

NOTES

1 Persona and Personalities: Medieval Lineage, Modern Legacy

1. All quotations of Chaucer are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn., ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).
2. Stephanie Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. xv.
3. George T. Wright, *The Poet in the Poem: The Personae of Eliot, Yeats, and Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), pp. 161 and 162.
4. Robert C. Elliott, *The Literary Persona* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 18–19, 31.
5. Elliott, *Literary Persona*, p. 20. For my discussion of classical Latin definitions, I have drawn from the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare, et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). The *OLD* defines *personare* as “to be filled with noise, resounding” and “to sound in every part, resound” (p. 1357).
6. Elliott, *Literary Persona*, pp. 21–22.
7. W. Beare, “Masks on the Roman Stage,” *Classical Quarterly* 33.3/4 (1939): 143 [139–146].
8. Elliott, *Literary Persona*, pp. 22–23, 25.
9. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare, et al., p. 1356. The concept of personification also is registered in “the attribution of personality to an abstraction, personification” (for *personae fictio*).
10. “Chaucer the Pilgrim” is the name most frequently given to the I-narrator of the *Canterbury Tales*. The title was used for years, but it is typically associated with E. T. Donaldson’s highly influential essay “Chaucer the Pilgrim,” which is discussed in section 1.3 of this chapter. For reference, see “Chaucer the Pilgrim,” *PMLA* 69 (1954): 928–936; rpt. in Donaldson, *Speaking of Chaucer* (London: Athlone Press, 1970), p. 10 [1–12].
11. J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 2:790–792.
12. Albert Blaise, *Lexicon Latinitatis Medii Aevi* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), p. 679.
13. See the online edition of the *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. F. McSparran, November 23, 2001. <http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med>.

14. *The Tale of Melibee*, VII.985, 1026. In Chaucer's usage, the phrase reads "in propre persona."
15. I quote from the online version of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, November 23, 2001. <http://www.oed.com>.
16. This statement is offered in a discussion of the term *person*. Interestingly, since I conducted my original research the statement quoted has been excised from the *OED*'s etymological discussion. It might be added here that, in its collective body of evidence, the *OED* effectively illustrates just how diverse (and complicated) are the possible connotations of a "person" in modern English. Moving beyond the realm of literature, it shows the multifaceted nature of the persona-concept by citing its prominent usage in a number of different intellectual paradigms, including its applications in Jungian psychology, its ties to the Christian idea of the Trinity, and its importance in grammatical theory.
17. Like "Chaucer the Pilgrim," the concept of "Chaucer the Man" is a central one that shall be utilized throughout this monograph. The idea of "Chaucer the Man" particularly gained prominence as a result of Donald Howard's essay of the same name and will hereafter be used to refer to the actual man of flesh and bone whose poetic corpus is read and critiqued. As section 1.3 of this chapter notes, Howard was influenced by the persona-theory of E. T. Donaldson and perceived the I-persona as having a close relationship to "the Man" himself; see Howard, "Chaucer the Man," *PMLA* 80.4 (1965): 337–343.
18. Wright, *Poet in the Poem*, p. 161.
19. A particularly important historical corollary to persona-theory that arose at a very early date was grammatical theory, given that "grammar is the map that traces and at times gives rise to self-enunciation." In the rhetoric of medieval grammatical treatises, the term *persona* often was used to reference a (strictly) grammatical entity, but increasingly writers built on such discourse to address the identifiable speaking positions, and speakers, found within a literary narrative. On these points, see Burt Kimmelman's discussion in *The Poetics of Authorship in the Later Middle Ages: The Emergence of the Modern Literary Persona* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 134. As an example, in an early treatise on language, Priscian (fl. 500) explains that the use of a different *persona*—in this case, a different grammatical formulation for a noun/pronoun—is not only pertinent when discussing another person (*id est non solum cum in aliam personam agit*), but also when discussing oneself. Priscian relates the grammatical function of the persona to the narrative personae used by such authors as Homer and Virgil, and in addition, notes that a writer can speak proficiently by moving from one person to another without speaking in the same singular person or confusing the meaning of the speech (*sive in transitione personarum intellegantur sive in una eademque persona*). See Priscian, *Institutionum Grammaticarum*, ed. Martin Hertzius (Leipzig: Teubner, 1859), 3.18.15, 16.
20. Kimmelman, *Poetics of Authorship*, p. 27. Kimmelman's study focuses on the uses of the persona by Dante, Langland, and Chaucer. However,

- Kimmelman may be accused of too frequently presenting generalizations based primarily on the work of these three figures, and criticized for not sufficiently locating the persona historically by more thoroughly investigating the term's use within the medieval commentary tradition.
21. These are my own idiomatic translations of the Latin. The citations are drawn from Beare's discussion of "Masks on the Roman Stage," 139–140. In full, Diomedes's original reads: "Antea itaque galearibus non personis utebantur, ut qualitas coloris indicium faceret aetatis, cum essent aut albi aut nigri aut rufi. Personis uero uti primus coepit Roscius Gallus, praecipuus histrio, quod oculis peruersis erat nec satis decorus in personis nisi parasitus pronuntiabat." Cicero's observation states "quo melius nostri illi senes qui personatum ne Roscium quidem magno opere laudabant."
 22. Donatus's Latin reads, "Haec sane acta est ludis scaenicis funebribus L. Aemili Pauli agentibus L. Ambiuo et L. qui cum suis gregibus etiam tum personati agebant." Again, I draw the Latin from Beare, "Masks on the Roman Stage," 139–140.
 23. On this point, see Elliott, *Literary Persona*, pp. 25 and 43.
 24. Elliott, *Literary Persona*, p. 45.
 25. See Beare, "Masks on the Roman Stage," 139–140. In its entirety, Festus's complex Latin reads, "Personata fabula quaedam Naeui inscribitur, quam putant quidam primum (actam) a personates histrionibus. Sed cum post multos annos comoedi et tragoedi personis uit cooperint, uerisimilius est eam fabulam propter inopiam comoedorum actam nouam per Atellanos qui proprie vocantur personati quia ius est iis non cogi in scaena ponere personam quod ceteris histrionibus pati necesse est."
 26. See Gregory Nagy's account of dramatic impersonation in "Early Greek Views of Poets and Poetry," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume I: Classical Criticism*, ed. George A. Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 47. For Terence's comments, see the forty-five line Prologue to *The Eunuch*, found online at the *Latin Library*. www.thelatinlibrary.com/ter.eunuchus.html.
 27. Nagy, "Early Greek Views," pp. 62–63.
 28. For reference, see the brief explanation of mimesis in William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman, eds., *A Handbook to Literature*, 7th edn. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), p. 321. The work of Erich Auerbach and Northrop Frye has been particularly influential in the modern theoretical development of the concept of mimesis. Cf. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953); and Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).
 29. I quote from 3.16 of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; see also his discussion of just and unjust actions, moral intent and purpose, in Book 1.13. These sections from the *Rhetoric* are illustrative of the fact that, as George A. Kennedy explains, Aristotle focused his discussion on the question of how authorial intent is transmitted by artistic techniques to the audience. It should also be noted that the famous quotation from Horace does go on to suggest

- that poets might both benefit and entertain their audience, yet many later thinkers would build their own commentaries on the distinctions between narrative “profit” or “delight.” See Kennedy’s discussion of the literary contributions of both Aristotle and Horace in “The Evolution of a Theory of Artistic Prose,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume I*, Kennedy, p. 191.
30. See Gerald A. Bond, “Composing Yourself: Ovid’s *Heroides*, Baudri of Bourgueil and the Problem of Persona,” *Mediaevalia* 13 (1987): 84 [83–117].
 31. See Martin W. Winkler, *The Persona in Three Satires of Juvenal* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1983), p. 72.
 32. I quote and translate from lines 30 and 79 of Juvenal’s first satire, found at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/juvenal/1.shtml>. For discussion, see Winkler, *Persona in Three Satires*, p. 48.
 33. Servius, *In Vergilii carmina commentarii*, ed. Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen (Leipzig: Teubner, 1881), 3.1.
 34. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), 8.7.11. “Apud poetas autem tres characteres esse dicendi: unum, in quo tantum poeta loquitur, ut est in libris Vergilii Georgicorum; alium dramaticum, in quo nusquam poeta loquitur, ut est in comoediis et tragoediis; tertium mixtum, ut est in Aeneide. Nam poeta illic et introductae personae loquuntur.”
 35. “Dramaticon est vel activum, in quo personae loquentes introducuntur sine poetae interlocutione, ut se habent tragoediae et fabulae.”
 36. See Bede, *De Arte Metrica*, in *Grammatici Latini*, ed. Heinrich Keil (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880), 8.259.
 37. William of St. Thierry, *Exposé sur le Cantique des cantiques*, ed. J. M. Déchanet (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962), pp. 80–82. “In toto hoc cantico, vix audiat vox, vel locutio interseratur, nisi Sponsi ac Sponsae.”
 38. William’s primary source for this commentary was the translation of Origen by Rufinus, wherein it states that Solomon had written his song in the form of a drama, which is defined as follows: “we call a thing drama, such as the enaction of a story on the stage, when different characters are introduced and the whole structure of the narrative consists in their comings and goings among themselves.” See *Origen: The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, trans. R. P. Lawson (London: Longmans, 1957), pp. 21–22.
 39. Bond, “Composing Yourself,” 83. Bond views this attitude as being most clearly seen in the Ovidian writings of the age.
 40. See Kimmelman, *Poetics of Authorship*, p. 2.
 41. Bond, “Composing Yourself,” 101. The concept of “polyphonic” writing that Bond utilizes to describe the Baudri’s multiple voicing draws directly on the famous theories of Mikhail Bakhtin. Here, I also quote from Tison Pugh’s discussion of Baudri, which describes the poet as carefully using the persona in such a way that he might portray not only “the pleasures” of a boy’s body but ultimately concern himself more with

- “celebrating same-sex desire between men than condemning it.” See Tison Pugh, *Queering Medieval Genres* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 30–32.
42. K. Hilbert ed., *Baldricus Burgulianus Carmina* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1979), 85.35–46.
 43. Perhaps the finest example of the various types of authorial shielding to which I allude, pervasive throughout the Middle Ages, is seen in the commonplace “take the good and leave the evil” defense of literature, which resonates in Chaucer’s verse. See, for instance, the famous lines from *The Miller’s Prologue* that urge the reader to “demeth nat that I seye/ Of yvel entente, but for I moot reherce/ Hir tales alle, be they bettre or werse,/ Or elles falsen som of my mateere./ And therefore, whoso list it nat yheere,/ Turne over the leef and chese another tale” (I, 3172–3177). For a brief discussion of authorial self-defense of this sort, see Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar, 1984), pp. 205–206.
 44. I borrow the term “autocitation” from Kimmelman, *Poetics of Authorship*, pp. 40–41.
 45. See especially Kimmelman, *Poetics of Authorship*, pp. 63, 71, 77, 87; cf. David F. Hult, “Author/Narrator/Speaker: The Voice of Authority in Chrétien’s *Charrete*,” in *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1989), pp. 80, 82 [76–96].
 46. The focus on authorial intentions is no better seen than in a particular collection of anonymous *accessus ad auctores* that widely concerns itself with the aims of notable literary works. One anonymous author, in fact, is seemingly so obsessed with Ovid’s intentions in bringing his various personae to the page, that he uses the term *intentio* and its corollaries *ad nauseam* throughout his discussion. I refer specifically to the *Accessus ad Auctores* collection edited by R. B. C. Huygens (Leiden: Brill, 1970), p. 32.
 47. Brian Stock, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Bernard Silvester* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 32.
 48. Here, I borrow phrasing from A. J. Minnis’s *Magister Amoris: The Roman de la Rose and Vernacular Hermeneutics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 227.
 49. I utilize the translations of these passages found in A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott eds., *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1100–c. 1375: The Commentary-Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 92.
 50. Reference from Minnis and Scott, eds., *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism*, p. 152. I have marked off the philosopher’s name in this section because it remains uncertain whether Bernard Silvester truly wrote the commentary on the *Aeneid* from which these passages are drawn.
 51. See Minnis and Scott, eds., *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism*, p. 152. On the concepts of *integumentum* and *involutrum*, consult Winthrop Wetherbee’s introduction to his translation of *The Cosmographia* of

- Bernardus Silvestris* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973); see also Stock, *Myth and Science*, pp. 42–58.
52. See Stock, *Myth and Science*, pp. 52–53.
 53. See Minnis and Scott, eds., *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism*, pp. 151, 152.
 54. In discussing the purposes of poetry, “Silvester” focuses on Horace’s famous pronouncement.
 55. Pugh offers a useful discussion of Marbod’s “amatory and queering lyrics” in *Queering Medieval Genres*, pp. 27–30.
 56. Italics mine. The citations and translations of these works are taken from pp. 30–33 and 88–91, respectively, of *Medieval Latin Poems of Male Love and Friendship*, trans. T. Stehling (New York: Garland, 1984). The poems are numbered 46 and 87 in this book. Material from the anonymous manuscript in which the second poem is found has been transcribed by J. Werner in *Beiträge zur Kunde der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Aarau: H. H. Sauerländer, 1905).
 57. *Medieval Latin Poems of Male Love and Friendship*, pp. 30–31, 90–91.
 58. “Num semper prisco cupiam me tradere visco,/ et semel egressus rursus laqueis dare gressus?” *Medieval Latin Poems of Male Love and Friendship*, pp. 90–91.
 59. “Haec mandatorum, carissime, verba meorum/ missa tibi soli multis ostendere noli.” *Medieval Latin Poems of Male Love and Friendship*, pp. 32–33.
 60. See Minnis’s discussion of these various points in *Magister Amoris*, p. 222.
 61. Bonaventure, *S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, ed. R. P. Bernardini (Florence: Quaracchi, 1893), 6.5–6.
 62. Minnis offers a useful consideration of these roles in *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 94.
 63. This idea was recognized long ago by Leo Spitzer in “Note on the Poetic and Empirical ‘I’ in Medieval Authors,” *Traditio* 4 (1946): 419 [414–422].
 64. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 217.
 65. *Ibid.*, pp. 112–117, 156–159.
 66. See Michael Zink, *The Invention of Literary Subjectivity*, trans. David Sices (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 14. Zink designates the development of the “romance of the self” as characterizing the thirteenth century in particular, seen in the “the birth of a personal poetry playing on narrativity . . . as the figure of the poet took shape and gained prominence” (p. 37).
 67. See A. C. Spearing, “A Ricardian ‘I’: The Narrator of ‘Troilus and Criseyde,’” in *Essays on Ricardian Literature: In Honour of J. A. Burrow*, ed. A. J. Minnis, Charlotte C. Morse, and Thorlac Turville-Petre (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 19 [1–22].
 68. Phrasing borrowed from Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, p. 230.
 69. Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, p. 221.
 70. “Il Prologo alla traduzione della ‘Consolatio Philosophiae’ di Jean de Meun e il commento di Guglielmo d’ Aragona,” ed. Roberto Crespo in

- Romanitas et Christianitas: Studia I. H. Wasznik oblata*, ed. W. de Boer, et al. (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1952), p. 59 [55–70]. “Et ita ipse ex parte sui ipsius dolores et causas eorum motivas ostendit, et ex parte philosophie causas annullantes huiusmodi dolores et consolacionem ostendentes adducit.”
71. According to the *OLD*, *confingo* denotes “to construct by shaping or molding,” and also “to invent, fabricate; to devise; with a feigned expression (for *fronte confincta*); to pretend.”
 72. The “intentional fallacy” was famously outlined by William K. Wimsatt, in “The Intentional Fallacy,” in Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), pp. 3–18.
 73. “Je n’I faz riens fors reciter,/ se par mon geu, qui po vos coute,/ quelque parole n’I ajoute,’ si con font antr’eus li poete,/ quant chascuns la matire trete/ don il lip lest a antremetre;/ car si con tesmoigne la letre,/ profiz et delectaction./ c’est toute leur entencion.” For reference, see Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, p. 227. In a similar vein, Gower’s Latin gloss to the *Confessio Amantis* (presumably written by the poet himself) might be recalled, wherein he states that he is conveying the emotions of other characters and is not speaking *in propria persona* but is “feigning himself to be a lover” so that he can write about the various passions of his personae one by one (“Hic quasi in persona aliorum, quos amor alligat, fingens se auctor esse Amantem, varias eorum passiones variis huius libri distinctionibus per singula scribere proponit”). See John Gower, *John Gower: The English Works*, ed. G. C. Macaulay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900–1901), 1.37.
 74. Jean de Meun, “Boethius’ *De Consolatione* by Jean de Meun,” ed. V. L. Dedek-Héry, *Medieval Studies* 14 (1952): 171 [165–275]. “Donc selonc ce est homme devisé en deuz, ce est a savoir en homme tourmenté et demené par passions sensibles et en homme devinement ellevé es biens entendibles.”
 75. “Et pour ce que seule philosophie nous ellieue par de don de dieu aus biens entendibles, Boeces establisset et represente soi en partie de homme troublé et tourmenté et demené par passions sensibles et establisset philosophie en partie de homme ellevé et ensuivant les biens entendibles.”
 76. I cite the translation of Guido’s text in Minnis and Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory*, pp. 469–476. For Guido’s use of these terms, see p. 471.
 77. Minnis and Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory*, pp. 472, 473.
 78. *Ibid.*, p. 476.
 79. I use Minnis’s translations of Evrart located in *Magister Amoris*, p. 283. The original text can be found in *Le Livre des eschez amoureux moralisés*, ed. F. Guichard-Tesson and B. Roy (Montreal: CERES, 1993), p. 3. “L’entente principal de l’auteur dessusdit et la fin de son livre, c’est de tendre a vertu et a bonne oeuvre, et de fourir tout mal et toute fole oyseuse.”
 80. Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, pp. 283–284; *Le Livre des eschez amoureux*, p. 22. “Nous devons savoir premierement . . . que l’auteur de la rime dessusdite

- faint et dit moult de choses qui ne sont pas a entendre a la lecture, ja soit ce que elles soient raisonablement faintes, et qu'il y ait aucune verité soubz la lettre et la fiction secretement mucie, sy come il apperra se Dieu loysir me donne de declarier la chose."
81. Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, 284; *Le Livre des eschez amoureux*, p. 22. "Sanz faille, on peut bien faindre aucunesfoiz et parler par figure et fabuleusement."
 82. Evrart's commentary also usefully explains "the three ways in which fiction may reasonably be employed" (i.e., the ways in which authors might use and manipulate their personae, perhaps as narrative shields, and their rationale thereof). Evrart summarizes these three ways as follows: in order to speak more safely and securely (which can be done by having a resuscitated corpse speak, using the "manner of a dream," or using "imaginary vision"), in order to speak more secretly ("parler plus secretement"), and in order to speak more subtly, pleasantly, and delightfully ("parler plus subtilement, plaisamment et delectablement"). See Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, pp. 23–24 ; and *Le Livre des eschez amoureux*, pp. 23–26.
 83. On the *querelle*, see A. J. Minnis, "Theorizing the Rose: Commentary Tradition in the *Querelle de la Rose*," in *Poetics: Theory and Practice in Medieval English Literature*, ed. Piero Boitani and Anna Torti (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1991), pp. 13–36. Prof. Minnis has also considered the topic at greater length in Chapter 5 of *Magister Amoris*, pp. 209–256.
 84. The *querelle*, as it is known today, is located in a series of documents in which the disputants discuss many significant aspects of medieval literary theory. The documents in question are mostly made up of letters written back and forth between the opposing critical parties.
 85. On the two respective sides of the *querelle* debates, see Minnis's discussion in *Magister Amoris*, pp. 224–230.
 86. All my citations of the *querelle* controversy are taken from the translation of the collection of documents by Joseph L. Baird and John R. Kane, "*La Querelle de la Rose: Letters and Documents*," *North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures* 199 (1978): 11–170. Here, I cite from page 48. The French documents of the *querelle* have been transcribed by Eric Hicks in *Le Débat sur le Roman de la Rose* (Paris: H. Champion, 1977). In the original, Christine's words read as follows: "Mais en accordant l'opinion a laquelle contredisez, sans faille, a mon avis, trop traicte deshonestment en aucunes pars—et mes mement ou personnage que il claime Raison, laquelle nomme les secréz membres plainement par nom" (Hicks, *Le Débat*, p. 13).
 87. Baird and Kane, "*La Querelle de la Rose*," 50. "Et la laidure qui la est recordee des femmes, dient plusieurs en lui excusant que c'est le Jaloux que parle, et voirement fait ainsi comme Dieu parla par la bouche Jeremie. Mais sans faille, quelxque addicions mençongeuses qu'il ait adjustees, ne peuent—Dieu mercy!—en riens amenrir ne rendre empires les conditions des femmes" (Hicks, *Le Débat*, p. 15).

