Chaucer's French Sources — Literary and Codicological Play and the Author's Persona

by

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Abstract

This dissertation studies the ways that Chaucer and his French contemporaries, Guillaume de Machaut, Jean Froissart, Oton de Graunson, and Eustache Deschamps, craft poetic authority. They do so in relation to the books that convey their writing and literary reputations to their audiences.

Chaucer, translating the work of these French poets, reacts to the constructions of authority he finds in medieval sources, in manuscripts, and in a scribal culture in which the transmission of texts can be unpredictable. I argue that Chaucer adapts Machaut's pseudo-autobiographical narrative voice in his own poetry. He responds to a contrast evident in manuscript culture between the single-author codex — for example, surviving books of Froissart's poetry, Paris, BNF f.fr. 830 and 831 — and the ubiquitous miscellany, a contrast that seems to operate along gendered and poetic as well as codicological lines. Chaucer adapts the poetic form of Graunson's "Cinq Ballades" to ensure that his "Complaint of Venus" circulates as a single piece, unlike some copies of his source text. Finally, I argue that Deschamps invites Chaucer to participate in a cross-
Channel exchange of invective, one that is part of a bookish and literary tradition.

The main argument of my dissertation is that Chaucer puts ideas about books into play in his poetry. He imagines manuscripts as forms for literature and as forms for authority, like the way the disordered aesthetic of the *Canterbury Tales* creates — ironically — a work of literature resembling a single-author manuscript: a collection of works by one author that circulates intact. Chaucer's investigation of bookish forms is playful, but it also has high poetic stakes: for Chaucer, as for his French contemporaries, play locates the poet in an authoritative literary tradition and secures his future renown.
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Introduction
Forms of Authority

My thesis asks some central questions about authorship in a manuscript culture. How do fourteenth-century courtly poets like Geoffrey Chaucer and his French contemporaries, Guillaume de Machaut, Jean Froissart, Oton de Graunson, and Eustache Deschamps, think about their poetic authority in manuscripts — and what is meant by that word "authority" when it is used to describe authorship in medieval manuscript contexts? Do these writers implement measures to control the ways their works are read and received in manuscripts? Do they try to shape the way their poetic reputations as authors are preserved for posterity?

0 Authority and the Medieval Author

The "authority" of a writer working in the Middle Ages might be measured in tangible terms — by the financial remuneration, promotion, patronage that an author attracted *etc.* — and in non-tangible terms — by an author's power, prestige, or renown. The authority of medieval vernacular writers also bore a complex relationship to that of Latin *auctores*. In the late fourteenth century, the period of concern in this thesis, "auctoritas" — what Machaut calls "auctorité" and Chaucer "auctoritee" — had been reshaped by changes in learning and textual culture, especially those of the so-called twelfth-century Renaissance. The scholastic commentary tradition foregrounded the author and his biography; and from the twelfth century writers built from earlier classical and medieval thought a "medieval theory of authorship."

Developing his own ideas within and as a part of this theory, for example, St Bonaventure could distinguish the work of scribes, compilers, and commentators from the authoritative voice of the author. Compilations of various sorts — commentaries, encyclopedias, universal histories, and so on — were particularly effective in demonstrating the different sorts of authority that might accrue to an author, including the learned writers cited within the text as well as the compiler himself, whose prologue would serve to contextualize the compilation and invent the compiler's own authority.

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In the following chapters I explore "authority" that is informed but not necessarily weighed down by classical and scholastic inheritance. Real world stakes are important for Chaucer and the French poets (such as Machaut, for instance, whose illustrious patrons include John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, and the Duke of Berry). Cannon points to records that list Chaucer as a member of John of Gaunt's expeditionary forces in France in 1369 (36), and speculates that this position — along with its financial benefits — was an "immediate, material" result of his patron's appreciation of the Book of the Duchess ("Lives of Geoffrey Chaucer," 36). But while poetic authority could be measured by political or social climbing, it could also be measured as the prowess to maneuver within, but to compose something unconstrained by, political and social realities or a writer's literary or scholarly inheritance. Galloway describes this kind of authority as a freedom, carefully and strategically won: a "vernacular poet [might...] find strategies emphasizing that he is neither institutionally constrained nor an obsequious princepleaser or professional versifier (one strategy was wittily to pretend to be, as in Thopas...)" (29).

I am interested in the kind of authority that authors establish by constructing personae for themselves in texts and in books, and by strategically influencing the way that their work is received. This idea of authority is more symbolic than material; it is conceived in terms of posterity, and occupies a place (however humble) within a lineage of great literary auctores like

2 Other patrons are the daughter of John of Luxembourg, Bonne, wife of the Duke of Normandy, later to become King John II; Charles the Bad (king of Navarre, for whom he composes Jugement dou roy de Navarre as well as the Confort d'Ami when Charles is taken prisoner by the English); the aforementioned John Duke de Berry (to whom he dedicates Dit de la fonteinne amoureuse) (For more bibliographical details, see Lawrence Earp, Guillaume Machaut: A guide to research).

3 Seth Lerer, "The Canterbury Tales," offers another economic reading of Chaucer's self-fashioning. The themes of money, language, and sex in the Canterbury Tales are "all three [...] about forms of representation: ways of speaking and presenting a performing self, ways of taking ordinary objects and investing them with meaning. They are all media of exchange, ways of representing one thing for another, of creating value in goods, actions, and ideas" (244).

4 Foucault's "What is an Author" elucidates this idea. The author is more than a name; rather it is a description or a "means of classification" (1627). The author's name can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others. A name also establishes different forms of relationships among texts [...] the fact that a number of texts
Ovid and Virgil. But this is a vernacular authority that takes a form quite different from that constructed in books and texts for writers of the Latinate tradition. For a writer such as Machaut, this kind of authority enables — but also is generated by — the production and dissemination of ornate single-author collections. The authority, or the strength of presence, of the poet figure in this kind of collection helps explain the temptation to read the narrator of the *Voir Dit* as the narrator of the *Prologue*, and both, ultimately, as Machaut himself. But just as his books lack the kind of "authorizing" scholarly apparatus appended to the work of Virgil or St Bonaventure himself, so Machaut’s authorial persona is less an amalgam of textual and bibliographical traditions than an often playful, self-deprecating, ironic poetic refraction of them, a persona that makes for a very different idea of vernacular literary authority. Machaut's ideas about authorship also draw their energy from disorderly rather than centripetal processes of textual transmission, those that elide, conceal or complicate ideas about authorship — that as often anonymize as they canonize a writer and his work.

My case is that this is the kind of self-representation in which Chaucer is interested when he borrows from his French contemporaries. He is invested in an exploration of that authority — sometimes ironically, sometimes in earnest — rather than the construction of a single "Chaucer the author" and his play is at once a response to the bookish authority of his French sources, particularly Machaut, and to the playfulness about authorship he finds in his reading of French fourteenth-century poetry and the disorder he likely found in books that contained that poetry. At stake, then, is a way of writing that explores (tests, challenges, creates) medieval notions of literary authority, that hints at but never quite develops a single, stable authorial presence.

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were attached to a single name implies that relationship of homogeneity, filiation, reciprocal explanation, authentification, or of common utilization were established among them. Finally, the author's name characterizes a particular manner of existence of discourse. Discourse that possesses an author's name is not to be immediately consumed and forgotten; neither is it accorded the momentary attention given to ordinary, fleeting words. Rather, its status and its manner of reception are regulated by the culture in which it circulates. (1627)

5 While codices devoted solely to Machaut's works are extant from his lifetime and shortly after, this is not the case for Chaucer.
Cannon, in *The Grounds of English Literature*, has argued that one way Chaucer crafts an authorial identity is by projecting an idea of himself as author as an immaterial "holograph" beyond the book, a single form that emerges from the many iterations of his texts. The creation of this authorial presence, however, comes at the expense of the material text, according to Cannon, and "the very brightness of his own projection has allowed centuries of admirers of the pantheon of resulting poesye to ignore both its grounds and the materialities behind such 'gossamer' attainments" (207).

My reading contends that this exploration of literary authority may belong to an imaginary realm, and that Chaucer imagines it, in powerful ways, through and in books. Throughout my thesis, I will show that Chaucer's self-shaping does not dematerialize his oeuvre, but rather the opposite. He draws attention to the way in which his authority, and that of his sources, exists in books and is transmitted by books. The "projection" of the poet beyond the text does not transcend the physical book; rather, the abstract idea of Chaucer the author draws readers back to the material textual iterations that constitute his works and thus his claim to authority.

### 0.1 Readers and Posterity

Inherent in this concept of authority is the idea of writing for posterity. Poets imagine themselves as part of a lineage reaching not only backwards in time (to Ovid, Virgil, etc.) but forward too. Literary evidence shows that Chaucer thought about his future reception. Seth Lerer, analysing Lydgate's response to Chaucer's work, shows that Chaucer constructs a "mythology" for himself, as a poet.

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6 Chaucer learns this strategy, Cannon argues, from vernacular Romance (such as self-projection or "holography"). To offer a simplified version of his argument, he explains that *Horn*, for instance, has so many iterations that no one version of the text is "Horn." Instead, the many projections of *Horn* create an immaterial "idea" of *Horn* beyond the text. This, he argues, is what Chaucer does with the idea of himself as a poet. He offers a superabundance of examples of "poesye" (or arguably of multiple narrators in their quest to write successfully) and creates for us a projection of "poet" as a "virtual object." For Chaucer, according to Cannon, the cost of this poetic glory is the "dematerialization" of his work (207).

7 Chaucer also imagines himself within an existing living community, of course, when he translates the French and Italian of his poetic contemporaries.
shaping the way his work is read after his lifetime, trying to establish himself as more than a "maker" of commissioned poems, but a member of a lineage of poetae.  

Poetry, it has been said, is something that goes on only in the perfect tense. Identified as the writings of the classical poetae and their Trecento inheritors, "poesye" to Chaucer and his contemporaries was a literary project toward which the living could only aspire... a way of writing freed from the controlling ideologies or codes of conduct that made all forms of commissioned literature acts of performance. In contrast to the autonomy of "poesye," "makyng" was perceived of as a socially constructed ritual, a public affirmation of behavior patterns and ideals. It was a form of writing on demand.... (Lerer, Chaucer and his Readers, 30-31)

Trigg also considers Chaucer's concern for his posterity, arguing that Chaucer is part of a unique literary moment, one which, for the first time, is concerned with posterity, in contrast to "older anonymous traditions and styles of poetry" (and even in contrast to alliterative poets contemporaneous to Chaucer [302]). This change, Trigg suggests, emerges from the "influence of Italian humanism, mediated through the poets he loved to imitate and outdo" (302). Contributing to increasing interest in the individual poet is a "growing culture of royal patronage, which rewarded individual practitioners, not traditions" (302-3).

My thesis adds to our way of thinking about Chaucer's own idea of posterity. I will argue that Chaucer considers his future readership in the context of books, even anticipating the way readers will encounter his texts on the page, as his short poem "Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn" evidences. Chaucer confronts the realities of textual copying and dissemination and reveals very real anxiety about the accuracy, or the "trewe[ness]" (4), of his texts as they go out into the world. Adam's work is characterized by "negligence" and "rape" (7): carelessness, which creates even more work for the exasperated author who now, in order to bring the presentation of his text up to standard, must Adam's "work renewe" (5). This concern is

8 Jardine shows Erasmus as participating in this quest for an enduring, intellectual gravitas that transcends the realities of the present (4). Jardine argues that the image of Erasmus that comes down to us is "Erasmus's own evaluation of his achievement, his own statement of the importance and potential reach and influence of his learning. It is not, and was not, the evaluation of the Europe he inhabited" (7).
ever present in Chaucer's texts: Chapter Three picks up this thread and shows how Chaucer's *Complaint of Venus* manipulates the form of his source text, Graunson's *Cinq Ballades*, with textual integrity and future readers in mind.

0.2 The Knowing Reader

Chaucer not only thinks about the forms in which his future readers will encounter his texts but also conceives of all different kinds of readers, present and future. Chaucer portrays critical readers like the God of Love in the *Legend of Good Women*. He writes bad readers, like the narrator in the *Book of the Duchess* who takes away from the tragic tale of Ceyx and Alcyone the lesson that he must pray to Juno for sleep. He also imagines and creates a community of learned, astute readers not only within the text, but outside of it.

I call this community Chaucer's "knowing readers." This audience did exist; it likely included, as Paul Strohm characterizes, "gentlepersons" and "a few London intellectuals," and Chaucer's social equals, or near-equals (50). These "fellow knights and esquires [...] and ladies of equivalent station" (55) — such as, for example, Richard Stury, a member of the household of Edward III — were "well-situated to appreciate [Chaucer's] transformations of poems by Machaut and Froissart" (55). Strohm suggests that Chaucer wrote specifically with this limited and educated audience in mind, intending coterie readership, perhaps, rather than widespread publication (51).

However, my thesis suggests that we can nuance our understanding of Chaucer's audience by using literature itself, alongside Strohm's social analysis of French literacy in England, to refine categories of readers. Familiarity with language is not the same as familiarity with literature, and the way Chaucer uses his sources implies the existence of certain kinds of vernacular readers in

9 Though this type of knowing audience might have been expanding to include a growing "reading public" (Strohm 47) who could, in theory, do the kind of comparative reading necessary to understand Chaucer's borrowing, provided they had access to manuscripts of these works. However, there is no evidence of Chaucer's work circulating commercially until the mid-fifteenth century, when interventions by bibliophiles like John Shirley take it out of courtly circles and into the London commercial trade (see, for instance, Lerer's chapter, "The complaints of Adam Scriveyn: John Shirley and the Canonicity of Chaucer's Short Poems," *Chaucer and his Readers*, 117-146).
his community — but more than this, it constructs the idea of different kinds of vernacular readers. Chaucer shapes a community of readers implicitly through modes of writing and translation, and through the forms of literary, linguistic, and codicological play that my thesis takes up. This community includes readers who can recognize Chaucer's posturing vis-à-vis his French sources, and appreciate the irony of his posturing, because they have the necessary level of familiarity with the French, courtly source texts.

Of course, Chaucer's sources are not just French; other kinds of literacy further define the readers who likely encountered his work, and whose encounters those works anticipate. A knowledge of classical literature, for instance, could inform a reader's understanding not only of Chaucer's works but also of the French texts — themselves rich in classical allusion — from which he draws. Familiarity with classical literature, but not with French lyric like Graunson's *Cinq Ballades*, for instance, would yield a different reading of the *Complaint of Mars* and the *Complaint of Venus* than the one my thesis engages in Chapter Three, for example. Chaucer shapes communities of readers through layers of allusions to different kinds of literature.  

In yet another category is the literacy of poets who, like Chaucer, were involved in cross-Channel literary exchange, and who were thus primed to pick up on Chaucer's subtle manipulations of French texts.  

Froissart himself, argues Wimsatt (179), read the *Book of the Duchess* and imitated it in his *Dit dou Bleu Chevalier* (Wimsatt speculates that Stury could have brought Froissart a copy when he visited him in Brussels in 1371 [178]). Froissart, both influencing Chaucer (Chaucer translates from the beginning of the *Paradis d'Amour* in the opening of the *Duchess*) and influenced by Chaucer, is one reader who we know with certainty would have been keenly aware of the ways in which Chaucer was recasting his work.  

10 Chaucer demands of his readers proficiency in a variety of areas if they want to grasp the subtleties of his text: French, Latin, Italian, classical and contemporary philosophy, religious debate, political conflict past and present, literary form, etc.

11 For more on cross-Channel exchange and the Hundred Years War, see Ardis Butterfield's *Familiar Enemy*. My thesis draws upon her work since she provides important socio-historical grounds for the kind of study I am trying to do with literary texts and manuscripts.

12 Graunson too, whom Chaucer mentions by name in the envoy of the *Complaint of Venus*, would have assessed the validity of poet's claim to translate his ballades "word by word."
Above all, however, Chaucer's experimentation with and mistranslation of French narrative voice fosters, for a reader such as Froissart, or a coterie, a privileged few, the impression that he is an exclusive author writing for an exclusive readership. Deborah McGrady's work shows that the use of literary techniques to establish and limit a community of readers itself has French precedents. Machaut, McGrady argues, uses anagrams, which claim to reveal the true identity of the author or a given character, as a strategy for excluding readers. Only members of a privileged circle can decipher them: "an anagram promises one truth, but a truth that can only be revealed if it is already known" [73] (this is especially the case for Machaut's anagram in Behaingne, which is deliberately "faulty," yielding a name which only very slightly differs from the expected name). I would also stress here that it is not my intention, in what follows, to make any definitive empirical claims about Chaucer's similarly knowing readership. I am interested in the way that such strategies construct an idea of an exclusive readership, apart from the experiences of real readers. It matters that there were poets, like Froissart, who could have perceived Chaucer's complex treatment of his materials. Chaucer's works do not anticipate an impossible readership. But at the level of their formal operation, his texts do construct that readership, and it is at this level that my argument typically engages with them.

0.3 The Reader Unknown

The readings that Chaucer's literary maneuvering open up are multiple. While an ideal reader such as Froissart, deeply invested in French-English literary culture, might have had the gratification of being in on the nuances of some of Chaucer's translations, Chaucer also imagines a less ideal audience, such as those who misunderstand him, on whom he wishes an age of suffering at the outset of the House of Fame. These "unknown" readers are important to what follows. I do not mean to set up the category in opposition to the "knowing reader." Some of these "unknown" readers might have fallen into this first category as well. I designate them "unknown" because they are not — and/or are not figured as — members of Chaucer's immediate coterie readership. They are the antithesis of an imagined, exclusive readership, and the embodiment of the inevitable vagaries of transmission. ¹³ This section briefly outlines what

¹³ Thomas Hocceleve, for instance, is an example of the overlap between these two categories. He is not part of this coterie audience though he is a "known" reader of Chaucer.
kinds of real medieval readers might be described in these terms, and then thinks about how their unpredictable readings become an aspect of Chaucer’s crafting of his authority.

Obviously, not all readers would have had enough familiarity with French and French texts to identify Chaucer's uses of and departures from his sources, just as not all English readers have the kind of literacy needed to appreciate the source work in, for example, T.S. Eliot's *Wasteland*). There were, of course, varying degrees of French literacy in late fourteenth-century England, from the cultivated French of aristocrats to the French of the middle classes, who required a working French for trade, record keeping, courts of law, bureaucracy, *etc.*, but who could never hope to achieve mastery of the language. Tim Machan cites a "desire for native fluency" (238) as the impulse behind French grammars and conversation manuals geared at merchants. However, it is unlikely that these handbooks could have imparted proficiency and familiarity with the Continental literary French writing from which Chaucer draws. Thomas Hoccleve — a fourteenth-fifteenth century bureaucrat, poet, and self-proclaimed disciple of Chaucer — shows that these two categories, "knowing readers" and "readers unknown," are not mutually exclusive. While Hoccleve is, as Calin writes, "an artist and a government official, like Machaut, Froissart, and Chartier, like Chaucer and Gower" (*French Tradition*, 400), Hoccleve's bureaucratic employment as clerk of the Privy Seal required, as well as proficiency in Latin, the mastery of an official French vernacular — the French of bureaucracy rather than the French of courtly literature. Hoccleve, however, engages with literary French in his writing, such as the *Letter of Cupid*, which adapts Christine de Pizan's *L'Epistre au dieu d'Amours*. Hoccleve does not belong to the social classes of elite readers that Strohm delineates; the example of Hoccleve shows, significantly, how Chaucer's literature may help define types of readers beyond the parameters Strohm's study suggests.

While my thesis tends to engage predominantly with the kinds of reading accessible to "knowing readers," unknown readers are no less significant to Chaucer's self-styling as author. In fashioning himself as a writer, like Virgil or Ovid, whose books would move around and perhaps outlast their maker, Chaucer necessarily anticipated unknown readers, who would — also of

14 He even created a formulary containing model documents for his department, most of which are in French (and his own marginal notes are all in French [Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England*, 401]).
necessity — approach his work with an unruly range of perspectives, preconceived ideas, knowledge, skills, and degrees of interest. As I show throughout my thesis, Chaucer plays with the idea of disruption that may result from unpredictable readings, sometimes appearing to minimize it, always capitalizing on it. For instance, in the *Complaint of Venus*, Chaucer reacts to the most obviously disruptive kind of reader — one who would alter his text, rearranging or excerpting it — and he builds into his ballade series formal cues that encourage its dissemination as a single piece. Disruption and misreading help Chaucer assert his authority, even as they threaten to undermine it. Authority challenged is also authority invented.

0.4 Chaucer's Manuscripts and Manuscript Studies

Chaucer, his fellow French poets, and his readers are operating within a manuscript culture. My thesis looks at a sampling of French codices as a way of getting a broader sense of the manuscript context in which Chaucer encountered French works. I examine how Chaucer responds not to individual manuscripts but to larger codicological trends — that is, the "sum" of his codicological environment beyond a single manuscript, and the effect the broad conditions of manuscript transmission exert on poetic authority.

As I will show, in the *General Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer explores the way texts circulate together in manuscripts. He shows how authority may be produced and disseminated by manuscript forms, and he tests how a prologue might become fixed or unfixed, and the power of the authorial voice or, conversely, plural competing voices, to do that fixing or unfixing. My thesis is interested in the question of what poetic authority has to do with books. I examine this question in light of recent scholarship which situates Chaucer's and contemporaneous French poets' bookish approaches to textual authority in the context of fourteenth-century international manuscript culture (for instance, on Continental French manuscripts, the *Machaut in the Book* project led by Deborah McGrady and Benjamin Albritton, and Elizaveta Strakhov's recent work on the cross-Channel circumstances of production of Pennsylvania MS 902; on the English side, Arthur Bahr's *Fragments and Assemblages*, Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin's *Production of Books in England*, and Wakelin's *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft*).

While I do not consider the Chaucerian manuscript tradition in depth because the witnesses of his work postdate his death, some manuscripts of Chaucer's work are of particular interest to my
project. In Chapter Three, for instance, I study the codicological setting for the *Complaint of Mars-Complaint of Venus* amalgamation that occurs in Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 2006.15

0.5 Chaucer's Translation

Finally, Chaucer uses translation as another means of establishing authority. Chaucer's translation has a broad scope in Chaucer studies, encompassing not only Chaucer's relation to his French sources but also to his Italian and Latin sources.

Translation is an inherently interpretative and appropriative act. Reynolds deals theoretically with the subtleties of different kinds of translation (between languages and dialects, paraphrasing, *etc.*) and argues that difference and inaccessibility are a necessary outcome of any act of translation. "Estrangement" is effected by translation (*The Poetry of Translation*, 16); when a translation attempts to "bridge" difference, it ultimately "reassert[s...] difference" (16). Chaucer shows an interest in the shifting gap between source and translation.16 Sometimes, this involves not acknowledging the gap at all: with the exception of a single case, Chaucer translates from French silently, leaving his source texts anonymous and unacknowledged. Only a "knowing reader" would — or could — recognize the borrowing.

In the *Complaint of Venus* he names, idiosyncratically, Oton de Graunson as the author of his source text. In this case, his translation is very free, but he claims to attempt to translate faithfully. My chapter on Graunson engages Copeland's distinction between "primary" and "secondary" translation to explain Chaucer's practice. Copeland explains that "primary translations [...] exhibit a close alliance with the aims and methods of exegetical practice, and like exegesis define their purpose in terms of service to a source text" (6-7). "Secondary" translations, however, have a "secondary relationship to the exegetical tradition of the schools: they do not define themselves though exegetical models of service or supplementation, but rather

15 For more on Middle English manuscripts and literary form, see the recent issue of the Chaucer Review (47.4) devoted to "Medieval English Manuscripts: Form, Aesthetics, and the Literary Text."

16 In some cases, like the *Romaunt* or the *Boece*, Chaucer translates quite faithfully and the distance between his work and the source text seems to be at its narrowest.
through rhetorical models of invention, that is, discovering one's own argument or subject out of available topics or commonplaces" (7). Chaucer engages in something like secondary translation, though in the Venus and French-sourced work, not on the same terms as the exegetical scholastic tradition. I will suggest that at stake in Chaucer's claim to offer a "primary" translation while actually crafting a "secondary" one, is an act self-authorization. The productive uncertainty of his translation is part of the way that he fashions his playful authorial persona in these poems.

Chaucer's explicit claim to translate word for word makes readers — from the most knowing reader of all, Graunson himself, to readers with varying levels of literacy in French and access to French texts — aware of the gap between translation and source, while they may not be aware of such a gap when he translates his other French sources silently (especially because, bewailing the relative lack of rhymes in English compared to French, he creates doubt about the degree of the success of his undertaking).

Chaucer harnesses translation — in its appropriative, interpretive and (as in Copeland’s argument) "inventive" aspects — for his development and investigation of authority. His translations are one of many maneuvers in a larger game, one strategy with which to assert poetic authority. He manipulates his sources, playfully, ironically, or competitively. He draws authority from the way his sources conceive authority at the same time as he asserts the primacy of his own work, holding sources out of reach, and placing his own texts in competition with them. In the following chapters, I explore cases in which Chaucer manipulates his French sources — most notably Machaut's Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne in his Book of the Duchess and Graunson's Cinq Ballades in the Complaint of Venus — to craft his own narrative and authorial personae.

0.6 An Example: Codicological Forms of Authority in Machaut's Prologue and Chaucer's General Prologue

I would like to offer a brief example that puts into play the key ideas I have just outlined — especially poetic authority, manuscripts, and posterity — reading Guillaume de Machaut's Prologue, dated to the 1370s, alongside Chaucer's General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, composed in the 1380s. Both Prologues allegedly explain their author's poetic purpose (Machaut
is called upon by Nature to serve Love by writing poetry; Chaucer, in his own way, is called
upon by human nature to represent the pilgrims).

Machaut and Chaucer, I will suggest, think
about authority with respect to books, in terms of how their poetic personae develop and are
accessed in books; their Prologues suggest what particular forms of books they might preface.

Machaut's Prologue offers itself as an introduction to a single-author collection, devoted entirely
to his oeuvre. The Prologue anticipates — even demands — this context (concluding, for
example, with the lines: "A l'onneur d'elles le feray [...] et pour ce vueil, sans plus targier,
Commencier le Dit dou vergier" [294-8] [for their honour, I will do it, and for this reason, I wish,
without delaying any longer, to begin the Dit dou vergier]. This introduces the following literary
work). Extant in later collections of Machaut's work, the Prologue is, in all but one case, the first
"literary" piece, appearing directly after paratextual material like flyleaves and tables of contents.
It survives relatively completely at the beginning of BNF f.fr. 1584 (on Dr), BNF f.fr. 22545,
and Pierpont Morgan Library MS M396; the four initial sections open BNF f.fr. 9221 (1r) and
BNF f.fr 881 (Palmer, Introduction, lxxxii). In BNF f.fr. 881, however, the Prologue appears on
folio 97r following a vernacular translation of Ovid, "le livre de l'art d'amours." The Prologue
here, though near the end of the codex, introduces a sampling of short lyric pieces by Machaut.

When the Prologue appears as the first literary piece in a collection of Machaut's work, it
purports to explain the production of the subsequent texts in the manuscript. The Prologue, I
think, goes even further — it is aware of, and demonstrates the processes involved in, compiling

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17 Harry Bailey and Machaut's Nature are the commissioners of poetic works and their
commands explain and frame the poetic output of their respective poets/narrators. Interestingly,
Chaucer uses the word, "voirdit"— a form of "verdict" and the title of Machaut's most complex
works — in the General Prologue, referring to the moment when Harry Bailey explains the rules
for the poetic contest: "And graunted hym, withouten moore avys/ And bad hym seye his voirdit,
as hym leste" (788-89). The Middle English Dictionary lists "verdit" and "voirdit" as two forms
of the same word. The Dictionnaire du Moyen Français distiguishes between the two words,
suggesting "résultat de la délibération d'un jury" for "verdict," and "engagement" and
"témoignage véridique" for "voirdit" — this second meaning of "voirdit" seems to overlap with
the Middle French meaning of "verdict" (DMF "verdict", "voirdit"). Chaucer uses both "voirdit"
and "verdit" to mean "verdict." He employs "verdit" twice in his Parliament of Fowls (503; 525).
According to MED, POF line 503 has the following variants (none of which are "voirdit"): vordyt, verdict, veyrdit, veredite, veredyt. No variants are listed for line 525.

18 Beginning with the entrance of the god of love at line 55, "Je suis Amours."
the kind of single-author manuscripts in which it imagines itself. Such manuscripts can be large, ornate, written in *formata* script on supple parchment, bound in even gatherings. The uniform appearance of these codices smoothes over the multiple hands involved in their production. The *Prologue* replicates the authority of such manuscripts: it consolidates poetic authority with a single author figure; a noble patron commissions the writing; the poetic subject matter is courtly.

Guillaume and his allegorical patron are thinking about the appeal of his works once gathered in manuscript form. Nature is concerned that he produce enough poetic breadth ("en faire assez" [24]). Guillaume in turn promises both poetic quantity and variety: he will compose "pluseurs" (48), "l'un grant et l'autre mendre/ et les aucuns chanter bien plaisanment (48-9) [some big and others small, and some to sing very pleasantly]. In a manner reminiscent of rubrics that impose codicological order, the *Prologue* emphasizes formal classification. Guillaume will compose "dis et chansonnettes" (125), "Double hoques" and "plaisans lais" (127), "motes, rondiaus, virelais" (129), which, he adds, are called "chansons baladees" (129). "Complaintes" and "balades entees" (130) complete the list. The *Prologue's* final lines in manuscripts where the *Prologue* is complete — again, "for this reason I want to begin the Dit dou vergier" — function as an *incipit* rendering, as Palmer points out, the "fiction and the materiality of the manuscript [...] indistinguishable" (xxxiii). Guillaume is even thinking about the aesthetic appearance of his poetry in manuscript when he explains that "Ymagination" makes the "impression" of the beloved's face on the lover's heart, and Dous Penser "la figure" ["draws the image"], "dont son fait cent fois embelist" (179) [therefore embellishing his poem a hundred times].

The *Prologue* claims a role as the introduction to a single-author collection. Because it allegedly emanates from the mouth of a real author, scholars are sometimes tempted to read it as the key to understanding Machaut's poetic enterprise, as an *ars poetica*, as a "formal unifying element" (Brownlee 16), as a description of the "subject and purpose of his work" (Lukitsch 258). In the *Prologue*, Machaut plays with the idea of stable authorial control over the codex, and, I would

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19 This is Machaut's game: seeming to offer himself, but remaining out of reach. He evokes his authorial presence through a narrator who seems like him. He offers what seems to be an "all-encompassing" poetic key, yet, at the same time, he thwarts our access to an explanatory "ars poetica" when we read it in context with his other work — the very context in which the *Prologue* demands to be read.
argue — and will argue at greater length in Chapter One — the narrator of the Prologue is no closer to the real Machaut than the narrators of his other dits (many of which offer equally convincing explanations of poetic composition). The seemingly "coherent" authorial voice in the Prologue is an illusion which elides the many iterations of Guillaume across Machaut's oeuvre, just as the single-author manuscript gives the impression of uniformity but is really the product of multiple hands and disseminated control (as alluded to by Guillaume's description of Dous Penser as "illuminator"). Creating such a convincingly authorial narrator, and modeling a single author's authority over his oeuvre, the Prologue seems to account for the composition of any of Machaut's pieces. Its circulation alongside the "Dit dou vergier" hangs only on the final couplet. As BNF f.fr. 9221 and BNF f.fr. 881 show — both Prologues ending incompletely and followed by an assortment of shorter lyric pieces — the Prologue's very "authority" can make it codicologically unfixed, rendering it susceptible to being slotted before a collection of Machaut's works that bears an uncertain relationship to the Prologue's own orderly account of his oeuvre.

Unlike Machaut's Prologue, Chaucer's General Prologue presents his collection very deliberately as an assortment of works, varying wildly in style, form, and content, composed by a multitude of competing authors. The General Prologue's pilgrimage frame imposes order by playing with elements of and ideas about disorder. It introduces polyvocality, the voices of a large group of tale-telling pilgrims. It leads to an impression of incompleteness, because through it the narrator promises one hundred and twenty tales — a promise that, as far as the surviving text suggests, ending as it does before the pilgrims reach Canterbury, was never to be fulfilled. The General Prologue, as it invents the pilgrimage, makes possible the addition of new material, like the insertion the Canon's Yeoman's Tale: the unexpected entrance of two new story-tellers makes perfect sense within the logic of the real-life pilgrimage (Alexandra Gillespie, Chaucer's Books, forthcoming). Finally, the competitive dynamic of the General Prologue explains the

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20 Like the Remede, Navarre and the Voir Dit. The latter offers an account of all the stages of writing and compilation—commissioning, composing, editing, and gathering texts in book form.
21 Complaints and ballades (in BNF f.fr. 9221) and ballades and rondeaux (in BNF f.fr. 881).
22 Coghill discusses the deliberate disorder of the General Prologue (116).
23 I am very grateful to Professor Alexandra Gillespie for advance access to her work.
presence in the collection of fragments and disorder — the imperfect state of *The Tale of Sir Thopas*, cut short by the Host, and the *Miller's Tale*, which cuts off that of the Monk, for example.

The *Canterbury Tales*, deliberately figured as a collection of diverse material, thwarts any desire on the part of an author or reader for coherence and completeness. The poet figure in the *Canterbury Tales* casts himself not as an author but as a compiler — a recorder of the tales of others. Unlike Guillaume in the *Prologue*, who explains his calling to write "*nouveaux dits*" (5), "new poetry," Chaucer's narrator identifies himself as one who repeats, gathers, and reports. Minnis likens this stance to that of a scholastic compiler, suggesting it allows Chaucer to defer responsibility "for his reader's understanding of any part of the *materia*, for any effect which the *materia* may have on him, and, indeed, for any error or sin into which the *materia* may lead a reader" (*Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 202).

Yet this disorder does not quite fit with the scholastic idea of compilation as distinct from authorship. It is a literary construction — a fiction. Chaucer is an author, and he uses the guise of compiler as an ironic strategy for control. Unlike Machaut's *Prologue*, which purports to explain the entirety of his oeuvre, Chaucer's *General Prologue* only holds explanatory power over a work for which he disclaims (even though he quite obviously has) responsibility. Chaucer's persona, therefore, remains self-evidently fictional; the author of the *Tales* effectively denies that he is an author. Machaut's prologue, by contrast, invents an author whose name can be attached to the works that follow it. The result has an irony that Chaucer might have appreciated, and built on: Machaut's *Prologue* blurs the line between the real poet who wrote various works and the voice of the text, and as a result becomes unmoored from Machaut's own conception of it. It becomes an item that can introduce any of Machaut's work. The *General Prologue* ascribes authorship to many fictional characters — types from estate satire — and thus offers only a distortion of the real author, a fictional narrator who goes about merely "recording" plural voices. Counter-intuitively, this stabilizes the author's miscellaneous works. The fiction of the *Canterbury Tales* is that it is a book by many pilgrims; it is, of course, a single book by a single

24 Reminiscent of Guillaume in the *Fonteinne amoureuse* who records and later presents the lament of his princely patron.
author, and the *General Prologue* only makes sense in relation to these works: it (and they) do not stand alone (Gillespie, *Chaucer's Books*, forthcoming).

This short reading illustrates the argument that runs throughout my thesis: Chaucer, like the French poets of the period, uses ideas about books to construct authorial personae and to imagine textual posterity — that is, to invent his version of poetic authority. He does this in relation to his French contemporaries, who model playful, ironic, and sometimes deliberately obfuscated modes of authority through their own attitudes towards books and through their own poetic personae. In this spirit Chaucer translates, mistranslates, adapts, and conflates his sources in a way that both mimics the sometimes confused forms of texts found in manuscripts — the disordering of authority — and, for a select audience, opens up alternative readings of his work in relation to his sources: readings that show him not just deferentially translating the French masters, but claiming a kind of authority over them: challenging them, one-upping them, and portraying himself as a literary equal.

0.7 Chapter Summaries

Each of my four chapters is organized according to Chaucer's literary relationship with individual French authors: 1) Guillaume de Machaut, 2) Jean Froissart, 3) Oton de Graunson, and 4) Eustace Deschamps. Chapter One, "Machaut's and Chaucer's Poetic Persona: Books, Pseudo-autobiography, and the Elusive 'Author',' draws on de Looze's and Spearing's discussion of the medieval French narrative voice and I examine the many iterations of Machaut's pseudo-autobiographical persona across his oeuvre. The *Prologue*, I argue, especially tempts readers to

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25 A reading which Minnis supports when he argues that the very deliberateness with which Chaucer crafts his persona as "compiler" ironically leads us to suspect the presence of "a very self-conscious author who was concerned to manipulate the conventions of *compilatio* for his own literary ends" (210).

26 She also discussed this topic at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 2015, in "The Make-Shift Form of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*."

27 "Narrative persona" refers to the way poets write first person, often pseudo-autobiographical, voices in their texts. "Authorial persona" is the way they imagine themselves or are imagined by their audience as authors. Chaucer and his sources play with these modes, developing fictional personae that at times seem indistinguishable from their historical authorial counterparts, and, at other times, are definitively contained within the text. I explore the way in which Chaucer and Machaut use shifting first person voices in Chapter 1.
interpret its first-person speaker as the author, Machaut, by posing as an *ars poetica*. BNF f.fr. 1584 engages in pseudo-autobiographical fluidity depicting, as its opening portrait, a "borgne" author figure — an allusion to Guillaume's self-styling in the *Voir Dit* — raising unanswerable questions about whether or not the historical Machaut was indeed "borgne." The point of this pseudo-autobiography, I argue, is playful uncertainty. Machaut's many voices allude to his role as author but, remaining fluid and unhinged from reality and historical fact, they elude attempts to pin down a definite authorial speaking voice. Counter-intuitively, this uncertainty creates authority for Machaut as author by making the reader think about the author himself. Chaucer adopts a similar pseudo-autobiographical technique in the *Book of the Duchess*, I argue. When he muddles his translation of Machaut's *Behaingne*, he opens a second possible reading — which can operate alongside the touching elegy to Blanche — accessible only to readers familiar with his French source. His confusion creates two parallel first-person identities, Chaucer the author who "fails" to translate his source accurately (which his knowing audience recognizes as a joke), and a bumbling narrator who fails to understand that the man in black's lady is dead. His adaptation of *Behaingne* is a game, and Chaucer derives authority by showing how nimbly and cunningly he can engage, play with, and overturn the authorial stances of his French sources. The knowing audience derives pleasure from being party to the game, recognizing the intentional muddle, and understanding the irony.

Chapter Two, "Froissart's Books and Chaucer's 'Bok': Codicological Forms of Poetic Authority and Competition," takes three approaches to Chaucer's engagement with Jean Froissart's texts and approach to books. First, I outline Froissart's poetic authority as evidenced by his surviving single-author manuscripts, BNF f.fr. 830 and 831. Then, I contrast the single-author tome with the intertextuality of the period. I look at Froissart's competitive response to the Machaut-Païen "Absalon" exchange inset in the *Voir Dit*. Next, I look at the way Chaucer participates in this competition by overturning the ballade exchange in the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women*, making the women, absent in the previous exchanges, the centre of his ballade. Finally, this chapter returns to Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, considering its structure as a patchwork of allusions in contrast to Froissart's single-author books, and arguing that Chaucer can gain authority as he mediates the interaction between these sources, acting at once as compiler, judge, and literary contributor. In closing, I will show how Chaucer brings together the codicological and literary threads at play in the chapter. He reacts to the single-author form of Froissart's
books. The *Book of the Duchess*, like a single-author tome that preserves authoritatively the work of an author for posterity, acts as a memorial, a tomb, for the dead Blanche. However, he also imagines the *Book of the Duchess* in contrast to the single-author codex, as a site for intertextual play: in the *Duchess* he recreates the literary intertextuality of the "Absalon" exchange by orchestrating a conversation between sources.

Chapter Three, "The Complaint of the Translator and the *Complaint of Venus*: Translation, Textual Authority, and Manuscript Dissemination," deals with Chaucer's translation of Graunson's *Cinq Ballades* in his *Complaint of Venus*. Chaucer ends his *Complaint of Venus* with the perplexing lament that since rhymes in English are so scarce, it "ys a gret penaunce" (79) to "folowe word by word" (81) his French source, a ballade sequence by the Savoyard knight, Oton de Graunson. Chaucer does not, in fact, translate the poem word for word (most obviously, the speaker is female rather than male, and Graunson's five ballades are condensed into three [Scattergood 179]). I suggest that Chaucer's changes are a reaction not just to Oton de Graunson's poetics, but also to the codicological contexts of his works. Therefore, a section of this chapter deals with Graunson's manuscript tradition, focusing particularly on London, Westminster Abbey 21, Paris, BNF f.fr. 2201, and University of Pennsylvania MS codex 902. While the *Cinq Ballades* survive in four manuscripts — the aforementioned BNF f.fr. 2201 and University of Pennsylvania MS codex 902, Lausanne, Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire, ms 350, and Barcelona, Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya, ms. 8 — they only circulate together and in sequence in two: BNF f.fr. 2201 and University of Pennsylvania MS codex 902.

This chapter argues that Chaucer had codicological integrity in mind when he effected his changes to his source. A sequence of ballades like Graunson's would be subject to the whims of scribes and compilers, easily separated, excerpted, or reordered. Chaucer, however, creates continuity by subsuming the ballades into a single complaint and appending his own envoy, which signals that the individual stanzas are part of a larger whole. Fifteenth-century manuscript witnesses show that Chaucer's *Complaint* seems to have been, with a few exceptions, transmitted intact. I close with a reading of Chaucer's plan for posterity gone awry. The *Venus* appears twice in Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 2006. When it appears for a second time, copied by Hand E, it is incomplete (only the second half is copied), appended to the end of the first half of the *Complaint of Mars*. I will suggest that rather than providing a fractured incomplete version of the text, the Pepys 2006 manuscript offers an even more complete text.
Finally, Chapter 4, "Deschamps's Proposal: An Invitation to Invective and the Usurpation of Poetic Authority," turns away from Chaucer's reading of French poetry to a French poet's reception of Chaucer's poetry. Here I will consider Deschamps's "Ballade to Chaucer," situating it in the context of cross-Channel invective, and paying particular attention to the ballade's main source, the exchange between Philippe de Vitry and Jean de le Mote. First, I will reexamine the possible meanings of the word "pandras," which has sparked lively debate amongst Chaucerians for decades. I will suggest that we might settle on a meaning of "pandras" that is derived directly from Latin "pando, pandere," meaning here "to publish." Wimsatt has suggested a similar reading of "pandras" as "espandras" (from "espandre," "to spread" [250]). However, the imagined prefix "es" is unnecessary, and while the form "pandras" is elsewhere unattested in French, this chapter will make the case that "pandras" could represent an example of a poet taking a very common Latin verb — used in Latin literary texts by Ovid and Virgil as "to publish," "to reveal" — into French. I will further suggest that, since there is no other explicit direct object in the text (Wimsatt supplies "light," Butterfield supplies "language"), we might understand Chaucer's work, the Romaunt of the Rose, and by extension Chaucer himself, as the things being published or revealed. The tone of the invective becomes more pointed, suggesting Chaucer's self-promotion (he publishes his work, his name — he builds himself up). In BNF f.fr. 840, the largest surviving collection of Deschamps's poetry, the "Ballade to Chaucer" appears next to Deschamps's moral ballades. These moral ballades contribute to my understanding of the way Deschamps conceives of authority. A major theme of Deschamps's moral ballades is that all worldly — and thus poetic — authority is impermanent. He proposes to Chaucer that they take advantage of this transitoriness — though he himself is wary of it and offers Augustine as a model for crafting lasting authority — by assuming the literary roles of their predecessors, Vitry and Le Mote.

My conclusion revisits the main threads that run through my chapters — how manuscript forms, from single-author codex to miscellany, intersect with literary texts, authors, and narrative personae in different formations to generate authority. Then, to illustrate the intersection of these threads, I introduce an anonymous prose text on love that circulates with Machaut's Remede de

28 As Butterfield has suggested (237).
29 With many thanks to Professor Alexandra Gillespie for proposing this reading.
Fortune in Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 1594. Finally, I gesture to further work to be done on French miscellaneous manuscripts, and the anonymous texts within them, that shape the context for French manuscript culture to which Chaucer responds.
1 Introduction: Misunderstanding Death

I will open this chapter on Chaucer's Book of the Duchess and Guillaume de Machaut's poetic persona by revisiting an "old crux" (French 236) of Chaucer studies: why does it take the narrator of the Book of the Duchess so long to determine that the man in black's lady is dead? I will focus on this episode in which the dreaming narrator, having followed first a hunting party and then a "whelp" [young dog] (389) through the woods, overhears this man in black lamenting and questions him about the source of his grief. In his complaint, the man in black states that his lady is "ded an ys agoon":

I have of sorwe so gret won

That joye gete I never non,

Now that I see my lady bryght,

Which I have loved with al my myght,

Is fro me ded an ys agoon.

[and thus in sorwe lefte me aloon]

Allas, deth, what ayleth the,

That thou noldest have taken me,

Whan thou toke my lady swete,

That was so fair, so fresh, so fre,

So good that men may wel se
Of al goodnesse she had no mete! (475-486)

Interpretations of this crux abound: the narrator does not misunderstand — his naïveté is a guise he adopts to bring healing to the man in black through a type of verbal therapy (Kittredge, *The Book of the Duchess*, 52); the narrator is right to misunderstand because, reading the complaint within the context of the contemporary French lyric, he cannot assume that the content is autobiographical (French 238-40); Chaucer deliberately leaves room for confusion about what the knight is lamenting (Morse 206).

At the end of this chapter, I will suggest another possible interpretation. My interpretation will emerge from an investigation of Chaucer's engagement with the primary source of these lines, Guillaume de Machaut's *Jugement dou roy de Behaingne* and, more broadly, with Guillaume de Machaut's poetic persona. In the *Jugement dou roy de Behaingne*, a lady, whose lover is dead, and a knight, whose lover is unfaithful, argue about who suffers more. The narrator, who has been eavesdropping in some bushes, interrupts — and is barked at by the lady's little dog — and leads them to the court of the King of Bohemia to request a judgment. The King, counseled by allegorical figures, rules in favour of the knight. Chaucer's man in black's complaint is modeled on the Machauldian lady's lament over the loss of her lover:

N'a mon las cuer jamais bien vendra,

N'a nul confort n'a joie n'ateindra,

Jusques atant que la mort me prendra

Qui a grant tort

Par devers my, quant elle ne s'amort

30 While this chapter will focus on Machaut's influence on the *Book of the Duchess*, Machaut is not Chaucer's only source and Chaucer draws on other French (and Latin) works, including Guillaume de Lorris's and Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*, Froissart’s *Paradis d’amours*, the anonymous *Songe Vert*, *Ovide moralisé*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Statius’ *Thebaid*, and other texts by Machaut like the *Dit de la fonteinne amoureuse*, and his first Complainte. For more on this, see Windeatt, ed. *Chaucer’s Dream Poetry.*
A moy mordre de son dolereus mort,

Quant elle m'a dou tout tollu et mort

Mon dous amy

Que j'amoie de fin cuer et il my [...] (193-201).

[Never will good come to my sad heart/ nor will it ever attain any comfort or joy,/ until death will take me/ who has (done) great wrong/ towards me, when she did not seek/ to bite me with her grievous sting/ when she altogether took from me and killed/ my sweet friend/ whom I loved with a noble heart and he did me.]

I will suggest that as Chaucer translates this source material he also poses as a mistranslator of it. He does so in a way that sets up competing ways of reading The Book of the Duchess. One of these readings features a narrator who offers verbal therapy and an author who successfully flatters his patron, John of Gaunt. The other reading, which I will lay out in detail at the end of this chapter, is available to knowing readers familiar with the source text. This reading reveals an author who confuses his French source and might even accidentally insult his patron. This second reading is, I argue, ironic and playful; by making it possible, Chaucer's work imagined learned members of a knowing audience who have no doubt he can translate French. His maneuvering is designed not only to delight but also to shape a community of readers who understand the irony, and who see the gap between the poet figure constructed in literature and the real author who remains tantalizingly just out of reach.

First, to contextualize this argument, I will look at Guillaume de Machaut as a source for Chaucer's narrative persona. Machaut crafts his poetic and authorial personae within books. I will argue that Machaut both evokes his authorial presence and denies access to it, ultimately drawing attention to himself as author by toying with his readers, thwarting them as he draws them in. He does so codicologically — as evidenced by his manuscript tradition, which consists of de luxe single-author tomes and miscellaneous collections of poetry — as well as textually, through his slippery pseudo-autobiographical narrator.
I will lay out the ways that Machaut portrays himself as an authoritative poet when he imagines the ways his works circulate in manuscripts. Here I will give a brief account of his manuscript tradition, focusing particularly on the books containing Behaingne. Then I will suggest that Machaut's development of a pseudo-autobiographical narrator creates a powerful illusion of a coherent and controlling authorial voice, especially when that narrator is encountered in a single-author collection, and even more so in a collection preaced by Machaut's Prologue.

At the same time as Machaut invites this reading he thwarts it, dispersing his authorial presence amongst different textual mediators with the result that Machaut, the author, remains inaccessible. The primary argument of this chapter, then, is that both Machaut and Chaucer, in different ways, explore the stability and the instability of poetic authority in a manuscript culture.

1.1 "Vesci l'ordenance que G. de Machau vuet qu'il ait en son livre": Machaut's Manuscript Tradition as Unifying Mechanism

I will now turn to Machaut's manuscript tradition as the context in which he crafts his poetic persona. Single-author manuscripts of Machaut's work create the illusion of authorial control over his work, and seem to limit the interpretative power of Machaut's readers as they encounter his poetry in manuscript. Scholars have argued that Machaut may even have personally supervised the production of such codices. Sarah Jane Williams and François Avril, for example, point to BNF f.fr. 1584, a fourteenth-century codex, as evidence of Machaut's controlling hand: above the table of contents, on folio Av, a rubric appears, reading, "Uesci l'ordenance que G. de machau vuet quil ait en son liure" [literally, "here is the order that G. de Machaut wants there to be in his book"].

