OF FALS YMAGINACIOUN:

POETIC HYPOCRISY IN ANGLO-ARABIC LETTERS,

700-1400

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الحمد لله. والصلاة والسلام على عبده المبعوث رحمة للعالمين.

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ABSTRACT

Broadly defined as the significant break between word, deed, appearance, or intention, hypocrisy might be the most overlooked and least understood "sin" in medieval literature. An odd one out, this moveable vice defies canonical classification: hamartiologists have attached it to Pride, Envy, Vainglory, Avarice. Seldom is hypocrisy named hypocrisy. Yet the vice's active agent, the hypocrite, runs rampant in public, wearing a gaudy array of cultural and ethical markers. What gives literary hypocrites notable edge are their profound but problematic skills of persuasion and performance.

This dissertation studies the place of the hypocrite in Old English, Middle English, and medieval Arabic culture and poetry. It conceives of hypocrisy as unique from the other vices: unlike the canonical sins, the hypocrite's complex intentions and skill sets can make it hard to couch in moral terms. Hypocrisy's prominence in literature and poetry suggests its importance to disparate civilizations. Hypocrisy itself may indeed serve as a marker of civilization—its discontents and dissonances. The variety of terms and contexts for hypocrisy, moreover, suggests its variety of values and meanings, which this dissertation explores. In their surveys and close readings of hypocrisy in Old English, Middle English, and Arabic literature, my chapters aim to delineate the complexity—and poetic richness—of hypocrisy as a complicated, even problematic vice, as well as a practical, sophisticated skill.

Chapter One traces the overlooked linguistic and literary history of the character of the hypocrite in Old English literature. It demonstrates that the vice was conceived mostly as a negative character trait. Unlike the simpler vices, hypocrisy took manifold verbal and behavioral forms, as is indicated by the many terms connoting dissimulation. A common element in the heroic and especially biblical poetry explored is the hypocrite's skills of performance and

persuasion. Successful hypocrites were not simply vicious in this tradition, but problematically and necessarily bright, driven, and charismatic. Despite these poetic elements, hypocrisy's poetic potentials aren't fully exploited: the Satan of these poems intends to deter more than allure audiences. To measure this period's conceptions of the vice against those of the centuries that follow it, this chapter includes accounts of hypocrisy's key terms in the Middle English period up to Chaucer's age.

Chapter Two picks up where Chapter One leaves off by homing in on Geoffrey Chaucer (d.1400), whose poetry played a pivotal role in more deliberately exploring hypocrisy's stylistic potentials, applying them to poetic ends with the aid of numerous new loanwords expressing deceit and doubleness. The chapter first contextualizes Chaucer's social and philosophical scenes. Responding to classical conceptions of a contingent world as represented in *Boece* and played with in his moral lyrics, Chaucer conceives of the vice as a powerful if not positive consequence of agency that allows humans to cope with and even flourish in a world turned upside down. Chaucer relies on what I call a poetics of hypocrisy to frame the socio-ethical problems of his day, problems that resonate in his poetry. In *Troilus and Criseyde*, this poetics entails well-crafted hypocrites whose actions transform their narrative worlds at the levels of syntax, style, and plot.

Chapter Three delves deeper into the ethical implications of Chaucer's hypocritical worlds. It turns to his *Canterbury Tales* to analyze its repeated manipulation of a civil assumption: that "every man should act in good faith upon the promises he made" (Hornsby, *Chaucer and the Law* 38). Inverting the principle that *pacta sunt servanda* (*promises must be kept*), the tales perplex readers by showcasing inconsistent characters who uphold agreements of dubious faith—oaths that suit such ends as murder, adultery, embezzlement, perjury, and treason.

In their own ways, the tales considered—The Friar's, Pardoner's, Clerk's, and Merchant's—institutionalize hypocrisy as the basis for social exchange, a humorous relation that nevertheless forces audiences to face the hard consequences of agency, normativity, and moral (anti-)realism.

Chapter Four concludes this project. Broad in scope, it surveys hypocrisy's key terms in classical and early postclassical Arabic literature. First it traces the different terms and conceptions—religious and cultural—of hypocrisy in Arabic literature across time (6th-13th century CE). As in the Old English tradition, hypocrisy enjoys an array of terms and connotations that share a common, publicly-performing element. Second, it probes hypocrisy's personal and poetic potentials with a case study of the notorious Iberian diplomat Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d.1375), who paralleled Chaucer professionally. A reading of his literary life against his English contemporary's reveals how differently each author conceived of and approached hypocrisy in word and deed: whereas Chaucer cultivates a subtle, playful, and useful poetics of hypocrisy in his oeuvre (and perhaps in his professional life), Ibn al-Khaṭīb wields hypocrisy—doubtless a vice in his hands—to craft an overt, highly personalized, and abusive style—no less poetic—that takes the traditions of *madḥ* and *qadḥ* (*praise* and *blame*) to new limits.

NOTE ON TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

I work with Larry Benson's *Riverside Chaucer*, Third Edition (1987). Line numbering and title abbreviations follow this edition. See Benson, *Riverside* 779. For the sake of economy, I cite this edition once in the bibliography, not each of the works taken up in this study.

Unless otherwise specified, all translations are my own. My word-for-word Old English translations in Chapter One demonstrate hypocrisy's array of expressions in the original verses, not their modern renderings. In preparing my translations, I consulted Craig Williamson and Aaron K. Hostetter's helpful versions. I'm enormously grateful and indebted to Peter Baker for reviewing and correcting these translations. All quoted Old English verses are based on the University of Virginia's *Old English Poetry* webpage: http://faculty.virginia.edu/OldEnglish/aspr/. The Arabic transliterations employed in this dissertation follow the Library of Congress' romanization table. See www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/arabic.pdf. Because I'm clumsy with Word, when quoting in Arabic script, I offer the citation in a footnote, against my practice of citing beside the quoted text. I'm deeply indebted to Nizar F Hermes for carefully reviewing and correcting my Arabic translations and transliterations.

INTRODUCTION: *HOMMAGE À HYPOCRISIE*: BETWEEN VIRTUE AND VICE

> When fear arrives, you see them gaping at you, their eyes darting as though overshadowed by death. When fear departs, they sear you with sharp tongues, greedy for the goods. —*The Qur'an*[1]

> The stallion, the twilight, the wild all know me,
>
> The sword, the spear, the parchment, the pen. —al-Mutanabbī (d.965)[2]

> In other words, the culture is and must be saturated with myths that are literally false, and deceptive if believed to be factually true. But the deception is legitimate if like the Noble Lie and the stories Socrates *wants* the young to hear, they are morally admirable fictions that drug people into sound convictions and lead them to virtue.
>
> —Schofield, *Plato: Political Philosophy* (2006)[3]

What is it about showoffs that gets under our skin? Not their bragging *per se*, as not all bragging unnerves us. We can admire a boast fulfilled, a *true* boast, an *honest* brag, like al-Mutanabbī's fateful vaunt; in Dizzy Dean's aphoristic formulation, "It ain't braggin if you can back it up." Rather, the prospect of fraudulence that comes with grand gestures and loud boasts offends us, for it opens the door to human ineptitude. Take crass televangelists, take politicians, poetasters, or Hollywood celebrities. Take academic hacks. It's possible to envy them their fame, fortune, and influence, but never their talents, for they have none, according to their sceptics. They see through their act, and it's this performance that unnerves them—the *weakness* of it, its failure to convert us all. Conversely, we can enjoy a good advertisement even as it sells us lies, or believe in self-serving "business ethics" models, endorsed by Socrates, that never attend to our better interests. Aesthetically, the method behind the message is beautiful, the craft that veils the designs. Maybe this is why we enjoy a good disguise in an undercover or double agent (the stuff of endless novels, shows, and movies) or value a worthy villain. It comes down to the strength of the performance, to the skills we hope to find in any strong pitch, without which, nothing.

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[1] "al-Aḥzāb" ("The Joint Forces") 33:19.

[2] الخيل والليل والبيداء تعرفني   والسيف والرمح والقرطاس والقلم

[3] 297.

This dissertation studies the development of hypocrisy as a literary device—an engine for character and narrative development and impetus of para-poetic commentary and investigation. It seeks to offer several definitions to and cultural understandings of the dynamic "vice" by investigating three distinct literary traditions: Old English, Middle English, and classical through early postclassical Arabic, with special focus applied to Chaucer's oeuvre. Its priority, moreover, is to provide fresh insights into hypocrisy's less explored (or unexplored) associations; in Chaucer's case, this means associations seen outside of antifraternal or Wycliffite lenses, two traditions that view the vice within ecclesiastical contexts, where it often stands in for heresy.[1] For decades, medieval hypocrisy has more or less exclusively been presented as a religious vice, with the scholarship centering on the Church and its heretics.[2] This present study invites renewed investigations into medieval hypocrisy beyond this singular environment, which limits how we can conceive of the vice, if it should be regarded as a proper vice at all.

In four chapters, I intend to complicate our assumptions of hypocrisy as a singular vice by investigating *hypocrisies'* complicated characteristics through the lens of three distinct literatures, traditions that demonstrate the terms and concepts' literal and ethical polysemy. As a theoretical outlook, I adopt Richard Newhauser's social constructivist approach to the historical study of vices, introduced in his edited volume *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals* (Brill, 2007), which pays attention to the lexical and cultural contexts in which a phenomenon—such as the emotion of anger—appears in a given environment and moment. Its meanings could change depending on time and place, in other words.[1] Eleven years since the publication of this foundational call to the renewal of hamartiology, no study has as yet analyzed hypocrisy in a lexically- and culturally-specific way.[2] This dissertation seeks to initiate new studies into hypocrisy as a social fact that, while preserving a few key identifying features, has varied widely in its local valuations and expressions over time: for some of the authors and characters I examine, hypocrisy is morally bad, but to others it's necessary; for some, it corrupts humanity, for others, it stems from the core of what it means to be human. For all, it proves incredibly conducive to the making of poetry.

---

[1] See Forrest, *Detection of Heresy* 158-64.

[2] Otherwise, hypocrisy enjoys careful attention in early modern literary studies, as it does in the contemporary fields of political science, psychology, and moral philosophy. Noteworthy contemporary book-length studies include Krasner, *Sovereignty*; Naso, *Hypocrisy Unmasked;* Runciman, *Political Hypocrisy*; Szabados and Soifer, *Hypocrisy.* See also the New York Public Library Lectures in Humanities' "Seven Deadly Sins" titles (Oxford University Press, 2003-06), a series of brief books that provide witty and thoughtful sketches of the sins intended for contemporary non-specialist readers.

A DECEPTIVE TERM

Outside the religious frame, where its ethical charge precedes it, is hypocrisy vice? A standard conception would be in terms of virtue ethics, where vices amount to bad habits that deviate from recognized virtues by means of excess or deficiency: thus Gluttony is Temperance in excess, Lust is deficient Modesty, and so on. As an antithesis to moral virtue, vices in this Aristotelian sense dispose a person through repeated habits to behave in manners unfitting to their rational natures.[1] Hypocrisy—not an emotional state in itself, but the performance of other emotions—doesn't quite fit this model on account of its definitional slippage: does *any* inconsistency amount to hypocrisy? Aristotle himself saw no harm in the flattery of friends or an orator's persuasive rhetoric.[2] Is inconsistency necessarily a vice? Is it the vice of deficient Integrity?[3] But this assumes too much: that humans are naturally disposed to a coherence of beliefs and actions; that their intentions and actions aren't often multiple and contradictory yet also interconnected (hence our knack for parsing means from ends); that they always know what they desire and act accordingly, and vice versa; that they strive to act according to reason; that reason is rational and reasonably governs, as opposed, say, to rhetoric or emotion; that all this is ethically good.

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[1] "the social constructionist perspective in emotionology... has emphasized the local moral evaluation of emotion as a key element in their production—the way in which those who use the vocabulary of emotions do so within socially restricted systems of duties and rights, obligations and conventions that serve as guidelines for the moral analysis of the terminology of emotions" (Newhauser, "Introduction" 3). A society's association of commerce with avarice or even its definition of usury, for example, might evolve over time based on its economic developments. For cultural constructionist studies on the variability of an emotion, see for instance Rosenwein's edited volume, *Anger's Past* (1998).

[2] Which makes sense, given that sin scholarship of the past dozen years or so has focused on ironing out the collective seven deadly sins, variously articulated across cultures and times. During this span, several monographs have appeared on single vices. See for instance Newhauser, *Greed* (2006), Cloutier, *Luxury* (2015); Denery II, *Lying* (2015); DeYoung, *Vainglory* (2010); King, *Ambition* (2013). The groundwork laid down by these recent studies makes the present undertaking possible. For a somewhat related study that moves away from the seven deadly sins, see Westacott, *The Virtues of Our Vices: A Modest Defense of Gossip, Rudeness, and Other Bad Habits* (2011).

Presently, hypocrisy is assumed to carry a negative moral charge. It is also taken for granted to differ from mere inconsistency and even fakery. Take Law professor William Miller's explanation:

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[1] Drefcinski, "Is Hypocrisy Always A Vice?" 152

[2] See Szabados and Soifer, *Hypocrisy* 67-68.

[3] "Aristotle believed, as did many others in the ancient Greek world, that moral virtue is necessary for one's well-being.... Someone might believe, however (wrongly, in Aristotle's view) that it is sometimes acceptable (and possible!) to indulge one's self-interest at the expense of virtue. Such a person might know which actions are virtuous (that is, in accord with the mean), but reject any direct inference from that fact to the view that these actions are obligatory. Perhaps the fact that hypocrites can pay lip service to one conception of morality while acting on another indicates that hypocrisy is this sort of moral failing. Clearly this sort of moral failure would not appear to be a vice as such, on the model of the mean, but rather a different sort of failure. A person who has integrity, on the other hand, must be a person who acts in accordance with what he or she believes to be right, even at a cost to himself or herself. More generally, a person of integrity must take moral reasons for action to be overriding. Indeed, the etymological conception of a person with "integrity" as one who is "whole" seems to stand in clear contrast to the sort of division between words, actions, and beliefs one associates with hypocrisy" (Szabados and Soifer, *Ethical Investigations* 84).

> Faking it is a domain not completely congruent with the vice of hypocrisy, though there is so much overlap that we must face hypocrisy at the outset. Not all hypocrites experience the anxieties at the core of the faking it syndrome. And not all types of faking it raise a serious issue of hypocrisy. I am not a hypocrite, unless most teachers are, for pretending to find interesting what is dull, or for engaging in the various falsenesses that constitute cajolery. Nor am I a hypocrite for putting on a somber face at the news of the untimely death of a person I didn't especially care for.... Were we to blame the mere donning of a role that our hearts weren't totally into as hypocrisy, we would be hypocrites all the time, except perhaps when asleep. (*Faking It* 9)

Miller probably dismisses hypocrisy as a natural, "ordinary" trait because he considers it a vice to begin with. His *a priori* logic isn't uncommon. Consider the morally-loaded *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of hypocrisy:

> The assuming of a false appearance of virtue or goodness, with dissimulation of real character or inclinations, esp. in respect of religious life or beliefs; hence in general, dissimulation, pretense, sham. Also, an instance of this. (s.v. hypocrisy (n.))

In this definition, hypocrisy assumes a morally negative charge; does this then set it apart from "mere" dissimulation? The depths of hypocrisy's vice-ness—inherent? culturally conditioned?—remain unclear.[1]

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[1] Together with *dissimulation*'s unhelpful entry, you have a tautology: "1.a. The action of dissimulating or dissembling; concealment of what really is, under a feigned semblance of something different; feigning, hypocrisy" (*OED* s.v. dissimulation (n.)).

PROJECT DEFINITIONS AND PARAMETERS

Throughout this project, I keep open the possibility that hypocrisy can serve as an ordinary vice, affecting everyone.[1] My turn to everyday ethics hopes to gound this study in the pragmatics of words and deeds, and to have this study serve as a building block for more abstract studies, including politeness theory, performance theory, emotionology, and identity studies. Additionally, I maintain several identifying features or assumptions that tie together the otherwise culturally and contextually nuanced literary hypocrites examined in this project. The most important one is that hypocrites operate in public. Hypocrisy's functions in public spaces as a relational system give it enormous potential to impact, for better or worse, all social structures that depend on mutual trust.[2]

Hypocrites moreover rely on their charisma or the persuasion of others to garner an audience or base of supporters; and they challenge, expose, or work against the norms or interests of their society. It also appears that many of the medieval literary hypocrites examined are fully conscious of, openly discuss, or otherwise reveal their doubleness: many calculate and weaponize their hypocrisy.[3] Unlike the hypocrites of Dickens, say, who may not know what they're all about, these actors perform intentions, beliefs, or emotions that mask hidden intentions, beliefs, or emotions, or otherwise conceal a bigger picture. These outward intentions, beliefs, and emotions are as "true" or "false" as the truth content of a poet's verse.

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[1] As Miller observes, even the efforts of concealing one's virtues or dissimulating in hopes of attaining them run clear risks of turning hypocritical. See Miller, *Faking It*, Chapter Three: "Antihypocrisy: Looking Bad in Order to Be Good" 20-30.

[2] Just as the "inherently intersubjective implications of lying" have contributed to mendacity's more or less universal condemnation by philosophers and theologians from time immemorial, hypocrisy's social presence and impact on trust-based relationships explain much of its negative charge (Jay, *Virtues* 47).

[3] Society-wide instances of hypocrisy, discussed in Chapter Three, might prove an exception to this; the citizens of the Clerk's Tale, for instance, might not recognize their own double standards.

Finally, hypocrites' actions do raise ethical questions, but their actions needn't be normatively wrong or bad. For example, the ethicists Jessica Isserow and Colin Klein define hypocrites as "*persons who have, by mismatch between judgments and actions, undermined their claim to moral authority*, where (very roughly), a person's moral authority is understood as a kind of standing that they occupy within a particular moral community" ("Hypocrisy" 193). True, outed hypocrites might lose their legitimacy in praising or blaming others and expose themselves to public censure or ridicule, but they also destabilize the standards on which an entire community stands and even elicit sympathy: if enough members of a community, say, secretly cheat on their spouses, or collectively park illegally inside the local church's modest lot every Sunday, that community's definitions of marriage/adultery and illegal parking may undergo adjusting before the act is deemed immoral. A prominent hypocrite (that is, a disgraced role model) might offer new standards for the society to adopt if they're like her or him or no better.[1] In brief, the hypocrite's performances pose as answers from which audiences derive ethical questions to ask themselves.

Beyond these broad identifying features, since defining hypocrisy proves so problematic, it will be necessary to continue to redefine the terms for hypocrisy within each of the textual and generic environments in which they appear. Words might carry true meanings in the Augustinian sense, but to contemporary readers and speakers they are as changeable and multi-identical as their users and interpreters. This is not a matter of mere polysemy. Philosopher Peter Ludlow highlights the importance of context in the establishment of terms' definitions; for him, every conversation serves as a "microlanguage" with its special set of figurations and referents. Words are moreover underdetermined: statements are not in themselves true or false, but depend on those engaged in the conversation (or language game, if you like) to determine their truth or falsehood.[1] For this reason, I will try not to force broad or historical theoretical readings onto the texts I read, as, for example, Moritz and Allen (*Distinction of Stories* (1981)), Ginsberg (*Cast of Character* (1983)) and other poetic theorists have done when formulating a coherence to the *Canterbury Tales* based on medieval commenators of Ovid, Aristotle, and other medieval literary critics. In the words of Glending Olson, we "need to give attention to evidence that may be less formally theoretical or critical... to perspectives on poetry as they emerge in a writer's own terminology" ("Making and Poetry" 272).

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[1] I play with Aristotle's tragic element: If the greater protagonist failed, what chance do *we* have at succeeding?

ANGLO-ARABIC LETTERS

If hypocrisy isn't easily packed into one neat definition, its numerous terms have helped infuse it with meanings over the centuries. My Chapters One and Four study these terms, the former to acknowledge and establish the English[2] cultural and lexical heritage prior to Chaucer's age, the latter to provide a sounding board against which we can compare the English poet's understandings and poetic uses of the "vice" in a way that seeks no intentions of establishing cultural or literary influences or, at this stage, concrete points of contact. Rather, in ending my dissertation with a turn to medieval Arabic conceptions of hypocrisy, I hope to encourage future comparative studies that rely less exclusively on the limiting and often misleading "influence-based" hermeneutics, which has its traps of over-crediting the "original source" and diminishing the capacities of the "borrower" or "translator." In comparing terms and literary conceptions of hypocrisy across disparate times and places, I intend to gesture, however faintly, toward a cross-cultural tradition, in the Auerbachean and Dronkean senses; alternatives to the influence-based model that entail what Jean Dangler recently describes as network-based systems of mutual exchange, where lines of influence and difference are provocatively blurred, demonstrate shared investments in language, poetry, and the study and representations of human nature.[1] Careful studies into the "striking similarities" across nonmodern languages and cultures that go beyond establishing positivist textual links moreover promise new opportunities for bringing into conversation seemingly disparate or anachronistic letters and periods.[2] For this reason, I turn away from an influence-based organizing principle for the literature I look at.[3] I also set aside a sizeable and rather foundational corpus of scholarship devoted to the Arabic-to-Latin transmission of medical and ethical tracts, wisdom and advice literature, and "Greek" philosophy. In the limited space I have for it, I choose to focus on Arabic poetry and literature rather than the possibly relevant, already-trod sciences surrounding them.[4]

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[1] This is the case for "all predicates, ranging from predicates for things like 'person' and 'tree', predicates for abstract ideas like 'art' and 'freedom', and predicates for crimes like 'rape' and 'murder'" (Ludlow, "Microlanguages" 6).

[2] And, indirectly, Latin, which gives Old English specific terms connoting fraud/trickery (such as *fals*), concepts (such as the Christian hypocrite), and many a French loanword.

Because Chaucer occupies such primary attention in this dissertation, my comparative study of Arabic literature culminates with an excursus on Chaucer's neighbor, fellow diplomat/courtier/poet, and sometime contemporary, the polymath Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb (d.1375). I focus on his turbulent political life and prosimetrics, a mode of writing in which this poet and chronicler distinguished himself. Like his great Andalusian predecessor Ibn Zaydūn

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[1] See Dangler, *Edging Toward Iberia*. al-Musawi, *Republic of Letters* applies such network theories to his extensive study of moving authors and texts of the postclassical Arabic-speaking world (ca. 12th-18th century). See also of course Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*.