88. This is the view of Catherine Attwood in *Dynamic Dichotomy: The Poetic "I" in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century French Lyric Poetry* (Amsterdam: Rodopoi, 1998), p. 221.
89. Baird and Kane, "*La Querelle de la Rose*," 53, 143.
90. *Ibid.*, 73. For the French, see Hicks, *Le Débat*, 62. Gerson voices his disapproval of De Meun's supposed use of his narratives to incite his readers into sinful acts of the sort displayed by his characters, saying "he was not content simply to utter the above-mentioned affronts everywhere publicly," but he also took care "to allure people into hearing, seeing, and holding fast to those things."
91. Baird and Kane, "*La Querelle de la Rose*," 77, 81. See also Hicks, *Le Débat*, pp. 67, 74.
92. Baird and Kane, "*La Querelle de la Rose*," 93, 103. "Maistre Jehan de Meung en son livre introduisy personnaiges, et fait chascun personnaige parler selonc qui luy appartient: c'est assavoir le Jaloux comme jaloux, la Vielle come la Vielle, et pareillement des autres" (Hicks, *Le Débat*, p. 100).
93. Baird and Kane, "*La Querelle de la Rose*," 154. "Sic detractio nis . . . quos vivens solo nutu oppido compressisset, qui de personatum varietate non discernunt, seu notant quibus passionibus moveantur aut induantur affectibus, et quem ad finem quave | dependentia aut quamobrem sint loquuti" (Hicks, *Le Débat*, p. 42). Jean de Montreuil also argues that Jean de Meun assumed the pose of the blunt satirist in his verse, and alleges that "they [i.e., Christine de Pizan and Jean Gerson] simply do not understand how that teacher has fulfilled the function of the satirist and is therefore permitted many things which are prohibited to other writers." See Baird and Kane, "*La Querelle de la Rose*," 153.
94. Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, p. 223. Interestingly, in *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), D. W. Robertson clearly echoes the defenders of Jean de Meun in his discussion of the *querelle*. For instance, Robertson claims that Christine fundamentally misunderstood Jean's deployment of personae, saying on page 361 that "Her accusation against Raison" refers to a passage "where the idea that it is better to deceive is attributed by Raison to lovers and certainly not advocated by Raison herself. La Vielle, Jalousie, and Genius all speak in character; no one of them represents the views of the author."
95. Baird and Kane argue this point in "*La Querelle de la Rose*," 11–12. The vehemence with which these points were, at times, asserted is no better seen than when Jean de Montreuil notes the "feminine limitations" of Christine, whom he then describes as sounding like the Greek whore discussed by Cicero, "who dared to criticize the great philosopher Theophrastus"; for reference, See Baird and Kane, "*La Querelle de la Rose*," 153.
96. Baird and Kane make this assertion in "*La Querelle de la Rose*," 12.
97. Phrasing for these lines has been borrowed from Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, pp. 222, 254.

98. In making these points, I have drawn from Alfred David's comments in *The Strumpet Muse: Art and Morals in Chaucer's Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 219; Willi Erzgräber, "'Auctorite' and 'Experience' in Chaucer," in *Intellectuals and Writers in Fourteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Piero Boitani and Anna Torti (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1986), 67 [67–87]; George Kane, *The Autobiographical Fallacy in Chaucer and Langland Studies* (London: H. K. Lewis, 1965), pp. 16–17; and Barbara Nolan, "'A Poet Ther Was': Chaucer's Voices in the General Prologue," *PMLA* 101.2 (1986): 156 [154–169].
99. See Elizabeth Heale, *Autobiography and Authorship in Renaissance Verse: Chronicles of the Self* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 9. For discussion of the use of personae by Renaissance authors, especially satirists, see Alvin Kernan, *The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959); and Alan Hager, *Dazzling Images: The Masks of Sir Philip Sidney* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991).
100. Page numbers are not given in the text of Speght's *The Workes of our Antient and lerned English Poet Geffrey Chaucer, newly printed* (London, 1598). These lines are found in the supplementary section titled "Arguments to euery Tale and Booke."
101. Alice Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 83. Miskimin does note, however, that the pilgrims frequently are understood as veiled by fiction, which helps to protect the poet.
102. This definition of "ironia" is found in H. H. Hudson's edition of Hoskins's *Directions for Speech and Style* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1935), p. 30. For discussion of Hoskins's views and Sidney's personae, see Alan Hager's *Dazzling Images*.
103. See Hoskins, *Directions*, pp. 36, 41, 42.
104. Yet it should be said that, as Wright notes, the "I" of Renaissance poems never emerges as a complete portrait of the poet despite the fact that a distinction between the speaker and writer is not deliberately drawn; see *Poet in the Poem*, p. 37.
105. See Wright, *Poet in the Poem*, p. 37.
106. On the various points, see Elliott, *Literary Persona*, p. 86.
107. Joseph Bristow makes this assertion in his introduction to *The Victorian Poet: Poetics and Persona* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 1.
108. The phrases are Arnold's, which Bristow cites on page 7 of *Victorian Poet*.
109. This quote is drawn from Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 180–181.
110. See Wright, *Poet in the Poem*, p. 131–132.
111. See Elliott, *Literary Persona*, p. 16.
112. Eliot describes the first voice as "the voice of the poet talking to himself—or to nobody," while the second is the voice of the poet "addressing an audience, whether large or small." See T. S. Eliot, "The

- Three Voices of Poetry,” in *On Poetry and Poets* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1957), p. 96 [96–112].
113. Wright, *Poet in the Poem*, pp. 131–132.
114. In fact, in his own recent study of Chaucerian reception, Steve Ellis has argued that Yeats was inspired by Chaucer, whom he saw as a “popular, oral performer” that the Modernist “applauded” for his variety and changes of voice. See *Chaucer at Large: The Poet in the Modern Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp. 35, 37, 45.
115. George Lyman Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry* (1915; repr. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 155. R. M. Lumiansky’s well-known extension of Kittredge’s notion of the dramatic principle, which was written only a few years after Donaldson’s work (discussed in the following text), was also very influential in its emphasis on the fictional aspects of Chaucer’s narrative verse. In Lumiansky’s view, the author developed his narratives specifically for character portrayal; thus, many of the individuals we meet strike us as actors in a play whom we know about intimately from their performances (i.e., personae, though the critic does not specifically use this term). Lumiansky contends that Chaucer employed three stages or techniques of dramatic presentation, and describes the links as a sort of “movable stage” present throughout the *Tales*, with short dramatic scenes. See *Of Sondry Folk: The Dramatic Principle in the Canterbury Tales* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1955), pp. 1, 7–8, 27.
116. Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, p. 218.
117. *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 154.
118. This statement is taken from Kittredge’s article (in which he initiates the idea of the Marriage Group) on “Chaucer’s Discussion of Marriage,” *Modern Philology* 9.4 (1912): 454 [435–467]. Kittredge also comments that the cynicism of the Merchant’s Tale is “in no sense expressive of Chaucer’s own sentiments, or even of Chaucer’s momentary mood. The cynicism is the Merchant’s. It is no more Chaucer’s than Iago’s cynicism about love is Shakespeare’s.” See *Chaucer and His Poetry*, p. 17.
119. Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, pp. 31, 38, 48.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
121. *Ibid.*, pp. 161, 184.
122. On this point, see Elliott, *Literary Persona*, pp. 11–13. In particular, Dante critics working in the mid-twentieth century were utilizing a similar type of persona-theory, while there were also influential analogues in criticism of eighteenth-century satire. Especially important essays from these fields were written by Leo Spitzer and Donaldson’s colleague Maynard Mack, respectively. Reference to Spitzer’s article is given in note 63 above; see also Maynard Mack, “The Muse of Satire,” *Yale Review* 41.1 (1951): 81, 82 [80–92].
123. Donaldson, “Chaucer the Pilgrim,” in *Speaking of Chaucer*, p. 10.
124. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
125. It should be admitted that Donaldson does at least make mention of the relationship of Chaucer’s persona to the personae of Dante, Langland,

- Gower, and even Swift; see Donaldson, "Chaucer the Pilgrim," in *Speaking of Chaucer*, p. 8. For a more in-depth discussion of "Chaucer the Pilgrim's" issues and ramifications, see my essay "Revaluating 'Chaucer the Pilgrim'" and Donaldson's "Enduring Persona," *Chaucer Review* 41.3 (2007): 308–320.
126. E. T. Donaldson, ed., *Chaucer's Poetry: An Anthology for the Modern Reader*, 2nd edn. (New York: Ronald Press, 1975), pp. 1038–1040. Though Donaldson does seem to favor a direct sort of poetic intentionality, his observations are at times inconsistent or even paradoxical on this issue, as he also suggests that the poet and "Chaucer the Pilgrim" "are not by any means identical in all respects," and states that "the enormous difference between the poet and the speaker in his poetry is the area in which Chaucer's poetic vision is broadest and most manifold." See *Chaucer's Poetry*, pp. 1038, 1040.
 127. Donaldson, *Chaucer's Poetry*, p. 1100; and Donaldson, "Chaucer the Pilgrim," in *Speaking of Chaucer*, p. 10.
 128. See Elliott, *Literary Persona*, pp. 35–36. For Elliott, the "doctrine of sincerity" denotes the notion that the writer should be sincere, that he should, somehow, sincerely represent himself and his beliefs for his audience—just as a person's actions should reflect his inner being, so what a writer writes should somehow be consonant with what he essentially is or believes.
 129. For reference, see footnote 98 above.
 130. See Howard, "Chaucer the Man," 342. Here, I also use phrasing from Howard's *The Idea of the Canterbury Tales* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 184.
 131. Howard, "Chaucer the Man," 337, 340.
 132. *Ibid.*, 343.
 133. *Ibid.*, 342, 343.
 134. Donaldson particularly was building on Kittredge's perception of the poet's narrative detachment.
 135. Donaldson, *Chaucer's Poetry*, pp. 1040, 1041.
 136. Derek Pearsall has been especially adamant in criticizing the notion Chaucerian irony, as is clear in "Epidemic Irony in Modern Approaches to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales," in *Medieval and Pseudo-Medieval Literature*, ed. Piero Boitani and Anna Torti (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1984), pp. 79–89.
 137. C. David Benson, "Their Telling Difference: Chaucer the Pilgrim and His Two Contrasting Tales," *Chaucer Review* 18.1 (1983): 65 [61–77].
 138. These points are made in C. David Benson, *Chaucer's Drama of Style: Poetic Variety and Contrast in the Canterbury Tales* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 26–27.
 139. Benson, "Their Telling Difference," 65.
 140. In Trigg's view, recent years have seen a growing trend whereby professional Chaucerians seem willing to make it "more difficult" to hear Chaucer's voice within his poetry. This may generally be true, but

- I would question her contention that these critics display an outright willingness to let go of the supposed “fiction of Chaucerian voice” that “may be the clearest indication yet of the closure, if not the final end, of the regime of authorial presence.” See Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, p. 14.
141. These phrases are taken from Nolan, “A Poet Ther Was,” 154, 158.
 142. *Ibid.*, 154.
 143. Lawton states this as his goal in *Chaucer's Narrators* (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1985), p. 7.
 144. See Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, p. 4.
 145. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
 146. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 74.
 147. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
 148. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 14. Lawton also states that he favors the term “apocryphal voices” to the “heteroglossia” Bakhtin projected for narrative fiction.
 149. Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, pp. 8, 47.
 150. For reference, see the following works: Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); and Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).
 151. Leicester, *Disenchanted Self*, p. 15.
 152. Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 11.
 153. See A. J. Minnis, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Shorter Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 3.
 154. This definition of the subject is given by Rice and Waugh in *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), p. 119. Although Rice and Waugh's definition is a useful and concise general one, it should be noted that in practice, subjectivity is variously manipulated by a number of critical schools for their own ideological ends. As Jonathan Culler has observed, “psychoanalysis treats the subject not as a unique essence but as the product of intersecting psychic, sexual, and linguistic mechanisms. Marxist theory sees the subject as determined by class position: it either profits from others' labour or labours for others' profit. Feminist theory stresses the impact of socially constructed gender roles on making the subject what he or she is. Queer theory has argued that the heterosexual subject is constructed through the repression of the possibility of homosexuality.” See Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 111.
 155. Minnis, *Oxford Guides*, p. 3.
 156. Culler, *Literary Theory*, p. 111.
 157. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 121.

158. Elliott, *Literary Persona*, p. 17.
159. Quoted in Sheryl Stolberg, "Transcripts Detail Secret Questioning in 50's by McCarthy," *New York Times* May 6, 2003: A1, A20.
160. Quoted in Anita Obermeier, *The History and Anatomy of Auctorial Self-Criticism in the European Middle Ages* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), p. 13.
161. Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, pp. 8, 47, 142.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 100. Here, Lawton is specifically referencing the I-narrator of the *General Prologue*.
163. Bakhtin, *Problems*, pp. 5, 6. In the citations in this paragraph, I have taken the liberty of removing the frequent italics Bakhtin utilizes in his discourse and have done the same with references from Genette in the following text.
164. Bakhtin, *Problems*, pp. 40, 59.
165. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 189–190, 243–245.
166. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
167. Gérard Genette, *Figures of Literary Discourse*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 149, 173.
168. On Butler's helpful notion of performativity, see especially *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
169. Wright, *Poet in the Poem*, p. 5.
170. For reference, consult Elliott's discussion of sociological personae on page 94 of *Literary Persona*.
171. See Bond, "Composing Yourself," 101.
172. A similar point is made by Judith Anderson, who observes that a mask typically has holes and therefore inherently implies someone behind it. See Anderson, "Narrative Reflections: Re-envisioning the Poet in *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Faerie Queene*," in *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance*, ed. Theresa Krier (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998), p. 94 [87–105].
173. James L. Battersby, "Narrativity, Self, and Self-Representation," *Narrative* 14.1 (2006): 41 [27–44].
174. *Ibid.*, 42.
175. *Ibid.*, 33.
176. Leo Carruthers, "Narrative Voice, Narrative Framework: The Host as 'Author' of the *Canterbury Tales*," in *Drama, Narrative and Poetry in the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Wendy Harding (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2003), p. 56 [51–67]. Carruthers adds that "It is not the characters who take over, but the author's creative instinct . . . Great art requires a spontaneity that sometimes defies logic."
177. See Wright, *Poet in the Poem*, p. 7.
178. Post-Structuralist theory has had an especially strong effect on the usage (or lack thereof) of persona-theory by modern literary theorists. But it may be argued that notions such as the *sujet* or the "death of the author" somehow deny the writer a life apart from that given by his/her textual readership, or even deny individuality itself. Many medieval poets, in fact, offer useful examples that contradict the writer's outright

subjectivity or supposed “death,” since it seems highly irrational to deny the authority of authors who explicitly assert their undying textual affiliation and individuality by supposedly entering “themselves” in their poems as personae.

179. Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, p. 103.
180. Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology: Subjects and Objects of Desire* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), p. 222.
181. Doubrovsky first used the term “autofiction” to describe his novel *Fils* (1977), and the concept was subsequently taken up by several French writers. For Doubrovsky, autofiction is a fictionalized autobiography, and he uses the term to both highlight and problematize an autobiographical connection between the author and his work. My use of the term is, therefore, meant to respond to this deliberate ambiguity by more fully separating the fictional text from the human author and emphasizing that autofiction is a creative, unreliable story of the self, as the term suggests.
182. See Lawrence de Looze, *Pseudo-Autobiography in the Fourteenth Century: Juan Ruiz, Guillaume de Machaut, Jean Froissart, and Geoffrey Chaucer* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997), pp. 2, 12, 16, 35.
183. De Looze, *Pseudo-Autobiography*, p. 37. I have taken the notion of “mimetic ideology” from Stephen Knight, “Ideology in ‘The Franklin’s Tale,’” *Paregon* 28 (1980): 25 [3–35]. We might recall here that mimesis has an important historical relationship to classical persona-theory.
184. See Vitz, *Medieval Narrative*, p. 38.
185. Henrik Skov Nielsen, “The Impersonal Voice in First-Person Narrative Fiction,” *Narrative* 12.2 (2004): 139, 145 [133–150].
186. Phrasing taken from Sheila Delany, *Medieval Literary Politics: Shapes of Ideology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 120.
187. See Chauncey Wood, “The Author’s Address to the Reader: Chaucer, Juan Ruiz, and Dante,” in *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture*, ed. Patrick Gallacher and Helen Damico (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 58 [51–60].
188. Zink, *Invention of Literary Subjectivity*, p. 158.
189. De Looze makes the same point in addressing “Chaucer the Pilgrim” from the *Canterbury Tales*. See De Looze, *Pseudo-Autobiography*, p. 138.
190. Heale, *Autobiography and Authorship*, p. 2. In actuality, the first citation of “autobiography” provided by the *OED* is from 1797, although the remainder of the early examples are drawn from the nineteenth century.
191. Zink, *Invention of Literary Subjectivity*, pp. 157–158.
192. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
193. Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: The Man and the Masks* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), p. 164.
194. See H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 63.
195. Thomas Garbáty makes a similar assertion in “The Degradation of Chaucer’s ‘Geffrey,’” *PMLA* 89.1 (1974): 103 [97–104].

196. See Derek Brewer, "The Reconstruction of Chaucer," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* Proceedings, no. 1 (1984): 6, 13 [3–19].
197. See Elliott, *Literary Persona*, 84.
198. Ellmann, *Yeats*, p. 5.
199. Walker has set forth her "persona criticism" in "Persona Criticism and the Death of the Author," in *Contesting the Subject: Essays in the Postmodern Theory and Practice of Biography and Biographical Criticism*, ed. William H. Epstein (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1991), pp. 109–121. I cite above from pages 109, 114, 119.
200. See Walker, "Persona Criticism," 119.
201. Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, p. 142.
202. See Roy Sommer's assessment of present-day narrative theories in "Beyond (Classical) Narratology: New Approaches to Narrative Theory," *European Journal of English Studies* 8.1 (2004): 6 [3–11].
203. Sommer, "Beyond (Classical) Narratology," 11.
204. Carruthers, "Narrative Voice," p. 56.
205. For this conceptualization, see Tison Pugh, *Queering Medieval Genres* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 158.
206. See Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 47.
207. See Glenn Burger, "Queer Theory," in *Chaucer: An Oxford Guide*, ed. Steve Ellis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 436, 437 [432–447].
208. See Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern*, p. 5.
209. See Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 22. Sinfield is not specifically discussing the persona with these words, but the ideological interpretation of various literary narratives.
210. Phrasing taken from Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. xii.
211. *The Prologue to Sir Thopas*, VII.693–95.
212. *General Prologue*, I.814. My usage of the term "juggement" in the following sentence is taken from line 818.
213. Among the lyrics, I find the narrative positioning and potential ramifications of autofiction most fascinating in "Chaucers Wordes Unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn," "Lak of Stedfastnesse," "Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan," "Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton," and "The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse."

2 Getting a Life: Biographical Constructions of Chaucer the Man

1. Derek Brewer, "Images of Chaucer 1386–1900," in *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature*, ed. D. S. Brewer (London: Nelson's University Paperbacks, 1970), p. 240 [240–270].

2. F. R. H. Du Boulay, "The Historical Chaucer," in *Writers and Their Background: Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Derek Brewer (London: G. Bell, 1974), p. 55 [33–57].
3. Malcolm Bradbury, "The Telling Life: Some Thoughts on Literary Biography," in *The Troubled Face of Biography*, ed. Eric Homberger and John Charmley (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 135 [131–140].
4. It is perhaps worth noting that Barthes himself has written a criticism of Chateaubriand's life of Rancé, in which, interestingly enough, no mention whatsoever of the author's "death" is made. Here, he argues that Chateaubriand's biography carries a typically Post-Structuralist "double wavelength" of meaning, unstable and fluid, which represents two worlds at once united and separated. Although it would be quite a stretch to say that Barthes's disregard of his earlier authorial theorem indicates that he had tempered his belief in the writer's "death," his evasion does at least seem significant. See "Chateaubriand: Life of Rancé," in *New Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), pp. 49, 52 [41–54].
5. Stanley Fish, "Biography and Intention," in *Contesting the Subject: Essays in the Postmodern Theory and Practice of Biography and Biographical Criticism*, ed. William H. Epstein (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1991), p. 11 [9–16].
6. Fish, "Biography and Intention," pp. 12, 13. Of course, the "author-function" was a theoretical notion of Michel Foucault's.
7. Fish, "Biography and Intention," p. 13. "Transcendental anonymity" is a term Fish borrows from Foucault, which the latter uses in his discussion of "What Is an Author?"
8. See Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, p. 123.
9. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p. 148 [142–148].
10. See Eric Homberger and John Charmley's Introduction to *Troubled Face of Biography*, p. xv.
11. Polhemus and Henkle have argued this point about fiction in particular, calling the relationship between fiction and life the "news of the novel." See Robert Polhemus and Roger Henkle, eds. *Critical Reconstructions: The Relationship of Fiction and Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 19.
12. Donald Howard, *Chaucer and the Medieval World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. xv.
13. See Richard Holmes, "Biography: Inventing the Truth," in *The Art of Literary Biography*, ed. John Batchelor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 19.
14. John Worthen, "The Necessary Ignorance of the Biographer," in *The Art of Literary Biography*, Batchelor, p. 237 [227–244]. Humphrey Carpenter adds that it would be possible for a biographer to write several different "lives" of the same person, variously using the extant material to "tell a very different story." See Carpenter, "Learning About Ourselves: Biography as Autobiography," in *The Art of Literary Biography*, Batchelor, p. 274 [267–279].