McGrady, however, calls this argument into question, suggesting that this inscription represents Machaut's loss of control over the presentation of his work.

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31 Avril writes, "le fait que l'assemblage des texts contenus dans A [BNF f.fr. 1584] se conforme aux directives de Machaut lui-même, ainsi que l'affirme très nettement la rubrique de la table contemporaine placée en tête du volume et une observation d'ordre iconographique [...] m'incitent à penser que le manuscrit A [BNF f.fr. 1584] pourrait avoir été copié et enluminé à Reims même, sous la surveillance du poète" (126).

32 McGrady is not alone in questioning the degree of Machaut's involvement in the production of BNF f.fr. 1584. She cites Kibler and Wimsatt (Chaucer's French Contemporaries: The Poetry/Poetics of Self and Tradition), as well as Paul Imbs, who implicitly rejects Machaut's
Bearing in mind the tension between the appearance of control and the loss of that control that this scholarship brings to the foreground, I will give an overview of Machaut's manuscript tradition. I will contrast the conspicuousness of the multiple hands at work within the miscellanies that contain Machaut's poetry with the uniform presentation of Machaut's texts in lavish single-author collections. Such uniformity glosses over the presence of the many hands responsible for their production.

The majority of miscellanies that contain Machaut's work date from the fifteenth century. In this context, Machaut's poetry appears alongside French vernacular verse as well as works in Latin and other languages (placing Machaut's poetry in the company of Latinate, clerkly, "learned" texts). A sampling of representative codices include: Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 1594, which contains Machaut's *Remede de Fortune* (1r - 36v) alongside an anonymous prose tract on love (37r-43r). This is a small early fifteenth-century parchment codex of a medium level of execution. The parchment is of mediocre quality, exhibiting pre-existing tears that the scribe accommodates (on fol. 2r, for example). It is written in a *cursiva media-formata* (a northern French bastard script, according to Fenlon, 100-2). Both texts may have been executed by a single scribe, though the prose tract is copied more rapidly than the *Remede* (I have identified some letterforms that are consistent across both texts: x, q, v, and rr), though Fenlon thinks the prose tract is the work of a second hand. If this is the case, the second scribal hand takes care to match the first, to establish an air of coherence. The anonymous prose tract is less decorated and generally executed more hastily than Machaut's *Remede*. This codex, possibly for personal use, pairs Machaut's *Remede* with another French vernacular text that takes up the supervision of BNF f.fr. 1584 when he favours BNF f.fr. 22545-22546 as a more "authoritative" base text for his edition of the *Voir Dit* (see *Controlling Readers*, 263, note 8).

33 According to Wimsatt and Kibler, the versions of Machaut's *Behaingne* that appear in miscellanies stem from the earlier tradition, associated with BNF f.fr 1586, the earliest surviving collection of Machaut's work. While the exemplar is an earlier version, the extant manuscripts are later (Introduction to *Le Jugement du roy de Behaingne* and *Remede de Fortune*, 26-32).
themes of love, explaining the right kind of love, and proper conduct in love in a courtly setting.\textsuperscript{34}

BNF f.fr. 20026, a fifteenth-century codex, contains Machaut's \textit{Jugement dou roy de Behaingne} (81v-115r) alongside the works of Alain Chartier in a sumptuous manuscript once owned by Charles d'Orléans and Marie de Clèves.\textsuperscript{35} BNF f.fr. 833 is also a carefully-executed manuscript, on supple translucent parchment, and written in a very tidy, highly ligatured, \textit{textualis formata}. The compiler of this manuscript sought out works that were composed or collected by Alain Chartier (for example, on 162v, a work by Achille Caulier, "l'Ospital d'Amours," is introduced: "Commence lospital damours fait/ et compile par le dit Me Alain"). BNF f.fr. 833 contains one lay by Machaut, showing how his lyric pieces could circulate individually and anonymously (the lay in question, "Amis t'amour me contraint" [176v], is labeled simply "Autre complainte"). This manuscript also contains works by Oton de Graunson ("Complainte de st Valentin" [172r-174r], "Pastourelle d'Oton de Granson" [174v-175v], and "Helas se je me complains" [175v-176v]).\textsuperscript{36}

BNF NAF 6221, a relatively scrappy paper codex, contains poetry by Machaut and Chartier nestled among works by Eustache Deschamps (Deschamps is the only author to be identified by name — for instance, the rubric on 33v reads "balade de eustace morel" — and it is the second largest surviving collection of Deschamps's poetry).\textsuperscript{37} This is a lower quality undertaking—likely for personal use. The collation is highly irregular, the mise-en-page is inconsistent, and the writing is messy, sloping unevenly, unlikely to have been produced by a professional scribe. Despite the disorderly aspect, the copyist took care to get the text right. The scribal hand has very carefully edited the text, fixing small copying errors and even correcting or clarifying letter forms (11r, for instance).

\footnote{34 There is not much bibliography on this book. It is mentioned in the work of Huot (256), Earp (\textit{A Guide to Research}), and Schrade (II, 138ff, 150, II-III, commentary, 34).}

\footnote{35 See Earp, \textit{A Guide to Research}; Duchesne (n.4).}

\footnote{36 In fact, all of Graunson's texts can be found alongside the work of Chartier (see Arthur Piaget, \textit{Oton de Grandson: sa Vie et ses Poésies}, for a description of the manuscript contexts for Oton de Graunson's poetry).}

\footnote{37 See Wimsatt, \textit{Poems of "Ch,"} 60-1; Wimsatt, "Collections of French Lyrics Chaucer May Have Known," 35-51.}
Guillaume de Machaut's work frequently appears alongside French translations of Latin texts, as evidenced by BNF f.fr. 881 and 1149. Both of these situate Guillaume de Machaut's works within a Latinate poetic tradition. BNF f.fr. 881 is a fifteenth-century parchment codex. It is well-executed, written in a *semi-textualis formata*, and decorated with red, gold, and blue miniatures, initials, and foliated borders. Here a collection of Machaut's poetic works appear after "De la vielle," a French translation of Ovid by Jehan Lefevre, who self-consciously justifies his translation by appealing to philosophical and religious authorities, and the translated "Livre de l'art d'amours." BNF f.fr. 1149 is also a fifteenth-century *de luxe* codex. Written on parchment, through-copied in a tidy, highly-ligatured, *cursiva recentior media-formata*, this codex situates Machaut's *Behaingne* after Jean Dupin's "Mandevie" and a verse translation of the *Anticlaudianus*, once again pairing Machaut's work with French translations of Latinate texts, a placement which suggests that Machaut, like the French translators of these Latin texts, is bringing the Latin literary tradition into the French vernacular.

38 After the rubric, "De La Vielle" begins (1r):

Bonne chose et proufita/ble est de la translacion des/ langaiges pour congnoistre/ et entendre les fais des anciens car si comme/ dit le philosophe tous hommes desirent/ naturelelemnt scavoit et science na point/ dennemi fors limnorant Que la transla/cion des langaiges soit bonne proouitable/ et neccessaire est assez prouvee par les/ docteurs de nostre foy ausquelz nous devons/ croire et obtemperez Car se les soixante/ et dix interpreteurs qui jadis furent a/vecques le roy degipte que on nommoit/ tholomee philadelphe un an continuemlent/ enbacquant a lestude...etc

[It is a good and profitable thing, the translation of languages, to know and understand the deeds of the ancients, since as the philosopher says, all men naturally desire to know science. There is no enemy except the ignorant man. That the translation of languages may be profitable and necessary is well proven by the doctors of our faith, whom we ought to believe and obey. Since if the seventy interpreters who long ago were with the king of Egypt, who was called Ptolemy Philadelphus, for one year straight, embarked on the study... etc.]


28
Westminster Abbey MS 21, dated to just after 1434, provides a different kind of example of Machaut's French lyric working alongside other languages. An assortment of French lyric pieces by Machaut, Graunson, de Pizan, among others, exists alongside multilingual paratextual features: several different hands engage with the book, producing marginalia in Middle English, Latin, and Greek; the book itself now enfolds its former vellum wrappers (which were appended at the end when it was rebound in 1910 [MW.4]), which preserve charters of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in Dutch. Evidence suggests that this manuscript was owned by at least one multilingual user. A recurring hand that writes in English (on 38r, 41v, 51v, and 80v) also re-copies — imitates — stanzas from the French poetry. For instance on 38r, the hand, in a scrawled *cursiva*, copies the final line — "Noble prince je pris daime et premier..." — of the French poem, "Balade courronnee sur lestat des femmes," (which begins on 37v). This same hand continues in English: "Trysty and Welbelouyd seynd yn the most hastys manor that y can y the commmannyd me un to praying yow to send me word of that mater." The writer may be drafting an important letter in the blank spaces of the codex since these same English sentences, with slight variations, appear multiple times throughout: on 41v; on 52v this same hand copies the Latin inscribed by another marginal hand, and then writes the recurring English lines; and on 80v, the final folio, "Trysty and Welbelouyd" appears sideways in the margin, next to English and Latin pen-trials in the same hand.

A large number of the manuscripts that preserve Machaut's works are single-author collections dating from the fourteenth-century, which exude a different type of authority — that is, they are large, imposing, and ornate. Such collections are *de luxe*, well-planned (as evidenced by the fact that they are through-copied), richly illuminated, and executed in a high caliber *textualis formata* on the smoothest parchment. BNF f.fr. 1586 is a representative example. It is the earliest surviving collection of Machaut's oeuvre. It is very large, measuring 230mm by 350mm. Its

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41 "Litteras quas in auditore ante edwardi in miseras recepi frater amantissime quibus intellexi te liberius litterat [...]Sandsford recepisse intellexi cui tuo nobis adivi sum quibus oravi litteras tibi ut destinaret cum ego iter versus londutum peterem in quibus policitibus est tamen ut quibus vulgo dici solet in sum experiendi est [ouden] pervisum est dubium."
ordinatio is perfectly consistent throughout: for example, it is ruled in two columns with 38 lines per column throughout both narrative and lyric sections, and all 28 gatherings consist of eight folios. Its script is a textualis formata in brown ink, through-copied by a single scribal hand, and it contains ornate blue and gold initials, and 104 detailed miniatures (this count is provided by the BNF catalogue), in a spectrum of colours: red, gold, blue, green, grey, brown.42

1.2 Machaut's Manuscripts — Specifically those containing Behaingne

Many Behaingnes belong to these single-author collections.43 These appear in Parker Library, Ferrell 1, BNF f.fr. 1584, 1585, 1586, 1587, 9221, 22545, 843, Bern, Burgerbibliothek 218, and Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 5203.44 All of these are fourteenth-century codices with the exception of BNF f.fr. 1585, which dates to either the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, and BNF f.fr. 843, a fifteenth-century codex infolio parvo. The majority of these books were produced for courtly display: Parker Library, Ferrell 1, BNF f.fr. 1584, 1586, 1587, 9221, 22545, Bern, Burgerbibliothek 218, and Arsenal 5203 — in other words, all but manuscripts BNF f.fr. 1585 and 843. Codices like BNF f.fr. 1584, 2230, Arsenal 5203, and Ferrell 1, are even generously adorned with gold leaf.45 These are the texts to which Wimsatt refers when he speaks of "several

42 Also, according to the BNF catalogue: "Il a été suggéré que le ms. était destiné à Bonne de Luxembourg, fille du roi de Bohême Jean et femme de Jean II le Bon, et poursuivi pour un autre patron à la suite du décès de Bonne en 1349 (cf. U. Günther)."

43 Schrade makes further distinctions between "Machaut MSS proper," which include the largest and most complete manuscripts, "Secondary Machaut MSS," which contain "more or less" a substantial part of Machaut's work but not written under his supervision, "Machaut text MSS," and "Musical Repertory MSS" (Earp, Scribal Practice, 33). Schrade and Earp argue that several single-author collections were compiled under Machaut's direct or indirect supervision. This view had been widely accepted (by Boffey, for example [53]). Wimsatt and Kibler, however, strongly disagree, arguing that some of the more independent texts preserve better readings (12).

44 The manuscripts that include Behaingne, including miscellaneous collections, are: the aforementioned BNF f.fr 843, 1584, 1585, 1586, 1587, 1595, 9221, 2230, 1149, 22026, 22545, Arsenal 5203, Bern, Burgerbibliothek 218, Parker Library, Ferrell 1, Arras, mediatheque municipale, 587, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 396, Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, Vu 22, and one manuscript, given the sigla Kr by scholars of Machaut manuscripts, the location of which is unknown.

45 The surviving mixed volumes — those codices that include Machaut's Behaingne (and sometimes other works by Machaut) among various French texts — tend to be later productions
beautifully-made collections of [Machaut's] work [...] suitable for any nobleman" (*Chaucer and his French Contemporaries*, 105).

The majority of these codices are *de luxe* productions; however, there are some that are not quite as ornate. BNF f.fr. 843, a single-author manuscript, is the least showy. It contains no miniatures, flourished capitals, or any other decor. While the script itself is relatively legible and even, it is unlikely to have been a display copy. There are three manuscripts of *Behaingne* containing a few illustrations and decorated initials that model an intermediate level of execution. This group comprises BNF f.fr. 1585, a paper codex dedicated to Machaut's works, which, despite being decorated with miniatures in wash, is written rather carelessly. The same can be said of BNF f.fr. 1595, consisting of only two texts, *Esopet* and *Behaingne*, and 2166, which contains the *Voeux du Paon, Restor du Paon*, and *Behaingne*, and which bears the arms of Philippe de Bethune.

Their scripts, however, are perhaps less rapidly executed than BNF f.fr. 1585 and both codices are parchment. BNF f.fr. 1585, though, might not be far removed from the more courtly productions. According to Earp, it was an illicit copy of Parker Library, Ferrell 1, and served as the model for BNF f.fr. 9221 (Earp, "Machaut's Role," 477). It was "hastily copied for use as an exemplar, apparently by unscrupulous individuals" (477) and it "forms a tradition outside the one controlled by the desires of the author" (477). Like the exemplar of BNF f.fr. 1585, Parker Library, Ferrell 1, the codicological offspring of BNF f.fr. 1585 — BNF f.fr. 9221 — is a *de luxe* codex (and it comes into the ownership of Jean duc de Berry); although the quality of BNF f.fr. 1585 seems at odds with the other codices, if Earp's theory is true (and while it is speculative, it is one possible theory to explain the existence of a manuscript so at odds with all other surviving collections of Machaut's work) it would have been, nevertheless, a product of the same social circumstances, copied from a courtly manuscript for the purpose of producing another courtly manuscript.46

(though, to recapitulate, according to Wimsatt and Kibler, these are based on an earlier exemplar and thus part of the early tradition). These are: BNF f.fr. 2166, 2230, 1149, 20026, 1595, Arras 587, Phillips, Pierpont Morgan 396, Stockholm Vu. 22.

46 The existence of BNF f.fr. 1585 potentially reveals attempts to control the circulation of manuscripts of Machaut's complete oeuvre. If BNF f.fr. 1585 had to be a hastily copied from
Some of these books have known illustrious patrons; two manuscripts, BNF f.fr. 20026 and 2230, for example, originate in the court of Charles d'Orléans. Both of these codices were copied by the same scribe (Wimsatt and Kibler 19-20). BNF f.fr. 2230 is overwhelmingly devoted to the work of Alain Chartier, and contains several works by Achille Caulier and Vaillant de Tours, making *Behaingne* the only work by Machaut. *Behaingne* is again the lone Machauldian text in BNF f.fr. 20026, with the rest of the manuscript comprising the work of Alain Chartier. Written in a *cursiva recentior formata* and surrounded with ornate images (in BNF f.fr. 2230, a swan being pierced by an arrow greets the reader on folio 1r) and fanciful borders, these are *de luxe* codices, suited for aristocratic readers. This is fitting since BNF f.fr. 20026 was owned by Charles d'Orléans and Marie de Clèves (the manuscript bears her coat of arms [Wimsatt and Kibler 20], her name appears on the first flyleaf i(v), and her initials M.C. on the back flyleaf i(r). Its partner, BNF f.fr. 2230, was made for Marie de Clèves's sister in law, Marguerite de Rohan, wife of Jean d'Angoulême.

These tomes are overwhelmingly courtly productions. Even BNF f.fr. 1585, the codicological outlier, testifies to the authoritative tradition of the Machauldian single-author collection through its very deviance from it. This tradition conveys a powerful sense of uniformity and coherence, and evokes Machaut's poetic reputation by presenting his oeuvre in a *de luxe* setting. The manuscripts in this tradition may conjure an authorial presence or seem to reveal a coherent authorial agenda: they are arranged according to the logic of Machaut's poetry (for instance, when they appear, the Prologue is at the beginning, *Jugement dou roy de Navarre* follows *Behaingne* as its sequel); BNF f.fr. 1584 even evokes the idea of authorial intent. The *de luxe* Parker Library, Ferrell 1 then these texts were not being freely circulated and reproduced, and the other versions of Machaut's works would have been the result of sanctioned scribal activity. Machaut's poetic oeuvre often circulated in highly ornate books solely dedicated to his work, supporting the characterization of an "official" Machauldian manuscript tradition.

47 The *Behaingnes* are both relatively modest, however. Neither contains decorated initials or miniatures, though these features are present elsewhere in the codices.

48 Subtle codicological cues help perpetuate the illusion of authorial control over the codex; we do not need the inscription in BNF f.fr. 1584, "Uesci lordenance que G. de machau uuet quil ait en son liure," to see the presence of a consistent but entirely fictional "author-figure" throughout
Machauldian manuscript gives an air of coherence (with its through-copied content and its uniform presentation) and incites scholars to argue about the extent of Machaut's personal supervision.

All of these books — the single-author collections just as much as the anthologies of verse — are the result of work by multiple contributors from scribes, to illuminators, to binders (Gillespie and Wakelin 3). Even the inscription above the table of contents in BNF f.fr. 1584, which insists so strongly upon on the author's plan for his codex, reveals the intersection of a multiplicity of desires — and the desires of scribes and readers putting pressure on the author's wishes. McGrady shows that the "order" desired by "Machaut," according to the inscription, does not correspond to the order in which the works actually appear in the codex. The table contains inconsistent foliation and scribal corrections, and works are omitted from the list: "the residual errors underscore the discordance distinguishing the author's presumed intentions from the resulting codex" (100). While the inscription, then, suggests the presence of authorial control, at the same time scribal corrections and residual errors destabilize that control. The inscription provides an example of what is presented as the author's wishes coming up against the activities of book producers, who, even as they may try to preserve the author's wishes, by correcting and emending, shift the locus of control over the codex.

1.3 Machaut's Pseudo-Autobiographical Narrator

One way in which authors in the fourteenth century play with ideas about authorship in a manuscript culture is by crafting a shifting first-person narrative voice. Kerby-Fulton, for instance, sees Langland reacting to the collaborative reality of book production and reader reception. His slippery poetic "I" in the C-text of Piers Plowman is a strategy by which he defends himself from unruly readings in a dangerous political context after the revolt of 1381,
and escapes the "wrath of some of his readers, both those in authority and his social peers" (69).49

Kerby-Fulton argues that Langland uses a shifty poetic persona, a form of "bibliographical control" (72) common in later medieval vernacular poetry, to influence the reception of his text within a volatile political environment. Machaut does something similar, though playfully. Machaut imagines how his poetic persona might be articulated in books, and he writes someone resembling himself into his narrative dits. His narrator, "Guillaume/Guillemin," shares Machaut's poetic interests, has the same patrons and employment, travels to the same places, and bears a similar yet ultimately different name. I will argue that, reacting to the way that authorial control is both suggested and elusive in books, Machaut uses a self-referential narrative pose to draw attention to his role as author and, at the same time, conceal authorial identity somewhere behind a multiplicity of shifting narrative voices.

Laurence de Looze's *Pseudo-Autobiography in the Fourteenth Century* examines the literary implications of the Machauldian narrative pose, "which plays with questions of truth, authority, and the relationship between life in a book and life outside a book" (16). His concept of "pseudo-autobiography" helps explain the shifting distance between Machaut and his narrator, "Guillaume."50 Pseudo-autobiography wavers on the line between fiction and autobiography, seeming to invite yet at the same time resisting both modes of interpretation.

The assumptions regarding truth and sincerity [...] that are normally read into the identity between author and narrator break down here. [...] pseudo-autobiography refers to a reading as autobiography that is derailed in the encounter with certain elements of the work (30-1).

49 Kerby-Fulton situates Langland's revisions to his C-text within its historical context, and she understands his "blurring of the author/persona" (71) especially in the apologia as a way to "shift the genre of the poem from the chanson d'aventure style of B to something more like (though not yet entirely like) the autobiographical tendency in serious religious literature" (72). He exhibits the tendency of his period to desire "bibliographical control" (72), making his "I" in the apologia a way to "communicate more directly — or at least appear to do so — with his public" (74).

50 And Chaucer engages with Machaut's pseudo-autobiographical stance as he crafts his narrative voice in the *Book of the Duchess.*
Pseudo-autobiography falls under Spearing's definition of "autography," which nuances our understanding of Machaut's shifting narrative "I": autographic writing, for Spearing, is "written in the first person and (to a greater or lesser extent) about the first person, but [it is] not [...] autobiographic because its purpose is not to narrate the life of an individual behind the text (36). He explains his understanding of autographic writing through his reading of an article by Lisa Samuels (1997), quoting: autography is "the story of a languaged self, a written 'I,' rather than the autobiography of an experiencing human" (37). I will build on de Looze's and Spearing's ways of thinking about Machaut's first person narrative voice, suggesting that Machaut crafts not one coherent narrative voice — or one recurring "narrator" character — but rather a series of discontinuous voices, a plurality of "Guillaumes." I will suggest that these voices work not only literally but also within their manuscript context to generate uncertainty and, therefore, on a higher level, authority.

Aspects of "Guillaume's" characterization — such as his status as clerk and poet, his reference to historical patrons — in Behaingne and Machaut's other narrative works encourage an autobiographical reading, but other elements of the narrative render this impossible, one example being the appearance of allegorical figures. A subtler and more playful example of thwarted autobiography is the anagram contained in the final stanzas, which, the narrator claims, if properly deciphered, will reveal his true identity:

Mais en la fin de ce livret feray

Que qui savoir

Vorra mon nom et mon seurnom de voir

Il le porra clerement percevoir

En darrein ver dou livret et vœoir,

51 With regard to historical details, Paul Imbs rightly cautions, "les personnages [...] peuvent même avoir appartenu à l'histoire connue, comme c'est le cas pas exemple pour le duc de Normandie, le futur roi Charles V, sans que les faits et dits qui lui sont prêtés par le poète soient à accepter comme également historiques" (251).
Mais qu'il dessamble

Les premières vij. sylabes d'ensamble

Et les lettres d'autres guise rassamble,

Si que nulle n'en oublie ne emble.

Einsi porra

Mon nom savoir qui savoir le vorra [...] (2056-2065).

[But at the end of this booklet I will make it /so that he who wants to know/ my name and surname in truth,/ will be able to perceive it clearly/ and see it in the last verse of the booklet/ He must but disassemble/ the first seven syllables from the whole/ and reassemble the letters in another fashion/ in such a way that he does not forget or remove any of them/ thus he will be able to know my name,/ he who wants to know it.]

The solution to the anagram seems to offer a diminutive form of the author's name — "Guillemin de Machaut" — playing, perhaps, with the idea that the narrative persona is a less complete self. Machaut offers what de Looze describes as an "example of near-naming between outright not-naming and exact naming" (73). Machaut gives a name that is very similar to his own and yet not the name the reader would expect, "Guillaume de Machaut." The diminutive "Guillemin" is not essentially different, nor is it a straightforward assertion of authorship. This self-diminishing, or self-deprecation, undermines Machaut's authorship at the very moment the reader expects him to claim it.

The anagram shows that Machaut is aware that books can unsettle his poetic persona. Books at once provide and thwart the reader's access to Machaut as author through the very mechanisms of their production, through the unpredictability of scribal copying, and through their empirical reality (Gillespie, "Manuscripts," 175). Machaut's joke is that his poetic control can depend on

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52 Empirical reality gives access to a poem, but does not offer what a reader might be seeking there — its author, its author's intention, its literary essence. The book's physical reality denies access to that which is beyond the book.
a few strokes of the stylus. Likewise, the audience's access to the author depends on scribal copying. Gillespie discusses this relationship between medieval text and manuscript in light of Blanchot's "Absence of the Book," thinking about the way that the book "propels" but also distracts from the text (177). She writes, "the book is not that which makes a literary work an epiphenomenon of its production. The book merely *seems* to do this; this is its ruse — to substitute its tangible, knowable forms for the innate form of the artwork" (177). Machaut is playing with the book's "ruse" when he works into his literary text the "tangible" reality of its codicological context, when he inserts into his writing an outcome of scribal copying in order to point to the tension between the text, "destined" (176) for something beyond the book, and the book "through which" (177) it travels.

Much scholarship examines Machaut's development of his narrative persona in his *dits*, but pseudo-autobiography is not just a literary trick. Machaut, I will show, develops his quasi-fictional narrator in relation to, and within, books.

1.4 Machaut's *Prologue* as *Ars Poetica*

I will begin with what I argue is the pinnacle of Machaut's pseudo-autobiographical trickery: the *Prologue*. Composed around 1372, and extant (in varying degrees of completeness) in BNF f.fr. 1584 and BNF f.fr. 9221, BNF f.fr. 22545 and BNF f.fr. 881, the *Prologue* has been received by scholars as the key to understanding Machaut's poetic enterprise. Brownlee understands it as a "formal unifying element" that characterizes "Machaut's 'global' identity as poète" (16). Wimsatt

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53 That is, for those "fleeting moments at which the work comes into being and loosens the bonds that constrain experience, including the experience of literature itself" (Gillespie, "Manuscripts," 176).

54 For example, Calin situates Machaut's "inepte et maladroit" narrator and lover within a literary tradition of first person narration, beginning with the *Roman de la Rose* ("Le moi chez Guillaume de Machaut," 252). Cerquiglini argues that the mixed genres of Machaut's narrative texts confuse and proliferate the identity of the speaking "je." She writes, "l'insertion lyrique, en effet, a pour conséquence de multiplier les voix, en multipliant les situations de discours" ("Un Engin Si Soutil," 91). Poirion's reading conflicts with my own as he seems to identify Machaut the author as the "je" of his *dits*: "dans un mise en scène personelle des *dits* [...] Il joue le jeu du clerc craintif et curieux" (198). Other studies include, but are not limited to, Brownlee, *Poetic Identity in Guillaume de Machaut*; Palmer, *Chaucer's French Contemporaries*; and Swift, "The Poetic I."
treats the *Prologue* as an *ars poetica* — as a "fully matured statement" of Machaut's poetic process and ideology (4) — alongside the *Art de dictier* of Eustache Deschamps. Lukitsch takes as a given that the *Prologue* represents Machaut's "theory of poetic composition" and reveals the "subject and purpose of his work" (258). Ferrand calls it "un art poétique," "un manifeste artistique" ("Regards sur le *Prologue*, 235). Codicologically speaking, this is a tempting reading since the *Prologue* (which appears in the later collections of Machaut's works) appears first in the manuscript and, introducing all other texts, purports to explain their production (Nature recounts that she has made Guillaume for the purpose of producing poetry, and assures him that the allegorical figures of Scens, Musique, and Rhetorique, will guide him, and that the God of Love will bring him the matter of his compositions, Dous Penser, Plaisance, and Esperence). However, I will argue along the same lines as Swift who states, "the implied 'unifying presence' of the poet," which is evoked by the *Prologue*, "is instead marked as an absence, a figure beyond the text that always escapes the reader's reach" (19-20). While the *Prologue* seems to act as an ordering principle — a poetic "key" — for the author's book,

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55 I am using the term "ars poetica" to refer to a text in which the Machauldia in persona explains the reason for, ideology behind, and process of composing poetry. The *Prologue* is not a step-by-step manual on poetic form (though arguably the *Remede*, showcasing individual set forms, offers this. The *Remede*, with its intercalated lyric, resembles Deschamps's *Art de dictier*).

56 Wimsatt describes the *Prologue* as revealing Machaut's attitude toward "manner and matter" (3) of poetic composition: "Whether the 'matiere' is happy or sad [...] when it is taken into the poem it becomes joyful" (4).

57 Ruth Evans describes the uneasy relationship that a medieval prologue can have to the text it prefaces (or collection of texts, in the case of Machaut's single-author manuscripts): they can "problematiz[e] [...] the traditional distinction between 'text' and 'preface' (372). Evans draws on prologues written in Middle English, but her insights shed light on Machaut's *Prologue* too. Machaut's *Prologue* claims to explain an "author's" oeuvre, but is voiced by a pseudo-autobiographical narrator whose relationship to the real author is indeterminable. The *Prologue* inhabits an uncertain place between fiction and reality, an uncertainty which Machaut capitalizes on and, like the authors Evans discusses, employs as a tool for textual "authorizing" (372).

58 Swift argues that Machaut's Guillaume is constantly in state of development, making himself as he creates and is created in poetry. According to Swift, the *Prologue* is a "retrospectively assembled launchpad for [Guillaume's] subjectivity which directs us forwards in Machaut's oeuvre" (23). The "truth of Machaut's poetic I also lies neither in its beginning as some preformed starting point, nor in its end, in the sense of a fixed point that we reach" (23-4) — it is a "subject in formation" (24).
allegedly making explicit the author's wishes, once again, Machaut is playing with the book as an impediment between audience and author.

The *Prologue*, I suggest, shows Machaut working through the possibilities inherent in the prologue as poetic form: what kind of textual control does it exert? Codicologically, how does a prologue influence the presentation of subsequent poetry in a collection? Perhaps there is nothing especially explanatory about the *Prologue* that we can read into the rest of his oeuvre, but rather just a poem about one "Guillaume's" encounter with Nature and her allegorical minions, and his subsequent decision to write poetry.59 This section will explain and then dismantle the following aspects of the *Prologue* that seem to posit it as a poetic key: the *Prologue* purports to give us Machaut's poetic philosophy, taking as its subject the writing process itself; it offers an idealized patron/poet relationship that accounts for his entire oeuvre; its images in BNF f.fr. 1584 seem to portray a stable author figure, demonstrating the way that his narrative persona is imagined in books.

### 1.5 Writing about Writing

First, while the *Prologue* is about the philosophy of writing, so too is every one of Machaut's other narrative poems, to a greater or lesser extent, making these equally viable candidates as *artes poeticae*, each offering competing poetic visions. While scholars would not argue that Machaut's other work does not take up the subject of writing, I will emphasize here the extent to which it does. My point is to show that we cannot read it as the key for how Machaut understood his poetic purpose.

59 R. Barton Palmer seems to implicitly agree with this reading when he titles his edition *The Fountain of Love (La Fonteinne Amoureuse) and Two Other Love Vision Poems*. The *Prologue* (along with the *Dit dou vergier*) is just another "love vision poem." He writes about the protagonist of the *Prologue* as "the version of Guillaume contained in the *Prologue*" (xxv), however, he nevertheless describes the *Prologue* as offering "keys for the interpretation and appreciation of the poetical works it introduces" (xxxii).
As de Looze points out, *Navarre* thinks about poetic production since the main action features ladies accusing Guillaume as author of *Behaingne* (another blurring of fiction/reality) of wronging them in his poem. The primary debate between the allegorical figures at the court of the king of Navarre is not really over who suffered more in love, but whether or not the poet erred. De Looze argues: "for the first time in France a poet has declared that how he behaves and how he writes are fit subjects for courtly narrative. The authorial role becomes not only the *qua* but also the *quid* of a literary work" (75). *Navarre* deals with a poet and his writing (and by extension *how* and *what* he should write), making it as much an *ars poetica* as the *Prologue*. In the same vein, the *Remede de Fortune* offers an example of poetic experiment — de Looze calls it a "poetic treatise" (83) — presenting different iterations of popular set pieces of the period.

Like the *Prologue*, the *Voir Dit* offers an all-encompassing manual for poetic composition, from inception to completion. Machaut lays out (and plays with, and circumvents) the process of courtly love affairs/poetic composition: he shows the exchange of letters, from delivery of missives by messenger (for example, 443-470) to the secret reading of them (e.g. 1410); poetic commissioning by aristocratic patrons, for example, the lady's request for "*j. petit rondelet ou aucune chanson nouvelle*" (L 26) [a little rondel or any new song]; the editing of texts, when he, for instance, requires of Toute-Belle that she date their correspondence (L 27) or asks "*sil y a aucune chose a corrigier que vous y faites enseingnes*" (L 33) [if there is anything to correct that you make a note of it there]; and finally, the product of lyric production and collection, the "livre où je mets toutes mes choses" [the book where I put all my things]. The *Voir Dit* purports to be an *ars poetica* at its fullest, as well as an *ars dictamini*, and *ars amatoria*. But, like the *Prologue*,

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60 "Machaut's judgment against himself disguises the fact that he devotes a whole poem (and one twice as long as *Behaingne*) entirely to himself and his role as an author" (75).

61 Including lai, chanson royale, ballade, virelai, rondeau, plainte.

62 Singer, in *Blindness and Therapy*, writes, "his old age not only poses physical problems, but it would also seem to exclude him from love, according to Andreas Capellanus, love is forbidden for men over the age of sixty" (161-2). Nevertheless, she argues, Guillaume employs "allusions to chivalric love or *amor de lonh*" in order to establish that "love can be generated without initial sensory experience" (165).

the *Voir Dit* is no more an authoritative manual for love and writing than any of Machaut's other
*dits*. As an *ars amatoria* it is especially a joke, given that the affair eventually sours.

### 1.6 Idealized Patrons

Second, the role of patron played by Nature in the *Prologue* makes the *Prologue*’s pose as a
poetic key even more powerful. The relationship between Guillaume and Nature, in the
*Prologue*, represents an idealized patron-poet relationship that explains the production of
Machaut's entire corpus. It escapes the problems of "earthly" patronage in the fourteenth century,
which Cerquiglini-Toulet describes in "Storehouses of Lyric." These problems include: "anxiety
about poetic creation," (226) a need to produce on demand, and as a result, a need to hoard and
"collect what one sees and feels at the moment" for "fear [...] of keeping someone, the prince,
waiting" (229). However, the idealized patronage that supports a reading of the *Prologue* as an
*ars poetica* is not specific to the *Prologue*, and many patron-poet relationships throughout
Machaut's work are equally idealized and equally fictional. For example, at the end of *Navarre*,
Guillaume is sentenced by the king of Navarre (having taken counsel from Raison *etc.*) to
compose the *Lai de Plour* as well as a song and a ballade, an example of commissioning
analogous to Nature's commissioning of Guillaume/Machaut to compose courtly love poems.
The *Fonteinne Amoureuse*, according to Cerquiglini-Toulet, similarly offers a model of literary
patronage that reflects the value ascribed to books in the fourteenth century. Cerquiglini-Toulet
argues that the mentality of needing to store or hoard lyric — the economy or anxiety of
"shortage" — is apparent when Guillaume copies down the lament he hears outside of his
window at night and is later fortunate enough to present his newly acquired patron, the prince,
"the prince's own composition" on demand ("Storehouses of Lyric," 231). This, Cerquiglini-
Toulet suggests, shows the development of the figure of the "scholar" in the fourteenth century in
contrast to the old mode of courtly entertainer.\(^{64}\) Toute-Belle in the *Voir Dit* is the patroness and

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\(^{64}\) This argument is complicated by the fact that it is not the lover himself who is singing this
song outside the window, but rather a singer hired by his lovesick lord. This creates a further
remove — a middleman between the nobleman and the expression of his feelings — in the lyric
economy. So while the poem appears to idealize patron-poet relationships, there is nevertheless a
disruption in the economy that unsettles the conception, performance, and writing down of lyric,
hinting at suppressed anxiety about commissioning and composition.
inspiration for much of Guillaume's work (though the less idealized patrons, with their greedy demands for poetry, sometimes get in the way of Guillaume's ability to fulfill Toute-Belle's every wish). Nature's command to Guillaume to "fourmer/ Nouveaux dis amoureux plaisans" (4-5) [to make new pleasant dis amoureux], and his reply, "Riens ne me doit excuser ne deffendre/ Que ne face le bon commandement/ De vous, dame..." (28-29) [Nothing ought to excuse me or prevent me from fulfilling your good commandment, lady...] may seem definitively to explain his poetry. When read alongside Toute-Belle's request for poetry (and Guillaume's happy agreement) it becomes clear that — because they are equally viable competing "keys" — the former is not any more a "key" to understanding Machaut's poetic purpose than the latter. These passages draw on a shared lexicon, making it impossible to privilege either of these models of patronage on the basis of vocabulary, tone, or expression, since both are imagined in the same terms. The narrator writes in the Voir Dit that he composes "pour ma gracieuse dame/ A cui i'ay donné corps et ame" (5-6) [for my gracious lady to whom I have given body and soul], which resonates with the narrator's description in the Prologue of the patroness, Nature, "par qui j'ay corps, vie, et entendement" (31) [through whom I have body, life, and wit] (while, of course, it is Nature who gives Guillaume body, life and understanding, and it is Guillaume who gives Toute-Belle his life and soul, there is still a similar positioning of both ladies as the caretakers of his life).

Similarly, when Nature commands "Or fay tost, si t'i applique!/ Tu ne m'en doiz pas estre reffusans" (26-7) [Now do it soon, thus apply yourself to it! You ought not to be refusing me in this], Toute-Belle asks for new works (for example, in her correspondence [L1] she requests, "qu'il vous plaise a faire un virelay seur ceste matere et le vous plaise moy envoier note avec ce rondel yci" [that it should please you to make a virelai on this subject and it pleases you to send

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65 I have added apostrophes and an accute accent on "donné" for the sake of legibility.
66 These lines seem similar because they are so conventional. This, however, reinforces the point that neither relationship is necessarily more sincere than the other.
me music with this rondelet here], and orders the production of what is supposedly the *Voir Dit* itself. As Guillaume informs us (in the oft-quoted lines):

...Que c'est au doux commandement

De ma dame qui le commande [...]  

Car celle pour qui amour veille

Wet que ie mette en ce voir dit

Tout ce qu'ay pour li fait et dit

Et tout ce qu'elle a pour moy fait

Sans rien celer qui face au fait

Et wet que toutes les rassamblé

Pour les y mettre tout ensamblé

Le voir dit weil ie qu'on appelle

Ce traitie que ie fais pour elle. (497-519)

[...That it is at the gentle commandment/ of my lady who orders it [...] /since that one for whom Love is vigilant/ wants me to put in this testimony/ everything that I have made and composed for her/ and all that she has made for me/ without hiding anything that pertains to the matter/ and she wants me to gather all these things/ to put them all together here/ and I want it to be called the "Voir Dit"/ this treatise that I am making for her.]

67 I have added apostrophes.

68 Much like Geoffrey putting his dream into rhyme, which is supposedly the *Book of the Duchess* itself but, of course, is not.

69 I have added apostrophes.

70 I am grateful to Professor Dorothea Kullmann for this interpretation.
Of course, Toute-Belle — at least, as she is constructed in writing\textsuperscript{71} — and the allegorical figure of Nature are imagined; both models of patronage are contained within (and only hold "explanatory" power within) their particular textual fictions.

1.7 The \textit{Prologue}, Codicologically

The \textit{Prologue} conflates narrative and authorial personae codicologically too, especially in BNF f.fr 1584. Here the position and mise-en-page of the \textit{Prologue} collapse the space between the ambiguous "poet" portraits, which accompany the text of the \textit{Prologue}, and the historical Machaut. Other paratextual cues muddy the distinction between author and narrator, and show medieval scribes reading the \textit{Prologue}'s narrator "authorially," where the text never explicitly makes this claim. The main text of the \textit{Prologue} does not name "Guillaume de Machaut" as its protagonist (only "Guillaume" [57] or "Guillem" [3]), yet the rubrics name the poet (for example, introducing the second ballade: "Comment Guillaume de Machaut respont a Nature").

The rubrics in BNF f.fr. 1584, for instance, are written in red ink and set apart from the main text, leaving a two-line gap (fol. 1v, for example). When the rubric is longer and appears beneath an image, it is provided with its own column. BNF f.fr. 22545, the only other manuscript to contain the complete \textit{Prologue}, similarly distinguishes the rubrics with red ink, though, unlike BNF f.fr. 1584, it does not leave blank space between rubric and main text. BNF f.fr. 9221 and BNF f.fr. 881 contain the first four sections of the \textit{Prologue}. BNF f.fr. 9221 lays out the rubrics in red. When these are longer and appear beneath an image, they span the full length of the page, running across the three vertical columns. These techniques serve to set the rubrics visually apart. BNF f.fr. 881, like BNF f.fr. 22545, has rubrics in red with no gap (on fol. 97r, for example). This is important because the rubrics are scribal additions, and the text of the \textit{Prologue} itself does not purport to be Machaut's definitive authorial statement on his oeuvre. The rubrics

\textsuperscript{71} As much scholarship has suggested, she may have been a real historical person, Péronne d'Armentières. See Williams, "The Lady, the Lyrics and the letters" (462). Leech-Wilkinson, in his introduction to his edition of the \textit{Voir Dit}, argues against a strictly fictional reading of the \textit{Voir Dit} and gives possible corresponding textual and historical circumstances including Machaut's known travels and patrons (xi-lvii). I would suggest, though, that the historical person, Péronne, is no more accessible through the constructed literary persona, Toute Belle, than is the author through "Guillaume," who alludes to, but does not quite correspond to, the author.
conflate Machaut the author with his narrator, perpetuating the pseudo-autobiographical confusion, tempting the reader to interpret the narrator as the author. The pseudo-autobiographical effect grows beyond Machaut's control, taking on a life of its own, developing further in the hands of his readers.

I will now consider ambiguous portraits in BNF f.fr. 1584 alongside the portrait at the opening of the section of ballades "ou il na point de chant" [where there is no singing] (no singing, though there is musical notation) in Cambridge, Corpus Christi, Parker Library, Ferrell 1, since their portraits were illuminated by the same artist, the Maître de la Bible de Jean de Sy, who was operating in Paris (Avril 127). Ferrand summarizes what is known about this artist: "ce grand illustrateur du temps de Charles V a travaillé, ainsi que d'autres artistes parisiens, dans l'atelier de Jehan Bondol de Bruges, maître devenu, dès 1368, Pictor regis" ("Les Portraits" 12), and who was responsible for the frontispiece of the Bible of Jehan de Vaudetar (1371). By the end of the fourteenth century, Paris had become a European centre of the art of illumination, "et l'on reconnaît bien dans ces peintures du maître de la Bible de Jean de Sy, dit encore Maître aux Boqueteaux, l'art dense, l'élégance linéaire, l'intelligence qui caractérisent l'école parisienne de cette époque" (12).

BNF f.fr. 1584, mentioned above, is a de luxe single-author collection of Machaut's oeuvre, dating between 1327 and 1377. It is parchment, and contains 506 folios (BNF Catalogue). Unlike other fourteenth-century codices of Machaut's works which were produced in Paris, the majority of BNF f.fr. 1584 was copied in a workshop in the East of France (possibly Reims). The location of its production, along with the aforementioned inscription — to recall an important debate surrounding this codex — tempts scholars, such as François Avril (126), to claim that this manuscript was produced under Machaut's own supervision (a theory which sees control over codicological presentation consolidated in the hands of the author, an interpretation which McGrady refutes). The first bifolio alone was copied and illuminated in Paris, by the Master of the Bible of Jean de Sy. Cambridge, Corpus Christi, Parker Library, Ferrell 1, dating to the fourteenth century, is large, originally containing 392 folios (though 321 and 313 are now lost). It is richly decorated with borders, illuminated initials, and hundreds of miniatures, a large
number of which were executed by the Jean de Sy Master (Leo 75). Its immediate patron is not known, but it belonged to the Count of Foix at some point in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Its provenance has been traced to the library of the Duc de Berry (Earp, Ferrel-Vogüé Facsimile).

In BNF f.fr. 1584, the poet appears "afflicted with a strabism" (Cerquiglini, "Le Clerc et le Louche," 479 note 3). In this case, strabismus, or misalignment of the eyes, is signaled by the figure's crossed eyes, though in other images, I will suggest, the same condition might be depicted with the figure's pupils pointing outward. In BNF f.fr. 1584, the Prologue is illustrated with three images: the first two were painted independently in Paris (Avril 126; fols. Dr and Er) and the third (fol. Fv) was produced by the same anonymous artist responsible for the remaining 153 miniatures in BNF f.fr. 1584 (McGrady 81), and likely executed in Reims (Avril 126). The first two images of the Prologue — which are by far the most detailed of the manuscript's illuminations — depict a cross-eyed figure. The third image, though carried out by a different artist, represents what appears to be the same figure. The figure wears the same robe, and has the same chin-length wavy hair and tonsured head. This image is not executed with the same level of detail and the figure's eyes are not misaligned (nor are they when he is depicted alongside the other dits [see for example the Dit du Vergier, 1r]), though McGrady sees the third

72 Though, according to Leo, Parker, Ferrell 1 "stands lower on the scale of artistic quality and ingenuity than the lavish norm" (72-3). He suggests that the artists were "pressed for time" (74).

73 The other manuscripts that contain the Prologue present the poet/narrator in varying ways. BNF f.fr. 22545 contains five images for the Prologue: 1r, 1v (three) and 2r. They do not show the poet with crossed eyes, but he is the same figure who appears at the opening of the Vergier on 3r (he has the same blonde curly hair, and is tonsured). Like BNF f.fr. 1584, this establishes a seemingly continuous narrative presence. BNF f.fr 881 contains one image of the poet in the Prologue (1r). His eyes are not crossed. This codex does not contain Machaut's complete oeuvre (it is a collection of Machauldian poetry, and Ovid, translated by Jean Le Fèvre).

74 Leo confirms that the crossed eyes are intentional on the part of the artist. He, however, resists the idea that the poet, or any patron, would encourage this depiction. He speculates that this instead represent the "intensity with which Machaut is focusing on his work" (246), the crossed eyes suggesting "duality" and the "effort of bridging the clerical/courtly gap" (246).

75 Ferrand overlooks this third image in the Prologue, mentioning only the first two: "Le Prologue [...] est accompagné [...] dans le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque Nationale fr. 1584, de deux grandes peintures en grisaille" ("Les Portraits," 11).
as functioning within the same cycle as the first two. The images, she writes, work in
"succession," depicting "Guillaume's passage from reading, to meditation, to performance" (38).

As Cerquiglini notes, the depiction of the figure with crossed eyes is based on lines in the *Voir Dit* in which an aged and decrepit Guillaume writes to his beloved:

Mon doux cœur et ma tresdouce amour, J'ay bien veu ce que vous m'avez escript. Si vous plaise savoir que se vous ne fussiez en ce pais je n'i fusse point venus iusques a un grant temps pour riens qui avenist, et a present ie n'ay riens a faire en ce pais fors vous veoir. Helas et vous vous en volez partir quant ie y doy venir qui m'est trop dure chose de vostre aleee. Car .i. iour de vostre demeure me sera uns ans. Et se vous povez bonnement demourer a vostre honneur riens ne me porroit tant plaire, car mon doux cuer vous savez comment il me couvient briefment partoir, et si ne vous puis mie souvent veoir a ma volente. Et se vos doulez cuers s'acorde a vos douces paroles, vous vous penriez bien prés de demourer; et aussi s'il vos souvenoit bien de vostre borgne vallet. Je vous pri douceement que vous me weilliez rescrire vostre bonne volente einsois que vous partez. Et toute voie ie weil tout ce que vous volez. Et a dieu mon doux cuer et ma tres douce amour. Vostre tresloial amy. (L'amant, lettre XIII)76

[My gentle heart and my very sweet love, I have seen well that which you have written me. Please know that if you had not been in this land, I would not have come at all for a long time for anything that might happen, and at present, I have nothing to do in this land except see you. Alas, and you want to go away when I must come, which is, for me, too hard an aspect of your going. Since one day of your remaining will be one year for me. And if you could conveniently stay, by your honour, nothing could please me as much, since, my gentle heart, you know how I must leave shortly, and thus I cannot see you very often as I desire. And if your gentle heart agrees with your gentle words, you will make an effort to remain very close by; and also if you remember well your "borgne" servant. I beg you sweetly that you should wish to write me back your good

76 I have inserted apostrophes.
will before you leave. And in all ways I want everything that you want. And adieu my gentle heart and my very sweet love. Your very loyal friend.]  

The narrator claims to be "borgne," which generally means "one-eyed" (either enucleated or blind in one eye), but can also be used to describe strabismus, which the illuminator of BNF f.fr. 1584 must have taken it to mean.\(^77\) In this passage and in the author portraits, then, Guillaume's condition is opposite to that of Guillaume de Lorris's narrator in the Roman de la Rose. The vision of the latter is binocular as he looks into the pool of Narcissus — there are two crystals in the pool, which may mirror his two eyes (see Akbari 56). Suzanne Conklin Akbari suggests that "as the lover looks into [the crystals], he passes from the real of reflected visions, intuitio, into that of refracted vision, detuitio or deduit" (66). This refraction produces, allegorically, "a multiplication of the self: after his look into the fountain, the lover begins to encounter multiple redoubled images of himself in Amors, Amis, Dangiers, and Bel Accueil" (66); this is the multiplication of what should have been a single object of desire" (66).\(^78\)  

Machaut's narrator — seeing only through one eye or having strabismus — on the other hand is narrow sighted. Unlike the lover in the Rose, because of his lack of depth perception, Guillaume's vision of himself/objects of desire is narrowed, even obstructed or concealed. This is a self-deprecating stance in relation to Toute Belle, as I will suggest below. At the same time, this condition — lack of depth perception, obscured vision — works as a metaphor for Machaut's ideas about authorship: it suggests that allegory, even semantics themselves, involve concealment of meaning and that this concealment is part of the poetic craft. Playing with depth perception — narrowing or conflating the self and the objects of desire — Machaut collapses levels of allegory onto themselves so that Guillaume and the historical Machaut, narrator and poet, Toute Belle and Péronne, exist uneasily, no longer readily separable layers of meaning.  

