Machaut, *The Judgment of the King of Bohemia* (*Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*), ed. and trans. R. Barton Palmer (New York: Garland, 1984). Guillaume de Machaut, *The Judgment of the King of Navarre (Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre)*, ed. and trans. R. Barton Palmer (New York: Garland, 1988).

[18] Alan of Lille, *The Plaint of Nature. Translation and Commentary by James J. Sheridan* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980).

[19] Spearing has explored the conceit of the narrator hiding and watching and has seen the poet as a voyeur: A.C.Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[20] Thomas Reed, *Middle English Debate Poetry: and the Aesthetics of Irresolution* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), p. 98.

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