15. For a discussion of these issues, see W. L. Warren, "Biography and the Medieval Historian," in *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, ed. D. O. Morgan (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1982), p. 9 [5–18].
16. See Catherine Peters, "Secondary Lives: A Biography in Context," in *The Art of Literary Biography*, Batchelor, p. 44 [43–56].
17. See Paul Murray Kendall, *The Art of Biography* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), p. 6.
18. See Victoria Glendinning, "Lies and Silences," in *The Troubled Face of Biography*, Homberger and Charmley, p. 57 [49–62].
19. David Carlson is one scholar who has been very frank about the possibility that Chaucer was less important in his time than many have presumed, given that his famous ransom shows that he was "worth less than a horse," for instance, and also the fact that in the early documentary records "Chaucer's name always appears buried deep in long lists of other names, routinely well down such lists whenever there is a discernible prioritizing of them" so that "Chaucer's significance is that he had no significance here." See *Chaucer's Jobs* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 2–4.
20. I quote from Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction*, p. 79. I have removed Abbott's original italics.
21. Nevill Coghill, *The Poet Chaucer* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. ix.
22. The epithet "Fadir Chaucer" is one of the reverent phrases used to describe the poet in the years following his death. See, for instance, the description provided by Thomas Hoccleve in his *Regement of Princes*, which is cited in Caroline Spurgeon's *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion 1357–1900*, 3 vols. (1925; repr. New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), 1:1.22. In the pages that follow, I rely heavily on Spurgeon's vast resource, which ambitiously sought to collect all the references to Chaucer since his death and has provided us with invaluable information about the poet's reception history. Recently, Jackson Campbell Boswell and Sylvia Wallace Holton have published a collection largely intended to supplement and emend Spurgeon's project because "many allusions to Chaucer that do not appear in Spurgeon have come to light" since the publication of her massive study. Cf. *Chaucer's Fame in England: STC Chauceriana 1475–1640* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2004), p. xi.
23. I quote from the eminently useful *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 1:1. Brewer designed these volumes as a response and supplement to Spurgeon's work and sought to present the complete, significant passages from the texts he deemed to be properly "critical," rather than simply providing a collection of any and all allusions to the poet (as per Spurgeon's intent).
24. See Howard, *Chaucer and the Medieval World*, p. xii.
25. This comment is taken from George Kane's important biography titled *Chaucer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 1.
26. Deschamps may have been the first to praise Chaucer's for his writing, as seen in a poem that asks for the "wise" and learned Chaucer to consider

- some verse of his own, and lauds the Englishman as “great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.” See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:41.
27. Here I cite phrasing from Usk’s *Testament of Love*, which praises (among other things) Chaucer’s “ymagynacion in wytte and in good reason of sentence” that surpasses all other poetic “makers,” and offers the now-famous description of the author as “the noble philosophical poete in Englissh.” For reference, see Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:43.
 28. Lydgate designated the poet “Maister Chaucer,” who put “the golde dewe dropes of speche and eloquence / Into our tunge.” See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:46, 48. I also use phrasing from Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer*, p. 90.
 29. Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 5.
 30. Paul Strohm, *England’s Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399–1422* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 153.
 31. Jacques Le Goff, “The Whys and Ways of Writing a Biography: The Case of Saint Louis,” *Exemplaria* 1.1 (1989): 215, 217 [207–225]. Le Goff does not, of course, specifically discuss Chaucer, but his ideas concerning the “lives” of noted medieval figures are appropriate for the poet.
 32. For a brief discussion of Leland’s life, see Eleanor Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* (1908; repr., New York: Peter Smith, 1933), p. 7.
 33. See John Watkins’s useful discussion of this idea in “‘Wrestling for This World’: Wyatt and the Tudor Canonization of Chaucer,” in *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance*, Krier, p. 23 [21–39].
 34. R. F. Yeager makes a similar observation in discussing William Thynne’s *Workes of Geffray Chaucer*, the edition of the corpus cited by Leland. See “Literary Theory at the Close of the Middle Ages: William Caxton and William Thynne,” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 6 (1984): 151 [135–164].
 35. The Latin reads “Hinc acutus dialecticus, hinc dulcis rhetor, hinc lepidus poeta, hinc gravis philosophus, hinc ingeniosus mathematicus . . . hinc denique sanctus theologus evasit”; I quote the Latin from Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 3:4.545. As Brewer notes, Leland’s view that Chaucer’s learning was garnered from an Oxford education is itself an ideologically loaded premise, since there is no extant evidence for any such schooling. It might also be argued that Leland’s “Chaucer” reflects his wish to please Henry by establishing a pious figure that fits the king’s Protestant religious campaign, in addition to his nationalistic intentions (a possibility that the notion of Chaucer-as-theologian might fulfill). See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:91.
 36. Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:93. In the Latin, “Nunc lectori ut prodesset nervis omnibus contendens, & vicissim ut eundem delectaret sedulo curans: nec antea finem fecit, quam linguam nostram ad eam puritatem, ad eam eloquentiam, ad eam denique breviter ac gratiam perduxerat, ut inter expolitas gentium linguas posset recte quidem connumerari” (Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 3:4.15).

37. Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, p. 1. The “legends” of Chaucer would alter and multiply over time, and thus I have favored the plural of this term to the singular “legend” referred to by Spurgeon.
38. See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:cv.
39. Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, p. 1.
40. John Bale’s subsequent biographies of Chaucer simply reproduce Leland’s conceptions, some word for word, and add a few more “legends,” including the poet’s so-called “disapproval” of monks; the assertion of knight-hood for the author, which led to a strong belief in Chaucer’s nobility throughout the sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries; and the importance of the perceived connection between Chaucer and Gower. See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 3:4.21, 26.
41. Kevin Pask takes a similar position in *The Emergence of the English Author: Scripting the Life of the Poet in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 22.
42. This declaration is taken from the biography written by John Pits, who modeled his “life” on Leland’s “Legend.” I translate the Latin from Pits’s *Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis tomus primus* (1613), with the phrasing drawn from the following observations: “erat Poëta elegans, & qui Poësim Anglicam ita illustravit, vt Anglicus Homerus meritò haberetur” and “attulerunt certè he duo viri nostro idiomati tantum splendoris & ornamenti, quantum ante illos prorsus nemo.” Quotations cited from Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 3:4.63, 64.
43. This description of “self-fashioning” is drawn from William J. Kennedy’s discussion in “Humanist Classifications of Poetry among the Arts and Sciences,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 3: The Renaissance*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 91, 94 [91–97]. The term itself is taken from Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
44. Glyn P. Norton, ed., *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 3: The Renaissance*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 3.
45. See J. A. Burrow’s comments on the poet’s reception during the period, in *Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Anthology* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 35. I have used the phrase “chorus of praise” elsewhere in this chapter, a common descriptor in studies of Chaucer’s reception that Burrow himself prominently utilizes.
46. See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:120.
47. See Clare Kinney, “Thomas Speght’s Renaissance Chaucer and the *Solaas of Sentence in Troilus and Criseyde*,” in *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance*, Krier, p. 66 [66–84].
48. Tim Machan, “Speght’s *Works* and the Invention of Chaucer,” *Text* 8 (1995): 148, 149 [145–170]. As Helen Cooper puts it, Speght’s edition is perhaps the most notable of the sixteenth-century editions of Chaucer’s complete works that “indicate his canonization, almost as the patron saint

- of English poetry”; see Cooper, “Chaucerian Representation,” in *New Readings of Chaucer’s Poetry*, ed. Robert G. Benson and Susan J. Ridyard (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2003), p. 12 [7–29].
49. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:cvi–cvii. It should also be noted that in addition to his use of documentary records, Speght was more circumspect than previous biographers, which is seen, for example, when he challenges the belief in Chaucer’s nobility by saying that (despite Bale’s assertion to the contrary), “in the opinion of some Heralds (otherwise then his vertues and learning commended him) hee descended not of any great house, which they gather by his Armes”; see Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, p. 19.
 50. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:cvii.
 51. Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, p. 28.
 52. In section 1.2 of Chapter 1, I offer words from Speght as distinct evidence for an awareness of persona-theory during the Renaissance.
 53. Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, pp. 19, 21.
 54. This is Machan’s view in “Speght’s Works,” 155, 161, 169.
 55. Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, p. 28.
 56. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.148. This quotation is from the preliminary address printed in the 1598 edition.
 57. Beaumont’s letter is presented in full in Boswell and Holton, *Chaucer’s Fame in England*, pp. 159–161. Apparently, this epistle was written by Francis Beaumont, the Master of the Charterhouse, and not the well-known dramatist.
 58. A thorough discussion of the various manifestations of this perspective has been offered by Linda Georgianna in “The Protestant Chaucer,” in *Chaucer’s Religious Tales*, ed. C. David Benson and Elizabeth Robertson (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1990), pp. 55–69. More generally, this period is marked by a series of modernizations of the poet’s “archaic” Middle English, a sort of poetic refurbishment that would become a mainstay of Chaucerian reception. The reason seventeenth-century writers felt the need to rewrite Chaucer’s texts is quite simple: his language, even more so than we have seen in the preceding era, was perceived as obscure and difficult to understand, so that critics felt the need to respond by “revitalizing” the archaic English literary past and refining it for future consumption.
 59. Italics mine. See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 3:4.79. The Latin phrasing describes Chaucer as “dignitate auctus” and states “sanè is est, quem antiquis Latii poetis non immerito conferre possemus.”
 60. See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 3:4.79. In the Latin, “licet id in Chauceri laudem haud parùm cedat, quod tam rudi aeo Priscorum Poetarum Veneres si non assecutus, saltèm imitatus fuerit, & horridiusculam linguae Anglicanae (qualis tunc temporis obtinuit) duriciem, Carmine ligatam, amoeniorem atque elegantiore reddiderit; primus enim omnium Linguae nostrati sordes excussit, nitorem intulit, & largâ vocum molliorum aliundè invectarum supellectile ditavit.”

61. See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 3:4.79. The Latin reads, “in rebus denique Theologicis apprime versatus.”
62. Translation mine, from the Latin as printed by Spurgeon in *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 3:4.79–80: “hinc graviores Ecclesiae Romanae superstitiones & errores acerbè sapiùs vellicat; corruptam ineptissimis commentis Disciplinam Ecclesiasticam luget; Cleri luxuriam & ignaviam castigat, in Ordines autem Mendicantes projectissimo ubique odio invehitur, quorum hypocrisin, ambitionem, aliaque vitia turpissima, aliquoties toâ operâ, nullibi vero non oblatâ quâvis occasione, acerrime insectatur.”
63. An engaging discussion of the creation of “Father Chaucer” by his early readers is offered by Christopher Cannon, *The Making of Chaucer’s English: A Study of Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 179, 211.
64. Ashley Thorndike, “Shakespeare in America,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 13 (1927): 156 [153–172].
65. In Trigg’s words, “the terms of Dryden’s preface are echoed again and again. Its discussion of Chaucer’s language, his sensibility, his comprehensive interest in human nature, and his comic realism are all deeply influential in subsequent criticism.” See Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, p. 154.
66. Dryden’s comments do not amount to a full and comprehensive “biography,” as Spurgeon categorizes them, but they do include many biographical observations that merit their discussion on these pages. The following are the Chaucerian poems modernized by Dryden for the *Fables* (note the inclusion of a spurious text): the Cock and the Fox (NPT), the Flower and the Leaf, the Wife of Bath’s Tale, and the Character of a Good Parson (“imitated from Chaucer and Inlarg’d”).
67. Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, p. 145.
68. Trigg concurs, commenting that it is “widely accepted” that Dryden’s “Preface” “inaugurates modern Chaucer criticism,” as it “consolidates a number of strands in the late medieval and early modern response to Chaucer. It also provides a founding moment for modern criticism.” See Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, pp. xix–xx, 145.
69. See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.276, 282.
70. Dryden has, in fact, been called an outright “poetic nationalist,” who sought to use classical criteria not just to criticize, but to refine and harmonize diverse traditions in order to construct an English canon rivaling the classics. On these points, see James Sambrook, “Poetry, 1660–1740,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 4: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 92 [75–116]; and Joshua Scodel, “Seventeenth-century English Literary Criticism: Classical Values, English Texts and Contexts,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 3: The Renaissance*, Norton, p. 554 [543–554].
71. Dryden’s nationalism also is evident when he notes that “as I am, and always have been studious to promote the Honour of my Native Country,

- so I soon resolv'd to put their Merits to the Trial, by turning some of the *Canterbury Tales* into our Language, as it is now refin'd." See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.272, 273.
72. Franklin E. Court offers an insightful discussion of the study of English literature in the eighteenth century, which "was a way to teach conduct, not . . . as a measure of 'polite learning' designated for the sons of the aristocracy, but as a way to transcend class-based distinctions of refinement and to promote English citizenship." See Court, *Institutionalizing English Literature: The Culture and Politics of Literary Study, 1750–1900* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 20.
 73. See Sambrook, "Poetry," p. 88.
 74. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
 75. See Scodel, "Seventeenth-century English," p. 554.
 76. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.276, 278. Dryden proceeds to comment further on the "realism" of the pilgrims' speech, and the "natural" comedy and pathos of their characters.
 77. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.278–279.
 78. However, in his very brief, purely biographical words about Chaucer the Man in the *Fables*, Dryden, too, has moments where he falls into the easy trap of perpetuating certain aspects of the "Legends." Thus, he agrees that (among other things) Chaucer was a poet for, and hence "favour'd" by, Edward III, Richard II, and Henry IV, an author who nonetheless took a political fall in conjunction with the fortunes of his "Brother-in Law" John of Gaunt. See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.277.
 79. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.277–278. Italics mine.
 80. Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, p. 148.
 81. This idea of Chaucer as an example or teacher is appropriate within the common Neoclassical interest in the effects of literature on its audience.
 82. The full title of Urry's edition is *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer Compared With Former Editions, and Many Valuable MSS. Out of Which, Three Tales Are Added, Which Were Never before Printed* (London, 1721).
 83. Pask, *Emergence of the English Author*, pp. 51, 52.
 84. The prefatory material in Urry's *Works* is unpaginated.
 85. Dart specifically mentions Chaucer's supposed interactions with Petrarch, Boccaccio, Lydgate, and others.
 86. This observation naturally brings up the poet's religion, which usually goes hand in hand with biographical commentary about his cultivated position as a noble man of letters. Hence, Dart seeks to further ensure the poet's prudent Protestantism, explaining that "there can be no doubt of Chaucer's intimacy with *Wickliffe*," so that the purported fact that he "was a Favourer of the *Lollards*" is clearly "evident from several places in his Writings, where he bitterly inveighs against the Priests and Fryers," although "his resentments were chiefly against the personal Vices of the Clergy, not their Doctrines."

87. Dart states that “many particulars relating to our Author having, through the negligence of our fore-fathers, been suffered to sink in oblivion, it is the more necessary to preserve what remains of him, and to attempt the recovery of some parts of his History: I shall therefore digest the confused common places left concerning him in as regular a method as I can, and with such additions as have been rescued from Time endeavour to clear up his Birth, and by the assistance of such particular *Æra*’s as are on Record concerning him, trace him through the most remarkable Passages of his Life.”
88. Despite his promotion of these “legends,” Dart’s influential biography should be recognized as the first life of Chaucer wherein the poet’s key testimony in the Scope-Grosvenor trial is relayed, and also for providing a more accurate and detailed discussion of the poet’s parentage and administrative work.
89. I have used the second edition of Tyrwhitt’s opus, entitled *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer. To Which Are Added an Essay on His Language and Versification, and an Introductory Discourse Together with Notes and a Glossary* (Oxford, 1798). His biographical comments are offered in “An Abstract of the Historical Passages of the Life of Chaucer.”
90. In full, Tyrwhitt’s comment (which references the presumption of the author’s early educational travels broad) reads, “I must observe, that these travels in France rest entirely upon the authority of Leland, whose account is full of inconsistencies.” Similar sentiments are found elsewhere in Tyrwhitt’s writing. See “An Abstract,” in *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer*, p. xviii.
91. Tyrwhitt, “An Abstract,” p. xxii.
92. The pervasiveness of the “Legends” is undeniably seen here, despite the fact that Tyrwhitt employed a more rigorous editorial method than was the norm (especially in terms of manuscript collation), and rejected a number of spurious texts, including *The Tale of Gamelyn and Beryn*, *Jack Upland*, *Lamentation of Mary Magdalen*, *The Testament of Cressida*, as well as other longer works and several miscellaneous ballads. Though Tyrwhitt’s work does support some key “legendary” texts and notions, his general scholarly caution remains evident when he explains that a biographer should not *freely* deduce “fact” from fiction: “we must be cautious . . . of supposing allusions which Chaucer never intended, or of arguing from pieces which he never wrote, as if they were his.” See “An Abstract,” pp. xxiii–xxiv. Charlotte Brewer offers a useful discussion of Tyrwhitt’s editorial work in *Editing Piers Plowman: The Evolution of the Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 54.
93. As I shall discuss in chapter 5, a common result of this viewpoint is to read the characterization of “Chaucer the Pilgrim” in the *Thopas-Melibee* link as a “true” self-description.
94. On these points, see Arthur Johnston’s *Enchanted Ground: The Study of Medieval Romance in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Athlone Press, 1964), p. 218.

95. As a result of the emergent belief in pure emotion, what mattered most for many Romantic critics was a sympathetic understanding of the individuality and creative spirit manifest in the writer's mind, and thus we see widespread support for the notion of the "sublime." See Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, "Language Theory and the Art of Understanding," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 5*, ed. Marshall Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 163 [162–184].
96. See Marshall Brown's discussion in the introduction to *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 5*, pp. 1, 2.
97. In fact, the title as it appears in full is indicative of both the scope of this biographical behemoth, as well as some of its ideological biases: *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer, the Early English Poet: Including Memoirs of His Near Friend and Kinsman, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster: With sketches of the Manners, Opinions, Arts and Literature of England in the Fourteenth Century*, 2 vols. (London, 1803).
98. Godwin, *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 1:vii.
99. In light of the recorded dates for some of Chaucer's travels abroad, several of the newfound government documents Godwin was working with explicitly contradict the "legendary" story of the poet's exile and imprisonment, so it is apparent that the biographer chose to change around dates and facts in order that the old story of exile and imprisonment would hold.
100. See Godwin, *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* 2:299, 419, 567, 569.
101. This statement is offered in the very first paragraph of the biography (Preface, 1:v–vi).
102. See Godwin, *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 1:4, 205. It should be noted that in this instance, Godwin is referring to the spurious *Court of Love*. A useful discussion of Godwin's biography and its method is provided by Hammond in *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, pp. 38–40; see also Elena Yatzek, "Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*: Making Virtue of Necessity," *Charles Lamb Bulletin* 84 (1993): 132 [126–135].
103. Godwin, *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2:80, 200. Italics mine.
104. *Ibid.*, 2:558. Italics mine.
105. *Ibid.*, 2:58.
106. The Schmitz life is entitled "A Life of Geoffrey Chaucer" and is found on pages cvii–cxxxvii of *The Poems of Geoffrey Chaucer, Modernized*, ed. Richard Hengist Horne (London, 1841).
107. Schmitz, "A Life of Geoffrey Chaucer," pp. cvii, cviii. Italics mine. In the first reference, Schmitz is typically citing the spurious *Testament of Love* as evidence.
108. Schmitz, "A Life of Geoffrey Chaucer," pp. xccviii–cxxxix.
109. *Ibid.*, p. cxxxvi. Italics mine. These comments are made in reference to Chaucer's humorous self-presentation in the *Prologue to Sir Thopas*, which I discuss more fully in chapter 5.
110. Schmitz, "A Life of Geoffrey Chaucer," pp. cxx–cxxi.
111. Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, p. 1.

112. Nicholas Harris Nicolas, *Memoir of Chaucer*, in *The Aldine Edition of the British Poets: The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (London, 1845), pp. 9–107.
113. This is Hammond's description of the work on page 40 of *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*.
114. Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, p. 40. Nicolas showed that during the time "Chaucer" was supposedly in exile, the Man himself was living in London and regularly receiving his pension, that he held his customs offices throughout the duration from 1382–1386, and that in August 1386, when the poet was allegedly imprisoned in the Tower, he was in truth employed as a member of parliament for the county of Kent. Despite these welcome advances, we must note that Nicolas still believed in Chaucer's authorship of *The Testament of Love* and other spurious works (including *The Flower and the Leaf*). For discussion, see Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:cxii.
115. Nicolas, *Memoir*, pp. 9–10.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
117. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
118. *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 90. Italics mine.
119. Nicolas, *Memoir*, p. 19. Italics mine.
120. Nicolas, *Memoir*, p. 19.
121. See my discussion of these terms and kindred concepts in section 1.4 of chapter 1.
122. Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, p. 1. The thorough research of the Chaucer Society certainly merits recognition here, as it began periodically publishing the documentary records of the author's life in 1875, which buttressed the type of life-writing called for by Nicolas. In 1900, these records were collectively published as *Life Records of Chaucer*, a work that was later augmented by the now-standard edition completed by Martin M. Crow and Clair C. Olson, titled *Chaucer Life-Records* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).
123. This is the view of René Wellek in his comprehensive *History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950, Volume 3: The Age of Transition* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1965), p. 87.
124. See Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 14.
125. See Brewer, "Images of Chaucer," 267, 269. The issue of Chaucer's "Englishness" is usefully discussed in Pearsall's "Chaucer and Englishness," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 101 (1998): 77–99. Pearsall believes that it is not the imputation of national qualities by the Victorians that is most important, but the appropriation of Chaucer as a possessor of particular qualities and national pride (p. 77).
126. I quote from Thomas A. Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body: From Corpse to Corpus* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 69. I also draw from Franklin E. Court, *The Scottish Connection: The Rise of English Literary Study in*

- Early America* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), pp. 46–47; and Court, *Institutionalizing English Literature*, p. 132.
127. The following volumes contain Morley's various biographical accounts of Chaucer: *English Writers*, Volume 1, Part 2, *From the Conquest to Chaucer* (London, 1866); *English Writers*, Volume 2, Part 1, *From Chaucer to Dunbar* (1867); and *English Writers: An Attempt towards a History of English Literature*, Volume 5, *The Fourteenth Century* (London, 1890).
 128. Morley, *English Writers*, 1:773.
 129. Morley, *English Writers*, 2:160. In a move that seems to typify this stage of Morley's writing, the biographer chooses to work around the dates of the poet's life (not unlike Godwin), which allows him to argue that Chaucer's imprisonment *did* occur, it just happened *after* the Merciless Parliament rather than during the previous several years; see *English Writers*, 2:273.
 130. Hertzberg discounted that the *Testament of Love* was part of Chaucer's canon in the extensive introduction to his German translation of Chaucer's major works, *Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Geschichten* (Hildberghausen, 1866).
 131. Morley, *English Writers*, 5:85.
 132. Though Morley has been compelled to correct his mistakes as a result of the new documentary records brought to light through Nicolas's *Memoir* and the research of the Chaucer Society, he chooses not to discuss his previous misconceptions or prior approach.
 133. Minto's biography is found in Chapter 1 of *Characteristics of English Poets from Chaucer to Shirley*, in a chapter entitled "Geoffrey Chaucer I. His Life, Character, and Works." I used the second edition of this work (Edinburgh and London, 1885), where the biography appears on pages 1–17.
 134. Minto, *Characteristics of English Poets*, pp. 4, 8, 9.
 135. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
 136. Adolphus William Ward, *Chaucer* (London, 1879), p. 46. As David Amigoni has observed, nineteenth-century life-writing—including, or especially, the famous "English Men of Letters" series of biographies—can be conceived broadly as a type of rhetoric that responds to, and hopes to patriotically shape attitudes toward, the language and ideals of culture. Cf. *Victorian Biography: Intellectuals and the Ordering of Discourse* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 24.
 137. Ward, *Chaucer*, p. 1.
 138. *Ibid.*, pp. 145–146.
 139. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
 140. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
 141. Thomas R. Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer: His Life and Writings*, 3 vols. (1892; repr. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962). Lounsbury presents his own biography in the first chapter, entitled "The Life of Chaucer." Volume I contains the chapters in question, Chapter I spanning pages 3–126, and Chapter II (on the "Legend") pages 129–224.