[2] The phrase is al-Karaki's, which she employs in her fascinating, comparison between Avicennan *Takhyīl* and Kantian aesthetic theory. See her ""Striking Similarities": Ibn Sīnā's *Takhyīl* and Kant's Aesthetic Judgment." Though she ultimately suggests Avicennan influences, al-Karaki importantly sheds light on the history of a shared idea across time and space, despite the gaps.

[3] For influence-based models see Ranelagh, *The Past We Share*, and Metlitzki, *Matter of Araby*.

[4] See especially the scholarship of Thomas Burman, Charles Burnett, Dimitri Gutas, Sidney Griffith, and Anna Akasoy.

(d.1071), Ibn al-Khaṭīb lived among an ethnically and professionally diverse milieu of al-Andalus that included philosophers, theologians, litterateurs, and natural scientists.[1] However, his extant writings, which are massive, occupying the genres of history and literature, don't reveal an Avicennan or Averroistic tradition. By his own account he's an *adīb* (*litterateur*), a medical doctor, and a minister. And in his father's unrehearsed verses, brought out in pride of his son's poetry:

الطبُّ والشِّعر والكتابة   سِماتُنا في بني النَّجابة
هنَّ ثلاثٌ مُبَلِّغاتٌ   مراتباً بعضها الحجابة[2]

Medicine, Poetry, Literacy:
Our salient features among the excellent;
Three professions that draw to the Ministry.

To my mind, Ibn al-Khaṭīb, like Chaucer, was peripheral to an "Aristotelian" or "philosophical" tradition. I count him, like Chaucer, a philosopher in a "non-traditional" sense, that is, insofar as he produces original thoughts on human existence and experience—simply, a philosopher in the poetic sense. Ibn al-Khaṭīb's elitist beliefs on who should rule might come out in his writings, for instance, but they come nowhere near al-Fārābī's (d.c.950) in their articulation of a platonic "philosopher-king." The famous wazir goes so far as to advise his children against entangling themselves with philosophy in his austere testament to them. I say all this first to justify once more my decision not to push the influence-through-philosophy narrative, and to contextualize how Ibn al-Khaṭīb came to develop a poetics of hypocrisy of his own.

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[1] For Ibn al-Khaṭīb's background as a philosopher and his para-literary intellectual network, see Mohamad Ballan's forthcoming dissertation, "The Scribe of the Alhambra: Lisan al-Din ibn al-Khatib, Sovereignty and History in Nasrid Granada" (University of Chicago).

[2] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭah* III.390.

For unlike Chaucer, who filters hypocrisy (and general conflict and violence) through the lenses of humor and fiction, Ibn al-Khaṭīb develops a no less rhetorical poetics of hypocrisy that both exploits and names nonfictional persons and personal experiences both to entertain, provoke thought, and downright provoke. Ibn al-Khaṭīb's social environment and philosophical background are thus important factors in giving his poetry an often cynical, renunciatory outlook on the deceptions and transience of earthly existence, balanced by religious conviction in something greater than his present circumstance.[1] I don't doubt that Ibn al-Khaṭīb's bitter experiences throughout his life played their part in forming his bleak outlooks on life. Nor do I doubt that they helped cultivate an attitude toward the world as fleeting and deceptive nature, or cultivate, for that matter, the promise of an afterlife according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. That said, Ibn al-Khaṭīb's *dhamm al-dunyā* or *contemptus mundi* poetry is by no means exclusive to him, but comes out of a long literary tradition, introduced below.[2]

Ibn al-Khaṭīb's later years, discussed in Chapter Four, allow us to consider the effects a troubled environment has on one's poetic and moral character. In my focus on two particularly vulnerable periods—Muḥammad V's 1358-1362 exile with his men, and Ibn al-Khaṭīb's 1371 desertion for Tlemcen—I seek to answer the following questions: What effect did this environment of fear, intrigue, and corruption have on the wazir's creative autonomy and ministerial integrity? Did it stunt his growth as a diplomat and poet by clouding his mind and sapping his energies? Or did it achieve the opposite effect, did it force him to construct survival mechanisms as a courtier and artist? And does he do so at the expense of selling out or abandoning a moral code?[1] Keeping these questions in mind will help articulate what hypocrisy meant to Chaucer.

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[1] See 'Abd Allāh, *al-Falsafah* 10-15. The author provides an equivocal overview of the wazir's stances toward philosophy, which he couples with *kalām* theology and sufism, all broadly defined. See 29-31. 'Abd Allāh also aligns him closely with the "anti-philosopher" al-Ghazālī (d.1111), who goes so far as to consider al-Fārābī and Avicenna (d.1037) faithless, although Ibn al-Khaṭīb does not go this far. For a highly useful analysis of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's understandings and uses of technical philosophical terms and concepts in his oeuvre, as compared to other Arabic philosophers and belles-lettrists, see 152-95.

[2] See 'Abd Allāh, *al-Falsafah* 131-39.

So what *did* hypocrisy mean to Chaucer, the primary subject of this dissertation? Before introducing his poetics of hypocrisy, it is necessary to provide some quick background, first into the concept he inherits, then the concept in the medieval Arabic tradition, and finally the concept in the context of Chaucer's age.

TERMS OF DECEPTION

As it shows up in the extant literature of Late Antiquity through the High Middle Ages, hypocrisy is conceived by didactic-minded Christian theologians as a vice to be eschewed.[2] Though known, it was inconsistently categorized and often obscurely discussed under the capital vices, which appear all the deadlier *as* capital vices.[3] Over the centuries theologians and poets classed hypocrisy as an offspring of Envy, Vainglory, Avarice, and Pride.[4] Though its English terms are many, the vice does possess one convenient term in the Greek New Testament. This term, *hypocrite*, derives from the Greek *ὑποκριτής* (stage actor or pretender), when *ῠ̔πόκρῐσῐς* was also synonymous with *εἰρωνεία* (*irony*), the rhetorical device of dissimulation or feigned ignorance.[1] *Hypocrite* assumed several related but nuanced meanings according to the dialect; it could have meant *answerer*, *interpreter*, *expounder*, *deliverer*, *reciter*, or *declaimer* (of an orator or choir), and it was associated closely with playing a part on the stage or skillfully delivering lines.[2] The arts of delivery and representation are thus essential to the identity of the Christian hypocrite, which employs the very term in the New Testament. The archbishop Isidore (d.636) explains the hypocrite as "simulator... Qui dum intus malus sit, bonum se palam ostendit" ("a counterfeiter... who, while evil within, publicly displays himself as honest"; *Etymologiarum* X.118). The lexicographer revalues the term's more neutral origins by explaining how actors would have used painted masks to deceive audiences, appearing now as one character, now another:

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[1] The questions were first posed by Muḥammad Zaghal in his 2006 study of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's hectic political career (*al-Iqtirāb wa al-Ightirāb* 16-17).

[2] Several medieval Latin treatises focus on the subjects of false penitents, false ecclesiasts, hypocrisy proper, or the false world. See Pseudo-Augustine, "De Fallacia Mundi"; Matthew of Janow, "Tractatus de hypocrisi" 166-311; William of St. Amour, *De Periculis* 112-39; Morée, *Preaching*; Hayton, "Pierre d'Ailly's *De falsis prophetis II*"; Sharp, "Tractatvs De Confessione" 21, 44; Larson, "Gratian's *Tractatus*." Bloomfield et al., *Incipits*, list additional tracts on the vices and virtues, including Henricus de Hallis, *De falsa penitentia* (533/6179) and Hugo, *De hypocrita* (555/6431). See also Amory, "Whited Sepulchres," "IV. The Patristic Actor-Hypocrite" 12-14.

[3] Technically, hypocrisy packs the same punch as any of the vices. As DeYoung explains, the capital vices "were not originally singled out as being the worst possible sins or the ones that were the hardest to cure," rather, they were marked for their tendency to promote other vices that served either as the means to that first vice or appeared as a byproduct of its pursuit (*Glittering Vices* 36). Aquinas offers this definition of capital vices in his discussions of Envy and Anger, *On Evil*, Questions X, Article 3 and XII, 5. For the development of the capital vices, see DeYoung, *Glittering Vices* 27-29, 36; DeYoung, *Vainglory* 35. For the status of secondary vices, see DeYoung, *Vainglory* 56. Bloomfield, *Seven Deadly Sins* 99, offers a different view, claiming that the eight (or seven) "deadly" sins were given extra weight in the later Middle Ages, in part due to their popularity in penitential manuals.

[4] For the ascription of hypocrisy to Envy, see Alan of Lille, *De Planctu Naturae*, "*De Invidia*" *PL* Col.468B-469B; for Vainglory, see Gregory the Great, *Moralium*, *passim*; Young, "Subsidiary Sins." Gregory compares the hypocrite to an ostrich, whose vain flapping fails to lift him off the ground (Book 31, Chapter 8 (578A-579C)), and to a spider, whose webwork proves vain when the wind blows it apart (Book 8, Chapter 44 (845A-846C)). For Avarice, see *Ancrene Wisse* III.6.135-49, VI.23.364-68. For Pride, see Perault, "Tractatus VI: De superbia, Caput 40: De hypocrisi," whose description conforms the New Testament's associations; William of Shoreham, *De Septem Sacramentis* 27596-603; Jean de Meun, *Roman de la Rose* 7214-18; John Gower, *Confessio Amantis I*.26; *III*.2, n.5. Pride is also associated with Hypocrisy in the Old English poems *Genesis* and *Vainglory*, discussed below.

> Now they look like a man, now a woman, now a man with barbered hair, now with long, now a woman with an old crone's, a maiden's, or some other appearance, with age and sex varied, to deceive the people while they act in plays. (Isidore, *Etymologies* 220)[3]

This theatrical meaning, states Isidore, survives beyond the stage in those who "falso vultu incedunt et simulant quod non sunt" ("move about in the world with a false face and simulate what they are not"; *Etymologiarum* X.120).[1] What remains of the hypocrite in early Christian thought is a false face removed from its neutralizing stage setting.[2]

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[1] *OED* s.v. irony (n.), Etymology, 1-2; Amory "Whited Sepulchres" 5.

[2] See Liddell-Scott-Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon* s.v. *ὑποκρισία*; Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary 1*, s.v. κρινω. According to the etymologists, the verb *hypokrinai* "first meant in Homer and Aristophanes "to interpret" (dreams or oracles), then, in the Ionian dialect, "to answer," a meaning which Herodotus conserved in the abstract noun, *hypokrisis*, "answer." In Attic Greek, by contrast, the concrete noun, *hypokritēs*, "actor," had the derivative verb meaning, not of "answerer" to a chorus, as it might have been in the Ionian dialect, but, rather, of "interpreter" of the playwright and poet. This "interpreter" was one who acted a part on stage with the right delivery and gestures, just as, in the rhetorical treatise of Typhon, ironic speech was to be accompanied "with some characterizing rendition", *i.e.*, a bit of acting" (Amory, "Whited Sepulchres" 5-6).

[3] "modo in specie viri, modo in feminae, modo tonsi, modo criniti, anuli et virginali ceteraque specie, aetate sexuque diverso, ut fallant populum, dum in ludis agunt" (Isidorus, *Etymologiarum* X.119). Compare Fals-Semblant below.

Another biblical term, חָנֵף or *khanef* (*profane* or *godless man*[3]), articulates a different, morally-charged hypocritical tradition. The Hebrew term appears in several places of the Old Testament, including the Book of Job, where it equates with hypocrisy via the concealment of wickedness out of fear or contempt of others.[4] The deviance associated with the *khanef*, notes Frederic Amory in his important study on hypocrisy in early Christianity, furthermore "connoted metaphorically either gross sexual defilement in pre-Exilic Hebrew, or else seduction by flattery and gifts in post-Exilic" ("Whited Sepulchres" 6-7). Amory suspects that *khanef* possessed mimetic features similar to the *hypokritēs*; presumably any traits of performance would necessarily inhere in believing (or intending, or disbelieving) one way but appearing otherwise. Although it's unclear when or how the two terms converged, this character, as it were, of the irreligious imposter finds full and lasting expression in the Pharisee.[5]

The New Testament captures the hypocrite's translation from openly theatrical and oratorical performance and into Christianity's moral terrain. *Hypocrite* isn't defined so much as depicted in the scribes and Pharisees of the Gospels; the term not only involves the concealment of one's wickedness, as it does in Job, but innovatively includes in its meaning the performance of piety for others' approval.[1] With this revaluation, professional pretenders lose their previously-held status as pleasingly clever, entertaining, and instructive agents—a loss manifested in the early church's suspicion of the Roman theater (broadly defined) as a site of debauchery, deception, and pagan ritual, as articulated by Tertullian (d.240) and Augustine (d.430),[2] the latter of whose writings lend *hypocrisy* immoral import. In his exegesis of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Augustine attributes the Pharisees' performance of piety (Matthew 6:2) to a desire to be known, a desire to seek not the approval of God but men through the public performance of pious acts, such as praying, fasting, or almsgiving;[3] Augustine bases his understanding of *hypocrite* on the theatrical source of the term, identifying stage actors as *pronuntiatores* or mouthpieces of other persons: like actors playing the part of a mythic figure, the hypocrite simulates that figure's words and deeds without ever identifying as that figure. And like Isidore, Augustine makes an abrupt cut from the stage to the church.[4] So abrupt is Augustine's transition from past to present that he perhaps takes for granted the fact that from his definition, an entirely different hypocrite has emerged—unlike the stage impersonator, whose audience knows, indeed encourages him to impersonate, this new hypocrite dishonorably deceives unbeknownst to his community. This new hypocrite encompasses another implied meaning of *hypocrite*: one who underhandedly (*hypo*-) discerns, decides, judges, condemns, or criticizes.[1]

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[1] Articulating the same basic features, John of Salisbury (d.1180) claims that *hypocrita* derives from the Epicureans on account of their perfect fit to the term. *Policraticus* VII.xxii.

[2] For the Latin origin of *fals* for fraud/trickery, see Durkin, *Borrowed Words* 119. Although exegetes applied hypocrisy's theatrical, mimetic meaning to their readings of both the Old and New Testament, "The Middle Ages had admittedly but the vaguest notions of the ancient stage or of the stage-performances of comedies and tragedies in Antiquity, and the heavily made-up actor in the late antique and patristic sources of Isidore does not seem to have greatly affected the medieval delineation of the actor type of the hypocrite" ("Whited Sepulchres" 14). At any rate, with over a thousand surviving manuscripts, Isidore's hypocrite-as-actor etymology reaches countless audiences, including Geoffrey Chaucer. See Barney, "Introduction" 24.

[3] Brown, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* s.v. †חָנֵף.

[4] Ehrlich, "Book of Job" 36-37; See for instance Job 8:13, 13:16, 31:33-34. Lexically, the godless man and hypocrite share the same term, namely *khanef* (חָנֵף). Alcalay, *Complete English-Hebrew Dictionary* s.v. Hypocrite.

[5] "Doubtless, the very name of the Pharisees—*Perushim*—for those who stand apart from every impurity... was a convenient stick to beat them with, in the hands of their opponents or anyone less holy than they.... on account of their fastidious "apartness" from ordinary folk... the Pharisees were graphically symbolized with the Scribes as "whited sepulchres" in *Matthew* xxiii, 27" (Amory, "Whited Sepulchres" 8).

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[1] See Plumpe, *Sermon on the Mount* 196, n.6. Gregory the Great applies this definition of hypocrisy to its uses in the Book of Job. See his *Moralia*, Book VIII.

[2] See Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*. For a summary of Augustine's strong suspicions against the Roman theater, see Dox, *Idea of the Theater in Latin Christian Thought*, "Chapter 1: The Idea of a Theater in Late Antiquity: Augustine's Critique and Isidore's History" 11-42. Compare also Prudentius (d.a. 405), who illustrates the theatricality of hypocrisy in his description of Avarice's performance of Frugality, as well as Discord's disguised entrance into—and boastful monologue amid—the Virtues' camp (*Psychomachia* 511-608, 670-718).

[3] Augustine, *DSD* II 2,5.89-90.

[4] Augustine, *DSD* II 2,5.92-98.

Ostentation and indirect criticism would pose no threat were it not for the fact that these hypocrites serve as role models to their community. The Pharisees enjoy the skills of eloquence and possess the polish of urbanity and political knowhow. Not anyone can pull off their deception. The consequences of their influence are further underscored by Jesus' claim that they block men from the kingdom of heaven, misguide their converts, and break the oaths and laws of God;[2] this sustained malediction culminates with the striking simile of the ossuary: "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men' s bones, and of all filthiness" (Matthew 23:27).[3] Only the best and brightest can garner so strong a condemnation.[4]

The Gospels' damning descriptions of hypocrisy hardly need elaboration—their images speak volumes. Perhaps they contributed to the vice's being taken for granted when it comes to defining hypocrisy. Will you know it when you see it? It's difficult to say how well these descriptions lined up with wider conceptions of hypocrisy, which virtually lacks explicit definitions from the English Middle Ages. Even after *hypocrisy* and *hypocrite* enter the language's vocabulary, few surviving works employ the terms. The *Middle English Dictionary*'s entry for *ipocrisie*, from Old French, maintains a clear, ethical charge: "The sin of pretending to be what one is not; false simulation of goodness or piety; trickery, sham, hypocrisy; -- also personified" (s.v. ipocrisī(e (n.)). Both the *Middle English Dictionary* and *Oxford English Dictionary* cite *Ancrene Wisse*, an early thirteenth-century rule for anchoresses, as the first known English composition to mention this abstract noun, listing in passing "ypocresie" among several "cuðe sunnen"—sins common enough not to incite public outcry (like murder), an indication of the prevalence of the vice (*AW* V.35). The popular monastic manual more meaningfully uses the common noun form "ipocrite" amidst Part Three's lesson on anger. Anchoresses are instructed to emulate the pelican, solitary, thin, and quick to repent, and shun the natures of dogs, snakes, and pigs—quick-tempered and gluttonous. From this discourse on self-restraint, the discussion launches into hypocrisy with an expansion on Jesus' pronouncement at Luke 9:58, "*Vulpes foueas habent, et uolucres celi nidos*; þet is, 'Foxes habbeð hare holen, ant briddes of heouene habbeð hare nestes'" (*AW* III.6.135-37). A useful elaboration follows, in which the false anchoress is likened to the fox, that proverbial "beast falsest" (137-38) which finds protection in burrows. (Compare the jerboa, after whose burrowing and escape practices the Arabic hypocrite or *munāfiq* is named). False anchoresses figuratively seek subterranean asylum, hiding in the earth their "unþeawes" or wicked practices, storing there their coveted goods (138-40). The passage then differentiates positive from negative modes of solitude: the true anchoress should build her nest high, keep vigilant, and hide herself from Satan and his hate, not bury herself below to furnish an earthly den of sin.[1] Though it comes and goes amidst a figuratively rich series of precepts on the solitary life, the vivid images of the burrowing fox and vigilant bird contributes the work's very idea of the anchoress—a figurative *anchor*, "'ancre,'" who props up the Church; should her commitment waver, "loki hwam ha lihe," she should regard just who it is she deceives (329, 336).

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[1] *OED* s.v. hypo-, *prefix*; Liddell-Scott-Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon* s.v. κρίνω. Though not defined as underhanded judge in the Bible, a sense of such a hypocrite emerges in Jesus' beratement of the Pharisees for their knowing mis-judgment of Jesus, who bears all the signs of the Messiah before them. (Compare Luke 12:56-59, where Jesus scolds the Pharisees for reading the weather based on its conditions yet failing to read the times. I am grateful to John Bugbee for referring me to this passage with this implied sense of "bad judge" in mind.)

[2] See Matthew 23:13-28.

[3] "Vae vobis scribae et pharisaei hypocritae, quia similes estis sepulchris dealbatis, quae a foris parent hominibus speciosa, intus vero pleni sunt ossibus mortuorum, et omni spurcitia!" (Douai-Rheims).

[4] The virtuous are especially at risk of falling for the hypocrite's tricks or even becoming one. Compare John Cassian (d.c.435) on vainglory, to which he assigns hypocrisy as an offspring. Athletes of Christ are particularly vulnerable to this vice due to its subtle capacity to mix with the virtues, a reality that leads the ascetic monk to warn, "omni studio ut iactantiae deditum declinemus, et ea, quae nos possunt inter ceteros notabiles reddere, ac ueluti solis facientibus laus apud homines sit conquirenda, uitemus," (let's turn away from every pursuit that is dedicated to boasting, and avoid those things that can cause us to appear among other notable men, and win us praise with men, as if those pursuits could have been accomplished by our doing alone"; Inst. lib. XI, 19).

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[1] See *AW* III.7.

Not until the close of the fourteenth century does hypocrisy and its common noun form become widely used, along with a flurry of other French loanwords that would encompass dissimulation in all parts of speech—nouns (*abet*, *art*, *barat*, *cornardie*, *deceivour*, *devis*, *faitour*, *falshede*, *favel*, *felon*, *fraude*, *gilour*, *gin*, *image*, *jogelour*, *traitour*, *trechard*, *trechour*, *tripet*), adjectives and adverbs (*deceivaunt*, *enginous*, *fel*, *queinte*), and verbs (*enchaunten*, *feinen*, *glosen*, *misseien*, *sclaundren*, *truflen*).[1] This influx of loanwords enabled later authors including Chaucer to express hypocrisy in poetically dynamic ways. Yet it would be wrong to conclude that this moral-literary category received less attention in preceding centuries. As I demonstrate in Chapter One, hypocrisy never escaped the notice of Old English authors, who recognized the vice's literary and poetic potentials—potentials that mirror the vice's inherent knack for performance.

ADAB AND THE ART OF HYPOCRISY

Nowhere is hypocrisy's equation with poetry and poetics more apparent than in the medieval Arabic tradition of *adab*, an evolving term that "most scholars trace back to the old Arab tradition and its concept of inherited customary norms" or habits (from Ar. *da'b* (*habit*)), and that comes in the Abbasid period to encompass the scope of knowledge under the rubrics of conduct (of specified classes, professions, or guilds), humanism, and—most relevant to our purposes—refined poetry and literature (Enderwize, “Adab b)”).[1] Whether in verse, prose, or both, this multifaceted term maintains ethical, etiquettical, rhetorical, and linguistic commitments through its balance between *al-jidd wa-al-hazl* (*earnest and game*). Topics on a given legal, cultural, religious, or anthropological matter are dished out in *aṣnāf* (*kinds*), that is, a variety of sections, categories, examples, and styles to give the effect of a literary *ma’dubah* (*banquet*), a term that shares its roots with *adab*.[2] This variety affords the *udabā*’ (*belles-lettrists*) the license to assume contradictory stances on a given matter, arguing persuasively from opposing angles to demonstrate not their true beliefs but rather their powers of persuasion and pretending. These authors establish their *balāghah* (*eloquence*) via *taḥsīn al qabīḥ wa-taqbīḥ al-ḥasan* (*the beautification of the ugly and uglification of the beautiful*):

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[1] For a data analysis of French loanwords in the fourteenth century, see Durkin, *Borrowed Words* 42-43, 227-80. Other terms enter English from other languages, including Old Norse, from which we get *sly* and *sleight*.