\(^77\) The DMF gives: "(celui) qui ne voit que d'un oeil;" by extention, "(celui) qui louche," "chassieux;" figuratively, "qui refuse de voir, qui veut s'aveugler," and "aveuglé" (DMF, "borgne"). In my discussion of the illuminations in BNF f.fr. 1584 and Parker Library, Ferrell 1, I will understand "borgne" to mean "afflicted with strabismus," or, by extention, sight-impaired. Machaut, however, does not specify which meaning of "borgne" he implies. I often leave the term untranslated.  

\(^78\) See Suzanne Akbari's reading of this optical phenomenon in Chapter Three, "Guillaume de Lorris's Roman de la Rose," in her book, Seeing through the Veil, 45-77.
Julie Singer argues that Machaut alludes to the *topos* of visual impairment in the *Voir Dit* to portray himself as a figure doubly marginalized in love (158). As Singer interprets:

His clerkly status is another obstacle to love: *'sed quo ad hanc nobilitatem ad amorem clericus spectare potest'* [...] The clerk, especially when depicted as cross-eyed or myopic, has access neither to perfect eyesight nor to a firsthand knowledge of love. (162)

Guillaume uses "borgneness" to marginalize himself, as Singer suggests. However, I argue that his marginalization functions within this passage as part of a larger trend of controlling and reproaching Toute-Belle. The letter contains hints of censure: Guillaume complains that he

79 In Singer's formulation, Guillaume can then employ the inserted lyric — a circular form — as a prosthesis for his afflicted eye, through which he can achieve a love relationship that otherwise would be inaccessible to him (since medieval thinkers understood love as entering through the eye). At the same time as he uses the prosthesis to overcome or circumvent those things which would impede his love affair with Toute-Belle, Guillaume also draws attention to the fact that this lyrical artifice cannot fully work — or cannot completely stand in for the eye. Foreshadowed in the secretary's story of the blinded and abandoned Polyphemus, "lyric prosthesis — Guillaume's singing, the cyclops's bellowing — is doomed to failure [...]" (180). Singer elaborates:

Machaut's lyric protheses fill in formal gaps (by compensating for the malfunctioning eye and bridging the space between prose and narrative verse) — even as their content insists on restoring the narrator's ability to see, and thus to love. That this project should fail — that Guillaume should remain borgne and Toute-Belle distant and out of sight — is perhaps a further indication that lyric, as the convergence of music and language, is a temporary fix at best. Yet this relief, fleeting as it is, comes of a therapy that lyric prosthesis — but not surgical prosthesis — can provide." (186)

80 This strategy has precedents in medieval love treatises and courtly love poetry. Women are often misogynistically portrayed as reproachers themselves (for instance, the *Roman de la Rose* describes women as "Plain de travail et de paine,/ Et de contens et de riotes [...] Et de dangiers et de reproches/ Que font et dient par lor bouches" (9320-23) [full of travail and pain, and contentions and fights, and haughtiness and reproaches that the make and say with their mouths]. Male lovers, in this literature, are encouraged to reproach women in turn for their feminine flaws. Bernart de Ventadorn's "Can vei la lauzeta mover" contains just such a reproach: "D'aisso's fa be femna parer/ ma domna, per qu'e-lh o retrai" [In such things my lady acts like a woman, and for this I reproach her] (Howard Bloch ed. and trans., "Medieval Misogeny," *Modernité au Moyen Age*, 305-6). Capellanus's *Ars Amatoris* models this attitude more broadly. Book III condemns ladies for their unfaithful, parsimonious, greedy, gluttonous, proud, disobedient, gossiping (*etc.*) natures, concluding, "est quoque ad omne malum femina prona" [The female sex is likewise disposed to every evil] (Walsh, III.107).
would never have visited the area if it had not been for Toute-Belle's presence, he begs her to stay, he threatens her that henceforth he will not be able to see her often, and then he disingenuously concludes, "anyways I want everything that you want." His humble stance as her dependent, her "vallet," and his self-described physical vulnerability as "borgne" are intended to reproach his beloved for neglecting to visit him, and for departing just as he arrives. Guillaume makes himself "borgne" to influence and control Toute-Belle's plan of action.

Whether or not the historical Machaut was "borgne" is unknowable. However his "borgneness" is a lifelike detail that gives the portrait of the narrative persona the illusion of reality, and seems to offer a glimpse of the author behind the narrative persona. Even if the historical Machaut did have a visual impairment, the narrator's "borgneness" does not provide access to the real author. This detail is a red herring — and a powerful one — and it works its way into pictorial representations of the author figure. The poet portrait at the beginning of BNF f.fr. 1584 depicts a "borgne" figure, creating a continuity between the poetic/narrative persona across multiple works, whether this is understood to be Machaut-the-author, or a recurring "Guillaume" narrator. Scribes and readers (and subsequent scholars) read the "borgne" figure of the Voir Dit and the cross-eyed figure depicted in the Prologue as one and the same. Many scholars refer to the figure of the Prologue as Machaut himself, such as Leo (19) and Ferrand, who praises the "realism" of the "portraits de Machaut: tonsure, strabisme, rien ne manque" (14). Whether he was "borgne" or not, "borgneness" is for Machaut — as it is for "Guillaume" — a literary tool for manipulating his readers. For Guillaume, it is a psychological tool to influence the actions of his most important reader, Toute-Belle; for Machaut, it is a pseudo-autobiographical strategy that

81 Cerquiglini sees his "borgneness" as a pose, and as engagement with a trouvère humility topos. Her reading of his humble stance as a way of also gaining control is in line with my thinking. She suggests, "if the clerc is indeed in control of the point of view, of the writing, he also controls its deformation" ("Clerc et le Louche," 488). "The defect, the imperfect eye, turns into the source of creative power which masters, in its very imperfection, the power of representation" (489).

82 Chaucer's own self-description with seemingly lifelike details is reminiscent of this pose. We might think of the Host calling the narrator a "popet" (VII.701) and "elvyssh by his contenaunce" (VII.703).

83 The second artist, who undertakes the third Prologue illustration in BNF f.fr. 1584 and who is responsible for its remaining images, also glosses over the incongruities in narrative voice, transposing elements from the two portraits by the first artist into his own 153 portraits.
draws attention to the author, forcing the reader to wonder if (or even leading the reader to assume without basis) the "borgne valet" describes Machaut.  

1.8 The "Borgne" Figure in Cambridge, Parker Library, Ferrell 1

The image on the opening folio (1r) of Parker Library, Ferrell 1 offers another instance of visual pseudo-autobiographical play. Here, the figure of the "author" appears seated, apparently reading a book. The perspective of the scene is slightly skewed: the figure, sitting in profile, faces a dais upon which his book is displayed, and the dais, in turn, faces him; however, the book is open and facing directly outward, squarely meeting the reader's gaze (that is the reader of the manuscript). The book is displayed not for the seated poet figure, but for the reader, so that he or she can see both open pages. The figure himself helps display the book. He holds up the left leaf in order to make it visible to the onlooker at an angle that would make his own reading difficult. The figure therefore is more preoccupied with presenting the book to his audience than with reading it.

I suggest that the figure is also displaying himself as author alongside his book. His body is framed within the image by the dais on his right, a trunk below him, upon which he sits, and a curtain, tied open, at his back. He is almost completely enclosed, with the exception of his foot, which extends out of the frame, giving a three-dimensional effect, as he breaches the image's boundaries and draws nearer to the reader.

84 Ferrand rightly reads the opening two images of the poet figure as a representation of poetic authority, and this supports my argument that Machaut offers us a convincing (but, I add, ultimately fictional) authorial presence. Ferrand explains that the portraits invert the conventional mode of representation wherein "a sa cour, en effet, un prince se fait entourer d'une mesnie, d'une retenue de serviteurs qui sont là pour réaliser son idéal et fonder sa gloire" (13). In the first portraits of BNF f.fr. 1584, however, "l'artiste a pris la place du prince son mécène qui, lui, a disparu des tableaux pour laisser seul en face de ses royaux et immortels visiteurs, Nature et Amour" (13). Here, the figure of the poet is not subservient to a prince, but is instead "doué de pouvoirs surnaturels, coopère à l'œuvre de Nature et d'Amour; il est le mondain dieu d'harmonie, pour reprendre la belle expression de son disciple le poète Eustache Deschamps" (18).

85 Images available on the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music and also in the facsimile of the Ferrell-Vogüé Machaut Manuscript.
The curtain behind him is tied open to uncover the figure, revealing him to his audience. Were the curtain left loose to hang, it would conceal the poet figure, allowing the reader to see only the book on the dais. Implicit here is a traditional metaphor for the revelation of truth — truth which, I will suggest below, this image in conjunction with Machaut's narrative stance plays with and obstructs. The curtain — sometimes used as a metaphor in medieval perspectivist theories of optics and cognition for the intervening medium between the perceived object and the perceiver (Akbari 37) — is pulled back, revealing the identity of what should be the real author in an intimate, behind-the-scenes view. The figure looks like he has been interrupted during a private moment and his arm crosses his body as if to shield himself from the intruding reader. Read this way, the image conveys a sense of indecency and exposure. The reader opens the curtain — pulling it open as he or she turns the flyleaf from right to left, in the same direction as the curtain — and encounters, first of all, this uncovered poet figure.

The figure presents himself and his book, inviting the reader's gaze — framing himself within the image and extending his foot towards his audience — at the same time as he shields himself from onlookers. The latter is a mock modesty *topos*, and the figure feigns embarrassment, having been caught with his collected oeuvre. The subtext is that these are his works he is eager to display them, and he turns his book towards his reader, encouraging his or her gaze.

The image suggests that the reader has caught a candid view of the author, Machaut, with his work. Readers familiar with Machaut's shifty narrative stance, and who understand the image's play between revealing and concealing the poet and his work, would hesitate to ascribe this identification. Do the opened curtains and turned leaves reveal the "author," or a figure that looks like, but is not quite, the author? "Borgneness" again adds to the uncertainty. The figure's pupils are but small specks, pointing in different directions. In the context of BNF f.fr. 1584, the figure appears to be "borgne," afflicted with strabismus. The depiction raises irresolvable questions: are the pupils intentionally misplaced? Or was the artist merely careless? Or is this his artistic

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86 The flyleaf is original, and there is transfer from fol. 1r to the verso of the flyleaf that seems to suggest that the ink was a still a touch wet when the book was first closed.

87 Though here the eyes point outwards in different directions, while in BNF f.fr. 1584, they are crossed.
If the figure is indeed intentionally "borgne" does this draw him closer to, or further from, the historical Machaut? Is this depiction influenced by Machaut? Or by the artist's encounter with the "borgne" Guillaume in the *Voir Dit*, whose "borgneness" may or may not been informed by the historical Machaut? While Parker Library, Ferrell 1 does not contain the *Voir Dit* — the work in which Guillaume proclaims himself a "borgne vallet" — the image was composed by the same artist responsible for the portrayal of the "borgne" poet in BNF f.fr. 1584, the Jean de Sy Master. Dominic Leo dates the body of BNF f.fr. 1584 and Parker Library, Ferrell 1 to around the same time (c.1370), but he dates the opening bifolio of BNF f.fr. 1584 slightly later to 1377 (*Illuminated MSS* xxv). Regardless of the direction of influence, both images emanate from the conception of one artist.

There are, however, many other artistic hands at work throughout Parker, Ferrell 1 (Leo identifies seven, 72), which create multiple iterations of the narrative figure. The number of iterations, I suggest, emphasizes the problematic nature of the identity of the figure in the opening portrait, adding a layer to Machaut's pseudo-autobiographical game. For example, the figure of "Guillaume" at the opening of *Behaingne* (47v) is bearded and has relatively long hair, with no evidence of curls. The narrator on 122r at the opening of the *Dit dou Lyon* has wavy blonde hair and no beard (in the style of the *Remede*'s protagonist, and these figures share a similar angularity). The *Fonteinne* offers yet another portrayal (197r). As usual, "Guillaume" is dressed in a grey robe, he is beardless and has curly hair, but his features are much rounder than the figure from the *Remede or Lyon* (his eyes are bulbous and he has a pronounced cleft in his chin). I am not suggesting that we necessarily read into these changing images an intention on the part of the artists to portray different "characters." Given the numerous hands involved in the production of such a *de luxe* manuscript, medieval readers would have understood that the appearance of a single figure could vary. Nevertheless, the ever-changing nature of Guillaume seems to reinforce a desire — perhaps of the medieval reader and certainly of the modern scholar

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88 For example, Dominic Leo, in his dissertation "Authorial Presence in the Illuminated Machaut Manuscripts," does not mention anything curious about figure's eyes. Leo asserts that "the Jean de Sy Master [does] not represent Machaut with crossed eyes in manuscript Vg [Parker, Ferrell 1]" (246).
— to read the opening potentially-"borgne" figure as the real, authoritative Machaut (as opposed to the shifting and more obviously fictional narrator).\textsuperscript{89}

While Parker Library, Ferrell 1 suggests the author's presence by placing in contrast the opening image with the shifting portrayals of "Guillaume" throughout the codex, it denies access to such an author. Looking at the opening image, the reader, placed in the position of intruder peeping behind the curtain, catches a candid glimpse of the "author" reading. But if the "author figure" is "borgne," how does he read this book? The suggestion of "borgneness," intentional or not, puts Machaut's pseudo-autobiography into play. The image draws attention to the fiction of the image and the poetry: a "borgne" figure appears to read but cannot read; a figure appears to be the author but is not the author. The open curtain does not give the reader unmediated access to or knowledge of the author after all.\textsuperscript{90} If we return to medieval optics, the curtains (along with veils or cloaks) function as metaphors for the "intermediate entities upon which medieval visual theory is predicated" (Smith 291).\textsuperscript{91} Smith explains:

\begin{quote}
And while medieval readers would not likely have had access to multiple manuscripts in order to compare their art, scholars, looking at these images in Parker, Ferrell 1 and BNF f.fr. 1584, might be tempted to read the representation of the "borgne" poet as the "real" Machaut, thus perpetuating the powerful but untenable idea of the Prologue as autobiographical "key."
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Akbari discusses the "link in western culture" between seeing and knowing (3).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
See also Tachau, Vision and Certitude, and Akbari, Seeing Through the Veil, who engage with medieval optical and cognitive theory, linking theories of sight to theories of knowing. Tachau writes, "most late thirteenth- and early fourteenth century thinkers [...] understood cognition to involve a process of abstraction from sense experience" (3). Tachau summarizes Roger Bacon's theories of sight (\textit{De multiplicatione specierum} [ca. 1262]), which involve an intervening medium between the object and the eye of the viewer. She explains:

a visible object generates, or 'multiplies' species of light and color in the adjacent, transparent medium. These species, which Bacon also calls 'virtues' or powers, 'forms,' 'images,' 'similitudes,' 'phantasms,' and 'intentions,' generate further species in the medium contiguous to them, which results in a continuous multiplication of species along rays proceeding in all unobstructed directions from all points on the object's surface. These visible species convey the object's accidents through the intervening medium, which serves as their substance, to the eye of the viewer, upon which they are, loosely speaking, 'impressed.'" (8)
\end{quote}

This intervening medium can be conceived of — especially by critics of this theory — in terms like "veils" or "cloaks." For instance, Wodeham's \textit{Lectura Secunda}, engaging with "perspectivist accounts" of optics (Akbari 37), and specifically Peter Aureol's \textit{Scriptum super Primum Sententiarum}, recognizes that the perceived entity or "apparent being" (Tachau 294) (in sight and
Ranging from the transparent, physical medium and the spiritual medium pervading the eyes and sensitive soul, to the species passing through those media and the reflective and refractive interfaces that redirect their passage, these intermediate entities can all lead to misperception in one way or another. Yet, ironically, without them perception and cognition would be impossible. (291-2)

This image in Parker Library, Ferrell 1, puts in motion ideas about sight, veiling, and knowing. The "borgneness" of the figure and the open curtain draws attention to who can see and who cannot — who can see the insurmountable gap between the image and the author, who can recognize that they cannot see the author. The curtain is drawn away, revealing an image of what should be the poet. The irony is that the figure the image reveals as the poet — the figure that promises to bring Machaut to his readers — is the very figure that obstructs their sight of him. The constructed persona is the only means of access to the poet, but the persona is also the very thing, through its confusion, muddle, and layering, blocking that access. The book itself functions in the same contradictory way, as an intervening medium between audience and author. Again, with its first flyleaf covering the image of the author figure, the book veils physically. Its function as a curtain or veil is built into the image of the poet figure, and into the very physical way this image is displayed in the book.

Much like the unsatisfying solution to the Machauldian anagram ("Guillemin"), the revelation of the author in Parker Library, Ferrell 1 is anticlimactic. The reader has not been offered a candid glimpse of the real author; rather, this image is a posed tableau, arranged for the reader's benefit. The image does not present Machaut the author after all, but only a "borgne" figure posing with his book and yet contained within it, an enigmatic figure who defies characterization as author or narrator.

in knowing) that Aureol posits is "formed' by the soul not as a prior cause, but as a product of vision" (296). Despite Aureol's insistence to the contrary, Wodeham casts this medium as a "cloak" or "mediator blocking direct cognition of extramental reality" (297). The medium in this debate both enables cognition (according to Aureol) and blocks access to cognition (as Wodeham argues).
1.9 Images of the Narrator in the *Jugement dou roy de Behaingne*

I would like to bring this discussion to bear on the *Jugement dou roy de Behaingne* and the *Book of the Duchess*. A multiplicity of "Guillaumes" — and the way they gesture to but impede access to the author, or play with the very idea of authorship — exists between copies of the *Jugement dou roy de Behaingne*. Images of Machaut's narrator in *Behaingne* vary significantly. As he eavesdrops on the knight and lady, Guillaume the narrator assumes different poses behind his shrubbery: he squats (BNF f.fr. 1584), he lies on his side, adopting the dreamer pose (BNF f.fr. 9221), he peeps out, revealing only his face (BNF, Arsenal, 5203), and he stands (BNF f.fr. 1586). All of these depictions reveal a shared preoccupation with the narrator, but they also produce a shifting set of "Guillaumes" in image, just as a shifting set exists in text, as I have argued. There is no fixed correlation between Machaut and "Guillaume," between "Guillaumes" across works contained by a single manuscript, or between "Guillaumes" of a single work across multiple manuscripts. Machaut disperses poetic responsibility amongst multiple poetic personae: author, narrator, dreamer, "borgne" lover, and clerk. His authority is a trick, a playful illusion, which thwarts his readers' search for an authorial identity. Machaut plays with authority by making his readers look for him as author, denying his readers access to him and making them aware of this denial. This playful take on authority is set within a bookish tradition in which, Machaut knows, his work will be both compiled and disordered.

92 In the *Behaingne* of Parker, Ferrell 1, he is the sole figure depicted.

93 Likewise, the little dog, is always depicted in this scene, often jumping, with the one exception of BNF f.fr. 1586 (although there are other examples of little dogs accompanying their ladies in French literature, here he is a disturber of the peace. He barks and jumps and tears at Guillaume's robes).

93 In BNF f.fr. 9221, the narrator's peeping is portrayed even while the judgment — for which the text is named — is not.
1.10 Confusion in the *Book of the Duchess*: The Narrator and the Poet

Chaucer engages with this mode of literary self-representation — as well as the way it plays out in books — to shape his own narrative and authorial personae in the *Book of the Duchess*. The prominence of Machaut's narrator — the way he asserts the importance of narration by drawing attention to it — helps explain Chaucer's complex attitudes towards his adaptation of the *Jugement dou roy de Behaingne*. His use of Machaut allows him to open up multiple ways of reading his narrative stance, one way that enhances his poetic reputation and another that makes possible deference to his patron. Chaucer draws most heavily from *Behaingne* for the situation of the Chaucerian narrator (his behaviour toward a heart-broken aristocrat). He also makes use of the *Fonteinne amoureuse* — a *dit* which contains yet another iteration of the pseudo-autobiographical Guillaume — for his Ceyx and Aleyone episode. Importantly, of Chaucer's numerous French sources, *Behaingne* offers the only evocation of a dead beloved in a *dit* predating the *Book of the Duchess*. Ardis Butterfield has pointed out that Oton de Graunson's *Complainte de St. Valentin* and the anonymous *Songe Vert* similarly contain poets who lament the deaths of their respective ladies but she notes that these works are probably later than the *Duchess* (Lyric and Elegy, 37).

I will return now to Chaucer's adaptation of scenes from Machaut's *Behaingne* in the *Book of the Duchess*, rereading the "foundational moment" or "crux" of misunderstanding in the *Book of the Duchess*: the man in black's complaint in which he declares that his lover is dead, which sets in motion the Chaucerian narrator's persistent befuddlement. The complaint in which the man in black declares that his lady is "ded and ys agoon" (479) is closely modeled on the passage from *Behaingne*. The first two lines are almost identical: "N'a mon las cuer jamais bien vendra/ N'a nul confort n'a joie n'ateindra" (193-4) and "I have of sorwe so gret won/ that joye gete I never non" (475-476). The apostrophes to Death are also remarkably similar — both, paraphrased, say the same thing: 'death, why did you take my loved one and not me?'.

In *Behaingne*, this is the lady's only declaration that her lover is dead. From this single utterance, those around her (the knight and the peeping narrator) understand the fact of his death. The Machauldian narrator comprehends the full weight of the situation and does not feel compelled
to emerge from his shrubbery to ask questions. In the *Book of the Duchess*, when the man in black speaks the same lines, the Chaucerian narrator remains oblivious to the beloved's death.

This dynamic is prefigured by Chaucer's adaptation of the Ceyx and Alcyone episode from Machaut's *Fonteinne Amoureuse*. Chaucer's Alcyone is unsure about the fate of her dead lover, where there is no such ambiguity in the French source. Machaut’s Alchioine wants to know "ou, et pourquoy, et quant/ II fu peris" (563-4) [where, and how, and when he died] while Chaucer’s Alcyone asks Juno that she might "wite wher-so he be,/ Or how he fareth, or in what wise" (112-3), voicing concern, but no certain knowledge of his death. In Chaucer’s version, the revelation by Morpheus, acting as Ceyx, of Ceyx’s death — the abrupt "I am but ded" (204) — anticipates the man in black’s equally terse "She ys ded!" (1309) that finally demystifies the narrator. Both declarations have the effect of shutting down the action: with Alcyone’s cry “Allas” (212) and the narrator’s judgment, "hyt ys routhe" (1309), each tale is brought to a close.\(^94\)

I will suggest yet another interpretation of the narrator's misunderstanding by thinking about Chaucer's narrative persona in light of Machaut's pseudo-autobiographical narrator: the foolish bumbling clerk figure who hides in shrubs and is barked at by little dogs inspires the narrator who grievously misunderstands (and as a result, incessantly questions) his social superior. Like Machaut, who uses this narrative stance as a tool for denying and establishing, consolidating and giving up, poetic control, Chaucer uses his bumbling narrator to evoke himself as a failing author for the select audience members who know the Machauldian source. Chaucer opens up this second reading — which exists alongside the poem's primary purpose as an elegy for Blanche — by playfully introducing confusion between his text and his source text. In this moment of misunderstanding, I argue, Chaucer crafts a misunderstanding narrator, who cannot understand the man in black's grief, and a confused (though, I will suggest below, fictional) poet figure, who muddles his French source, a translation which he should be able to get right given that French and English are both languages of the English court in this period. Since we know from Chaucer's use of French sources throughout his career as well as his diplomatic missions to

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\(^94\) Arthur Bahr similarly reads the Ceyx and Alcyone story as a frame for the man in black episode ("The Rhetorical Construction of Narrator and Narrative in Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*," 55). See also Helen Phillips,"Structure and Consolation in the 'Book of the Duchess',' for a reading of the "typological relationships" (109) in the poem's structure.
France that he was perfectly qualified to understand and translate French, this posturing must be, of course, a poetic construct, a strategic device, and a ruse. The confused poet persona therefore is as crafted and textual as the failing narrator; both allude to Chaucer as author but ultimately deny access to him, both are his ironic creations. At stake is his poetic reputation, but also the social pressure of flattering and pleasing his patron, John of Gaunt, and responding adequately to the death of Gaunt's wife. Chaucer's particular adaptation of the Machauldian source — which I will expand on below — allows him to meet these demands. The narrator fails to understand that the lady is dead because he cannot make sense of the muddled translation in which he is operating. The Chaucerian narrator therefore must question the man in black. He does this while the Machauldian narrator, who has understood the meaning of "mort," remains concealed in the bushes for another thousand lines. The process of questioning ultimately leads the Chaucerian narrator to a more empathetic response than the response conveyed by the French model, and the confusion of the source contributes to the elegiac function of the text. In the Machauldian debate, the death of a loved one is, according to Ardis Butterfield, "simply one kind of misery to be weighed against another" (37), judged with the help of allegorical figures such as Courtesy, Loyalty, Reason, and Youth (and in Behaingne these figures rule against the bereaved lady). Minnis supports this empathetic reading of the Book of the Duchess, arguing that the Book of the Duchess overturns the verdict reached in Behaingne and shows that the death of a loved one is the greatest loss (Minnis, "Book of the Duchess," 110). In the Duchess, the narrator, reduced to near speechlessness (crying out only, "hyt ys routhe"), recognizes that there is no adequate consolation (French 241) or judgment to be offered when confronted with the harsh reality that "ded" really means dead.

At the same time as the narrator's confusion offers John of Gaunt solace, it is a source of pleasure for other members of his audience. Those able to recognize the irony of the confusion, and recognize the gap between text and source and between fictional personae and Chaucer the author, are gratified by this recognition. Chaucer derives poetic authority from wittily handling the poetry of his French contemporaries and from positioning himself as their literary equal; he derives authority from his select audience's appreciation of his poetic skill vis-à-vis his French sources; and he derives authority from the very exclusivity of those who are able to recognize this skill.
1.11 Examples of Confusion

Chaucer unevenly redistributes the lines of Machauldian characters, and slightly shifts its poetic form. Davis calls this strategy "misprision," and argues that Chaucer's subtle revision of his source is aggressive: Chaucer "deploys elements typical of Machaut and his literary milieu to create a Machaut-like central character, and then evokes a historical occasion [ie. the death of Blanche] to which this Machauldian figure is inadequate" (392). This is a "campaign to undermine" (402) the Machauldian French tradition and to cast himself, and the English vernacular, as more promising and effective by comparison. I would argue, however, that instead of casting English as more effective than French, as Davis suggests, Chaucer's transposition of his source creates intentional muddle and creates an author figure who confuses elements of his source.

Chaucer never claims to translate his source closely, and it could be argued that Chaucer is loosely drawing on Behaingne. However, his manipulation of his source text results in meaningful confusion — involving, I will suggest, the realignment of gender — for specific ends.

First, Chaucer's adaptation mixes up Machauldian roles, making impossible one-to-one correlations between characters in Behaingne and characters in the Book of the Duchess. Unable to understand the man in black's lyrical outburst, the narrator approaches him in an attempt to discover the nature of his ailment through questioning. During their conversation Chaucer puts into these characters' mouths the words of Behaingne's knight and lady. However, he transposes the lines of the Machauldian characters in a confused way with the result that there is no stable correlation between characters in Behaingne and the Book of the Duchess. For example, the Chaucerian narrator speaks the Machauldian lady's apology: "Mais si j'ay fait/ Riens ou il ait villonie ou meffait,/ Vueil liez le moy pardonner, s'il vous plait" [But if I have done anything in which there is low action or misdeed, pardon me for it, please (72-4)], becomes the narrator's, "I am ryght sory yif I have ought/ Destroubled yow out of your thought. Foryive me, yif I have mystake"(523-5). And, to confuse things further, he utters these lines as he plays the role of the Machauldian knight who has gone unnoticed by the lady; or, in his case, the man in black. In this
same episode, the man in black plays the lady\textsuperscript{95} when, lost in his sorrow, he fails to notice the approach of the narrator (just as the Machauldian lady fails to notice the knight). The lady exclaims, "Certes, sire, pas ne vous entendi/ Pour mon penser qui le me deffendi" (70-1) [Certainly, lord, I did not hear you on account of my thinking which prevented me from it]. The man in black says to the narrator "I herde the not" (520). When the narrator describes the man in black's troubled state of mind, he paraphrases the lady's lines: "throgh hys sorwe and hevy thought,/ Made hym that he herde me noght" (509-10). In this same passage, the man in black also voices the lines of the knight: "Dame, il n'affiert ci nul pardonement,/ Car il n'i a meffait ne mautalant" (77-8) [Lady there is no pardon necessary here, since there is no misdeed or ill will], becomes, "Yis, th'amendes is lyght to make,/ [...] for ther lyeth noon therto;/ There ys nothyng myssayd nor do" (525-8). Implicit in the switching of voices is the interchangeability of gender, since the narrator and man in black both take turns filling the role of the Machauldian lady.

Schibanoff, too, sees a reconfiguration of gender roles in this episode, arguing that it is the narrator who takes on the role of "queer other" (66) in order to negotiate the social and gender dynamics of the scenario. Playing the "passive learner" (75), the narrator is able to praise Whyte while keeping the man in black at the centre of the poem, in the "pre-eminent position of courtly maker in the poem" (66). Schibanoff understands gendering as a strategy through which to flatter John of Gaunt, the flattery of whom is accepted by scholars.

This reading is unquestionably right — Chaucer flatters John of Gaunt, and his \textit{Book of the Duchess} is successful as a memorial to Blanche. I would suggest, though, that Chaucer makes available a competing reading to those thinking about his use of his French source, one which shows a gap between the \textit{Duchess} and its source, introduced by a constructed author figure who realigns Machauldian roles and feminizes John of Gaunt's alter ego. Of course, this could only have been recognized by a knowing audience, familiar enough with the source text to notice the redistribution of lines and attentive enough to pick up on the irony. Chaucer reconfigures \textit{Behaingne}'s love debate, placing his narrator in an implied competition with Gaunt's alter ego, the man in black, over "who suffers more." The long-suffering narrator claims to have

\textsuperscript{95} The most obvious instance of the man in black adopting the Machauldian lady's role is when he voices the lament about the loss of his beloved (discussed above).
experienced an inexplicable eight-year bout of listlessness, "melancolye" (22), "drede" (24), and insomnia. The narrator draws upon certain elements from Behaingne to formulate his malady, taking on the role of a legitimate contender in the love debate: the length of his illness, for instance, evokes Behaingne's lady, who was also servant to love for "vij. ans ou .viij. entiers" (125) [seven or eight whole years]. As Bahr rightly remarks, it would be inappropriate for Chaucer to compare John of Gaunt's very real grief with the plight of his somewhat clumsy narrator (50), and so the Duchess does not replicate a debate between two engaged participants — while competition is subtly implied, Chaucer's stance in relation to his patron is, of course, overwhelmingly courteous. The man in black turns the words of Machaut's knight into a declaration of his poetic incompetence. The man in black, the fictional author of the complaint in the Book of the Duchess, declares that his lady was so beautiful that he lacks the "Englyssh and wit" (898) necessary to describe her. This passage loosely mimics Behaingne, in which the cuckolded knight utters similar words when he relates the moment he first laid eyes on his lady: "Ne tous li mons souffire/ ne porroit pas por sa biauté descrire/ parfaitement" (294-6) [nor could the whole world suffice to describe her beauty perfectly]. In the French version, it is the world that cannot suffice, whereas in the Book of the Duchess, it is a shortcoming of the dull-witted English poet, the man in black. Of course, this is a humility topos and we do not take the man in black at his word — we do not assume that this noble figure has a poor handle on the English language. However, if any dull-wittedness were implied of John of Gaunt's alter-ego, the man in black, it would be a blunder on the part of the authorial persona.

These strategies, I would suggest, are deliberate and designed to model the confusion of a French source, and designed to amuse and perplex a knowing audience. This reading is supported by Chaucer's use of the intercalated lyric and the distortion of the form of his source text (another "mistake" by the "incompetent" poet). Wimsatt describes the form of the Book of the Duchess as consisting of octosyllabic couplets, "interspersed with set-pieces in the formes fixes" (127). Aside from the man in black's complaint, the other conspicuous set piece — the man in black's first song for his lady — while alternating AA BB AA, maintains the octosyllabic couplet verse structure and is smoothly integrated into the surrounding narrative.

Lord, hyt maketh myn herte lyght

Whan I thenke on that swete wyght

62
That is so semely on to see;
And wisshe to God hyt myghte so bee
That she wolde holde me for hir knyght,
My lady, that is so fair and bryght!

(1175-80)

The man in black’s complaint, the first set piece, is the only moment in the entire poem that breaks the rhyme scheme, rhyming instead AABBA CCDCCD. Wilcockson suggests that the rhyme scheme of this eleven-line complaint may be faulty (970), departing from the otherwise consistent rhyming couplets of the text (including the second lyric at lines 1175-80 [Benson 1137]); this is our next case of Chaucerian muddle. All manuscripts agree (though one sixteenth-century editor, Thynne, tried to fix this by adding a line after 479, and rearranging others — emendations that have been rejected by most subsequent editors). If the rhyme scheme of the complaint is faulty it is intentionally so, since Chaucer shows us throughout the Book of the Duchess that he is perfectly capable of composing rhyming couplets. Moreover, despite what the narrator says, this piece is neither technically a "lay" (471) nor a "complaynte" (487). In this sense, then, the man in black’s complaint too has fallen victim to Chaucer’s confusion. Here again, leaving out a line, or giving us an incorrect lay or complaint, Chaucer’s translation of French form is somehow incomplete. I would argue that the lyric’s anomalous rhyme scheme and form contribute, in part, to the narrator’s misunderstanding of

96 "And thus in sorwe lefte me aloon." He moves 486 to follow 483, recreating the AA BB rhyme scheme.
97 Wilcockson explains that "most modern editors omit Thynne's line, but number as if the line were present" (970). He suggests, "on the 'lectio difficilior' principle, the eleven-line compleynyte should stand" (970). Helen Phillips includes the line in square brackets in her edition. Dickerson argues that, "although some circumstances throw suspicion on 480, no sound reason exists for excluding the line from the text" (54). Blake, however, cautions against "accepting this piece as genuine" (306). Shippey accepts the eleven-line form (prior to Thynne's addition) on the basis of numeric symbolism: "the number eleven, in classical and Christian tradition together, had associations with death; sin; mourning [...] Chaucer may, in short, have counted more carefully than Thynne" (192).
these lines. He does not know how to read the poem's content because its form is jumbled — hence his impulse to categorize it first as song without note (471), then as a lay, and then as a complaint (perhaps mirroring a reader's confusion as he/she encounters the muddled form). If he can just figure out what this is, maybe he can grasp what it means. However, none of his designations are accurate and they do not enlighten him. This contrasts with the way in which the consistent metre and rhyme in *Behaingne* help clarify the lady's loss to her audience. Machaut makes use of his chosen rhyme scheme, AAAB BBBC etc., in order to insist on the death of the lady's lover: he takes the opportunity to position "mort" as one of the rhyming words in the lady's complaint, and so repeats its sound in four consecutive lines, three times in one stanza: Tort, s'amort, mort, mort. Even "s'amort," and then "mordre" mid-line contain within them the sound of "mort." The result is that in the Machauldian lady's complaint the beloved seems more "mort" than in the man in black's "lay" (which does not place the words "death" or "dead" in a rhyme position).

1.12 Blind Author, Blind Narrator

As well as adapting poetic material from *Behaingne* to craft his poetic personae, Chaucer engages with similar questions about the slipperiness of authorship as Guillaume's self-identification as a "borgne" poet. While Chaucer, at the time that he composed the *Duchess*, could have been familiar with the "borgne" poet of the *Voir Dit* (written between 1362-65), he probably had not come across Machaut's *Prologue* or pictorial representations of the *Prologue*’s narrator since Machaut wrote his *Prologue* around 1372, nearing the terminus ante quem for the *Book of the Duchess*. I would suggest that Chaucer may take up the idea of "borgneness" — which Machaut describes as a physical disability — metaphorically. Neither the poet nor his narrative persona is "borgne" or vision-impaired; rather Chaucer fashions himself as a metaphorically "blind" poet, who muddles French love poetry, through his own cognitively "blind" and bumbling narrator, who cannot understand that "dead" means "dead."98

98 See also Suzanne Akbari's discussion of the interrelationship of sight and knowledge, "emotional release" and "intellectual comprehension," in the *Book of the Duchess* (*Seeing through the Veil*, 195). When "White is present inside the mind [...] as the remembered image," she argues, the man in black's "sorrow can come to an end. His moment of emotional release is simultaneous with and, apparently, the consequence of the narrator's comprehension [...]" (194).
There is a textual basis for conceiving of the narrator's inability to understand and the poet's deliberate confusion in terms of cognitive and metaphorical blindness. Throughout the Book of the Duchess, Chaucer sets up a correlation between sight and knowledge, recalling again the correlation between the two in medieval theories of perception. This is especially clear if we read the second episode of the text, the narrator's escapades in dreamland, as a structurally inverted version of the first episode, the Ceyx and Alcyone story, as Bahr convincingly argues we can. Alcyone's concrete understanding of her husband's death can only come as a result of seeing — of casting "hir eyen" (212) on his actual "dreynte body" (195). Inverted, Alcyone's knowledge through sight turns into the narrator's misunderstanding and inability to understand the death of lady Whyte as a result of metaphorical blindness (and by extension Chaucer, as the author who confuses his French sources, must be similarly blind).

Both Machaut and Chaucer use the idea of obscured sight to different ends. Guillaume capitalized on his "borgneness" to reproach and control Toute-Belle. This narrative pose bleeds into Machaut's authorial persona, contributing to the deliberate confusion between and the conflation of author and narrator. Guillaume's "borgneness," as we have seen, raises the question, who is really "borgne"? Are the figures in the images of BNF f.fr. 1584 and Parker Library, Ferrell 1 "borgne" because that is how the pseudo-autobiographical narrator styles himself in the Voir Dit, as Cerquiglini argues? Or, is "Guillaume" depicted as "borgne" in the Voir Dit as an attempt to bolster the pseudo-autobiography, because the author himself is really, in fact, "borgne"? These questions, though irresolvable, are important because they underlie the relationship that Chaucer creates between poet and narrator in the Book of the Duchess, when he establishes his own metaphorical "blindness."

99 Bahr describes the structure of the Book of the Duchess as "chiasmic" ("The Rhetorical Construction of Narrator and Narrative in Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess," 43). He explains that the conclusion of the Book of the Duchess completes the "chiastic rhetorical pattern initiated in the tale of Alcyone" (55). "There the Narrator imposes abbrevatio on the suffering widow—as contrasted implicitly with the amplificatio of Ovid's Alcione—but this dismissive abbrevatio (215-17) turns into a self-absorbed amplificatio (218-30). This narrative structure mirrors, by the sort of inversion half-expected in dreams, the self-absorbed amplificatio of the Black Knight's suffering, which the Narrator's questions finally reduce to abbrevatio ("She is ded!"). This change then stimulates the Narrator's own heartfelt abbrevatio ("Be God, hyt ys routhe!")) (55).
Chaucer sets up the question: does Chaucer the author only seem incompetent because he is poetically responsible for a narrator who misunderstands the words of the man in black? Or is the narrator himself awkward and incapable of seeing the truth of the man in black's words because Chaucer the author is blind to French poetry (that is, cannot adequately understand French poetry in order to translate it)? Chaucer sets up this intentionally muddled relationship between blind author and narrator to play with and construct his status as an author. I have suggested above that this works in two ways: first through the appreciation of the gap between persona and author by a knowing audience who understands the irony in his muddle; second through the narrowing of his audience to a select and learned group — consisting of "gentle persons" (Strohm 50), Chaucer's fellow poets, and his social equals, bureaucratic functionaries, working within a documentary culture (Strohm 47-55) — that is, to those that can recognize the irony. I suggest that Chaucer plays even further with the gap between author and persona at the end of the Book of the Duchess. His play functions in a way that for readers especially familiar with the Machauldian narrative stance might recall Machaut's pseudo-autobiography. Chaucer's play with a pseudo-autobiographical gap alludes to an author but then cuts off access to the author.

By taking on a Machauldian pseudo-autobiographical narrative pose, Chaucer playfully dissociates himself from the muddle (again, readers who can see this maneuvering already know the confusion of the French source is intentional, but this is an aesthetic literary game). Machaut uses his pseudo-autobiography to play with the illusion of control and coherence in texts and manuscripts, but an illusion that readers ultimately understand is an illusion. Ironically he hints at and obscures his identity as author in his narrative work and the codices that contain it. He relinquishes poetic authority to the voices of the multiple Guillaumes and to a multitude of scribes, artists, and readers. While Machaut's pseudo-autobiographical game collapses the space between author and narrator, tempting us to read his narrator Guillaume as the author (for instance by crafting a narrator who professes to be "borgne"), Chaucer opens distance and disjoint between narrator and poet. Instead of collapsing perceived space between author and
narrator, Chaucer, I will show, creates a gap between himself and the faulty translation of the French source. 100

Chaucer, then, as the failing author is to blame for the confusion of his source until the closing lines of the Book of the Duchess when the narrator claims authorship over the work, claiming to put his "sweven in ryme" (1332). 101 The blind poet persona becomes not Chaucer the author but rather the narrator. This composition is supposedly the text we are reading, and the narrator's claim to be the author of a very real literary work is reminiscent of Guillaume of the Voir Dit compiling the "livre ou jet met toutes mes choses" or of Guillaume of the Jugement dou roy de Navarre who was allegedly responsible for composing Behaingne. It might be productive to think about this moment as pseudo-autobiography: when the narrator claims authorship the distance between narrator and author narrows. The narrator reminds us of the author by claiming to be the author, drawing attention to the poem's authoredness. When the narrator takes on the role of confused poet, he not only exculpates Chaucer from blame for the muddled poetry, but, even more significantly, he renders Chaucer the real author inaccessible. As the identity of the narrator shifts to occupy the persona of the fictional poet, the poet himself — whose presence had been evoked by that persona — moves out of reach.

Machaut seems to claim and then ultimately disclaim poetic responsibility, frustrating readers' attempts to pin down his authorial identity. Chaucer too seems to establish a poetic identity — albeit as a metaphorically blind poet who confuses the French material — only to reject that authorial identity and situate it with the narrator who, not responsible for any of Chaucer's other works, is contained textually. 102 He is contained codicologically too. The Book of the Duchess opens with an image of the narrator reading a book:

100 Though, of course, readers who were able to recognize Chaucer's mistranslation of his source, as I have shown, would understand that this is a pose and that Chaucer is constructing a persona as a failing author.

101 This is the "pseudo-autobiographical reveal" much like the Machauldian anagram at the end of Behaingne.

102 This is in contrast to Machaut's narrative persona. Machaut's narrator's act of writing is not contained within the piece and his poetic activity reaches beyond Behaingne. Machauldian narrators are responsible for the production of Behaingne and the Lai de Plour (as well as the Remede, which the pseudo-autobiographical narrator of the Voir Dit claims to have composed).
Upon my bed I sat upright
And bad oon reche me a book
A romaunce, and he it me tok
To rede and drive the night away;
For me thoughte it better play
Then playe either at ches or tables. (46-51)

And it closes with the narrator waking up with the book still in his hand:

Therwyth I awook myselve
And fond me lying in my bed;
And the book that I hadde red,
Of Alcione and Seys the kyng,
And of the goddes of slepyng,
I fond hyt in myn hond ful even. (1324-1329)

The narrator is book-ended: contained by books, and contained within his self-authored book. When he claims to compose the poem, he sets in motion an inescapable self-referential cycle that textualizes him, severing him from Chaucer the author. As the reader reaches the end of the poem, the narrator's declaration that he writes "this sweven in ryme" (1332) refers the reader again to the beginning of the work, which is the beginning of the work that the narrator claims to

This same speaker lays claim to Machaut's lyrics within the Voir Dit itself, but again, like the Book of the Duchess these are mostly self-contained. However, as McGrady points out, some of his songs and lyric appear again in other sections of the same manuscript, where such shorter pieces are collected.
write at the end. Chaucer sets in motion an endless cycle in which his narrator composes his tale at the end, over and over again. This is Chaucer's final joke: the reader may think the text in a book provides access its author, but it only offers a fictional and constructed persona writing himself into his book with every reading. The book, Chaucer implies, creates an insurmountable gap between the narrative persona and author.

Like Machaut's pseudo-autobiography, Chaucer's narrative stance is codicological: both poets create personae that explore the limits and the boundedness of books. They make use of the way books bring a pseudo-autobiographical narrative persona to an audience. Books seem to offer a glimpse of the author, but an author constructed by his texts, through a persona contained within the text.

Chaucer experiments with pseudo-autobiography in order to respond to the conflicting social and literary expectations that exert pressure on his composition. His dual sets of personae enable him to craft an eloquent, sensitive, and fitting memorial for Blanche, while also opening up the possibility of literary play (here the line "For me thoughte it better play/ Then playe either at ches or tables" [50-1] is evocative). This play would have been particularly satisfying to audience members who understood Chaucer's posturing and felt in on the game. Riffing on Machaut's pseudo-autobiographical trope, Chaucer establishes, in a formal literary way, an exclusive community of readers who see the gap between author and narrator, understand the irony, are familiar with the French sources, and to whom Chaucer offers himself as an elite and exclusive kind of author.
Chapter 2
Froissart's Books and Chaucer's "Bok": Codicological Forms of Poetic Authority and Competition

2 Introduction: Dreaming Miscellaneously

The *Book of the Duchess* opens with an evocative scene: the narrator, unable to sleep, asks for a book, a "romaunce" (48), in which "were written fables/ That clerkes had in olde tyme./ And other poetes, put in rime" (52-4). The *Riverside Chaucer* glosses this "bok" (52) as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The narrator's description of its contents, however, is suggestive of a miscellany: it is full of "fables" (52) with diverse subject matter ("quenes lives, and of kings/ And many other thinges smal" [58-9]), and written by "clerkes" and "poetes" in the plural (53-4). "Amonge al this" (60) — the diversity and quantity of material again suggesting a collection — the narrator explains, he "fond a tale" (60), the story of Ceyx and Alcyone. The narrator falls asleep holding this book of miscellaneous poetry and fables.

The very structure of the *Book of the Duchess* consists of a range of translations and allusions to bits of miscellaneous French poetry. The image of the poet dreaming with his miscellany, and dreaming miscellaneously, raises the central question of this chapter: how do poets, like Chaucer and Froissart — the primary source for Chaucer's narrator's sleepless condition — establish themselves as poets in relation to books, through manuscript forms? I will suggest that they do this in a tangible sense, through the physical book, by preserving their oeuvre in ornate single-author tomes — like the two surviving manuscripts of Froissart's poetry, Paris, BNF f.fr. 830 and BNF f.fr. 831 — as well as in a metaphorical sense, as Chaucer does in the *Book of the Duchess*, by imagining encounters with books both in poetry and as forms for poetry.

I will first explore ideas about authorship within the physical codex, devoting some time to describing Froissart's surviving books, Paris, BNF f.fr. 830 and 831. I will think about the authority of these manuscripts, preserving a single author's works, in relation to the intertextuality ingrained in the French poetry of the fourteenth century — exemplified by the ballade exchange between Thomas de Paien, Guillaume de Machaut, Jean Froissart, and
Geoffrey Chaucer ("Hyd Absalon" in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women) — which disseminates French lyrics in fractured snippets and echoes. These two trends are seemingly opposed: the surviving codices preserve the author's oeuvre intact, as authoritative and indivisible, and intertextual exchange takes the author's text out of context, where it is rendered anonymous, sampled and recycled by other poets. However, as I will show, the second has as much to do with establishing poetic credibility as the first: the "Hyd Absalon" exchange is a male-centered competition, a reality which Chaucer reveals and overturns in his inset ballade devoted to lauding women, though ironically, with the goal of winning for himself this particular homosocial contest. I will link the lively intertextuality of the ballade exchange to the aesthetic\(^{103}\) of the Book of the Duchess, in which books function intangibly, as forms for conceiving of authorship in writing. At the same time as the form of the Book of the Duchess is itself intertextual, offering snippets from many French works, it also evokes, I will suggest, the fixed authority of a single-author manuscript. It acts, like Froissart's books, as an unchanging memorial to the past.

2.1 Manuscripts of Froissart: Paris, BNF f.fr. 830 and 831, and the Chroniques

Paris BNF f.fr. 830 and 831\(^{104}\) were executed during Froissart's lifetime (McGrady 187) and dated by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France to 1393 and 1394, respectively. BNF f.fr. 831 opens with a similar claim as BNF f.fr. 1584, a collection of Machaut's work (discussed in Chapter 1): that the contents were "fais, dittés et ordonnés" by Froissart "a le contemplation et plaisir de plusours haus et nobles signours et de plusours nobles et vaillans dames" (McGrady 187) [made, rhymed, and ordered by Froissart for the contemplation and enjoyment of many high and noble lords and of many noble and worthy ladies].\(^{105}\) The patrons who

\(^{103}\) See also Alexandra Gillespie, Chaucer's Books (forthcoming) for this aesthetic in the Canterbury Tales. Again, I am very grateful for advance access to Professor Gillespie's research.