142. Elsewhere, I have discussed Lounsbury as being a prominent example of an American critic who consciously sought to break from the traditions of British literary scholarship. See my discussion in “Worlds Apart? Chaucerian (Re)Constructions in Britain and America,” in *Translaio, or the Transmission of Culture in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Laura H. Hollengreen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 229–253.
143. Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer*, 1:xv. Lounsbury adds that “the biography of Chaucer is built upon doubts and thrives upon perplexities” and also comments that “what we call the lives of our earlier authors consists in most cases of little else than the discussion of disputed points that can never be settled, the weighing of probabilities where certainty can never be assured, or, if nothing better offers, the relation of events in which they have borne, or may have borne, a part.” See *Studies in Chaucer*, 1:4, 11.
144. Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer*, 1:xiv.
145. Lounsbury pointedly adds that “knowledge is the mother of confidence; but so likewise is ignorance.” On these points, see *Studies in Chaucer*, 1:4, 52, 175.
146. Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer*, 1:156.
147. *Ibid.*, 1:156, 177.
148. *Ibid.*, 1:217.
149. *Ibid.*, 1:216.
150. Walter W. Skeat, ed., *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), 1:lii, liii. Skeat’s biography encompasses pages ix–lxi of the first volume. Despite such generally sage critical observations, it should be noted that Skeat’s life of Chaucer does, at times, confidently offer unprovable (and sometimes fallible) presumptions. For instance, he holds fast to the belief that Chaucer actually met Petrarch, and, concerning the poet’s alleged financial problems, remarks, “it is pleasant to think that, as far as money matters were concerned, he ended his days in comparative ease.” See *The Complete Works*, 1:xxv, xliv–xlv.
151. Skeat, *The Complete Works*, 1:lii.
152. *Ibid.*, 1:liii.
153. Louis Althusser’s influential concept of ideology was proposed in his 1970 study titled “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.”
154. John Matthews Manly, *Some New Light on Chaucer* (London: G. Bell, 1926), p. ix.
155. Briefly, the other main current of Chaucerian life-writing that Manly supports pertains to the poet’s education and eventual courtly occupations, which, it is argued, can logically be explained by assuming that he was educated at the Inner Temple, as versions of the “Legends” asserted. In making this claim, Manly is reliant largely on the old record of “Master Buckley,” who had been cited many years earlier by Speght as offering proof of Chaucer’s “beating of a friar in Fleet Street” while serving at the Inner Temple.
156. Manly, *Some New Light*, p. 73.

157. *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 93. As Steve Ellis has noted, Manly's study may be seen as "both a symptom and a stimulus to the empiricizing obsession" of this time-period, when several scholars showed an interest in "empirical" things like the topography of the Canterbury pilgrimage. See Ellis, *Chaucer at Large*, pp. 29, 30.
158. Manly, *Some New Light*, p. 295. Derek Brewer is one contemporary scholar who agrees with Manly's conception of Chaucerian "realism," stating that several of the characters "indisputably" refer to living people and arguing that "we will never get closer to ordinary fourteenth-century life" than in the verse of Chaucer, whose *Tales* provide "a remarkable panorama of England in the fourteenth century as reflected in the many facets of Chaucer's mind." See Brewer, *Chaucer and His World* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1978), pp. 197, 199, 200.
159. John Gardner, *The Life and Times of Chaucer* (1977; repr. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1999), p. 3. Italics mine.
160. Gardner, *The Life and Times*, p. 19.
161. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
163. Howard, *Chaucer and the Medieval World*, p. xv.
164. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
165. *Who Murdered Chaucer? A Medieval Mystery* (London: Methuen, 2003) is a collaboration undertaken by Terry Jones, Robert Yeager, Terry Dolan, Alan Fletcher, and Juliette Dor that concedes that "most of what follows is speculation. The evidence is mostly circumstantial, and we have to admit that we shall probably never really know the truth" (p. 1). The study goes on to consider the possibility that Chaucer was murdered in the year 1400, concluding that "if Chaucer were, indeed, the victim of a state-arranged 'disappearance,' then we might do worse than point the finger of suspicion at . . . Thomas Arundel" (p. 360).
166. Derek Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 3.
167. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 4, 5.
168. Though it is extraneous to the specific interests of this section, it is worth mentioning that Pearsall briefly offers an interesting way of reading Chaucer's life that might be useful for future biographical accounts. Pearsall admits the likelihood that he will find the poet a "decent sort of fellow," and as a result, suggests that the best way to approach the author may be to consciously create a sort of negative prejudice against him, which, when balanced against the inherently positive bias of the biographer, may initiate a more "true" depiction, or at least some fresh biographical possibilities. See *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 8.
169. Paul Strohm recently has made a similar observation with specific regard to applications of critical theory, saying that "the right use of theory is not to 'settle things.'" See *Theory and the Premodern Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 213.

3 Chaucer Speaks: Memoirs of the Man?

1. Steven Connor, "The Ethics of the Voice," in *Critical Ethics: Text, Theory and Responsibility*, ed. Dominic Rainsford and Tim Woods (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 235 [220–237].
2. Tobin Siebers, *The Ethics of Criticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 2.
3. I have briefly discussed Horace's influential assertion in section 1.2 of chapter 1. In the Latin, his famous phrase (from the *Ars poetica*) reads "aut prodesse volunt aut delectare."
4. *General Prologue*, l.789; *The Miller's Prologue*, l.3180.
5. "Lak of Stedfastnesse," 7; Chaucer's Retraction, X.1085, 1088.
6. Siebers, *Ethics of Criticism*, p. 1.
7. Dominic Rainsford and Tim Woods, "Introduction: Ethics and Intellectuals," in *Critical Ethics*, Rainsford and Woods, p. 4 [1–19].
8. Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 421.
9. Alfred David, "Chaucer's Good Counsel to Scogan," *Chaucer Review* 3.4 (1969): 266 [265–274].
10. I quote from the introduction to Alfred David's useful *A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer Volume V: The Minor Poems*, Part One, ed. George B. Pace and Alfred David (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), p. 8.
11. Jay Ruud, "Many a Song and Many a Leccherous Lay": *Tradition and Individuality in Chaucer's Lyric Poetry* (New York: Garland, 1992), p. 13.
12. Booth, *The Company We Keep*, p. 11. "Ethical criticism" is a description used by Siebers in *Ethics of Criticism*, p. 220.
13. This headlink is taken from the edition printed by one Julian Notary ca. 1499–1502. I use the transcription from Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.47.
14. Godwin, *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2:558.
15. These views are found in Scattergood's examination of "The Short Poems" in the *Oxford Guides to Chaucer*, Minnis, pp. 497, 498; and his essay "Chaucer a Bukton and Proverbs," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 31 (1987): 106 [98–107].
16. Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, p. 34; I also draw from Kittredge, "Chaucer's Envoy to Bukton," *Modern Language Notes* 24.1 (1909): 15 [14–15].
17. Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 184.
18. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 3, 25. Trigg cites Sedgwick's theories in condemnation of patriarchal perspectives of this very kind, characterizing both "Bukton" and the "Envoy to Scogan" as supporting a Chaucerian reading community that is "interpellated as homosocial (masculine and male-identified)" by virtue of a "shared anxiety" and a "homosocial" kind of identification. See *Congenial Souls*, pp. 28, 33.

19. See Arthur Gilman's biography of Chaucer in *The Poetical Works of Chaucer*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1880), 1:lxviii.
20. David, *A Variorum Edition*, p. 140.
21. Jane Chance, "Chaucerian Irony in the Verse Epistles 'Wordes Unto Adam,' 'Lenvoy a Scogan,' and 'Lenvoy a Bukton,'" *Papers on Language and Literature* 21(1985): 125 [115–128].
22. *Ibid.*, 126, 127.
23. Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, p. 36. Howard similarly comments that the voice in "Scogan" is not a persona, "but Chaucer himself addressing a trusted younger friend." See *Chaucer and the Medieval World*, p. 464.
24. Chance, "Chaucerian Irony," 120, 122–123.
25. Jay Ruud, "Chaucer's *Envoy to Scogan*: 'Tullius Kyndenesse' and the Law of Kynde," *Chaucer Review* 20.4 (1986): 327, 328 [323–330]; see also Ruud, "*Many a Song and Many a Lecherous Lay*," p. 107.
26. Scattergood, "The Short Poems," p. 509.
27. John Scattergood, "Old Age, Love, and Friendship in Chaucer's *Envoy to Scogan*," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 35 (1991): 99 [92–101]. See also Scattergood, "The Short Poems," p. 510.
28. David, "Chaucer's Good Counsel," 266, 270.
29. *Ibid.*, 272, 273.
30. This is the view of Richard Horvath in "Chaucer's Epistolary Poetic: The Envoys to Bukton and Scogan," *Chaucer Review* 37.2 (2002): 174 [173–189]. Horvath offers perhaps the most persuasive case for reading these two ostensibly private poems as public works, saying that the poet addresses "a private individual in terms that imply a wider audience may be listening" (p. 179) and arguing that "their ingenuity lies in their capacity to recreate an intimate bond between the speaker and a host of readers . . . recipients not of his actual friendship but of its simulacrum, a cultivated rapport between poet and audience in the broader sense" (p. 185).
31. As Paul Strohm has noted, "the dedicatee of a poem is not necessarily the sole member of its implied audience, or even very close to the center of that audience," which makes the scholarly search for Chaucer and his friends in/surrounding this work (and others like it) an even more difficult critical task. See Strohm, "Chaucer's Audience(s): Fictional, Implied, Intended, Actual," *Chaucer Review* 18.2 (1983): 141 [137–145]. Strohm's view apparently was influenced by Anne Middleton's notion of "public poetry," which describes a common poetic voice in the vernacular that "defined man as a social being, and unlike its private counterpart, was turned outward to public expression" and "is offered not as the realization of an individual identity, but as the realization of the human condition." See Middleton, "The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II," *Speculum* 53 (1978): 96, 109 [94–114].
32. See Scattergood's summary of these accounts in "The Jongleur, the Copyist, and the Printer: The Tradition of Chaucer's *Wordes Unto Adam, His Own Sciveyn*," in *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context*, ed.

- Keith Busby and Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1990), p. 499 [499–508]. In her important paper on “New Evidence on the Hengwrt/Ellesmere Scribe and the City,” presented at the 2004 New Chaucer Society Congress, Linne Mooney provided persuasive evidence that linked Chaucer’s writing to the London scribe Adam Pinckhurst. Parts of this presentation have been published in “A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript by the Hengwrt/Ellesmere Scribe and Its Implications for London Standard English,” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 26 (2004): 65–112, written in conjunction with Simon Horobin; and “Chaucer’s Scribe,” *Speculum* 81.1 (2006): 97–138.
33. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp. 3–4.
 34. Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics*, pp. 6–7. See also the continuation of her discussion on pages 8–10.
 35. Morley, *English Writers*, 2:283; Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer*, 1:229.
 36. Britt Mize, “Adam, and Chaucer’s Words unto Him,” *Chaucer Review* 35.4 (2001): 353, 356 [351–377].
 37. See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 2:235.
 38. Scattergood, “The Jongleur, the Copyist, and the Printer,” p. 506; Scattergood, “The Short Poems,” p. 501.
 39. Scattergood, “The Jongleur, the Copyist, and the Printer,” p. 506. Stephen Partridge suggests that the poet portrays himself in the poem as being actively involved in making copies and correcting scribal errors; see Partridge, “Questions of Evidence: Manuscripts and the Early History of Chaucer’s Works,” in *Writing after Chaucer: Essential Readings in Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Daniel J. Pinti (New York: Garland, 1998), p. 12 [1–26].
 40. Mize, “Adam, and Chaucer’s Words,” 368.
 41. R. E. Kaske, “*Clericus Adam* and Chaucer’s *Adam Scriveyn*,” in *Chaucerian Problems and Perspectives: Essays Presented to Paul E. Beichner C. S. C.*, ed. Edward Vasta and Zacharias P. Thundy (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), pp. 114–115 [114–118].
 42. *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 117.
 43. Chance, “Chaucerian Irony,” 118.
 44. *Ibid.*, 119.
 45. Jones and company use this common, Aristotelian phrase to describe the poet in *Who Murdered Chaucer*, p. 2.
 46. Carlson, *Chaucer’s Jobs*, pp. 1, 64.
 47. This is the view of Gardner in his *Life and Times of Chaucer*, a disputable perspective that smacks of the kind of idealized biographical pronouncements encountered in chapter 2; see *The Life and Times*, pp. 248, 262. David is one critic who tempers Gardner’s view yet agrees with his private reading, arguing that (depending on the dating of the poem) “Lak” may represent encouragement to the (young) king to cure the ills inflicted by previous regimes, or an effort to rally the (older) king to reform evils for which he is largely responsible; see David, *A Variorum Edition*, p. 78.

48. It should be noted that in an early account of “Lak,” Strohm affords it a direct, personalized significance by suggesting that Chaucer intended the work as advice for the prince rather than aiming it at his usual, core audience of courtiers—a view that he would come to temper in time, which may coincide with a more “personal” reading of “Purse” (see note 65 below). For reference, see *Social Chaucer*, p. 82.
49. Paul Strohm, “The Textual Environment of Chaucer’s *Lak of Stedfastnesse*,” in *The Idea of Medieval Literature: New Essays on Chaucer and Medieval Culture in Honor of Donald R. Howard*, ed. James M. Dean and Christian K. Zacher (London: Associated University Presses, 1992), pp. 137, 142 [129–148].
50. Strohm, “The Textual Environment,” pp. 139, 142, 143.
51. See Brewer, *A New Introduction to Chaucer*, p. 119.
52. See Marchette Chute, *Geoffrey Chaucer of England* (London: Robert Hale, 1951), p. 289.
53. Brewer, *A New Introduction to Chaucer*, p. 120.
54. J. E. Cross, “The Old Swedish *Trohetsvisan* and Chaucer’s *Lak of Stedfastnesse*: A Study in a Medieval Genre,” *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* 16 (1965): 299 [283–314].
55. Cross, “The Old Swedish *Trohetsvisan*,” 299, 300.
56. *Ibid.*, 289.
57. On these notions, see Scattergood, “Social and Political Issues in Chaucer,” 470, 472; Scattergood, “The Short Poems,” pp. 489–491; and Howard, *The Idea of the Canterbury Tales*, p. 130.
58. Ruud also suggests that “Lak” represents a generic poem that presents a world where true nobility has ceased to exist, and with it the Golden Age of truth and gentillesse. In this view, the Golden Age might return again through a rightful king’s governance. On these various points, see Ruud, “*Many a Song*,” pp. 54, 56, 57.
59. In making these claims, I am particularly drawing from lines 2–4, 9, 11–12, 15, and 25 of “Lak.”
60. Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 179.
61. Historians have made it clear that, although he was apparently well-regarded by the populace before the Peasant’s Revolt (and even seen as a kind of benevolent father), Richard’s popularity waned at every level toward the latter years of his reign. For reference, see Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).
62. A. J. Pollard, *Late Medieval England, 1399–1509* (New York: Longman, 2000). See also Gwilym Dodd and Douglas Biggs, eds., *Henry IV: The Establishment of the Regime, 1399–1406* (Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press, 2003).
63. Nicolas, *Memoir*, pp. 53, 82.
64. Cited in Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 2:93.
65. Chute, *Geoffrey Chaucer of England*, p. 292. Strohm makes an altogether different historical argument for the piece. With its garland of arguments supportive of Henry’s claim, “Purse” is apparently the first (extant) poem to emphasize that Henry does possess royal blood and the estates

- of the realm did want him to rule. Strohm concludes that if Chaucer was granted his annuity as a result of the text, Henry was gaining more from the exchange. See "Saving the Appearances: Chaucer's *Purse* and the Fabrication of the Lancastrian Claim," in *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), pp. 33, 34, 36 [21–42].
66. Sumner Ferris, "The Date of Chaucer's Final Annuity and the 'Complaint to His Empty Purse,'" *Modern Philology* 65.1 (1967): 46 [45–52].
 67. Ferris, "The Date," 47, 50. Ferris contends that Chaucer went through the proper bureaucratic channels to receive his money and waited until he badly needed it, and ascribes the lack of payment to an administrative mix-up due to the regnal transition.
 68. Andrew J. Fimmel, "The Poet as Sunday Man: 'The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse,'" *Chaucer Review* 8.2 (1973): 150, 151 [147–158].
 69. Fimmel, "The Poet as Sunday Man," 153. It is interesting that Fimmel describes "Purse" (on page 147) as the example *par excellence* of Chaucer the poet and Chaucer the Man coming together.
 70. Skeat, *The Complete Works*, 1:xliv. Recently, Brewer has agreed with such a "reasonable" explanation, seeing Henry as willing to be gracious to the old poet he had known all his life. Howard echoes this sentiment, concluding that Chaucer "won the favor" of Henry with the poem. See, respectively, Brewer, *Chaucer and His World*, p. 212; and Howard, *Chaucer and the Medieval World*, p. 478.
 71. E. P. Kuhl, "Chaucer and Westminster Abbey," *Journal of English and German Philology* July 1946: 342 [340–343]. An interesting study relative to Kuhl's argument has been undertaken by Thomas A. Prendergast, who discusses the entanglement of "Purse" with an early modern legend about Chaucer's so-called "prodigality" (i.e., the supposed biographical account of the *Testament of Love*), which affected the poem's reception—specifically in terms of a desire to absolve Chaucer from a reputation for political opportunism, traces of which (Prendergast believes) remain today. See "Politics, Prodigality, and the Reception of Chaucer's 'Purse,'" in *Reinventing the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Constructions of the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, ed. William F. Gentrup (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 63–76.
 72. Kuhl, "Chaucer and Westminster Abbey," 343.
 73. I paraphrase from Carlson, *Chaucer's Jobs*, pp. 43–44.
 74. R. T. Lenaghan, "Chaucer's Circle of Gentlemen and Clerks," *Chaucer Review* 18.2 (1983): 158 [155–160].
 75. Robert S. Sturges, *Chaucer's Pardoner and Gender Theory: Bodies of Discourse* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 17–18.
 76. Jones and company essentially ask the same questions, but do so to suggest that the poem was originally written for Richard but altered when Henry took the throne. See *Who Murdered Chaucer*, p. 180.
 77. Translation mine. See Crow and Olson, *Chaucer Life-Records*, p. 547. The Latin reads as follows: "Chawcerus ante mortem suam sepe clamavit ve

- michi ve michi quia revocare nec destruere jam potero illa que male scripsi de malo et turpissimo amore hominum ad mulieres et jam de homine ad hominem continuabuntur. Velim. Nolim. Et sic plangens mortuus.”
78. James Dean recently has argued that the Retraction does seem to be what Chaucer wanted for the end of the *Tales*, and suggests that in light of other similar endings to Middle English works, the text at least shows us why Gascoigne’s story of Chaucer’s death-bed repentance is likely since such an anecdote harmonizes with both late medieval clerical sensibilities and common medieval English narrative patterns. See “Chaucer’s Repentance: A Likely Story,” *Chaucer Review* 24.1 (1989): 64–76.
 79. David Marshall, “Unmasking the Last Pilgrim: How and Why Chaucer Used the Retraction to Close *The Tales of Canterbury*,” *Christianity and Literature* 31 (1982): 72 [55–74].
 80. Joseph A. Dane, *Who Is Buried in Chaucer’s Tomb?: Studies in the Reception of Chaucer’s Book* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), p. 102. Trigg echoes Dane’s comments, adding that “the problems in reading the *Retraction* show how deeply implicated are questions of reception and transmission with the earliest response to the text, how hard it is to draw that secure line between (authorial) text and (editorial and critical) commentary, and how difficult it is to read Chaucer’s texts as completely closed.” See Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, p. 71.
 81. On these various points, see James D. Gordon, “Chaucer’s Retraction: A Review of Opinion,” in *Studies in Medieval Literature in Honor of Professor Albert Croll Baugh*, ed. MacEdward Leach (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), pp. 81–96; and Douglas Wurtele, “The Penitence of Geoffrey Chaucer,” *Viator* 11 (1980): 335–359.
 82. See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.307.
 83. See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:319.
 84. Ward, *Chaucer*, p. 141.
 85. It should be noted that N. F. Blake is one contemporary scholar who has continued the tradition of skepticism about the Retraction’s very authenticity. Noting the vagaries of manuscript transmission, Blake suggests that the Retraction may have been an addition, not written by Chaucer, that was included to give the *Canterbury Tales* a more finished appearance. See N. F. Blake, *The Textual Tradition of the Canterbury Tales* (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), pp. 173, 200, 202.
 86. J. M. Manly, ed., *Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales* (New York: H. Holt, 1928), p. 656.
 87. James Work, “Chaucer’s Sermon and Retractions,” *Modern Language Notes* 47.4 (1932): 257–259.
 88. Charles A. Owen, Jr., *The Manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1991), p. 125.
 89. Owen specifically refers to the Parson’s “treatise” as the “Treatise on Penitence.” See Charles A. Owen, Jr., “What the Manuscripts Tell Us about the Parson’s Tale,” *Medium Aevum* 63.2 (1994): 239 [239–249]. Lee Patterson similarly considers the function of the *Parson’s Tale* and

- Retraction as a penitential manual or treatise on penitence; see Patterson, "The 'Parson's Tale' and the Quitting of the 'Canterbury Tales,'" *Traditio* 34 (1978): 331–380.
90. Larry D. Benson, "The Order of the *Canterbury Tales*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 3 (1981): 80–81 [77–120].
 91. Mícheál F. Vaughan, "Creating Comfortable Boundaries: Scribes, Editors, and the Invention of the *Parson's Tale*," in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400–1602*, ed. Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp. 46, 47, 51 [45–90].
 92. Vaughan, "Creating Comfortable Boundaries," p. 68.
 93. J. S. P. Tatlock, "Chaucer's *Retractions*," *PMLA* 28.4 (1913): 521, 524 [521–529].
 94. Tatlock, "Chaucer's *Retractions*," 525, 528–529. Tatlock nonetheless bemoaned the Retraction, saying (on page 528) that "Chaucer was no longer himself if he seriously would have liked to blot out entirely, on religious and moral grounds" the majority of his mature poetic output.
 95. Olive Sayce, "Chaucer's *Retractions*: The Conclusion of the *Tales* and Its Place in Literary Tradition," *Medium Aevum* 40.3 (1971): 232, 233 [230–248]. Sayce explains that this type of text often served the purpose of recapitulation to capture the listener's sympathy, and included the motifs of reemphasizing the moral message, admonishing sinners to take heed, offering prayers and requests for intercession, and mentioning the poet's name and the title of the work.
 96. Sayce, "Chaucer's *Retractions*," 237, 245.
 97. Gale C. Schricker, "On the Relation of Fact and Fiction in Chaucer's Poetic Endings," *Philological Quarterly* 60 (1981): 13, 14, 23 [13–27].
 98. Schricker, "On the Relation," 24. Schricker also claims that in no other of his endings is the speaker so manifestly Chaucer himself, nor the motivation for speaking so profound as personal salvation (p. 14).
 99. In making this point, I am drawing from Obermeier's *History and Anatomy of Auctorial Self-Criticism in the European Middle Ages*, p. 17.
 100. See William A. Madden, "Chaucer's Retraction and Mediaeval Canons of Seemliness," *Mediaeval Studies* 17 (1955): 178–179, 182, 184 [173–184].
 101. Gregory Roper, "Dropping the Personae and Reforming the Self: The *Parson's Tale* and the End of the *Canterbury Tales*," in *Closure in the Canterbury Tales: The Role of the Parson's Tale*, ed. David Raybin and Linda Harte Holley (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2000), pp. 173, 174 [151–175].
 102. Gordon, "Chaucer's Retraction," 93. More specifically, Gordon contends, Gower's supposed advice to Chaucer in (the first recension of) the *Confessio* is initiated by Venus, who urges Gower to encourage his friend to resign himself to his age and write his final "testament of love." For reference, see *The Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, 2.8.2941–2957.