> Poets describe themselves as drinking wine, having adulterous or forbidden heterosexual and homosexual affairs, addressing princes as their equals, or boasting of various kinds of excellence, saying that which they do not do. (van Gelder, “Paradox” 327)[3]

Such intellectual flexing not only entertains, but also provokes philosophical and ethical reflection on norms, institutions, and the nature of existence.[4]

Adab’s conduciveness to ethical and philosophical reflection served as a useful alibi for litterateurs to test the bounds of *takhyīl* (*imagination*; compare the Gr. *φαντασία*).[5] The poets’ use of imagination was taken as a celebration of their capacity to transcend and transform reality through visionary, figurative language.[1] According to medieval thinkers, imagination could rearrange old or disparate ideas to produce new—often untrue—concepts and experiences, an occasion—positive or negative depending on the critic—for fictive invention that was encapsulated in the axiom, "the best poetry is that which 'lies' the most" (Heinrichs, "Takhyīl").[2] Poetry's reputation as a morally ambivalent, imaginative craft extends to the English tradition, where it was held up by some as a medium for the exploration of ethical matters while put down by others as a "false" conveyor of "truth" through artificial language.

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[1] For two detailed and valuable surveys of *adab*’s many applications and authors in Arabic’s classical and postclassical periods, see Azarnoosh, “Adab” and Jakko, “Adab a).”

[2] Compare the weak *ḥadīth* (*Prophetic narration*): "إن هذا القرآن مأدبة الله..." (“This Qur’an is surely God’s banquet (*ma’dubat Allāh*)...”). For a helpful discussion on the of the branches of *‘ilm al-adab* (*the science of literary language*) in the Arabic world’s classical period, see Bauer, “Adab c).”

[3] Compare the unaplogetic confessions of Fals-Semblant or Chaucer’s Pardoner.

[4] See van Gelder, “Paradox” 323-25, 328, 336, 339-44.

[5] For the moral and philosophical (Aristotelian) conceptions of poetry see al-Mu‘tazz et al., “Shi‘r”; Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*.

Comparable studies into medieval Europe's reception of classical rhetoric underscore the power of artificial language—loaded with insincere emotions—to elicit desired reactions from its readers and hearers. But other reactions might arise, and the imprecise application of rhetorical strategies (assuming they are applied in a given text) may not target a single desired response. If it is assumed, moreover, that Old English and medieval English and Arabic poetry deal with the praising or blaming of universal values inspected through "manners and customs," as Judson Allen repeatedly proposes, *how* medieval works present their ethical questions is far from formulaic (Allen, "Hermann the German" 73).[3]

Steeped in rhetoric, Chaucer never sends a single message, and his prescriptions cause more problems than solutions.[4] To echo Robert Payne, "[t]o know that artful language may move men to desire the good does not of itself guarantee that the poet rightly perceives the good, or that what he intends to be moving will actually be so" (*Key* 89). It is only fitting, then, that Chaucer plays on inconsistent characters and reflects on hypocrisy in literary modes that are themselves two-faced, two-tongued, and altogether ambivalent. In striking similarity to the *udabā'* before him, he ironizes received notions of style and rhetoric through reversals of praise and blame but pushes past incongruity-based comedy to trace the ethical contours of inconsistent (and inconstant) human actions and test their limits. Hypocrisy signals a critique of decorum—a critique of the normative—as much as it humorously breaks its rules.[1] Framed differently, because Chaucer is not a philosopher or theologian, but rather a poet who explores and aestheticizes philosophical questions free from adhering to a philosopher or theologian's tradition, he can shake readers' assumptions about the essential goodness of humans or their natural pursuit of Happiness, capital h, while hiding behind strange characters and narratives.

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[1] See ʻĪd, *al-Takhyīl*; van Gelder and Hammond, *Takhyīl*.

[2] *Khayr al-shiʻr akdhabuhu*. See Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, "Chapter Three: Poetry: Lie Or Truth" 27-40. For the dangers of imagination, see Minnis, "Medieval imagination" 240-43.

[3] See Allen, "Hermann the German" 68-69, 71. Chaucer's *Troilus* or *Canterbury Tales*, two ambitious, multi-generic works of poetry rich in plot and character challenge inherited Aristotelian theories that deny poems both.

[4] "Rhetorical theory formed the basis of medieval training in poetic composition, as we can see from the emphasis in early grammatical training, the survival of the most influential treatises in hundreds of manuscripts, and the identification of rhetoric with poetic in all of the medieval arts of poetry. During the medieval period, the terms "rhetorician" and "poet" were often synonymous"; "The poet's art was indeed a product of rhetorical training, and thus artificial. But for the medieval author, "artificial" meant "crafted," or "artful," and was a term of the highest praise" (Woods "Chaucer the Rhetorician" 28).

Though his ethical engagements weigh on his work constantly, Chaucer frequently parts company from Gower and predecessors by refraining from passing direct judgment on his characters, or drawing audience attentions to the rightness or wrongness of an action, despite equivocating with ambiguous words and expressions—a hallmark of his satire.[2] These ambiguous descriptions of the pilgrims' personal and professional markers create a textual forum in which to validate or challenge the social customs and institutions out of which these pilgrims grow as literary characters—literary expressions of social persons.[3] To explore the parameters and consequences of interpersonal hypocrisy beyond cultural and institutional influences,[1] I will shift focus from institutional representation to that of human nature, which transcends estate and all other cultural demarcators. This approach should prove helpful for a study on poetic hypocrisy, since the hypocrites I discuss below, being "antisocial" persons insofar as they disrupt institutional and interpersonal bonds, often *fail* to identify with or live up to the professional ideals they are presumed to be shaped by and represent.

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[1] By normative, I mean those societal ideals held to a morally real standard. See McCord, *SEP* s.v. "Moral Realism."

[2] As Mann observed, Chaucer avails himself of backhanded compliments, for instance, of the Sergeant of the Law: "Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas, / And yet he semed bisier than he was" (*CT* I.321-22). See Mann, *Estates Satire* 7, 190-92. Some of these descriptions, like that of the Prioress, draw out individual hypocrisies as much as institutional ones. For a dissection of the Prioress' hypocrisies, see Rex, *Sins of Madame Eglentyne* Chapter 9, "The Sins of Madame Eglentyne" 83-117. Departing from Mann, Rex makes the compelling observation that Chaucer's *Tales* is rife with judgment. Of the General Prologue, readers "are reminded over and over... of the distinction between appearance and reality—between reality and the ideal" (97). But do these reminders constitute judgments?

[3] See Fowler, *Literary Character*, 15, 28, 33-34, 38; Mann, *Estates Satire* 13-15, 33-34, 58-59, 194; Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, Power*, 21-22. By social persons, I refer to Elizabeth Fowler's definition, "a general term

POETIC HYPOCRISY IN CHAUCER'S AGE

If poetic composition is hypocrisy in the making, hypocrites personify poetry. Take Fals-Semblant, as "blak withynne and whit withoute" as a whited sepulcher (*Rom* 7333).[2] In his address to Love's army, the son of Hypocrisy deliberately mixes his messages, denouncing deceit while actively practicing it, referring to his own, the false religious, as proud, "stoute," and "malicious" tricksters (6158). While he warns against "Cristis wrath," Fals-Semblant welcomes the station men have given him: he asks, "Whom shulden folk worshipen so / But us?" (7225; 7239-40; 7213-40), a question that lays blame not on himself, but his victim-enablers—often the rich and influential.[3] What makes Fals-Semblant's painstaking deceptions possible are his talents of disguise, which involves more than dressing the part. Claiming to be more fluid than Proteus when it comes to "gile" and "tresoun," Fals-Semblant boasts that he can escape men's recognition even as they see and hear him (6319-24). The holy priest and humble preacher comprise only two of countless characters that Fals-Semblant plays:

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meant to indicate *a paradigmatic representation of personhood that has evolved historically among the institutions of social life*" (Fowler, *Literary Character* 2, n.3).

[1] An anachronistic but more effective term would be Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses.

[2] See Chapter One.

[3] See *Rom* 6870-76.

> Now am I knyght, now chasteleyn,
> Now prest, now clerk, and now forster;
> Now am I maister, now scoler,
> Now monk, now chanoun, now baily;
> Whatever myster man am I.
> Now am I prince, now am I page,
> Now am I Robert, now Robyn,
> Now Frere Menour, Now Jacobyn;
> ...
> Somtyme a wommans cloth take I;
> Now am I a mayde, now lady.
> Somtyme I am religious;
> Now lyk an anker in an hous.
> Somtyme am I prioresse,
> And now a nonne, and now abbesse;
> And go thurgh alle regiouns,
> Sekyng alle religiouns. (6327-52)

Operating at the cutting edge of reinvention, impressed upon the reader by the deictic “nows,” this multitasking seemer presents and re-presents himself through disparate crafts: now a knight, now a castle keep, now a prince, now a page, with the semi-regular anaphora—now, sometimes, and now, and—setting the passage to a constant rate of change. A jack of all trades, he boldly claims to suit *whatever* occupation the occasion presents, despite barriers of trade or skill set, class, age, gender, or religious order. In one long breath, False-Seeming paves the way for thinking about protean public identities, about performance, about poetry itself as carefully crafted dissimulation.[1]

Beyond the anti-fraternal tradition, John Gower (d.1408) offers some of the richest and most explicit non-religious treatments of hypocrisy—*Ypocrisie* or *Falssemblant*—in his English *consolatio*-cum-romance frame narrative, *Confessio Amantis*.[2] In its Prologue, the poet heralds the disconnect between appearance and reality, actions and intentions as the order of the day, and ascribes the world's ailments to a general intemperance that has led to statewide insecurity and institutional corruption. The misbalancing forces that destroy civilization problematically inhere in humans.[3] In keeping with these existential facts of intemperance and division, the lawless laws of love reign supreme in Gower's modern world. The epigraphical verses with which he opens his first Book captures love's oxymoronic nature: love is an unhealthy health, a warlike peace, a sweet affliction in which no lover can indulge with moderation. Nor can the lover rationally plan to love. Rather, one catches love as one contracts an illness.[4] Given its conflicting properties, it comes as no surprise that hypocrites are highly susceptible to this infection, which in turn arouses hypocritical behavior. So strongly does Venus attract (lure) hypocrites that she warns Amans not to feign his malady, and frowns when he declares his loyalty to her, admonishing him that many who do so prove nothing but *faitours* or imposters.[5] Genius demands that Amans confess his hypocrisy, but the latter adamantly denies taking up the hypocritical habit. His reason: he hasn't enough heart to do so: "my corage / Hath ben mor siek than my visage" (715-

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[1] See Heller-Roazen, *Fortune's Faces* 135-37.

[2] According to Gower, World weds the Seven Sins, which give birth to a number of offspring. Pride gives birth to "Hypocrisy, Murmur and Complaint, Presumption, Boasting, and Vain Glory," while Envy gives birth to "Detraction, Sorrow-at-other's-Joy, Joy-for-other's-Grief, Supplanting, and False-semblance" (Peck, *CA I*.26; *CA III*.2, n.5).

[3] See *CA* Prol.971-82; see 995-1011.

[4] *CA* I.1-92.

[5] *CA* I.164-69, 173-76.

16). Actors must wear their vice well to play their part convincingly and strategically, which Amans cannot do:

> So lowe cowthe I nevere bowe
> To feigne humilité withoute,
> That me ne leste betre loute
> With alle the thoghtes of myn herte. (718-21)

Practically speaking, Amans lacks the ability to dissociate actions from intentions. He simply cannot fool himself. Were he to try to do so, his inner will would blow his cover.[1]

With Genius' discussion of the romantic hypocrite, a trademark smooth talker emerges, one whose crimes include seducing innocents on the pretense of love and breaking contracts.[2] The false lover performs an array of theatrical feats unique to his trade, including the use of makeup and the manipulation of voice, face, and posture to feign melancholy.[3] If they wish to succeed, then, false lovers must possess certain traits beyond stature and relaxed morals, including a silver tongue, unordinary self-control verging on self-deception, decent acting technique, and fine artistry. All this can't be more opposed to received stereotypes of truth: plain and direct.

Gower's three tales on hypocrisy—concerning a love-crazed knight (Mundus) and his costumed tryst with a married and shockingly consenting Pauline; a recount of the Trojan horse raid; and an account Nessus' post-mortem con of Hercules and Deianire—bear witness to the development of hypocrisy in fourteenth-century English poetry, in which the vice takes central stage and performs poetic ends as opposed to serving as a passing point of reference in a didactic exemplum or litany on vices, as witnessed in earlier centuries.[1] Gower sets entire tales to revolve around dissemblers who create situations—and consequent realities—for themselves and others. To convey his thoughts, he relies more on the narrative-driven rather than allegorical diction of a French-enriched English vocabulary. On this score, his depictions and voices blend hypocrisy's many colors and infuse them in concrete characters, who begin to move away from their static, allegorical antecedents.

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[1] *CA* I.725-29.
[2] *CA* I.674-86.
[3] *CA* I.687-703.

Poetic hypocrisy may be as old as literature, where the vice always played a role in stories and verses of love and war, cultivated in each genre as a necessary virtue. Another tradition, the "anti-fraternal" one as expressed in *Le Roman de la Rose*, importantly offered Chaucer in particular more than an abstraction of religious hypocrisy. In falling somewhere between character and allegory as a practical exemplar of dissimulation, Fals-Semblant parts company with traditional representations of the vices, which according to Morton Bloomfield were understood allegorically among exegetes wishing to articulate such abstractions as the seven devils that Jesus casts out of Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2), or the seven abominations hidden in the heart of the deceptively eloquent (Proverbs 26:25). Bloomfield also posits that the principal vices were first thought of as "concrete devils or demons" (*Seven Deadly Sins* 34); this supposition aligns with CS Lewis' formulation of allegory's development, which he connects to the late Roman antique apotheosis (or breakdown) of the pantheon, during which the gods were "becoming more and more like mere personifications"; the gods of such poems as Statius' *Thebiad* no longer meddled in the affairs of the environments they visited as individuals with reasoned motives and various interests, but now affected them more as indiscriminate forces with unchanging essences (*Allegory of Love* 50).[1] As essences, the dead deities, like the chief vices, occupy the spiritual world of temptation or inner conflict, a *bellum intestinum* that everyone wages within themselves, and for Lewis, such a morally charged, inward turn "does not discover *character*" (60-61). Rather, allegory affirms previously held assumptions about one's nature, world, and what lies beyond it. As Sheila Delany explains, if allegory assumes a perfect, unchanging analogy between itself and humanity, or any narrative, spiritual, or cosmic system, this closed system produces no new knowledge, indeed it mustn't, since otherwise the reader will not recognize its moral:

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[1] Otherwise, the literature on religious hypocrisy is itself all too secular, often inspired by a factional feud or amounting to sectarian propaganda. Some notable historical examples include Poggio Bracciolini's *Contra Hypocitas* (1448), Henry Foullis' *The History of the Wicked Plots and Conspiracies of Our Pretended Saints Representing the Beginning, Constitution, and Designs of the Jesuite* (1662), and Samuel Dales' *Quakers and Cock Robins; Or, Hypocrisy Unmasked* (1828). Sectarian investigations, invectives, and witch hunts are by no means limited to Christianity.

> Most allegories... refer us to a realm of abstract moral or religious ideas which are not only unknown but unknowable. Its "truth" (if it refers us to an abstract system) is unverifiable. Non-allegorical literature shows us proud persons who are very like other proud persons whom we can actually meet.... But allegory shows us Pride herself, whom we will never meet, or a psyche whose parts walk before us, or a heavenly city which we will never physically see.... Epistemologically, meaning precedes narrative in allegory.
>
> ("Undoing Substantial Connection" 34-35)

Reader cannot verify the allegories they encounter on the page or refer them back to the physical world; instead they must deduce the meaning of an unknown system according to the allegorical one that has been provided. In fourteenth-century society, many assumptions about the world—including the institutions producing outlooks that conformed to such assumptions—were challenged, which explains for Delany why analogic modes of understanding, including allegory, were being abandoned. Chaucer would have found in Jean de Meun's Fals-Semblant an impetus to craft willful characters who "take the strawe, and lete the corn" (*Rom* 6353-54). Characters, in other words, free to choose what harms them, determine their desires, and in so choosing, impact their worlds—prospects in keeping with the widely discussed philosophy of Chaucer's age.[1] If *Fortuna* impersonally personifies life's circumstances for most authors of the Middle Ages, for Chaucer, the real fortune-makers are the willful opportunists and gifted swindlers on the ground.

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[1] See Lewis, *Allegory of Love* 50-53.

CHAUCER'S POETICS OF HYPOCRISY

I pay special attention to Chaucer's works as a case study in medieval poetic hypocrisy on account of the breadth of his corpus and socio-political circumstances of his age,[2] which clearly impacted his writing, both inspiring and prompting him to offer social and philosophical commentary about it. Chaucer contributes to the vernacularization of ecclesiastical hypocrisy but expands on it to encompass all aspects of social life.[3] Like Gower, he is aided by an influx of French and Latin loanwords that appear between the thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuries and allow him to play with "new" combinations and forms of English words.[4] More than static type traits reminiscent of the allegorical virtues and vices on the order of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*,[1] Chaucer's ordinary hypocrites are driven by familiar human motives and interests, as witnessed in Fals-Semblant's semblance of a literary person.

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[1] Most theologians prior to Chaucer's age had formulated conceptions of man, sin, and freedom that fell somewhere between Augustine and Ockham. See De La Torre *Thomas Buckingham* 27-101. For Bernard of Clairvaux (d.1153), for instance, God's rational creation "had a choice. It could remain good, or it could turn away from the good" (Evans, *Bernard* 79; see his Chapter Five, "Positive Theology" 72-101). Following the ancients, Christian philosophers and theologians assumed that man always naturally desired the good, even as he missed his mark and sinned. For such thinkers, humans who crave or take up sinful habits effectively do so out of their own ignorance. Compare Thomas Aquinas (d.1274), who found that all humans seek happiness as their ultimate end, even if they act in a manner that produces the opposite effect, or John Duns Scotus (d.1308), who argues that humans are programmed to desire happiness, but nothing prevents them from foregoing it when presented to them. See Kent, "Moral Life" 237, 241. In this capacity, Scotus precedes Ockham and follows Anselm of Canterbury (d.1109) in his claim that humans can reject grace. See Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, Chapter Seven, "Grace and Free Will" 125-45.

[2] Marked by plague, war, economic crisis, and political and—thanks to the 1378 Schism—spiritual strife. See Leicester, *Disenchanted Self* 26-27.

[3] See Geltner, "Faux Semblants"; Pitard, "Greed and Anti-fraternalism" 212, 222-23. For Chaucer's hypocritical monks and other clerics see 208-09.

[4] See Cannon, *Making of Chaucer's English* 56-57, 61-63, 70-71. Chaucer's own employment of new words is rather limited. As Cannon shows, the poet reinvents himself with every work, often discarding terms for newer ones still. See 118-31.

Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy entails his aesthetic valuing of a character's moral and professional inconsistencies, blind spots, or deviations for their enablement of poetic variation. I assume that literature—let's say history and poetry—is heavily filtered through rhetoric, a fact that clouds the intentions and emotional sincerity of the author, who nonetheless probes ethical questions.[2] Curiously, Chaucer places himself in his General Prologue amidst a band of "parasitic individuals" whose tales elaborate modes of cheating—and truth-telling that only brings sorrow (Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity* 80-81; *CT* I.542-44).[3] By aspiring to a canon of imposters whom he equips with rhetorical skills, the poet hints at—perhaps celebrates?—his imperfections. After all, he was no angel.[4]

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[1] This tradition is kept alive in the Latin drama of the Central Middle Ages, particularly in its allegorization of the virtues. Other than the twelfth-century *Antichristus*, which features *Ypocrisis*, allegorical vices don't seem to receive much attention until their appearance in the English morality plays of late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. See Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage II* 62-63, 151-52; Wright, *Play of Antichrist*.

[2] Chaucer would have understood why philosophers and theologians have been wary of rhetoric despite its beneficial uses. For a brief overview of the question of whether an immoral man can, by means of rhetorical maneuvering, deliver a moral message, as posed by such thinkers as Guibert de Nogent, Plato, Aristotle, Quintilian, and Augustine, or whether it is better not to rely on such maneuvering, see Payne, "Chaucer's Realization of Himself as Rhetor," 273-80; see also Klima, "Medieval Liar." For the suspicion of rhetoric as a disruptive, transgressive, or outright perverting force, as articulated by Plato, Aristotle, Martianus Capella, Quintilian, Alan of Lille, and Matthew of Vendôme, see Copeland, "The Pardoner's Body and the Discipline of Rhetoric" 143-49. Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures* 74-84, provides a useful account of this historical suspicion of rhetoric, especially in light of Christianity. And for the close relationship between literature and rhetoric, see Morse, *Truth and Convention* 15-124.

[3] The pilgrims are the Reeve, Miller, Summoner, Pardoner, Manciple, and Chaucer.

[4] According to his checkered public record, Chaucer was no stranger to the underworld of criminal and gang violence: "Chaucer's career in violence was extensive, no matter the veracity of the roadway anti-fraternal beating. The "Father of English Poetry" committed rape—rape, not kidnap, although he knew kidnapping otherwise. He practiced extortion. And an episode of "trespass and contempt" is on record.... Recognition that other doings of Chaucer's, as a Justice of the Peace, for example, or as a functionary in the state's revenue extraction apparatus, may also have been violent in some sense or criminal would depend on how one defined terms" Carlson, "Robberies" 30-31; see 37-40.

Do medieval ethicists “confront the question of sincerity,” to quote Judson Allen, who claims they do not (*Ethical Poetic* 12)? What is the nature of emotions, anyway? Are they themselves socially constructed? To what degree are they sincere? Does their dependence on social norms and institutions make them less so? If emotions, in other words, “are learned, as social constructionists think, then they are like the lines and actions that an actor memorizes.... When people express an emotion, they play a role,” however convincingly they do so (Rosenwein and Cristiani, *History of Emotions* 22). Individuals may rarely reflect on their emotions since they perform in concert with an entire society, managed by “states, employers, families, religious leaders” (23). These enforcers of conduct both prescribe appropriate and inappropriate behavior in social contexts and lead by example.