\(^{104}\) See Fourrier, ed. L'espinette Amoureuse (7-12) for detailed manuscript descriptions.

\(^{105}\) Baudouin (Introduction, ix) and Fourrier (Introduction, L'espinette Amoureuse, 14) speculate that Froissart may have supervised their production, though neither provides evidence for this claim. Huot agrees, explaining: "given that these two manuscripts date from within Froissart's
commissioned these tomes are unknown.\textsuperscript{106} BNF f.fr. 831\textsuperscript{107} belonged, in the early fifteenth century, to Richard de Beauchamps, Count of Warwick (Fourrier, Introduction, \textit{L'espinette Amoureuse}, 8-9; Dembowski 3), and godson of Richard II (leading Dembowski [3] and Huot [241] to speculate that this could have been the very codex offered by Froissart to Richard II in 1395).\textsuperscript{108} BNF f.fr. 830, according to Dembowski, seems not to have left France, though little is known about its provenance, appearing only in the catalogue of the Bibliothèque royale de Paris in 1622 (5). Though their known provenance is fragmentary, both books were produced for nobility, and, Fourrier adds, in the same atelier: "le format, le grain du vélin, la disposition du texte et la décoration présentent un caractère identique" (10). Froissart's list of patrons is illustrious: Jean de Hainaut; Philippa de Hainaut; Wenceslas et Jeanne de Brabant; Robert de Namur; Jean de Châtillon; Enguerrand VII de Coucy; Guy II de Châtillon, comte de Blois; Gaston Fébus, comte de Foix; Aubert de Bavière; Guillaume d'Ostrevant (Arlima, "Froissart"). Not surprisingly, given his known patrons, these tomes are fabulously ornate. They contain most of the same works in more or less the same order,\textsuperscript{109} and according to Fourrier's analysis, they

lifetime and provide such detailed information about Froissart's background and his role as author, it is most likely that he was responsible for their production" (240).

\textsuperscript{106} For evidence of provenance (including analysis of initials on flyleaves) see Godfried Croenen, Kristen M. Figg, and Andrew Taylor, "Authorship, Patronage, and Literary Gifts."

\textsuperscript{107} Fourrier gives more information on this manuscript's provenance. In the sixteenth century, the manuscript was part of the royal library of the King of France. It is mentioned in 1544 in the \textit{Inventaire de la Librarie de Blois lors de son transfert à Fontainebleau}, and it appears henceforth in all catalogues of this library ("Introduction," 9-10).

\textsuperscript{108} Froissart describes the presentation of the illuminated codex to Richard II in the \textit{Chroniques} (XV).

\textsuperscript{109} Contents of BNF f.fr. 830: Table des matières (f. 1va)/ Jean Froissart, Le paradis d'amours (f. 2ra-15va)/ Le temple d'onour (f. 15va-23vb)/ Le joli mois de may (f. 23vb-27va)/ L'orloge amoureus (f. 27va-36vb)/ Le ditié de la flour de la margherite (f. 36vb-38vb)/ Le dit dou bleu chevalier (f. 38rb-42rb)/ Le debat dou cheval et dou levrier (f. 42rb-43ra)/ L'espinette amoureuse (f. 43ra-76ra)/ La prison amoureuse (f. 76ra-114va)/ Lais amoureus (f. 114va-139rb)/Pastourelles (f. 139rb-150rb)/ Chançons royaus amoureuses et serventoys de Nostre Dame (f. 150rb-153ra)/ Ballades (f. 153ra-160va)/ Virelais (f. 160va-163vb)/ Rondeaux (f. 163vb-170rb)/ Le joli buisson de jonece (f. 170rb-213ra)/ Le dit dou florin (f. 213ra-217ra)/ La plaidoirie de la rose et de la violette (f. 217ra-219va)
were copied from the same exemplar (7). Even at first glance the books are physically imposing, with the page of 830 (slightly larger than 831) measuring 270mm by 370mm. The execution of both codices is immaculate and the *ordinatio* is consistent: in both collections a hierarchy of richly decorated initials — coloured with red, pink, blue, and gold — marks larger breaks between works and smaller stanza divisions. The script is a *textualis formata quadrata*, with frequent biting of bows, forked ascenders and descenders, fine hairstrokes, and ample shading. Rubrication is applied liberally, yellow highlighting marks the first letter of every poetic line, and catchwords appear regularly. The ruling is neat and the two columns per page are consistently thirty-two lines long. The vellum of both books is light, supple, and evenly thin, gathered relatively consistently in quires of eight folios. The materials of the books are high quality and the careful and aesthetically pleasing execution indicates that these tomes of poetry were intended for display as well as reading.

BNF f.fr. 831 contains a miniature (1v) depicting a figure clad in blue robes with purple underpinning and a grey hat sitting on a large chair and reading to two noble ladies and a man. A small white dog stands at the feet of the reading figure. The portrait, I think, evokes an author figure, holding his book (typical of an author portrait). Many scholars interpret this figure as

| Contents of BNF f.fr. 831: Table des matières (f. 1va)/ Le paradis amoureus (f. 2ra-15va)/ Le temple d'Honneur (f. 15va-24ra)/ Le joli mois de may (f. 24ra-27va)/ Le dit de la margheritte (f. 27va-29ra)/ Lais amoureus et de Nostre Dame (f. 29rb-53vb)/ Pastourelles (f. 54ra-62ra)/ La prison amoureuse (f. 62rb-101rb)/ Chançons royaux amoureuses et serventois de Nostre Dame (f. 101rb-104ra)/ L'espinette amoureuse (f. 104ra-137ra)/ Ballades (f. 137ra-145ra)/ Virelais (f. 145ra-148rb)/ Rondeaux (f. 148rb-155ra)/ Le joli buisson de jonece (f. 155ra-197rb)/ La plaidoirie de la rose et de la violette (f. 197rb-200va). As Dembowski notices (9), and as Croenen *et al* later remark as well, BNF f.fr. 831 contains a poem not in 830, describing "how the legendary English King Brut [...] and his descendants ruled Albion" (Croenen *et al* 3). BNF f.fr. 831 omits four works included in 830: the *Orloge amoureus, Le dit dou bleu chevalier, Le debat du cheval et dou levrier, and Le dit dou florin* (3).

110 The dimensions of BNF f.fr. 831 are 265mm by 360 mm.

111 Croenen *et al.*, following evidence by Vanwijnsberghe (who identifies work by the same illuminator), show that this image was executed by a local craftsman in Valenciennes (17).

112 For uses of images in French manuscripts as a means of poetic self-authorization, see Dhira B. Mahoney, "Courtly Presentation and Authorial Self-Fashioning," 97-160. In the English
Froissart himself. Fourrier, in his analysis of the BNF Froissart manuscripts, writes, "on y voit, devant une tenture noire losangée d'or, un homme (Froissart ?) assis en une cathèdre à estrade" (7). De Looze writes that the "cleric presumably [represents] Froissart himself" (Introduction, Prison amoureuse, xxxiv). McGrady makes the case that the seated figure represents Froissart (187) and the nobleman in the audience is a prince (187), suggesting that the figures could represent "both the audience evoked in the opening rubric and the main characters of the Prison amoureuse, a work that is close to the epicentre of the codex (fols. 62-101)" (187).

In this work, the narrator, "Flos," exchanges letters with the princely figure, "Rose." This is the basis for McGrady's identification of the male audience member as a prince. Details of the image — the figure's shorter coat and similar hat — suggest that he is more likely Froissart's social equal than patron; however, it is possible that the figure could evoke, for attentive readers, the princely Rose from the Prison. Huot explicitly describes the image in BNF f.fr. 831 as an "author portrait" (Song to Book, 238). Dembowski states, "il est difficile de dire si l'homme au livre représente le poète lui-même ou le dieu d'Amour" (2); The "dieu d'amour" is the only other suggested interpretation of this image, and Dembowski does not elaborate on his reasons for proposing it. Given the iconographical context of the teaching scene, suggested by McGrady (187), "Froissart/an author figure" is the more likely reading. This image is interesting, then, because it depicts the poet above the audience members (one of whom could, perhaps, evoke the

context, the frontispiece of Troilus and Criseyde in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 61 speaks to the image in BNF f.fr. 831 and provides further context for reading the figure as the author. Lerer's description of this later image (second to third decade of the fifteenth century) shows similar power dynamics at play. He writes: "unlike his counterparts in the many presentation portraits that open medieval manuscripts, the poet is not kneeling before a king or patron but is elevated above his audience" (Chaucer and His Readers, 22), like the image in BNF f.fr. 831. Of course this image is later and different (for instance, the figure does not hold a book), but it may be a later iteration of a shifting conception of poetic authority. Lerer describes the image as a fifteenth-century imagination of fourteenth-century poetic authority, one which portrays Chaucer as "the English version of the classical auctor" (23).

Though I would nuance this reading — like the author portraits in Machaut's manuscripts, this image could evoke Froissart's pseudo-autobiographical narrator (for more on Froissart's pseudo-autobiography, see de Looze, Pseudo-Autobiography in the Fourteenth Century).

De Looze, for instance, describes the audience as "one man and two women" (xxxiv).
prince figure from the *Prison amoureuse*), symbolically (sitting on a throne-like seat, and holding the codex), and physically, positioned at the centre of the frame, and larger than the other figures—his billowing robes occupy almost as much of the image as the other figures combined. He is artificially higher in the frame than the audience members, who, though standing, appear below the elbows of the seated poet.

Huot's and Brown's accounts of the developing fourteenth century "authorial consciousness" (Brown 101) corroborate a reading of this predominant figure as the author. Huot interprets the visual supremacy of the author in the portrait as evidence for the growing importance of the "figure of the author" (as we see in codices of Guillaume de Machaut's work, for example) in the fourteenth century, emerging from the tradition of the chansonniers. In this context, there is a new focus on the "circumstances of poetic composition and even on the activities of writing and bookmaking" (Huot 64).

McGrady's reading of the configuration of the scene supports my interpretation of the power relations at play in this image. She compares this arrangement to "scholastic portraits of the *magister* teaching his students" (187). The dynamic representation of the figures in the audience suggests their involvement, as students heeding the teachings of their master. McGrady reads this image as a way of "securing [Froissart's] status as an authoritative figure" (187). By invoking both the relationship between poet and patron, and magister and student, the miniature suggests that poetic control resides with the figure who holds the codex and the work/knowledge within it.

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115 A privileging of poet over prince may reflect an ongoing debate about the respective importance of "the clerk and the chevalier," a debate which "goes back at least as far as the twelfth century" (Huot 63).

116 The image might evoke certain aspects of the conventional "dedication scene" that we see elsewhere in manuscripts of Froissart's works. Brown describes this type of miniature: "these illustrations depicted the circumstances of the commission or final offering of the work [... ] they typically portrayed the author, usually kneeling, before a seated dedicatee. Often intermediaries, such as the one who had commissioned the work or a patron saint, appeared alongside these main figures" (Brown 101). Zink describes just such a scene in the opening of many manuscripts of the *Chroniques*: "Froissart est représenté par ses illustrateurs en train d'offrir son livre — un de ses livres — à un mécène (19). The image in BNF f.fr. 831, I suggest, complicates the dynamics of authority in the dedication scene. While the poet figure offers his poetry to an audience, the delivery is oral, and he is sitting. Rather than handing the book over to a recipient, he retains control over the codex and by extension his work.

75
"Froissart" as poet and magister controls and imparts poetry/learning from the codex to his engaged and active audience.\textsuperscript{117}

Other volumes of Froissart's prose Chroniques exude an authority akin to that of BNF f.fr. 830 and 831. The Chroniques were commissioned by noble patrons, Robert de Namur (book 1, version 1), and Guy II de Châtillon, Count of Blois (redacted Book 1, and Books 2 through 4). These survive in lavish manuscripts such as British Library Harley 4379, Arundel 67, and Royal MS 14, DV.\textsuperscript{118} All are similarly large tomes, and all richly decorated. Harley 4379, the "Harley Froissart," (c.1470-2, BL catalogue) according to Humphreys (i), contains twenty-nine miniatures — the first of which, depicting in incredible detail Isabel of Bavaria's entry into Paris, covers the entire page (3r) in colour. Copied in Bruges, the Harley Froissart was acquired by Philippe de Comynnes, "statesman and chronicler" (British Library Catalogue).\textsuperscript{119} Arundel 67, a fifteenth-century collection consisting of three tomes, is the least ornate, though it too contains miniatures (most of which have been excised) and gilded initials. It was likely owned by Prince Arthur of Wales, since his ostrich feathers and motto "pour elle" occur frequently in the margins (BL Catalogue). Dated to the late 15th C (BL Catalogue), Royal 14 DV (one of a series of 5 volumes), is on par with Harley in terms of decor and is the weightiest volume of all (its page measures 300 mm by 420 mm, and the book itself is 110mm thick). It contains miniatures as well as a table of contents. Froissart's poetic oeuvre, then, appears to be executed as elaborately as some of his historical writing, and all of the books I have described above are reminiscent of the more authoritative volumes of Machaut's work.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{117} According to McGrady, although the poet is seated above the noble figures, the latter are important to the scene too: the male figure holds a scroll (or, I add, perhaps points with his index finger) in the direction of the poet, an action which symbolizes his "intimate involvement" in the composition of the text (187), the most rightward lady's mouth is parted to speak, and the little dog beneath the poet leaps up to "give the entire scene a sense of movement" (188).
\textsuperscript{118} The "Harley Froissart," BL MSS Harley 4379-4380, is on display in the "Treasures of the British Library exhibit."
\textsuperscript{119} According to the British Library Catalogue: He added "his arms, quartered with those of his Flemish mother, Marguerite d'Armuyden (ff. 3r, 12v, 20v, 29v, 32v, 36r, 60v, 83v, 99r, 109v, 135v, 142v, 146r, 160r) ... he probably acquired the manuscript before 1472, when he transferred his allegiance from Charles the Bold to the rival Louis XI of France."
\end{flushleft}
2.1 Ne Quier Voir: Another Ballade Exchange

While his poetry exists only in the two collections, Froissart's poetic texts offer access to the fourteenth-century French culture of intertextuality and citation, a reality which Froissart's codicological posterity masks. Froissart's two surviving single-author collections seem to represent codicological authorial control, given the inscription in BNF f.fr. 831, and the image of a poet seated above his audience.

By contrast, Froissart borrows from the work of his contemporaries and engages in intertextual exchange and competition, in which the text leaves its author's hands and is freely appropriated and re-written. Froissart participates in this kind of intertextual play alongside his contemporaries Machaut and Chaucer, as demonstrated by the ballade competition that originates in Machaut's *Voir Dit* and culminates in Chaucer's intercalated ballade, "Hyd, Absalon," in the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women* (F 249-69; G 203-223). These authors participate in a French culture of borrowing and citation which exists alongside — at odds with, in spite of, and even as complementary to — the oft-thwarted authorial desire for control over text and codex. Both trends, I suggest, are interdependent mechanisms by which a poet may craft an authorial persona.

This exchange begins in the *Voir Dit* with the ballades, "Ne quier veoir la biauté d'Absalon" and "Quant Theseüs, Herculès et Jason." Notably, Machaut attributes the second text to Thomas de Paien (the *incipit* reads "Balade et y a chant/ Thomas" [452, 6494], and Guillaume earlier refers to it as the "balade .T. paien" [440]). Thomas de Paien was, according to Leach's research, a court secretary and Canon at Reims, like Machaut ("Machaut's Peer, Thomas Paien," 91). Froissart in turn, is responding to these two ballades in his Ballade 6, "Ne quier vœoir Medee ne Jason" (Smith, "Five Notes," 29 and Wimsatt, "French Contemporaries," 181-2). Chaucer then responds to both Froissart and Machaut in his intercalated ballade in the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women*.

Below is the ballade that Machaut ascribes to Paien, "Quant Theseüs, Herculès et Jason," as well as the second which he claims as his own, "Ne quier vœoir la biauté d'Absalon":

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Balade et y a chant

Thomas
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Quant theseus, hercules et jason
Cerchierent tout et terre et mer parfonde
Pour acroistre leur pris et leur renon
Et pour voir bien tout l’estat dou monde,
Moult furent dignes d’onnour.

Mais quant ie voy de biaute l’umble flour,
ASsevis sui de tout si que par m’ame,
Je voy assez puis que ie voy ma dame.

Quar en veant sa biaute, sa façon,
Et son maintieng qui de douceur seuronde,
Je y pren assez bien pour devenir bon
Car le grant bien de li en moy redonde
Par la grace de fine amour
Qui me contraint a hair deshonour
Et tout vice. si puis dire par m’ame
Je voy assez, puis que ie voy ma dame.

Veoir ne quier la doree toison,
Ne les Yndres. ne de Rouge Mer onde,
Naus infernaus penre guerre ou tenson

Pour eslongier le regart de la blonde

Dont me vient ioie et baudour,

Et dous penser, mais tien pour le millour

Qu'a tout compter et bien peser a drame,

Je voy assez puis que ie voy ma dame, 120

[When Theseus, Hercules and Jason

Searched everything, both the world and the deep sea,

To increase their value and their renown

And to see well the whole state of the world,

They were very worthy of honour.

But when I see the humble flower of beauty

I am so quenched that, by my soul,

I see enough since I see my lady.

Because in seeing her beauty, her manner,

And her bearing, who is overflowing with gentleness,

120 Here and in other passages from the Voir Dit, I have inserted apostrophes to increase legibility.
I take there enough goodness to become good,
Since the great good from her overflows in me
By the grace of perfect love
Which constrains me to hate dishonour
And all vice. Thus I can say by my soul
I see enough since I see my lady.

I do not desire to see the golden fleece
Nor the Indies nor the water of the Red Sea
Nor to bring war or quarrel to the infernal ones
To distance myself from the gaze of the blonde lady
From whom comes my joy and happiness,
And sweet thoughts; but I consider it the best
That, counting everything and weighing precisely down to a drachme,
I see enough since I see my lady.]

Response G. de Machau

Ne quier veoir la biaute d'absalon
Ne de ulixes le scens et la faconde
Ne esprouver la force de sanson
Ne regarder que dalida le tonde

Ne cure n'ay par nul tour 5

Des ieus argus ne de joie grignour

Car pour plaisance et sanz aide dame

Je voi assez puis que ie voy ma dame.

De l'ymage que fist pymalion

Elle n'avoit pareille ne seconde 10

Mais la belle qui m'a en sa prison

Cent mille fois est plus bele et plus monde

   C'est uns drois fluns de doucour

Qui puet et scet garir toute dolour

Dont cils a tort qui de dire me blame 15

Je voi assez puis que ie voy ma dame.

Si ne me chaut dou scens de salemon

Ne que phebus en termine ou responde

Ne que venus s'en mesle, ne mennon

Que iupiter fist muer en aronde 20

   Car je di quant ie l'aour,
Aim et désir. sers et crie et honnour
Seur toute rien et que s'amour m'enflame
Je voi assès puis que ie voi ma dame.

[I do not wish to see the beauty of Absalom
Nor the intelligence and eloquence of Ulysses,
Nor do I wish to test the strength of Samson,
Nor watch while Delilah shears him,
Nor do I have care in any way
About the eyes of Argus, nor of greater joy,
Since for pleasure and without the help of a soul,
I see enough since I see my lady.

The image that Pygmalion made
It had no equal nor second;
But the beautiful one who has me in her prison
Is a hundred thousand times is more beautiful and pure:
She is a true river of gentleness
Who can and knows how to heal all pain
Therefore that one is wrong who blames me for saying
I see enough since I see my lady.

Thus I do not care for the wisdom of Salomon,

Nor that Phoebus determines it or responds,

Nor that Venus become involved, nor Memnon

Whom Jupiter had transformed into a swallow,

Since I say: when I adore her,

Love and desire [her], serve and cry out [her praise] and honour her

Above all else, when her love inflames me,

I see enough since I see my lady.]

(Livre dou Voir Dit, eds., Leech-Wilkinson and Palmer, 452, 454)\textsuperscript{121}

Machaut and Paien are participating in an exchange, and a contest — even if this is an imagined contest. It is possible that the attribution of the ballade to Paien is fictional and that the ballade is a straw man composed by Machaut enabling Toute Belle to rule in Guillaume's favour.\textsuperscript{122} However, fictional or not, it is a contest nonetheless. If this contest is a literary construct of the Voir Dit it is all the more apt since it would take up the theme of the contest itself, which is, as I will argue, not ladies and love but rather "literariness" for its own sake. Butterfield points to the "competitive puy-like challenge" in the way that the Voir Dit frames the ballade exchange. Remarks made by the characters in the Voir Dit reveal the implicit competition: Toute Belle, for instance, in letter 38 declares her preference for Guillaume's piece (Familiar Enemy 258); and

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{121} Translations of the Voir Dit are my own.

\textsuperscript{122} The Voir Dit's relationship to reality is muddy at best: the pseudo-autobiographical narrator "Guillaume," while evoking Machaut, cannot not be equated with the historical Machaut and Toute Belle's works may have been composed by a "historical" lady but they may have been just as plausibly composed by Machaut.
Guillaume's complaint that Paien "fist devant et prist toute la graisse dou pot a son pooir, et ie fis apres, si en iugerés s’il vous plaist, mais vraiemment il avoit l'avantage de trop" (L35, p.440) [composed first and took all of the grease from the pot that he could, and I composed afterwards: Thus you may judge as you please, but in truth he had an unfair advantage], using the term "avantage" highlights the competitive nature of the ballade exchange (Butterfield 259).

2.2 The Nature of the Competition: Curtailing Toute Belle

The contest purports to be about winning a lady's favour. Its true focus, however, is writing poetry, with the lady as an almost arbitrary subject or excuse for that writing. The love story of the entire Voir Dit, which provides the context for the ballade exchange, is also about the process of writing, and Toute Belle, even if she had been a real person and real participant, only exists in the Voir Dit as a literary creation. The contest is between the two men, the battleground is on parchment or paper, and the stakes do not involve romantic love but literary supremacy. It is notable that, in this context, the "graisse dou pot" could be a metaphor for writing as well as a metaphor for food: the "pot" evoking the inkpot, and the "graisse," the ink.

Leach further shows that Machaut (or Guillaume) uses his musical setting to bolster his poetic retort:

Guillaume places Thomas's poem in the top voice, a voice that is highest in pitch but fourth (that is, last) in importance in the contrapuntal hierarchy. So the voice carrying Guillaume's poetry might lie 'humbly' beneath that of Thomas's at important musical articulations (cadences involving all the voices together and marking the major sections of the balade's musical structure), but Thomas's is a triplum-type voice in terms of its contrapuntal function (that is, it is at the very bottom of the contrapuntal hierarchy), whereas Guillaume's is the true cantus: it carries the octave sonority at major cadence points and has a slightly larger overall range. All phrases end together, and much of the syllabic declamation is aligned so that, almost syllable for syllable, Guillaume's text effaces and sonically obscures that of his rival. (572)

As an ingredient of ink, or possibly even as burnt matter from the pot used to make ink. Medieval ink making, Bidot-Germa explains, is a process of concentration:

les diverses substances étaient séchées et très finement concassées, puis dispersées dans de l'eau pure, le tout macérant quelques heures avant l'adjonction finale d'une solution diluée de sel métallique [...] Les encres au carbone ou parfois à la suie, étaient composées de charbon de bois et d'autres substances naturelles additionnées: graisses animales, liants glucides [...] protéiniques [...] ou lipidiques. (193)
As Leach writes about the exchange, "this is a thinly veiled (and possibly parodic) example of the male-male striving ordinarily inherent in the poetics of courtly love: ostensibly about the lady whom the poems praise, the poems and their setting are actually an all-male competition, addressed back and forth between the two poets" (572). Cerquiglini-Toulet describes this phenomenon with regard to the later Court of Love, but her comments are equally applicable to this earlier exchange of love lyrics. She writes, "The game of love was played to the gallery rather than in the lady's chamber (the ladies are mute; their 'judgments' were not recorded). The game of love had become representation. Loving was less important than declaring that one loved" (The Color of Melancholy 48).

The Voir Dit curtails the influence of Toute Belle when Guillaume assigns to her the role of judge over his competition with Paien. He draws attention to this by delaying his presentation of the poem sequence to the reader. He tells Toute Belle in an initial letter that he is sending the ballade pair ("Je vous envoie la balade T. paien et la response que je li fais" [Letter 35]) [I am sending you the ballade of T. Paien and the response that I made to him], but it is only in a second follow-up letter (when she has deferred her judgment of the matter in her response to Letter 35),\(^{125}\) that he makes the poems available to the audience. In doing this, he leaves the reader in suspense, mimicking his own anticipation as he awaits the verdict, highlighting the nature of Toute Belle's role as a judge, a deliverer of the verdict. In this capacity, she is necessarily removed from the process of authorship. Even though she is supposedly co-author of the Voir Dit, here she is cut out from the means of poetic production, denied the opportunity to flex her literary muscle and potentially win the contest, which, as we have seen, is really about the writing process more than it is about any particular lady. Toute Belle is only important inasmuch as she judges the poetic competition between the men, and her role is dependent on Paien and Machaut's poetic contest.

While the position of judge would seem to be the most important position of all in the ballade competition (and faring better than the women Cerquiglini-Toulet describes, her judgment is

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\(^{125}\) She writes, "Jay bien veu ce que vous mavez escript de thommas. Et quant il plaira a dieu que ie vous voie ie vous diray tout ce quil en fu" (Letter 36) [I saw well what you wrote to me concerning Thomas. And when it pleases God that I see you, I will tell you everything that is necessary about it].
"recorded" [48]) Toute Belle's influence is limited by the conventions of her literary love affair with Guillaume, and she cannot but judge in his favour. She deems his ballade superior, though in a relatively cursory way (especially considering the effusive praise with which she normally receives his new works). Her remarks are limited to three sentences within a long letter: "Les ii balades que vous m'avez envoies sont si bonnes que on n'i saroit trouver que redire. Mais ce n'est pas comparison car ce que vous faites me plaist trop mieux a mon gre que li autres font. Et aussi suis ie certeinne que einsi fait il aus autres" (Letter 38)\textsuperscript{126} [The two ballades that you sent me are so good that one would not be able to find anything to criticize.\textsuperscript{127} But there is no comparison since the one that you made pleases me much more to my liking than those the others make. And also I am certain that thus it will please the others].

Two parts of this statement undermine her power as judge and show that she is judge in name only. First, she compares Guillaume's work to that of the plural "others" ["que li autres font"] rather than to Paien's specifically. She is not actually judging the particular ballade exchange at hand. Instead she is reaffirming her conventional position: she has no choice, as his lover and poetic protégé, but to prize his work above all others. Second, she gestures to the opinion of others, displacing the onus of judgment from herself to a larger community of readers ("Et aussi suis ie certeinne que einsi fait il aus autres"). She draws attention to the reception and dissemination of the debate, with which we know both "Guillaume" and Machaut are concerned.

Of course Toute Belle's acknowledgment of her relative unimportance in the debate is the artifice of Machaut himself. This portrayal of Toute Belle is a poetic construction. In making her undermine her own role as judge Machaut slyly draws attention to the real literary purpose of the exchange, which is not to praise a lady but to establish poetic superiority over a literary rival.

\textsuperscript{126} I have added apostrophes.

\textsuperscript{127} The DMF gives "dire à nouveau, répeter qqc., ou dire qqc. par ailleurs" as well as "dire (ce qu'on trouve à reprendre), critiquer" as meanings of "redire" (DMF, "redire"). The DMF quotes this line from the \textit{Voir Dit} as an example of the second meaning. However — to entertain briefly the first meaning given by the DMF — "dire à nouveau" would yield the reading, "so good that nobody could find anything to retell." This could be interpreted as an implied challenge to other poets to add their own versions of this ballade to the competitive exchange.
2.3 Froissart Decontextualizes: Experimental Intertextuality

Jean Froissart presents himself as such a rival, adding "Ne quier veoir Medee ne Jason" to the ballade competition:

Ne quier veoir Medee ne Jason,

Ne trop avant lire ens ou mapemonde,

Ne le musique Orpheüs ne le son,

Ne Hercules, qui cerqua tout le monde,

Ne Luressse, qui tant fu bonne et monde,

Ne Penelope ossi, car, par Saint Jame,

Je voi assés, puisque je voi ma dame.

Ne quier veoir Vregile ne Platon,

Ne par que art eurent si grant faconde,

Ne Leander, qui tout sans naviron

Nooit en mer, qui rade est et parfonde,

Tout pour l'amour de sa dame la blonde,

Ne nul rubis, saphir, perle ne jame:

Je voi assés, puisque je voi ma dame.

Ne quier veoir le cheval Pegason,
Qui plus tost ceurt en l'air ne vole aronde,

Ne l'ymage que fist Pymalion,

Qui n'eut parel premiere ne seconde,

Ne Oleüs, qui en mer boute l'onde;

S'on voelt savoir pour quoi? Pour ce, par m'ame: 20

Je voi assês, puisque je voi ma dame.

[I do not wish to see Medea or Jason]

Nor to read further in the map of the world,

Nor [do I wish to see] the music of Orpheus, nor the sound,

Nor Hercules, who searched the whole world,

Nor Lucretia, who was so good and pure,

Nor Penelope either, since, by Saint James,

I see enough since I see my lady.

Nor do I wish to see Virgil or Plato,

Nor [see] by which art they had such great eloquence,

Nor Leander, who completely without ship

Swam in the sea, which is swift and deep,

All for the love of his lady, the fair one,
Nor any ruby, sapphire, pearl, or gem:
I see enough since I see my lady.

Nor do I wish to see Pegasus, the horse,
Who runs in the air more quickly than the swallow flies,
Nor the image which Pygmalion made,
Which has no equal first or second
Nor Eolus, who in the sea creates waves,
If one wants to know why, it is that, by my soul,
I see enough since I see my lady. ]

(Transcribed from Wimsatt's *Chaucer and his French Contemporaries*, 183. Translations are my own.)

This ballade is reminiscent of the structure of Machaut's ballade — recalling his anaphora and successive negative clauses — and opens with the "first rhyme word in Thomas's" ballade (Leach, "Paien," 108). Leach argues that "Froissart is almost certainly responding to both poems at once" (108). She further proposes that Froissart may have participated in the opening poetic blows of the contest, rather than contributing later. Machaut and Froissart, she speculates, may both have been in Calais with John, Duke of Berry, in October of 1360, when he departed for England as a hostage (108). She adds,

Although the evidence dates only from 1362-3, it is entirely possible that Thomas Paien might well already have been in John's service in 1360 and, if so, as secretary would have

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128 Froissart gives "ne quier" (1), "ne quier" (8),"ne quier" (15) for Machaut's "ne quier" (1), "ne cure" (5), "ne me chaut" (17).
been in his immediate entourage. If the situation in the Fonteinne is factual as well as verisimilar, it would indicate that Machaut, too, accompanied John to Calais. (108)

Given the shifting relationship between Machaut's poetry and reality, we cannot read the account of the Duke of Berry's departure in the Fonteinne as historical fact. Leach's argument may not be provable, but it is helpful nevertheless. It reveals the extent of Froissart's critical engagement in the exchange: his ballade is so direct a response to the Voir Dit pair that scholars look for evidence of his presence at the time of the initial composition. Froissart recognizes that the competition is about the writing process and not about the lady, and his poetic contribution exposes this. Froissart strips the exchange of the pretense that the poems are about ladies. He draws to the foreground what was underlying in the Machaut-Paien exchange: the heterosexual desire in these poems is merely a guise and that the real impetus of the composition of lyric is poet-centered competition and self-promotion. Froissart, I suggest, shows how the love lyric is really about the poet and writing for the sake of writing by exposing the conventionality of love-lyric tropes.

He takes the examples of his models to the extreme, highlighting the absurdity of love lyric conventions. For instance, when Machaut begins seven lines with "ne"; Froissart offers thirteen lines that open this way. He parodies the tendency of the Machaut-Paien ballades to list classical mythological characters. Froissart establishes the formula, 'name plus qui clause,' which he repeats seven times, underlining the repetitive, enumerative, and formulaic nature of these allusions: "Ne Hercules, qui cerqua toute le monde./ Ne Lucrese, qui tant fu bonne et monde" (4-5), "Ne Leander, qui tout sans naviron/ Nooit en mer, qui rade est et parfonde" (10-11), "le cheval Pegason,/ Qui plus tost ceurt en l'air ne vole aronde" (15-16), "Ne l'ymage que fist Pymalion,/ Qui n'eut parel premiere ne seconde" (17-18), "Ne Oleüs, qui en mer boute l'onde" (19). Froissart exerts no effort to establish context or meaning — I argue that this is a move in a game, an exploration or exposition of the artificiality of love in lyric, and an attempt to undermine the contributions of his competitors in this exchange, Machaut and Paien.
2.4 Chaucer Recontextualizes: "Hyd, Absalon," the *Legend of Good Women*, and the Female Poetic Subject

Chaucer's addition to the competition exists inset within the two versions of the *Prologue to the Legend of Good Women: Prologue F* and *Prologue G*. The *LGW* survives in twelve manuscripts, though only one of these — Cambridge University Library Gg 4.27 — preserves the *G Prologue* (the *F* version survives in eight manuscripts and all early printed sources [Lynch 11]). Though the chronological order of the two *Prologues* is still debated, scholars generally agree that the *F Prologue* refers to Queen Anne, and was written after her arrival in England in 1382 and before her death in 1394, and that the *G Prologue* represents a later revised version, as Lowes argues, dating to 1394 (Shaner and Edwards, 1178). Each version of the *Prologue*, I will show, contextualizes the ballade differently, and each critiques the ballades of the previous contributors. The ballades from both versions follow:

\[ F \]

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;

Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al adown;

Hyd, Jonathas, al thy frendly manere;

\[ \]

129 Lynch explains that in the nineteenth century, the *F-*version was thought to be the revision of the *G* version (11) — see John Calvin French, for example, *The Problem of the Two Prologues to Chaucer's Legend of Good Women* (1905), who argues that *G* predates *F*. The consensus shifts following Lowes's research, and more recent scholars tend to accept the current order. Gardner, for example, accepts this dating and catalogues Chaucer's revisions in *G* (599). He suggests that the *G Prologue* "present[s] a new, more serious view of Love" (610). Lynch, however, emphasizes that the "question of priority has never finally been resolved" (11). Delany, in *The Naked Text*, challenges the accepted order and adopts an "agnostic position" (35). Seymour suggests that the *G* text is not even the work of Chaucer but rather that of a fifteenth-century reviser (533).

130 "And whan this book ys maad, yive it the quene,/ On my byhalf, at Eltham or at Sheene" (496-7).

131 Lowes, "The Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* as related to the French *Marguerite Poems* and the *Filostrato*," 593-683.
Penelope and Marcia Catoun,
Make of youre wifhod no comparsoun;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Thy faire body, lat yt nat appere,
Lavynye; and thou, Lucrese of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boghten love so dere,
And Cleopatre, with al thy passyoun,
Hyde ye your trouthe of love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe, that hast for love swich peyne:
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Herro, Dido, Laudomia, alle yfere,
And Phillis, hangyng for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espied by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun,
Maketh of your trouthe neyther boost ne soun;
Nor Ypermystre or Adriane, ye tweyne:
My lady cometh, that al this may dysteyene. (F 249-269)
Hyd, Absalon, thy gilte tresses clere;
Ester, ley thow thy meknesse al adoun;
Hyd, Jonatha, al thyn frendly manere;
Penelope and Marcia Catoun,
Mak of youre wyfhod no comparisoun;
Hyde ye youre beautes, Ysoude and Eleyne:
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Thy fayre body, lat it nat apeere,
Laveyne; and thow, Lucrese of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boughte love so dere,
Ek Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hide ye youre trouth in love and youre renoun;
And thow, Tysbe, that hast for love swich peyne:
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Herro, Dido, Laodomya, alle in-fere,
Ek Phillis, hangynge for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espied by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betrayed by thy Jasoun,

Mak of youre trouthe in love no bost ne soun;

Nor Ypermystre of Adriane, ne pleyne:

Alceste is here, that al that may disteyne. (G 203-223)

Chaucer evidently had access to Machaut's and Froissart's pieces (and possibly Paien's as well, though there are no obvious parallels between Paien's ballade and the one Chaucer presents us in the Prologue to the Legend). Chaucer takes from Froissart the rime-royal stanza, a structural and rhetorical anchor that "echoes throughout the poem" (for Chaucer, "hyd," for Froissart "Ne"), and a "freedom with classical names" (Butterfield 260). From Machaut, Chaucer obviously borrows "the opening reference to Absalom as the paragon of beauty" (Wimsatt, Natural Music, 184). Wimsatt further explains, "there is a manifest similarity between Chaucer's refrain and that of the French ballades; a simple assertion of the lady's presence [...] is followed by the implication in a brief subordinate clause that she surpasses all that has before seemed worthy" (184). Of course Chaucer is not only alluding to the French ballade contest. His inset ballade, and the Legend of Good Women more broadly, borrows from Ovid, as do the ballades of Paien, Machaut, and Froissart. Other sources for his Prologue to the Legend of Good Women include Deschamps's Lai de Franchise (for the praise of the daisy), Machaut's Behaingne (for the idea of breaking the laws of love), and the tradition of the court of love (Shaner and Edwards 1069).

The borrowings from the French ballades show that Chaucer is actively engaging in the contest, reacting to a group of texts which, as Butterfield observes, "shows such strong internal links that one feels fairly confident as a reader of moments of reaction back and forth between them" (260). However, I am interested in the moments where Chaucer deviates from the ballade group. These moments, I argue, show him vying to "win" — to provide the "best" ballade in the group, to "quit" Paien, Machaut, and Froissart — as he undertakes the slyest poetic maneuver of all.

I suggest that Chaucer recontextualizes the poetic contest in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women. While Machaut showed through narrative context — that is, Toute Belle's reaction to

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132 For Chaucer's use of the Heroides see Shannon, Chaucer and the Roman Poets, 176-301.
the ballade exchange — that the texts were about authorship and poetic competition and not at all about ladies, and while Froissart decontextualized the exchange to make manifest the relative unimportance of the female love object, Chaucer, I will show, completely overturns the context of the debate, making the male-centered competition into a poem that is entirely focused upon women. Not only does he implant the ballade within the context of the *Legend of Good Women*, but he substitutes the names of the male heroes, who receive the majority of poetic attention in the French ballades (Jason, Orpheus, Hercules, Virgil, Plato, Pygmalion, Ulysses, Argus, Solomon, Phoebus, Jupiter, Theseus *etc.*) with those of illustrious women (Esther, Penelope, Marcia, Iseult, Helen of Troy, Lavinia, Lucretia, Polyxena, Cleopatra, Thisbe, Hero, Dido, Laodamia, Phyllis, Canacee, Ysiphile, Hypermnestra, and Ariadne). Apart from Absalom — the citation of whom fulfills the specific purpose of explicitly linking Chaucer's ballade to the Machaut-generated contest — and Jonathas — whose appearance is more mysterious, not appearing in any of the French sources — men are only named in the ballade as antagonists: "Phillis, hangyng for thy Demophoun" (264), and "Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun" (266) (here, Jason, who was idealized by Paen and Froissart, is cast as a villain). Chaucer repositions the lady, or more accurately ladies, at the centre of the inset piece. In doing so, he invests, or he portrays himself as the poet to invest, the ballade with meaning — apparently the praise of women — while in the other ballades this praise reads like a series of empty tropes.

Not only does Chaucer rewrite the ballade at the centre of the French debate, he offers two frames for it, *Prologue F* and *Prologue G*, the second of which carries out even more systematically the recontextualization. When the ballade first appears inset in *F*, the Chaucerian narrator claims authorship of the ballade, "Hyd Absalon": "And therfore may I seyn, as thynketh me./ This song in preysyng of this lady fre" (247-8). In *G*, the ballad becomes more female-focused as the narrator attributes its composition to the ladies who follow the God of Love, who are described as "trewe of love [...] echon" (193). These women are so moved by the daisy that they spontaneously erupt into song and dance:

...That ryght anon as that they gonne espye

This flour, which that I clepe the dayesye,

Ful sodeynly they stynten alle atones,
And knelede adoun, as it were for the nones.

And after that they wenten in compas,

Daunsyne aboute this flour an esy pas,

And songen, as it were in carole-wyse,

This balade, which that I shal yow devyse. (195-202)

In this case the Chaucerian narrator is only responsible for the "devising" of the poem. "Devisen" can have a range of meanings: the narrator, therefore observes, reflects upon, performs, composes (a letter, poem etc.), portrays, tells, relates, describes, distinguishes, or bestows the poem (MED). All of these readings imply a secondary action — a transmission of something already created. The result is that we are presented with a poem about ladies allegedly composed by ladies.

There is a telling variation between the iteration of the ballade in the F Prologue and that of the G Prologue. Chaucer changes the refrain "My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne" (F 255, 262, 269) (which is very near the French, "Je voi assés, puisque je voi ma dame"), to the more specific, "Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne" (G 209, 216, 223). This change is in keeping with remarks made later in the respective Prologues by the God of Love. In Prologue F, where the ballade is the composition of the Chaucerian narrator, the God of Love chastises the poet figure:

..."A ful gret necligence

Was yt to the, that ylke tyme thou made

'Hyd, Absolon, thy tresses,’ in balade,

That thou forgate hire [Alceste] in thi song to sette..." (537-540)

The poem recited by the ladies in G does not receive censure. Instead, here, turning his attention to other Chaucerian works, the God of Love says:

"A ful gret neglygence
Was it to the, to write unstedefastnesse

Of women, ...

Why noldest thow han writen of Alceste,

And laten Criseide ben aslepe and reste?

For of Alceste shulde thy wrytynge be...

(525-532)

Where the Chaucerian narrator's composition fails by omitting Alceste, the ladies' work is successful, reaffirming Alceste's superiority three times by making her the subject of the refrain. The ladies do not incur the God of Love's ire and instead the God of Love asks the narrator why he wrote about Criseide and not Alceste (as the ladies' song did), expressly comparing Chaucer's *Troilus* negatively to the ladies' "Hyd Absalon." The implication of this comparison, therefore, is that the ladies are superior composers of love lyric. However, I would suggest that this judgment has to be considered in relation to the previous French ballade exchange, which necessarily forms the context for "Hyd, Absalon." Within this context, the re-instatement of the importance of ladies within the ballade — making ladies not only subjects, but also the authors — is a strategic maneuver.

This maneuvering shows, I suggest, that Chaucer is just as concerned with his own poesy as Machaut and Froissart and he undertakes his recontextualizations for the purpose of one-upping his rivals. Of course, Chaucer also reacts to, adapts, and, as Copeland suggests, "appropriates" his classical *materia* — applying "exegetical techniques to his own *Legend* he claims the status of *auctor*, thus constituting his translations as *auctoritas*" (Copeland 186). I will suggest he evinces a similar impulse towards the French lyric tradition in my chapter on Graunson. However, he postures differently towards his French ballade sources in the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women*: he does not appropriate the French texts, "substitute" his work "for its source," or "efface the presence of that source" (as Copeland suggests he does in relation to Latin *auctores* [202]). Instead, posing as a contender in an ongoing intertextual contest — an active participant rather than a translator — Chaucer offers a ballade to be compared to his sources: the Paien, Machaut, and Froissart ballades.
There is evidence in the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women* of Chaucer's interest in his own "poesy." The *Legend of Good Women* claims to restore in literature the reputation of women whom, according to the God of Love, the narrator has besmirched in his earlier work. What this mandate really does is allow Chaucer to publicize his oeuvre and to create new work. The God of Love's weighing of his work, designating the works that defame women, provides an opportunity to offer a catalogue of his writing. The God of Love decries the *Romance of the Rose* and *Troilus and Criseyde*: "Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose,/ That is an heresy ayeins my lawe" (*F* 329-330; *G* 255-6); "And of Creseyde thou hast seyd as the lyste,/ That maketh en to wommen lasse triste" (*F* 332-3); "Hast thow nat mad in Englysh ek the bok/ How that Crisseyde Troylus forsok,/ In shewynge how that wemen han don mis?" (*G* 265-7).

Cataloguing or providing "data from an author's *curriculum vitae*" is a strategy with which, as Kerby-Fulton describes, an author can create a "bibliographic ego" (79). She defines the "bibliographic ego" as "any manifestation of authorial self-consciousness" (79), and as a "kind of authorial intrusion into the text itself" designed to "establish, protect or market the author" (79). Kerby-Fulton's work sheds light on Chaucer's self-promotional agenda here. Even as they are being "maligned," Chaucer places his writings next to works of literary auctoritas:

> What seith Valerye, Titus, or Claudyan?

> What seith Jerome agayns Jovynyan?

> How clene maydenes and how trewe wyves,

> How stedefaste widewes durynge all here lyves,

> Telleth Jerome, and that nat of a fewe,

> But, I dar seyn, an hundred on a rewe... (*F* 280-5)

> What seyth also the epistel of Ovyde

> Of trewe wyves and of here labour?
What Vincent in his Estoryal Myrour?

Ek al the world of autours maystow here,

Cristene and hethene, trete of swich matere;

It nedeth nat al day thus for to endite.

But yit, I seye, what eyleth the to wryte

The draf of storyes, and forgete the corn? (G 305-312)

By comparing these "good" works to his own, Chaucer suggests that he keeps company with the literary greats. The God of Love's accusations imply that he ought to have written something to achieve this status, because he is was capable of it.

Alceste, speaking in the narrator's defense — "The man hath served yow of his konynge./ And forthered [wel] youre lawe with his makynge./ Whil he was yong he kepte youre estat" (G 398-400; F 412-13 [does not contain final line]) — contributes to the catalogue of Chaucerian works:

He made the book that hight the Hous of Fame,

And eke the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse,

And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,

And al the love of Palamon and Arcite

Of Thebes, thogh the storye ys knownen lyte;

And many an ympne for your halydayes,

That highten balades, roundels, virelayes;

And, for to speke of other holynesse,

He hath in prose translated Boece,

And maad the lyf also of Seynt Cecile.
He made also, goon ys a gret while,

Origines upon the Maudeleyne. (F 417-428; G 404-418)

The female subjects of the *Legend of Good Women* similarly reveal that Chaucer is more interested in subtle poetic play and subversion of expectation than he is in actually bringing the figure of the lady back into love lyrics. As many other scholars have noted,¹³³ not all the deeds of these women are "good," and Chaucer plays with, hints at, and glosses over the less praiseworthy aspects of their tales.¹³⁴ For example, we can think of the story of Philomela and Procne, who, as revenge for Tereus's mutilation and rape of Philomela, "serve Tereus the flesh of his and Procne's son, Itys" as a "grisly meal" (*Riverside Chaucer* 1073). This, Chaucer omits (and puns on), saying simply "The remenaunt" — evoking both the remaining part of a story, or the remaining portion of a meal" (MED) — "is no charge for to telle./ For his is al the som: thus was she served..." (2383-4). Likewise, while he places women at the centre of the inset ballade, listing, as we have seen, female names rather than male ones, his ballade silences these ladies just as much as Guillaume's competition silences Toute Belle. Chaucer's ballade explicitly commands, "Maketh of your trouthe neythir bost ne soun" (F 267), and it instructs its female subjects to "hyd" (four times: 249, 251, 254, 259) and to "nat appere" (256).

Chaucer plays the poetic game, and "Hyd, Absalon" and the ensuing *Legend of Good Women* respond to Toute Belle's self-acknowledged absence from the ballade and to Froissart's decontextualization of the ballade. Chaucer responds to his rivals by doubly recontextualizing the ballade, once more placing females at the centre of the text, though ironically and playfully, and ultimately, for his own poetic ends: the participation in — and ideally the winning of — the contest.

¹³³ For the interpretation that these legends are satirical and antifeminist, see: Garrett, "Cleopatra the Martyr," 64-74; Goddard, *Chaucer's Legend of Good Women*, 87-129; Taylor, "The Medieval Cleopatra," 249-69; Baum, "Chaucer's 'Glorious Legende',' 377-81. McCall, *Chaucer Among the Gods*, argues that these tales satirize not bad women but rather bad men (see 112-117).

¹³⁴ Though, of course, as Cowen notes, "the poem is neither pure pathos nor pure satire" (435).
2.5 Froissart and the Structure of the *Book of the Duchess*

The *Book of the Duchess* contains the same kind of intertextuality — and the poetic ambitions that lie behind it — as the ballade exchange between Païen, Machaut, and Froissart.\(^{135}\) Chaucer translates poetic intertextuality — enabled by a shared cross-Channel intellectual milieu — into the structure of his "book." In the *Duchess*, Chaucer mediates the interaction between his diverse poetic sources in a way that suggests both their collaboration and competition.\(^{136}\) By imagining these intertextual dynamics, I suggest, Chaucer crafts his authorial identity in the same way that Froissart's single-author codices depict him as an important author. Chaucer does in the *Book of the Duchess* with the arrangement of his sources and, I will suggest below, perhaps even bookish forms, what he does poetically in the *Legend of Good Women* — he plays with poetry, competes with his French contemporaries, and establishes his poetic reputation.

*The Book of the Duchess* samples, for example, the *Romance of the Rose*, Machaut's *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne, Jugement dou Roy de Navarre, Dit dou Lyon, Remede Fortune, Fonteinne Amoureuse*, the *Lay de Confort*, first complainte, and third, eighth and ninth motets, Froissart's *Paradis d'Amour*, and Benoît de St Maure's *Roman de Troie*, among others. It opens with an adaptation of Froissart's *Paradis d'Amour*. The beginning of the *Paradis d'Amour* follows:

> Je sui de moi en grant merveille

> Comment je vifs quant tant je veille,

> Et on ne poroit en veillant

> Trouver de moi plus traveillant,

\(^{135}\) Of course the latter predates the former, but it exemplifies a tradition of competition that characterizes poetic citation and exchange (for instance, the ballade exchange between Philippe de Vitry and Jean de la Mote discussed in Chapter 4).