103. Judith Ferster, *Chaucer on Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 155, 156.
104. Ferster, *Chaucer on Interpretation*, p. 156. George Petty and Peter W. Travis are among those who likewise offer theoretical readings of the Retraction. Petty wonders if the Retraction is a sort of “performative misinterpretation” that would permit Chaucer to escape the final condemnation of a Christian judgment against his soul for the sinfulness of his creations. Travis, meanwhile, sees the Retraction as a Derridean “parergon” that raises questions about its own status, as well as the status of the poetry it frames—the prose seems to reside inside and outside of the *Tales*, serving as both marginal gloss without and essential constituent within. See George R. Petty, Jr., “Power, Deceit, and Misinterpretation: Uncooperative Speech in the *Canterbury Tales*,” *Chaucer Review* 27.4 (1993): 413–423; and Peter W. Travis, “Deconstructing Chaucer’s Retraction,” *Exemplaria* 3.1 (1991): 135–158.
105. Elizabeth Fowler discusses how Chaucer evokes certain (conventional) “social persons” in the Retraction, and thus “presents us with a process of ethical deliberation.” See Elizabeth Fowler, *Literary Character: The Human Figure in Early English Writing* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 90.
106. See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 2:111.
107. Helen Cooper, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 410.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 412.
109. Tony Davenport, *Medieval Narrative: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 268.
110. See Chance, “Chaucerian Irony,” 128.

4 Lives of Their Own: The Wife of Bath, the Pardoner, and Critical (Dis)Approval

1. Alan Sinfield, *Cultural Politics—Queer Reading* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 56.
2. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 2. Especially important, Sedgwick argues, is that this “binarized” conception of homo/heterosexuality, codified in the late-Victorian era, “left no space in the culture exempt from the potent incoherences” in self-identification it created.
3. Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, pp. 11, 12. Sedgwick also describes several important, related “definitional binarisms,” including such opposed concepts as natural/artificial, secrecy/disclosure, same/different, in/out, and art/kitsch.
4. Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, p. 48.
5. Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn’t* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 24. Lochrie’s book offers a helpful discussion of the development and cultural impact of sexual “norms,” as well as their implications for medievalists.

6. Helen Cooper, "Chaucer's Self-Fashioning," *Poetica* 55 (2001): 57 [55–74].
7. *Ibid.*, 60, 69.
8. On these points, see Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 94, 95.
9. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. xi.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
11. See Burger, "Queer Theory," pp. 436, 437.
12. This quotation is taken from Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero's "Introduction: Caxton, Foucault, and the Pleasures of History," in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. Fradenburg and Freccero (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. xix [xiii–xxiv].
13. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, pp. 99, 100.
14. Here, I quote from Sedgwick, who is specifically considering the known/unknown of the closet, as it relates to homo/heterosexuality. See *Epistemology of the Closet*, pp. 3, 4. I have corrected a typing error in the original text.
15. See Fradenburg and Freccero, "Introduction," in *Premodern Sexualities*, p. xvii.
16. James F. Rhoads, "Motivation in Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*: Winner Take Nothing," *Chaucer Review* 17.1 (1982): 41 [40–61].
17. Ward, *Chaucer*, pp. 183, 185, 188.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
19. Manly, *Some New Light on Chaucer*, pp. 123, 227. Though Manly did admit that the *Tales'* characters were, indeed, fictional constructs, he held fast to their so-called "reality." With regards to the Pardoner, he comments that "on the whole, the evidence seems to indicate that so striking a person as the Pardoner, with his long flaxen hair, his new Italian fashions, and his glaring eyes must have been nearly as familiar to Chaucer's readers as was Rouncival itself, which they passed daily as they journeyed between London and Westminster" (p. 130). On the Wife, Manly adds that "although Chaucer borrowed from the *Roman de la Rose* . . . there are many touches which indicate that Chaucer had a particular person in mind," such as her name, her "striking costume," and her personality, while "Chaucer writes as if he had seen her in her native place" (p. 231).
20. John Ganim, "Identity and Subjecthood," in *Chaucer: An Oxford Guide*, Ellis, p. 224 [224–238].
21. Derek Pearsall's scholarship is characteristic of this tradition, as is evident in his assertion that with the Wife of Bath, Chaucer "creates so powerfully the *illusion* of spontaneous mental activity that we have the impression of penetrating to a layer of consciousness usually concealed" so that the sense of life "is irresistible." Similarly, Pearsall states that the poet "gives such dramatic vitality, such individuality of expression, and so many *suggestions* of autonomous motivation to the Pardoner that he tends to burst through the cardboard of convention." Italics mine. See *The Canterbury Tales* (New York: Routledge, 1985), pp. 84, 96.

22. C. David Benson, "Trust the Tale, Not the Teller," in *Drama, Narrative and Poetry*, Harding, p. 21 [21–33]. The barb I have quoted is indicative of Benson's firm belief that "it is Chaucer's poetry, more than the elusive personalities of his pilgrims, that deserves our trust and attention" (p. 23).
23. See *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, III.163–187.
24. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre-and Postmodern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 112, 128.
25. Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*, p. 160. In a later reading, Dinshaw articulates her notion of the "queer touch," positing that the Pardoner's interruption of the Wife of Bath sends into a "queer skid" what previously was represented confidently as being natural (the "robust heterosexuality" of the Wife), and exposes it as a pose that is learned and exploited; see *Getting Medieval*, p. 113.
26. Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, pp. 130, 131, 141. In this view, what is exclusively perceived as "natural" in the Middle Ages is heterosexuality and its attendant behaviors.
27. *The Introduction to the Pardoner's Tale*, VI.325; and *The Pardoner's Prologue* VI.459–460.
28. *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, III.68, 111, 112.
29. This is the view of Geoffrey Galt Harpham in "Imagining the Centre," in *Critical Ethics*, Rainsford and Woods, p. 42 [37–52]. I have removed Harpham's italics.
30. Booth discusses the "ethical codes" of scholars, as mentioned in chapter 3, and also concerns himself with their "ethical programs"—a notion I have borrowed here. See *The Company We Keep*, p. 5.
31. In making this comment, Baier is distinctly drawing on Bakhtinian theory. See Annette C. Baier, "Ethics in Many Different Voices," in *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy, and Theory*, ed. Jane Adamson, Richard Freadman, and David Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 268 [247–268].
32. This is Elizabeth Fowler's view of what she calls "social persons" in literature. See Fowler, *Literary Character*, p. 31.
33. Cf. Davenport, *Medieval Narrative*, p. 67.
34. *General Prologue*, I.445, 669–670.
35. *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, III.1–3.
36. *Ibid.*, 692–696.
37. Priscilla Martin, "Chaucer and Feminism: A Magpie View," in *A Wylf Ther Was: Essays in Honour of Paule Mertens-Foucq*, ed. Juliette Dor (Liège: Université de Liège, Département d'Anglais, 1992), p. 241 [235–246].
38. Quotation taken from Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:171. Dryden used this description for the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, which he chose not to translate in the *Fables* because of his reservations regarding its content (though he did include the *Wife of Bath's Tale*).
39. For a particularly helpful reading of the Wife's satirical background, see Jill Mann's *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social*

- Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 121–127.
40. Helen Cooper, “The Shape–Shiftings of the Wife of Bath, 1395–1670,” in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 171, 172 [168–184]. It is worth noting that, as Cooper contends, “almost all the modern readings of the Wife are foreshadowed in these early responses to her” (p. 170).
 41. Arguably the most controversial early text that built upon the tradition of Dame Alice as a stereotypical shrew was a ballad entitled “The Wanton Wife of Bath,” which was published (and quickly censored) in 1600. In this poem, Alisoun is depicted as one who lives lewdly, “who did in pleasure spend her dayes, and many a fonde delight.” The perceived blasphemy of “The Wanton Wife of Bath” led to an order (recorded in the Stationers’ Register) that all copies of the ballad be burnt, and that its printers be fined. See Cooper’s citations and discussion of the poem in “The Shape–Shiftings of the Wife of Bath,” pp. 180–182.
 42. Richard Brathwait’s commentary on the Wife is located on pages 60–149 of *A Comment Upon the Two Tales of Our Ancient, Renowned, and Ever Living Poet Sr Jeffray Chaucer, Knight* (London, 1665), pp. 72, 73. Perspectives of this sort were, in fact, firmly entrenched long before the Restoration, as is seen clearly in John Skelton’s *Philip Sparrow* (ca. 1507), where the reader is told how the shrewish Wife “controld/ Her husbandes as she wold,/ And them to dispise/ In the homeliest wise/ Bring other wiues in thought/ Their husbandes to set at naught”; see Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.69.
 43. William Blake and Walter Clyde Curry represent two notable, later examples of male critics who continue to condemn Alisoun’s wanton, shrewish behavior. Blake compared the “two classes” of women that Chaucer portrayed in the *Tales*—represented by the Prioress and Wife—and scorned those whom Alisoun seemed to represent. In his words, she is “a scourge and a blight. I shall say no more of her, nor expose what Chaucer has left hidden; let the young reader study what he has said of her: it is useful as a scarecrow. There are of such characters born too many for the peace of the world.” See Blake, *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the Nine and Twenty Pilgrims on Their Journey to Canterbury*, in *A Descriptive Catalogue of Pictures, Poetical and Historical Inventions* (London, 1809), p. 24. Moving forward to the early twentieth century, Curry’s influential physiognomical account pejoratively argues that the Wife’s “large hips indicate excessive virility,” while her round face and complexion “indicates that the woman is immodest, loquacious, and given to drunkenness.” Furthermore, Dame Alice’s voice displays her “voluptuous and luxurious nature,” while being “gat-toothed” can indicate the envy, boldness, deceitfulness, and faithlessness of this “fair Venerian figure.” See Curry, *Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences*, 2nd edn. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), pp. 108–113.

44. See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:283.
45. Matthew Browne was a pseudonym for William Brightly Rands; see Matthew Browne, *Chaucer's England* (London, 1869), 1:248. Morley's comment is offered in a comparison of the Wife of Bath to Emily from the *Knight's Tale*, whom the critic sees as the other primary example of "true womanhood" in the Chaucer Corpus; see Morley, *English Writers*, 2:285.
46. D. W. Robertson uses this pejorative descriptor for the Pardoner in *A Preface to Chaucer*, p. 45.
47. This is the oft-cited declaration of Kittredge in *Chaucer and His Poetry*, p. 180.
48. Cooper, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer*, p. 149.
49. These words represent Siebers's definition of Feminist criticism that, he adds, often results in "a powerful dialogue between life and literature"; see *Ethics of Criticism*, p. 186.
50. On these ideas, see Barrie Ruth Straus, "The Subversive Discourse of the Wife of Bath: Phallogocentric Discourse and the Imprisonment of Criticism," *ELH* 55.3 (1988): 529 [527–554]; see also Jill Mann, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 91.
51. Dinshaw openly remarks on both of these aspects of her own criticism in "New Approaches to Chaucer," in *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*, 2nd edn., ed. Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 274, 281 [270–289].
52. H. Marshall Leicester, Jr., "Of a Fire in the Dark: Public and Private Feminism in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*," *Women's Studies* 11.1–2 (1984): 160, 175 [157–178]. When Leicester uses the quoted phrasing, he uses Middle English spelling conventions (i.e., "woman-handel") that I have taken the liberty of altering.
53. Ethan Knapp, "Chaucer Criticism and Its Legacies," in *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Seth Lerer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 350 [324–356].
54. See Nicholas Watson, "Desire for the Past," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 21 (1999): 59–97.
55. Here, I borrow phrasing from Siebers, *Ethics of Criticism*, p. 187.
56. For Donaldson's work with persona theory, see my remarks in chapter 1, section 1.3.
57. E. Talbot Donaldson, "Designing a Camel; or, Generalizing about the Middle Ages," *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 22 (1977): 4 [1–16].
58. *Ibid.*, 7.
59. Elaine Tuttle Hansen, "The Wife of Bath and the Mark of Adam," *Women's Studies* 15 (1988): 400, 407 [399–416].
60. *Ibid.*, 404, 405.
61. Cf. Elaine Tuttle Hansen, "Irony and the Antifeminist Narrator in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 82.1 (1983): 11–31. In this essay, Hansen asserts that "Chaucer's irony is directed not, indeed, at women, but at Cupid, at the narrator of the

- Legend of Good Women*, and at the antifeminist tradition to which both unwittingly perhaps but nevertheless certainly subscribe. Both Cupid's views of female virtue, in accord with the canons of his Religion of Love, and the narrator's treatment of women in his Legends are . . . inherently antifeminist" (p. 12).
62. *Écriture féminine* is a concept famously developed by the French critic Hélène Cixous, who praised the subversive possibilities of such writing for the purpose of exposing the oppressiveness of male structures. See, for instance, Cixous's essay "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Linda Cohen, *Signs* 1 (1976): 875–899; and her book (with Catherine Clément) *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
 63. Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 35, 39, 56. In a later essay, Hansen continues this line of thought by emphasizing that it is "problematic" to see the Wife of Bath as a "feminist" in the modern-day sense of the term, since it is Chaucer as male poet, not the Wife as female character, who escapes the constraints of gender and enjoys the privileges of maleness. Furthermore, by focusing on Chaucer's intentions, critics fundamentally repeat the antifeminist move made possible by the Wife's narratives—placing the focus on the "dangerous male" and his beliefs, while the woman in the picture fades into the background. See Elaine Tuttle Hansen, "'Of His Love Daungerous to Me': Liberation, Subversion, and Domestic Violence in the Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale," in *The Wife of Bath: Complete, Authoritative Text with Biographical and Historical Contexts*, ed. Peter Beidler (New York: Bedford Books, 1996), pp. 276, 288 [273–289].
 64. "Medieval ventriloquism" is a useful term utilized by Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson to describe medieval writing in which female voices proceed from male authors. See their Introduction to *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 2 [1–21].
 65. Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*, p. 117.
 66. Jill Mann, *Geoffrey Chaucer*, pp. 78, 82. The feminist critic Ruth Evans has described Mann's Chaucer as "a good old-fashioned liberal humanist"; See Evans's review of *Geoffrey Chaucer* in *Textual Practice* 7 (1993): 85–89.
 67. Minnis offers this category in a discussion of the *Legend of Good Women*, but it is clearly applicable to reception of the Wife of Bath as well. See Minnis, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer*, p. 427.
 68. Helen Phillips, *An Introduction to the Canterbury Tales: Reading, Fiction, Context* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 36.
 69. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer*, pp. 319, 321.
 70. D. W. Robertson, Jr., "'And for My Land Thus Hastow Mordred Me?': Land, Tenure, the Cloth Industry, and the Wife of Bath," *Chaucer Review* 14.4 (1980): 403 [403–420]. Robertson's essay demonstrates that

- widowhood would have afforded the Wife her money and a certain amount of power and freedom, and argues that inheritance laws therefore explain the attractiveness of Alisoun's lands to her husbands (see also pp. 406, 414).
71. Robertson, "And for My Land," 415, 416. Stewart Justman has provided a similar reading, arguing that, in effect, Alisoun is a trader who multiplies husbands as a usurer would money; thus, Chaucer presents a thoughtful image of the commercial class, which mocks the "clamorous economic desires of men." Cf. Stewart Justman, "Trade as Pudendum: Chaucer's Wife of Bath," *Chaucer Review* 28.4 (1994): 345, 347, 349 [95–111].
 72. Beverly Kennedy, "'Withouten Oother Compaignye in Youthe': Verbal and Moral Ambiguity in the *General Prologue* Portrait of the Wife of Bath," in *Chaucer and Language: Essays in Honour of Douglas Wurtele*, ed. Robert Myles and David Williams (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 32 [11–32].
 73. Anne Laskaya, *Chaucer's Approach to Gender in the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1995), p. 187.
 74. S. H. Rigby, "The Wife of Bath, Christine de Pizan, and the Medieval Case for Women," *Chaucer Review* 35.2 (2000): 135 [133–165].
 75. *Ibid.*, 135, 154.
 76. *Ibid.*, 139.
 77. *Ibid.*, 147.
 78. Kennedy, "Withouten Oother Compaignye in Youthe," p. 23.
 79. See Fowler, *Literary Character*, p. 73.
 80. Blake, *Sir Jeffery Chaucer*, pp. 16, 17.
 81. These are the words of an anonymous Romantic critic on "The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer," in *Retrospective Review* 14.2 (1826): 341 [305–357].
 82. Dickens's comments are cited in Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 2:3.82.
 83. The following list represents some of the more notable scholarly accounts of the Pardoner and his "life" of preaching. These accounts serve as suggestive examples of the ways in which historical readings tend to place the locus of accountability primarily on the shoulders of the Pardoner himself, which may allow the poet to be quietly absolved when it comes to certain moral issues and perspectives. Cf. A. L. Kellogg, "An Augustinian Interpretation of Chaucer's Pardoner," *Speculum* 26.3 (1951): 465–481; Alan Fletcher, "The Preaching of the Pardoner," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 11 (1989): 15–35; Siegfried Wenzel, "Chaucer's Pardoner and His Relics," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 11 (1989): 37–41; David K. Maxfield, "St. Mary Rouncivale, Charing Cross: The Hospital of Chaucer's Pardoner," *Chaucer Review* 28.2 (1993): 148–163; and Alastair Minnis, "Reclaiming the Pardoners," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33.2 (2003): 311–334.
 84. Kitredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, pp. 180, 211, 212.
 85. In certain "queer" versions of the moral flinch, which are detailed later in this chapter, there is a sense that Chaucer is not sensitive *enough* to his outcast character—yet that is typically as far as the criticism of the author goes.

86. Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, p. 217.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
89. Kemp Malone, *Chapters on Chaucer* (1951; repr. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), pp. 16, 177, 185.
90. C. D. Deshler, *Selections from the Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (London, 1847), p. 65.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
92. Vern Bullough, "On Being a Male in the Middle Ages," in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 32 [31–45].
93. Sedgwick, *Between Men*, pp. 201, 207, 216–217.
94. Curry, *Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences*, p. 58.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 60. Curry adds that the Pardoner represents "a complete psychological study of the mediaeval *eunuchus ex nativitate* and a mordant satire on the abuses practiced in the church of his day" (p. 64). The famous description of the Pardoner as a "geldyng or a mare" is located in *The General Prologue*, l.691.
96. Curry, *Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences*, pp. 68, 70.
97. John Halverson, "Chaucer's Pardoner and the Progress of Criticism," *Chaucer Review* 4.3 (1970): 190 [184–202].
98. For the main, successive readings of this kind, see especially the following pages from these three important accounts (and I quote from p. 203 of Lumiansky's influential study): Lumiansky, *Of Sondry Folk*, pp. 201–203; Robert P. Miller, "Chaucer's Pardoner, The Scriptural Eunuch, and the Pardoner's Tale," in *Chaucer Criticism Volume I: The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960), pp. 225–226 [221–244]; and Beryl Rowland, "Chaucer's Idea of the Pardoner," *Chaucer Review* 14.2 (1979): 143–145, 148–149 [140–154].
99. On these points, see, respectively, Lee Patterson, "Chaucer's Pardoner on the Couch: Psyche and Clio in Medieval Literary Studies," *Speculum* 76.3 (2001): 664, 668, 670 [638–680]; and Vern Bullough and Gwen Brewer, "Medieval Masculinities and Modern Interpretations," in *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West*, ed. Jacqueline Murray (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 94, 96, 101, 105 [93–110].
100. Monica E. McAlpine, "The Pardoner's Homosexuality and How It Matters," *PMLA* 95.1 (1980): 13 [8–22].
101. *Ibid.*, 11, 16.
102. *Ibid.*, 17, 18, 19.
103. *Ibid.*, 10.
104. Steven F. Kruger, "Claiming the Pardoner: Toward a Gay Reading of Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale," *Exemplaria* 6.1 (1994): 121 [115–139]. Kruger cites the Pardoner's *Tale* as evidence of homophobia in Chaucer's verse, because the rioters "clearly" illustrate the homophobic construction of male sexuality in the Middle Ages (pp. 128–131).