Chaucer and Ibn al-Khaṭīb each demonstrate the complexity of sincere and insincere emotions by presenting characters and individuals who occupy “emotional communities,” that is, overlapping social communities (such as the church, parliament, guild, and family) that define its members’ emotions within a social context; occupying these overlapping communities, their occupants moved “continually from one such community to another—from taverns to law courts, say—adjusting their emotional displays and their judgments of weal and woe... to these different environments” (Rosenwein “Worrying About Emotions” 842). Both diplomat-poets proceed from an awareness that “even *within the same society* contradictory values and models, not to mention deviant individuals, find their place” (842-43). It only follows from this that *within the same person* occupying worlds as hectic as Chaucer’s or Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s will contradictory values, intentions, and actions arise.

Hypocrisy makes such contradictory emotional states and switches between “sincere” and “insincere” behavior possible, for while it is not a single emotional state in itself, it consciously mimics many. Irrespective of the Parson's Tale's literary merit or doctrine, the popular and straightforward definitions offered in it reveal hypocrisy's high capacity to bond with the vices, which entail hypocrisy. Wrath, for instance, features a number of vices that involve the doubleness of the tongue: lying in order to deceive one's fellow Christians; wrongful praising; giving wicked counsel; backbiting; betraying counsel and defaming confidants, and generally appearing to speak with good or playful intentions when really they're malevolent.[1] The vices have long been thought to relate to one another by association, otherwise one vice wouldn't lead to another, as the hamartiologists have claimed. Hypocrisy plays a more immediate role in this process; it serves not only as an ingredient in the other vices' composition, or serves as a vehicle for their expression, equipping them with needed insincerities in order to seduce, persuade, flatter, and ultimately betray. If Chaucer did not notice this capacity, he certainly took it for granted in his poetry. In rendering hypocrisy poetically, he, like the court poets and belles-lettrists before him, reveals the seams of sincere, social emotions.

Consider Chaucer's most famous instance of this, his *caveat lector* toward the end of the General Prologue, where "[t]he wordes moote be cosyn to the dede" (*CT* I.742). Here, truth is inadequately reduced to mere consistency. According to Paul Taylor, Chaucer builds on Isocrates' suggestion that "words must match facts," which encompasses objective, ethical facts or natural laws; words also make facts in the Platonic sense of giving shape to objects and actions not seen or experienced by the listener, serving as familiar carriers of true if unseen information (*Chaucer Translator* 77). Yet the tales are themselves fabrications, conveyed through the artificial medium of metered verse, rendering the above contract a glib pretense for impropriety. The less proper the tale, the greater the retelling's consistency, and the greater its truth content.

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[1] See *CT* X.608, 612-18, 639, 644, 645. Other characteristics of the hypocrite surface in the vices of Envy, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, and Lechery, with each attribute tracing back to the above definition of concealing oneself to appear other than oneself.

If scriptural parables and philosophical cosmologies promise to match words with moral and universal constants, poetic words needn't match facts—themselves poetic, the stuff of narrative and perspective.[1] Words can both avow and disavow a verbal-moral realism, and the ambiguous phrase, "wordes moote be cosyn to the dede," leaves open the option that words "must or should?" be cousin to the deed, "a relation once removed" from the truth of the matter; the homophone *cosin*, fraud or trickery, is also not far from the message (Turner, *Chaucerian Conflict* 135). Following this latter interpretation, Taylor notes that *cousin* can mean "a dupe," and if applied to the phrase, then words can do the opposite of faithfully render actions and abstract ideas—they can belie them (*Chaucer Translator* 78). If words be dupes to the deeds, then a more accurate formulation would be that phenomena themselves deceive us, undoing our efforts to capture them in words. The result is the same: words mean one thing but say another, a truth not confined to fictitious characters and plots, but reflected in their audiences—*hypocrites lecteurs*—who have their institutions, their norms, their codes of conduct to interrogate.

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[1] See Adler and Van Doren, *How To Read A Book*, "How to Read History" 234-54.

CHAPTER ONE: A MOVABLE VICE: HYPOCRISY'S TERMS OF PERFORMANCE IN OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE

> But if, as Huizinga has suggested, the most conspicuous sin of the earlier Middle Ages had been pride and that of the high Middle Ages cupidity, the sin most widely denounced in this period was hypocrisy. It had for some time troubled humanists, but by the later sixteenth century condemnations of hypocrisy reached a crescendo.
>
> —William Bouwsma, *The Waning of the Renaissance, 1550-1640*[1]

Scholars have tended to periodize hypocrisy, associating it closely with early modern Europe, as if it knew no worse a time.[2] Sarpi, Montaigne, and other statesmen and thinkers of the long sixteenth century blamed the vice for their lands' socio-political woes. Later, at the individual level, Descartes would suspect his very senses of deception, while Bacon would accuse human understanding itself of miscoloring the world. In the English tradition, Shakespeare and Jonson take credit for lending hypocrisy full dramatic expression. Yet the vice's roots run as deep as the language. To demonstrate this fact, this chapter unearths hypocrisy's richness as a literary and ethical concept in Old English literature, a tradition that persists down the ages up to Chaucer's own. In what follows, I identify the key terms and salient features of Old and Middle English hypocrisy. Employing more words than our catch-all noun,[3] the period's authors sampled a palette of terms that denote a range of meanings, Christian and non. This hypocritical palette blends to give the vice as we understand it its basic trait as an exclusively public habit that uniquely enlists other sins—even virtues and skills—to operate at all. Like no other act, for hypocrisy to work it must be well performed.

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[1] Bouwsma, *Waning of the Renaissance* 117.

[2] See for instance Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*; Snyder, *Dissimulation*; Lobsien, *Transparency and Dissimulation*; Eliav-Feldon and Herzig, *Dissimulation and Deceit*; see also Grant, *Hypocrisy and Integrity*; Wikander, *Fangs of Malice*.

[3] Namely *hypocrisy*, a thirteenth-century borrowing.

COUSINS TO THE DEED: RELATIVE OLD ENGLISH TERMS

The Anglo-Saxon literary tradition inherits from Christianity a conception of the hypocrite-as-actor but lacks a perfect analogue. Nevertheless, Old English translators from Latin maintain an impressive degree of consistency when rendering *hypocrite* and *hypocrisy* in religious prose: in the Old English Gospels, for instance, the term given for *hypocrite* is *licettere* and its forms, while at a couple verses *licettung* plugs in for *hypocrisy*.[1] Faithful to the Gospels, these applications preserve hypocrisy's Pharisaic designation, where hypocrisy equals ostentation, that is, self-promotion through show. Though these terms preserve a sense of performance, this sense emerges from the literary context in which they appear, as opposed, say, to the terms' etymologies or the historical charge that might come with them.[2]

Homilists expand the Gospels' designation. Wulfstan, Ælfric, and others identify the Devil both as the principal enemy and *licetere*, from whom man's own hypocrisy proceeds.[3] Wulfstan, for instance, dubs those who follow the Devil "rihtliceteras" ("utter hypocrites"; *Homilien* VII.54.14).[4] These followers, essentially dupes, are "sare beswicene þurh ðæs sweartan deofles scincræft" ("sorely deceived by the Devil's dark art of deception"; XLII.198.17-18).[1] Elsewhere, in Ælfric's homily on Saint Cuthbert,[2] the devil's arts, "... deofles syrwum," encompassed the world of magic, "deofles dyderunge," with the deceitful, crafty fiend, "swicola feond," terrorizing a people with the optical illusion of a burning house (*Homilies, SS* X.114-15, 122-23, 118).[3] The Devil's techniques of deception prove various, an idea articulated by the myriad terms used to describe them.

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[1] See Liuzza, *Old English Version I*, Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 23:13, 15, 25, 27; Mark 7:6; Luke 6:42, 12:56. For *hypocrisy* see Matthew 23:28 (*licettunge*); Luke 12:1 (*licetung*). For the dating of these Gospels, see Liuzza, *Old English Version II*, 1-24. Less exact synonyms for hypocrisy are also used throughout the New Testament, such as *deceit*, from the Greek *dolos* (Lat. *Fraus*), translated as *facn* and its forms. See for instance *Old English Version I* John 1:47; Matthew 22:18, 26:5; Luke 20:23; Mark 14:1, 7:22; BEEKES *Etymological Dictionary 1* s.v. δόλος.

[2] For a discussion of semantic borrowings in the Old English period see Durkin, *Borrowed Words* 161-67.

[3] Fittingly, *devil* literally means *accuser* or *slanderer*—the essence of underhanded deceit and betrayal. *OED* s.v. devil (n.), Etymology. As for his enemy status, in the religious prose *inimicus* and *hostis* were glossed as *feond*. Gneuss, *Lehnbildungen* 92. In the religious poetry (discussed below), Satan appears as the father of lies, pledge breaker par excellence: he betrayed God, His angels, and led countless men to follow suit, beginning with Adam and Eve.

[4] See Wulfstan, *Homilien*, VII, 52-53. Later in this homily, "Antecrist" is invoked as the Devil's partner in misleading man; Wulfstan refers to him as "se þeodlicetere" ("the great hypocrite") (54.18; see 15-22).

In so many words, insincerity comes up in discussions of hypocrisy, as does dissimulation. Ælfric characterizes the Devil thus: "he is yfeltihtend 7 leaswyrcend. synna ordfruma 7 sawla bepæcend" ("he's the inciter of evil and maker of falsehood, the source of sins and deceiver of souls"; *Homilies, FS* VI.176-77[4]). The Devil's fraud and man's guilt conspire in humanity's immiseration[5]: under Satan's direct influence, Ananias and Sapphira "alogen þam halgan gast" ("deceived/lied to the Holy Ghost"), whence Peter demands, "Hwi woldest þu swician on þinum agenum" ("why would you deceive/cheat in your property?"; XXII.93-4[6]). Bedeviled, "Iudas se swicola" ("Judas the treacherous/deceitful") sells out Christ while his co-conspirators "mid leasum gewitum. forleogan woldon" ("would lie with false knowledge"; *Homilies, SS* XIV.78, 120-21).[7] Then there is Herod, whose deceitful acts "getacnode þa leasan licceteras. þe mid hiwunge god secað" ("signified the false hypocrites who seek God with feigning"; *Homilies, FS* VII.260-61). From Ælfric's *Homilies*, readers sense a commitment on the Devil and his followers' part to trick Adam and his children; they're told the Devil deceived/seduced/perverted—"forlærde"—Adam (I.159), and "beþæht" ("deceived") mankind with "deofles searocræftum" ("Devil's trickery" XIII.13-14). More, the Devil *desires* deception: of his plans for Adam it's revealed, "mid leasunge he wile beswican" ("with falsehoods he wills/wishes to deceive"; I.120[1]). Ælfric accuses none other than hypocrites of defying Christ: "Se bið eadig 7 gesælig þe for criste þolað wyriunge 7 hospas fram leasum licceterum" ("Yet be happy and blessed for Christ endures the curses and blasphemies from false hypocrites"; XXXVI.258-59). These quick examples evoke hypocrisy's common ingredients, chiefly pretense for personal gain and the harm of others. Such pretense demands persuasive technique, skillful fraud, treason, or their combination.

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[1] Compare a devil or sorcerer's delusion, *dydrung*; like *dry* (*magician, sorcerer*), *drycræft* (*magic, sorcery*), and *dryman* (*magician, sorcerer*), *dydrung* serves as an intersection between the Devil's deceptive arts and man's, a possibility repeatedly imagined in the thirteenth-century *South English Legendary*. In this popular hagiographic collection, devils and their human limbs frequently employ their art—complete with costumes, props, and thefts of identity—for sinister ends. See for instance "St. Michael," "St. Benedict," "St. Matthew," "St. Peter," and "St. Clement."

[2] Itself a blend of Bede's prose and verse originals. See Jones, "Saint Cuthbert."

[3] See Ælfric, *Homilies, SS* X.113-26.

[4] See Ælfric, *Homilies, FS* I.159-60.

[5] "Ða þurh deofles swicdom 7 adames gylt. we furluron þa gesælþe ure saule" ("When through the Devil's fraud and Adam's guilt, we lost then happiness—our soul"; Ælfric, *Homilies, FS* I.162-64).

[6] See Ælfric, *Homilies, FS* XXVII.220-23.

[7] See Ælfric, *Homilies, SS* X.14-130.

Though Old English authors looked beyond *licettere* and *licettung* to communicate hypocrisy's sense of deception, shared elements emerge from this variety of terms and contexts, namely an element of performance behind every deception. In both the prose and poetic records, plenty of Old English terms include hypocrisy among their connotations. Below are select nouns that connote *hypocrite*:

1. æswica, *m. An offender of the law, a deceiver, hypocrite, apostate*
2. hiwere, *m. One who pretends, a hypocrite*
   (from hiwian (v.), *To form, fashion, shape, colour, feign, pretend*)
3. leasere, *m.* I. *a false person, hypocrite*
   II. *one who feigns or acts, a buffoon, jester*
4. leogere, *m. A liar, one who speaks or acts falsely, a false witness*

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[1] See Ælfric, *Homilies, FS* VII.186-87.

5. swica, *m.* I. *a deceiver*

II. *one who fails in fidelity or fealty, a traitor*

6. twi-spræc, *f. Double speech, unfair speech, detraction*[1]

(*ASD* s.v. æswica; hiwere; leasere; leogere; licettere; swica; twi-spræc)[2]

This sample points to some of the moral and social environments in which the hypocrite may appear in Anglo-Saxon society. The vice passes as a byword for verbal or behavioral deception in these cases. As perjurer, the hypocrite can break secular or sacred laws, and her or his deception—a mix of shaping and pretending—can range from playful acting to grave treachery. These wide-ranging terms draw on the common thread that while they remain in them, as characters, hypocrites distinctly set themselves apart from their communities through their effective use of misleading words and deeds. A turn to the *Thesaurus of Old English* deepens the idea of effective performance when conceiving of this character. The volume's headings are arranged by their synonymy, with *hypocrisy* falling amidst scores of nuanced terms such as *Deception*, *Pretence*, and *Fraud*, respectively cross-listed with *Cunning*, *Imagination*, and *Treachery*. Among the terms surrounding hypocrisy are *artifice*, *befool*, *cheat*, *collusion*, *cunning thought*, *breaker of faith*, *enticer*, *fabricate*, *flattering*, *misrepresent*, *secret tactics*, *snare*, *stratagem*, *treachery*, *wise of speech*, and *wily*.[3] Evidently, Old English authors had their store of associations for *hypocrite*.

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[1] Compare the Latin *bilinguium*, employed by hamartiologists to refer to hypocrisy. See for instance Craun, *Lies, Slander, Obscenity* 15.

[2] Many of these terms live with us today: *blench*, *craft*, *cunning*, *forswear*, *liar*, *lease*, *manswear*, *mislead*, *spell*, *turn*, *twofold*, *untruth*. Others are now obsolete. See *OED* s.v. *amar*; *blend*; *bicharre*; *dern*; *faken*; *forlead* (v.[1]); *swike*; *unright*; *wrench* (n.[1]); *yepe*. For obvious purposes, I'm tempted to see *fæcne*, deceitful, behind our word *fake*, but its origins are obscure.

[3] See *TOE* pp.376-79, 06.01.07.04 Deception to 06.01.07.04.04.03 Deceit, fraud, treachery.

How to Act: Some Standards of Sincerity

While the principal Old English term for *hypocrisy*, *licettung*, appears only in biblical and homiletic prose literature, in the poetic record, terms like those listed above describe *hypocrisy* and its agentive form. The use of such nuanced terms enables understandings that cut deeper than “dissimulation” and “imposter.” In building on the basic idea of a word-deed dissonance, the terms found in the heroic and wisdom poetry furthermore shed light on Anglo-Saxon society’s disapproval of insincerity and cowardice. Two major poems, *Beowulf* and *The Battle of Maldon*, spotlight the norms (or ideals) of their society insofar as they prescriptively color hypocrisy with culture-specific features. In these poems, character actions, pledges, and speeches, along with the narrator’s judgments, illustrate the praised traits a noble warrior ought to possess, namely courage, strength, prudence, loyalty, and openhandedness.[1] In *Beowulf*, the eponymous hero embodies these desired traits, which crystalize into a sincerity that knows no concealment. For example, Beowulf’s disembarkation on Danish shores impresses its coastguard—he calls out to the Geats in amazement, “No her cuðlicor cuman ongunnon / lindhæbbende,” (“never has a troop more openly landed here”) without prior consent (*Beowulf* 244-45a). Explaining their unannounced arrival, Beowulf first reveals his troop’s affiliation and allegiances, “We synt gumcynnes Geata leode / ond Higelaces heroðgeneatas” (261-62), (“We are Geat men and Hygelac’s hearth-companions,”) a nation friendly to the Danes; he then states plainly, “We þurh holdne hige hlaford þinne” (“We came with loyal heart to seek your lord, Halfdane’s son”; 267-68). The Geat traveler further assures the coastguard with calls to transparency and offers of counsel:

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[1] See for instance *Beowulf* 18-25, 286-300, 1671-72, 2177-83a, 2633-60, 2702b-09a; *Maldon* 202-29, 244-59, 273-94, 304-08.

> Habbað we to þæm mæran   micel ærende,
> Deniga frean,   ne sceal þær dyrne sum
> wesan, þæs ic wene. (270-72a)
> (We have a great message to proclaim to the Danish lord, there must not be any secret, as I believe.)
>
> Ic þæs Hroðgar mæg
> þurh rumne sefan   ræd gelæran. (277b-78)
> (I can advise Hrothgar with an open heart.)

It isn't long after his admittance into Hrothgar's hall that Beowulf delivers on his words and fatally disarms Grendel. Actually, it is his *remembrance* of his oath that spurs him to action:

> Gemunde þa se goda,   mæg Higelaces,
> æfenspræce,   uplang astod
> ond him fæste wiðfeng;   fingras burston. (758-60)
> (Hygelac's good kinsman then remembered his evening speech, stood upright and firmly seized him; fingers burst.)

Having given his word on behalf of Hygelac, Beowulf takes seriously his obligation to defend the Danes and represent the Geats. Failure to fulfill his oath would mean either cowardice, betrayal, or weakness. The warrior's care for honoring his word lasts with him a lifetime:

> Ic on earde bad
> mælgesceafta,   heold min tela,
> ne sohte searoniðas,   ne me swor fela
> aða on unriht. (2736b-39a)

> (I endured what happened, kept well what was mine, never sought sly enmity, nor swore many oaths unjustly.)

These are the words of the warrior-king as he dies from wounds inflicted by the dragon. Beowulf's expression of such satisfaction at the end of his life speaks to the primacy of character integrity—realized or idealized—in the world in which this poem materialized. As the poem's narrator himself reflects on the hero's candor and openhandedness, and itemizes the tales and treasures brought back from Denmark and offered Hygelac, he passes judgment on the gift-giving described:

Swa sceal mæg don,
nealles inwitnet   oðrum bregdon
dyrnum cræfte,   deað renian
hondgesteallan.   Hygelace wæs,
niða heardum,   nefa swyðe hold,
ond gehwæðer oðrum   hroþra gemyndig. (2166b-71)

> (A kinsman must do so, not weave a net of treachery for others with secret craft, or arrange a comrade's death. To Hygelac, fierce in conflicts, his nephew was very loyal, and both were mindful of one another's comforts.)

Effectively, the narrator punctuates his inventory of Beowulf's favors to his king with a sharp contrast with how a kinsman ought *not* to act: he shouldn't plot in secret to betray—or even put down or strong-arm—his friends.[1] What attaches such treachery to hypocrisy is the successful *performance* of a false friendship or loyalty, the concealment of intentions for unknown, quite possibly sinister ends. Revealingly, such character and narrative remarks that scorn habits deemed detrimental to the individual and community, centered on betrayal from well-played hypocrisy, are as numerous as those that praise promoted actions.

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[1] See *Beowulf* 2177-83a.

Anxiety over betrayal—the logical conclusion of hypocrisy—surfaces throughout *Beowulf*. In the poem's final battle scene, Beowulf's men flee for the woods rather than help their leader slay the dragon; afterward they return to their leader's body ashamed, "scamiende" (2850). Wiglaf, the only unwavering companion, further shames the warriors for their dereliction: "Nealles folccyning fyrdgesteallum / gylpan þorfte" ("The people's king had no need to boast of his comrades-in-arms"; 2873-74a).[1] Wiglaf's rebuke morphs into a dire—if empty—imagining of the Geats' obliteration at the hands of enemies once they catch wind of the warriors' desertion.[2] Cold feet on the battlefield thus constitute a breach in comitatus. The consequences of a broken vow—a thane's failure to protect his ring-giver and endangerment of the greater community—underscore the importance of giving one's oath with a clear state of mind.[3]

The warriors depicted in *Maldon* are similarly valued according to their performance on the battlefield. The three sons of Odda and several more soldiers, for instance, flee a losing campaign against the Vikings—a great disservice, notes the narrator, considering the many favors their leader Byrhtnoth had showered on them.[4] What follows this account of desertion are narrative and character descriptions and displays of loyalty and courage. As the narrator notes, the bold thanes, uncowardly men, “wlance þegenas, / unearge men,” rushed to battle, desiring death or vengeance (*Maldon* 205b-06). Several boasts are then renewed. As did Beowulf and Wiglaf, one soldier, Ælfwine, recalls the “beot” (“pledge”) he gave his leader Byrhtnoth at mead, and invokes his lineage as evidence of loyalty to his lord and grief at his death (213b). Another, Leofsunu, fears the social stigma of fleeing battle and outliving his king; he stays in battle to avoid the blame of men, despising flight, “fleam he forhogode” (254). Still another warrior, Dunnere, proclaims “Ne mæg na wandian se þe wrecan þenceð / frean” (“he ought not flinch or flee who intends to take revenge for his lord”; 258-59a), before entering the fray. And Eadweard, another soldier, spoke boastful words “gylpwordum spræc,” that he wouldn’t flee while his leader lay, “he nolde fleogan… þa his betera leg,” and killed, and was killed (275b-77). Others followed suit.

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[1] See *Beowulf* 2860-76.