\(^{136}\) Thanks to the work of Kittredge we know the extent of his borrowings. See, for example, Kittredge's catalogue of French sources in "Guillaume de Machaut and the *Book of the Duchess,*" 1-24, and "Chauceriana," 465-483.
Car bien saciés que par veillier
Me viennent souvent travillier
Pensées et merancolies
Qui me sont ens au coer liies
Et pas ne les puis deslyer,
Car ne voeil la belle oublyer
Pour quelle amour en ce traveil
Je sui entrés et tant je veil. (1-12)

[I am marveling about myself
How I am alive when I am awake so much
And one could not, in waking,
Find one more troubled than me,
For know well that in waking
Thoughts and melancholies
Often come to trouble me
Which are bound into my heart
And I cannot detach them,
Since I do not want to forget the beautiful one
For whose love, in this trouble
I have entered, and so much I stay awake."

Chaucer's first lines are directly translated from the *Paradis*: "I have gret wonder, be this lyght,/ How that I lyve, for day ne nyght/ I may nat slepe wel nygh noght" (1-3). Immediately, this borrowing suggests that this work will translate French poetry. However, his dealing with the *Paradis* after these opening lines becomes more complex, and Chaucer departs from his source in significant ways. For example, it only takes Froissart's narrator ten lines to get to root of the cause of his insomnia: "Car ne voeil la belle oublyer/ Pour quelle amour en ce traveil/ Je sui entrés et tant je veil" (10-12) [Since I do not wish to forget the beautiful one for whose love I have entered into this travail and for whom I stay awake so much]. Chaucer's narrator, on the other hand, remains tight-lipped about the reason for his sleeplessness, saying:

> But men myght axe me why soo
> I may not slepe and what me is.
> But natheles, who aske this
> Leseth his asking trewely.
> Myselfen can not telle why
> The sothe... (30-35).

He may withhold the details of the cause of his condition, but he is much more effusive about its gravity — he waxes on for forty lines while Froissart's narrator describes his state in twelve lines — professing not only the same "melancolye" (23) as Froissart's narrator ("merancolies" [7]) but also the "drede" he has "for to dye" (24). Froissart's narrator, however, is more emphatic in his twelve lines than the Chaucerian narrator in his forty, and he uses the rhyme scheme to his advantage to underline his insomnia. "Veille" appears on its own or as a sound within a rhyme-word eight times in the opening twelve lines: "merveille, veille, veillant, traiveillant, veiller, travillier, traiveil, veil." Finally, Froissart's narrator, without external guidance, knows to appeal to Juno, Morpheus, and Oleus for sleep— "Car tant priai à Morpheüs,/ A Juno et à Oleüs,/ Qu'il m'envoyèrent les messages/ De dormir" (15-18) [Since I prayed so much to Morpheus, Juno and
Eolus, that they might send me the messengers of sleep)—and it is for the narrator that Juno dispatches her messenger, Iris, and the narrator whom Morpheus's son, Enclimpostair, visits:

...la deesse noble et chiere

Tramist Iris sa messagiere

Pour moi au noble dieu dormant,

Et le doule dieu fist son commant,

Car il envoia parmi l'air

L'un de ses fils, Enclimpostair. (23-28)

[The noble and dear goddess

Sent her messenger Iris

For me to the noble sleeping god,

And the gentle god did her command

Since he sent through the air

One of his sons, Enclimpostair.]

Chaucer's narrator needs to draw his lesson from books. In the *Book of the Duchess*, the visit of Juno's messenger to the God of sleep occurs embedded within another narrative, Chaucer's retelling of the Ovidian Ceyx and Alcyone story, modeled on Machaut's *Fonteinne Amoureuse*.

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137 The name "Enclimpostair" is Froissart's invention (see Wimsatt, *Natural Music*, 75). I discuss "Enclimpostair" further in Chapter 4 in the context of Jean de Le Mote's neologisms and invention of pseudo-classical characters.
Having looked particularly at Chaucer's adaptation of Froissart's *Paradis d'Amour* in the opening of the *Duchess*, I will now turn to the overall structure of Chaucer's French borrowings. I would suggest that we might describe Chaucer's activities in terms of both copying distinct items and remembering and reinventing sources.\(^{138}\)

Chaucer, at times, does seem to be translating directly from items he has on hand. As I have shown, he follows closely the opening lines of the *Paradis d'Amour*. Sometimes, though, even when following sources closely, Chaucer arranges his translations in a way that no longer presents his sources as separate and distinct. For instance, his prayer to Juno and Morpheus and the promise of the feather bed melds the *Paradis d'Amour* and the *Fonteinne Amoureuse* (Windeatt x). Chaucer introduces his own material and takes creative liberties with the French, drawing out the lament about his sleeplessness, taken from Froissart, for an additional twenty-eight lines, or abbreviating the Ovidian and Machauldian Ceyx and Alcyone story, excising their transformation into birds. At times Chaucer alludes to French sources more vaguely, like the springtime setting of the dream, which evokes the *Romance of the Rose* and the tradition of French dream visions.

The structure of the *Book of the Duchess* as a whole is like a patchwork of sources, as scholars have remarked. I might suggest further that this patchwork structure evokes a dreamlike encounter with a book — perhaps of the kind the narrator holds in his hands as he sleeps — and with that book's diverse contents. This structure may call to mind the way one might read a book of many fables and "many other thinges smale" (59) by "clerkes" (53) and "poetes" (54), flipping back and forth between miscellaneous contents. It may even evoke the way a reader remembers miscellaneous reading, which the narrator himself suggests when he says that his collection of "fables" is meant "to rede and for to be in minde" (55). As Carruthers shows, the activation of the memory is intrinsic to medieval reading.\(^{139}\) Chaucer, however, is not "remembering" texts for the

\(^{138}\) I am very grateful to Professor Ardis Butterfield for suggesting this reading.

\(^{139}\) Medieval reading is "highly active," Carruthers theorizes, and engages a "hermeneutical dialogue" between "the mind of the reader and the absent voices which the written letters call forth... If such an activity does not occur, reading has not truly taken place for the memory has not been engaged (Book of Memory, 230-1). The book itself supports this process of memory, Carruthers argues, both resulting from and furnishing memoria (240).
same ends as twelfth-century scholastics and theologians. He uses memory here in play, as a mode of writing or as a literary aesthetic: he remembers literature as a way of crafting his own. The patchwork of translation playfully recalls bits and pieces of texts as they would "be in minde" — in Chaucer's mind, if we think about the Duchess as a "memorative composition" (Carruthers 240), created from "rumination, cogitation, dictation, a listening and a dialogue, a gathering (collectio) of voices from [...] several places in memory (243), and in the narrator's mind as he slips into his dream state.

Chaucer translates some texts at length and cuts in and out of others; he follows some sources closely and alludes to others; he blends images from different texts. For example, the horn of the hunt in the narrator's dream (354-6) might at once be an image Chaucer remembers from his own reading, recalling the instrumental post plague celebrations of Machaut's Jugement dou roy de Navarre, and an image the narrator remembers from his reading, recalling, as Spearing suggests (Medieval Dream Poetry, 58-9), the horn which Juno's messenger blows in Morpheus's ear.

In this reading, Chaucer shows an engagement with French manuscripts — thinking about the ways he encounters them and remembers their contents. These interests, nascent in Chaucer's poetry, would blossom in the period between 1400-1450 into the compilation of such miscellanies in England (Boffey 9). These English miscellanies, not unlike Chaucer's own "compilation," are nevertheless still deeply French: "they were very often made up of poems either in French, or with obvious French connections" (9). As Boffey's survey of manuscripts shows, "only one surviving collection concentrates entirely on [love lyrics in English]," that is, BL MS Harley 682 (9). Even Harley 682, however, is, in crucial ways, fundamentally French, likely compiled for Charles d'Orléans during his imprisonment (10).140

140 The ballades in this collection "were organized in narrative sequence, forming a cycle of the kind particularly favoured by French poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries" (9). Boffey offers another example of a "French" English collection: this is a booklet in Bodl. MS Fairfax 16 which, as she points out, containing the complaint "O thou fortune which hast the governaunce" found also in the "autograph manuscript of Charles d'Orléans, BNF f.fr. 25458" (10), has a "French connection of some unidentifiable kind, and a link with the circles in which poems known to Charles d'Orléans circulated" (10).
2.6 Chaucer's Mediation and the Authorial Persona

When Chaucer copies directly from a source or remembers his miscellaneous readings — or manipulates texts to make it seem like he is remembering reading — he performs an act of mediation. The way the French texts interact is subject to his mediation, as is the audience's experience of these French texts. One way Chaucer mediates is by interweaving narratives, implicitly putting his sources into competition (competition which comes to the fore especially when we think about these intertextual dynamics in light of the the intertextual "Hyd Absalon" ballade contest). Chaucer embeds, for example, his borrowing from Froissart within a narrative adapted from Machaut. In Chaucer's model, his sources cut each other off, vying for poetic attention, jostling for literary exposure. No one source tells its story completely before it is interrupted and the narrative taken over by another source.

This is evident, for example, in the passage above where the translated opening of the *Paradis d'Amour* takes a new turn as Chaucer introduces the Ceyx and Alcyone episode of the *Fontaine Amoureuse*. Instead of telling the episode in its entirety, the narrator cuts it short, leaving out the metamorphosis of the lovers into seabirds, which figures in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as well as the Machauldian retelling. Then, the *Romance of the Rose* becomes the model for the dream vision setting: "Me thoghte thus: that hyt was May..." (291). This dream vision yields to the *Roman de Troie*: "For hooly al the story of Troye" (326), though the *Rose* resurfaces when the narrator describes the windows of the chamber in which he finds himself: they "were peynted, bothe text and glose,/ Of al the Romauence of the Rose" (334-5). The *Roman de la Rose* gives way to allusions to *Navarre* and the *Paradis d'Amour*, which Chaucer uses as sources for the description of the hunt.

Chaucer also puts his sources to work collaboratively. From this perspective, he uses bits and pieces of numerous sources to create an even greater whole. Rather than cutting each other off, these sources might be understood as contributing and adding meaning to one another. The structure of the *Book of the Duchess* brings together and mixes up many French narrative and lyrical poems without identifying authorship in order to create a new whole, an original literary work.
Chaucer, I suggest, constructs his role as author when he arranges the interplay between his sources. Placing his sources in implicit competition, Chaucer casts himself as mediator, judge, and fellow participant in a literary contest, like the "Hyd Absalon" ballade competition. As mediator, he introduces the texts, allows them their turn to speak, and decides when to introduce a new voice.\footnote{Scholarship dealing with Chaucer's sources for the \textit{Book of the Duchess} acknowledges that he manipulates these sources — interweaving, excerpting, abbreviating, and expanding — see, for example, Kittredge, "Guillaume de Machaut and the \textit{Book of the Duchess}," 1-24; Bahr, "The Rhetorical Construction of Narrator and Narrative in Chaucer's \textit{The Book of the Duchess}," 43-59; and Phillips, "Structure and Consolation in the 'Book of the Duchess'," 107-118. While these scholars do not suggest that Chaucer puts his sources into competition, I think that his handling of sources here may demonstrate his ongoing interest and participation in poetic contest.} As judge he deems which poetic source offers the best material for his topic. He has the power to privilege one source text above the others. As competitor, he understands his work as part of the French intertextual game. By crafting his work from the texts of his French contemporaries, he is participating in a tradition of citation and competition, one which finds parallels in troubadour poetry. Yolanda Plumley describes the musical aspects of the rich tradition to which Chaucer and the French authors belong. She discusses Machaut and his French circle in relation to the \textit{Cour Amoureuse}:\footnote{Which Butterfield describes as "a perhaps parodic courtly imitation of the Puy" (\textit{Familiar Enemy} 236).}

The \textit{Cour amoureuse}, the 'Court of Love,' was founded in 1400 in Paris by Charles VI and his royal uncles, the dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon. The idea behind this literary tribunal was that once a month one of its 24 appointed ministers was to organize a poetry competition [...] Whether Guillaume de Machaut engaged in his own day in competitions of the kind formalized by the \textit{Cour Amoureuse} is not known. But his courtly audience was surely well acquainted with the principle of citation in lyric poetry, judging from the pervasiveness of this feature in his own offerings in this genre." ("Playing the Citation Game," 22)

In this spirit, Chaucer embeds the "citation game," as Plumley puts it, within the very structure of his work and numbers himself among the competitors. Chaucer's orchestration of his sources in the \textit{Book of the Duchess} may represent his early consideration of poetic contest as a literary
form. Again, Chaucer later engages in a contest when he contributes to the Machaut-Paien-Froissart competition, and I would further suggest, as other scholars have, that we can also see this ongoing spirit of literary competition in the "Puy like" manifestations of the *Canterbury Tales*: the *Canterbury Tales* is founded on a literary (and mostly poetic)\(^{143}\) contest,\(^{144}\) in a non-courtly setting, with the winner earning a free supper. The Host even acts as the "Prince du Puy," elected, as was the case for non-fictional Puys,\(^{145}\) by "oon assent" (817).

Through Chaucer's mediation and arrangement of his sources, the *Book of the Duchess* introduces layers of readings accessible to different kinds of readers. As I have suggested before, only a knowing reader would recognize the patchwork of sources, recognize the poetic process, and ask questions about the process — questions which ultimately lead back to the role of Chaucer as author. One possible layer of reading shows Chaucer as competitive with his sources; another possible reading, in which Chaucer adopts a less contentious role as an assembler of French verse, yields a politically astute self-portrayal of a tactful poet constructing a text to help John of Gaunt navigate grief and loss. In this second reading, Chaucer does not use Blanche's death as an opportunity for self-promotion; rather, skilfully gathering together the best bits of the best French courtly texts into a coherent whole, Chaucer portrays himself as a courtly poet who can produce poetry suitable for noble patrons.

### 2.7 Disappearing Female Subjectivity and Codicological Form

The occasion for *Book of the Duchess*, the death of Blanche, brings together the threads of this chapter, connecting, I will suggest, Chaucer's engagement with poetic and manuscript forms to Froissart's tomes and to the intertextual ballade competition. Like the lyric competition between Paien, Machaut, Froissart, and Chaucer, the *Book of the Duchess*, ironically, claims to be about a

\(^{143}\) Though, of course, this is narrative poetry (and the *Melibee* and the *Parson's Tale* are prose).

\(^{144}\) For competition as the structuring principle of the *Canterbury Tales*, see for example, Helen Cooper, "London and Southwark Poetic Companies: 'Si tost c'amis' and the *Canterbury Tales*," 109-116, Emily Jenson, "Male Competition as the Unifying Motif in Fragment A of the 'Canterbury Tales'," 320-28, and Seth Lerer, "The Canterbury Tales," 243-94.

\(^{145}\) "A puy's members would elect a yearly prince or maître who would preside over a feast in which the submitted poems would be judged and the winner awarded a silver crown" (Butterfield 235).
woman, but is really about men writing about women. *The Book of the Duchess* presents women disappearing under male authorship. In this respect it mimics the single-author codex, acting in the same way as Froissart's books, BNF f.fr. 830 and 831. Both are elegies or monuments to an inaccessible figure: an author to whom the codex refers but at the same time denies access, like Blanche, who is doubly out of reach, both allegorized in literature and dead. Blanche becomes "lady White" and is described in only conventionally superlative terms: her eyes are "debonaire, good, glade, and sadde" (860), her beauty is so great it cannot be described or understood (902-3), she was "whit, rody, fresh, and lyvely hewed" (905), her face "was alderbest" (907). Blanche, the real historical person, disappears behind White, the literary construct. There is a French literary tradition for the disappearance of female subjectivity, and Chaucer's literary construction of lady White recalls, for instance, the allegorical "Rose" — the female object of desire — in the *Roman de la Rose*.

Likewise Alcyone's subjectivity disappears within the narrator's miscellany (or at least in the narrator's retelling of the tale, though he does claim "this was the tale" [62], suggesting he tells the tale as he read it). This version of the Ceyx and Alcyone tale, as Bahr notes ("Rhetorical Construction," 47), abbreviates Alcyone's twenty-three line lament in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to a single word: "Allas" (213). Chaucer imagines a miscellany that contains works which silence women, and he imagines a narrator-poet who turns Alcyone's plight into his own quest for sleep and, ultimately, literary production. Chaucer does the same to the dead Blanche when he imagines himself as the author of a literary memorial, or single-authored "book."

Within both the framework of the miscellany as well as in the single-author collection, the female subject disappears. While the miscellany — of the type containing the "Hyd Absalon" intertextual exchange, and the reading of which might be evoked by Chaucer's mosaic-like arrangement of his sources in the *Book of the Duchess* — may seem to be "alive" with multiple poetic voices lauding many a lady, women are just a game of writing in it. It is no less "deadening" to women than the single-author tome, modeled by the elegaic function of the

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146 See Chapter 1 on Guillaume de Machaut for more detailed discussion.

147 This is a subtler working through of literary female subjectivity — or lack thereof — than some of the more overtly anti-feminist texts of late medieval England. For instance, the Ragman Roll, claiming to act as a "mirror for ladies," describes (or apostrophizes to) a lady as "if that the
Book of the Duchess, which is literally a monument to a dead woman — Blanche is inaccessible and cannot be revived.

fynde himself wolde haue a make" (37). The author appeals to conventional anti-feminist tropes: a woman is full of "daunger" (46), constantly nags ("for also sone as oo chidyinge ys paste./ Another comyth" [99-100]), is too "mercyall" (145) to other men, and keeps her husband in a state of captivity, in her "thrall" (147). Ultimately, and most relevant to the disappearance of the female subject in the Book of the Duchess, the female figure evoked in the Ragman Roll is a literary construction, and like lady White, is imagined as a series of conventional superlative (though this time negative) tropes. The final couplet confines the female to a literary existence: "And yn the rolle last, as yn wrytynge,/ I rede, that this game ende yn youre hood" (207-8). She will endure in the writing, and inasmuch as her subjectivity is constructed in writing, she will remain passive, to be "read," "discerned," "understood," "learned," and "interpreted" (MED "reden").
Chapter 3
The Complaint of the Translator and the Complaint of Venus:
Translation, Textual Authority, and Manuscript Dissemination

The Complaint of Venus, a triple ballade and envoy in which a lady describes the "bounte,
wysdom, [and] governaunce" (9) of her beloved and the trials she endures in her service to love,
takes as its inspiration Oton de Graunson's Cinq Ballades. Not only does the Complaint alter its
source text, changing the speaker from male to female, condensing Graunson's five ballades into
three, and adding an envoy [Scattergood, "Chaucer's Complaint," 179]), in doing so, it also raises
questions about its own intention, which it states explicitly in the envoy, "to folowe word by
word the curiosite/ Of Graunson, flour of hem that make in Fraunce" (my emphasis, 81-2). This
is the only time Chaucer mentions by name one of his French sources. Unlike his one-sided
borrowing from Guillaume de Machaut, Chaucer enjoys a more reciprocal relationship with Oton
de Graunson, whom he likely knew personally. Graunson's Cinq ballades are the source for the
Complaint of Venus, the primary focus of this chapter; however, Chaucer's adaption of these
ballades is likely the only time in which influence traveled in this direction (Wimsatt, Natural
Music, 219).

This chapter picks up the subtleties of the power dynamics, which I have outlined in my
Introduction, inherent in Chaucer's translation. Translation, as Reynolds theorizes, is a
necessarily appropriative act, and it introduces differences that make the source text inaccessible
(16). In Reynolds's words, some "poet-translators [...] recognize, with especial rage, that
translation inevitably shuts them off from what they nevertheless keep trying to grasp — by
translating" (16). Chaucer, I will suggest, recognizes this, though not in rage but in play. He
acknowledges that an attempt to translate "accurately" or "word by word" is futile. Instead he
plays with this inherent inaccessibility, and even draws his knowing readers' attention to the fact
that he does not translate faithfully by, paradoxically, claiming to do so.

148 Graunson is more often influenced by Chaucer, taking inspiration for his Complaine de l'an
nouvel from the Book of the Duchess, and his Le Songe Saint Valentin from the Parliament of
Fowls (Wimsatt, Poems of CH, 56).

149 For more on Chaucer's translation practices, see also Tim Machan, Techniques of Translation,
on the Boece (though he does not deal with the Venus).
Lines 81-2 will be my starting point, and I will suggest that the envoy to the *Complaint of Venus* sheds light on Chaucer's dubious claim about translation. This chapter will argue that the envoy creates deep poetic uncertainty at the same time as it unifies the poem structurally in order to make certain its posterity as a single work. The result is that the verses contained by the *Complaint of Venus* circulate together more frequently than Graunson's *Cinq Ballades*.

### 3 The "Word for Word" Translation

The entire envoy to the *Complaint of Venus* follows:

Princes, receyveth this compleynt in gre,

Unto your excelent benigne

Direct after my litel suffisaunce,

For elde, that in my spirit dulleth me,

Hath of endyting al the subtilte

Wel nygh bereft out of my remembraunce,

And eke to me it ys a gret penaunce,

Syth rym in Englissh hath such skarsete,

To folowe word by word the curiosite

Of Graunson, flour of gem that make in Fraunce. (73-82)

According to Taylor, while Chaucer occasionally translates relatively faithfully, as evidenced by his *Romaunt of the Rose* and *Boece*, he also undertakes "interpretative appropriation" (14). Machan suggests that we might understand Chaucer's translation practice on a continuum, with close translation at one end and a "recreation of a source text" at the other end (131). These phrases — "interpretative appropriation," "recreation of a source," and "secondary translation" (to recall Copeland's terminology [6-7]) — more aptly describe Chaucer's activities in the *Venus* yet Chaucer claims to undertake a "word by word" or a "primary" translation. The claim about
the scarcity of rhyme in English also raises questions. Wimsatt, for instance, reads the line as a genuine grievance (*French Contemporaries* 217). Rhymes are more plentiful in French, where final stressed syllables often belong to grammatical endings, and like grammatical ending can rhyme with like (for example, rhyming infinitives [Borroff 231]). Galway sees it as competitive mockery (277). Hart thinks it a mere "compliment" to Graunson (5).

I would like to think more about the *Venus's* unreliable claims about its relation to its source, beginning with the statement the speaker makes in the final lines that it is a "penance" to translate Graunson "word by word" because of the lack of rhyme in English (relative to French). Chaucer states only that to translate Graunson's French work into English is a hardship but leaves in doubt the success or failure of his undertaking (and indeed he humbly hints that he might not be up to the task given that age is 'dulling his spirit' [76] and depriving him of "subtilte" of "endyting" [77]).

150 Wimsatt examines the rhymes used by Graunson and Chaucer and suggests that Chaucer's translation is less successful (technically) than Graunson's. He writes: "in the first place, [Graunson's] rhymes are considerably more homogeneous. His -ire, -as, -euse involve in all cases a single consonant; two of them are sibilants, and all three continuants. Chaucer's -ise, -ente, -ay, by contrast, present a thoroughly disparate consonant set: sibilant, nasal plus stop, and diphthong (no consonant). Moreover, Granson's rhymes have a better alternation of masculine and feminine endings, as French practice and the poetic treatises favoured" (216). Wimsatt goes concludes that Graunson's original has moments of "phonetic subtlety that Chaucer's [text] does not match" (217). He cites the "effectiveness of Granson's rhymes in lines 6 and 7 of each stanza" compared to which "Chaucer's monosyllables in the same position [...] are quite colourless" (217). While this analysis perhaps unfairly casts Chaucer's *Venus* as a pale derivative of the *Cinq Ballades* it is helpful because it suggests one more possible valence for the lament of the speaker in the lines of then envoy.

151 See Borroff: "In Old French, the [...] ending -(i)er of most verbs could appear in rhyming position [...] virtually any infinitive could thus rhyme with any other." The lament in the *Complaint of Venus*, she argues, could be "disingenuous." But it could "also refer to the lack in English of some of the suffixes found useful for rhyming purposes by the French poets" (231).

152 Unlike Wimsatt, Hart considers Chaucer's venture in the *Complaint of Venus* a success. In his opinion, Chaucer does not seem to want for rhyme in the *Complaint of Venus* or elsewhere (5).

153 Copeland, discussing Chaucer's "conventional apology of the translator" as he departs from his source in the *Legend of Good Women* ("I coude folwe, word for word, Virgile,/ But it wolde lasten al to longe while" [1002-3]), suggests that the apology liberates the translator from the "constraints of that source" (200). The translator's apology in the *Venus*, however, raises doubt
In order to assess the accuracy of Chaucer's translation, a medieval reader would have to have had a very good memory or access to a copy of Graunson's *Cinq ballades*. Moreover, a reader would have had to care enough about the relation of the translation to its source to undertake a comparison. Such a reader represents the "knowing" reader described in my Introduction: learned, literary, fluent in French, and interested. However, regardless of whether or not readers met these conditions, Chaucer gains poetic renown. On the one hand, if readers did not care about the accuracy of his claim to translate, or if they took the speaker at his/her word, then Chaucer passes off his text as Graunson's. Chaucer disguises his text to look like Graunson's, and without the texts side by side, a reader could easily believe — or not even think to question — Chaucer's claim to translate accurately. In this reading he gains a reputation as an adept translator of the French courtly poetry — here, specifically, the poetry of a chevalier — when really he very subtly, sometimes barely discernibly, offers something different of his own. On the other hand, if a reader were able and willing to perform the kind of comparative reading that I am doing here, Chaucer's play with authority is even more successful. This kind of reader, the kind of knowing reader described above — a reader like Graunson himself — would see that Chaucer's claim to translate is a ruse, and recognize the irony and the cleverness of the ruse. Whether a reader falls for the trick, or recognizes and appreciates the trick, Chaucer derives poetic acclaim from this posturing as an accurate translator.

Chaucer effects significant changes to the speaker, content, and form of his source, but at times he does indeed translate quite closely (showing that the rest of the *Complaint of Venus* could have reflected his source text more accurately, had this been his goal). Verbal parallels abound, and they range from individual words, to phrases, to whole stanzas. Particular words stand out as directly lifted from his source text: "leyser" (3) for "loizir" ("Il n'est confort," 3); "covenable" ("Complaint," 25, and "Certes, Amour," 1); and "encomberous" (42) from

about whether the translator is liberated or constrained: it claims that the *Venus* is a faithful translation but, emphasizing the difficulty of that task, it calls that fidelity into question.

154 According to Wimsatt's assessment, about "60 percent of Chaucer's phraseology closely parallels Graunson's" (French Contemporaries, 216).

155 In the case of the ballades beginning "Certes, Amour"/"Now certis, Love."
"encombreux" ("Certes, Amour," 18). The short phrase, "Amours, sachiez que pas ne le veulz dire/ Pour moy getter hors des amoureux las" ("Amours, sachiez,"1-2), becomes, "But certes, Love, I sey not in such wise/ That for t'escape out of youre las I mente" (49-50), and "Cuer, il te doit assez plus que suffire," ("Amours, sachiez," 17), is echoed by Chaucer as "Herte, to the hit oughte ynogh suffise" (65). This veneer of similarity, however, is arguably designed to conceal the alterations that Chaucer makes to his source. These alterations, I suggest, show him borrowing Graunson's poetic authority and, at the same time, undermining it. They playfully model how authors can generate renown in a manuscript culture.

These alterations render the tone of the *Venus* more abstract, moral and lofty than the *Cinq Ballades*. Many commentators have noted that Chaucer excises two fifths of the source. Scattergood demonstrates that Chaucer nevertheless draws from the excised poems, showing that he had access to them, and deliberately left them out. For instance, Chaucer translates the first line of ballade II, "A mon avis Dieu Raison, et Nature/ En lui fourmer se sont bien entendue," with the line "Therto so wel hath formed him Nature" (14) ("Chaucer's Complaint," 175). The "idea of service" in Ballade III, Scattergood further maintains ("A qui je sui veuil estre servans" [20]) becomes the basis for Chaucer's line "that me to serve is al his besynesse" (20) (175). Chaucer alludes to these two missing poems just to the extent that a "knowing reader" could be aware that Chaucer has read them and could translate them, but chooses not to.

156 Longer parallel lines include (but are not limited to):

Veillier ou lit et jeuner a la table,/ Rire en plorant et en plaignant chanter,/ Baissier les yeux quant on voit regarder,/ Souvent changier couleur et contenance,/ Plaindre en dormant et songier a la dance ("Certes, Amour," 3-7)

As wake abedde and fasten at the table,/ Wepinge to laughe and singe in compleynyng,/ And doun to caste visage and lokyng,/ Often to chaunge hewe and contenaunce./ Pleyne in slepyng and dremen at the daunce (27-31).

And again in the next stanza of the same ballade pair, though here the apostrophe to Love as "you" in Graunson is turned into a third person singular description of love in Chaucer:

Amours, ainsi fault vos dons acheter,/ Et vous donnez souvant sans ordonnaunce/ Assez dolour et petit de plaisance (13-15)

Thus dere abought is Love in yevyng,/ Which ofte he yiveth withoute ordynaunce, /As sorne ynogh and litil of plesaunce (37-39).
Next, Kosta-Théfaine's analysis of the form of the *Complaint of Venus* in contrast to that of the *Cinq Ballades* provides more evidence of Chaucer's subtlety (*Translations* 275-284). The rhyme scheme of the main body of the *Complaint* is the same as Graunson's "Ballades" — both texts follow the pattern "ababcccb," and Chaucer nearly follows Graunson's decasyllabic meter when he writes his *Complaint* in iambic pentameter. Superficially, these forms, with the same syllable count and rhyme, appear identical. Only the internal distribution of stresses differentiates Chaucer's iambic pentameter from the meter of his source. His choice of form is therefore, I argue, as close as it can possibly come to matching Graunson's while still maintaining a hint of difference or disjoint — a vague sense that something about the translation does not quite line up.

Scattergood argues that Chaucer displaces the emotional "parameters" of the love affair (*"Chaucer's Complaint,"* 179). Chaucer's poem, he argues, "is about emotional readjustment, about coming to terms with reduced expectations, not about coming to terms with no expectations" (178), as opposed to Graunson's work, which is "a poem about a situation which has a past history, but no future that can be conceived of in terms other than those of the present" (176).

Chaucer's switch in the gender of the speaker is an alteration that both distances the translation from its source text and acts as a means by which Chaucer crafts a more abstract — authoritative — tone. When he alters the gender of the speaker, Chaucer must also alter the adjectives that describe the subject in order to render him the archetypal beloved, and these changes, according to Wimsatt, "are far from perfunctory," and represent a significant departure from the source text (*French Contemporaries* 217): "Doulz fais femenis" (I.5) is Chaucer's "manhod" (4), and "[B]eauté, bonté, grace" (I.9) is "bounte, wysdom, governaunce" (11). The change of gender allows Chaucer to implicitly assert that his is a "loftier" approach to Graunson's profane subject matter by giving him an opportunity to change the adjectives, by which he elevates the tone of his text. As Kosta-Théfaine writes:

> the physical description in Grandson's poem does not appear in Chaucer's work, in which there is a moral description rather than a physical one. At least the woman speaking in Chaucer's poem celebrates a knight with whom she is in love. (157)
Chaucer subtly elevates the tone even at the syntactic level. He inverts the sentence structure, placing earlier in the sentence the verbs that often end Graunson's poetic lines, and completing his poetic lines with abstract nouns. Phillips notices this tendency too, though she argues that this restructuring makes Chaucer's female speaker more passive and subservient than the male lover in Graunson's ballades ("Complaint," 89).\(^{157}\) Of course these alterations could be, in part, the result of translation itself, the French sentence structures being difficult to render into English, as Phillips also acknowledges (89). However, these changes occur within the context of a systematic elevation in tone and subject matter in the Complaint of Venus, and so even if they are inevitable, Chaucer puts them to use towards a specific purposes. Stanza one of "Il n'est confort" provides us with an example of this technique in practice. Graunson's lines end with two conjugated verbs in the third person singular, four infinitives, and only two nouns. These are, in the order in which they appear, "face," "parler," "espace," "penser," "recorder," "m'ame," "blasme," and "loer." The eight lines of Chaucer's opening stanza end: "plesaunce," "hevynesse," "remembraunce," "worthynesse," "stidfastnese," "dure," "creature," "gentilesse." Only one of these endings is a verb "dure," an infinitive in a compound construction, "may dure" (6). The overwhelming majority of these are abstract nouns (six), with only one concrete noun, "creature." Even "creature," can be used abstractly, like the word "wight" (meaning "a living creature" and "an animate being" [MED "wight"]). It functions here almost as a third person pronoun: "Ther oghte blame me no creature" (7), which translates as "no one ought to blame me for it" (for this usage, the MED gives "a man" and "a person" [MED "creature"]).

The result of the nominalization of the line endings is that the action in the ballades is less active and immediate, as Phillips also argues (89). The abstract nouns, I suggest, create an academic and learned tone. Many of them — from the example I gave alone: plesaunce, remembraunce, creature, gentilesse — are French words brought into learned Middle English discourse, either for their specialized meaning or for their elevated tone (Burrow and Turville-Petre, 3.3-3.5). They recall the Boethian ballades, which, as Scattergood writes, concern abstract concepts: "philosophical or moral questions, or questions where the philosophical or moral shades into the

\(^{157}\) Phillips contrasts the male lover's actions, "parler" and "penser," with the female lover's "two powerless states [...]: to be 'in heuynesse' and at the same time to have 'remembraunce;' both are states rather than actions, both nouns" ("The Complaint of Venus: Chaucer and de Graunson," 89).
As a result, their language is abstract — for example, "sothfastnesse," "buxumnesse," "thral," "goodnesse" (Truth 1, 15, 23, 24), "gentilesse," "rightwisnesse," "besinesse," "honeste," "noblesse," "magestee" (Gentilesse 1, 8, 10, 11, 17, 19), "wilfulnesse," "stedfastnesse," "dissensioun," "oppressioun," "wrecchednesse," "discrecioun," "honourable," "trouthe and worthinesse" (Lak of Stedfastnesse 6, 7, 9, 12, 18, 22, 26). Scattergood relates the language and matter of these ballades to several intellectual traditions: the writings of learned Latin auctores like Boethius ("Short Poems," 484), Stoicism (496), epistolary curial satire, originating from Horace, Seneca and others (493), and Biblical proverb (498). He describes Chaucer's handling of his source material in this group of ballades as "scholarly and pernickity" (484). The language of the Complaint of Venus is reminiscent of this tendency. Scattergood links the language of the speaker's love complaint to the intellectual realm of literary production, showing how "words and concepts that have been important in the three ballades" resurface in the envoy: "his poems are the best his 'litel suffisaunce' can achieve (75); age has taken the skill of writing almost completely out of his 'remembraunce' (78); translating French ballades is his 'penaunce' (78)" ("Short Poems," 468).

The more abstract tone of the Complaint contrasts with the first-person, possibly pseudo-autobiographical, voice of Graunson's "Cinq Ballades." As Kosta-Théfaine identifies, "the speaking voice in Grandson's text could be interpreted to be the poet's. In Chaucer's poem with the alteration of gender from male to female, it is impossible to identify the voice speaking with the poet's" (157). Spearing cautions against this kind of identification of a first person voice with the poet (at least in pre-Chaucerian Middle English works, of which these two pieces are neither, admittedly). His admonition, however, is worth taking into consideration: "the first-person pronoun may be prominent in [Middle English poetry], but it rarely refers to a specific individual or creates the illusion of a distinctive voice; it is a near but empty space, proximal but not

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158 On the academic tone of the shorter poems, see Besserman, "Chaucer's Envoy to Bukton," who situates the "Envoy to Bukton" in the medieval exegetical tradition. See also Scattergood's reading of "Lak of Stedfastnesse" which describes how "Chaucer habitually talks about the particular by way of [...] generalized statements" ("Social and Political Issues in Chaucer," 474).

159 Scattergood concludes, "the sententiousness of Chaucer's writing in his poems which give advice [...] appears to have favourably impressed some of his followers, who valued him for, amongst other things, proverbial wisdom" ("The Short Poems," 496).
personalized, waiting to be inhabited and adopted by any reader" (16). Spearing, here, contributes to a tradition of criticism, originating with Spitzer, about the medieval first-person voice. Spitzer writes that "in the Middle Ages, the 'poetic I' had more freedom and more breadth than it does today" (15) and that "the medieval public saw in the 'poetic I' a representative of mankind (416)." In this context, Spearing reminds us that these voices do not necessarily represent individual speakers (or the voices of the authors), nor are they necessarily even unified or coherent. They are fictional, yet their fictionality operates on a spectrum. Graunson's first-person male speaker at least suggests the poet himself, while Chaucer's first-person speaker evokes a likely-female lamenter — whose "I" must be fictional — making clear the disconnect between speaker and author. When Chaucer severs any possible link between himself and the poetic voice of the main body of the poem (though not of the envoy, which I will discuss below), the outcome reads more like a literary exercise than an actual lament of a lover.

These changes amount to a kind of translation that Copeland calls "secondary" translation. Copeland argues that the liberties Chaucer takes with translation (specifically in the Legend of Good Women) are meant to "authorize" his "vernacular writing [...] through a genre of official discourse" (180). She writes:

Secondary translations insert themselves into academic discourse, not by proposing to serve the interests of continuity with the antiqui, but rather calling attention to their own status as vernacular productions and thus underscoring the fact of cultural and historical difference that vernacularity exposes. (179-80)

In the Venus, of course, Chaucer postures within and against the French literary tradition rather than the academic tradition; the Venus operates as secondary translation on Chaucer's and his

160 For instance, Spitzer says of Dante's narrator that no reading public could have accepted the Commedia as an eye-witness report "unless the 'poetic I' of Dante represented, for this medieval community, the human soul as such with all its capacity to attain the Beyond and to reach out of space towards its creator" (16).

161 This speaker does not have a concrete identity (the identification of the speaker with Venus is editorial, as I will discuss below). The voice is a fictional, first person, and likely-female (this assumption is questioned by Holsinger [196]) construct, assumed by Chaucer for the Complaint.
vernacular sources' terms, and the "official discourse" (180) his secondary translation engages is French love poetry. I would further add that Chaucer's self-authorization complicates Copeland's model: it arises not just from his act of secondary translation, that is the act of creating difference, but from the introduction of uncertainty about whether he offers a primary or a secondary translation. The control he exerts over his source text functions along the multiple levels of recognition available to different kinds of readers.

Knowing readers, such as Graunson himself — and Deschamps and Froissart fall into this category too — could have noticed some of these subtle changes in form, sentence structure, and tone by which Chaucer crafts a secondary, more "authoritative" translation. For those unable to do — or uninterested in doing — this kind of comparative reading, Chaucer replaces Graunson's work with his own, making Graunson's text inaccessible by means of his dubious claims to translate.

When Chaucer passes off his poem as "Graunson's" — as a primary translation — he capitalizes on the authority of the illustrious chevalier-poète and of the French tradition to which he belongs. At the same time, equivocating about the fidelity of the translation, he opens up the possibility of uncertainty in the text's relationship to its source.

3.1 The Envoy

The Complaint of Venus's fidelity to its source is not the only uncertainty that Chaucer intentionally cultivates: he adds ambiguity about the identity of the envoy's speaker. So far, this chapter has discussed the lines that contain the claim to translate as though they emanate from Chaucer the author himself, shedding light on his project of translating Graunson. Critics from Scattergood to Wimsatt have similarly leapt to this assumption. Scattergood referring to "Chaucer" as separate from the main speaker — "the woman" — articulates implicitly the assumptions we make about the poetic voice in both poem and envoy:

Chaucer, while keeping out of the way of the woman's complaint he has written and talking about other things, also enforces the essential connection between the body of the poem and the envoy by the simple device of repeating words [...] Chaucer seeks to define his relationship to his source material and to make room for his own performance.

("Chaucer's Complaint," 182-3)
The envoy's voice, however, is not necessarily authorial or even different from the body of the poem. While the speaker's talk of poetic composition — "endyting" (77) — and translation is tantalizingly authorial, we know all too well that Chaucer's fictional characters often claim to have composed the very works that contain them or discuss poetic composition and authorship: for example, the narrator of the Book of the Duchess says that he will "put this sweven in ryme" [1332]); the Clerk in the Canterbury Tales asserts that "Fraunceys Petrak" (IV.31) "taughte [him] this tale" (40).

As it is used conventionally, the envoy does not require a switch in speaker. This is evidenced by the envoys of Chaucer's other shorter poems. For example, "Fortune" ends with an envoy that is explicitly voiced by one of the poem's speakers — not an author figure but Fortune herself, who begs, "Lat nat this man on me thus crye and pleyne" (74). The envoy to "Truth" maintains a sense of continuous poetic voice by carrying forward the refrain "and trouthe thee shal delivere, it is no drede" (28). Here the voice sounds a bit more authorial but, important to my point, this is the case throughout the poem. The voice does not shift from a fictional speaker in the body of the poem to someone that sounds like the author in the envoy. The same can be said for the envoy to "Lak of Stedfastnesse," the refrain of which, "And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse" (27), modifies but recalls the primary refrain, "That al is lost for lak of stedfastnesse" (7), to create development or continuity between the body of the poem and its envoy. The "Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan" repeats "Scogan" through both body and envoy, again making clear the continuity between these parts. The envoys that most resemble that of The Complaint of Venus

162 The narrator in the Book of the Duchess similarly identifies, somewhat dubiously, a poetic work as "lay" (471) or a "complaynte" (487).

163 Bertolet writes of the continuous voice of the "poet-diplomat" (66) in the envoys of Chaucer's advice poems.

164 Hovarth identifies the epistolary nature of the short poems: "the short poems imagine themselves [...] integrally as letters to an addressee" (173). They posit a coherent epistolary voice, but one which complexly reaches beyond the "poem's internal dynamics" (174). Chaucer's first-person voice in "Bukton" and "Scogan," Hovarth argues, may at once seem "spontaneous and humorous," yet these poems "depend on a complex of rhetorical conventions that exploit the capacity of written texts to publicize private authorial intentions. In dramatizing side-by-side the circumstances of courtly friendship and coterie literary production, they show, in microcosmic relief, how the tension between Chaucer's social experience and the (increasingly) public environment of his reception crafts a self-reflexive literary aesthetic" (174).
are "Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton" and "The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse" where the speakers of the envoys seem to be Chaucer referring as author to the poem he has composed. None of these cases present an obvious change of speaker in the envoy. I do not think that we should assume a switch from "female lover" to "someone akin to Chaucer-the-Poet" in the Complaint of Venus. Bruce Holsinger argues that we need not assume that the first speaker of the Complaint is even female (196). The title, The Complaint of Venus, is a "modern editorial convenience" (196) (and two manuscripts, Bodleian Fairfax 16 and Bodleian Arch. Selden B.24, give the title "a balade made by that worthy Knight of Savoye in frenshe calde sir Otes Graunson. translated by Chauciers" (Holsinger 197; and Lenaghan, "Textual Notes," 1187). Holsinger argues that the ambiguity of the narrator's sexual identity places this text in "a long line of medieval poems of fin'amor that explore the possibilities of gender inversion within the courtly relationship" (197).

My point here is that Chaucer is creating some uncertainty — productive uncertainty, I will suggest below — around the identity of the speaker of the envoy. While scholars tend to agree that the lament is uttered by a fictional, likely-female, first-person speaker, they are tempted to interpret the speaker of the envoy as non-fictional and authorial. Given the evidence from Chaucer's other short lyrics with envoys, however, we cannot do so with certainty. I am not

Both Butterfield and Scattergood link the form of the envoy to the emerging importance of the diplomat-envoy in Cross-Channel negotiations. Butterfield notices that "just as the machinery of diplomatic communication grew more complicated and the person of the envoy was relied upon more extensively, the poetic envoi, in the shape of an addition to the strophic pattern of a chant royal or ballade, reappeared and became a dominant feature of lyric composition" (187). Sir Phillip de la Vache (1346-1408), to whom Chaucer directs the envoy of "Truth," was himself just such an envoy, and was sent, for example, "on an embassy to treat of peace with France" on April 2, 1390 in his capacity as "captain of one of the King's forts in Picardy" (Rickert 10). He was "associated with Chaucer in records and with men whom Chaucer evidently knew" (Scattergood, "Short Poems," 492). Interestingly, de la Vache was the son-in-law of Sir Lewis Clifford (492), to whom Deschamps refers in his "Ballade to Chaucer." For life records of de la Vache, see Edith Rickert ("Thou Vache") who first proposed this identification.


Both of these moves (claiming to be a translation of a French source, and evoking a potentially-authorial presence) assert some sort of poetic authority that ultimately proves dubious.
questioning the fictionality of the first voice, but rather drawing attention to the uncertainty of the second. As Chaucer's other lyrics show, the envoy does not have to be an authorial statement. It can be just as fictional as the rest of its poem, voiced by a character contained within the fiction of the poem. The result as it relates to the *Venus* is that the speaker of the envoy cannot be pinned down as Chaucer or a fictional persona.

How is this uncertainty productive for Chaucer? Not only does the speaker's profession of the difficulty of his task make Graunson's source inaccessible to his knowing audience by holding it out of reach, the added uncertainty of the envoy's speaker casts the very claim of attempted translation into doubt, ultimately making this audience aware of the source's inaccessibility. Chaucer invites the knowing reader to read, "I, Geoffrey Chaucer, am translating 'word for word' this authoritative French text composed by a knight" but on the other hand, also read "I, a flawed narrator, am claiming to translate but am failing rather badly." Because the identity of the speaker is uncertain — is it the authoritative author, or the first-person fictional narrator? — the reliability of the speaker's claims to translate and the authority of the translation are also uncertain.

One way to think about the way Chaucer unsettles the relationship between translation and source is that he is engaging Graunson in an implicit competition — albeit one that seems to be one-sided. Chaucer uses translation as a tool that necessarily introduces uncertainty and difference to obscure readers' access to Graunson's work, and to replace the original, with his own — rather different — *Complaint of Venus*. The fact that Chaucer offers secondary translation under the veneer of a primary one — the veneer of deference or "service to a source" (Copeland 7) — suggests hidden competition and subtle posturing. The *Complaint of Venus* contains other evidence of rivalry to support this interpretation. Galway, for instance, argues that Chaucer's lament about the lack of available rhymes in the English language is a competitive goad — she writes, "Chaucer crows over the superior skill with which he has accomplished the

168 Wimsatt speculates that the lament about English rhyme might be the "poet's quiet joke: using but two rhyme sounds in ten lines, Chaucer employs a rhyme scheme for the envoy that is much more demanding than that which either poet uses in the ballades proper" (213). On the other hand, he later considers, this frustrating lack of English rhyme might actually stem from Chaucer's real difficulty in translating the final ballade, a translation which Wimsatt deems less successful than the rest (see *Natural Music*, 217).
harder task" (277). As an aside, the lines "it ys to me a gret penaunce/ syth rym in Englishh hath such skarsete..." call to mind the earlier competitive ballade exchange—discussed here in the Chapter on Froissart — between Thomas Paien and Guillaume de Machaut inset in the Voir Dit (and to which Froissart and Chaucer later respond). Butterfield points to the "competitive puy-like challenge" (Familiar Enemy 258) inherent in the way that Machaut frames the exchange, and he similarly bewails his poetic disadvantage, insisting that Paien "fist devant et prinst toute la graisse du pot a son pooir, et je fis aprè..." (Voir Dit 572) [he composed first and took all of the grease from the pot that he could, and I composed afterwards].

Chaucer's identification of Graunson's work as a "curiosite" (81) is likewise ambivalent, perhaps insulting rather than extolling Graunson. The choice of the word "curiosite" (which Wimsatt calls "a word with a nicely ambiguous quality" [French Contemporaries 213]) is indeed curious and, I think, deliberate. This word draws attention to itself since it breaks the iambic pentameter, which is otherwise consistent (especially in the envoy), by adding an extra foot, two syllables. Reading the poem silently or aloud, "curiousity" necessarily disrupts the flow of the text, causing a reader either to stumble or speed up to rein the extra syllables into the pentameter. Either way the word awkwardly sticks out.

According to the textual notes in the Riverside Chaucer, the eight extant manuscripts (all dating from the fifteenth-century) convey this line as is (Lenaghan 1187). The MED lists two variant forms of "curiosite," each of which has one fewer syllable. These are "curio(u)ste" and "coriouste." The variants reduce the metrical disruption to the iambic pentameter slightly by offering one extra syllable instead of two. Still neither of these variants can smoothly integrate into the meter, and the line remains unwieldy. Therefore, the additional two syllables are unlikely to have been inserted by a scribe during the text's transmission, and it seems probable that "curiosite" was Chaucer's word choice.

Any claim to direct translation and naming of a source invites comparison and judgment. Wimsatt, though more implicitly than Galway, also sees Graunson and Chaucer in competition, determining, for instance, that while Chaucer is the superior poet, in the final stanza of the final ballade, Graunson "appears to have the advantage in this pair" (Natural Music, 217). And again, "in so far as the two were men of the court and the battlefield, Chaucer would certainly have granted Granson precedence; but with regard to their writing, the latter naturally would have deferred" (220).
The *Riverside Chaucer* glosses "curiosite" as "intricate and skillful workmanship", however, the MED provides other less complimentary implications that support Galway's argument and my argument that Chaucer is reacting competitively to Graunson's *Cinq Ballades*. These other meanings range from "idle or vain interest [...] in worldly affairs" to "sophistry," to "recondite character," to "fastidiousness," to an "anxiety; a worry" ("curiosite" MED). Like the conventional reading, "intricate and skillful workmanship," none of these definitions offers an accurate translation because they imply abstract qualities or concepts rather than specific objects. They can apply to Graunson's *Ballades* but they cannot substitute the word for the poem itself. I would suggest that Chaucer uses "curiosite" because of its difficulty. The definitions given by the MED can, nevertheless, shade our interpretation of "curiosite." Graunson's ballades take up the topic of worldly love, jealousy, and human emotion and could, in this context, be accused of "interest in worldly affairs." Though the same criticism could be applied to Chaucer's poem as well, as I have argued earlier, in the *Complaint of Venus* Chaucer adopts a loftier tone and approach to the subject matter than his source. The poem's "Frenchness" and the alleged "difficulty" of rendering it into English rhyme might suggest the reading of "curiosite" as "sophistry," or even as a thing which causes "worry" or "anxiety." This reading would reveal a frustrated accusation of inaccessibility.