105. Kruger, "Claiming the Pardoner," 124, 125.
106. *Ibid.*, 137, 138.
107. Here, I use terminology from John Bowers's "Queering the Summoner: Same-Sex Union in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*," in *Speaking Images: Essays in Honor of V. A. Kolve*, ed. R. F. Yeager and Charlotte C. Morse (Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 2001), p. 301 [301–324]. Bowers believes that one result of the critically "fetishized" Pardoner is that many scholars have overlooked the "queer" resonance of the Summoner (p. 302).
108. Sedgwick, *Between Men*, pp. 3, 4.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
110. See Glenn Burger's essay "Queer Chaucer," *English Studies in Canada* 20.2 (1994): 160, 163 [153–170].
111. Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*, p. 158.
112. Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, p. 135.
113. Carolyn Dinshaw, "Chaucer's Queer Touches/A Queer Touches Chaucer," *Exemplaria* 7.1 (1995): 90 [75–92]; Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, p. 134. The Host's well-known threat is located in *The Pardoner's Tale*, VI.952–955.
114. Dinshaw, "Chaucer's Queer Touches," 77, 91, 92.
115. Dinshaw openly articulates her political program of theoretical "claiming" by commenting that critics who actively create relations with (or touch) the past are able to build coalitions and communities in the present in which abjected figures (such as queers and medievalists) are empowered within the "culture wars" and not just tolerated with free speech. See especially *Getting Medieval*, pp. 182, 206.
116. I am borrowing here from Alastair Minnis, "Chaucer and the Queering Eunuch," in *New Medieval Literatures* Vol. VI, ed. David Lawton, Rita Copeland, and Wendy Scase (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 107 [107–129].
117. Dinshaw, "New Approaches to Chaucer," p. 275.
118. Elizabeth Allen, "The Pardoner in the 'Dogges Boure': Early Reception of the *Canterbury Tales*," *Chaucer Review* 36.2 (2001): 92, 98 [91–127]. Allen also considers manuscripts that include spurious continuations such as the *Prologue to the Tale of Beryn*, a text that constructs a lewd figure noteworthy for a "frankly mercenary, heterosexual promiscuity" (p. 107).
119. Allen, "Pardoner in the 'Dogges Boure,'" 92.
120. Interestingly, Allen cites the correction of this line in the Northumberland MS, where the scribe has entered "I trowe he *had* a geldyng or a mare" (Allen's italics), which "avoids the question of his sexual anatomy by eliminating his comparison to a horse of any kind, suggesting the unreadability of the metaphor to begin with." See Allen, "Pardoner in the 'Dogges Boure,'" 115.
121. Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 6, 8, 169, 201.

122. *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 212.
123. See Karras and Boyd, “‘*Ut cum muliere*’: A Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London,” in *Premodern Sexualities*, Fradenburg and Freccero, pp. 106, 108 [101–116].
124. Here, I quote Anna Kłosowska’s observation from *Queer Love in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 144.
125. See Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 281; cf Bowers, “Queering the Summoner,” p. 302. As Glenn Burger reminds us, “neither ‘the homosexual’ nor his more optimistic ‘gay’ younger brother will likely be found reproduced exactly in medieval systems of representation because such categories are ‘born’ out of modern, not premodern, axes of difference”; see *Chaucer’s Queer Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 126.
126. These words are drawn from Colleen Lamos’s observations on “The Ethics of Queer Theory,” in *Critical Ethics*, Rainsford and Woods, pp. 141, 143 [141–151].
127. See *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue*, III.166; and *The Pardoner’s Prologue*, VI.453.
128. Richard Firth Green, “The Sexual Normality of Chaucer’s Pardoner,” *Mediaevalia* 8 (1982): 357 [351–358]. More recently, Green has continued this line of thought by considering Harry Bailly’s reference to the Pardoner’s “old breech” (VI.948). Green believes that the Host’s comment may contain a previously unrecognized allusion to the folk-tale tradition of the “Friar’s pants”; if so, then he is *not* referring to the Pardoner as a eunuch, hermaphrodite, or homosexual, but rather as a type of (heterosexual) cuckold. Cf. Green, “The Pardoner’s Pants (and Why They Matter),” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 15 (1993): 132–133, 145 [131–145].
129. Henry Ansgar Kelly, “The Pardoner’s Voice, Disjunctive Narrative, and Modes of Effemination,” in *Speaking Images*, Yeager and Morse, p. 428 [411–444]. Kelly additionally notes that “if there is anything of the gelding or mare about him as he hopes for a wench in each town, we can take it to be the effeminacy of his appearance, which, far from signaling a lack of ability to indulge in the vice of lechery that he boasts of, seems to indicate practice, if not success, and insatiability, if not satisfaction.”
130. Pearsall, *The Canterbury Tales*, pp. 97, 100. Douglas Wurtele similarly emphasizes that moral assumptions can be made about the Pardoner without specifying his sexual abnormality—the character’s physiognomy suggests a variety of pejorative traits, not only hermaphroditism and perhaps even sodomy, but most importantly, deceitfulness and dishonesty. Cf. Wurtele, “Some Uses of Physiognomical Lore in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*,” *Chaucer Review* 17.2 (1982): 137, 139 [130–141].
131. Cooper, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer*, pp. 58–59. Dewey Faulkner cogently comments that the Pardoner’s description seems to say “‘I believe he was either a eunuch or a homosexual,’ although critics have been quick to seize upon one or the other possibility as a fact and use it as a

- psychological entrance into—or club to beat—the tale.” Cf. Faulkner’s Introduction to *Twentieth Century Interpretations of the Pardoner’s Tale*, ed. Faulkner (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973), p. 8.
132. Alcuin Blamires, “Sexuality,” in *Chaucer: An Oxford Guide*, Ellis, p. 219 [208–223].
 133. See *The General Prologue*, I.670–674, 676, 688–690. Among those who posit a homosexual relationship between the Pardoner and the Summoner, Bowers’s recent article represents the most comprehensive application of queer theory to explain the relations between these two characters, whom he believes are “clearly a couple.” See Bowers, “Queering the Summoner,” pp. 306, 307.
 134. *The Introduction to the Pardoner’s Tale*, VI.318.
 135. Sturges, *Chaucer’s Pardoner and Gender Theory*, pp. 40, 41.
 136. I borrow phrasing here from Laskaya, who asserts that the *Canterbury Tales* “both reinscribes and challenges the category of ‘manliness’”; See *Chaucer’s Approach to Gender*, p. 199.
 137. The Monk’s description is found in *The General Prologue*, I.167. Michael Sharp discusses this reference at length in his essay “Reading Chaucer’s ‘Manly Man,’” in *Masculinities in Chaucer: Approaches to Maleness in the Canterbury Tales and Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. Peter G. Beidler (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1998), pp. 173–185. Other similar citations include: the description of King Lycurgus (in *The Knight’s Tale*) as having a “manly” face; the Green Knight-type entrance of a warrior who, though come from the land of Fairies, had a “manly” voice (in the *Squire’s Tale*); and the Parson’s citation of “manly” deeds. Cf. *The Knight’s Tale* I.2130; *The Squire’s Tale* V.99; and *The Parson’s Tale* X.601.
 138. See Laskaya, *Chaucer’s Approach to Gender*, p. 191.
 139. On these points see, respectively, Bowers, “Queering the Summoner,” p. 301; and Minnis, “Chaucer and the Queering Eunuch,” p. 129.
 140. Quotation taken from Peter Beidler’s “Introduction” to *Masculinities in Chaucer*, p. 3.
 141. See Sedgwick, *Between Men*, pp. 1, 2, 6.
 142. *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 214.
 143. Here, I cite from Dinshaw’s comments on the *Man of Law’s Tale*, which seem to be equally applicable to the case of the Pardoner. See Dinshaw, “New Approaches to Chaucer,” p. 283.
 144. These quotations are drawn from Minnis, “Chaucer and the Queering Eunuch,” pp. 110, 120. Minnis has recently elaborated on these ideas in his extensive, masterful account of the Wife of Bath and Pardoner titled *Fallible Authors: Chaucer’s Pardoner and Wife of Bath* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). David Raybin offers an example of a reading that supports a view that the Pardoner’s perversities “incorporate multiple categories of interpretation,” yet also illustrates the moral flinch because the poet himself is said to project this “multiplicity” to offer the “astoundingly tolerant suggestion” that—however it is manifest—“moral and sexual deviation may be reconciled rather

- than condemned.” See Raybin, “Poetry and Play in the Nun’s Priest’s Tale and the Pardoner’s Tale,” in *Drama, Narrative and Poetry*, Harding, pp. 216, 224 [213–226].
145. See Laskaya, *Chaucer’s Approach to Gender*, pp. 78, 200.
146. See, respectively, Jacqueline Murray’s “Introduction” to *Conflicted Identities*, p. xii; and Bullough’s “On Being a Male in the Middle Ages,” p. 43.
147. See Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, pp. 157, 197.
148. See, respectively, Glenn Burger, “Doing What Comes Naturally: The Physician’s Tale and the Pardoner,” in *Masculinities in Chaucer*, Beidler, pp. 129, 130 [115–130]; and Raybin, “Poetry and Play,” p. 222.
149. In these sentences, terminology is drawn from Butler’s *Bodies that Matter*, pp. 9, 10, 23.
150. To borrow from Bowers, a fair question to ask is who is being most coy in this scenario and who is saving whom from being implicated in any potentially controversial sexual politics—is it the medieval poet or his readers who seem more wary of “betraying the sort of sexual knowledge that would amount to self-recognition”? See Bowers, “Queering the Summoner,” p. 311.
151. This conclusion is based primarily on Harry Bailly’s remarks to/about “Chaucer the Pilgrim,” who is said to stare feebly at the ground, to be small and fair of face, and who looks like a chubby, “elvyssh” “popet.” See the Host’s words in *Prologue to Sir Thopas*, VII.696–704, which will be discussed at length in chapter 5.
152. In making this statement, I am inspired by the title of Jonathan Goldberg’s essay “The History that Will Be,” in *Premodern Sexualities*, Fradenburg and Freccero, pp. 1–22.

5 Claiming the “Popet”: Ethics, Evasion, and the Pilgrim’s Progress

1. Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, p. 126.
2. Sarah Cooper, *Relating to Queer Theory: Rereading Sexual Self-Definition with Irigaray, Kristeva, Wittig and Cixous* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 214.
3. The full title of Bunyan’s allegorical masterpiece is *The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come*. The definitive edition of Bunyan’s text was edited by Roger Sharrock (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).
4. See Kruger, “Claiming the Pardoner,” 115–139. As chapter 4 explained, Kruger’s essay was among the first to “claim” or “queer” the Pardoner, and remains one of the finest such accounts to date.
5. *Prologue to Sir Thopas*, VII.696–704.
6. Phrasing and ideas drawn from Glenn Burger, “Mapping a History of Sexuality in *Melibee*,” in *Chaucer and Language*, Myles and Williams, p. 70 [61–70].

7. See Helen Cooper, "Chaucer's Self-Fashioning," 58.
8. See Burger, "Mapping a History of Sexuality," pp. 63–64, 70.
9. Dinshaw, "New Approaches to Chaucer," p. 283.
10. Harry's famous question is found immediately before his description of Chaucer the Pilgrim cited previously, in *Prologue to Sir Thopas*, VII.695.
11. On this point, see Ann Astell, "Chaucer's 'Literature Group' and the Medieval Causes of Books," *ELH* 59 (1992): 270, 276 [269–287].
12. Helen Cooper comments on the contradictory nature of the Chaucerian corpus in "Chaucerian Poetics," in *New Readings of Chaucer's Poetry*, Benson and Ridyrd, p. 50.
13. Kłosowska, *Queer Love in the Middle Ages*, p. 95.
14. Sturges, *Chaucer's Pardoner and Gender Theory*, p. 135.
15. Paul Zumthor, *Speaking of the Middle Ages*, trans. Sarah White (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 83.
16. This quotation is found in the (unpaginated) "Arguments to euery Tale and Booke" from Speght's *Workes of our Antient and lerned English Poet Geoffrey Chaucer*. I have briefly discussed Speght's words in chapter 1, section 1.2.
17. See my account of Speght's autobiographical tendencies in section 2.2 of chapter 2.
18. James Lorimer, "Chaucer," *North British Review* 10 (1849): 306 [293–328]. It should be noted that subsequently, many critics have used variants of the same phrase uttered by Lorimer.
19. "Body criticism" is a helpful term utilized by Thomas Prendergast in his excellent study of *Chaucer's Dead Body*, where he describes a suggestive "return towards the body" within nineteenth-century Chaucer scholarship.
20. Aside from a series of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century critical accounts that considered the possibility that *Melibee* was written in blank verse, I have been able to identify only one specific reference to the tale in its own right before the later years of the Victorian age. As discussed later in this chapter, on those rare early occasions that *Melibee* is mentioned by critics, it is usually as part of a discussion of the "elvyssh" Chaucerian I-narrator.
21. An example of a humorous reading of *Sir Thopas* during the early stages of Chaucerian reception is found in an anonymous poem from 1611, where the writer comments on the character Sir Thopas and states that "Yet would he not play *Cupids Ape*/ In *Chaucers* jest lest he should shape/ A *Pigsnye* like himself." For reference, see Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism*, 1:1.185. In his study of "*Sir Thopas* in the Sixteenth Century," J. A. Burrow also cites the references to and usage of *Sir Thopas* by such writers as John Skelton and William Dunbar as evidence for a humorous/satirical understanding of Chaucer's text before England's Neoclassical era; see Burrow, "*Sir Thopas* in the Sixteenth Century," in *Middle English Studies Presented to Norman Davis in Honour of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. D. Gray and E. G. Stanley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 69–77.

22. Burrow, "Sir *Thopas* in the Sixteenth Century," p. 81.
23. Burrow also cites the work of Michael Drayton as an example of the serious interpretation of *Sir Thopas*, but admits that both Spenser and Drayton likely were at least aware of the burlesque nature of Chaucer's text, and apparently chose to read it as a sincere romantic model on which to base their own verse.
24. For reference, see Edwin Greenlaw, et al. ed., *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1938), 1.9.8–15. J. A. Burrow briefly discusses the connection in question in "The *Canterbury Tales* I: Romance," in *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion*, ed. Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 113 [109–124]. Of course, it is also widely recognized that Book IV of the *Faerie Queene* is based on Chaucer's verse, but in this section Spenser largely draws on plot elements of *The Squire's Tale*, a fiction which Chaucer interrupts and leaves incomplete, much like *Sir Thopas*.
25. See *The Works of Edmund Spenser*, 6.1.3, 6.1.26, and 6.3.1.
26. Joseph Dane contends that the very language and category of parody/burlesque was established in the eighteenth century, and accordingly, suggests that the notion of *Sir Thopas* as a playful burlesque was an eighteenth-century creation. That is a somewhat dubious assertion, but the evidence *does*, at least, indicate that it was during this period that critics began openly discussing *Sir Thopas* with an eye toward parody, and Dane is likely correct in his assumption that our modern understanding of parody "is still strongly rooted in the critical assumptions of these eighteenth-century scholars." On these points, see Joseph Dane, "Genre and Authority: The Eighteenth-Century Creation of Chaucerian Burlesque," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 48.4 (1985): 345–357.
27. Dane, "Genre and Authority," 356, 357.
28. Thomas Warton, *The History of English Poetry* (London, 1774), 1:433.
29. Morley, *English Writers*, 2:330. For similar accounts, see J. H. Hippisley's comments in *Chapters on Early English Literature* (London, 1837), p. 69; and also an anonymous contribution to *The Retrospective Review* 14.2 (1826): 342, 343, 353 [305–357].
30. John Major and Thomas Garbáty are among the few critics who discuss at length the idea of Chaucer the Pilgrim as a deliberately ironic, playful narrator who deprecates his own intelligence and literary skill. Cf. John Major, "The Personality of Chaucer the Pilgrim," *PMLA* 75.3 (1960): 160–162; and Garbáty, "The Degradation of Chaucer's 'Geffrey,'" 97–104.
31. Immediately before Chaucer the Pilgrim begins his first tale, Harry Bailly conspicuously comments that "now shul we here/ Som deyntee thing, me thynketh by his cheere." This comment seems to indicate the feeble or even effeminate nature of Chaucer's "I," and thus will be taken up more fully in section 5.2 below. See *Prologue to Sir Thopas* VII.710–711.
32. *Prologue to Sir Thopas*, VII.923, 925, 930.
33. V. J. Scattergood, "Chaucer and the French War: *Sir Thopas* and *Melibee*," in *Court and Poet*, ed. G. S. Burgess (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1981),

- pp. 290, 293 [287–296]. Scattergood's account responds to an earlier reading by J. M. Manly, who felt that the tale could be read as satirizing the Flemings for the pretensions of their bourgeois knighthood (so that the verse is doubly parodic, as a criticism of social and poetic conventions). Cf. J. M. Manly, "Sir Thopas: A Satire," *Essays and Studies* 13 (1928): 52–73.
34. Scattergood, "Chaucer and the French War," pp. 291, 294, 295. Scattergood also cites *Melibee* in support of this argument, which is a rare case in which both tales are critically drawn together, rather than separated—though the connection thereof is not thoroughly analyzed.
 35. I quote from the famous disclaimer in which Chaucer the Pilgrim urges his readers to "blameth nat me if that ye chese amys" (I.3181). The specific lines in question are offered after he blames the "harlotrie" of the *Miller's Tale* and *The Reeve's Tale* on the two "cherls" themselves. In the poet's words, "Avyseth yow, and put me out of blame;/ And eek men shal nat maken ernest of game" (I.3185–3186).
 36. For instance, R. F. Yeager offers an antiwar argument that is similar to Scattergood's account cited previously; cf. R. F. Yeager, "Pax Poetica: On the Pacifism of Chaucer and Gower," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 9 (1987): 97–121.
 37. *The Tale of Sir Thopas*, VII.940.
 38. On the politics involved in moving Chaucer's tomb, see Derek Pearsall's discussion in "Chaucer's Tomb: The Politics of Reburial," *Medium Aevum* 64.1(1995): 51–73.
 39. The quotation here is from Simon Haines, who does not address Chaucer in particular but who clearly supports the value of literature as "moral language" for the masses. See Simon Haines, "Deepening the Self: The Language of Ethics and the Language of Literature," in *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy, and Theory*, ed. Jane Adamson, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 30 [21–38].
 40. See Barry Windeatt, "Literary Structures in Chaucer," in *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion*, Boitani and Mann, p. 208 [195–212].
 41. This idea is drawn from Tobin Siebers's discussion of the problems inherent in the New Critical paradigm, but it seems to me more broadly relevant in the context of Chaucerian reception. For reference, see *Ethics of Criticism*, p. 55.
 42. See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1:54.
 43. Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 94. Lerer's account is offered in response to a political reading by Lee Patterson of the sort we shall examine in the following text, in which it is argued that *Melibee* represents a specific kind of "mirror"—one for noble children, a general rule book for royal princes (i.e., a *fürstenspiegel*). See Patterson, "'What Man Artow': Authorial Self-Definition in *The Tale of Sir Thopas* and *The Tale of Melibee*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 11 (1989): 139, 147 [117–175].
 44. Although few readers commented on the tale, it should be admitted that the text was copied independently in five manuscripts, and thus was

- apparently a popular text for some genteel readers—which may be the basis for Lerer’s argument. However, the lack of scholarly commentary on the work from the medieval period forward may suggest that while certain readers saw its advice as being worthwhile, few seemed to enjoy the text enough to address it in any deep fashion.
45. See Prendergast, *Chaucer’s Dead Body*, pp. 134, 141.
 46. See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 2:246.
 47. Italics mine. C. D. Benson, “The *Canterbury Tales*: Personal Drama or Experiments in Poetic Variety,” in *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion*, Boitani and Mann, p. 105 [93–108]. A few readers have sought to explain away the alleged dullness of *Melibee* by defining it as an elaborate (if tedious) literary joke. R. M. Lumiansky in particular argued that Chaucer “certainly” presented the “most routine literary fare” in *Melibee*, in contrast to the “highly original” *Sir Thopas*. In this view, the prose tale represents the purposeful second half of the joke by which Chaucer the Pilgrim makes evident the Host’s lack of literary taste and critical ability; see Lumiansky, *Of Sondry Folk*, pp. 88, 94. It might be noted that, generally speaking, interpretations of this kind have not been well received.
 48. For a brief discussion of *Melibee*’s relationship with its source materials, see Helen Cooper, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer*, pp. 314–314.
 49. W. W. Lawrence, “The Tale of Melibeus,” in *Essays and Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1940), pp. 101, 110 [100–110].
 50. See Diane Bornstein, “Chaucer’s *Tale of Melibee* as an Example of the *Style Clergial*,” *Chaucer Review* 12 (1978): 236–254; and Pearsall, *The Canterbury Tales*, p. 287.
 51. *Sir Thopas*, VII.925, 930, 940.
 52. *Ibid.*, VII.957.
 53. *Ibid.*, VII.954, 961.
 54. Gardiner Stillwell, “The Political Meaning of Chaucer’s *Tale of Melibee*,” *Speculum* 19.4 (1944): 434, 444 [433–444].
 55. In an influential account of this kind, R. F. Green has noted that there is a “strong likelihood” that Chaucer wrote *Melibee* for (the young) Richard. Green explains that the tale exemplifies a court poet’s role as a royal advisor, since it was through works like *Melibee* that a writer in the *familia regis* might demonstrate his worth and claim a more substantial position than that of mere entertainer; see Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 143. Lynn Johnson and Ann Astell have offered corollaries to this view, seeing the tale as being aimed directly at the king himself and not just at the general political situation. Cf. Lynn Johnson, “Inverse Counsel: Contexts for the *Melibee*,” *Studies in Philology* 87.2 (1990): 149, 150, 154 [137–155]; and Ann Astell, *Political Allegory in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 102.
 56. Notable accounts concerned with the text’s presumed political interests include the following: Judith Ferster, *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and*

- Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 102–107; Phillips, *An Introduction to the Canterbury Tales*, pp. 177–179; David Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 220–222; Strohm, *Social Chaucer*, pp. 161–163; and Stephen Knight, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 138–139.
57. These quotations are drawn from Wolfgang Riehle's article "Aspects of Chaucer's Narratorial Self-Representation in *The Canterbury Tales*," in *Tales and Their Telling Difference: Zur Theorie & Geschichte der Narrativik*, ed. Herbert Foltinek, Wolfgang Riehle, and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 1993), 140, 141 [133–147].
 58. This is the view, for instance, of Celia Daileader in "The *Thopas-Melibee* Sequence and the Defeat of Antifeminism," *Chaucer Review* 29.1 (1994): 27, 35 [26–39].
 59. Daniel Rubey, "The Five Wounds of Melibee's Daughter: Transforming Masculinities," in *Masculinities in Chaucer*, Beidler, p. 159 [157–171].
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
 61. See Laskaya, *Chaucer's Approach to Gender*, p. 166.
 62. Helen Cooper, "Chaucerian Representation," p. 24.
 63. I borrow phrasing from John Plummer, "'Beth Fructuous and that in Litel Space': The Engendering of Harry Bailly," in *New Readings of Chaucer's Poetry*, Benson and Ridyrd, p. 113 [107–118].
 64. This paragraph offers several quotations from Laskaya, *Chaucer's Approach to Gender*, p. 197.
 65. Bowers, "Queering the Summoner," p. 318.
 66. For Bowers's discussion of these points concerning Richard, Chaucer, and his readers, see "Queering the Summoner," pp. 315–318.
 67. Bowers, "Queering the Summoner," p. 313.
 68. *General Prologue*, l.673.
 69. Kłosowska, *Queer Love in the Middle Ages*, p. 120.
 70. See Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body*, p. 103.
 71. Nicolas, *Memoir of Chaucer*, pp. 71, 72.
 72. Again, the term "body criticism" is drawn from Prendergast's study of *Chaucer's Dead Body*, p. 10.
 73. From Dart's unpaginated *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, found in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*.
 74. Gilman, *The Poetical Works of Chaucer*, 1:li, liii. Previously, J. H. Hippisley had similarly highlighted the supposed shyness of the poet, noting that from the *Prologue to Sir Thopas* "we may infer that he was of a meditative and absent turn of mind." Cf. Hippisley, *Chapters on Early English Literature*, p. 109.
 75. See Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 2:159.
 76. For examples that illustrate the gradual recognition of the divided self, see, for instance, the progression evident in the following accounts: John Saunders, *Cabinet Pictures of English Life: Chaucer* (London, 1845),

- pp. 30, 33, 188, 198; Ward, *Chaucer*, pp. 118, 145–146; and Minto, *Characteristics of English Poets*, pp. 8, 9.
77. On these points, see Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body*, pp. 8, 10, 103, 116.
78. Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body*, pp. 8, 134.
79. This tradition was largely in response to Harry Bailly's description of Chaucer the Pilgrim, as well as the famous portraits of the poet (or his *alter ego*) in the Ellesmere Chaucer or Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes* (Harley 4866).
80. Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p. 3.
81. See Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body*, pp. 118, 122, 132, 133.
82. Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, pp. 182–185.
83. Helen Cooper, "Chaucerian Poetics," p. 46. Cooper is here describing criticism broadly conceived, rather than merely addressing scholarship of the nineteenth century, which underscores that these ideas are not only applicable to the Victorian era but also earlier periods and even our own day and age.
84. Helen Cooper, "Chaucer's Self-Fashioning," 56, 57. In this instance, Cooper's comment is offered in the context of the reception of Chaucer in the Renaissance, but once again, her notion seems to hold for later ages as well, including the Victorian era.
85. See Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, pp. 1, 227, 231.
86. On these points, see Butler's *Bodies That Matter*, pp. 7, 100.
87. See Burger, "Queer Chaucer," 160, 161.
88. *Ibid.*, 159, 163; see also Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation*, p. xvii.
89. Sinfield, *Cultural Politics—Queer Reading*, p. 15.
90. I have removed the italics from this quotation, taken from Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 197. Sedgwick is actually referencing criticism of Henry James with these words, but they also fit well the elisions of Chaucerians.
91. For these quotations, see, respectively, Kłosowska, *Queer Love in the Middle Ages*, p. 5; and Sinfield, *Cultural Politics—Queer Reading*, p. 36.
92. Sarah Cooper, *Relating to Queer Theory*, pp. 104, 206–207.
93. Here, I borrow from Sedgwick's vital scholarship, which attempts to "denaturalize the present" and reimagine homosexuality "as we know it today." See Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, pp. 48, 53.
94. Indeed, Cadden provides examples of medieval writers addressing such notions as hermaphrodites, eunuchs, women dressing as men, and men engaging in sexual activities with other men. See Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, p. 165.
95. See Laskaya, *Chaucer's Approach to Gender*, p. 13.
96. See Peter Beidler's introduction to *Masculinities in Chaucer*, p. 3.
97. Quotations drawn from Murray's introduction to *Conflicted Identities*, pp. x–xi.
98. Bullough, "On Being a Male in the Middle Ages," pp. 34, 41.

99. Jo Ann McNamara, "The *Herrenfrage*: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050–1150," in *Medieval Masculinities*, Lees, p. 22 [3–29]. Additional, useful studies of medieval masculinity include Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); and *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997).
100. See Sinfield, *Cultural Politics—Queer Reading*, p. 15.
101. For my earlier comments, see chapter 4, section 4.3.
102. *The General Prologue*, l.756.
103. Plummer, "Beth Fructuous and that in Litel Space," p. 107.
104. Mark Allen, "Mirth and Bourgeois Masculinity in Chaucer's Host," in *Masculinities in Chaucer*, Beidler, pp. 13, 16, 21[9–21].
105. See Tison Pugh, "Queering Harry Bailly: Gendered Carnival, Social Ideologies, and Masculinity under Duress in the *Canterbury Tales*," *Chaucer Review* 41.1 (2006): 39, 44, 59 [39–69].
106. *The Pardoner's Tale*, VI.952, 955; *The Clerk's Prologue*, IV.2; and *Epilogue to the Nun's Priest's Tale*, VII.3452, 3453, 3455, 3456. It should be noted that in Middle English, a "mayde" could apply to both genders, though it seems to be a pejorative descriptor for the male Clerk in the mouth of the Host. Also, the reference to the Nun's Priest as a "trede-foul" echoes the earlier description of the Monk, and as the *Riverside Chaucer's* explanatory notes state, Chaucer may have intended to cancel out the second usage (although there is some debate on this point).
107. Laskaya, *Chaucer's Approach to Gender*, pp. 44, 51.
108. Laskaya makes a related case in *Chaucer's Approach to Gender*, pp. 4, 192.
109. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 97.
110. *The Shipman's Tale*, VII.435; and *The Epilogue to the Nun's Priest's Tale*, VII.3449.
111. *The Prologue to the Nun's Priest's Tale*, VII.2786, 2787, 2789.
112. *Sir Thopas*, VII.923, 924, 925, 930.
113. The possibility of humor and/or irony would seem to be underscored by the fact that, comparatively speaking, Harry offers a positive assessment of the *Tale of Melibee*, by stating his wish that his wife Goodelief had heard the story of the patient Prudence. See *The Prologue to the Monk's Tale*, VII.1889–1925.
114. *The Prologue to the Monk's Tale*, VII.1941–42, 1945–1948, 1951, 1965.
115. *Prologue to Sir Thopas*, VII.696–697.
116. See Blamires, "Sexuality," p. 214. Ruth Mazo Karras has recently considered at length the concept of "active" male vs. "passive" female sexuality in the Middle Ages; cf. *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
117. Pugh, "Queering Harry Bailly," 59–60. Cf. Ganim, "Identity and Subjecthood," p. 236.

118. In “Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan,” the poet mentions his “figure” (ln. 27) and puts himself among those who are “hoor and rounde of shap” (31). Meanwhile, in the *House of Fame*, the Eagle complains that Geoffrey is “noyous for to carye” (ln. 574), while in “Merciles Beaute”—which may or may not have been written by Chaucer—the writer references the notion that he has become “fat” (ln. 27).
119. *Prologue to Sir Thopas*, VII.711; *Sir Thopas*, VII.921. Italics mine.
120. The Middle English definitions in this chapter are taken from the online edition of the *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. F. McSparran, June 10, 2005. <http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/m/med>.
121. I quote from Hall’s dissertation from the University of Glasgow. See Alaric Timothy Peter Hall, *The Meaning of Elf and Elves in Medieval England*, Ph.D., University of Glasgow, October, 2004, pp. 2, 190, 191, 195, 203. Much of this material has now been published in Hall’s *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2007).
122. Pugh, “Queering Harry Bailly,” 60.
123. *The Wife of Bath’s Tale*, III.874–875, 878–880.
124. Cohen, *Of Giants*, 101, 112. For Cohen, *The Tale of Sir Thopas* “fundamentally transforms the romance formula” through its omission of “any kind of sexual menace,” thereby working against the traditional, sexually charged “gigantomachia” of these romance adventures, which often are motivated by “sexual violence and unauthorized aggression.” In Chaucer’s tale, on the other hand, “masculinity is inscribed as diminutive” as the male body is diminished “to keep it safe from the possibility of sex”; thus, “Chaucer’s reductive poetics drain romance of its libidinal force, transforming the genre from an exercise in the excitation of desire to a comic demonstration of the body’s innocuous innocence.” On these points, see *Of Giants*, pp. 97, 100, 101, 102, 108, 109.
125. Ann Haskell, “Sir Thopas: The Puppet’s Puppet,” *Chaucer Review* 9.3 (1975): 253, 259 [253–259].
126. *Ibid.*, 253.
127. It is interesting, if surprising, that the *MED* does *not* offer “puppet” as one of the connotations for a “popet.” The *OED*, too, suggests that our modern term “puppet” was a later etymological development.
128. Cohen, *Of Giants*, pp. 99, 115.
129. For these connotations, I am drawing on both the *MED* and the *OED*.
130. See Plummer, “Beth Fructuous and that in Litel Space,” p. 112.
131. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “Diminishing Masculinity in Chaucer’s *Tale of Sir Thopas*,” in *Masculinities in Chaucer*, Beidler, pp. 149, 150, 151 [143–155].
132. Plummer, “Beth Fructuous and that in Litel Space,” p. 113.
133. I quote from Pugh, “Queering Harry Bailly,” 60.
134. Here, I am inspired by the phrasing used, respectively, by Bowers in “Queering the Summoner,” p. 301; and Minnis in “Chaucer and the

- Queering Eunuch,” p. 129. I have previously quoted from these same passages in chapter 4, section 4.3.
135. Sedgwick, *Between Men*, pp. 1, 2.
 136. *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5.
 137. According to Laskaya, Chaucer the Pilgrim “tries to avoid being drawn into the limelight. He feels vulnerable to the judgments of others, so he frequently turns to us either to excuse himself or to justify himself.” See *Chaucer’s Approach to Gender*, p. 197.
 138. George Williams, *A New View of Chaucer* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1965), pp. 145, 147, 150. Writing in a far less politically correct age, Williams described Sir Thopas as “what an undergraduate would call a ‘pansy’ or perhaps a ‘queer,’” thus representing a figure with characteristics that “would naturally invite ribald jokes about homosexuality” (p. 147).
 139. Phillips, *An Introduction to the Canterbury Tales*, p. 176.
 140. See Britton J. Harwood, “Same-Sex Desire in the Unconscious of Chaucer’s Parliament of Fowls,” *Exemplaria* 13.1(2001): 106 [99–135]. As this title implies, Harwood is not actually referring to the *Thopas-Melibee* link, but is interested in the repressed wishes of the poet within the *Parliament of Fowls*. Nonetheless, the comment seems logically applicable to the reception legacies in question.
 141. Chauncey Wood, “Chaucer and ‘Sir Thopas’: Irony and Concupiscence,” *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 14.3 (1972): 389 [389–403].
 142. *Ibid.*, 390, 392, 403.
 143. In making these observations, I borrow from the work of Catherine Attwood, who comments on Christine de Pizan’s usage of a “double-gendered” persona in her writing; see Attwood, *Dynamic Dichotomy*, p. 186. I also apply ideas from Bullough and Brewer, “Medieval Masculinities and Modern Interpretations,” p. 95.
 144. Sturges, *Chaucer’s Pardoner and Gender Theory*, p. 148.
 145. Burger, *Chaucer’s Queer Nation*, pp. 176, 177.
 146. I am influenced here by a kindred set of remarks made by Sinfield in *Cultural Politics—Queer Reading*, p. 56.
 147. Burger, “Queer Chaucer,” 158, 163.
 148. I borrow phrasing from Bowers’s “Queering the Summoner,” p. 305.
 149. Sinfield, *Cultural Politics—Queer Reading*, p. 10.
 150. Phrasing here taken from Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, pp. 157, 197.
 151. According to Burger, a “queer” Chaucer is a different situation than is found with Shakespeare because “what little evidence there exists about the historical Chaucer’s own sexual desire—most notably and controversially the ‘rape’ of Cecily Chaumpaigne—is clearly directed toward women.” See “Queer Chaucer,” 158.
 152. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 53.
 153. Ferster, *Chaucer on Interpretation*, p. 19.
 154. Burger, *Chaucer’s Queer Nation*, p. 176.

155. *The General Prologue*, I.691. One of the few critics who draw a connection between the Pardoner and Chaucer the Pilgrim is Laskaya, who asserts that “although Chaucer seems to cast doubt on his own virile masculinity—writing his body as small, elfish, childish, like a ‘popet’—he distances himself (and his audience) from the Pardoner, the pilgrim who most trespasses embodied definitions of masculinity”; see *Chaucer’s Approach to Gender*, p. 191.
156. I borrow phrasing here from Geoffrey Harpham, whose aim is to encourage scholars to leave the “ghetto” and return to a more central interpretive position where a more broadly agreeable critical hermeneutic can be established; see Harpham, “Imagining the Centre,” pp. 50–51.
157. See Davenport, *Medieval Narrative*, p. 50.
158. Helen Cooper, “Chaucerian Representation,” p. 20; and also the continuation of this essay titled “Chaucerian Poetics,” p. 31.
159. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 197.
160. Roland Barthes, *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), p. 123.
161. Jung, Carl, “Concerning Rebirth,” in *The Collected Works of Carl Jung*, ed. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler, 2nd edn. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 9:1.113–150.

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INDEX

- Abelard, Peter, 14–15, 16
Albertanus of Brescia, 173
Allen, Elizabeth, 149
Allen, Mark, 185
Althusser, Louis, 81, 108
anti-feminism, 132, **136–138**, 139,
 140, 141, 176
anti-matrimonial satire, 91, 92
Aristotle, 10, 11
author-function, 35, 45, 46, 47, 52
authority, and literature, 1, 17, 18, 22,
 23, 24, 35, 40, 41, 46, 49,
 50, 52, 56, 101, 126, 127,
 130, 133, 134, 161, 174, 181
authorship, theories of, 6, 7, 8, 19, 22,
 52, 176
autobiography
 classical conceptions of, 5, 6, 10, 11
 in the Middle Ages, 7, 8, 18, 19, 20,
 22–23, **42–43**, 57
 see also autofiction; Chaucer
 Studies, autobiographical
 interpretation in
autofiction, 2, 3, 9, 20, 25, 27, 31,
 36, **40–48**, 49, 50, 53, 54,
 57, 62, 63, 64, 66, 70, 80,
 84, 89, 90, 93, 97, 98, 99,
 101, 105, 109, 117, 123–124,
 125, 126, 136, 156, 161,
 164, 173, 174, 180, 184,
 196, 197
 and autobiography, 20, 31, **41–44**,
 45, 46, 49, 50, 53, 57, 62,
 63, 64, 66, 70, 80–81, 84,
 89, 90, 93, 98, 101, 105,
 109, 117, 123, 124, 125, 126,
 136, 164, 174, 180, 184
 and Chaucer's narrators, 2, 3, 9, 31,
 41, 42, 44, 46, 47, 48–49,
 50, 53, 54, 57, 62, 63, 64,
 66, 70, 80–81, 84, 85, 89,
 90, 93, 97, 98, 99, 101, 105,
 109, 117, 123–124, 125, 126,
 136, 156, 161, 164, 173, 174,
 180, 184, 196, 197
 coinage by Serge Doubrovsky, 41
 implications for biographical
 writing, 49, 53, 54, 57, 62,
 64, 66, 70, 80–81, 84–85
- Bakhtin, Mikhail, 33, 37
Barthes, Roland, 3, 51, 52, 197
 see also “death of the author”
Battersby, James, 39
Baudri of Bourgueil, 13–14
Beaumont, Francis, 61
Bede, 12–13
Benson, C. David, 32–33, 126, 172
Benson, Larry, 114
Bernard Silvester, 15–16
binaries/binary sexual categories, *see*
 gender theory
biographies/biographical writing
 on Chaucer, *see under* Chaucer,
 Geoffrey, biographies of
 on individuals from the Middle
 Ages, 53
 on literary authors, 51, 52, 53, 54
 “monumentalization” in, 53, 60,
 69, 88

- biographies/biographical writing—
 Continued
 theories of, 51–54
 use of literary works as
 (auto)biographical evidence,
 52, 53, 57–58, 59, 60, 64–65,
 67, 68, 70–71, 72, 73–75, 76,
 77, 78, 79, 81, 83, 84–86
 utility of, 51, 52, 85
- Blake, William, 142
- Boethius, 18–19, 20, 25
 see also Consolatio philosophiae
- Bonaventure, 17–18
- Bond, Gerald, 13
- Booth, Wayne, 52, 88, 90
- Bowers, John, 177–178
- Boyd, David, 150
- Brathwait, Richard, 131
- Brewer, Derek, 51, 54–55, 104
- Brooke, Stopford, 179, 180, 191
- Bullough, Vern, 145
- Bunyan, John, 159
- Burger, Glenn, 182, 192–193, 195
- Burrow, J.A., 165
- Butler, Judith, 38, 122, 124, 159,
 181–182
 performative theories of, 38, 122,
 181–182
- Cadden, Joan, 149–150, 183
- Carlson, David, 102
- Chance, Jane, 94, 95, 97, 101
characteres scripturae, 12, 13, 25
- Chaucer, Geoffrey
 and (literary) authority, 1, 2, 22,
 40, 46, 49, 50, 56, 101, 118,
 126, 133, 159, 161, 163, 174,
 177, 181, 195
 biographies of
 and alleged Protestant
 sympathies, 61–62, 66
 “appeal to fact” in nineteenth
 and twentieth-centuries,
 75–79
 autobiographical interpretation
 in, 49, 52, 53, 54, 57–58,
 59–60, 61, 63, 64–68,
 70–71, 72, 73–79, 80–81,
 84–86
 basis on apocryphal works, 57,
 58, 59–60, 67, 68, 70, 71,
 73, 76
 during the eighteenth century,
 63–68
 establishment of “Father
 Chaucer”, 55–56, 58
 justification of Chaucer’s
 writing, 58–63, 66
 “legends” of Chaucerian
 biographies, 56–58, 59–60,
 63, 66, 67–68, 69–70, 71,
 72–78, 80, 81, 85, 105
 during the Renaissance, 56–61
 during the Romantic age, 68–72
- characters
 “Chaucer the Pilgrim”, *see*
 “Chaucer the Pilgrim”
 Harry Bailly (i.e. ‘the Host’ of
 the *Canterbury Tales*), 29, 33,
 49, 82, 148, 152, 153, 160,
 161–162, 164, 170, 179, 180,
 184, 185–190, 192, 194
 description of Chaucer the
 Pilgrim, 50, 157, 160, 161,
 164, 177, 178–182, **185–196**
 and masculinity, 183–190
- Melibee, 176
- Monk, 153, 186
- Nun’s Priest, 185, 186
- Pardoner
 afforded a “life” by scholars,
 50, **124–128**, 133, 143, 144,
 147, 155, 157
 alleged homosexuality of, 124,
 127, 128, 132, **145–152**,
 153, 154, 155, 157
 disapproval by scholars, 129,
 131–132, 142–143, 144–145
 as homosocial embodiment,
 154–156, 190
 interruption of Wife of Bath,
 127, 128, 151

- and “moral flinch” of scholars, 50, **143–144**, 147, 155, 156, 166, 170
- moral interests of, 128–129, 143, 144, 145, 146, 156, 194
- sins, greed, preaching, and relics, 142, 143, 144, 145, 151, 155, 156
- Prudence, 175, 176
- Sir Thopas, 165, 188, 191
- Summoner, 152, 178
- Wife of Bath
- afforded a “life” by scholars, 50, **124–128**, 131, 133, 135, 136, 140, 141
 - and anti-feminism, 130–131, 132, 136–139, 140, 141
 - approval by scholars, 129, 131–132, 133, 134, 135, 139, 142, 145, 175
 - feminist readings by scholars, 130, **132–138**, 139, 140, 141
 - moral interests of, 128–129, 132, 133, 136, 139, 141–142
 - satirical nature of, 130, 131, 132, 136, 138, 139
 - sexual nature of, 124, 127, 128, 132
 - “shrewishness” of, 130–131, 139
- as “Father of English Poetry” (or “Father Chaucer”/ “Master Chaucer”), 3, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 63, 67, 75, 79, 88, 94, 97, 104, 105, 137, 138, 144, 157, 159, 163, 164, 166, 170, 173, 177, 181, 191, 195, 196, 197
- idealistic portrayals by scholars, 54, 58, 63, 79, 88, 163, 166, 169, 173, 180, 196
- narrators/narrative technique
- awareness and understanding of personae, 2, 6, 22, 34, 140, 194, 196, 197
 - playfulness of, 1–2, 33, 42, 70–71, 91, 92, 97, 106, 116–117, 119, 122, 159, 167, 168, 169, 170, 184, 191
- self-division and binaries/ doubling, 5, 7, 8, 31, 34, 70, 71, 74, 78, 120, 122, 153, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165, 168, 181, 183, 192, 194, 197
- use of personae, 2, 3, 5, 8–9, 25, 29–34, 40, 42, 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 53, 62, 65, 70–71, 74, 77, 80–81, 84–85, 89, 91, 93, 96–97, 99, 101, 102, 105–106, 109, 110–111, 113, 116–117, 118, 119, 123–124, 125, 129, 133–134, 136, 137, 139–140, 149, 152–153, 157, 161, 162, 168, 173, 174, 177, 180, 183, 184, 186–191, 194, 196, 197
- relationship to Henry IV, *see* Henry IV
- relationship to John of Gaunt, *see* John of Gaunt
- relationship to Richard II, *see* Richard II
- religious views and piety, 61–62, 66–67, 78, 84, 88, 89, 94, 95, 101, 112, 115, 116, 117–119
- scholars of, *see* Chaucer Studies, works
- theme of masculinity in, 99, 101, 152, 153–154, 155, 157, 176–177, 182, 183–185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 192
- themes of sentence and solas (profit and pleasure) in, 87, 162, 171
- Book of the Duchess*, 29, 44, 70, 79, 107
- Canterbury Tales*, 5, 29, 30, 32, 34, 41, 44, 49, 61, 62, 64, 70, 74, 82, 87, 112, 113, 114, 116, 119, 125, 126, 127, 143, 149, 150, 153, 155, 157, 160, 161, 164, 171, 174, 177–178, 179, 181, 183, 184, 185, 189, 196