[2] *Beowulf* 2886b-91, 2910b-3030a. Baker challenges the position that sees Beowulf's death as a defeat, and refrains from reading his objective to slay the dragon and thereby protect the Geats as an ironic, automatic death sentence for his people. See the final chapter to his *Honour, Exchange, and Violence*, esp. 232-39. Beyond *Beowulf*'s main narrative, hints of betrayal manifest in the poem's subplots and character speeches, including Sigemund's tale, the Finnsburg episode, and Beowulf's assessment of Freawaru's marriage to Ingeld. See *Beowulf* 898-915, 1071-1159a, 2020-69a.

[3] For an example of complete loyalty to one's ring-giver in face of death, see the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'s *Cynewulf and Cyneheard*.

[4] *Maldon* 185-201.

As it commemorates many soldiers’ dedication and resolve, *Maldon* likewise voices the real consequences of battle-dodging. In one sense, the proclamations given by several loyal warriors allow readers to conceive of desertion in terms of a type of hypocrisy understood in relation to treachery. Offa—who, unimpressed by the boasts brought out “modiglice” (“seemingly bravely”) at the mead hall, predicts their failure to stick at the hour of need (200a)—speaks of mistaken identity and treachery in the same breath:

> Us Godric hæfð,
> earh Oddan bearn,   ealles beswicene.
> Wende þæs formoni man,   þa he on meare rad,
> on wlancan þam wicge,   þæt wære hit ure hlaford;
> forþan wearð her on felda   folc totwæmed,
> scyldburh tobrocen.   Abreoðe his angin,

þæt he her swa manigne   man aflymde! (237b-43)

(Godric the cowardly son of Odda has deceived us all. Many men supposed, when he rode on his horse—on that bold steed—that it was our lord; therefore our men became divided here in the field, shield broken. May his undertaking fail, that he here put to flight so many!)

Disguised by his horse, Godric assumes a false identity, thereby pulling many men from the battlefield and betraying the army. In this way, Offa, who for his part upholds his vow to Byrhtnoth,[1] faults Godric beyond his cowardice for the influence he holds over his followers—a key feature of any good hypocrite. An old companion to the slain commander, Bryhtwold, illustrates a further consequence of running away:

A mæg gnornian
se ðe nu fram þis wigplegan   wendan þenceð.
Ic eom frod feores;   fram ic ne wille,
ac ic me be healfe   minum hlaforde,
be swa leofan men,   licgan þence. (315b-19)

(He may ever grieve who now thinks to turn from this battle-play. I am wise in years; I don't want [to run] away, but plan to lie by my lord, by such a dear man.)

Bryhtwold's words assume a lifeless existence for the battle-quitters who outlive their comrades, consigned to further tribal confrontations without the braver among them, as Wiglaf had envisioned for himself. The old man's intention to follow through on his boast with consistent deeds contrasts entirely with Offa's beer boast, which proved an ostentation meant to impress his cohort. Bryhtwold's distaste for exile suggests that community lies with those who remain faithful to one another, while the insincere keep smaller, less secure circles. His brief words epitomize the bleak existence of the soldier who survives his community in *The Wanderer*; the poem's nameless earth-stepper imparts relevant advice that a man mustn't bring out his boast until he knows his capabilities and limitations.[1]

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[1] *Maldon* 288-94

Boast or no boast, the Anglo-Saxons valued and depended on loyalty as any other people would. In *Precepts*, a father includes in his instructions to his son the admonition never to abandon his close friend, "Ne aswic sundorwine," but to hold him close, "þæt þu næfre fæcne weorðe / freonde þinum" ("that you never become deceitful to him"; *Precepts* 29a, 31). He tells his son to hold and choose his words with care, an instruction echoed throughout the poem, including the end:

> Ne beo þu no to tælende,   ne to tweospræce,
> ne þe on mode læt   men to fracoþe,
> ac beo leofwende,   leoht on gehygdum
> ber breostcofan. (90-93a)
>
> (Don't be too slanderous or double-tongued, nor consider men too worthless in your mind, but be amiable, bear a light in your thoughts.)

Having a loose or double tongue meant something awful to these poets, who condemned slander in the same breath as they did the secret resentment of others. It's thus difficult to see how these poets could have conceived of hypocrisy in any positive light whenever the term connoted betrayal. Still, their undesirability notwithstanding, the above empty boasts and desertions needn't constitute hypocrisy, at least not the term's complete meaning in the Anglo-Saxon literary context. Intentions matter when conceiving of such scenarios, since the boaster in the mead hall may well have resolved to fight to the death, only his instincts got the better of him. Such cowardice differs wildly from a thane's reservations upon offering his word, or a devil's knowing misguidance of man for the former's pleasure and latter's grief.

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[1] *Wanderer* 65b-72.

Even in a society whose surviving poetry stresses constancy in word and deed, the case can be made for a practical hypocrisy that capitalized on tact and performance. Praised deeds on the battlefield may themselves amount to performance; if instinct demands that one flee from imminent danger, the true warrior *appears* unwavering before and intimidating to his foes, despite any fear.[1] Like brave-acting fighters, a person might bury his inner desires, fears, and intentions in order to fulfill a duty or simply survive in the world. The husband's abandonment in *The Wife's Lament* documents at least two such intention-appearance breaks. First, he sets off to settle a score, leaving behind the poem's speaker, his lover:

> ða ic me ful gemæcne   monnan funde,
> heardsæligne,   hygegeomorne,
> mod miþende,   morþor hycgendne.
> Bliþe gebæro   ful oft wit beotedan
> þæt unc ne gedælde   nemne deað ana
> owiht ells;   eft is þæt onhworfen,
> is nu   swa hit no wære
> freondscipe uncer. (*Wife's Lament* 18-25a)
> (Then I found for myself a most suitable man—ill starred, sad in mind, concealing his spirit, plotting murder—we vowed very often with blithe bearing that nothing would

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[1] Compare contemporary advice to hikers on how to manage mountain lion encounters: appear unintimidated, open your jacket to seem bigger than yourself, don't run or show your back, don't play dead. National Park Service, "Your Safety."

> separate us except death alone; afterward that changed, now is as if our friendship never was.)

It is only after he forsakes her that the wife discovers her ex-husband's gentle bearing was a façade that concealed darker thoughts. Was this husband's change inevitable, and his dissimulation therefore a temporary mercy, his practice of making virtue of necessity? The poem's speaker herself appears ambivalent over her husband's broken vows, longing for him but far from wishing him well for the sorrows he's caused her.[1] Ironically, he may have taught her a valuable lesson:

> A scyle geong mon   wesan geomormod,
> heard heortan geþoht,   swylce habban sceal
> bliþe gebæro,   eac þon breostceare,
> sinsorgna gedreag. (42-45a)
>
> (A young man must always be inwardly sad, heart's thought harsh, likewise he must have a blithe bearing, likewise breast-care, a multitude of sorrows.)

Like her husband, the wife, too, bears a calm appearance as she grieves internally. To survive her harsh existence, she must adopt a steely double-mindedness. Hypocrisy might not be well regarded in a culture that emphasized sincerity so strongly, yet its theatrical dimension offers an essential skill for prevailing in a treacherous earth. Although they fail to dissociate from ethically negative connotations, the artful and imaginative conventions of dissembling, as famously displayed in Satan and his followers, manage to seep through the evildoer's words and deeds.

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[1] See *Wife's Lament* 42-50a.

DEVILS

Recent scholars who work on the sizeable corpus of Old English religious poetry have argued for its political and social relevance in the everyday lives of its first audiences.[1] Samantha Zacher, for instance, writes that these audiences "misread" key moments in Daniel and other Biblical scenes to count themselves the chosen inheritors of a new kingdom.[2] Distant nations are moreover framed in Anglo-Saxon styles and customs: the Israelites of *Daniel*'s opening lines amount to gold-doling vassals who serve a far wealthier *Weard* or Guardian, while the rood and Christ take similar roles in the famous dream poem. When considering hypocrisy, it is thus reasonable to approach its treatments in this poetic tradition as a concept rendered intelligible and applicable for Old English audiences, whether on account of its prior importation into the culture, or the prior existence of an analogous idea. At any rate, the literary context in which these characters appear draws on the smooth deceiver's familiar techniques of performance and persuasion to elicit real decisions from those on the receiving end of her or his oratory.[3]

Key scenes from the period's religious poetry warn against swindlers human and non, and frame them regularly as oath breakers.[4] Just as the Pharisees quietly keep *hypocrisy*'s properties of performance alive through their pretend piety and public influence, so, too, do the devils and their mortal victims cleverly manipulate others into obeying them. No poem displays Satan's uneasy theatrical talents more than *Genesis A* and *B* of the Junius manuscript. Early on, the poem references Satan’s sway over a respectable troop of rebel angels: “engla weard for oferhygde / dwæl on gedwilde” (“The angels’ supervisor seduced them into error on account of his pride”; *Genesis* 22-23a).[1] That Satan, once favored for his devotion, now leads an angelic army against its Creator speaks to the heights of his ambitions and the powers of his charisma and persuasive technique.[2] Confident, the arch-fiend is pleased by his self-assessment:

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[1] "Old Testament poetry comprises roughly a third of the extant corpus of Old English poetry. This finding is consistent with Malcolm Godden's well-documented assertion that the Old Testament was *the* chief resource and source of inspiration for Anglo-Saxon literary, visual, and theological productions" (Zacher, *Rewriting the Old Testament* 4).

[2] See Zacher, *Rewriting the Old Testament.* Liuzza similarly accepts that the Anglo-Saxons "seem to have felt... a vivid sense of continuity between the events of the Bible and their own history" ("Gospels" 8). For an overview of Old English biblical literature, see "Chapter Three: Old English Translations and Paraphrases" 79-124 in Fowler, *Bible in Early English Literature*.

[3] Thus the Israelites *chose* the Devil's craft, "curon deofles cræft" despite their Lord's great favors (*Daniel* 32b).

[4] For instance, Devils are frequently referred to as *wærlogan* or pledge breakers. See *Guthlac* 298a, 623a, 911a; *Juliana* 455a.

> Þuhte him sylfum
> þæt he mægyn and cræft   maran hæfde
> þonne se halga god   habban mihte
> folcgestælna.   Feala worda gespæc
> se engel ofermodes.   Þohte þurh his anges cræft
> hu he him strenglicran   stol geworhte,
> heahran on heofonum. (268b-74a)
>
> (It seemed to him that he had more main and skill than Holy God might have followers. The angel spoke many words of pride. He thought with his own skill how he might make himself a stronger throne, higher in the heavens.)

His imagination in overdrive, Satan dreams up the many wondrous works he’ll fashion both with his hands, “Ic mæg mid handum swa fela / wundra gewyrcean” (279b-80a), and the many hands of those loyal angels under his control. In the hundreds of lines that follow, Satan is established as a thorough hypocrite whose eloquent words are mixed in their truth-content: he literally lies to

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[1] Compare *Christ and Satan*, in which the angels complain against their vanquished leader, whom they accuse of deceiving them through his lies, “ðinum leasungum” (62a), and whose very face, the seat of his many masks, they cite as loathsome, “Atol is þin onseon!” (61a).

[2] See *Genesis* 262-68a.

Adam and Eve, the best indication of his penchant to speak one way with unknown, alternative motives intended.[1]

As it homes in on the Devil's plot to undo Adam and Eve, the poem colors its language with hypocrisy-associated terms assigned to various parts of speech. Upon preparing his attack, an eager—"fus"—Satan begins to gird himself—"gyrwan"—for the mission before him (443a, 442a). Literally, he armors himself, while figuratively, he wears a strong mind, "hyge strangne," that he plies to dishonest ends, for it was a deceitful, "fæcne," mind (447b; 443b); many eloquent speeches, "spræca fela," were known to him, many wandering words, "wora worda" (445b-46a). Thus armored and word-girded, the devil cuts through Hell with his "feondes cræfte" (449b), with a mind to ambush man:

> wolde dearnunga   drihtnes geongran,
> mid mandædum   men beswican
> forlædan and forlæran   þæt hie wurdon lað gode (450-52)
> (He wanted to secretly trick God's vassals with evil deeds, to seduce and pervert them so they'd become hateful to God.)

This quick description of Satan's plot colors the alliterative verse. The terms connoting his will to delude his human enemy, *mandædum, forlædan, forlæran,* both add a touch of rhyme to the lines and create a trajectory his victims will follow as he mis-leads and mis-guides them toward their ruin. Once amidst their paradise, Satan assumes a different costume: we're told he then cast himself in the semblance of a snake, "Wearp hine þa on wyrmes lic," and wound himself around Death's Tree by dint of "deofles cræft" (491-92). At the levels of language and plot, then,

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[1] See for instance *Genesis* 495-521, 547-87.

Satan’s doubleness enriches the verse, which relies on an array of nouns, adjectives, and verbs that denote the outward and inward intentions of a master trickster.

Despite his consignment to the role of the ultimate, eternal loser, Satan’s will, his skills of movement and disguise, earn him a temporary victory over his dupes. The success of his ruse can be appreciated in Eve’s genuine conviction that Satan really was a messenger of God; in swaying Adam to eat of the fruit, Eve sincerely believed she served God in obeying the serpent.[1] When Adam, mindful of God’s plain command to avoid the Tree of Death, turns down the snake’s offer to approach it on suspicion of the creature’s presentation and message, the devil in disguise finds Eve: “Lædde hie swa mid ligenum and mid listum speon” (“[The serpent] led her thus with lies and lured her with cunning”; 588). The author reiterates Eve’s miseducation by the serpent, who deceived her with lies, secretly seducing her, “hie mid ligenum beswac, / dearnenga bedrog” so that she was deluded “bedroren wurde” by the “deofles cræft,” elsewhere “deofles searo,” terms that encompass not only artifice but might, art, and design (601b-602a; 823; 632a).[2] With these ingredients, Satan deceived Eve, “[f]orlec,” so that she began to trust his words and follow his instructions, “heo ongan his wordum truwian, / læstan his lare,” which she believed ultimately came from God, a message Satan delivered so circumspectly and glibly, “swa wærlice wordum” (647; 649b-50a; 652). As Eve entices her husband in explicit defense of the serpent, the angry angel stood by, “Stod se wraða boda,” to direct the scene and supply the couple’s emotions for them (686b).[3] The Devil’s plotting, performance, and persistence pay off:

> legde him lustas on   and mid listum speon,
> fylgde him frecne;   wæs se feond full neah

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[1] *Genesis* 647-83, 704-17a.

[2] *ASD* s.v. cræft, searu. Within the same poem, such as *Daniel*, craft can be ascribed positively to man and God, as well as negatively to the Devil.

[3] See *Genesis* 694b-703a.

þe on þa frecan fyrd gefaren hæfde
ofer langne weg; leode hogode
on þæt micle morð men forweorpan,
forlæran and forlædan. (687-92a)

([The angry angel] placed lusts in them and allured them with cunnings; he fiercely followed them. The fiend, who in the bold expedition had arrived from a long way, was very near. He devised to throw men into great destruction, to deceive and mislead them.)

Given his malicious intent, the Devil lacks the fictive play of a stage actor—his lessons are realer and harder. Nevertheless, his hurtful hypocrisy necessitates the application of otherwise impressive traits, including an adventurous bent for endurance and artistry. Strangely, these features of perpetual motion, performance, and disguise, which constitute his identity, fail to define him precisely. Like any hypocrite, this actor is defined by his very defiance of a sole identity. As one devil deftly describes his own in the Exeter Book's *Guthlac*,

Hwilum wedende swa wilde deor
Cirmdon on corðre, hwilum cyrdon eft
Minne mansceaþan on mennisc hiw
Breahtma mæste, hwilum brugdon eft
Awyrgde wærlogan on wyrmes bleo,
Earme adloman attre spiowdon.
Symle hy Guðlac gearene fundon,
þonces gleawne, He geþyldum bad,
þeah him feonda hloð feorhcwealm bude. (907-15)

> (At times raging they cried out together like a wild beast, at times the mean miscreants turned into human form with great revelry, at times the cursed apostates, wretchedly malformed, changed into the dragon's hue, spat venom. Always they found Guthlac resolved and alert. He expected them patiently, though the gang of fiends offered him slaughter.)

In contrast with Guthlac's constant vigilance against them, the devils rely on constant change to undermine their enemies; the thrice repeated "hwilum," at times, assures the reader these cruel creatures can take on any guise, play any role; this promise of performance makes them thrillingly—if dangerously—exotic, able to induce real pain[1] or simply sway man to carry out his bidding.

MEN

The widely applicable traits that first gave Satan and his mimics success over man serve as a model for the Middle English literary hypocrites to follow. Whether literary types or characters, they are the product of mankind's inheritance of a devilish duplicity. In Eve's innocent words,

> "Me nædre beswac   and me neodlice
> to forsceape scyhte   and to scyldfrece,
> fah wyrm þurh fægir word,   oðþæt ic fracoðlice
> feondræs gefremede,   fæhðe geworhte,
> and þa reafode,   swa hit riht ne wæs,
> beam on bearwe   and þa blæda æt." (*Genesis* 897-902)

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[1] A martyr, Guthlac himself succumbs to the brutal onslaught of his demonic aggressors. See *Guthlac* 81-88a, 226-38, 467-69, 513-20.

> (“The serpent deceived me and forcefully urged me to an ill fate and to sinful greed, the hostile worm through fair words, until I shamefully performed a fiendish act, did wrong, and seized the [fruit], tree on hill, as was not right, and ate the fruit.”)

Although acknowledging her guilt in the disobedient act, Eve credits the snake as he should be credited—after all, he first lied to her, urging her to take from the tree while promising false outcomes, filling her with fair words. Through Satan’s trickery, Eve and all humanity adopt the same enticing spirit to make it a human vice. Human *firencræft* or *sin-craft* is thus understood in Old English thought as patently satanic.[1] This is the stigma of the hypocritical character: considered a coward, weak to temptation, a victim of trickery but liable to trick others.

Alive to this all-too-human stigma, Old English authors poeticized human hypocrisy. Their depictions served to entertain and instruct their immediate audiences, and to continue to raise philosophical questions touching on human nature. That priests and monks were most often invoked with respect to hypocrisy reveals an even greater paradox—that those most responsible for carrying out divine precepts were most vulnerable to corruption, and when guilty of dissemblance, most blameworthy on account of their influential office. Poets might deliver their social critiques from demons’ mouths. In *Guthlac,* for instance, a demon attempts to persuade the secluded saint that men of his type only feign sanctity:

> In þam mægwlite   monge lifgað,
> gyltum forgiefene;   nales gode þigð,
> ac hy lichoman   fore lufan cwemað

---

[1] I adopt the term from *Juliana* (14), in which it refers to members of Maximian’s pagan society. For a lengthy elaboration of the demonic causes of man’s sins, see *Juliana* 345-506a. Actually, this verse saint’s life stars a demon—first disguised as an angel—sent to Juliana’s prison cell, where the saint detains and interrogates it, if after falling fleetingly for its frightful words (258-69). Apprehended, it confesses to a number of conspiracies carried out with its brothers, “mid minum broþrum” (312a), against the Christians, including Jesus, John the Baptist, and the apostles. See 289-315a.

> wista wynnum.   Swa ge weorðmyndu
> in dolum dreame   dryhtne gieldað.
> Fela ge fore monnum miþað   þæs þe ge in mode gehycgað;
> ne beoð eowre dæda dyrne,   þeah þe ge hy in dygle gefremme. (460-66)
>
> (Many live in appearance, given to sins; they won't prosper in the least, but please their bodies for love of feasting. Thus you yield honor to God in foolish delight. You conceal from men many things that you devise in your heart; your deeds are not hidden, though you commit them in secret.)

Though intended to deceive the saint, the demon's claim may have stemmed from a sincere concern, whether within the church or beyond it, that religious leaders truly lead by example.

Whatever the reason for the less-than-ideal reputations the religious sometimes received, the idea of a hypocritical priest had comic potentials, as is witnessed in the final stanzas of the homily-poem *Seasons for Fasting*. The otherwise sober poem takes a sharp, humorous turn by painting a strange picture of lax priests: they falsely try to feign and regularly provoke the barkeep, "Hi leaslice leogan ongynnað / and þone tæppere tyhtaþ gelome," allowing oysters and wine in the morning; compared to "þæt hund and wulf," this priest seizes cuisine without measure (*Seasons for Fasting* 216-17). Like the stanzas surrounding them, these lines show the comic potential of the hypocritical priest—an inconsistency that lends itself well to the theories of humor. Audiences might laugh on account of the incongruity of this canine image, or feel better about themselves at their superior's expense. This priest may even find some advocates, since he seems to bend the rules for everyone, not just himself. In brief, this character's self-deception enables the poet to address a grave offence—the flouting of divine law from the highest post—through humorous means and surprising imagery.

Literary treatments of hypocrisy thus allowed poets to entertain as much as instruct—to craft brilliant images with words in philosophical pursuit of an all-too-familiar habit. In *Vainglory*, hypocrisy is presented less as a vice and more a process that blends with several vices—pride, gluttony, and wrath—to overtake a person's life. This idea is conveyed through an extended conceit of siege warfare. After relaying a telegraphic account of what sort of person *not* to be (a power-drunk schemer[1]), the poet lays out the first image of his conceit: a group of men—war-smiths to be precise, "wigsmiþas"—holding assembly in their "winburgum" or wine-towns (*Vainglory*, 14). At their banquet they sit; they redress the true story, they exchange words, "soðgied wrecað, / wordum wrixlað," to incite war (15-16a). The poem's parataxis creates an abrupt and immediate display of the effect of this drunken banquet and call to arms: a band of divided-minded, drunken warriors:

sindon dryhtguman
ungelice….
Bið þæt æfþoncal   eal gefylled
feondes fligepilum,   facensearwum;
breodað he ond blæceð,   boð his sylfes
swiþor micle   þonne se sella mon,
þenceð þæt his wise   welhwam þince
eal unforcuþ.   Biþ þæs oþer swice,
þonne he þæs facnes   fintan sceawað.
Wrenceþ he ond blenceþ,   worn geþenceþ
hinderhoca,   hygegar lete

---

[1] *Vainglory* 10-12.