I have shown how Chaucer uses the envoy to generate uncertainty, and how this uncertainty enables him to gain authority from Graunson's *Cinq Ballades*. I have argued that this, read alongside the poetic goad and derogatory meanings of "curiosite," reveal that Chaucer situates himself in competition with Graunson. Now I would like to discuss the envoy's formal role of producing structural certainty. This facet of the envoy, I suggest, works alongside its poetic function and assures that the *Venus* circulates in one piece. The envoy acts as a safeguard against the vagaries of codicological dissemination to which Graunson's ballades are vulnerable.

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170 The MED uses these lines from the *Complaint of Venus* as its example for the use of "curiosite" to mean "skill, ingenuity, cleverness... skilled or clever workmanship, elegance (of workmanship), beauty (of a work of art)." Chaucer's *House of Fame* is also cited here (line 1178: "The grete craft, beaute, The cast, the curiosite [of the castle]).

171 And perhaps the title, "Complaint of Venus" (appearing in fifteenth-century manuscripts, Bodleian, Ashmole 59 and Cambridge, Trinity College R.3.20), succeeds in elevating the subject matter into the realm of the deities.
Graunson's sequence of five ballades is subject to the whims of scribes and compilers of lyric anthologies. As evidenced by the actual transmission of the *Cinq Ballades* to which I will turn shortly, they are separated, mixed up, or taken out of context. But first, I will describe more generally the MS tradition of Oton de Grauson's works in order to contextualize the surviving versions of the *Cinq Ballades* within this larger picture.

### 3.2 Graunson's Manuscript Tradition

Graunson's texts generally survive in a more fragmented way — often anonymously in miscellaneous collections of verse — and in less illustrious codices than those of Guillaume de Machaut, for example. Wimsatt hypothesizes that this could be due to Graunson's social position as part of a "new group of noble poets," who were, perhaps, according to Wimsatt, not as concerned with "systematically preserving[ing] their oeuvre as [their] contemporaries of lesser birth like Machaut and Froissart" (*French Contemporaries* 211).

Graunson, Wimsatt qualifies, "was probably responsible for having manuscripts made that included his work," though the "total of his extant verse is but a fraction of what remains of the other prominent French poets whom we associate with Chaucer, and it is uneven in quality" (*French Contemporaries* 212). Moreover, "Graunson never presented himself as more than an amateur in the world of such professionals" (211). Twenty-four manuscripts conveying at least one of his works are extant, and none of these contains Graunson's complete works (Grenier-Winther 21). The largest collection of his works appears in Lausanne, Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire, MS 350 (which contains seventy-six of his poems — approximately 60 percent of his total works [21] — and employs rubrics identifying his authorship).

Here, I will examine codices that represent opposite poles of Graunson's manuscript tradition as it has come down to us. I will begin with Westminster Abbey, MS 21, a small, relatively scrappy, fifteenth century paper book, which represents the type of anthology of French lyric in which Graunson's work often survives. Next, I will look at Paris, BNF f.fr. 2201, an ornate and well executed codex, and Pennsylvania MS codex 902 — the two manuscripts that present Graunson's *Cinq Ballades* in sequence.
3.3 Westminster Abbey MS 21

Westminster Abbey, MS 21 is a small (79 folios) codex, produced in France just after 1434, containing miscellaneous French verse (Manuscripts of Westminster Abbey, 77). Executed in France, it made its way to England at the beginning of the sixteenth century (Grenier-Winther 32). This paper codex was at one point wrapped in vellum — the wrapper consists of two charters of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, written in Dutch (it was rebound in 1910 and the wrapper was moved to the end of the volume [Manuscripts of Westminster, 77]). Several pages (fols.1-7) survive only in fragment. The script\(^{172}\) is a fifteenth-century *bastarda* ranging from *formata* to *currens*, written in brown ink. The pages are arranged in single or double columns, and rubrics occasionally introduce works or name individual speakers within the works. The ends of some texts are marked with "fin" or "explicit," while others are not. The contents of the manuscript are various: it features six selections of poetry by (or attributed to) Oton de Graunson\(^{173}\) alongside work by Guillaume de Machaut, Christine de Pizan and divers ballades, dits, and jeux partis. It gives the impression of a reasonably well-executed, though not particularly uniform, collection of lyric, likely for personal use (there is a lot of interaction with the codex by readers, including scribbles of Greek, Latin, and English in at least two separate hands throughout, suggesting that the manuscript passed through learned hands [fols. 24r and 41v, for example]). Grenier-Winther does not date these scribbles; however, the English notes seem to be written in a late-medieval secretary script.

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\(^{172}\) I believe the script to have been executed by a single hand, though it changes in aspect throughout the codex with visible differences between when the scribe is fresh and when he is fatigued at the end of a writing stint.

\(^{173}\) "Lai de plour" du *Livre Messire Ode de Granson* (fol. 11v-13v); Ballade, "Amours, Amours puis que cest vo plaisance" (attributed to Graunson) (fol. 16-LXXIX); Ballade "Se je ne say que cest de joie d'amour" (attributed to Graunson) (fol. 24v-XXXVI); Ballade "Il a passé des ans .vii. et demi" (fol. 27va-XXIV); Ballade "Gentil corps me convient il morir" (by Guillaume de Machaut, attributed to Graunson) (fol. 30ra-VI); *Complainte de Saint Valentin* (fragment) (fol. 76r-77v-XC). There is a list of the manuscript's entire contents in the description by Grenier-Winther (32).
3.4 Paris, BNF f.fr. 2201

Paris, BNF f.fr. 2201 seems to have been a more carefully organized undertaking. Graunson's work appears in one conglomeration, from folio 71r to 110v. This is only interrupted by the "Lay de Dames" ("Amis t'amour me contraint") by Guillaume de Machaut, which appears on 105r-109r (Grenier-Winther 31). Preceding the section of Graunson's poetry is an incomplete Livre des cent ballades (1r to 70v). Closing the manuscript is L'Istoire de Griseldis (111r-131v). This manuscript is executed on parchment, decorated with miniatures (images of ladies, and knights, and horses are found on 1r, 10v, 15v, 22r 32v, 52v, 71v), borders, and illuminated majuscules. The gatherings are consistent (of twelve folios each, except where leaves are missing) and catchwords line up with the text. The mise-en-page is carefully arranged with frequent rubrics and gold initials, alternately decorated and red and blue, marking larger divisions. Smaller divisions are marked with red and blue alternating initials. The text is written in single columns, in brown ink, and executed in a fifteenth-century French cursiva recentior,\textsuperscript{174} formata-media, with thick Bastarda-like descenders.

The "Cinq Ballades" appear on folios 75v to 77v of BNF f.fr. 2201, introduced by the rubric (which lends the ballade sequence its current designation), "Les cinq balades ensuyvans." It is worth noting, however, that there is nothing distinguishing about this rubric — that is, the rubric might not so much indicate that these ballades are considered a cohesive group that form a single work as it could represent the compiler making sense of the poetry in front of him and fitting it within the ordinatio of the manuscript. He has a number of ballades to arrange, he wishes to rubricate this grouping of ballades by Graunson, and so pragmatically he calls them the "following five ballades." This is supported by a later rubric on 77v, which reads "Les six balades ensuyvans," (77v-78r) which reveals the same principle of ordinatio at work. These six ballades appear as a group only in BNF f.fr. 2201 (and Ballade 1 ["La grant douleur qui si fort me destraint"] and 3 ["Vostre beauté, ma belle douce dame"] of the sequence only exist, to our knowledge, in Paris, BNF f.fr. 2201. These are the only two ballades of the sequence labeled as such in the Grenier-Winther edition). It seems that the scribe/rubricator, having found a solution

\textsuperscript{174} The descenders of "f" and "s" reach below the line, "a" is a single-compartment form, and ascenders are looped.
to the problem of what to call the previous group of five ballades, applies the same convenient solution to the group of six ballades that immediately follows. So while subject matter and form may suggest a reading of these ballades as "self-contained groups," I argue that the rubrication, taken in its codicological context, does not in fact encourage this reading. Supporting this point, each ballade begins with a two-line high coloured initial, and, while there is no space between ballades, there is also no space between the final ballade in the series and the *Complaint de Saint Valentin* which immediately follows (which suggests that the through-copying is meant to save space rather than display the ballades as one work). While I suggest that this codicological evidence does not necessarily support a reading of the *Cinq Ballades* as a discrete unit, Chaucer uses these five ballades to form a more coherent poem. It is therefore quite likely that Chaucer had seen a manuscript similar to BNF f.fr. 2201 or University of Pennsylvania MS codex 902 (below), as Wimsatt suggests, which preserve Graunson's ballades "in the order which Chaucer obviously had before him" (*Poems of CH*, 69).

### 3.5 University of Pennsylvania MS Codex 902

Pennsylvania MS codex 902, written in France ca. 1400, has received recent scholarly attention by Wimsatt and Strakhov, who have connected its compiler and its contents to the English court. This manuscript is parchment, contains 101 leaves, and measures 300 mm by 240 mm. It is written in brown ink with red embellishment on majuscules and headings. It was executed by "several similar cursive hands" in a two-column format (*Penn in Hand: Selected Manuscripts*). It contains an assortment of poetry composed between 1330 and 1400 — 310 pieces — more than half of which are anonymous (*Wimsatt, Poems of "Ch"* 2-3). The works that are attributed to authors were composed by Machaut, Graunson, Deschamps, Margival, and le Mote (3). It is particularly relevant here because it may even have been compiled by Graunson himself (*Wimsatt, Poems of "Ch,"* 4). Wimsatt's narrative about the assembly of Pennsylvania MS codex 902 imagines Graunson gathering much of the poetic material for this collection (including the Vitry-Le Mote ballade pair) during his time in England (4) (a *séjour* that lasted more or less from 1369 to 1396, interrupted by journeys to France and Spain). Wimsatt divides the contents of Pennsylvania MS codex 902 into thirds. In the opening third, Graunson, he suggests, features his own compositions alongside the works of other poets, including texts from Machaut's *Louange des dames*, not set to music. In the second third, Graunson arranges Machaut's works that
"elsewhere have musical settings" (4) alongside works by other poets that also have musical settings. The final third is dedicated mostly to lyrics without music, in which the second set of Graunson's works appears interspersed with the poems of "Ch" and ballades by Machaut (4). Wimsatt writes, "toward the end, and especially after the last 'Ch' poem (number 276), lyrics that Granson probably did not find in England appear. The form and content of these being in the later Granson manner, they could have been composed in France by Granson and court friends..." (4). Though this argumentation is speculative, it situates the codex within an English-French literary context in which we know Graunson and Chaucer both participated, a context that Chaucer necessarily engages when he "translates" the Cinq Ballades. The Cinq Ballades appear on fols. 15va to 16va in Pennsylvania MS codex 902. Here the individual pieces are labeled "ballade," as are the ballades that follow the series. Like in Paris BNF f.fr. 2201, the Cinq Ballades are not particularly distinguishable from neighbouring lyrics as a single entity.

3.6 The Other Manuscripts of the Cinq Ballades

These manuscripts are indicative of the unplanned way in which Graunson's work survives. The transmission of the Cinq Ballades is no exception. The ballades survive in four manuscripts: the aforementioned BNF f.fr. 2201 and University of Pennsylvania MS codex 902, Lausanne, Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire, ms 350, and Barcelona, Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya, ms. 8. In BNF f.fr. 2201 and University of Pennsylvania MS codex 902, the ballades appear together and in the sequence imitated by Chaucer, who translates "directly" only the first, fourth, and fifth, but as Scattergood has shown (in "Chaucer's Complaint"), draws upon all of them. Appearing together (on fols. 75v-77v in BNF f.fr. 2201, and on fols. 15va to 16va in Pennsylvania MS codex 902), the ballades follow the sequence: "Il n'est confort qui tant de bien me face," "A mon advis Dieu Raison et Nature," "Or est ainsy que pour la bonne et belle," "Certes, Amours, c'est chouze convenable," and "Amours, sachès que pas ne le vueil dire." In Lausanne, BCU, 350 and BNC 8 these ballades are not presented together as a unit, and they follow the order, "Amours, saché," "Il n'est confort," "A mon advis," "Or est ainsy," and "Certes, Amours." Lausanne, BCU, 350 and BNC 8 preserve a sequence that is quite close to Pennsylvania MS codex 902 and BNF f.fr. 2201, only the former open with the ballade that the latter placed last.
BNC 8 places "Amours sachés" first, four folios before the rest of the ballade group. The remaining four ballades appear together (150v-154v). Like BNC 8, in Lausanne, BCU, 350, "Amours, saché" appears first, alone, on fols. 88r-v. The next three of the ballade group ("Il n'est confort," "A mon advis," and "Or est ainsy") are copied as a group on fols. 100r-101v. The fifth ballade, "Certes, Amours" stands alone on 113r-v. Interestingly, what was ballade 1, "Amours, sachés," appears again after all five ballades, on fols. 116v-117r. With its two iterations of "Amours, sachés," placed in both initial and final position, Lausanne, BCU, 350, follows the sequence of BNC 8, and the Pennsylvania MS codex 902 and BNF f.fr. 2201 manuscripts.

3.7 Chaucer's Envoy and Complaint

Graunson's manuscripts do not display — to the same extent, or at all — the coherence and uniformity of Machaut's manuscript tradition, for example. His ballades are transmitted in a variety of configurations. Chaucer mitigates the unstable and unpredictable nature of the dissemination of the Complaint of Venus in manuscripts, and one of the most significant formal departures from his source is appending an envoy. While Chaucer introduces poetic uncertainty into his translation, here he mitigates codicological uncertainty. Both maneuvers show the Complaint of Venus capitalizing on the authority of Graunson's Cinq Ballades and then superseding them; both reveal Chaucer's interest in the codicological posterity of the Venus and his own poetic renown. The envoy does the formal work of bringing the ballades into a single framework, making the Venus a work that should circulate intact, rather than as three discrete ballades.

Work by Brantley and Bahr shows that Chaucer was invested in questions of manuscripts, form, and control. Brantley, for instance, demonstrates that Chaucer makes use of the numerous

175 Modern critics too disagree about the nature of Graunson's work, identifying either "separate ballades" (as does Phillips, 307), or treating a single entity — a mutually-dependent "five-ballade sequence" (Wimsatt, French Contemporaries, 213) — unified under the heading "les cinq balades ensuivans."

176 Wimsatt suggests that Chaucer's formal manipulation of his source, condensing Graunson's five ballades into three, "suggests a forme fixe type," the triple ballade, reminiscent of the motet and originally designed for polyphonic performance (French Contemporaries 215). By alluding to a forme fixe, Chaucer encourages the circulation of Venus as a single piece.
valences conveyed by the tail rhyme manuscript layout to shape his poetic persona in the 
*Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer's *Sir Thopas* evokes not just the tail rhyme of romance but also the 
tail rhyme layout of devotional and dramatic texts, all of which rely on "oral performance" (429). The tail rhymes in these cases, "transform the heard into the seen. The *Sir Thopas* layout [...] is ultimately the visible realization of relations that should be listened for, and therefore for fifteenth-century scribes and readers it presents a paradox: the striking visual layout of a literate text that compels even a private, silent reader to enact in imagination a bumbling spoken performance" (430) — the bumbling performance of the pilgrim-author, whose story is received in contempt.

Bahr identifies Chaucer's "literary self-consciousness," and his play with form in the *Canterbury Tales*. In Bahr's reading, the "compilatory" impulse of the *Canterbury Tales* is an invitation for readers to manipulate form, to reshape the *Canterbury Tales* into compilations of their own (168). Bahr calls this Chaucer's "compilational game" and it describes an impulse antithetical to the one at work in Chaucer's envoy here — it invites openness, rearrangement, recontextualization, while the envoy of the *Venus* stabilizes and preserves textual integrity. Yet, both cases reveal Chaucer experimenting with codicological form, anticipating, and participating in the way his texts appear in books. In this context, we might read Chaucer's envoy as a similar experimentation with form. The envoy might create continuity — perhaps vying to offer an "authoritative" alternative to Graunson's potentially fractured ballade group — by subsuming the ballades into a single complaint and signaling that the individual stanzas are part of a larger whole.

As Brantley and Bahr show, Chaucer thinks about codicological form throughout his oeuvre. The proem to *Venus's* sometimes-partner text, the *Complaint of Mars*, performs a similar task as the

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177 Kerby-Fulton, again, shows that Chaucer's contemporary, Langland, is similarly concerned with form, codicological control, and textual reception when he crafts a "bibliographic ego" in the C text *apologia*. (Though this attempt at control is driven, Kerby-Fulton speculates, by more than just a desire for political safety and social conservatism (122), impulses which she deems "un-Langlandian" [122]). Regardless of his motives, the insertion of a first-person seemingly "authorial voice" and the systematic revisions to the C text show Langland worrying about his text's openness and vulnerability as it circulates in manuscripts, and applying mechanisms to control its reception.
envoy of *Venus*: bringing together the three structural parts of the poem by "set[ting] the scene for a love poem" (Rossignol 92) and promising to offer, as Holsinger points out (195), the "sentence of the compleynt [...] That woful Mars made atte departynge/ Fro fresshe Venus" (24-6).

Formally, *Mars* and *Venus* are complementary. As Holsinger writes of *Mars*, despite its conventional theme, in this poem Chaucer seems to be working deliberately against formal convention, particularly on the level of the stanza. At the opening of the complaint itself [...] the poetic unit abruptly shifts to a nine-line stanza." Comparing this structure to *Venus*, he suggests, "if 'The Complaint of Mars' foils generic and formal expectations, 'The Complaint of Venus' adheres strictly to convention" (196).

Codicologically, they circulate together in several important manuscripts, and the "precedent for joining the two, and for the neatly symmetrical titles, must have been set early in the fifteenth century" (Boffey 36). They are copied side by side in Bodleian, Fairfax 16, Tanner 346, Arch. Selden B.24, Cambridge, Trinity College MS R 3.20, and Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 2006 Hand B and Hand E. In the second iteration in Pepys 2006, which I will discuss in more detail below, the two are melded together with no *incipit* or *explicit*; *Venus* begins midway through the third stanza of ballade two and is appended to an incomplete *Mars*. They appear side by side in Tanner 346 (fols. 65r-71r), this time introduced with the rubric, "The complaint of Mars & Venus." In Fairfax 16, *Mars* and *Venus* are introduced by a miniature, which occupies an entire folio (14v). The miniature — produced in an English context (London, says Horobin

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178 The relationship of the *Complaint of Venus* to the *Complaint of Mars*, Phillips writes, adds to the poetic uncertainty: "we do not know whether to take The *Complaint of Venus* as a counterpart to The *Complaint of Mars*, or as an independent poem whose title and speaker are unknown, or as a covert reference to a contemporary scandal" ("The *Complaint of Venus," 86).

179 Fairfax 16 is "the most de luxe of the three Oxford manuscripts" (Horobin 24). The frontispiece displays the coat of arms of John Stanley of Hooton, a member of Henry VI's court and "presumably the person responsible for commissioning the manuscript" (24).

180 Boffey thinks the frontispiece draws on a "convenient iconographic tradition" (37) related to the subject matter of *Mars* and *Venus*. 
[24]), possibly by the Abingdon Missal Master, an associate of William Abell (Brantley 175) 
— consists of a "tripartite structure" with "three gold frames [that] enclose the individual figures of Jupiter, Mars, and Venus" (Boffey 36-7). While Brantley and Horobin make the case that the image's iconography speaks primarily to the themes of the Complaint of Mars and not the Venus, by portraying the figures of Venus and Mars together, it nevertheless proposes a partnership, at least on a visual level, between the two texts.

Boffey argues that when the Complaint of Venus is set alongside the Complaint of Mars, as it is in these manuscripts, the Venus "becomes a rather different poem, a formal complaint whose function as 'speech' within a framing story gives it more in common with Troilus's songs and complaints, and turns it into an intercalated lyric" (36). This, I will argue, is especially the case when the Mars and the Venus are amalgamated in Pepys 2006.

3.8 Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 2006

Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 2006 consists of two parts bound together, the first part spanning from page 1-224, and the second part, page 225-391 (xxiv) (from 392-394 the manuscript ends with a list of contents and lacunae in the manuscript, written in a seventeenth century hand [xxii]). These sections were previously "two larger, originally separate and

181 However, "even if the artist cannot be named," Brantley writes, "the peculiarly English, rather than International, style of the hands suggests that Chaucer's poetry can be associated with visual materials nearer to home than continental manuscripts of the Filostrato or the Roman de la Rose" (175).

182 Brantley questions interpretations that suggest the image speaks to both poems. She suggests that the "structure of the image argues for the separation — or at least the separability — of the first two texts in the manuscript, for it depends upon the narrative of adultery told only in the Complaint of Mars" (176). The artist represents the "classical past in imagery readily readable in Christian terms" by evoking "imagery of baptism connected to Venus" as well as "imagery of prayer connected to Mars" (204). Horobin likewise suggests that the frontispiece is meant to accompany just the Mars (24).

183 This is a common tendency in the circulation of Chaucer's shorter works. In CUL, MS Ii. 3. 21, "The Former Age" and "Truth" are intercalated "with the appropriate metres" in the Boece (Edwards, "Fifteenth-Century Middle English Verse Collections," 103). In BL, MS Add. 10304, Boece is joined by a later hand to unique extracts of the General Prologue and "Truth" with a unique envoy to "form a rather more extensive kind of Boethian vernacular anthology" (103). In Pepys 2006 as well, the Melibee and the Parson's Tale are merged (103).
unrelated manuscripts" (xxvii). Both sections of the manuscript are paper, and both date to the second half of the fifteenth century (though the first part seems earlier than the second) (Edwards xxiii, McKitterick 42). It was rebound for Pepys in the late seventeenth century (xxiii), and Pepys was "presumably the first to bind [the two halves] together" (xxx) (Erler agrees with Edwards's assessment 401). Pepys 2006 contains work by Chaucer and Lydgate in the first part of the manuscript, and the prose pieces from the Canterbury Tales alongside Chaucer's lyrics in the second half (Edwards, Facsimile, xxii). The second half contains nine of Chaucer's twenty-one surviving short poems, making this collection, as Erler points out, the second largest collection of Chaucer's short poems (after Oxford, Bodleian MS Fairfax 16, which contains thirteen of these [401]). Decoration is modest in both sections: the first contains only the "occasional larger initials by the scribe" (xxvii); the second exhibits "regular, albeit fairly crude attempts at decoration throughout," such as pen work that embellishes initials, "an attempt at floral decoration" in yellow, black, and red ink, and some yellow highlighting on initials" (xxvii). According to Edwards there are four scribal hands at work in the manuscript (he disagrees with Hammond who identifies six) (xxv). The scribe, identified as "Scribe E," who copied the Mars-Venus amalgamation in which I am interested, writes in a "large, well formed bastard hand combining elements of anglicana and secretary" (xxv).

The Mars and the Venus are not the only amalgamated or reconfigured texts in the Pepys collection. The Legend of Good Women and the ABC are "disordered" in the second half of the manuscript, reflecting, Edwards suggests, "the imperfect exemplars that were available for

184 Edwards speculates that the second part could have been "copied from a printed source, whether Caxton or Caxton derived" (xxvii). The names of John Kyriell I and/or II and William Fettyplace (410) appear in the second part — see Erler for a discussion of the socio-economic significance of these families. The Kiriel family came from Kent and they were associated with Edmund Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, as well as the Stourton, Cobham, and Chicheley families. William Fetypace was a London Merchant, and possibly the son of John Fetplace, a London draper (McKitterick 43). The first part may have belonged to John Stow in the sixteenth century, due to titles added in a hand resembling his (xxix), but Edwards is not wholly convinced.

185 Erler argues that Pepys appears to have been made for personal use, and that the compiler of the second half of Pepys "was actively interested both in Chaucer's presentation of sophisticated behaviour and in his mockery of it" (410), as evidenced by the presence of moral prose texts and some of the more light-hearted "mocking words of love" (like Merciles Beaute) (409-10).
transcription" (xxii). Other texts, like the *House of Fame* are highly "unreliable" (Edwards xxii), and the first part of the manuscript is missing leaves.

The *Mars-Venus* amalgamation occurs in the second half of Pepys 2006 (from 378-82), copied by hand E. There is no *incipit* or *explicit*, and the *Mars* runs into the *Venus*, maintaining the same layout (though the transition from *Mars* to *Venus* occurs over a page turn [from 380 to 381]). The amalgamation consist of *Mars* lines 1-28, 57-84, and 29-56 followed by *Venus* line 45 to the end (including the envoy). The resulting text follows (I have reproduced the texts from the *Riverside* edition rather than transcribing from Pepys 2006 itself).

Gladeth, ye foules, of the morowe gray.

Lo, Venus, rysen among yon rowes rede,

For when the sunne uprist then wol ye sprede.

But ye lovers, that lye in any drede,

Fleeth, lest wikked tonges yow espye.

Lo, yond the sunne, the candel of jelosye!

Wyth teres blewe and with a wounded herte

Taketh your leve, and with Seint John to borowe

Apeseth sumwhat of your sororwes smerte.

Tyme cometh eft that cese shal your sorowe;

The glade nyght ys worth an hevy morowe—

Seynt Valentyne, a foul thus herde I synge

Upon thy day er sonne gan up-sprynge.
Yet sang this foule — I rede yow al awake,
And ye that han not chosen in humble wyse, 15
Without repentynge cheseth yow your make,
And ye that han ful chosen as I devise,
Yet at the leste renoveleth your servyse.
Confermeth hyt perpetuely to dure,
And paciently taketh your aventure. 20

An for the worship of this highte feste,
Yet wol I, in my briddes wise, synge
The sentence of the compleynt, at the lest,
That woful Mars made atte departying
Fro fresshe Venus in a morwenynge, 25
Whan Phebus with his firy torches rede
Ransaked every lover in hy drede.

Then seyde he thus, "Myn hertes lady swete,
Ye knowe wel my myschef in that place,
For sikerly, til that I with yow mete, 30
My lyf stant ther in aventure and grace;
But when I se the beaute of your face,

Ther ys no drede of deth may do me smerte,

For al your lust is ese to myn herte."

She hath so gret compassioun of the knyght, 35

That dwelleth in solitude til she come—

For hyt stod so that thilke tyme no wight

Counseyled hym ther, ne syde to hym welcome—

That nygh her wit for wo was overcome;

Wherefore she sped her as faste in her weye 40

Almost in oo day as he dyde in tweye.

The grete joye that was betwix hem two

When they be mette ther may no tunge telle.

Ther is no more but unto bed thei go,

And thus in joy and blysse I lete hem duelle. 45

This worthi Mars, that is of knyghthod welle,

The flour of feyrenesse lappeth in his armes,

And Venus kysseth Mars, the god of armes.
Sojourned hath this Mars of which I rede

In chambre amyd the paleys prively

Throgh Phebus, that was comen hastely

Within the paleys yates sturdely,

With touche in honde, of which the stremes bryghte

On Venus chambre knokkeden ful lyghte.

Whilom the thridde hevenes lord above,

As wel by hevenysh revolucioun

As by desert, hath wonne Venus his love,

And she hath take him in subjeccioun,

And as a maistresse taught him his lessoun,

Commaundynge him that nevere, in her servise,

He nere so bold no lover to dispise.

For she forbad him jelosye at al,

And cruelte, and bost, and tyrannye.

She made him at her lust so humble and tal,

That when her deyned to cast on hym her ye,

He tok in pacience to lyve or dye.
And thus she brydeleth him in her manere,

With nothing but with scourging of her chere.

Who regneth now in bllyse but Venus,
That hath thys worthy knygght in governaunce? 70

Who syngeth now but Mars, that serveth thus

The faire Venus, causer of plesaunce?

He bynt him to perpetuall obeisaunce,

And she bynt her to loven him for evere,

But so be that his trespas hyt desevere. 75

Thus be they knyt and regnen as in hevene

Be lokyng moost; til hyt fil on a tyde

That by her bothe assent was set a stevene

That Mars shal entre, as fast as he may glyde,

Into hir nexte paleys, and ther abyde, 80

Walkynge hys cours, til she had hym atake.

And he preide her to haste her for his sake.

Thus be we ever in drede and sufferyng;
In nouncerteyn we languisshe in penaunce,
And han wele ofte many an hard mischaunce,  85
Al the revers of any glad felyng.

But certes, Love, I sey not in such wise
That for t'escape out of youre las I mente,
For I so longe have ben in youre servise
That for to lete of wil I never assente;  90
No fors thogh Jelosye me turmente.
Sufficeth me to sen hym when I may,
And therfore certes, to myndyng day
To love hym best ne shal I never repente.

And certis, Love, when I me wel avise  95
On any estat that man may represente,
Then have ye made me thurgh your fraunchise
Chese the best that ever on erthe wente.
Now love wel, herte, and lok thou never stense,
And let the jelous putte it in assay
That for no peyne wol I not sey nay;  100
To love him best ne shal I never repente.

Herte, to the hit oughte ynogh sufise
That Love so high a grace to the sente
To chese the worthieste in alle wise
And most agreable unto myn entente. 105
Seche no ferther, neythir wey ne wente,
Sith I have suffisaunce unto my pay.
Thus wol I ende this compleynt or this lay;
To love hym best ne shal I never repente.

Princes, receyveth this compleynt in gre,
Unto your excelent benignite 110
Direct after my litel suffisaunce,
For elde, that in my spirit dulleth me,
Hath of endyting al the subtilte
Wel nygh bereft out of my remembraunce,
And eke to me it ys a gret penaunce,
Syth rym in Englissh hath such skarsete,
To folowe word by word the curiosite
This particular combination of Mars and Venus accentuates their shared language and courtly love themes. The excerpted passages emphasize "jelousy" (though in Mars Venus "forbad [Mars] jelosye at al" [62, line numbers correspond to the Pepys 2006 conglomeration] and in the Venus the first person speaker admits to being tormented by jealousy); the sampled texts insist on "choosing a mate" (from Mars: "ye that han not chosen," "cheseth yow your make," "ye that had ful chosen" [now 15-17]; from Venus: "Chese the best that ever on erthe wente" [now 97], "To chese the worthieste in alle wise" [104]); once chosen, mates are bound together, "bynt" and "knyt" (from Mars, now 73, 76), caught forever in the lover's "las" (Venus, now 88).

The transition from the Mars to Venus material within the amalgamation is almost seamless. Both poems' meters are iambic pentameter and they share a rhyme scheme: ABABBCC. However, the stanzas from the Venus have an added refrain, which repeats the B rhyme — they are ballade stanzas. The added refrain and the switch to a ballade stanza have the effect that the Venus material starts to read like an intercalated lyric (within a poem which in its most common form — not melded to Venus in this way — is already a "formal amalgam of narrative and complaint" [Brantley, "Complaint of Mars," 178]). Adding to this effect is the fact that the Venus material is set up to sound like it is uttered by the character Mars. It is introduced by the lines, "...that Mars shal entre, as fast as he may glyde,/ Into hir paleys, and ther abyde,/ Walkynge hys cours, til she had hym atake. And he preide her to haste her for his sake." We would expect "and he preide her..." to initiate direct speech, which it does, making the material that follows — that is, the text that we call the Complaint of Venus, here acting as an inset lyric — Mars's own complaint (since his actual complaint is omitted from this iteration of the text). The amalgamation of the Mars and Venus here is not at all fragmentary but rather very whole.

While the context of this particular iteration suggests that the speaker of the Complaint of Venus in this text is Mars himself, the second refrain "To love hym best ne shal I never repente" casts the identity of the speaker once more into doubt. The pronoun "hym" refers to a male object — and while Mars could still be the speaker (as Holsinger has argued, there is no

186 As Boffey has suggested for Fairfax 16.
concrete evidence that the speaker must be female), Venus cannot be the beloved of this inset lyric as the narrator's lover is, as Holsinger puts it, "unambiguously male" (196). While this version in Pepys 2006, with the *Venus* as an intercalated lyric in *Mars*, could appear to provide a solution to the problem of the speaking voice in the *Venus*, this solution is ultimately thwarted (as it is in the *Venus* when it remains intact, as I have argued).

Pepys 2006, melding the *Mars* and *Venus*, offers an example of plans for future codicological integrity gone awry. The *Venus* is taken out of context, despite the presence of the unifying envoy. However, Pepys 2006 responds to, even extends, the impulse towards textual integrity in Chaucer's *Complaint of Venus*, the form of which reacts against the miscellaneous and variable textual tradition for lyrics — including Graunson's *Cinq Ballades* — in the kinds of collections Chaucer would have read. Boffey provides further evidence of this impulse towards completeness: the *Mars* and the *Venus* frequently circulate as partners in the fifteenth century (36), and they are found side by side in the manuscripts in which they are both preserved (and they appear individually only in two manuscripts respectively, *Mars*: Longleat 258, lines 43-298 only and BL, Harley 7333, lines 1-176 only; *Venus*: Bodleian, Ashmole 59 and Cambridge University Library Ff. 1.6 [Lenaghan 1187]). In Pepys 2006, they are especially unified. No longer merely codicological neighbours, they are melded together, made inseparable at the very same time as their form and content are altered.

3.9 Return to the Envoy and Wholeness in the *Complaint of Venus*

This impulse towards textual integrity in the *Complaint of Venus*, I think, is the simplest explanation for the addition of an envoy that Wimsatt calls a "somewhat anomalous appendage" (*French Contemporaries* 213). According to Wimsatt, "its versification does not relate it to the preceding poem as envoys commonly did, it is much longer than the French poets ever made their envoys, and indeed it is not even like any current ballade stanza" (213). On the one hand, Wimsatt is right. The envoy creates disjoint between the body of the poem and the envoy: its versification changes from "ABABCCCB" to "AABBAABBAAB," and it suggests a switch of speaker (though as I have shown, with great uncertainty), making us all the more tempted to read the voice of the envoy as authorial. On the other hand, as I have shown, the very appendage that
introduces disjoint also creates completeness. It melds itself thematically to the body of the poem, recalling words and concepts, as Scattergood has shown ("Short Poems," 468). It lends the ballade series a poetic form — a triple ballade and envoy — that suggests an intact work, and encourages its circulation as a single piece in contrast to Graunson's five ballades.

To bolster the work of the envoy, Chaucer inserts cues in the text itself to indicate the "wholeness" of his work. Not relying on rubrics in manuscripts, which are subject to scribal discretion, he labels his work internally. In the first line of his envoy, he calls his work "this compleynt" (72). In the penultimate line of the final ballade, his speaker declares, "Thus wol I ende this compleynt or this lay" (71). Graunson's text contains no mention of poetic form. Wimsatt disparages this line, claiming that it "stands alone and adds virtually nothing" (217), noting, "even the lyric types named in this line are uninformative" (217). I suggest that the formal naming is a deliberate move. The terms "lay" and "complaint" can refer to technical formes fixes. The lay, the most technical poetic form in the fourteenth century, is made up of "twelve strophes, divided into sub-sections, all of which must vary in rhyme-scheme, syllable count and number of lines — apart from the last strophe which repeats the first" (Butterfield, "Lyric and Elegy," 37). The definition of the complaint is more fluid (Wimsatt, French Contemporaries, 29), but "both Machaut and Froissart did compose a set form of complainte, which, like the lai, was noted for its technical difficulty" (Butterfield 37). These terms can also be applied more generally, in a non-technical sense. Scattergood argues that Chaucer creates his own mode of complaint: "the complaint (though often included among lists of poetic forms by French poets) in Chaucer is not a form, perhaps not even a genre, but a type of expression" ("Short Poems," 465). The MED gives a wide range of non-technical meanings for the word

187 This resonates with Kathryn Kerby-Fulton's discussion of the "bibliographic ego," as a mechanism for textual control. This can take the form of the inclusion of the "author's curriculum vitae which might serve to reaffirm his purpose, attract new patronage, or explain a new literary course of direction" (79), and which, integrated "within the narrative framework of the text itself" (79), is difficult to excise. Chaucer's misidentification of form, here, is not quite the same, but it exhibits a similar impulse to name and control from within. This might be understood as "bibliographic ego" in that it is a self-conscious maneuver, showing authorial attention (or more precisely deliberate inattention) to poetic form.

188 For more discussion of Machaut's and Froissart's "complaint" form, see Butterfield, "Lyric and Elegy," 37-38. See also Wimsatt, Natural Music, 29.
"lay," including a short narrative poem, a tale, a song, a lyric — this meaning best describes the *Venus* — and the song of a bird (MED "lai"). The *Complaint of Venus* does not meet the technical requirements of the *formes fixes* but it can be considered a lay or complaint in this more general capacity. It is therefore unclear again whether this designation is a perfectly accurate statement by the author about the poem's mode of expression or whether it is a muddled misidentification by a confused speaker. I suggest that, while the poem is a complaint and lay in the broad sense, Chaucer uses this specific vocabulary to gesture toward the more precise and technical applications of these terms. He invokes the cohesive power of set forms, *formes fixes*, to lend the idea of formal integrity to the *Complaint of Venus* and to suggest that it should circulate as a single entity in books. He suggests that his poem be treated as a lay or a complaint — composed of multiple stanzas yet understood to be a single piece — rather than as a series of ballades, the individual units of which could, if the scribe so chooses, be divided up and made to stand alone. This might also explain his description of Graunson's work as "curiosite:" he labels it this way, instead of identifying it by form, subject matter, or title. Chaucer hesitates to identify the poetic form of his source, lest it suggest his work be treated as a series of ballades. Chaucer's strategy seems to have worked. As fifteenth-century manuscript witnesses show, Chaucer's *Complaint of Venus* was for the most part transmitted intact, as we have seen.\(^{189}\)

The envoy is suggestive of competition in Chaucer's attitude towards his source in the *Complaint of Venus*. In controlling the reception of his work from within, poetically, by producing uncertainty in the envoy, and from without, by using the formal cohesion imparted by the envoy to his advantage, Chaucer renders the circulation of the *Venus* more stable than that of Graunson's *Ballades*. At the same time, his mode of self-representation alerts knowing readers to the uncertainties of scribal copying and codicological posterity. He preserves his work, and his poetic reputation, against these uncertainties, ironically, by introducing uncertainty of his own — uncertainty regarding source, speaker, and poetic form. Chaucer reacts to the manuscript culture of the vernacular lyric anthology and fashions his work against it. Perhaps thinking of the way that Machaut's or Froissart's oeuvres could circulate in *de luxe* single-author collections, Chaucer

portrays himself as the sort of author whose works circulate together. Chaucer seems to taunt Graunson: not only is his work superior poetically, it will enjoy a superior transmission, remaining complete for posterity.
Chapter 4
Deschamps's Proposal: An Invitation to Invective and the Usurpation of Poetic Authority

This chapter will revisit as a starting point one of Eustache Deschamps's more well-known works, the "Ballade to Chaucer," in which he apparently praises his English contemporary, calling him "grans en [...] poeterie" (3) and "saiges en rhetorique" (4) [great in poetry... wise in rhetoric]. First, I will situate the poem, as Ardis Butterfield and others have, within the tradition of cross-Channel invective. Then, I will argue, based on a close reading of the text and an analysis of its codicological context, that Deschamps invites Chaucer to participate in a process of literary self-authorization. This self-authorization takes shape in two ways: first Deschamps refers to the precedent for cross-Channel exchange set by Philippe de Vitry and Jean de le Mote in order to lend authoritative weight to his project; second, he takes advantage of the fragility of literary authority — the weakness of which he reveals in Ballade 127 addressed to Guillaume de Machaut as well as in the moral ballades that surround the "Ballade to Chaucer" in BNF f.fr. 840 — to promote himself and Chaucer as the next great literary figures of the age once the authority of their poetic masters has waned. The "Ballade to Chaucer" follows:

O Socrates plains de philosophie,

Seneque en meurs et Anglux en pratique,

Ovides grans en ta poeterie,

Bries en parler, saiges en rethorique,

Aigles treshaulz, qui par ta theorique

Enlumines le regne d'Eneas,

L'Isle aux Geans, ceuls de Bruth, et qui as

Semé les fleurs et planté le rosier,

Aux ignorans de la langue pandras,
Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.

Tu es d'amours mondains Dieux en Albie:

Et de la Rose, en la terre Angelique,

Qui d'Angela saxonne, et puis flourie

Angleterre, d'elle ce nom s'applique

Le derrenier en l'ethimologique

En bon anglès le livre translatas;

Et un vergier ou du plant demandas

De ceuls qui font pour eulx auctoriser,

A ja longtemps que tu edifias

Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.

A toy pour ce de la fontaine Helye

Requier avoir un buvraige autentique,

Dont la doys est du tout en ta baillie,

Pour rafrener d'elle ma soif ethique,

Qui en Gaule seray paralitique,

Jusques a ce que tu m'abuveras.

Eustaces sui, qui de mon plant aras:
Mais pran en grè les euvres d'escolier
Que par Clifford de moy avoir pourras,
Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.

L'Envoy

Poete hault, loenge [d'escuirie]¹⁹⁰
En ton jardin ne seroye qu'ortie:
Considere ce que j'ai dit premier,
Ton noble plant, ta douce mélodie.
Mais pour sçavoir, de rescripre te prie,
Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier.¹⁹¹

Butterfield's translation follows. Later I will revisit the translation and suggest changes for the first stanza.

O Socrates, full of philosophy,
Seneca in morality, Aulus in the world,
great Ovid in your poetry,
concise in speech, and wise in rhetoric,

¹⁹⁰ In the manuscript, this word is difficult to decipher. Butterfield suggests "destruye," "d'escuiye," or "d'escuirie." I have used the word which, I think, yields the most likely reading.

¹⁹¹ I have reproduced the text from Ardis Butterfield's edition in the Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War, 144-6.
an eagle on high, who, by your knowledge
illuminates the kingdom of Aeneas—
The island of the Giants, those of Brutus—
and who has sown flowers and planted the rosebush,
you will take the language to those who don't know it:
Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.

You are the earthly God of love in Albion.
and of the Rose, in the [angelic] land of Angles,
which from the Saxon Angela, then flowered
into the name of Angletere, the last name in the etymological series;
and you translated the Rose into good English;
and for a long time you have been constructing an orchard
for which you asked for plants from those
who create authority for themselves.
Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.

And for this reason, from the fountain of Helicon
I ask to have from you a genuine draught
of which the source is entirely under your jurisdiction
with which to quench my feverish thirst,

and I'll remain in Gaul paralysed

Until the time you let me drink it.

I am Eustache, whose plants you will have;

But take them in good spirit, these school-boyish writings,

That you will receive from me by Sir Lewis Clifford.

Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.

Envoy

Elevated poet, famed among squires,

I would be a mere nettle in your garden

if you consider what I said at the beginning

about your noble plant, and your sweet melody.

But I beg you provide me with an official response, so that I can confirm it:

Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer. 192

192 In these stanzas, Geoffrey Chaucer is in the vocative in apposition to "Socrates, Seneca, Ovid etc." While the form "Geoffrey Chaucer" appears to be in the object case — for instance in apposition with "te" (35), also in the object case, in the envoy — this is in form only. This is a direct address and requires a vocative, which, in Old French, would have been expressed in the subject case. However in this period, Middle French starts to lose its case endings and the usage of declension breaks down (Burdy 30).
4  Butterfield's Rereading of the "Ballade to Chaucer" as Invective: Contextualization within the Hundred Years War and the Vitry-Le Mote Exchange

Foundational scholarship has interpreted this ballade as it appears at first: as a panegyric. Kittredge, for instance, in 1903, considered it "highly complimentary" ("Chaucer and Some of his Friends," 6), and most subsequent scholars have agreed (see Jenkins, or Pearcy 268). Despite this general tendency, reading this poem conversely, as invective, is not new: Deschamps's borrowing from the Philippe de Vitry and Jean de Le Mote exchange has long since been pointed out by James Wimsatt (Poems of "CH," 133; Chaucer and his French Contemporaries, 253). Philippe de Vitry (1291-1361) — a poet praised by Petrarch, musician, senior member of the French royal administration, and bishop (Diekstra 504) — initiated this ballade exchange with Jean de Le Mote by writing invective to Le Mote, who had moved across the Channel to England. Wimsatt suggests that the exchange would have been well-known in Chaucer's England (Poems of "CH," 57) (and later in this chapter I will evaluate Wimsatt's suggestion in light of the codicological evidence for the circulation of Vitry-Le Mote ballade pair). Wimsatt, though identifying Deschamps's use of Vitry's attack and Le Mote's reply, does not interpret Deschamps's poem as insulting.

In a pioneering reading, Ardis Butterfield delves further into the import of these allusions and argues that Deschamps is flavouring his own ballade with a hint of censure, "accusing" Chaucer of being a mere translator (Familiar Enemy, 237). Reading this ballade as invective offers interesting ways to reinterpret the poem within the context of the Hundred Years War (especially given Deschamps's contemptuous attitude towards the English in other ballades). I will present here in some detail Ardis Butterfield's work, since my own interpretation builds on and slightly shifts her reading. While she approaches the exchange from a socio-historical perspective,

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193 Representing Jean II in the papal court at Avignon (Butterfield 128).
194 The exchange dates to the middle of the fourteenth century (Wimsatt situates it between 1340 and 1361 [Poems of "CH" 73]) and survives in two manuscripts: Pennsylvania Library, MS Codex 902 (c.1400) and Paris, BNF, Latin 3343 (15th century). In the Paris manuscript, this exchange is followed by a second attack, this time instigated by Jean Campion, Vitry's disciple, to whom Le Mote replies much more scathingly.
thinking about how the invective fits within broader Anglo-French relations during the Hundred
Years War, I will read the poem within a developing literary tradition of cross-Channel
invective. Butterfield reads Deschamps's "Ballade to Chaucer" alongside its primary source, the
cross-Channel debate between Philippe de Vitry and Jean de Le Mote. Implying that Le Mote
would be condemned to the deepest circles of hell for his poetic crimes, Vitry berates him for his
associations with Edward III and the English court — You serve foolishly ["Nicement
sers"(5)] in Albion cursed by God — and ridicules his poetry, accusing him of throwing around
"nons divers/ Dont aucuns enfes scet user" (23-4) [diverse names which any child knows how to
use]. Le Mote responds deferentially but unapologetically. He addresses the master as a
"mondains Dieu d'armonie" (1) [earthly God of harmony] but insists, "Ne je sui point de la
nacion/ De terre en Grec Gaulle de Dieu amee" (9-10) [I am not at all from the nation called
Gaul in Greek, loved by God].

The Vitry-Le Mote and the Deschamps-Chaucer exchanges belong to a broader context of
fourteenth and fifteenth-century Anglo-French invective. Because of the muddied and
problematic division between "French" and "English" in this period, Butterfield suggests that the
exchange of invective provides more than just "evidence of raw nationalist feeling" (113): it
represents, rather, a sorting out of — a negotiating and a staking claim to — linguistic and
cultural sameness and difference. In doing so, the invective mode allows writers to create, shape,
and imagine discursive difference rather than defend understood or conventional rhetorical
territory.

Given the linguistic nature of this battleground, Vitry's invective is primarily about language and
"poetic allegiance" (Butterfield 129) rather than Le Mote's geographical relocation across the
Channel. Vitry accuses Le Mote's French of deteriorating ("his tongue as he passes over the fiery
channel between Gaul and Albion has been condemned for speaking disreputable, unlearned,
indeed childish babble" [127]). Le Mote's reply is a "returned gift" (127) that answers every
point of Vitry's poem. He declares that he is not from the land called "Gaul" because his poetry
"does not speak narrowly from within one context" (127). His allegiance is not just to France,
England, Hainault etc. Turning to Deschamps's "Ballade to Chaucer," Butterfield teases out the

195 "Possibly stimulated by Philippa of Hainault," suggests Diekstra (504).
dual connotations of Deschamps's apparent praise. The text is "full of puns and inversions, sly jokes that stretch out the representations of 'English' from Anglux (Latin) to Angela (Saxon) and Angleterre (Anglo-French)" (149). She writes,

... Deschamps constantly insists, right through his praise of Chaucer, that the terms [of his praise] are two-edged: Chaucer's poetic talents are drawn from a source 'en ta baillie,' a choice of word which pointedly underlines the uncomfortable fact of English military control while it pretends merely to laud Chaucer's poetic mastery [...] One might add that the spirit of contest is generally uppermost in a request for a poem in late medieval French poetry: the request functions as an aggressive challenge. A further hint as to Deschamps's competitive tone occurs in the image of the garden in Stanza 2: he grows the plants, Chaucer merely picks them. (150)

As Butterfield has shown, there is precedent for the hint of invective in the "Ballade to Chaucer," and there is a challenge latent in his ultimate request for poetry ("de rescripre te prie"). I will argue that as well as opening up a competition through this cross-Channel trash-talk, Deschamps is doing something even more subtle and meta-poetic. He is extending to Chaucer an invitation to adopt the invective of their predecessors, Vitry and Le Mote, as a literary mode, both in earnest — for we must not overlook the very real impact of the Hundred Years War — and in play.