- Chaucer, Geoffrey—*Continued*
- “dramatic” readings of, 29, 32, 36, 64–65, 81, 126
 - “Chaucer the Humorist” in, *see under* Chaucer Studies
 - “Chaucer the Moralist” in, *see under* Chaucer Studies
 - Thopas-Melibee* sequence, *see* *Prologue; Tale of Melibee; Tale of Sir Thopas under* Chaucer, Geoffrey
 - “Chaucers Wordes Unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn”, 89, 90, **98–101**, 111
 - “Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse”, 89, 101, 102, **106–111**
 - General Prologue*, 32, 33, 74, 145, 185
 - House of Fame*, 1, 29, 44, 70
 - Introduction to the Man of Law’s Tale*, 1
 - “Lak of Stedfastnesse”, 87, 89, 101, **102–106**, 107, 110
 - “Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton”, 50, 70–71, 89, **90–94**, 95, 96, 97, 98
 - “Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan”, 50, 89, 90, 91, **94–97**, 98
 - Miller’s Prologue*, 170, 196
 - minor poems
 - autobiographical interpretation of, 50, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 96, 98, 100, 101, 105, 109–110, 112, 114, 116–117, 118, 119, 120
 - conventional features of, 91–92, 95–97, 98, 99, 100, 103, 104–105, 106, 109, 110, 111, 113, 115–117, 118
 - and friendship, notions of, 89, 90–91, 92, 93–94, 95, 97–98, 101, 107, 109, 111, 112
 - historicization and individualization by scholars, 89, 90–91, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 102–103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 113, 115, 118
 - morality in (and moral readings of), 87–88, 89, 90, 93, 94–95, 97, 100–101, 104, 105, 108, 112, 115, 117, 118–119, 128
 - Pardoner’s Prologue* (specific references), 124, 128, 144, 147, 156
 - see also* *Pardoner under* Chaucer, Geoffrey
 - Pardoner’s Tale*, 124, 128, 153
 - Parson’s Tale*, 65, 113, 114–115, 118
 - Prioress’s Tale*, 189, 196
 - Prologue to Sir Thopas*, 184, 190, 192
 - description of Chaucer the Pilgrim in, *see* “Chaucer the Pilgrim”; Harry Bailly *under* Chaucer, Geoffrey
 - Retraction, 50, 84, 87, 88, 89, **112–119**
 - as Chaucer’s pious “final” words, 84, 112–113, 115–119
 - textual issues and, 113–115, 116–117
 - Tale of Melibee*, 6, 50, 74, 159, 160–163, 164, 165, 167, **170–177**, 179, 181, 184–185, 191, 193, 194, 195, 196
 - alleged dullness of, 172–173, 174
 - and moral issues, 159, 162, 163, 164–165, 167, 170–177, 181, 194, 195–196
 - political readings of, 174, 175–176
 - as translation, 173
 - Tale of Sir Thopas*, 26, 50, 74, 159, 160–163, 164, **165–170**, 171, 172, 174, 177, 179, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196
 - satirical readings of, 167–169

- and scholarly “flinching”,
166–167, 170, 177, 195
serious interpretation of,
165–170
Troilus and Criseyde, 1, 33, 115
Wife of Bath's Prologue (specific
references), 124, 129–130,
131, 132, 133, 140, 141
and gender issues, 122–123,
124, 127, **129–141**, 145,
152, 175
see also *Wife of Bath under*
characters
Wife of Bath's Tale, 124, 131, 137,
140, 188
Chaucer Life-Records, 75, 78, 79, 106
Chaucer Society, 75, 76, 77, 81
Chaucer Studies
autobiographical interpretation in,
1, 8–9, 26, 29, 30–32, 40,
41–42, 44, 49–50, 52, 53,
54, 57–58, 59–60, 61, 63,
64–66, 67–68, 70–75, 76,
77, 78–79, 80–81, 84–86,
89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 96,
99–100, 101, 105, 108–110,
114–117, 118, 119, 125, 136,
164, 168, 171, 173, 174, 176,
178–180, 184, 193
“body criticism” in, 164, **179–181**
elision of “Chaucer the Humorist”,
165–167, 169, 170–171, 177
emphasis on “Chaucer the
Moralist”, 167–168,
170–171, 172, 177
evasions and oversights in (general),
44, 54, 62, 77, 79, 82,
90, 96, 97, 103, 105, 122,
126, 133, 135–136, 137,
138, 139, 141, 142,
143–144, 147, 148, 151–152,
155, 156, 163, 166, 168,
173, 176, 181, 191, 192–193,
195, 196
and homophobia, 132, 145, 147,
148, 150, 157, 182, 185
ideologies of Chaucerians, 24, 32,
41, 46–47, 48, 49, 54, 56,
61, 62, 79, 81–82, 86, 108,
113, 126–127, 129, 132–133,
135, 136, 137, 144, 147–149,
151, 154, 163, 181, 193, 194,
196–197
interpretive fragmentation in, 129,
162–163, 164, 165, 168, 194,
195–196
moral dimension of criticism, 21,
24, **87–89**, 90, 94–95, 101,
104, 105, 108, 112, 117,
118–120, 128–129, 135,
136, 139, 143–144, 155, 163,
165, 166, 167, 170, 171, 172,
174, 175, 176, 191, 195–196
see also “moral flinch”
and personae/persona-theory, 2–3, 5,
6–7, 8–9, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26,
27, **28–36**, 40, 42, 44, 46, 47,
48–50, 53, 54, 56–58, 59–60,
61, 62, 65–66, 68, 70–75,
77, 78–86, 88–90, 91–97,
98–101, 103–106, 109–111,
113, 115, 116–117, 119–120,
122–124, 125–127, 128, 129,
131, 133–137, 138–141, 143,
148–149, 151, 152, 154–156,
157, 161–162, 163, 164, 167–
169, 170, 172, 173, 174–175,
177, 178–181, 183–198
“Chaucer the Man”, 8, **31–32**, 44, 47,
49, 50, 53, 58, 59, 69, 72,
74, 78, 81, 89, 99, 113, 115,
116, 118, 123, 143, 156, 157,
173, 176, 177, 184, 188
“Chaucer the Pilgrim”
and “body criticism”, *see* Chaucer
Studies, “body criticism” in
and “Chaucer’s Challenge”, 50,
194–195, 196–197
effeminate and “queer” features of,
50, 157, 175, 177, 179, 180,
181, 182, 183, 184, **185–190**,
191, 192–194, 195, 196

- “Chaucer the Pilgrim”—*Continued*
 and “ghettoization” by critics,
 195–196
 homosocial reading of, 190–191
 interpretation by E. Talbot
 Donaldson, 29–31, 32
 and male anxieties, 176–177, 183,
 184, 190–191
 and “normalization” by critics,
 122, 180–181, 190, 193
 and queer theory, 47, 50, 157, 161,
 178, 182–183, 184, 186–194,
 195, 196
 similarities to the Pardoner, 157, 160,
 184, 186, 190, 192, 194–196
 Christine de Pizan, 21, 22–23, 24,
 134, 141, 142
 Cicero, 9, 10, 95
 Cohen, Jeffrey, 185, 188, 189
 Col, Gontier, 21
 Col, Pierre, 21, 23–24
 Connor, Steven, 87
Consolatio philosophiae, 18–19, 20
 Cooper, Helen, 119, 122, 130, 132,
 152, 153, 162, 177, 181
 Cooper, Sarah, 159, 161, 182
Court of Love, 67, 70, 71
 Cross, J.E., 105
 Curry, Walter Clyde, 145–146

 Dane, Joseph, 113, 167
 Dante Alighieri, 20–21, 25, 42, 61
 Dart, John, 66–67, 179
 David, Alfred, 88, 89, 93–94, 95
 de Looze, Lawrence, 41
 “death of the author”, 3, 40, 51, 52, 85
 Deshler, C.D., 145
 dialogism, 34, 37, 38
 Dickens, Charles, 142
 Dinshaw, Carolyn, 98–99, 111,
 127–128, 133, 137, 148,
 149, 160
 Diomedes, 9
 “doctrine of sincerity”, 31, 35
 Donaldson, E. Talbot, 29–31, 32, 136
 and “Chaucer the Pilgrim”, 29–31
 Donatus, 9
 Doubrovsky, Serge, 41
 dramatic personae, *see under* persona/
 personae
 Dryden, John, 59, **63–66**, 68, 70,
 73, 130
 Preface to *Fables Ancient and*
 Modern, 63–65, 70
 Du Boulay, F.R.H., 51
 écriture féminine, 137
 elf/elves, medieval views of, 187–188
 Eliot, T.S., 9, 28
 Elliott, Robert, 4, 10, 36
 Evrart de Conty, 21

Fables Ancient and Modern, *see* Dryden,
 John
Faerie Queene, *see* Spenser, Edmund
 Feminism/Feminist theory, 130,
 132–138, 140–141, 191
 see also gender theory
 Ferris, Sumner, 109
 Ferster, Judith, 118, 194
 Festus, 10
 Finnel, Andrew J., 109
 Fish, Stanley, 51–52

 Gardner, John, 83–84, 85
 Gascoigne, Thomas, 112, 118
 gender theory, 99, 111, 121–123, 124,
 127–128, 132–138, 140–141,
 145, 146–150, 151, 152, 153,
 155, 175, 176, 181–182, 190,
 191–194
 and binaries/binary sexual
 categories, 121–123, 124,
 127, 128, 150, 153, 156
 on gender roles and sexual “norms”
 in the Middle Ages, 124,
 134, 136–139, 140, 141, 147,
 148–151, 154, 155, 183–185,
 190, 192
 and the Wife of Bath, *see under*
 Chaucer, Geoffrey
 Genette, Gérard, 37

- Godwin, William, 69–71, 72, 73, 76, 91
- Gordon, James, 118
- Gower, John, 25, 55, 57, 118
- Green, Richard Firth, 151
- Guido da Pisa, 20–21
- Hall, Alaric, 187
- Hammond, Eleanor, 57, 72, 73, 75
- Hansen, Elaine Tuttle, 136–137, 138
- Haskell, Ann, 188–189
- Heale, Elizabeth, 42
- Henry IV, 57, 102, 103, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111
- homodiegesis/homodiegetic
narration, 34, 37, 38
- homosexuality, in the Middle Ages,
16–17, 145, **146–151**, 153,
154, 178, 182, 183, 194
see also Pardoner *under* Chaucer,
Geoffrey
- homosociality, 92, 154–156, 190–191
see also Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky
- Horace, 10, 11, 16
- Hoskins, John, 26
- Howard, Donald, 31–32, 52–53, 84
and “Chaucer the Man”, 31–32
- Hughes, Langston, 36
- integumentum* and *involucrum*, 15
- “intentional fallacy”, 19, 30, 31, 35,
40, 45
see also “doctrine of sincerity”
- I-persona/I-personae, *see under*
persona/personae
- Isidore of Seville, 12, 13
- Jean de Meun, 19–20, 21–24,
25, 134
see also querelle de la Rose
- Jean de Montreuil, 21, 24
- Jean Gerson, 21, 23, 24
- John of Gaunt, 60, 79, 107
- Joyce, James, 28
- Jung, Carl, 38, 197
- Juvenal, 11
- Kane, George, 31
- Karras, Ruth, 150
- Kaske, R.E., 101
- Kelly, H.A., 151
- Kempe, Margery, 43
- Kennedy, Beverly, 140, 142
- Ker, W.P., 100, 172
- Kimmelman, Burt, 9, 14
- Kittredge, George Lyman, **28–29**, 92,
94, 143–144, 180–181
- Kłosowska, Anna, 162–163, 178
- Knapp, Ethan, 135
- Kruger, Steven, 147, 148, 159–160
- Kuhl, E.P., 110
- Laskaya, Anne, 140, 177, 185
- Lawton, David, 33–34, 36, 37, 40, 46
and *Chaucer's Narrators*, 33–34, 36
“legends” of Chaucerian biographies,
see under Chaucer, Geoffrey,
biographies of
- Leicester, Jr., H. Marshall, 34, 134
- Leland, John, **56–58**, 59, 60, 67, 68
- Lerer, Seth, 55, 171
- Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical
Biography*, *see* Pearsall,
Derek
- Lochrie, Karma, 121, 180
- Lorimer, James, 108–109, 164
- Lounsbury, Thomas, 79–81, 99
- Lydgate, John, 55, 171, 172
- Madden, William, 117
- Manly, J.M., 82–83, 114, 125, 126
- Marbod of Rennes, 16–17
- “mark of autobiography”, 42, 44, 93
- masculinity, in the Middle Ages, 99,
101, 149–150, 152, 153–154,
176, 177, 182, 183–184, 185,
186, 188, 190–191
see also gender theory
- mask/masking, *see under* persona/
personae
- McAlpine, Monica, 146–147
- Memoir of Chaucer*, *see* Nicolas,
Nicholas Harris

- Middle English Dictionary*, 6–7, 187, 188, 189
- mimesis*, 10–11, 41, 64
- Minnis, Alastair, 35, 138
- Minto, William, 77, 78
- Miskimin, Alice, 26
- Mize, Britt, 99, 100
- Modernism, 27, 28, 29
- “moral flinch”, in Chaucer
criticism, 50, **143–144**, 147, 155, 156–157, 163, 166–167, 170, 177, 191–192, 195
see also Chaucer Studies, moral dimension of; Pardoner *under* Chaucer, Geoffrey
- Morley, Henry, 76–77, 99, 131, 168, 169
- Narratology, 34, 39, 40
- New Criticism, 3, 34
- Nicolas, Nicholas Harris, **72–75**, 76, 77, 78, 108, 178–179
Memoir of Chaucer, 72–75, 178
- Nolan, Barbara, 33
- Ovid, 11, 64
- Owen, Jr., Charles, 114
- Oxford English Dictionary*, 7–8, 189
- Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 4–5, 6
- Patterson, Lee, 34
- Pearsall, Derek, **85–86**, 92, 107, 151, 153, 174
Life of Geoffrey Chaucer, 85–86
- performativity, 10, 34, 37, 38, 122, 128, 181, 182
see also Butler, Judith
- persona/personae
and authorial protection/defense, 11–12, 14, 16–17, 18, 19, 22, 25, 36, 134, 143
autobiographical interpretation of, *see under* Chaucer Studies, autobiographical interpretation in
and concept of the “divided self”, 5, 34, 70, 71, 74, 78, 163, 164, 168, 179, 181, 194
and classical satire, 11–12
derivation of, 4, 9, 20
disregard by scholars (general), 2, 3, 8, 25, 26–27, 33–34, 35, 36–38, 40, 44, 45, 61, 103, 119, 137, 138–139, 173, 196, 197
dramatic personae, definition of, 5, 123
etymology of, 4–9
everyday human use, 7, 8, 38–39
in propria persona, 6, 19, 22, 74
see also I-persona/I-personae
intentions/intentionality of, 6, 7, 11, 12–13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22, 30, 31
I-persona/I-personae, definition of, 5, 123
and masks/masking, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 18, 25, 28, 29, 31, 38, 39, 45, 197
and narrative detachment, 29, 32–33, 35, 39, 71, 74, 89, 91, 93, 96, 115, 116, 124, 135, 137, 179
psychological theories of, 38–39
“queer” nature of and relationship to queer theory, **47–48**, 49, 50, 75, 82, 86, 99, 100, 106, 108, 111, 123, 140, 141, 155–156, 160–161, 196
ramifications for literary interpretation (general), 3, 5, 6, 7, 8–9, 14, 19, 41–44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 54, 125, 194, 196
relationship to concept of mimesis, 10–11, 64
relationship to term “character”, 7, 65
and theories of voice or tone, *see* tone, theories of; voice, theories of
theorization of, *see* persona-theory

- persona-theory
 and Chaucer, *see under* Chaucer
 Studies
 in classical Greece and Rome, 5,
 9–12
 connections to theology and
 philosophy (general), 6, 7, 9,
 10, 12, 14–15, 17, 18, 19
 disregard by scholars, *see under*
 persona/personae
 during the Middle Ages, 6, 7,
 12–25
 and Modernism, 28–29
 during the Neoclassical period,
 26–27
 during the Renaissance, 25–26
 during the Romantic and Victorian
 periods, 26–27
 and queer theory, *see* persona/
 personae
Personati (play by Naevius), 10
 Phillips, Helen, 138, 191
 physiognomy, 145, 146, 152
The Pilgrim's Progress, 159
 Pinckhurst, Adam, 98
 Plummer, John, 185, 189, 190
 Pollard, A.J., 107
 polyphonic narratives, 13, 34, 37
 Post-Structuralism, 3, 34
 Pound, Ezra, 9, 28
 Prendergast, Thomas, 180, 181
 pseudo-autobiography, 41

 queer theory
 and alleged homosexuality of the
 Pardoner, *see* Pardoner *under*
 Chaucer, Geoffrey
 and “Chaucer the Pilgrim”, *see*
 “Chaucer the Pilgrim”
 and personae/persona-theory,
 47–48, 49, 50, 75, 82, 86,
 99, 100, 106, 108, 111, 123,
 140, 141, 155–156,
 160–161, 196
 see also gender theory
querelle de la Rose, 21–24, 32, 134

 reception studies and theory, 3, 24,
 31, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52–54,
 55, 59, 69, 71, 80–81,
 83–85, 88, 89, 90, 98, 107,
 112–113, 123, 124, 125, 129,
 132–135, 138, 141, 147–149,
 152, 156, 163, 166, 169,
 170, 175, 179, 181–182, 191,
 196–198
 and anachronism, 133, 147–149,
 150, 182
 and Feminism, 132–135, 138, 141
 and queer studies, 47, 147–149,
 182, 191
 see also Chaucer Studies
 Renaud de Louens, 173
reportatio and *assertio*, 15, 18, 19, 72
 Richard II, 57, 59, 102, 103, 104, 105,
 106, 107, 108, 110, 175,
 178, 191
 Rigby, S.H., 141–142
 Robertson, Jr., D.W., 139
Roman de la Rose, 19, 21–24, 37, 134
 Roper, Gregory, 117–118
 Roscius Gallus, 9
 Rubey, Daniel, 176
 Rushdie, Salman, 36
 Ruud, Jay, 89, 95, 105

 satire, use of personae in, *see* persona/
 personae
 Sayce, Olive, 115, 116, 117
 Scattergood, V.J., 91, 95, 100, 169
 Schmitz, Leonhard, 71–72
 Schricker, Gale, 115–116, 117
 Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, 92, 121,
 122, 145, 147, 154, 190,
 194, 197
 homosocial theories of, *see*
 homosociality
 “self-fashioning”, 58
 Servius, 12
 Shakespeare, William, 25, 63, 93,
 193, 194
 Sidney, Philip, 26, 58
 Siebers, Tobin, 87, 88

- Sinfield, Alan, 121, 123, 182, 193
 Skeat, Walter W., 79, 81, 110
 Song of Songs, 12, 13
 Speght, Thomas, 26, **59–61**, 67,
 163–164
 Spenser, Edmund, 165–166, 167
 Stillwell, Gardiner, 175
 Strohm, Paul, 55, 103
 structural anti-feminism, *see*
 anti-feminism
 Sturges, Robert, 110–111, 153,
 163, 192
 subject (or *sujet*) and subjectivity, 34,
 35, 37, 38, 40, 43, 48, 49,
 123, 133, 182

 Tatlock, J.S.P., 115
 Terence, 9, 10
Testament of Love, 57, 59, 60, 67, 68,
 70, 71, 73, 76
 theater, classical, 4, 5, 9–11
see also persona/personae,
 masking
 tone, theories of, 33–34, 35, 36, 37,
 38, 40
 Trigg, Stephanie, 2, 3, 63, 65
 Tyrwhitt, Thomas, 68

 Usk, Thomas, 55, 57, 59, 70
utilitas (moral utility), 21, 22, 23

 Vaughan, Míceál, 114, 115
 voice, theories of, 28, 32, 33–34, 35,
 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 87

 Walker, Cheryl, 45
 Ward, Adolphus William, 77–79, 113,
 124–125
 Warton, Thomas, 167–168, 169
 Watson, Nicholas, 135
 Wharton, Henry, 62–63
 William of Aragon, 19, 20
 William of St. Thierry, 13
 Williams, George, 191
 Wimsatt, William, 30
 words and deeds, theme of, 18,
 41, 106
 Work, James, 114
 Wright, George, 3, 9, 26, 38

 Yeats, William Butler, 9, 28

 Zink, Michael, 42, 43
see also “mark of autobiography”
 Zumthor, Paul, 163