> scurum sceoteþ.   He þa scylde ne wat
> fæhþe gefremede,   feoþ his betran
> eorl fore æfstum,   læteð inwitflan
> brecan þone burgweal,   þe him bebead meotud
> þæt he þæt wigsteal   wergan sceolde,
> siteþ symbelwlonc,   searwum læteð
> wine gewæged   word ut faran,
> þræfte þringan   þrymme gebyrmed,
> æfæstum onlæd,   oferhygda ful,
> niþum nearowrencum. (22b-23a, 26-44a)
>
> (The men are unalike.... Their envy finished them all, the enemy’s javelins, with treacherous wiles; he cries out and palliates, he boasts himself up excessively more than the better man, he thinks his ways seem honorable with everyone. Afterward, there will be another betrayal, when he beholds the end of his treachery/fraud (facnes). He tricks and cheats, he dreams up many stratagems, he lets loose his mind-dart/wile (hygegar), he shoots in showers. He knows not the crimes, the enmities promoted, he hates his betters, the earl out of envy, lets a treacherous arrow break the city wall, which the Maker commanded that he must defend, he sits feast-inflated, lets out contrivances, lets fly wine-heavy words, pushing with dispute, fermented with force, ablaze with envy, full of pride, with unfriendly tricks.)

Weaving literal with figurative images of insurrection, the above lines equate verbal abandon with martial treachery. What begins as an all too familiar experience (an overactive ego, the slipping of loose words, coupled with bad faith) ends in real—and really entertaining—chaos.

Perhaps no Old English poem takes up the subject of human hypocrisy as creatively and directly as does *Homiletic Fragment I* of the Vercelli Book. Like *Vainglory*, this screed against bad habits brings to life the backbiter and backstabber's actions through an extended metaphor. A stark disparity between appearances and reality is established from the beginning with the example of a nobleman maligning another behind him while speaking fairly before him.[1] The poet then offers an image reminiscent of the whited sepulcher—an unclean heart:

ond þæt facen swa þeah
hafað in his heortan,   hord unclæne. (*Fragment I* 5b-6)
(yet he holds the deceit/treachery (facen) in his heart, a hoard unclean.)

The undesirability intended in this image is underscored by the words of a wise man who prays that he may not associate with the forgers of lies, "mid þam ligewyrhtum," who are full of smooth speech, "þam þe ful smeðe spræce habbað," who hold grim thoughts in their breasts, "in gastcofan grimme geþohtas, / gehatað holdlice," so that their trust—a pledge with their lips—proceeds not, "swa hyra hyht ne gæð, / wære mid welerum" (11b-15a). That the wise must plead with God *not* to conform to this group of double-dealers speaks to hypocrisy's prevalence and allure in the contemporary society. Though regarded with disdain, then, the inwardly fraud-filled, outwardly fair-mouthed[2] nevertheless fascinate the poet, who sets up his central conceit with the remark, "Ænlice beoð," Singular they are, or Incomparable, or Excellent, or even Beautiful they are:[3]

Ænlice beoð,
swa ða beon berað   buta ætsomne

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[1] *Fragment I* 1-5a.
[2] "gefylled mid facne, þeah he fæager word / utan ætywe" (*Fragment I* 17-18a).
[3] See *ASD* s.v. æn-lic.

> arlicne anleofan,   ond ætterne tægel
> hafað on hindan,   hunig on muðe,
> wynsume wist.   Hwilum wundiaþ
> sare mid stinge,   þonne se sæl cymeð. (18b-23)
>
> (Singular they are, just as bees bear both together: delicious food, and a poisonous tail in the back, honey in the mouth, a pleasant feast. At times they sorely wound with their sting, when the occasion arises.)

An undetected blend of charm and harm, these unique creatures dish out harsher injuries thanks to their sweet semblance. It is these bees that the poet likens to lying men, "bioð gelice þa leasan men," who with their tongues promise good faith with pleasing words, "þa mid tungan treowa gehataþ / fægerum wordum," but think deceitfully when they at last nastily deceive "facenlice þencaþ / þonne hie æt nehstan nearwe beswicaþ" (24-27). Like bees, this type of man has a honey flavor in his vows, "hafað on gehatum hunigsmæccas," smooth and friendly words, "smeðne sybcwide," and within, through devil's craft, "þurh deofles cræft," a secret wound, "dyrne wunde" (28-30). The prospect looks bleak from the poet's perspective. For him, everything on earth is now mixed with falseness, "Swa is nu þes middangeard mane geblonden," mercy with wickedness, "milste mid mane" (31, 34a); as inheritors and perfecters of this devil's art, man develops and sustains this earth by chasing his envy, "ehteð æfestra," sowing guile, "inwit saweð," malice in abundance, "nið mid geneahe" (35-36a). And for this poet, none other than a few truly enjoy peace.[1] Deception and inversion aren't the stuff of hypocrites, but make up man—is it a mere coincidence that *man* and *mán* (*crime, guilt; wicked, false, base*) are homographs, as are *niþ* (*man*) and *níþ* (*rancorous; malice*)?[2]

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[1] See *Fragment I* 36b-39.

[2] *ASD* s.v. man; mán; niþ; níþ.

The notion that this vice touched the sweep of creation, running rampant on the earth, wouldn't have raised an eyebrow, for, occupying a fallen world, the authors and audiences of the above poems likely took this life to mean a trial and death sentence, at best a layover en route to home.[1] This idea that all earthly delights rot and die would endure across Middle English letters. The widely-read twelfth-century monk Bernard of Cluny conceived of hypocrisy on a cosmic scale.[2] Well before Darwin promoted evolution by crafty deceptions of plants and animals, or natural selection,[3] Bernard's influential verse satire encapsulated man's mutability. In it, flesh is mocked for its sure decay: "Culta licet caro, semper eris caro, *nec caro semper*" ("Flesh may be dressed, yet it will always be flesh, *not even always flesh*"; *Contemptu Mundi* I.748, my emphasis).[4] As though it were not in flux enough, flesh dresses itself in various ways to clothe its ever-spoiling corpse. Given the full reach of false appearances, it's a wonder prudent cunning was never widely called a virtue in a dishonest world, some honest fraud for the honest few, a prudent mask to face the faces.

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[1] For this reason, the *Guthlac A* author discourages that a man should even bother to improve the world. *Guthlac* 46b-47. See also *Maxims I* 187-200, which proposes that the seeds of earthly wickedness were first planted with Cain's murder of Abel and have been spreading ever since. For this reason, the poem warns, the warrior must be on guard always against wickedness, particularly the violence of the blade.

[2] Bernard constituted one of the *Auctores octo morales* whose works became standard in the English curriculum during the later Middle Ages, and on whose works Chaucer draws heavily. The poet would have been exposed to Bernard's satire in the schoolroom, where it was used for language and moral instruction alike. See Pepin, *Scorn for the World* xx-xxi. While Chaucer forgoes incorporating Bernard's verses directly, several of his works, such as his *Former Age*, echo the main themes of faithlessness and degeneration that are voiced in *De Contemptu Mundi*. The short lyric, for instance, bears striking resemblances to the opening of Book II of Bernard's work.

[3] See Campbell, *Liar's Tale*, "Chapter Two: The Evolution of Cunning" 31-42.

[4] See Bernard of Cluny, *Contemptu Mundi* I.719-56.

AFTERWORD: THE WHITENESS OF THE VICE

> Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the milky way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color; and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows— a colorless, all-color of atheism from which we shrink?
>
> —Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (1851)[1]

Those familiar with Melville's great novel might remember what most appalled Ishmael about the whale: its whiteness. Societies, he explains, traditionally have relied on this color to heighten the purity, beauty, prestige, or majesty of an object, from pearls to the trappings of popes and princes. Yet just as it heightens what is true, or good, or beautiful, when coupled with malignant objects, so, too, can whiteness "heighten that terror to the furthest bounds" (Melville, *Moby-Dick* 160). Ishmael ends his ekphrasis with an arresting assessment of Nature, whose earthly hues paint the visible world "like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but the charnel-house within" (165). Just as whiteness enhances an object's vileness, hypocrisy heightens other vices with multiform insincerities and betrayals. The hypocrite is never a hypocrite, but an avaricious thief, a lusty knight, a clever glutton, a proud beggar, an envious oath-breaker. But the meta-vice's whiteness cuts both ways in a world so bad men must be wise as serpents, innocent as doves to endure.[2] Perhaps hypocrisy even stands alone as the only vice that enlists the aid of "conditional virtues," that is, positive qualities that can either enhance the goodness or badness of a given agent (Piazza et al, "When a virtue is not" 529). Necessarily, the hypocrites assemble the traits of trustworthiness, courageousness, self-control, diligence, and perseverance, among others, to pull off their plots.

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[1] Melville, *Moby-Dick* 165.

[2] Matthew 10:16.

So it's no coincidence that several of the above-listed French and Old English terms share a peculiar polysemy: *enginous*, *queinte*, *wily*, *artificial*, *crafty*, and *list* and *searo*, respectively, are contranyms that encompass both the positive and sinister significances of skill, cleverness, art, cunning, guile, and power.[1] Still other terms, like *trufler,* can connote jester, entertainer, or storyteller. In Chaucer's age, poets would keep up an Old English stress on hypocrisy's negative capabilities. William Langland takes aim at the clerkly elite when he reminds the church's learned leaders to prove "[t]rewe of youre tonge and of youre tail boþ" (*PP* B.XV.105)—prove true to your speech and your pledge/appearance/privates.[2] It should come as no surprise that he abruptly invokes Hypocrisy, of all vices, at the close of his dream vision, when all seems finally to end well: its penetration into the gate of Holy Church and disabling of Contrition bespeak its power to corrupt at the highest levels of institutional authority, where the good life is most ardently sought:

> For [in Latyn ypocrisie] is likned to a dongehill
> That were bisnewed wiþ snow, and snakes wiþinne,
> Or to a wal þat were whitlymed and were foul wiþinne.
> Right so manye preestes, prechours and prelates —
> Ye [b]en enblaunched wiþ *bele paroles* and wiþ cloþes,
> Ac youre werkes and wordes þervnder aren ful w[o]lueliche. (*PP* B XV.111-16)

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[1] Thus the falsest of beasts, the fox, famous for his cleverness and wit, often gained the sympathy of audiences as a representative of "those in society who lived by their intellect, frequently the clergy or courtly counsellors" (Salisbury, *Beast Within* 131).

[2] For puns of "tail," compare *MED* s.v. taille (n.) 3. (e), 1. (c); tail (n.) 1b. (c); tale (n.).

Like hypocrisy's many faces, Langland's likening yields an excess of metaphors stacked one atop the other: a dung-heap coated in snow, the heap housing snakes; a whitewashed wall, foul within; pretty words, and pretty clothes hiding something wolfish underneath. Like no other vice, hypocrisy can prove all the more lethal for its demands on its agent to possess ample intellect, skill, imagination, and sociability. Satan's initial success in the garden, repeated ad nauseum by society's best and brightest, should give us pause as it did the *Genesis* poet, who first asked: How would God endure that so many of His thanes should be beguiled, "forlædd," by the lies, "lygenum," that came from Satan's teachings (598a)?[1] Asked differently, how could Satan (or Faus-Semblant, or Chaucer's Pardoner), a being so *bad*, be so *good* at what he does, and do it all?

The following two chapters tackle these and related questions. Set in fourteenth-century London, they leave hypocrisy's first home of pastoral literature and step into Chaucer's hectic secular court, where the vice enjoyed more pointed poetic applications for the developments of character and plot. Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy, as I call it, moreover displays a self-consciousness about the hypocritical worlds its author imagines and inhabits: chaotic, corrupt, and radically contingent. In the process of crafting memorable characters, the poet also imposes upon audiences hard moral questions. The chapters make clear that hypocrisy played an integral part in Chaucer's poetry; his contributions to our understanding of the vice in the later Middle Ages are enormous, yet Chaucer adds nothing to the vice's poetic expression on lexical grounds. This chapter, I trust, demonstrates how alive the concept of hypocrisy was in English prior to the poet's age.[2] Rather, the poet's contributions are philosophical, stylistic, and metalinguistic—his hypocritical poetic constitutes a grammar of good and evil for his culture. And far from a catalogue of the appetites and capers of devils and friars, Chaucer constructs narrative environments full of free agents whose hypocrisies emerge by virtue of their everyday interactions.

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[1] See *Genesis* 595b-98.

[2] For a more thorough treatment of Chaucer's lexical unoriginality as a poet, see Cannon, *Making of Chaucer's English*, "Chapter 3: The development of Chaucer's English" 91-135.

CHAPTER TWO: CHOOSING VICE: CHAUCER'S POETICS OF HYPOCRISY IN CONTEXT AND VERSE

fortis Fortuna adiuvat. —Terence, *Phormio* (ca.160BCE)[1]

By the fruyt of hem shul ye knowen hem. —Chaucer, The Parson's Tale[2]

The previous chapter made the case for the existence of a predominantly diabolical hypocrite who belonged to Old and Middle English biblical and homiletic literature. Though no inventor of the literary hypocrite, Geoffrey Chaucer breathes life into the namesake sin by presenting it as an ordinary, everyday vice, and relies on its potentials of artifice to pose ethical challenges that speak to his age, and to develop memorable characters. The first half of this chapter takes up traditional notions of hypocrisy, the nature of evil, and the nature of Fortune as understood by Chaucer and found in his own works, namely his Parson's Tale and *Boece*. These conceptions will serve as background for the poetry analyzed in the chapter's latter half: selections from Chaucer's Ricardian-era "moral" lyrics and his *Troilus and Criseyde*.[3] Visible in these works is a break from received understandings of human hypocrisy as a sin reached from error: the poems at times hail the opportunism Chaucer elsewhere critiques.[4] Where the poet falls on the arts of deception and dissimulation is anyone's guess, but his poetry fares all the better for his "poetics of hypocrisy," an engine the poet relies on time and again for infusing his characters with problematic agencies—namely a will to deceive; the consequences of their decisions detailed in the narratives challenge audiences with probing questions on the essential natures of humanity and morality. Based on the extant literature, Chaucer is the first—and counts among the most fruitful—Middle English poets to develop and systematically implement such a poetics that aesthetically values a character's moral and professional inconsistencies, blind spots, and deviations for their enablement of poetic discovery and variation.

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[1] Line 203. Fortune favors the daring.

[2] *CT* X.116.

[3] For the dating of these works, see *Riverside Chaucer*, Explanatory and Textual Notes.

[4] The Friar, Pardoner, and Canon's Yeoman's Tales, for instance, reject professional opportunism, greed, and false brotherhood.

I borrow Esther Quinn's definition of *poetics* to encompass not only the poetry that Chaucer produces that treats of hypocrisy, but also the conditions and motives that go into the making of such poetry.[1] Thus analogously, this poetics reflects to a degree the social realities of 1380s London, when King Richard II's recurring showdowns with Parliament would lead to a deterioration in trust between both parties, with the result of exceptional episodes of political rebellion, deposition, and assassination. The suddenness with which a faction can leverage written laws and unspoken rules against an ally on the wrong side would have dissuaded a sensible courtier like Chaucer from wholeheartedly committing to Ricardian or Lancastrian camps; as a diplomat and court poet, he could neither rely on nor resist the ambit of his king, himself subject to abrupt reversals of fortune. Actually, Chaucer couldn't commit officially to Richard's cause since his relation to the king was "neither bound by oath nor secured by land tenure; it was a relation based on mutual interest and thus open to constant reevaluation on both sides" (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 36). The poet's 1386 resignation from his post as controller of wool and petty customs, while not prompted by parliamentary action, demonstrates such a reevaluation, "a private decision to scale down his visibility as a member of the royal faction" (37).[2] This relationship encapsulates Chaucer's court associations, marked by unusual upheaval and change. In the light of the late fourteenth-century's strained economic conditions, permanent alliances based on sworn vassalage and a code of traditional values such as mutual trust "were rapidly being replaced by more temporary and more opportunistic forms of alliance" (90-91).[1] Exposed as he was to an array of social patterns and informed by London's insecure climate, Chaucer—himself a cautious writer, an indirect, cloaked poet—writes hypocrisy into his poetry to explore timely moral and philosophical questions. As a necessary vice or even virtue, hypocrisy likewise enriches his characters and the circles they negotiate.

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[1] See Quinn, *Poetics of Disguise* 2.
[2] See Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 38-41. Chaucer's possibly authentic address to Henry IV in the "Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse" demonstrates his shift in allegiance for personal survival.

It's easy to see how hypocrisy should thrive in an environment of insecure, overlapping circles. By the Parson's simple estimate, "Ypocrite is he that hideth to shewe hym swich as he is and sheweth hym swich as he noght is" (*CT* X.394), the hypocrite exists only within a relational system. More to the point, hypocrisy *is* a relational system, its expression adapting to the social process taking place, as when other vices factor into a given character interaction. Little wonder, then, that the literatures of every time and tradition—literally every satire and social commentary on the modern, urban state of affairs, from Juvenal to Ibn Khaldūn, to La Rochefoucauld, to Swift, to Stephen Colbert—mock faulty ideas in general and hypocrisy in particular.[2] Aesthetically, the nature of these elaborations is telling, for the hypocrites despite their corruptions always appear colorful and comical before audiences; their creative wiles inspire as much suspense and textual pleasure as opprobrium. Typically, poetic hypocrites prevail in unstable and no-less fascinating literary environments. To exist, they need a public to dupe and to attest to their performances even if that public doesn't know it to be a performance. They necessarily negotiate private and public spaces since they show themselves one way before others, persuading them to their cause while concealing and confessing their intentions at different times and to different people. And like any public figure, hypocrites offer themselves to their communities as examples to be emulated.

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[1] These new forms of alliance included "vassalage for cash payment... short-term retention; household service; liveries of cloth, hats, hoods, collars, signs, or badges" (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 108). For further commentary on new forms of professional association in late fourteenth century England, and the anxieties felt in their wake by crown and parliament alike, see Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow*, Chapter Three 57-74.

[2] For the tradition of satirizing faulty ideas in Chaucer via Boethius, see Payne, *Menippean Satire*.

The hypocritical ethos affords its agents many everyday freedoms not available to the conscientious, such as the freedom to lie, cheat, steal, trick, indulge—options that had commanded the attentions of fourteenth-century English philosophers, chiefly the notorious and influential William of Ockham (d.1347), whose treatises drew critical conversations at university that would span decades.[1] Ockham posited that the human will not only dominates man's intellect and other mental faculties but enables him to *not* will the highest good (happiness).[2] Though theologians have agreed with the Aristotelian idea that vices are acquired through willful habit just like the virtues,[3] most conceive of sins as enslaving snares chosen by mistake. Along with Ockham, who defended man's freedom as the means for earning God's salvation,[4] Thomas Buckingham (d.1349), Robert Holcot (d.1349), and Adam Wodeham (d.1358) each sought to uphold man's moral freedom in order to establish God's perfect agency; Buckingham's position that "God's foreknowledge is... contingent or fluid" and "in some way follows man's decisions" doesn't veer far from the others' (De La Torre, *Thomas Buckingham* 108).[5] The liability in all these positions is that man can freely and knowingly desire and choose a course that goes against his best interests. Chaucer adds to this suggestive equation by writing characters who both enjoy and benefit from the sins they perpetrate with eyes wide open. Calkas, Pandarus, and Diomede are just three agents in Chaucer's ensemble who force readers first to question the goodness of Nature, which typifies man's instincts and conducts his affairs,[1] then to question good and evil as moral categories.

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[1] As William Courtenay shows in his study of England's fourteenth century academic scene, Ockham's philosophy entered many discussions at Oxford. See *Schools and Scholars*, Chapter Nine, "*Theologica Anglicana*" 250-306. For the spread of Ockhamist thought on the Continent via Ockham's student Adam Wodeham, see Courtenay, *Adam Wodeham*, "Chapter Three: The *Lecturae* of Adam in Later Medieval Thought" 113-59.

[2] See Delany, "Undoing Substantial Connection" 50.

[3] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II.

[4] According to Ockham, "[n]o one is saved or damned except by his own free acts" (De La Torre, *Thomas Buckingham* 87-88; see 81-91). "Ockham declares that no act can be morally virtuous unless it is done with knowledge and freedom" (Adams, "Ockham" 254); "God actually commands rational creatures to follow the dictates of right reason and in fact rewards adherence to right reason and sacramental participation with eternal life. The two norms could break apart but they do not and will not!" (266). See Pelletier, *Ockham on Metaphysics*.

[5] See De La Torre, *Thomas Buckingham* 109-11, 129-30; see Slotemaker and Witt, *Robert Holcot*.

Enter Fortune, that skittish force who stands against all reason, who challenges God's chain of love as a common conception of the world order, and who pervades fourteenth-century court literature.[2] Aristotle employs *fortuna*'s Greek analog τύχη to refer to luck or chance. In Book B.4-6 of his *Physics*—a foundational source for medieval thinkers—the Philosopher defines *fortuna* as an accidental cause that is the product of human choice; in other words, fortune amounts to the future contingency created in the wake of human action.[3] As a vernacular poet, Chaucer played out the philosophy of contingency through created characters and narratives.[4] Man-made contingency proved amenable to the poet's ambitious, risk-seeking characters. Figures like Pandarus, the Pardoner, or his rioters don't simply reflect the contingency of language through their speeches on uncertain events,[5] but embody Fortune variable identity by their hypocrisy—I mean their steady dissemblance, their radical *lack* of a fixed identity.[1]

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[1] White argues for Gower and Chaucer's skepticism of the goodness of nature: rather than serve as God's deputy on earth and guide to men, Nature "delivers them to an irrationalism which militates forcefully against their best interests as rational moral agents" *Nature, Sex, Goodness* 254; for White, love encapsulates this irrationality in Chaucer's poetry. See his Chapters Six and Seven, 174-255.

[2] See Taylor, *Chaucer's Chain of Love,* "Chapter One: Chaucer's Chain of Love in the European Tradition" 18-39. Fortune appears regularly in court literature as a powerful destabilizing force or bringer of mixed goods. See for instance Petrarch's massive late opus, *De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae* ("*On the Remedies of Fortune (Good and Bad)*"), a section of which went into the mid-fourteenth century English work, *A Dialogue Between Reason and Adversity*. See also the *Roman de la Rose*, as well as Wimsatt and Kibler's 1988 edition to Machaut's monumental *Remede de Fortune*.

[3] See Heller-Roazen, *Fortune's Faces* 79-85. At the level of language, Aristotle classifies certain statements about the future as neither true nor false but contingent. This proposition, cited in his *De Interpretatione*, reached the Latin Middle Ages via Boethius and later William of Moerbeke, which allowed medieval philosophers and theologians to ponder the nature and implications of contingency in statements. See 13-26. Boethius defines contingency as possibility: "that which happens by chance, or comes from free choice and one's own will, or which, by virtue of the readiness of nature, can be said to be in either of its parts, that is, as happening and not happening" (20).

[4] See Heller-Roazen, *Fortune's Faces* 26-28.