4.1 The Problem of "Pandras"

In order to set in motion this exchange of invective, Deschamps must deliver some insults of his own, modeling for Chaucer what he proposes they do. I will now turn to stanza one, the meaning of which is complicated by scholarly disagreement over the possible meaning of the word "pandras" in the phrase spanning from "qui a semé les fleurs" to "aux ignorans de la langue pandras." I will present scholarly readings of "pandras," eliminating those that are not viable. I will then propose a new possible solution, one which supports my reading of Deschamps's invitation to invective and play. My reinterpretation of "pandras" reveals Deschamps accusing Chaucer of shameless self-promotion. At the same time, I suggest, Deschamps sees the potential of self-promotion and hints that he and Chaucer could use it as their own literary tactic.
Scholars such as Butterfield and Wimsatt have suggested that "pandras" is a verb — a reading which allows for a pleasing symmetry in the ballade, making the first stanza grammatically parallel to the second and third. Readings of this potential verb have included "to pander to" (a variation on Mieszkowski's suggestion of "Pandarus" [327], discussed below), "to take," (Butterfield 147), and "to spread" (Wimsatt, *Natural Music*, 250). "To pander to" is unlikely since it is unattested in French, and unattested in other languages in this period. Butterfield's suggestion can also be ruled out. While she translates "pandras" as a form of "prandre," which is a common variant, she translates "to take ... to" — a meaning which "prandre" in Old and Middle French cannot sustain — and supplies "the language" as the direct object. The construction "prendre" with the preposition "a" (or, in this case, "aux.... pandras") means "to seize" or "to take away," not "to take toward" or "to bring." Deschamps's ballade "Contre les Riches" (Vol. I, III, page 73), demonstrates this construction, reading: "Car riches veult les autres subvertir/ et tout avoir; prandre aux povres le leur..." (11-12) [The rich want to subvert the others/ And have everything; take from the poor their belongings...].

Wimsatt's translation, "to offer," derived from "esperduras" — literally, to "expand," "to spread" — remains possible. Supporting this interpretation, Rothwell mentions "pandre" as a form of "esperandre" as cited by Bibbesworth in his *Tretiz*, which was "composed to teach French to Anglophone landowners around the middle of the thirteenth century" (Rothwell 270). Wimsatt's reading of "pandras" as a verb requires a direct object. Drawing on the light-related imagery of the stanza ("enlumines") — and breaking down his proposed "illuminate" in order to circumvent

196 Professor Dorothea Kullmann suggests that "pandras" could come from the verb "pendre," yielding "you will hang from the tongue of the ignorant people" (Personal email, 5 Dec. 2015). This is clearly an insult, and this reading supports an interpretation of the ballade as an instance of invective.

197 "To take" and "to spread" require a direct object.

198 Butterfield gives as an example its appearance in a thirteenth-century text *La Paix aux Anglais* where Henry III is depicted as saying "Je pandra bien Parris, je suis toute certaine" (*Familiar Enemy* 147) [I will take Paris easily, I am completely certain].

199 Butterfield also writes that "pandre could be an aphaetic form of *apprendre* [...] though the syntax would be more awkward to construe" (148).
the problem of the object — Wimsatt supplies "light," and translates, "you will spread the light." His reading requires a previous image (illumination) to do double duty as an implied object.

Scholars have also suggested that we might read "pandras" as a noun. Pearcy (38), and earlier scholars such as Jenkins (272-3) and Toynbee (482), understand "pandras" as a noun in the genitive depending on "la langue," meaning the language of Pandrasus, the Greek king from Wace's Brut. Pandrasus is not a character from the Brut who enjoys much fame, nor is he connected to England in any particular way, and so this reading is, arguably, a stretch. Eugen Lerch (later supported by Mieszkowski [327]) argues that "Pandras" could refer to the proper noun "Pandarus" ("Zu Einer Stelle bei ED," 68), yielding something along the lines of "you, oh great translator Geoffrey Chaucer, are a Pandarus to those ignorant of the French language." As Wimsatt has pointed out (340 n. 32), in order for "pandras" to work as a noun, the reader must supply a form of "to be" or, I add, understand the descriptions of Chaucer in the opening stanza as dependent on the "tu es" in the first line of the second stanza. However, given that the meanings of "pandras" as a noun are unlikely, as I have shown, and given that reading "pandras" as a verb establishes grammatical parallelism with the other stanzas in the body of the poem (the penultimate lines of stanzas two and three end with verbs in the second person singular ["edifias," 19; "pourras," 29]), I suggest that reading "pandras" as a verb is the most viable solution.

I would like to put forward a new reading of "pandras" as a verb. We might hone Wimsatt's interpretation and read "pandras" as a French coinage of the Latin pando, pandere (its primary meaning in Lewis and Short is "to spread out, extend, unfold, expand"). Wimsatt's missing prefix is unnecessary and Deschamps's ballade could offer a unique surviving case of this use of "pandre." For readers with some familiarity with Latin, "pandras" would have at least resonated with the Latin pando, pandere. For those with a greater Latin proficiency, "pandras" evokes the literary sense of the Latin pando, commonly used by well-known Latin authors like Virgil and

200 I am indebted to Professor Alexandra Gillespie for suggesting this reading (Personal email, 6 Oct. 2015).
Ovid, and referring figuratively to language and speech: "to unfold, make known, publish, reveal, explain" (Lewis and Short, "Pando").

Deschamps, I suggest here, could be participating in a relatively common practice of creating Latinate neologisms as a way of bringing Latin into French. This became a necessary strategy for transmitting Latin learning into the vernacular under the translation movement of Charles V (Kelly 264-265), patron to both Machaut and Deschamps. Serge Lusignan explains the impulses behind this practice:

les déficiences du lexique français [...] se situent à deux niveaux. Il existe d'une part des mot latins pour lesquels le français ne se dispose tout simplement pas d'équivalents. Ces mots nomment des réalités inconnues de la culture vernaculaire. Dans d'autres cas, le lexique de la langue vernaculaire n'offre comme équivalents des terms latins que des mots auxquels il manque la qualité nécessaire pour les faire accéder au registre de l'expression savante. Dans un cas comme dans l'autre, le traducteur préfère créer un néologisme qui, sans exception, sera un calque du mot latin. (152)

Deschamps, I suggest, responds to this second need. He requires a word that means "to publish," but the Old French word "publier" does not quite convey the elevated tone he desires.

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201 As opposed to the reading "prandre/prendre," which is derived from the vulgar Latin form, "prendere" (for "prehendere": to seize) (Dictionnaire du Moyen Français, "Prendre").

202 For the creation of neologisms in English from Latin and French, see Cannon, The Making of Chaucer's English: A Study of Words.

203 Translators also make use of other techniques like glossing, periphrasis, and creating lexicons (Lusignan 152).

204 Rickard elaborates on this cultural context: "The prestige of Latin, the view that French was inferior to it, and the activity of such translators as, in the fourteenth century, Nicolas de Vérone (Lucan), Pierre Bersuire (Livye), Raoul de Presles (St Augustine), and Nicolas Oresme (Aristotle in Latin), and in the fifteenth Jean de Rovroy (Frontinus), Jean le Bègue (Sallust), Vasque de Lucène (Quintus Curtius), Robert Gaguin (Julius Caesar), Laurent de Premierfait (Cicero), and Octovien de Saint Gelais (Virgil), led to an influence of Latin on French which went far beyond mere renovation of vocabulary" (77-8).

205 As Rickard writes, "neologisms coined in Latin [had] more prestige and novelty value" than their French alternatives (76).
"Publier" is related to the adjective "puble," from Latin "publicus," meaning public, vulgar, established by the people ("puble," Dictionnaire du Moyen Français). The verbal form, first attested in Chrétien de Troyes (ca.1175), suggests "to render public, to repeat, to say everywhere" ("puble," DMF).\(^{206}\) It seems to have lowlier connotations associated with rumour spreading, repeating, and gossiping. Deschamps may coin "pandras" for its specific literary valences: it evokes a Latin literary tradition and gestures to the Ovidian indebtedness of his sources, the ballades of Vitry and Le Mote (Plumley 255).

I would further add that the Vitry and Le Mote exchange, and Campion's later contribution (Appendix A), draw attention to neologism in poetry. Vitry and Campion attack Le Mote for this very practice. According to Vitry, Le Mote's "amoureus diz" are "couvers/ De noms divers" [his love poems are covered in diverse names] (23-4). Campion, the disciple of Vitry, takes up his master's mantle, developing this accusation against Le Mote with greater precision: "Quant en ses dis noms de Bretesque mait/ Qui n'ont cogneu poete en Meonie,/ En Manthe, en Peligne, en Verone..." (15-17) [Since he puts into his poems bizarre names unknown to poets in Maeonia, Mantua, Peligni, or in Verona] (trans. Wimsatt, Natural Music, 66). The implication is that Le Mote invents these "unknown" names. These allegations have some grounds, and Le Mote's ballades are proof that Latinate coinages occur in poetry as well as learned translation. Le Mote "improvis[es...] names," Wimsatt describes, "to lend authenticity to his fabrications" (71), and

\(^{206}\) In Cligès it is used to describe spreading rumour and news.

Ensí demande cist et cil :
"Qui est cist anfes, qui est il?",
Tant que par tote la cité
An sevent tuit la verité,
Et le suen non et le son pere
Et le covant que l'emperere
Li avoit fet et otroié.
S'est ja tant dit et puepleié (2931-2938).

[Thus this one and that one ask, "who is this child, who is he?," so much that throughout the whole city everyone knows the truth about it, and his own name, and the name of his father, and about the covenant that the emperor made and granted to him. Thus it is so much said and published/spread among the people].
endows these names with "pseudo-classical credentials" (Wimsatt 70).\footnote{Le Mote may have been the author of a ballade that invents the existence of nine female worthies: "Neuf Preuses" (Wimsatt, Natural Music, 67).} Froissart too invents names, such as "Enclimpostair" (28) in the Paradis d'Amour [Wimsatt 75].\footnote{Perhaps we can read Chaucer's "Lollius" in this context.} Deschamps's ballade alludes to Vitry's and Campion's accusation. He improvises a word, "pandras," in a poem that takes as its source invective condemning this type of practice. His allusion is playful and, of course, not quite analogous to the proper name neologisms in question, but it also highlights the invective nature of his ballade to Chaucer: Deschamps puts into play this underlying literary point of contention at the moment he describes Chaucer's own poetic activities.

Latin pando, pandere, when it means "to publish," is transitive and requires a direct object (Lewis and Short), though the construction of the verb could have changed in its new French context. "Pandras," then, could stand alone as "you will publish" or "pandras" could take an unexpressed neuter object pronoun "le" — "it" — since in Old French pronouns can be supplied.\footnote{See Jensen, Old French and Comparative Gallo-Romance Syntax, 155-6; Donaldson, "Null Objects in Old French," Research on Old French, 82.} The phrases "you will publish" and "you will publish it" necessarily raise the question, "what will you publish?". There are two possible implied answers to this question, the meanings of which are suggested by the stanza (even though they are not functioning as the actual grammatical objects of "pandras").

The most straightforward answer to what Chaucer will publish is his writing. There is, in the ballade, a clear allusion to one of his works, Chaucer's English translation of Roman de la Rose: the "Rose" (12), implied by the "rosier" (8). The "Rose" and the "rosier" serve other grammatical functions (the "rosier" is the object of another verb, "qui as" [line 7]), but Chaucer's Romaunt of the Rose can still be evoked by these allusions as a possible reading for what Chaucer will publish (just as Wimsatt's "light" is evoked by "enlumines").
I might also suggest that Deschamps evokes the refrain, "Geoffrey Chaucer," as another possible implied object of Chaucer's publication. By publishing, full-stop, by publishing writing, and by publishing the Romance of the Rose, it follows that Chaucer publishes himself — makes himself known — and self-promotes. There are alternative solutions then: the reader interprets, "you, who have sown the flowers and planted the rose bush, will publish [it] [the Romauunt of the Rose]." Reaching the refrain, the reader could infer, "you will publish [yourself as noble Geoffrey Chaucer]." The result is playful and literary invective. Either way, the line conveys: "you self-promote through the dissemination of your poetry."

Deschamps's literary sources support this reading of "pandras" as derived from "pando," "to publish." A relevant example comes from Ovid's Metamorphoses, when Perseus addresses Andromeda:

Ut stetit, "o" dixit "non istis digna catenis,

sed quibus inter se cupidi iunguntur amantes,
pande requirenti nomen terraeque tuumque,
et cur vincla geras." (4.678-81)

[He said: "Oh! those are not the chains you deserve to wear, but rather those that link fond lovers together! Tell me, for I would know, your country's name and yours, and why you are chained here." (Translation by Miller)]

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210 I have found only one translation that comes close to interpreting the line in this way. This appears in early editions and translations of Huizinga's Autumn of the Middle Ages. Huizinga interprets "pandras" to mean something like: "you will pour yourself forth" (see, for example, note on page 388, Payton translation). This interpretation is given without comment. In later editions, Huizinga takes up the position that "pandras" refers to Pandarus of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde (1932 edition, page 397, note 4, Bastin translation).

211 Other possible Latin examples of "pando" as "publish" include Virgil and Lucretius:

"Sit mihi fas audita loqui: numine vestro/ Pandere res alta terra et caliginis mersas" (Aeneid 6.266-7). [Permit me to utter the secrets I have heard: May I have your divine permission to disclose things buried in the deep earth and darkness (Trans. Davidson, vol. II, 133)]; "Accipe ergo animis atque haec mea figite dicta:/ Quae Phoebus omnipotens, mihi Phoebus Apollo/ Praedixit, vobis furiarum ego maxima pando." (Aeneid 3.252) [Lend then an ear, and in your
This excerpt resonates with Deschamps's poem: Deschamps names Ovid as a poetic authority in the "Ballade to Chaucer" (he compares Chaucer to "Ovides grans en ta poeterie" [3]); the ballade's primary source, the Vitry le Mote exchange, is itself heavily indebted to Ovid (Plumley 255); like this passage from the Metamorphoses, the "Ballade to Chaucer's" first stanza is preoccupied with names and naming. The first stanza emphasizes the importance of naming by alluding to but withholding names. The reader must supply the name of Chaucer, who, described in similes, is not explicitly named until the final line of the first stanza. Likewise, the first stanza describes "Angleterre" indirectly as the "regne d'Eneas/ L'Isle aux Geans" (6-7), naming it only in the second stanza. Finally the reader supplies the name "Rose" as an implied object of "pandras," a name that is, yet again, hinted at with "rosier" and only given in the following stanza. 212

Given all of this, we might tentatively reread stanzas one and two:

Oh (you) Socrates, full of philosophy

(You) Seneca in custom, and Aulus in practice,

(You) Ovid, great in your poetry,

Concise of speech, wise in rhetoric,

(Oh you) Eagle on high, who by your theory Illuminates the kingdom of Eneas,

The isle of giants — those of Brutus — and who has minds fix these my words: what almighty father Jove revealed to Phoebus, Phoebus Apollo to me, I the chief of the Furies disclose to you (Davidson, vol. I, 320); Omnem rerum naturam pandere dicti (Lucretius, De rerum natura, 52, Proem V).[To unfold by his pronouncements all / The nature of the world (Trans. Dutton)]

212 And a name that hints at the Roman de la Rose and Chaucer's English translation of it.
Sown the flowers and planted the rose bush,

To the ones ignorant of the language you will publish [scil.: it, the *Rose*, or: yourself as]

Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.

The outcome of such readings is unquestionably antagonistic: the invective starts to take shape as Deschamps hints that there is something self-promoting in Chaucer's poetic exploits. This theme is developed in stanza two, where we can read Chaucer's own poetic aims in parallel with "ceuls qui font pour eulx auctoriser." According to Deschamps, as well as being self-promoting and self-constructing, Chaucer is interested in creating a reputation for himself in the same way as those authors whose poetry he seeks.

4.2 The Invitation

Why is Deschamps writing invective to Chaucer? This is a difficult question, since the nature of their relationship remains uncertain. Scholarly opinion is divided: some assume that Deschamps was well-versed in Chaucer's poetry, and they see allusions to the *House of Fame*, for example, in Deschamps's "aigles treshaulz" [very lofty eagle]. Others have argued that Deschamps probably only knew of Chaucer indirectly through the reports of their mutual acquaintance, Sir Lewis Clifford, and that he found only Chaucer's translation of the *Roman de la Rose* worth remembering (Calin, "Deschamps's 'Ballade to Chaucer' Again," 79). His praise, then, is purely formulaic and rhetorical (79).

It would be understandable that a poet might compose invective for a long-time rival, but what if they barely even knew of each other? I suggest that a possible answer lies in the envoy, where Deschamps begs, "de rescripre te prie."

This is an invitation for Chaucer to respond with invective of his own (in fact, it is not uncommon for an English poet to get swept up in French courtly debate — we need only think of Hoccleve and his engagement with the work of Christine de Pizan within the context of the
More specifically, this is a call to take up the mantles of Vitry and Le Mote, whose exchange is a source for this ballade (see below).

Deschamps draws upon the earlier ballade pair not only for material (he wields Le Mote's classical allusions, invokes Ovid, and calls his addressee a "mondains dieux" [earthly god]) but also to put these literary forefathers to practical, intertextual use. First, Deschamps resurrects them as a subtle and unspoken way of informing Chaucer of what he wants him to do. For, if he and Chaucer had had minimal prior contact, the purpose of this ballade may have been confusing to its recipient. But the references to this more famous instance of cross-Channel invective, read alongside the explicit request to write back, do meta-poetic work. They enable Deschamps to set out the parameters of the literary proposition: that is to take up the positions of Vitry and Le Mote, and participate in a similar exchange. Whether he had read Chaucer's work or had heard of it through Clifford, Deschamps recognized that they were uniquely situated to do something interesting poetically: to be the Vitry and Le Mote of their generation.

4.3 The Importance of the Vitry and Le Mote Ballades

The renown of the prior poetic exchange legitimizes the new project, and I will here pause on the Vitry-Le Mote ballades, and think about what kind of precedent these set for Deschamps's cross-Channel exchange of invective. I reproduce them here with Vitry's ballade first, followed

\[\text{\footnotesize \ref{213} Butterfield picks up on this when she casts Deschamps as saying, "Write back [...] translate me back, abuse me while you cultivate me" (151). Butterfield sees the invective of this ballade as a linguistic competition and play: Deschamps, accusing Chaucer of being a translator, shows him as "taking French into English, an act for which Deschamps cannot help but praise him. But he couches that praise in the old language of internecine warfare: a half language, an English that is 'bon' but unfixed, somewhere between Latin, Saxon and French, somewhere in the crossing between island and continent" (151). This is interesting, and her analysis gets at the subtext of Deschamps's etymological asides.}
\]

\[\text{\footnotesize \ref{214} Vitry and Le Mote are not, in fact, significant sources of actual poetic matter, and Deschamps could have chosen to appropriate much more potent invective from the exchange.}
\]

\[\text{\footnotesize \ref{215} Wimsatt suggests that these pieces might have been circulating at the English court, where Chaucer could have encountered them: "They are effective poems, written by well-known authors, which had special topical interest for the English court" (Poems of "CH," 74).}
\]
by Le Mote's response, as they appear in Wimsatt's edition (Poems of "CH," 66-68). Translations are his.

De terre en Grec Gaule appellee,

[Castor fuitis fuyans com cers,]

En Albion de flun nommee,

Roys A[n]theus devenus serfs,\(^1\)

Nicement sers 5

Quant sons fais d'anfent fains amer

D'amour qu'Orpheus ot despite,

Laou tu n'as d'amour fors l'amier,

En Albion de Dieu maldicte.

T'ombre de fuite yert accusee 10

Par Radamantus le pevers

Et de roy Minnos condemnee

A vii. tours de queue a revers;

Et a cupers

[Contraindra] ta langue a l'aper, 15

Comme de renoie traite,

\(^{216}\) I have changed this name to "Antheus" (Wimsatt reads, "Autheus"). See note 218. I have replaced the period with a comma.
De Flagiton, l'amere mer,
En Albion de Dieu maldite.

Certes, Jehan, la fons Cirree
Ne te congnoit, ne li lieu vers 20
Ou maint la vois Caliopee.

Car amoureus diz fais couvers
De noms divers.

Dont aucuns enfes scet user

Come tu, qui ne vaulz une mite 25
A Pegasus faire voler,
En Albion de Dieu maldite.

[Out of the land called Gaul in Greek,
In flight, like a deer fleeing Castor,
To Albion named for a river,\textsuperscript{217}

King A[n]theus, [having become a serf]\textsuperscript{218}]

\textsuperscript{217} I have changed Wimsatt's "the river" to "a river" to reflect the fact that there is no article in the French text.

\textsuperscript{218} Wimsatt interprets this figure as King Arthur (and he gives "Autheus" in his edition of the French text). For this interpretation to function grammatically, we have to understand the subject case form of this name, despite its function as an object, as the result of the loss of declension in
You serve foolishly
When you pretend to love [sounds made by a child]\(^\text{219}\)
With a love that Orpheus [found]\(^\text{220}\) hateful,
There where you have no love except bitterness,
In Albion cursed by God.

Your shade in flight will be accused
By Rhadamanthus the perverse
And condemned by King Minos
With seven turns of his tail backwards;
And with reproaches
He will constrain your tongue to loosen

Middle French (Burdy 30). Professor Dorothea Kullmann has suggested that the figure could be interpreted as one of the kings named "Antheus" in classical and medieval Latin literature. She considers Antheus, the adversary of Hercules and the son of Poseidon and Gaia, the most likely candidate because of his connection with earth, or "terre" (1), in the ballade. She suggests that this name could be interpreted in the subject case in apposition to the subject "you, Le Mote." This would read: "you, Antheus, having become a serf." I have corrected this line in Wimsatt's translation (which read, "you have become a serf."). Butterfield and Diekstra also read "Antheus," interpreting this figure as "Actaeon" (Familiar Enemy 122; "The Poetic Exchange," 508).

\(^{219}\) I have changed this from Wimsatt's translation, "his youthful deeds" (in this reading "sons" would have to be an incorrect form of "ses," a third-person possessive adjective in the object case, plural). Many thanks to Professor Dorothea Kullmann for suggesting this correction.

\(^{220}\) I have changed "finds" to "found."
As with a renegade traitor,

At Phlegethon, the bitter sea,

In Albion cursed by God.

Indeed, John, the fountain of Cirrha

Does not know you, nor the green place

Where the voice of Calliope stays.

For you make amorous poems filled

With divers names.

Now any child knows how to write

Like you, who are not able one whit

To make Pegasus fly

In Albion cursed by God.

O Victriens, mondains dieu d'armonie,

Filz Musicians et per a Orpheus,

Supernasor de la fontaine Helye,

Doctores vrays, en ce pratique Anglus,

Plus clers véans et plus agus qu'Argue.

Angles [en chant], cesse en toy le lyon!
Ne fais de moy Hugo s'en Albion
Ne je suis point de la nacion
De terre en Grec Gaulle de Dieu amee.

Mais folle atisse, enluminans envie,
Par fauls proces, raportes d'Oleus.
T'a fait brasser buvrage a trop de lie
Sur moy, qui ay de toy fait Zephirus,
Car en la fons Cirree est tes escus;
Tous jours l'ay dit sans adulacion.
Or m'as donne a cupers Flangiton,
Fleuve infernal, et les vij. tours d'entree
Sept tourmens sont. Je ne vueil pas tel don
De terre en Grec Gaulle de Dieu amee.

Contre mal bien servir sers en Albie

²²¹ There is some editorial disagreement arising from the reading of this line in BNF Latin 3343. Wimsatt, using Pennsylvania Codex MS 902 as his base text, supplies "chiers" here from BNF Latin 3343. Both Butterfield and Diekstra render the line as "Castor, [ne leus], ne roys serfs
Et se li roys Minos enquisiert ma vie
Il trouvera Eclo et ses vertus
Pour contrester contre Radamiatus 25
S'il m'acusoit d'aucune traison.
N'ains [nons ne mis en fable n'en] chançon
Qui n'ait servi en aucune contree.
Sy te supplie, ne banny mon bon nom
De terre en Grec Gaulle de Dieu amee. 30

[O man of Vitry, worldly god of harmony,
Son of Music and peer of Orpheus,
Greater Naso of the fountain of Helicon,
True doctor, Aulus Gellius in this practice,
More clear-sighted and more acute than Argus,
Angel in song, restrain the lion in you!
Do no make Hugo of me because I am in Albion.

[Antheus]" (square brackets representing additions from BNF Latin 3343) (122; 509). I have adopted the reading "serfs."

222 I have emmended "Autheus" to "Antheus" to correspond to the reading of the figure above. This is Butterfield's interpretation of the name as well (125).
I never had inspiration of flight elsewhere.
And I in no way belong to the nation
Of the land in Greek called Gaul, loved by God.

The report of Eolus always incites foolishly
By false process, inflaming envy.
It has made you brew a drink with too many dregs
For me, who have made of you Zephirus,
For your shield is in the fountain of Cirrha;
I have always said it without flattery.
Now you have given me with reproaches Phlegethon,
The infernal river, and the seven turns upon entering
Are seven torments. I do not wish such a gift
From the land in Greek called Gaul, loved by God.

Serving well against evil I serve in Albion,

[As] Castor, Pollux, and [serf], King A[theus].

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223 Wimsatt and Butterfield add negation to the line (Wimsatt translates, "Not Castor..."; Butterfield and Diekstra give, "I am neither..."[125: 511]). However, the "ne" does not negate the line because there is no negated verb (such as "ne suis"). Here "ne" functions as the conjunction "et." The names in this line are in the subject case in apposition to "I," so I have added "as" for clarity.
And if King Minos is seeking my life

He will find Echo and her powers

To contest against Rhadamanthus,

If he accuse[d]\textsuperscript{224} me of any treason.

I never put a name in fable or song

Which would not have served in [some]\textsuperscript{225} country.

So I entreat you, do not banish my good name

From the land in Greek called Gaul, loved by God.

\textbf{4.4 University of Pennsylvania MS Codex 902}

This exchange survives in two fifteenth-century manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania MS codex 902 and BNF Fonds Latin, 3343. Pennsylvania MS codex 902 has been worked on at length by James Wimsatt (\textit{Chaucer and the Poems of "CH"}) and more recently by Elizaveta Strakhov (dissertation, \textit{Politics in Translation: Language, war, and lyric form in Francophone Europe, 1337-1400}). Wimsatt covers substantial ground: he suggests that Pennsylvania MS codex 902 is connected to the English literary scene, providing "a direct entrée to social, historical, and literary aspects of the poetic world in the London courts in the mid-fourteenth century when Chaucer first came on the scene" (2). The manuscript contains 310 poems (more than 160 by anonymous authors), all of which were composed between 1330 and 1400 (2-3). The works that are attributed to authors were composed by the likes of Machaut, Graunson, Deschamps, Margival, and le Mote (3). Wimsatt speculates that Oton de Graunson himself might

\textsuperscript{224} I have changed "accuses" to "accused" to reflect the imperfect form of "accuser."

\textsuperscript{225} I have changed this from "any" country.
have been the compiler of Pennsylvania MS codex 902, a theory which I discuss in Chapter 3 on Oton de Graunson.226

In Pennsylvania MS codex 902, the Vitry-Le Mote ballades appear together as items 62 and 63 (fols. 23b-23c), preceded by anonymous ballades. The ballade directly before the pair, with the refrain "Tant que je peusse ma dame en aide avoir" (Poems of "CH," 105), may have been composed by Le Mote, given its "multiple classical allusions" (106). A lay (incipit "Se fortune destinee et menee" [106]) immediately follows the pair, after which appears another series of ballades.

To summarize, Wimsatt describes Pennsylvania MS codex 902 as being gathered together by a courtly poet, as containing works composed and circulating on both sides of the Channel, and as being read by royalty at the French court. His description locates the Vitry-Le Mote exchange in England, at court, during Graunson's residence there. Wimsatt suspects that Chaucer would have known the ballade exchange, based on Le Mote's prominence at the English court. Records dating from 1327, 1338, and 1343 connect Le Mote to Edward III (6), and Le Mote composed Li Regret Guillaume for Queen Philippa at the death of her father, Guillaume of Hainault — "if Le Mote lived on to 1356," Wimsatt muses, "he may well have been the first prominent court poet that young Geoffrey Chaucer met" (6).227 While this is unprovable, Pennsylvania 902 shows that the exchange is circulating with poetry composed up to 1400, poetry contemporaneous to Chaucer and Deschamps, and poetry which is popular in Chaucer's England (like the ballades of Machaut etc.). The exchange continues to enjoy cultural currency in the generations following its composition.

226 The first leaf of Pennsylvania MS codex 902 is inscribed with the "motto of the Kingdom of Bavaria" (that is Droit et ferme), which, Wimsatt argues, suggests a possible link to Isabel of Bavaria, who married Charles VI in 1395 (3). He writes, "since two Granson poems found in Penn have acrostics 'Isabel,' and were probably written for Queen Isabel, it is entirely likely that the book belonging to her which is identified in a record as 'le livre des Balades Messire Othes de Granson' is the Penn manuscript" (3).

227 Both Chaucer and Le Mote could have been present at Windsor in 1358 for the celebrations following the victory at Poitiers (5). Wimsatt further argues that Le Mote's works are the "chief models" (9) for the "Ch" poems in Penn 902 — another possible connection between Chaucer and Le Mote which would support the possibility that Chaucer was familiar with Le Mote's exchange with Vitry.
4.5 BNF, Fonds Latin 3343

The second witness is BNF lat. 3343, also a fifteenth-century anthology but one of another character. A paper codex, copied by a single hand in *cursiva recentior*, it preserves 1193 pieces and fragments according to the BNF catalogue. BNF lat. 3343 contains a variety of largely Latin (though occasionally French) learned and religious texts (for example, dialogues between Martha and Mary, moral verses in Latin, Proverbs, and work by Augustine, Cicero, Virgil, Seneca, Martial *etc.*) and it situates the Vitry-Le Mote exchange within this learned setting (showing, perhaps, why Deschamps turns to it as an authoritative precedent). The Vitry-Le Mote exchange appears on folios 109r-111v as part of a pocket of French material. The exchange is directly preceded by two poems, lovers' complaints, by Jean de le Mote. After the exchange (or, as an extension of the exchange) comes a ballade by Jean Campion, a cleric of Tournai and follower of Philippe de Vitry, who "takes up his mentor's attack on the misuse of names by le Mote" (Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the Poems of "CH,"* 75), followed by Le Mote's scathing response (See Appendix A). This manuscript offers the broader exchange, including the additional Campion-Le Mote material, in contrast to Penn., which presents only the kernel of the argument, the Vitry-Le Mote pair. The manuscript seems to organize this material according to the theme of "exchange," and this continues to be the case even as we move outward from the Vitry, Campion, and Le Mote exchanges. On fols. 107-109, right before the exchange of invective, the manuscript groups together another series of exchanges, which highlights the linguistic questions raised by Vitry's and Le Mote's ballades. This series consists of a French work by Philippe de Vitry, followed by a response, also in French, by Pierre d'Ailly (1351-1420), both of which are then translated into Latin by French Humanist Nicholas Clémançon (late 14thC to early 15thC) (and in the manuscript, these Latin translations precede the original French texts). The ballades of Vitry and d'Ailly follow — I reproduce the French texts from Piaget's edition in *Romania* 27 (1898): 55-92 — along with my own English translation.

Franc Gontier by Philippe de Vitry:

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228 See also the more recent edition in Bliggenstorfer, *Eustache Deschamps: aspects poétiques et satiriques*, 305.
Soubz feuille vert, sur herbe delitable,

Lez ru bruiant et prez clere fontaine,

Trouvay fichee une borde portable.

Ilec mengeoit Gontier o dame Helayne

Fromage frais, laict, burre, fromaigee,

Craime, matton, pomme, nois, prune, poire,

Aulx et oignons, escaillongne froyee

Sur crouste bise, au gros sel, pour mieulx boire.

Au goumer beurent, et oisillon harpoient

Pour resbaudir et le dru et la drue,

Qui par amours après s'entrebaisoient

Et bouche et nez, polie et bien barbue.

Quant orent prins le doulx mès de nature,

Tantost Gontier, haiche au col, ou boys entre;

Et dame Helayne si met toute sa cure

A ce buer qui queuvre dos et ventre.

J'oy Gontier en abatant son arbre

Dieu mercier de sa vie seüre:
"Ne scay," dit-il, "que sont pilliers de marbre,
Pommeaux luisans, murs vestus de paincture; 20
Je n'ay paour de traïson tissue
Soubz beau semblant, ne qu'empoisonné soye
En vaisseau d'or. Je n'ay la teste nue
Devant thirant, ne genoil qui s'i ploye.

Verge d'uissier jamais ne me deboute, 25
Car jusques la ne m'esprent convoitise,
Ambicion, ne lescherie gloute.
Labour me paist en joieuse franchise;
Moult j'ame Helayne et elle moy sans faille,
Et c'est assez. De tombel n'avons cure." 30
Lors je dy: "Las! serf de court ne vault maille,
Mais Franc Gontier vault en or jame pure."

Beneath green leaf, on delectable grass,
Beside a babbling stream and near a clear fountain,
I found set up a portable pavilion,
There Gontier ate with lady Helayne
Fresh cheese, milk, butter, cheese

Cream, clotted milk, apple, nut, prune, pear,

Garlic and onions, crushed shallot

On mealy crust, with coarse salt, to drink better [to incite thirst].

They drank at a vessel, and the little birds made music

To gladden both the lover and the beloved,

Who afterwards lovingly embraced one another

Both mouth and nose, [one] smooth and [the other] well-bearded.

When they have taken the sweet food of nature,

Gontier, then, axe at the neck, enters into the woods.

And lady Helayne thus places all her care

To this humidity which covers [her] back and stomach.

I hear Gontier, while felling his tree,

Thanking God for his safe life:

"I do not know," he says, "what columns of marble are,

Shining pommel, walls bedecked with paintings

I have no fear about treason woven

Beneath pleasant appearance, nor that I may be poisoned
In a goblet of gold. I have not a bare head

In front of a tyrant, nor a knee that bends to him.

A doorkeeper's staff never pushes me away

Since covetousness doesn't inflame me to that point,

[Nor] ambition, nor gluttonous lechery.

Labour rewards me with joyous freedom

I love Helayne very much and she [loves] me, without fail,

And that is enough. We have no concern for the grave."

Therefore, I say: "Alas! The serf of the court isn't worth a penny,

But free Gontier is worth a pure gem set in gold.

La Vie du Tyran by Pierre d'Ailly:

Ung chastel sçay, sur roche espoventable,

En lieu venteux et lez eaue perilleuse;

La vy thirant seant a haulte table,

En grant palaise, en sale plantureuse,

Avironné de famille pompeuse,

Plaine de fraude, d'envie, et de murmure,

Vuide de foy, d'amour, de paix joieuse,
Serve et subgitte par convoiteuse ardure.

Vins et viandes avoit il sans mesure,

Chars et poissons, occis en mainte guise, 10

Brouès et saulces de diverse taincture,

Et entremès par art fais a devise,

Le mal glouton par tout guette et advise

Pour appetit trouver, et quiert maniere

Comment sa bouche, de lescherie esprise, 15

Son ventre emplisse com bourse pautonniere.

Mais sac a fiens, pulente cimitiere,

Sepulcre a vin, corps bouffi, crasse pance,

Pour tous ses biens en soy n'a lie chiere.

Car ventre saoul en saveur n'a plaisance. 20

Ne le delicte ris, jeu, chanson ne dance,

Car tant convocite, tant quiert et tant desire

Qu'en riens qu'il ait n'a vraye souffisance:

Acquerir veult ou royaume ou empire.
Par avarice sent douloureux martire,

Traïson double, en nulluy ne se fie,

Cueur a felon, enfle d'orgueil et d'ire,

Triste, pensis, plain de merencolie.

Las! trop mieulx vault de Franc Gontier la vie,

Sobre leese et nette povreté,

Que poursuir par orde gloutonnie

Court de thirant, riche maleürté.

I know a palace, on a horrible rock

In a windy place and near perilous water,

There I saw a tyrant, sitting at a high table,

In a large palace, in a plentiful hall

Surrounded by pompous retinue

Full of fraud, envy and murmur,

Devoid of faith, love, joyous peace,

Servile and subject by covetous burning.

Wines and food he had beyond measure,

Meat and fish, killed in many ways,
Broths and sauces of diverse tones

And entremets made by art as he pleases

The evil glutton everywhere seeks out and watches

To find appetite, and he searches for a way

How his mouth, taken with lechery,

Might fill his stomach like a rascal's pouch.

But it's a bag of manure, a stinking cemetery,

Sepulcher of wine, body bloated, a fat belly,

For all his goods, in him there is no happy feast

Since a drunk belly has no pleasure in flavour.

Nor does laughing delight him, games, song or dance,

Since so much he covets, so much he seeks, so much he desires,

That in anything he has, there is no real sufficiency

He wants to acquire either realm or empire.

By avarice, he experiences painful martyrdom

He fears treason, he trusts in no one

He has a felon heart, inflated by pride and ire,

Sad, brooding, full of melancholy,
Alas, so much more is worth the life of free Gontier,

Sober happiness, clean poverty,

Than to follow, by foul gluttony,

[The] Court of a tyrant, rich cursedness.

This set of ballades is a fitting introduction to the Vitry-Le Mote exchange since it anticipates key themes of the pair. BNF lat. 3343, through this arrangement, encourages a reading of the pair that is analogous to Deschamps's reading of them. It draws out the idea that an individual's identity and morality is bound up with geographical location. While moral difference is the main concern of the Gontier poems, that moral difference is tied to the relationship between place and identity: free Gontier's sunny pasture makes possible his idyllic, carefree way of life, and the tyrant's barren rock is the setting for his cold, empty existence. Le Mote's identity shifts, Vitry implies, when he crosses the Channel, a geographical threshold (he changes political allegiance ["devenus serfs" 4], his poetry becomes worse ["la fons Ciree Ne te cognoit" 19]).

The Vitry-Ailly-Clémanges sequence features linguistic change too. The translation of French to Latin has the effect of linking this pocket of vernacular verse to the overwhelmingly Latin content of the manuscript. The Vitry-Le Mote pair is concerned with the subtle change of tongues when a poet crosses the Channel (as Butterfield suggests, 129). Setting the Vitry-Le Mote exchange next to a moment of translation from French to Latin, the manuscript raises the questions: does the Vitry and Le Mote also feature a type of translation? Both are written in French, but Le Mote's work, given his emigration, is also fundamentally "English" (or at least it is according to Vitry's critique). Le Mote's "Englishness," Butterfield argues, is what fuels Vitry's invective (114): "Speaking from 'over there' puts le Mote on a different cultural footing

\[229\] An accusation that the "Chaucerian' view of Chaucer and Englishness" has not considered because Le Mote "writes in French [...] and comes from Hainaut" (Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, 114).
from Vitry [...]. Their language is both the same and different" (130). In this context, the manuscript invites questions about linguistic relationships.

Finally, the most explicit theme drawn out by the pairing of these ballade sequences in BNF lat. 3343 is the idea of exchange itself, across the Channel and across languages. Just like the compiler of 3343, Deschamps is thinking about exchange, and his ballade anticipates a response. His project depends on collaboration — even as he dishes out invective — and he awaits a counter-blow.

4.6 Vitry and Le Mote as Precedents for Deschamps

Deschamps capitalizes upon the pre-existing popularity of the Vitry-Le Mote ballade exchange to legitimize his project. As Pennsylvania codex 902 and BNF lat. 3343 show, the ballade exchange was enjoying an elite readership even into the fifteenth century, circulating at the French and English courts alongside contemporary vernacular lyric and amongst Latin works of theological learning, respectively.

Deschamps draws on their precedent for the very act of exchange and alludes to the literary matter of their texts as well. For example, the ambivalent tone of their exchange is a source for his praise and condemnation of Chaucer. Vitry is writing to Le Mote, who was possibly his pupil (Wimsatt, Poems of "CH," 78), imagining Le Mote as a friend and as a traitor. The opposition contained within "amer," for example, reveals the complex and contradictory emotions that underlie the poem. Toying with the word "amer," which can be both the infinitive "to love" and the adjective 'bitter," Vitry's ballade pulls in opposite directions, caught between contradictory modes of conveying the same meaning.

230 According to Butterfield, Deschamps inherits a similar cross-cultural situation: he likewise addresses a poet who is "taking French into English" (151), and he imagines English as "unfixed, somewhere between Latin, Saxon, and French, somewhere in the crossing between island and continent" (151).

231 Does the French of Vitry's invective become to Le Mote's "English"/Anglo-French tongue what Clémanges's Latin is to d'Ailly's and Vitry's French? Are French and Anglo-French different and the same in a way that mirrors how source and translation are both different and the same, both different modes of conveying the same meaning? Do they convey it with equal adeptness? Does Vitry's "Frenchness" render his language more authoritative than Le Mote's "Englishness"?
emotions: "fains amer/d'amour" (6-7) [you feign loving with a love...], "tu n'as d'amours fors amer" (8) [you have no love except bitterness], and "amere mer" (17) [bitter sea].

Likewise, Deschamps's ballade, expressing laudation and disdain, gestures towards a spectrum of feeling: curiosity, appreciation, rivalry, and contempt. This is, in part, a self-conscious pose — an effort to align himself with Vitry and Le Mote and to carefully situate his ballade within their tradition — but perhaps it is, in part, sincere.

Given Deschamps's engagement with the tradition of poetic invective, it is not coincidental that he has focused so much on Chaucer's "self fashioning" or "self-authorizing" through the manipulation of the works of others. Rather, this accusation hints at the significance of Deschamps's proposal to Chaucer: that this self-authorizing is something they can do. Furthermore, Deschamps may have drawn the idea of self-construction — both as insult and as poetic possibility — from Le Mote's ballade: "Ne fais de moy Hugo..." (7) [don't make a Hugo of me!] and "moy, qui ay de toy fait Zephirus" (14) [I who made a Zephirus of you]. Le Mote's idea that one poet could make (in the case of Zephirus) or break (Hugo) the reputation of another poet looms behind Deschamps's accusation of Chaucer's self-construction and it clarifies the stakes of his proposal to collaborate. Deschamps would obviously like to become Zephirus through his exchange with Chaucer, but there is always a chance that his relationship with his partner/adversary will make him a Hugo. This promise and danger underlies the tension of this ballade, as Deschamps negotiates the fine balance of praise and scorn.

Deschamps's ballade to Chaucer encapsulates the possibility for this kind of English-French poetic collaboration in the fourteenth century, amidst war and hostility. Certainly Deschamps's invective has to be understood in the context of the war with those "ignorans," the English. But, as we have seen, it is also a playful gesture, an assumed pose, and an invitation to a fellow

\[\text{---}\]

\[\text{232 Which, heard, could be understood as "l'amere mer" (as it is written in Pennsylvania MS codex 902), "la mer amer," or even, "l'amere amer."}\]

\[\text{233 Wimsatt identifies Hugo as "Ugolino, famed resident of the circle of traitors" (56). He adds that there is an "unidentified Hugo" (56) who is attacked by Vitry in a motet. Le Mote might also be alluding to this.}\]
writer, similarly engaged with French poetics, to work within this tradition of courtly cross-
Channel competition.

4.7 Ballade 127, "A Guillaume de Machaut, sur le Voir Dit":
Unsettling Authority

The crafting of poetic personae in response to an "authoritative" French tradition, represented by
Le Mote and Vitry, is, I would suggest, an interest that both Deschamps and Chaucer have in
common. Machaut as we have seen is of primary importance as a source for Chaucer, and this is
even more the case for Deschamps, for whom Machaut was a mentor. Just as Deschamps used
the Vitry-Le Mote exchange to endow his own project with authority, so too does he eke out
authority from his association with Machaut, a closer and more immediately available source.
There is a hint of competition inherent in the student-teacher relationship between Deschamps
and Machaut; this is apparent, for instance, in Ballade 127 "A Guillaume de Machaut, sur le Voir
Dit," when Deschamps appropriates his master's work to assert his own literary control. This
incident will shed light on the nature of the poetic proposal that Deschamps extends to Chaucer.
Deschamps recounts the event in Ballade 127, reporting to Machaut how he read a selection from
the Voir Dit — a rather complicated passage about fortune, often accompanied by an illustration
inscribed with Latin text — likely before the court of Louis de Mâle at Bruges, during the
negotiations of 1375 (Coleman 233). He informs his teacher of how the work was so well
received, and how everyone praised Machaut. The ballade follows:

\begin{quote}
A Guillaume de Machaut, sur le Voir Dit

Treschiers sires, vueillez remercier

L'art de musique et le gay sentement

Que Orpheus fist en vous commencier,

Dont vous estes honouriez haultement:
\end{quote}

\footnotesize

234 The translation is my own.
Car tous voz faiz moult honourablement

Chascuns reçoit en maint pais estrange,

Et si n'y a nul, a mon jugement,

Qui en die fors qu'a vostre louenge.

Les grans seigneurs, Guillaume, vous ont chier,

En voz choses prannent esbatement.  

Bien y parut a Bruges devant hier

A Monseigneur de Flandres proprement

Qui par sa main reçut benignement

Vostre Voir Dit sellé dessur la range,

Lire le fist; mais n'est nul vraiment

Qui en die fors qu'a vostre louenge.

Je lui baillié voz lettres en papier

Et vo livre qu'il aime chierement;

Lire m'y fist, present maint chevalier;

Si adresçay au lieu premierement  

Ou Fortune parla si durement,

Comment l'un joint a ses biens, l'autre estrange.
De ce parlent, mais nulz n'en va parlant,

Qui en die fors qu'a vostre louenge. (Raynaud, vol. 1, 248, CXXVII)

[Dearest lord, you should thank

The art of music and the joyful feeling

That Orpheus made begin in you,

For which you are highly honoured:

Since all of your deeds very honourably

Each person receives in many a foreign land,

And thus there is no one, in my opinion,

Who says anything about it except to your praise.

The great lords, Guillaume, hold you dear,

And take pleasure in your works.

This was very apparent in Bruges the day before yesterday

From (ie. from the example of) the Lord of Flanders himself

Who in his hand graciously received

Your Voir Dit, sealed along its boards,²³⁵

He had it read; but there is no one in truth

²³⁵ This reading is suggested by Coleman (237).
Who says anything about it except to your praise.

I delivered to him your letters on paper
And your book that he loves dearly;

He made me read in there, in the presence of many knights;

Thus I directed myself first of all to the place

Where Fortune speaks so harshly,

About how she joins one to her goods, and estranges the other.

Of this they speak, but no one goes on discussing,

Who says anything about it except to your praise.]

Underlying this glowing report, however, is, as Deborah McGrady and Joyce Coleman argue, an exertion of control by Deschamps over the work in question. McGrady casts Deschamps as an aggressive reader of Machaut, one who tries to exploit his interactions with Machaut's texts. In this instance, Deschamps capitalizes on the power he exerts, as wielder of the book, over the audience of his public reading. He selects a passage that renders his role as mediator between audience and text indispensable. The passage in question, scholars agree, is likely Guillaume's denigration of Fortune (though it is worth noting that his description of his chosen passage "Ou Fortune parla si durement" does not correspond exactly to any moment of the *Voir Dit*).

Guillaume's reflections of Fortune, in all six extant versions, exhibits a "heavy dependence on paratextual material — including rubrics and illustration — to organize the passage. Each copy introduces the section with a visual reproduction of Fortune's portrait as described by Guillaume" (McGrady 164). Some of these include the original Latin from the source, Titus Livy's description of the image of Fortune (BNF f.fr. 1584 and New York, Morgan Library, M 396); BNF f.fr. 9221 provides French translations (164). In the context of a public reading, Deschamps, McGrady argues, would have had to "compensate for Guillaume's heavy dependence on the visual apparatus when performing the passage" (166). The audience would
have been unable to understand the passage on their own, just from listening, without Deschamps's aid. Deschamps, McGrady speculate, would have had to interject with his own further explanations, or "pantomimed the description of Lady Fortune and her wheels" (166), or displayed the codex, allowing the audience "brief access to the physical page" (167) before or after the reading. This is what puts him in control over his audience. McGrady describes Deschamps's role, then, in terms power and desire:

    Deschamps's entire performance centres on what the audience can only imagine or, at best, glimpse fleetingly. Even if he offered up the pages to display their contents to his listeners, he would have limited their ability to cast a lingering, voyeuristic gaze on the secrets contained within the binding. For the audience would be subject to the exposure he allowed, as if participating in a peep show. (167)

Deschamps controls the codex he presents as well as its audience. In doing so, he usurps power over the Machauldian text itself: "Stepping beyond his prescribed role as an interim reader who serves the author-figure, the poet of B127 takes hold of the book, picks and chooses passages, recontextualizes and reinvents, and ultimately makes the work his own" (168).

Joyce Coleman thinks that Deschamps takes control not so much by wielding the physical book as manipulating the poetic matter of the passage to suit his audience and the occasion. She argues that Deschamps recasts the excerpt on Fortune as an instructional text, or a *speculum principis* (234), a reading that she bases on the single line "comment l'un [Fortune] joint a sens biens, l'autre estrange" (22). Coleman speculates that changing the context of Machaut's reproachful musings on Fortune, Deschamps advocates for peace and truce. According to Coleman, Deschamps's presentation conveys nothing of the "sexual corruption" (239) of Machaut's portrayal. Instead, she says, "we can assume that Deschamps sought to transform Machaut's angry meditations on female unreliability into a commentary on the twists and turns of the political negotiations currently taking place in Bruges" (239).

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236 Unless, as McGrady says, they were "well-practiced in mnemonic techniques so as to be able to generate and then retain the image described by Guillaume" (166).
I argue that it is not the manner in which Deschamps may or may not have recast this Machauldian passage that allows him to usurp power from the master. It is Deschamps's very glossing over of what precisely it is that he read — he strategically offers no way of knowing any more than he has told us — that allows him to wield power over the Machauldian text. His power is derived not from changing the text itself, but from not letting us know whether he did or did not. In this way, his control over Machaut's work is twofold. First, he estranges the audience at the court of Louis de Mâle from the "original" Machauldian material by physically wielding the book, holding it just out of the audience's reach, and granting access only as he pleases, as McGrady has argued (168). Second, and even more significantly, he estranges Machaut (the addressee of this ballade) from knowing the circumstances of the performance and reception of his work, just as he estranges the wider audience of the ballade from this knowledge. Neither we, the readers, nor Machaut can do more than guess which passage Deschamps read, how he contextualized it, and how he displayed the book.