[5] The Pardoner's line "Paraventure ther may fallen oon or two / Doun of his hors and breke his nekke atwo" bracingly bespeaks contingency in language (*CT* VI.935-36).

The remainder of this and the following chapter are meant to contribute to current discussions on Chaucer and ethics. By Chaucer's age, the academic curriculum would expand on Aristotle's canon in innovative ways, such that the university would house a variety of philosophical schools that included the teachings of Aristotele, Plato, philosophically-inflected Christian theology, and their many experimental offshoots.[2] Chaucerians continue to tease out the author's philosophical poetry. Jessica Rosenfeld's *Ethics and Enjoyment in Late Medieval Poetry* (2011) constitutes one imporant work among many that see his poetry and age through the lenses of Aristotle and the fourteenth century philosophical learning, roads well paved by Sheila Delany, Mary Carruthers, Ann Astell, Mark Miller, and Kathryn Lynch. Her volume expands on the poet's commitments to the contemplation of happiness, friendship, and goodness in his oeuvre, while Kellie Robertson's *Nature Speaks* (2017) investigates Chaucer's depictions of human agency in light of Aristotle's natural philosophy. My readings similarly delineate Chaucer's interests in human nature and practical ethics, which permeate the author's rhetoric. Still, Chaucer wears his philosophy lightly and mostly refrains from overtly referring to philosophers by name; in other words, he isn't concerned with rehearsing or cataloging positions. For this reason, I regard Chaucer as a philosopher in his own right who poses original questions on normative and practical ethics through the medium of poetry. Paradoxically, because Chaucer *does* philosophy more than he references its practitioners, some scholars have found that "Chaucer's own interest in philosophy (e.g., ethics or moral philosophy) was secondary to his more fervent fascination with contemporary science and speculative natural philosophy" (Gabrovsky, *Alchemist* 18). I have no doubt that the material sciences fascinated Chaucer intensely, but choose to focus on the poet's ethical engagements for the simple fact that hypocrisy occupies ethical and philosophical domains, for if one face of hypocrisy epitomizes poetic style, invention, and imagination, another it invites contemplation into human nature, choice, and goodness.

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[1] Professional actors commonly undergo an emptying out of a fixed identity when taking on a role. Last year, for instance, Jim Carrey turned heads with his declaration that he has no sole, fixed identity. See Garrido, "Jim Carrey doesn't exist anymore"; Walsh, "Jim Carrey doesn't exist."

[2] See Pansau, "Latin Aristotle" 667-70.

HYPOCRISY DEFINED: THE PARSON'S TRADITION

Preaching "Cristes gospel trewely" (*CT* I.481), Chaucer's Parson prefaces his discourse on penitence with the above proverb from Matthew 7:20. The parish priest likens the spiritual condition to a tree, whose root is contrition: for those willing to quit sin and turn to God, this root reaches the heart, the seat of sincerity, where it is nourished to bring forth fruits of satisfaction: public works that validate spoken and unspoken words.[1] Living this simile, this Parson, a byword for sincerity, serves as a role model for an entire body of parishioners, whom "devoutly wolde he teche" by the examples of graciousness, clemency, generosity, patience, and humility (I.482).[2] This character sketch, found in the General Prologue, includes a brief but pointed catalogue of what the man is *not*, namely a priest for hire who sells his services to patrons or other congregations at the expense of his own. This parson isn't scornful, domineering, or self-important. Nor does he tell others how to act without obeying his own orders.[3] The devotion he shows his community approaches self-sacrifice. Thus he chooses to teach and visit parishioners on foot, however great the distance, and chooses not to leave his flock for more lucrative or worthwhile engagements elsewhere.[1] The Parson not only holds back against excommunicating tax evaders, but spends his earnings on his parishioners instead of himself.[2] He brings together his community by offering it his utmost energies and resources. In essence, he's no hypocrite.

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[1] See *CT* X.110-15.

[2] See *CT* I.483-97. Presumably, these qualities are reflected outwardly on the Parson's person: "While we cannot know what the Parson wears as a traveling costume en route to Canterbury, we can nevertheless be certain that he is not clothed in *False Vestments* because Chaucer emphasizes, with a statement and restatement, the Parson's spiritual authenticity.... If Chaucer's Parson dramatizes the medieval concept that each soul is clothed according to and in its spiritual health, *clannes*, or, conversely, in filthiness, depending on the soul's 'habits', then we must assume that his garments are not 'bismotered'...." (Hodges, *Chaucer and Clothing* 264).

[3] See *CT*.I.507-28.

Chaucer's Parson contrasts completely with the textbook hypocrite he defines in his Tale. A product of penitential manuals, devotional writings, and the Vulgate Bible with its patristic commentary, it offers mainline definitions of the vices as are found in contemporary treatises.[3] The Parson's is the sole, explicit definition of the vice we have in Chaucer's corpus; otherwise, *ypocrisie* and its forms are seldom employed.[4] A spare definition, it overlooks the vice's theatrical, Greek heritage, yet its versatility as a character trait comes through nonetheless. The Parson classes hypocrisy as one of several "twigges" of Pride (390), a sort of sin of sins, described by Morton Bloomfield as "the sin of exaggerated individualism" (*Seven Deadly Sins* 75).[5] This helps explain why the Parson must invoke an active agent: "Ypocrite is he that hideth to shewe hym swich as he is and sheweth hym swich as he noght is" (*CT* X.394). This simple definition conveys the hypocrite's dramatic designs: he conceals himself—his secrets, intentions, schemes, sins, etc.—to show himself as he is, and shows himself as he is not. The sentence's antithetical structure fractures the identity of the hypocrite, who plays multiple roles at once (he is and he is not as he shows himself; he is not as he is; he pretends to be other than he is to be his true self (false), and never rests on a single personality, despite giving others the impression that the sum of his person is as outwardly appears. Behind the hypocrite's words and deeds, then, is a simultaneity of thoughts, intentions, and meanings, the full measure of which can be known (within the narrative) only to that character. This brief but dense definition invites readers to imagine the hypocrites' various associations. Insofar as they make a community, hypocrites form a band of exaggerated individuals, a brotherhood of oath-breakers and double agents who threaten, like devils, to contaminate the dominant Christian body they inhabit.[1]

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[1] *CT* I.482, 490-95, 507-14. As with the other pilgrims' portraits, Jill Mann senses a habituality in the Parson's visits and daily routine in general, "day in, day out, in varying conditions" (*Estates Satire*, 60).

[2] *CT* I.486-89.

[3] For the many sources from which Chaucer assembled this tale, see *S&A I* 529-41. Also see Newhauser, "The Parson's Tale and Its Generic Affiliations" 46-49.

[4] Other than Fragments A and C of *The Romaunt of the Rose* and *The Canterbury Tales*, *ypocrisye* and its forms (e.g. *ypocrite*) don't appear in Chaucer's works. (It is used once in *RomA*, six times in *RomC*, twice in the Squire's Tale, once in the Pardoner's Tale, and four times in the Parson's Tale.)

[5] Commonly identified in medieval hamartiology as the root of all sins, Pride encapsulates the ambition, rebellion, and self-interestedness inherent in every vice.

The hypocritical ethos comprises a set of aesthetic choices antithetical to the Parson's. An antithalian, the Parson voices the age-old, poet-as-liar trope; the parish priest practically boasts of a nonexistent poetic potential. Asked to bring out "a fable" that will draw the tale-telling contest to a close (X.29), he resists on account of the genre's fictitious elements: deviating from Pauline "soothfasteness" (33), fables offer little more than empty amusement—what's written off as "draf" (35).[2] The Parson deems poetry guilty by its association with feigning, a craft he can't take up out of a lack of interest and ability: "I am a Southren man: / I kan nat geeste 'rum, ram, ruf,' by lettre, / Ne, God woot, rym holde I but litel bettre.... I wol nat glose" (42-45). The parish priest gladly admits his convenient inability to set his story to rhyme or alliteration since he associates these techniques with feigning already, hence his assurance "I wol nat glose," I will not falsify, I will not embellish. Insofar as he refuses to share a tale, the Parson does not conclude so much as abruptly break up the tale-telling party. Based on the logic of his renunciation of poetry and fiction as two features of an artificial art, it follows that the less sincere the narrator or narrative, the more poetic the product.[1]

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[1] Then as now, those posing as an open threat to their community are cut off from it. See Westerhof, "Amputating the Traitor"; Kramer, "Understanding Contagion."

[2] See *CT* X.31-36.

Defenders of poetry will rush to grant from this the possibility that not all lies are immoral, that they can entertain and instruct, but the Parson sees the matter quite differently. From his view, the smalltime fakers who feign confession deny themselves the penitential promise, thereby harming themselves and their circles. Barring discerning believers and carelessly obvious imposters, a person might not know a hypocrite by his fruit or know him only after a deception—as Milton would put it, neither "Man nor Angel can discern / Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks / Invisible, except to God alone" (*PL* III.682-84). In theory, the Parson has the hypocrite's defining features down pat, yet he might not pick out from his flock a scrupulous dissembler if he turned to him in confession. Even if he could, what could he do about it? So much of a nuisance for the Church were openly insincere confessions that the penitential process often devolved into an empty formality that undermined confession's basis.[2] Unsurprisingly, the Parson draws his discourse on confession to a close with anxious advice:

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[1] The Parson may well reflect the historical role of the parish priest. See Bennett, *English Manor* 335. Still, his anti-entertainment stance may have rendered him unpopular among his fellow pilgrims. The Man of Law's Epilogue* casts the Parson as an all-around burden to the company. In a ridiculous reversal, the Parson is rebuked by Harry Bailly for rebuking him for swearing; the Host recommends that this "Lollere" share a tale, but before he could respond to the request, the Parson is anticipated by the Shipman who cries "Heer schal he nat preche; / He schal no gospel glosen here ne teche" (*CT* II.1179-80). The Shipman's subsequent assertion that the Canterbury pilgrims all believe in God, and that the Parson would only "sowen som difficulte, / Or springen cokkel in our clene corn" (1182-83) suggests that the authority of the parish priest was not always welcome. Despite his best intentions or moral footing, then, the Parson remains open to censure from or rejection by his community. For a non-idealistic, historically-minded reading of the Parson's portrait along Wycliffite lines see Thompson, *English Clergy* 101-07.
*The Man of Law's Epilogue appears in 35 MSS but is omitted from 22 others, "including the Hengwrt, the Ellesmere, and all those with the 'Ellesmere' arrangement" (Eberle, "Explanatory Notes" 862).

[2] The fourteenth-century penitential priest under John XXII, Bishop Pelayo, found no sin more grievous to God than "in fictis et hypocritalibus confessionibus" ("in fictitious and hypocritical confessions"); impenitents, he complained, all too often cite only venial sins, in broad terms at that, with the least intention of quitting them: "Quod dicunt una die dicunt et altera, acsi in omni die aequaliter offendant. Vix unquam habent intentionem cessandi nec vitam mutandi" ("What they say one day, they say another, as though they similarly stumble every day. They hardly ever have the intention of quitting or changing their lifestyle"; Lea, *Auricular Confession II* 416, n.1). Unsympathetic to the penitential system, Lea has the confessors playing along in the game of confession, going through the motions for personal gain or out of mere habit. See 414-15, *passim*. Compare Wycliffe, who declares that priests absolving "feigners" are committing a sin. *Apology* 66.

> Thou shalt nat... peynte thy confessioun by faire subtile wordes, to covere the moore thy synne; for thanne bigilestow thyself, and nat the preest. Thow most tellen it platly.... Thow shalt eek shryve thee to a preest that is discreet to conseille thee; and eek thou shalt nat shryve thee for veyne glorie, ne for ypocrisye, ne for no cause but oonly for the doute of Jhesu Crist and the heele of thy soule. (*CT* X.1022-23)

In the short run, the sinner might only beguile himself, for a disingenuous confession comes to naught.[1] In the long run, however, he rebels against God, Jesus, and the Church, and in so doing, according to the Parson, he exposes himself to the Devil's persuasion. Like other Canterbury pilgrims, the Parson articulates falling for the Devil's tricks in so many analogies of defection. The theme of rebellion against a received, natural order recurs throughout his treatise, with sin defined as a basic disorder in the divine hierarchy of reason:

> [W]han man synneth, al this ordre or ordinaunce is turned up-so-doun./ And therfore, thanne, for as much as the resoun of man ne wol nat be subget ne obeisant to God, that is his lord by right, therfore leseth it the lordshipe that it sholde have over sensualitee, and eek over the body of man. (263-64)

A person sins when he loves creation in a way that detracts from the proper devotion to his Creator.[2] Sinners not only rebel against their Lord, emancipating themselves from His easy service, but enslave themselves to sin and to the Devil, taking on the latter's likeness as he enters his company in turn, at the expense of "the compaignye and communyoun of hooly chirche" (312).[3] Compared to rebellious lords whose households oppress the people, sinners not only betray God when they “sellen... hir lordshipe to the devel of helle” (439), but oppress all members of the Christian body, be they workers employed alongside or beneath them or neighbors living near them: whether out of Envy, Anger, Avarice, or Lechery, it is the community members who experience first-hand the sinner’s separation from and antagonism toward them.[1] Just as he gives up on his community and courts the favor of a different lord, the sinner seeks new company, even one within the larger social structure. Both the sincere and insincere thus inhabit the same social environments.

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[1] Being inherently insincere, hypocrites are ineligible for confession, and, spiritually speaking, stand among the worst of men, for they neither repent whether or not they pretend to, nor do they count among the righteous who need not do so. See *CT* X.700, 1024; Luke 15:3-7.

[2] *CT* X.358-59.

[3] For enslavement to the Devil, see *CT* X.276, 338, 351. For the desirable servitude to the Lord, an epithet the Parson assigns often to Jesus Christ, see 559-60, 760, 773-74. For man taking on the likeness of the Devil, see 545.

The hypocrisy that thrives in Chaucer’s poetry stems from such antagonistic communities within greater London, and the city’s chaotic scene might account for Chaucer’s pronounced turns to moral and political philosophy and social commentary.[2] London’s bleak professional realities must have heightened Chaucer’s appreciation for the existential challenges posed in Boethius’ *De consolatione*, which eschews the cynical questions it raises, namely why just men suffer at the thriving hands of unjust careerists. Chaucer plays with this and like questions beyond his *Boece* to better enterain the side of such careerists, whose acts are lent practical logic within their corrupt environments. Because such environments have always been sought as reasons and justifications for unethical or deviant behavior, I turn to them in the next two sections. Their inhabitants shouldn’t be ignored, however. Is it not they who capitalize on such worlds, if not create and legislate them?

According to the Parson, then, man is tricked into sinning: misled into his enslavement, the Devil literally “makes him do it.” Hence the Parson’s many lists of remedies for victims intending to free themselves of a sin’s shackles.

[1] See for instance the descriptions under the above-listed headings in the Parson’s Tale.

[2] For the influences and poetic registers of London in Chaucer’s poetry, see Butterfield (Ed.), *Chaucer and the City*.

THE COMPULSION OF PHILOSOPHY: BOETHIUS ON VICE

So determined is the Parson to embody a long-assumed idea about truth and goodness—namely that the two go hand in glove, that truth itself must altogether entail consistency—that when the Host commands him to bring out a fable for the group, the parish priest asks assertively, "Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest, / Whan I may sowen whete, *if that me lest*?" (*CT* X.35-36, my emphasis). The Parson is not only able to share wheat with his fellow pilgrims rather than chaff, but willingly chooses to do so. If he could choose according to a set of motives and desires, it follows that others can make different decisions according to a different "order" altogether. All over his *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer juxtaposes characters possessing—and narrative commentaries endorsing—such *gentil* traits as magnanimity, probity, and compassion, with the blameworthy, ignoble traits of the *churl*: self-interestedness, dishonesty, immoderation, unkindness, ungodliness, and lack of refinement.[1] The Parson's conservative account of hypocrisy fits perfectly with these dishonorable, anti-social traits. Under this rubric, the noble of heart not only love the virtues and hate the vices, but actively avoid the latter "in word, in werk, and contenaunce" (*CT* X.465); the *fre*, the *curteis*, the *clene*, the *gentil*—he proves "[t]rewe of his word" (*Gent* 9).

Chaucer gives a canonical view of the gentle and the wicked in his translation of Boethius' famous work. Chaucer's *Boece* opens to the marvels of a condemned senator at his enemies' fraudulent but successful accusations; facing execution, he complains to Philosophy, his interlocutor, that these "schrewed" (wicked) folk should be so bold and powerful as to "apparailen felonyes ayens vertu" or contrive crimes against virtue (*Bo* I.pr4.187-88). More incredible is the fact that these men should use their government offices to oppress the innocent and hoard the state treasury, all in the name of justice and for the common good.[1] The uncomprehending prisoner is baffled that an all-ethical Ruler would allow for such successful corruptions.[2] As Mark Miller points out in his close reading of the work, Philosophy's arguments against Boece's reality—and reality at large—don't refute the cold fact that his colleagues really have successfully conspired to secure his unjust execution. For her part, Philosophy refuses to meet her student halfway on his complaints: most of their "dialogue" comprises the promulgation of her outlook without granting Boece's views a fair hearing, even though his positions are in fact tenable according to the sum of his experiences. Philosophy overwhelms Boece with sweeping claims, reminding the prisoner that his family remains alive and well while tactfully omitting the reality that nothing prevents their fortunes from soon reversing.[3]

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[1] See *MED* s.v. chĕ̄rl (n.), 1.a-d, 2.

Philosophy intends to convince her student that wicked men are, contrary to everything he has known, in actuality powerless, miserable, and even pitiable. Her position accords with traditional understandings of the nature of the vices: wicked men may appear successful, but really punish themselves through their vicious practices. Although they appear to live, their bad habits degrade them, until they are no different than slavish beasts or lifeless corpses.[4] Boece grants tersely that, in theory, virtuous men will always possess strength and enjoy the fruits of their goodness, while the wicked, out of weakness, will only desire what will harm them, yet sitting on death row, it must take all his efforts to forget that his enemies are enjoying the powers they now possess, or to believe that bliss *always* comes the good folks' way.[1] His instructor's long-winded explanations that one can differentiate good from evil actions due to their contrary qualities, and that all of mankind, without exception, "hasteth to comen to blisfulnesse"; striving "to comen to good" those who miss their mark take up vices by mistake (IV.pr2.48-51, 63-64; 171-74)—these Boece languidly accepts.[2] Theologians likewise conceive of the vices as errors in judgment on the part of the sinner, beginning with Augustine, according to whom everyone naturally desires happiness, achievable through the love of God alone; sinners therefore err in their pursuits of anything other than God.[3] Despite this view, Augustine still conceives of sin as a willful act that has its pleasures. In his reflection on the pears he stole as an adolescent, the bishop sickens at the fact that his motive to sin was nothing other than the pleasure in "the very act of thieving" (*Confessions* II.9). Virtue and vice don't quite complement each other in Augustine's scheme; clearly a world's difference exists between deliberately planning your colleague's demise out of pleasure and personal gain versus doing so out of involuntary, pitiable ignorance.

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[1] Meanwhile, Boece, who really does promote the common good, has been charged with obstruction of justice for protecting falsely accused government officials and opposing state policies that impoverished the people. See *Bo* I.pr4.44-162.

[2] See *Bo* IV.pr1.17-21.

[3] *Bo* II.pr4.25-57.

[4] *Bo* IV.pr3.93-126; pr2.192-98. Degraded by the venomous vices that "percen and thurw-passen the corage withinne" without physically killing them (IV.m3.42-48), these undead men are so blinded that they cannot see the wickedness of their actions, and since they harm only themselves, these men, languishing from vices like a diseased body, deserve not one's contempt but pity. *Bo* IV.pr4.182-92; 290-300.

Philosophy cites the misattribution of what gives Boece happiness to the cause of his "false" losses and sorrows, inflicted by Fortuna, whose "aventures" he believes have caused his downfall. She reasons that since the things of this world are external to us, and may be taken from us as abruptly as they were given, they have no real value; instead, the prisoner must value what may never be taken from him (happiness), and mustn't fear what cannot harm him.[4] The problem, of course, is that the blows of fortune do hurt, even if they shouldn't—even if the prisoner should "syngen byfor the theef" who robs him, as Philosophy insists (II.pr5.181).[1] For all her consolation, Philosophy cannot wish away the force of fortune; Boece's counselor compels him not to wage war against the unvanquished goddess, yet the connection between the blows of fortune and the strategies of hypocritical men should stare the prisoner and mentor in the face. Though once regarded as a formidable entity, Fortune functions in medieval literature as a poetic trope meant to personify life's unexpected turns. The figure shares the characterizations of Chaucer's literary hypocrite, who like the two-faced traitor enjoys the games he plays, even if they're at another's expense.[2] Both create events and control circumstances to manipulate reality. Fortune is thought of as fickle, arbitrary, and irrational, while the hypocrite can be considered deliberate and crafty, but both share the same basic outlook, with the former breeding an ideology conducive to the latter, one that thrives on the tweaking or breaking of accepted norms.[3]

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[1] See *Bo* IV.pr1.50-56.

[2] See *Bo* IV.pr2.12-17. Boece seconds Philosophy's claims with concise one-liners—"So semeth it," "So is it," "I ne doute it nat," "That is soth" (*Bo* IV.pr2.71, 75, 104, 226)—with no audible protest.

[3] See Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* Liber Primus; *De Beata Vita* III.17-22.

[4] We get no ready response from Boece to these claims: Philosophy answers for him: "Gabbe I of this? Thow wolt sey 'nay'" (*Bo* II.pr5.170-71). For happiness being the highest good, immune from fortune's harm, see pr4.

Were it not for the cynical view (or frank, or adventurous, depending on your outlook) that the universe isn't ordered, Fortuna wouldn't have survived antiquity. Thus if fortune factors little into Philosophy's conception of reality, it still might mean something to those who stand to gain from such a worldview, whom Philosophy seeks to erase from existence. To this idea, Boece's stretches of silence and repetitive nods are finally broken—a signal of his inability to process or accept his teacher's logic. When she states flatly that evil is "nothing" (*Bo* III pr12.151), he first responds with incredulity: "Scornestow me... or elles, pleyestow or disseyvistow me, that hast so woven me with thi resouns the hous of Didalus, so entrelaced that it is unable to ben unlaced?" (154-57).[1] From God's vantage point, "purveaunce," evil is nothing, and even brings good into the world.[2] But humans don't operate from God's unchanging perspective and couldn't if they tried. Little wonder, then, that Philosophy leaves Boece with parting advice pertaining to *this* world: honor the virtues, eschew the vices, and don't "dissimulen" (V.pr6.307). Despite her theories for vice from error or enslavement to sin, free will wins the day, holding for sinners and saints alike. Boece must console himself not by rejecting the unreality of his "destyne"; rather he must take seriously the idea that men "forleten the good *wilfully*" or that, even more contrary to Philosophy's teachings, "turnen hem *wilfully* to vices" (IV.pr2.181-82, my emphasis). The bad guys get away, in the end. And in the end, Boece sits in his cell to contemplate this strange fiction, a world of unfair, free players.