Deschamps keeps not only the content of his reading out of reach, but also the reaction of the courtly audience. In the ballade's refrain, Deschamps stresses that there is no one "Qui en die fors qu'a vostre louenge" [...Who says anything about it except to your praise]. This is a tricky refrain since each time it is repeated it is given context — that is, its meaning is established — by the previous line. The first iteration begins, "Et si n'y a nul, a mon jugement..." (7) [And there is no one there, in my opinion]. Next is, "mais n'est nul vraiment..." (15) [But there is no one in truth]. And finally, "mais nulz n'en va parlant..." (23) [but no one goes on discussing]. While at first these declarations appear to be overwhelmingly positive, beneath the veneer of praise Deschamps subtly leaves room for doubt. Every time Deschamps repeats the complimentary refrain, my reading shows, he introduces a qualifier (or, a potential qualifier), with the result that the refrain starts to read as a backhanded compliment. He is careful; he does not want to reveal his hand, and he wishes only to discretely unsettle the idea of Machaut's authority. The first qualifier is "a mon jugement." This reduces the apparently universal acknowledgment of Machaut's talents to the subjective perception of a single man, Deschamps.237 "In my opinion," or "it seems to me," the line reads, "there's no one who would say anything about you but praise."

237 Cf. for instance, the lines "... L'art de musique et le gay sentement/ Que Orpheus fist en vous commencer,/ Dont vous estes honouriez haultement" (2-4).
The phrase, "it seems to me," undermines the reported universal acclaim, that "everyone praised him"; the good opinion of the many, it turns out, is actually just an opinion itself.

Next, the word "mais" introduces the remaining two iterations of the refrain. This word is slippery as it can convey a range of meanings. The most likely meanings in the context,\textsuperscript{238} "but" or "rather" (as Coleman translates),\textsuperscript{239} cast doubt on the quality of Machaut's work: "I read it," Deschamps seems to say, "But no one speaks anything except to your praise." Such a reading implies that the positive reception of the work is contrary to expectation, or that the listeners were biting their tongues and suppressing their criticism.

The possibility conveyed by the ambiguous monosyllabic word to defame the great author is enough to shake Machaut's authority (and our reading of Machaut's authority), as is Deschamps's tactic of holding knowledge of the event just out of reach. This resonates with Chaucer's appropriation of Graunson's \textit{Cinq Ballades} for the \textit{Complaint of Venus} (see Chapter 3). Both Chaucer and Deschamps challenge the authority of the poets of their respective source texts, addressing them in verse and showing that the reception of their work is open and vulnerable to changes wrought by translation or recontextualization.

This brings to the fore an important anxiety, which Deschamps exploits in Ballade 127, about the openness of the book and lack of control over poetic reception. This is a concern of Machaut's, and his narrator, Guillaume, faces uncooperative and even malicious readers in the \textit{Voir Dit}. They mock, misread, repurpose, and circulate Guillaume's work against his wishes (and McGrady's \textit{Controlling Readers} visits these moments in detail). Guillaume, for instance, realizes that his supposedly ideal reader, Toute Belle, has disseminated his private correspondence throughout the court, making a mockery not only of his sentiments but of his poetic enterprise: his secretary informs him "...par tout vos lettres flajole/ Et moustre, ne(i)s a la carole./ Dont ce n'est c'une moquerie,/ Et poi y ha qui ne s'en rie" (7366-9) [...she flaunts and shows your letters everywhere, giving occasion to song/dance. It is one big joke and there is no one who does not laugh (McGrady 59)]. This examples shows how, on the one hand, the book is a necessary means

\textsuperscript{238} Other meanings like "henceforth" or "ever" are less likely since the main verb is in the present tense.
\textsuperscript{239} As does McGrady in the third stanza \textit{(Controlling Readers, 161)}. 

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of bringing a poem to an audience, and is, therefore, a tool for generating poetic renown — and Cerquiglini Toulet suggests that fourteenth-century French poets were thinking about books as monuments of their authorship, publicizing and preserving their names and "renown" (Color of Melancholy, 129). On the other hand, the openness of the book and the liability of its contents to be copied, recontextualized (as does Deschamps), or misused (as does Toute Belle) means that when the book carries a text out into the world, the text moves beyond its author's control, making that author and the idea of his/her poetic reputation vulnerable (and even subject to mockery).

Deschamps ironically gains literary control by means of this very codicological openness. He inserts himself between the author and the audience by mediating the relationship between the book and the audience, in order to interrupt the relationship between authored material and poetic authority. He heads off and re-routes towards himself the poetic glory that Machaut may have enjoyed from this recitation. He unsettles the idea of Machaut's authority, not just for Machaut, but for readers encountering this portrayal of his manipulation of his master's text, as he contains Machaut's text within his own.

4.8 Authority for Posterity: The Ballades of Paris, BNF f.fr. 840

This moment brings to light similarities between the stances of the Deschamps and Chaucer with regard to their authoritative French-language contemporaries and it is no surprise that Deschamps saw Chaucer as a partner with whose help he could capitalize on the prior Vitry-Le Mote exchange. Because this project is so invested in authority — and in the posterity and reception of this recontextualized authority — it is fitting to think about Deschamps's proposal, "The Ballade to Chaucer," within its manuscript context. The final section of this chapter, then, will look at the "Ballade to Chaucer" side by side with the texts that surround it in BNF f.fr. 840. These are a group of Deschamps's moral ballades that speak of the fragility of earthly and political power in similar terms to the way we have seen Deschamps thinking about the fragility of literary authority. I will argue that placed in context, this group of ballades highlight the crux of Deschamps's proposal to Chaucer: he seems to ask, 'can we take advantage of the fragility of literary power and benefit from it? Can we take over the esteemed positions of our predecessors and models (Vitry, Le Mote, Machaut) and craft ourselves as the most important literary figures of our age, all the while protecting our own work from the very fragility that we use?'
The "Ballade to Chaucer" appears in the largest collection of Deschamps's work, BNF f.fr 840, a weighty tome solely devoted to his oeuvre. It includes more than fifteen hundred pieces, of which at least a thousand are ballades. The production of this manuscript was not personally overseen by Deschamps and may not contain all of his works (Wimsatt, *Poems of "CH,"* 60).

The velum codex dates to the early fifteenth century and was likely compiled just after Deschamps's death. The script is a *cursiva recentior* with a *media-formata* level of execution. A table of contents precedes the poetry, which lists the title of the pieces with their folio numbers in the outer margins, imposing a sense of coherence upon the manuscript. Similarly, the manuscript has been rubricated in such a way as to lend order to the collection. The poetry section opens with the rubric, "Ci commencent Balades de moralitez" (fol. 1r) [Here begin ballades of morality]. Rubrics like this appear throughout the manuscript, for example: fol. 67r "Cy sensuiuen plusieurs lays/ Et premierement commence/ Le noble lay de uerite" (the lays in this section are flanked by *incipits* and *explicitis*); on 81v, Le "livret de la fragilité d'umaine Nature" is introduced with its own table of contents; on fol. 102v appears "Ci commencent les chancons Royaulx" *etc.* The scribe has attempted to divide Deschamps's far-ranging work according to poetic form (which is common in French manuscripts of this period), and also, to a certain extent, as with the "balades de moralitez," he has attempted to identify subject matter.

The ballade section that contains the famous "Ballade to Chaucer" is heavily rubricated, and rubrics introduce every new piece. When no title is given, the rubication alternates between "Balade" and "Autre balade" (rubrics familiar from other poetic manuscripts of the period). The "Ballade to Chaucer" (fol. 62r) is one of those labeled "Autre balade." As conventional as this is, I suggest the rubric invites it to be read in tandem with the "Balade" that precedes it. My reason for proposing this is that the poem’s "partner" text, also on fol. 62r, "Sur la Prophétie de la Sibylle," (titled thus in the Raynaud edition [vol. 2, 138]) is concerned with authority of a different but suggestive kind.

Opening with the vocative, Sibyl, and citing the "livre de la cite de dieu" (the first a vehicle of divine authority and the other representative of Latinate theological and textual authority) this poem seems, on the surface, to be about a different sort of authority than that involved in Chaucer and Deschamps's project. However, the codicological partner of the "Ballade to Chaucer," "Sur la Prophétie de la Sibylle," casts some light on the former. It invokes a figure of
great authority, "Augustin," and it plays subtly with the meaning of authority itself, its fragility, its tendency to be involved in shifts in and struggles for power. It prefigures and sets the stage for the "Ballade to Chaucer," highlighting particular themes and informing our reading of the "Autre Balade" to come.

Sur la Prophétie de la Sibylle

Sebile, tu\textsuperscript{240} de qui Saint Augustin,

En son livre de la Cité de Dieu,

Parle et conclut en tenant ceste fin

Qu'en la Cité as et doiz avoir lieu,

Car esperit de vraie prophecie 5

Eus, et des dix fus auctorisie,

Et qui parlas plus veritablement

Du Fil de Dieu, de sa mort, de sa vie,

Du cours du monde et du definement;

Tu aux Rommains, qui orent cuer enclin 10

De toy veoir, exposas le vray sieu

Des .ix. soulaulx; ce fut respons divin

\textsuperscript{240} Raynaud supplies "tu" here (vol. 2, 138, CCLXXXIV).
A leurs songes, qui moult furent terrien:

.iii. regnes tindrent la monarchie,

Or, My, Septen, l'occidental partie: 241

Second premier destruit dolentement:

Tiers, le second; le quart nous certifie

Du cours du monde et du definement.

Du regne aux Gaulx, de leur foy, de leur lin

Parlas a droit, et de leur fin t'ensieu:

Quant ilz lairont de Dieu le droit chemin.

Et ne seront a justice ententieu,

Qu'Orgueil tendra entr'eulx la seignourie,

Et Convoiter, Vaine Gloire essaucie

Sera partout trop magnifistement:

La vient leur mort, ta parole accomplie

Du cours du monde et du definement.

L'envoy

241 These forms come from orient, midi, and septentrion (Raynaud, vol. 2, 138, CCLXXXIV, note d).
Prince des Gaulx, soit Pité vostre amie,
Honoure Dieu et ne convoitez mie;
Amez les bons et Justice ensement;
Fuiez les foulz, et que droit vous charie,
Ou la fin voy de vo regne approchie,

[Sibyl, you of whom Saint Augustine\textsuperscript{242}
In his book of the City of God,
Speaks and concludes in holding this outcome
That in the city you have and must have a place
Since you had the spirit of true prophecy
And by the gods you were authorized,
And you who spoke more truly
Of the son of God — of his death, of his life —
Of the course of the world and of its end.

To the Romans, who had a heart inclined
To see you, you exposed the true siege\textsuperscript{243}

\textsuperscript{242} The translations of the following ballades are my own.
Of the nine suns; this was the divine response

To their dreams, which were very earthly:

Four kingdoms held the monarchy

The East, South, North, the Western part:

The second destroys the first, grievously

The third the second; the fourth guarantees us

Of the course of the world and of its end.

Of the kingdom of the Gauls, of their faith, of their lineage

You spoke rightly, and of their end I follow you:

When they will depart from the right path of God.

And they will not be attentive to justice,

Because Pride will hold dominion amongst them

And Covetousness, Vain Glory

Will be everywhere too manifestly exalted:

There comes their death, your words fulfilled

Of the course of the world and of its end.

243 This is Raynaud's interpretation (vol 2, 138).
Envoy

Prince of the Gauls, may Pity be your friend,
Honour God, and do not covet at all;
Love the good ones and Justice also;
Flee from the fools, and may the right guide you,
Or I see the end of your reign approaching,
Of the course of the world and of its end].

Deschamps lists the four kingdoms of the world: the East ("Or"), the South ("My"), the North ("Septen") and the West. He underlines the transience of these powers, emphasizing that the "Second premier destruct dolentement: Tiers, le second..." [the second destroys the first grievously, and the third destroys the second...]. At odds, then, with the "stable authority" implied in the citation of Augustine — discussed below — are the constant cycles of toppling and usurpation, rise and fall, of earthly power. The placement of the "Ballade to Chaucer" next to the "Sur la Prophétie de la Sibylle" brings out their shared themes of political/poetical ousting. Just as each empire overcomes the last, so too does Deschamps vie to build on and ultimately overshadow, in his "Ballade to Chaucer," the authority of a previous poetic exchange by Le Mote and Vitry, and to posit himself and Chaucer as the authoritative poets of their age (and his use of the Voir Dit shows that this was not an isolated endeavor). The compiler picks up on this dynamic between Deschamps and his sources and understands the vagaries of poetic authority. Here, the very reception of the "Ballade to Chaucer" and its partnership with the "Sibylle" reveals the influence that reception and posterity can have on the reading of text — the very kind of power that Deschamps is thinking about. Placed together, the "Balade" and the "Autre Balade" inform each other in the small microcosm of this codicological unit. The codicological dissemination of these texts together paints Deschamps as a destabilizer of the strongholds of poetic power in the "Ballade to Chaucer".
4.9 "Balades de Moralitez" and the Moral of the "Chaucer"-
"Sibylle" Pair

The ballade group that encompasses this pair, in the same vein as "Sur la Prophétie de la Sibylle," consists of moral and instructional poems that appear under the rubric of "balades de moralitez" in the manuscript (fol. 1r). In the immediate vicinity are found, "Il faut toujours penser à la mort" and "Devoirs de Princes envers les bons" on 61v, and "Comment Franche Voulente puet resister a tous cas," which is an address by Franche Volonté to Fortune, and the accompanying "Response de fortune" (62v). These ballades develop a moral theme — an overarching instructional structure — into which the "Sibylle" and "Ballade to Chaucer" pair fits. I argue that each of these encompassing poems offers a model of a different kind of transitory earthly power, from political might to monetary wealth (to poetic recognition, when we include the "Ballade to Chaucer" as one of these exempla).

"Il faut toujours penser à la mort" (as titled in Raynaud vol. 2, 134-5, CCLXXXII), turns about the refrain, "Que chascun muert et ne puet scàvoir quant" (10) [That each person dies and he cannot know when], admonishing princes to recall the impermanence of their privileged social and financial positions. Deschamps warns,

    Et aviser que, de nulz biens que homs ait

    Temporelment, n'en est un seul qui dure

    Ne qu'om en puist porter [...],

    Fors un vielz drap, sarcueil et sepultre

    Quant il mourra" (11-15).

    [And advising that, of all the goods that man has

    Temporally, there is not a single one that lasts

    That he could take with him...

    Except for an old sheet, a coffin, and sepulcher
Its partner text, the "Autre Balade" ("Devoirs de Princes envers les bons," vol. 2, CCLXXXIII, pg. 135-6), offers a remedy to this predicament. Bemoaning the corruption of his contemporary world — reminiscent of Chaucer's "Lack of Stedfastenesse," Deschamps writes, "Mais au jour d'ui tout le contraire voy" (21) [But today I see completely the contrary] — the ballade instructs the prince what he ought to do to avoid such terrestrial traps: he should not value the transitory goods mentioned in the preceding ballade (wealth, flattery, power, etc.), but rather love God, the only possible form of permanence.

Skipping ahead a few folios to the two ballades that follow the "Sibylle" and "Chaucer" pair, we find a complaint against Fortune leveled by Franche Volonté, and Fortune's subsequent response (and Wimsatt mentions this and its partner "Response to Fortune" as possible sources for the complaint of Fortune by Chaucer, and speculates that these are the kinds of pieces that Deschamps might have sent across the Channel with Clifford, especially as they are found next to the ballade to Chaucer in manuscript [225]).

The first, "Comment Franche Voulenté Puet resister a Tous Cas" (vol. 2, CCLXXXVI, page 140-1) presents a dichotomy between Fortune, the personification of transitory goods and fickleness, and Franche Volonté, a model of stability who stands in opposition to the fleeting nature of Fortune's favour. This stable counterpart explains to the goddess that she "est en homme née/ Pour empeschier toute ta pouesté" (3-4) [is born in man/ to thwart all (Fortune's) power]. And also,

Franc Cuer ne puet de son siege mouvoir.

Car Dieux lui a ceste vertu donnée

Qui le maintient, se sage est, en planté. (9-10)

[Free Heart cannot move from its seat,

244 "... for turned up-so-doun/ Is all the world" (5-6).
Since God has given him this virtue,
He who maintains him in abundance, if he is wise.]

Franche Volonté continues:

C'est du hault lieu secret de sa pensée,
Querans les biens de pardurableté,
Non pas du corps terriens forsenée
Ou riens certain n'a fors que vanité.
Job monstra bien en son adversité
Que de telz biens ne doit a nul chaloir... (17-21)

[It is from the high secret place of his thoughts,
Seeking goods everlasting,
And not from the senseless earthly body
Where nothing is certain except vanity.
Job showed well in his adversity
That no one ought to value these goods...]

Finally, Fortune's response (the "Response de Fortune," vol. 2, CCLXXXVII, pg. 141-2),²⁴⁵ completes this survey of temporal impermanence. Fortune begins contemptuously, "Lasse! Je voy pluseurs a la volée./ Qui cause sont de leur grant maleurté/ Eulx soubmettans, comme gent

²⁴⁵ Interestingly the response is rubricated as "balade," not "autre balade" as the alternating rubrics would have us expect. This is strange since the response of Fortune to Franche Volonté is even more obviously a "partner" text than all the other ballade pairs I have so far discussed.
Miserable one! I see many people all together/ Who are the cause of their great misfortune,/ Submitting themselves, like blind people/ to the wretched goods of temporality]. She says that the one "Qui se soubmet a mondaine vilté" (10) [He who submits himself to worldly viliness] is weak-willed and deserves his inevitable fall. The one who prizes earthly goods will see "son cuer consentant tourmenté,/ Lesquelz ne puett tenir longue durée,/ Car par la mort en est il debouté." (17-20) [his heart willingly tormented,/ those things that he cannot hold for a long time,/ Since by death he is robbed of them] — a sentiment that echoes the lesson of "Il faut toujours penser à la mort."

In sum, the moral of this group of "balades de moralitez" is twofold. First, flee the world, the transitory, the fleeting, the fickle! Second, seek permanence and stability in righteousness, justice, and God. Right into the middle of this context, we can slot the "Sibylle" and the "Chaucer" and the reading that emerges from the two together. The tension between transitory and stable authority helps explain Deschamps's reference to Augustine — a theological authority — who at first appears at odds with the model of the rising and falling literary empires. Deschamps's ballades suggest that, like political power, literary renown is transient, unless it is established in a particular way, the right way. Some authority, like Augustine's, seems to be enduring. When these two partner texts are read in tandem, Deschamps seems to entice Chaucer: if their self-authorizing project is successful they might be able to achieve, through their poetry, literary immortality, akin to Augustine's immortality as a theological authority. Augustine's work and authority is, of course, conveyed through texts and books, as Deschamps emphasizes when names not only "Augustine" but also his book. Chaucer and Deschamps might achieve authority beyond the fleeting, evade the whims of poetic fortune, and avoid overthrow by their successors. If they do not succeed, their renown will be as transitory as the poetic regime they replace.

In conclusion, Deschamps is suggesting — and by means of his borrowing from the Vitry and Le Mote exchange, enacting — the benefits of the transitoriness of power. It can be harnessed for the purpose of self-authorization. But he is also wary that his literary might — and the exchange that he proposes to craft with Chaucer — is equally fragile. These ballades pose the question, "how can Deschamps and Chaucer capitalize on previous authority, and do it so well that their work, like Augustine's, will last forever?" In order for their hard work to be worthwhile, there has to be some chance of eternal poetic life. This is what they can strive for. In highlighting the fragility of human conditions and in suggesting a remedy for it, the "Ballade to Chaucer" and its
partner text fit in with these moral ballades that share the same awareness and concern. While the pair's place amongst these ballades at first seems idiosyncratic, their codicological position in fact brings to the fore the subtleties of Deschamps's proposal to Chaucer.
In the preceding chapters I have taken up the issue of Chaucer's literary and codicological relationship to Guillaume de Machaut, Jean Froissart, Oton de Graunson, and Eustache Deschamps. I have looked at the ways in which these poets craft personae in literature and in books. Literary authority, I have argued, emerges from — and then is, ironically, complicated by — the ways poets imagine textual dissemination in manuscripts, which is imperfect, unpredictable, and subject to the dispositions of scribes. Books can be logical and orderly — or "authoritative" — as are some single-author manuscripts, and they can be disorderly — not presenting the same straightforward ideas about authority — as are many miscellaneous collections. The interplay between authority and its absence has emerged as a theme in each of my chapters. To bring my dissertation to a conclusion, I will briefly recall some key moments in which poetic personae take shape in relation to books and in which poets use books to generate or complicate the idea of authorship.

5 Humility as Authority

In the texts I have studied here, a poetic persona can be playful, ironic, and self-deprecating — a way of mediating the audience's (always already mediated) access to the author's identity. For example, as I have shown, Machaut uses pseudo-autobiography to confuse the relationship between first-person narrator and author. One of his anagrams, for instance, names "Guillemin" as author, an appellation that is a diminutive form of "Guillaume." Machaut calls the alleged author "little Guillaume" — he names a lesser self — at the moment the reader expects him to name himself as author. The solution to this anagram, McGrady has argued (73), is accessible only to the privileged readers who already know to search for Guillaume de Machaut's name and to reconstruct something similar. Machaut conceals authorial identity behind the speaking "I" voices of his self-deprecating narrator(s), but in a way that refers readers back to the author, forcing them to think about the author's identity.
Deschamps's Ballade 127 offers an example of a poet posing as a mere pupil presenting his master's work, while drawing authority from that work and its material context. When Deschamps describes how he wielded Machaut's *Voir Dit* before the court of Louis de Mâle in Bruges, he provides an instance of a literary text figuring and shaping the reader's perception of a tangible book. Most often, I have thought about how the text appears in codex, and how the codex relays the author's self-constructed literary persona. Deschamps's Ballade 127 turns this paradigm on its head and depicts a codex within a text. He subsumes Machaut's work into his own. He appropriates the passage from the *Voir Dit* and the authority inherent in the codex — a monument of Machaut's work — physically, by holding the codex, and literarily, by memorializing the moment in writing, offering his own very subjective account.

### 5.1 Books as Forms for Poetic Authority

I have also considered Froissart's surviving manuscripts, BNF f.fr. 830 and 831, which are devoted solely to Froissart's poetic works, as foils for the lively and competitive intertextual exchange of love lyrics. Froissart's manuscripts safeguard his reputation by preserving stable readings in codices that attribute the work to a known author. Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* suggests that, for these very reasons, the single-author codex is "deadening." It functions as a tomb, or monument: an idea associated with writing in the fourteenth century (Cerquiglini-Toulet 138).²⁴⁶ It memorializes an author's work just as the *Book of the Duchess* memorializes the dead Blanche. In contrast, the "Hyd, Absalon" exchange between Machaut, Paien, Froissart, and Chaucer seems alive; the same poetic images and tropes are given new life with every iteration. In such a poetic exchange, these authors' poems do not exist in isolation — instead they refer to a whole nexus of other French literary work. The author establishes himself in relation to contemporary poets by engaging with them and attempting to outwit them. I have argued that Chaucer engages this lively intertextuality in the very structure of the *Book of the Duchess*. Yet this context is "deadening" to female subjectivity, a fact which, I argue, Chaucer's contribution to the competition exposes, even as it ironically continues to elide the position of the female subject. His ballade is about fictional ladies, and allegedly written by fictional ladies. Love lyrics

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²⁴⁶ Cerquiglini-Toulet explains: "writing becomes a tomb; there is a will to survive both by leaving a trace and by compelling others to read what is dictated" (138).
— and the books that often contain them, like the miscellany the narrator of the *Book of the Duchess* reads at night — Chaucer suggests, use the female beloved as a trope, rendering her just as empty and deadened by literature as Blanche.

In manuscripts, the tension between authority and its absence plays out in material form. I have described the miscellany as non-authoritative in contrast to the authoritative single-author collection, but I have also tried to complicate this dichotomy by examining moments in which authors capitalize on the miscellaneous aesthetic of disorder and polyvocality to create a different kind of poetic authority. For instance, Graunson may have been the compiler of a miscellaneous book of poetry. Wimsatt argues that University of Pennsylvania MS Codex 902 might be a collection of Graunson's own devising, in which he embeds his own poetic works (*Poems of "CH,"") 4).

### 5.2 Literary Criticism and Manuscript Culture

One way for me to bring some of the different strands of my thought in this dissertation together — and also to point to some future directions for this research — is to consider a book that I do not discuss in detail elsewhere: Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 1594. In a number of ways, this manuscript encapsulates the interplay I describe between authority and the absence of authority, textually and codicologically; it also suggests how this interplay may have shaped Chaucer's own experience of the French poetic miscellany.

247 I recognize that the dichotomy I have set up between these manuscript forms — the single-author codex and the miscellany — is oversimplified. Arthur Bahr's vocabulary of "compilation," "fragment," and "assemblage" helps nuance the way we can talk about manuscript form. For instance, both single-authored collections, like the *Canterbury Tales*, and miscellaneous collections are encompassed by his definition of "compilation": "the assemblage of multiple discrete works into a larger structure whose formal interplay of textual and material parts makes available some version of [...] literary effects [...] (10). "Compilation," for Bahr, includes "terms like *anthology* and *miscellany* as modern ways of interpreting how disparate texts, assembled and juxtaposed, function as a whole" (11). Bahr's interpretation demonstrates other ways of conceiving of manuscript forms. These forms can overlap with one another or defy categorization.
I have described Pepys 1594 briefly in my chapter on Machaut; it is an early fifteenth-century parchment codex containing Guillaume de Machaut's Remede de Fortune (1r - 36v) followed by an anonymous prose tract on love (37r-43r) (Fenlon 100-2). Both of these texts are written in a *cursiva media-formata*. The execution of the codex is not particularly ornate or deluxe, although there are some decorations, such as illuminated majuscules. The manuscript seems to give preference to Machaut's text: its author is identified, it is placed first, its appearance is slightly tidier, and it is more systematically decorated. However, the scribe (or scribes, as Fenlon suggests [100-2]), has taken care to create a consistent *ordinatio* between the Remede and the prose tract. As I have suggested in my chapter on Machaut, judging by the similarity of letterforms and decoration, both texts may be the work of a single hand. I cannot rule out Fenlon's hypothesis, however, that the prose tract is the work of a second hand (100-2).

Linguistically, the prose text contains more modern phrases not present in the Remede (composed in the mid-fourteenth century). The appearance of the demonstrative form "celle-ci" (evident in the extract from 37v-38r, below)\(^\text{248}\) alongside the older form "ceste" in the prose text suggests that it was composed after the Remede. The presence of these more modern forms can be explained by both hypotheses about the manuscript's assemblage: either both texts were copied at the same moment, after the composition of the prose text, or the Remede was copied earlier and the prose text was added later by a second hand that took care to match the first. Both texts are copied on parchment of a similar quality, both are written in the same script with identical (or near identical) letter-forms, and both contain majuscules embellished in the same style (though these are rarer in the prose tract) with yellow detailing.\(^\text{249}\)

\(^{248}\) This is a later development. De Mulder and Lamiroy date this demonstrative form to the beginning of the fifteenth century (217). See also Marchello-Nizia, *L'évolution du français*, 170-1.

\(^{249}\) There are some minor discrepancies between the fourth and fifth quires. The prose text begins in the fourth quire following the Remede. The ruling, for instance, changes from brown ink to black ink at the quire break between folios 38 and 39. The ruled area in quire five is smaller (115mm by 152mm) than in quires one to four (120mm by 160mm), with only 29 ruled lines as opposed to 32. These changes could support the hypothesis that the prose text was added later. They could also be explained as an attempt to accommodate the text's prose form in the only quire devoted exclusively to it.
The contents of the Pepys 1594 are thematically suited. Both texts are about good, worthwhile love, and how a lover should behave. If these texts — the first authored and "authoritative," the second anonymous — are understood together, the codex as whole becomes a guidebook to the pursuit of courtly love. It seems likely the compiler of Pepys 1594 intended this — though the space left after the Remede was copied may also have been an invitation for him to copy out whatever exemplar he had to hand. This is possible since the Remede ends in the fourth quire, with two folios remaining. The prose tract begins in the fourth quire (starting on fol. 37r) and continues into a fifth quire.250

In either case (or both cases — they are not mutually exclusive), Pepys 1594 is the result of the activity of compilatio. Bahr defines this "not as an objective quality of either texts or objects, but rather as a mode of perceiving such forms so as to disclose an interpretably meaningful arrangement, thereby bringing into being a text/work that is more than the sum of its parts" (3). The overall impression that Pepys 1594 is a guidebook to courtly love is one outcome of this medieval mode of codicological thought.

The result is that the structure of Pepys 1594 becomes a secondary layer of commentary on its contents. We might productively think of this commentary as a kind of critical "theory" about the texts within the book251 that emerges from the process of compilatio. I would suggest that by so carefully arranging these texts together in this book, the scribe presents, wittingly or not, a theory about them. This argument is rather like the one that Daniel Wakelin has offered — that scribes' ideas about literature are implicit in and/or a result of the very careful work that they undertake when disseminating texts in a manuscript culture. I would suggest that Pepys 1594 demonstrates a tendency that authors like Machaut and Chaucer explore more fully and explicitly when they make books a part of their way of thinking about writing. As Wakelin argues, scribes who copy

250 The collation of Pepys 1594 is: 1-3 (10), 4 (8), 5 (6).
251 "Theory" is a modern term that I use here because it helps explain some of the similar ways that medieval authors were thinking and writing about authorship. As Evans, Taylor, Watson, and Wogan-Browne caution, "although there is now a consensus that Latin scholastic culture of the Middle Ages had a body of writing that can be grouped under the rubric of 'medieval literary theory,' it must be understood that the category, as well as the term, it modern, not medieval" (314).
correct, emend, excise, complete, or exactly replicate texts\textsuperscript{252} perform activities "analogous to things we call philology or literary criticism" (4):\textsuperscript{253}

[Scribes] ponder language and the problems of rendering its sounds; they show respect for the words chosen by writers and their power; they reflect on verse-form and its workings; they imagine the complete form of a work when they have not seen it; and finally, when the scribes are also the composers or deliberate revisers of works, they pursue the creative activity we call authorship by means of correcting. (Wakelin 4)

Chaucer engages in something like this activity when he translates; and the Pepys compiler was also involved in something similar. He imagined a complete book, one that combined texts that might otherwise have always circulated separately. The compilatio of Pepys 1594 draws attention to its texts' shared ideas and this attention becomes a critical framework for a reader’s response to the texts.

Indeed in certain ways, in this manuscript context, the anonymous prose text comments on — glosses — Machaut's poem. It simplifies some of its concepts and rewrites others. Take for example the initial lines of the Remede, which claim that to learn any "art" (1) — the art of love, it is implied — the student must understand "douze choses" (2) [twelve things]. In its opening lines, the prose text reduces the nature of love to just three categories, simplifying the Machauldian subject matter: "vous devez savoir que il est .iii. amours: une mercheande, une villainne, et une loyal, bonne, et certainne" (37r) [you ought to know that there are three kinds of

\textsuperscript{252} "Non variant copying might involve immense concentration and attention and be just as effortful and thoughtful as variation," Wakelin suggests (54).

\textsuperscript{253} Wakelin speculates: "... the hypothesis to test might look like this. The scribes, by bothering to treat English works with the close attention evident in correcting, helped those works on their way to becoming objects of prestige and scholarship in later centuries. First, those corrections did very practically help — along with the rest of the scribes’ less eventful moments of copying — to preserve that literature. Secondly, might the attitudes evident in such care be passed on to people who then handled these books later? That might occur directly when later people saw the corrections in them, although in the long run this would apply only to a few of the earliest printers and then antiquaries. It might occur, more likely, indirectly: did the close attention of the scribes either express or influence a wider interest in reading these works attentively? And could this more nebulous set of attitudes be passed on to future ages and finally to our own practices of criticism?" (309).
love: one mercantile, one low, and one loyal, good, and sure]. The anonymous author clarifies:

Or est ainsi que je pense a parler de la bonne amour vraie qui doit en nous regner. Et celle ci ne faut ne a vie ne a mort. C'est quant le cuer gentil, qui tant est noble et franc, par douce amour est pris et si ne scet comment: ce n'est ne pour creinte, ne pour bien fait, ne pour amour que l'en ait eü a li, ne pour biaute, ne pour richesce, ne force, ne gentillesce, ne cuidance que il doie estre amé. (37v-38r)

[Now it is thus that I intend to talk about the good, true love that must rule in us. And this one does not fail either in life or in death. It is when the noble heart, which is so noble and free, is taken by sweet love and thus does not know how: it is neither for fear nor for gain, nor for love that the one had had for it, nor for beauty, nor for riches, nor strength, nor for a belief that it ought to be loved]

This passage works to distill the ideas about love found in the narrative Remede. The prose text states explicitly, in a single tidy paragraph, the nature of good love ("bonne amour vraie").

At other moments, the prose text recasts material from the Remede. For example, the Remede explains the necessary conditions for learning "aucun art" (1):

Aimme son maistre et son mestier

Seur tout; et ce li est mestier

Qu'il l'onneure, oubeïsse, serve;

Et ne cuide pas qu'il s'asserve,

Car s'il les aimme, il l'ameront,

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254 Another example in which the prose text seems to clarify the Remede is its treatment of allegorical figures. "Esperance," for example, acts as a character, counseling and consoling the lover, in Machaut's Remede. The prose text reduces the complexity of the allegory, simply enumerating allegorical figures and briefly mentioning their roles as the lover's messengers: "Premiers y a Doulz Penser qui bien est mon ami bien prochain," "Apres si vient Doulz Souspirs," "Et puis vient l'autre message qui est appelé Doulz Regart" etc. (42v).
Et s’il les het, il le harront. (9-14)

[He loves his master and his craft
Above all; and it is necessary for him
To honour, obey, serve it;
And he does not believe that he enslaves himself
Since if he loves them, they will love him
And if he hates them, they will hate him]

The anonymous prose text speaks directly to this moment in the Remede and recontextualizes its lines:

Et de ce s'ensuit la tierce amour, que il aimme ceulz qui l'aimment: "Se tu m'aimes, je t'ameray; se tu me hes, et je toy." He, biaul sire, dieus, que ceste amour mercheande vient a male fin... (fol 37r)

[And from this follows the third love: that he may love those who love him: "If you love me, I will love you; if you hate me, I will hate you." Alas, noble lord, god, that this mercantile love comes to a bad end...]

These sentences invert the paradigm in Machaut's Remede, which seems to be the primary literary source for the lines. The hypothetical first person speaker becomes the one who will love or hate if he is loved or hated; Machaut's student, by contrasts, will be loved or hated if he loves or hates. The prose text suggests that Machaut's prerequisites for "art" or love result in an unworthy kind of love, a love which it deems unstable and fickle. In this context, the prose text seems to warn readers not to draw the wrong lesson from the poetic text. The compilatio of the manuscript, by pairing the works, has developed a secondary level of commentary — a critical reading of Machaut's Remede through the anonymous prose text.

This book, then, is doing just the sort of work with its French contents that — as I have suggested throughout my dissertation — forms a context for Chaucer’s writing about literature,
literary practice, and literary posterity. Pepys 1594 shows quite neatly how scribal activity intersects with ideas about texts and authority — because a scribe intends this, or more simply, because literary meaning is always in some in part an effect of codicological form. Pepys 1594, I have shown, has the form of the miscellany — a form in which different authors' texts and different ideas about those texts are juxtaposed in dynamic ways. The result is cumulative: the book starts a conversation between a poetic text presented as an authoritative work, and a second, less authoritative, anonymous work, which serves to explicate — in various ways to translate and transform — Machaut's own.

One of my points in this dissertation is that — of course — medieval authors must have encountered many books like Pepys 1594: books whose forms were miscellaneous because scribes and their patrons, rather than authors, wanted them to be so, and because of the exigencies of manuscript making — including the individualized form of manuscripts, the staggering of production over time and between agents, and unpredictable access to exemplars. As he tells us in the *Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer read many works of French poetry in such compiled manuscripts — books like Pepys 1594. Chaucer therefore came into contact with the particular nexus of ideas about authorship that such books represent. My case in this dissertation is that Chaucer and his contemporaries worked within a manuscript culture in which a kind of literary criticism is inherent to the act of copying, and/or apparent in the act of reading scribally copied texts. The ideas about authority that I have traced in poetry are in some part an elaboration upon this codicological theory of literature. Chaucer knows that his engagement with his French sources is in some way a part of the same system of critical reading, and that knowledge becomes a part of his own theory of authorship.

I am obviously not the first critic to detect in Chaucer's work awareness of the critical function of translation and adaptation, or its bookishness. For instance, in the *Boece*, he departs from his main source in many places and reproduces the "explanatory commentary that frequently

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255 As Hanna suggests, "exemplar poverty" — the scarcity of available exemplars — is in part responsible for the miscellaneity of Middle English manuscripts. Because scribes did not have access to a large number of exemplars, they would copy multiple works, rather than one work of particular interest, from an available exemplar, resulting in a miscellaneous kind of book (*Pursuing History*, 31; see also "Miscellaneity and Vernacularity," 37-51).
accompanied the text in manuscripts" (Hanna III and Lawler, *Riverside Chaucer*, 2004). In this case, not only does Chaucer engage in a secondary level of commentary to clarify the text for his audience, he incorporates an existing body of criticism that he finds as an aspect of the manuscripts he reads.

In the *Complaint of Venus*, the narrator offers some of his/her own literary criticism, drawing attention to the phonetic structures of the French language and how this enables rhyming and thus Graunson's adherence to a strict poetic form in the *Cinq Ballades*. The *Canterbury Tales* tales are told by pilgrims who perform literary criticism that has a relationship to the form of the book as well as the pilgrimage, as Gillespie argues. They frame their texts with prologues and epilogues; they gloss ideas and sum them up; they gesture to what is important, and reveal hidden meanings in their tales. 256 Chaucer's pilgrim-compilers are imperfect, however. For instance, the Clerk, who tells the tale of Griselda — which he confesses to have borrowed from "Fraunceys Petrak" (IV.31) — concludes that women, unlike the patient Griselda, should "holdeth no silence" (IV.1189) When he gets the gist of his Petrarchan tale wrong in this way, the Clerk represents in miniature Chaucer’s much broader investigation of what happens when translators mistranslate and when commentators misread. 257

The conclusion the Manciple draws from his own tale provides one possible way to address such problems. The Manciple tells a tale of adultery and punishment, and delivers the moral: 258 "a wikked tonge in worse than a feend" (IX. 320). 259 He closes with the injunction, "and be non auctour newe" (IX.359). "Auctour," from Latin "auctor," typically describes writers of great "authority," not repeaters and "janglers." The MED defines it as "one who makes or creates a


257 Another example is when the company of pilgrims "laughen" at the "nyce cas" of the *Miller's Tale* (I.3855). They respond with a platitude which is not particularly relevant to the tale: "Diverse folk diversely they seyde" (I.3857).

258 He intentionally moralizes, opening with "Lordings, by this ensample I yow preye" (IX.309).

259 This moral also reads as ill-fitting. In the *Manciple's Tale*, the crow speaks the truth, not wickedness or "jangling" (IX.350). The conclusion the Manciple draws seems, at least, unexpected since his tale offers other more obvious morals (such as one should not commit adultery; one should not murder one's spouse in anger etc.).
person or thing" (such as God, the first "auctour") and "a source of authoritative information or opinion, an authority" (MED "auctour"). An "auctour" implies someone who creates a new piece of literature. Chaucer, then, recasts the crow's speech as more than mere "jangling." The line suggests that repeating a tale, like translating, is necessarily transformative and generative — a report can never quite accurately convey events exactly as they occurred since it is necessarily influenced by its teller's interpretation. Chaucer suggests that this creative imperfection is one way that a poet can achieve the status of "auctour." In other words, misrepresentation or just representation of a word may lead to the creation of new literary work. Such translations and transformations are typical of manuscript book production, as the example of Pepys 1594 shows where a second text comments on the one to which it is appended, and where an anonymous writer transforms the ideas of well known poet. Such transformations are equally technologies of authorship. As my thesis has shown, Chaucer is invested in a project that explores just this kind of authorship — he is, in fact, the kind of author whom the Manciple denounces, one who manipulates his sources in order to author something "newe."

5.3 Theories of Authorship

In the example of the Manciple, Chaucer is aware of the way critical response intersects with ideas about authorship. I have just argued that Chaucer found such critical responses in manuscripts like Pepys 1594, where scribes compiled and copied the French poems Chaucer read, sometimes in transformative ways. In this last section of my conclusion, I will turn back to theories of authorship themselves — to Chaucer's elaboration of them, and to strategies for self-authorizing that he found, not only in the learned literate culture of this time, but in the poetry of his French contemporaries, and the manuscript culture that transmitted their and his own literary work.

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260 I refer to the manuscript culture of Chaucer's period. Of particular interest to my thesis is the way in which the rise of the importance of the author (Huot, Song to Book, 64) intersects with books, from the single-author collection to the miscellany. The fourteenth-century writers I have considered are responding to this environment, I have argued, when they develop their playful poetic personae.
Minnis provides a Latinate context for the development of what we might call "theories of authorship." He suggests in some part these theories originate in scholastic thought in the Middle Ages. He explains that scholastic thinkers, interested in poetics,

produced a critical vocabulary which enabled the literary features of Scriptural texts to be analysed thoroughly, and which encouraged the emergence in the fourteenth century of a more liberal attitude to classical poetry. (6)

Chaucer and Gower "exploited [...] aspects of the vast corpus of literary theory" (6-7) established by the scholastics. Minnis argues that Chaucer's self-styling as the "lewd compilator" of a manuscript, and not as an "author," engages in the same idiom of "self-deprecation" (199) as did compilers like Trevisa, and that both Chaucer and Trevisa use this posture as a way to escape responsibility or blame for their material (193). Minnis does not argue that Chaucer's poetic matter is "identical with the nature of the diverse materiae of a compiler like, for example, Vincent of Beauvais"; rather, he suggests, writers like Vincent of Beauvais and Chaucer, "drew on a common corpus of literary theory; they described their different diversities in a similar way" (201). Minnis suggests that Chaucer was not "interested in presenting himself as a 'modern author'" (209). Instead "Chaucer was fond of assuming self-depreciating literary roles, and the role of compiler would have been particularly congenial to him" (209) (Minnis is, of course, aware that this role is deliberate and constructed).²⁶¹ Chaucer certainly adopts a self-deprecating stance a times, and such a stance is useful to him for dodging responsibility for sometimes radical, sometimes even potentially blasphemous, writing.²⁶²

In this dissertation I have further suggested, however, that Chaucer adapts scholastic positions according to ideas of authorship espoused by French fourteenth-century authors. As I have summarize above, these French authors are similarly self-deprecating, if not entirely genuinely. Machaut, for instance, describes himself unflatteringly as a "borgne vallet." Authors such as

²⁶¹ Minnis allows for one exception in the Troilus (210) in which the narrator aligns himself and his "litel book" with the ancient authors.

²⁶² Though Minnis suggests we might read the Retraction as a piece in which Chaucer casts off the role of blameless compiler, giving us a glimpse of "Chaucer as a writer who holds himself morally responsible for his writings" (208).
Machaut assumed humble stances, but as they did so, they also showed that they were quite comfortable emerging from behind what Minnis calls the "shield and defence" (210) of the role of compiler. As they defer their authorship they also claim it, though, as I have shown, elusively, obliquely, and playfully. Minnis is surely right that in the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer poses as a compiler. Though, as my Introduction suggests, he complicates the scholastic tradition's distinction between compilation and authorship. His self-deprecating pose here and elsewhere is a literary construction, one that puts into play the self-deprecating poses of his French contemporaries.⁶⁺³ For Chaucer, the claim to be a compiler is the ultimate, profoundly ironic, assertion of his authorship.

The example I gave from the *Canterbury Tales* in my Introduction shows how this pose works. Chaucer's *General Prologue* and Guillaume de Machaut's *Prologue* offer different ways of using a prologue to construct a narrator and an author, and to influence its own position in the manuscripts that contain it. In Machaut's *Prologue*, the narrator portrays himself as an author — easily and, indeed, often confused for the historical Machaut himself — and imagines his *Prologue* at the beginning of a single-author collection. The *Prologue* seems to account for Machaut's entire corpus, with the somewhat ironic consequence that it is always about to be unfixed — it is made available for excerption and representation in relation to any of Machaut's texts. It is not anchored to a particular work.

Chaucer's more obviously fictional narrator, on the other hand, poses as a compiler, bringing together the tales of many equally fictional pilgrims. On the one hand, the collection in question models disorder, with poetic responsibility divvied up amongst many, often clashing voices. On the other hand, the pilgrimage frame requires that, for the most part, the texts it contains will travel together, with Chaucer the "compiler" of what becomes, in fact, the most obviously

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⁶⁺³ Evans, Taylor, Watson, and Wogan-Browne comment on the unique literary concerns shared by vernacular writers (which may partly explain Chaucer's departures from his Latin models). "Vernacular writers do not only see themselves as engaged in an attempt to make their language the equal of Latin; they are acutely aware, in a broad variety of ways, of the differences between languages and the need to theorize their own projects in light of those differences. In some cases, such theorizations revolve around the politics of access, exploring the vernacular's special ability to communicate across the range of professions and social classes, whether to restrict that ability or to exploit it to the full. In other cases, a writer's concern is with this ability in a more mythical than political sense" (330).
authoritative single-author manuscripts of Middle English literary tradition. Chaucer's *General Prologue* describes the production of a specific work by a specific narrator — and so, unlike the Machauldian *Prologue*, the *General Prologue* cannot be relocated. Chaucer's *General Prologue* ensures the codicological stability and cohesion of his work. By crafting a fictional narrator-compiler, Chaucer becomes a very real author of a canon — a book — of literary work.

Chaucer shapes his quite extraordinary poetic authority from literary ideas about authors, including the French authors whose work has concerned me in this dissertation, and about the manuscripts that transmitted medieval literary writing. He develops a theory of his own work as an author as he translates his sources and responds to his codicological context — and his sources' ideas about that same context — into his poetry. He read the poetry of his French sources in manuscripts; he knew that his poetry too would be read in manuscripts; and he plays with the uncertain realities of manuscript culture as he crafts his narrative and authorial voices. He evokes, hints at, competes with, and undermines his sources, often all at once. A seemingly innocuous reference to a source can be a literary game (the fictional Lollius of the *House of Fame*, for instance); a compliment to a contemporary can be double-edged (is his praise of Graunson really praise?). Chaucer's relationship to his source texts takes place within a book culture in which textual dissemination is always unpredictable, and in which the author always relinquishes control to the copyists and makers who produce the objects that carry his texts to an audience. He contributes to a textual culture that is greater, in creative and intellectual terms — the emerging literary theories, systems of criticism, and networks of ideas — than the sum of its individual bookish parts. As I have argued throughout my thesis, Chaucer engages with his French sources, and manuscripts that bore them, in play, but play that has importantly meaningful ends.

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Appendix A


Messire Jehan Campions

Sur Parnase a le Mote Cyrre et Nise,

Cuide avoir chilz songié, qui le Parfait

Des Vens imparfist, et beu a devise

De la fontene Elycone que a fait

Li chevalux volans, dont moult s'a mesfait— 5

Che dist li Victriens, dieus d'armonie—

Car ne congnoist ne congneu. Mené

Ne l'i ont Clyo, Euterpe, Uranie,

Thersicore, Erato, Melponené,

Thayle, Calliope, et Polimnie. 10

Espoir! Caron en Phlegeton l'esprise,

Ou Athleto en Lethés l'out attrait,

Ou en Cochite ou Thesiphone est prise,

Pour lui mectre el point qu'elle Athamas lait,

Quant en ses dis noms de Bretesque mait 15
Que n'ont congneu poete en Meonie,

En Manthe, en Peligne, en Verone né,

Ne Flaccus, Clyo, Euterpe, Uranie, etc.

Si lo que se dis de le femme Anchise

Ou de son fil l'archier volage estrait,

Taise tez noms! Mieulx en vaulra s'emprise.

Et se l'avule en Ramnuse o son lait

L'a allechié, je les talaire n'aît

Persé, harpen; ne egyde Gorgonie

Syringe ou barbiton l'ait demené,

A l'onnour Clyo, Euterpe, Uranie,

Thersicore, Erato, Melpomené,

Thalye, Calliope, Polimnie.

Jehan de le Mote respond au dit Messire Jehan Campion

Tu, Campions, appel faisans

Par le voye regalien,

Mote n'est point chevaulx volans,

Ains vit en rieule Eliien.
Tu comprens le Philistien

Et il David en combatant,

Par quoi en fleuve Tantalus

Te baigneront en arguant

Tribles, Florons, et Cerberus.

Sces tu tous les mondains rommans

Et tous les noms, V. et combien?

Je doubt que li fruis des lubans

Vraiment ne soient li tien.

Il ne m'en cault du Victrien;

Son castoy pren de cuer joyant.

Mais tu! Va, s'apren bergibus!

La tiennent escole de cant

Tribles, Florons etc.

Tu, qui tous vens yes congnoissans,

Congnois tu le Mur Graciien,

Le roc ou Phebus est regnans,

Et tous le clans de cel engien
Et de Cerberus le Mairien?

Nennil, certes. Mais d'Aridant Congnistras au fons la jus,

Car la te menront galopant,

Tribles, Florons, et Cerberus.