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[1] Philosophy does differentiate between "debonaire" fortune, which deceives man, and "contrary" fortune, which reveals to him her true, fickle nature. See *Bo* II.pr8. This identification, however, has no effect on fortune's existence, or that of her momentary beneficiaries.

[2] See Patch, *Fortuna* 80-81. See Chaucer, *BD* 618-709. The best poetic hypocrite of Chaucer's must be the Pardoner, who treats his profession as a game he plays to win.

[3] "Human beings who perceive the validity of law and order will cherish faith in an ordered universe. Those, on the other hand, who find that order sometimes imposes restraint, and that restraint is sometimes tyranny, will rejoice in the freedom that beckons from uncharted ways, and for them a universe of chance will mean a universe of opportunity" (Patch, *Fortuna*, 5).

In what world does one get away with such "churlish" behavior? Need hypocritical actions always be churlish? These questions are posed in Chaucer's works that address *Boece*'s challenges. In these works, the poet furnishes for his hypocrites a world "turned up-so-doun" (*Sted* 5), one that problematically justifies and nurtures the hypocritical ethos. Paradoxically enough, such an imagination equips Chaucer with the means not only to develop characters of poetic force, but also to probe the same philosophical and ethical questions raised in *Boece* but at a more practical level. Rather than advance philosophical arguments intended to reveal morally real, universal truths, Chaucer remains committed to questions that pertain to everyday ethics in a chaotic world. More interested in entertaining multiple worldviews than he is in presenting a single outlook on life's troubles, the poet is willing to challenge the normative, Boethian views arrived at through reflective reasoning.[1] This challenge—and the ethical-poetic confusions that stem from it—comes to the fore in Chaucer's conventionally themed yet highly ambivalent moral lyrics, composed in Richard II's reign in the closing decades of the fourteenth century.

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[1] Despite following Philosophy's reasoning, the prisoner initially can't accept that evil is nothing since everything he knows indicates otherwise—in the words of Mark Miller, whatever it is, surely evil "is *something*"; at Philosophy's claims that evil men are powerless, what, asks Miller, "could be more evident than that evil men are often quite powerful?" (*Philosophical Chaucer* 127; 128). It will take Philosophy a lengthy, one-sided disclosure of the human and divine double-perspective to rest her case. See *Bo* IV.pr6.41-78, 258-83, pr7.

[2] See *Bo* IV.pr6286-97, 328-43.

These wildly popular, French-styled *formes fixes* chansons invite a poetics of hypocrisy by design.[2] As a court poet, Chaucer would have been exposed to these fixed-form lyrics (ballades, rondeaux, and virelais)—and likely excelled at composing them in French—from the reign of Edward III on.[3] Like the sonnet form, these poems, in vogue among the court nobility, are at once terse and probing, with their brevity punctuated by an emphasis on wordplay and ambivalence. Such lyrics commonly touched on the timeless, universal, and—in Chaucer's case—secular themes that invited philosophical reflection on *this* world, such as love, fortune's turns, or the nature of truth in modern times.[4] If audiences tired of these lyrics' familiar messages, moreover, they had their subtexts to fall back on, for beneath these conventional forms lie the possibility for ironic commentary served in smart poetic style.[5] A lyric about truth, for instance, might very well be a song about falsehood in disguise; likewise, a ballade rehearsing universal truths (say, love) might speak to a specific personal occasion, including the unspoken needs of an audience ("love"). This doubleness and tension between pure and profane love inheres in *fin'amors* and troubadour lyrics.[1]

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[1] Put differently, Chaucer demonstrates "a much more powerful interest than Boethius has in exploring the social and psychological specificities of persons' inhabitation of philosophical problems" (Miller, *Philosophical Chaucer* 150-51). He's more realistic.

[2] "There are quite literally thousands of lyrics preserved in English from the medieval period" (Hirsch, *Medieval Lyric* 3). Taken together, Chaucer's short poems exist in 53 MSS, making them one of Chaucer's most popular works. For the sake of comparison, *CT* exists (in part or whole) in 82 MSS; *Tr*, 16; *Bo*, 9. See Lenaghan, "Textual Notes" 1185; Hanna III, "Textual Notes" 1118; Barney, "Textual Notes" 1161; Lawler, "Textual Notes" 1151. For the development of the fourteenth-century ballade see Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries* 58-76; for the generic features of Chaucer's ballades, specifically his *Lak of Stedfastnesse*, see Cross, "*Trohetsvisan*."

[3] Since they were so occasional, it shouldn't come as a surprise that so few of Chaucer's fixed-form lyrics survive.

[4] The titles Robbins classes in his anthology of Middle English lyrics under the heading "The Wicked Age" rehearse the same themes of Chaucer's moral poems, e.g. "Truth is Unpopular"; "This World Is Variable." See Robbins, *Historical Poems*. Charleton Brown's edited volume *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century* similarly shows that themes such as man's abject state and the falseness of this world were, among others, quite common.

[5] See Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the Poems of "Ch"* 9.

Chaucer's moral lyrics needn't refer, say, to Richard II specifically, as some have argued, to reflect the reality that courtiers, members of parliament, and other high officials followed the fashions of the day to stay abreast of history.[2] Instead of adopting the philosophical discourse of *Boece*, these popular poems introduce a "metapoetic axiom" whereby human institutions—presumably in place of philosophical truths—are scrutinized through "the formal register of poetic language" (Holsinger, "Lyrics and short poems" 198). The poems' ambivalent interplay between form and content allows for a rehearsal of the prisoner's complaints without accepting Philosophy's consolations.

ORDERED CHAOS: CHAUCER'S MORAL LYRICS

Essentially, the basic belief in the goodness of man forms the backbone of Boethian philosophy. Mankind only seeks harmony with a seemingly chaotic but ordered world, ordered by a cosmic chain of love; only in failing to achieve this connection does mankind fall slave to the vices. Freedom is confined to virtue and its pursuit. Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy questions such assumptions. His lyrics advance man's "wilful wrecchednesse" (*Sted* 13) as an indicator of his agency. In parting from the conventional understanding of vice as virtue mis-pursued, these lyrics implicitly entertain—or align with—contemporary philosophical positions that conceive of habitual sin as a chosen lifestyle. Though it affirms human agency, this reading simultaneously expresses the problems it gives rise to; I disagree, then, with optimistic interpretations of

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[1] See Dronke, *Medieval Lyric* 209-10; Zumthor, *Medieval Poetics* 159-60. Compare Giffen, *Profane Love*.

[2] Many scholars have read Chaucer's short poems in light of Richard's "debates" with parliament amidst an increasingly unpredictable, tyrannical regime, but few have established hard evidence to anchor individual short poems in a historic moment. For convincing arguments put forth, see Rickert, "Thou Vache"; Scattergood, "Social and Political Issues"; Scattergood, "Curial Satire"; Cowling, "Chaucer's Complaintes of Mars and Venus."

Chaucer's lyrics as mitigating moral entropy by joining "the disparate worlds of political contingency and absolute moral values," as Chad Crosson remarks of *Lak of Stedfastnesse* ("Language for Ethics" 218). Crosson's declaration that "there is nothing in the poem that invokes an ironic reading" risks underestimating the genre's typical themes, so typical as to weaken the force of the poem's unoriginal message (218). Ironies aside, Crosson rightly identifies the poem's correlation and collapse of world with word, with each occupying the same line position:

> Somtyme the world was so stedfast and stable
> That mannes word was obligacioun,
> And now it is so fals and deceivable. (*Sted* 1-3)

The world was the word, and words *were* obligations, they promised clear intentions and referents, free of penalty or charge.[1] Yet in these modern times "it"—the world and man's word—belies this synonymity.[2] With these once identical elements now "nothing lyk" (5), words rely on a present fiction of semantic obligation as "a tool to deceive"; they are capable of being "bought or sold" like any commodity (Crosson, "Language for Ethics" 221). Ironically, false words depend on "the signifying conventions of language, which have a normative truth claim as their premise" to make their deceptions work; they have every reason to perpetuate such conventions (Jay, *Virtues* 40). If the lyric's own conventions don't discount the poet's nostalgia, his impractical, formulaic, and perhaps obsequious appeal to a "prince" to "wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse" comically (and most ironically) reconciles the world-word rift by leaving it up to a royal to recuperate what can only be elegized (*Sted* 28). If he's anything like helpless Richard, this prince has no real power to restore honor and virtue across his kingdom or court: no one person can accomplish such a feat. The prince can only act virtuously and maybe make a positive if minor mark that way. Or he can kill off his rivals and recompense his poets for their words.

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[1] Crosson, "Language for Ethics" 222. Compare Hobbes' third law of nature, "that men perform their covenants made," which Mackie deems "an eternal and immutable fragment of morality" (*Ethics* 123). Were it not for the human propensity to betray, there would be no need for impersonal laws meant to penalize broken promises. See Jay, *Virtues* 95-96.

[2] Crosson, "Language for Ethics" 224). For widely-held conceptions of earthly corruption reflected in language, see 224-28.

Another ballade, *Fortune*, comprises an antagonistic, anti-Boethian dialogue between the blind goddess and one of her subjects. While highly derivative of the *De consolatione* and the French lyrics of his contemporaries, Chaucer, forgoing Philosophy's conclusions, revives the myth that Fortune rules the earth; to the plaintiff's accusations against her mismanagement of the world's affairs and general corrupting effect upon man—who either falls on hard times, or else acquiesces to her regime of "oppressioun" to play by the rules of a known "tormentour" and "fals dissimulour" (*For* 19, 18, 23)—Fortune makes no effort to correct her accuser on these points. Instead, she validates her general rule:

> How many have I refused to sustene
> Sin I thee fostred have in thy plesaunce.
> Woltow than make a statut on thy quene
> That I shal been ay at thyn ordinaunce?
> Thou born art in my regne of variaunce,
> Aboute the wheel with other most thou dryve.
> My lore is bet than wikke is thy grevaunce,
> And eek thou hast thy beste frend alyve. (41-48)

Pitting people against each other, Fortune admits to showering her favors upon some of her subjects at the expense of the rest. Denying the plaintiff's complaint against the "lack of hir favour" (5), Fortune argues that her unhappy servant ought to worship her even more fervently since she has preferred him over others for so long.[1] And he might as well: love her or hate her, the wayward goddess governs the plaintiff's affairs as she does all others, with whom he must "dryve" about her wheel from birth to his "laste day" (71). Far from a conceptual illusion, Chaucer's Fortune is as real as if not more real than Philosophy, Boece, or Boece's false friends; the "beste frend" he has in this world, this governess reminds her interlocutor of the "lore" that she "taught" him: thanks to her, he now sees clearly when once he lived in ignorance (33-34, 37). If she is his worst enemy, Fortune is also man's best friend.

The goddess not only invites her plaintiff to subscribe to her worldview, but mocks him for challenging her on moral grounds. When he curses her teaching and renounces her unfailing, universal rule as a widespread sickness in his rebuttal, Fortune quips, once more, that he hypocritically complains of the *favors* with which she has showered him, and shows amazement that he should "oppresse" her "realtee" (60), a regality that, however undependable, is as constant as the ebb and flow of the sea, as static as the changing sky, no more, no less. To expect other than this is to misread the nature of this world, claims Fortune, for only "blinde bestes ful of lewednesse"—would mistake the righteous workings of God, or the fixed properties of the heavens, for the disorder of Fortune's earthly realm (68). The conversation ends here, with the airtight triple ballade leaving no room for one last response. Instead, the goddess gets the final word, sending off her accuser with a cutting demonstration of the difficulty of opting out of her services: in an ironic appeal to the "gentilesse" of his superiors, the goddess bribes the plaintiff's "princes" to give him what he wants already (maybe this will shut him up): "Lat nat this man on me thus crye and pleyne, / And I shal quyte you your bisinesse" (74-75). However much he hates doing so, the plaintiff—and possibly Chaucer[1]—must recalibrate his values to suit the mutabilities of a fraudulent world, selling out to win the favor of Fortune and her many suitors.

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[1] See *For* 27-32, 38-40.

While the style of Chaucer's lyrics appears to cleave to fixed forms,[2] the poems' syntactic elements betray their themes of inconstancy and doubleness.[3] In *Fortune*'s case, key words create the basic story of an incompetent tyrant who placates her subjects with such incentives as wealth and status, while leaving others immiserated. The highly alliterative, assonant lines play on oppositions, be they the mutability of man's estate in the "wrecched worldes" (from "wele" to "wo"; "now povre and now honour, / Withouten ordre"; "Frend of effect and frend of countenaunce"; "That I thy frendes knowe, I thanke it thee" (1-2; 34; 51)) or the tension between sincerity and dishonesty ("Yit is me left the light of my resoun / To knowen frend fro fo in thy mirour"; "My suffisaunce shal be my socour"; "O Socrates, thou stidfast champioun... Thou never dreddest hir oppressioun"; "he that hath himself hath suffisaunce" (9-10; 14-15; 17-19; 26)). Key components to the lyric's themes are further brought out by the poem's broken word order. Occasionally, the subject-verb-object order is disrupted by the front-shifting of a verb or predicate for the sake of emphasis:

> This wrecched worldes transmutacioun...
>
> Governed is by Fortunes errour. (1-4)
>
> Thy lore I dampne; it is adversitee. (49)
>
> How many have I refused to sustene

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[1] Pearsall interprets the ballade as Chaucer's "half-serious plea for rescue" from his day job as clerk of the king's works (*Life* 166).
[2] "'Fortune' is in classic form but has three ballades plus a seven-line envoy (ababbab)" (Davenport, "Ballades" 181); actually, a good many of Chaucer's ballades bend the rules of the *forme fixe*. Following Wimasatt and rejecting Friedman's view that the English language was indisposed to rhyme ("Late Mediæval Ballade"), Davenport makes the case for the ballade's variability in French; if Chaucer had fewer rhyme-words to work with, he became more resourceful in response to his constraints.
[3] For the mimetic function of syntax in Middle English poetry, see Roscow, *Syntax and Style*.

Sin I thee fostred have in thy plesaunce. (41-42)

In the first two examples, taken from the plaintiff, the verb and predicate adjective are brought to the topic position at the front of the sentence (and the heads of their respective stanzas) to showcase Fortune's influential grip on the world and its subjects. In Fortune's defense, the favors she has shown her unwishful servant are stressed through her inversion of object and verb, which leaves Fortune and her debater face to face in the sentence.[1] While limited by its genre, *Fortune*'s thematic and syntactic play on fortune's informal trial (and ostensible, comic acquittal) shows the poetic appeal of the "hypocritical" character, whose worldview and persuasive rhetoric create a vibrant narrative with surprisingly difficult, potentially mixed messages from which to draw: ought one to resist Fortune's—the crown's, parliament's, etc.—favors at all costs, as the plaintiff insists? But what do we make of the fact that the plaintiff himself has benefitted from her in the past (or so she claims!); will he accept her final bid to support him? Has Fortune, in her subversive, twisted appeal to perspective—"No man is wrecched but himself it wene" (25)—left her dumbstruck subject to mull her logic that an inconstant world demands inconstant values, and that to survive in it you must deceive and self-justify? This is freedom? This is autonomy?

To take another lyric that engages in a playful "doublenesse" in a poetically rich and philosophically deep way, *The Former Age* seems to expose the hypocrisies of Chaucer's modern society. In terms of its content, the poem laments the passing of a simpler, peaceful time when people observed moderation in their appetites and enjoyed the fruit of the lands without "wound[ing]" the ground for it (*Form Age* 1-11). The poem provides an inverse inventory of the technologies that the former age lacked:

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[1] The adjunct "in thy plesaunce" is an additional, subtle way of establishing Fortune's favors on the plaintiff without directly or conventionally stating so.

> No mader, welde, or wood no litestere
> Ne knew; the flees was of his former hewe;
> No flesh ne wiste offence of egge or spere.
> No coyn ne knew man which was fals or trewe,
> No ship yit karf the wawes grene and blewe,
> No marchaunt yit ne fette outlandish ware.
> No trompes for the werres folk ne knewe,
> Ne toures heye and walles rounde or square. (17-24)

Dyes, coins, ships, trumpets, spears, foreign merchandise: this wealth of neutral artifacts signals civilizational decay when associated with the dark side of trade ("fals" coins) and exploration ("werres"). The stanzas that follow take the same slant. Chaucer not only poeticizes modern decadence in material terms, but also measures his civilizational discontent by juxtaposing the moral caliber of today's with yesterday's men. Whereas today's tyrants "spare for no sinne" in order to "asayle" entire cities for ever greater gains (33-40), yesterday's men, though they lacked the luxuries of palace chambers or even walls, slept in "seurtee" or safety, a surety not available for the present age (41-46); this is because these men, of one heart free of guile, each "his feith to other kepte" (47-48). As in *Fortune*, Chaucer draws a direct line between the civilized world and the betrayal of social ideals.

Words don't always mean what they say, however, and the lyric's encomium of the past breaks down at several levels. Although the poem regrets the present conditions in its lament that "in *oure* dayes nis but covetyse, / Doublenesse, and tresoun, and envye, / Poyson, manslawhtre, and mordre in sondry wyse" (61-63, my emphasis). A product of its age, the poem can't help but identify its historic moment; that it can only imagine a golden age without ever calling for a return to it only reinforces the sense of entrapment in the present one. Lacking realistic (or any) solutions, the poem's complaints begin to sound hollow. It's also unclear whether the poem can imagine a future that accords with the verses' words: a world free of conflict: in praising the viceless, "lambish peple" of the past, who, ruled by humility, peace, and good faith, had "no fantasye to debate"—no desire to fight one another, and required "[n]o lord, no taylage by no tyrannye" (50-51, 54)—the poem implies that the present age *demands* a more autocratic ruler to tax his people for his military campaigns and redress his vicious debaters.[1] Whatever its political intentions, the lament's social ambivalence comes through clearly enough, for the lines suggest that the lambish people, when "voyd of all vyce" (50), are indeed mere animals. Virtue can't flourish without vice, and paradoxically, it is vice which sparks the "fantasye" in man to "debate"—not only to dispute, but to discuss, to exchange words, to weave a storyline in order to promote his agenda or win over rivals, as witnessed in *Fortune*. Poetry itself, a creative forging of lyric "laments," would have found no place in this dark, former age.

The Former Age's call for a simpler time thus maintains a double-minded perspective on the past. A medieval reader encountering this poem would fail to imagine what this ideal first age must have been like other than from his present perch, its luxuries and losses intact. Even the presentation of a blissful past is misleading. As one early modern thinker put it, the former age was anything but rosy. He describes the first age as a time of constant warfare that in consequence lacked any cooperation among men, hence it lacked security or culture: "no Navigation... no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving... no Knowledge of the face of the Earth... no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare" (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 89).[1] This description aligns exactly with Chaucer's lyric, only in reverse: the former age faded into oblivion precisely because it lacked the tools of the modern one. Chaucer sketches not a blissful life of freedom and ease but "sheer privation" (Miller, *Philosophical Chaucer* 146). Can one even call those who, albeit of one heart and faithful to one another's word, lack the individuating differences of thought, vocation, or motivation a community? Aren't these essential community ingredients?

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[1] Compare the *Lenvoy to King Richard*, *LS* 22-28 and see Scattergood, "Social and Political Issues," who argues that Chaucer encourages the king to maintain his coronation oath while preserving his royal prerogative. But see Ruud, *"Many a Song,"* who finds it "unlikely that Chaucer would compliment Richard: as a royalist, he had no love of the Gloucester faction, but as a lifetime friend of Gaunt and dependent on the Lancaster family, it is hardly conceivable that Chaucer would have commended Richard for the actions of the last two years of his reign" (54). For a one-sided but useful summary of Richard's tyrranical development, see Quinn, *Poetics of Disguise*, 10-14 with notes. For annotations and translations of sources documenting Richard's turbulent years, see McHardy, *Reign of Richard II*.

Fortune and *The Former Age* reopen problematic questions first posed by Boethius in his philosophical dialogue, touching on the contemporary woes of greed, treachery, and violence; more than *Boece*, these woes relate to Chaucer and his professional circle's lives—careerists stuck between serving an inconstant king and entering equally insecure, temporary alliances. If these very popular poems can suit any age, how much more suitable must they have been for Chaucer's, whose courtiers and MPs enjoy the power to direct the course of the kingdom through their royal counsel, and whose clashes would lead to some of the darkest episodes in English political history. Alive to the philosophy that *treuth* is what you make of it,[2] Chaucer could have applied such lyrical imperatives to his political circumstances:

> Reule wel thyself that other folk canst rede,

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[1] Compare Machiavelli (d.1527), who similarly held mixed views about the past: "It is possible for a city or a province to possess a body politic well organized by some excellent man, and, for a time, by virtue of the skill of such a founder, always to progress toward the better. Anyone, therefore, who is born in such a state and praises ancient times more than modern ones is deceiving himself" (*Discourses* 150). It's quite possible for present times to pale in comparison to the past in a given region—Machiavelli believes this to be his own case—but most people mistakenly adopt rosy pictures of the past due to changed perspectives over time, or due to their restricted circumstances "by fortune" (151); rather than blame the times, they ought to blame their perspectives and judgments.

[2] Compare Ockham, for whom one's experience of reality relies on sensory perception rather than a belief system held up by universal ideas. See Ruud, *"Many a Song*" 18. With one's own senses subject to doubt (at least according to Bacon, Descartes, et al.), and without universal constants to fall back on, it's difficult to see how truth *isn't* what you make of it according to nominalism.

> And trouthe thee shal delivere, it is no drede. (*Truth* 6-7)
> Daunte thyself, that dauntest otheres dede,
> And trouthe thee shal delivere, it is no drede. (13-14)

Not without a measure of ambivalence would the poet's audience—his later ones, at any rate—have understood the lines' association of "trouthe" or general faithfulness with freedom.[1] This is but another occasion in which Chaucer's moral poems' forms contain a potential contradiction in meaning, reflecting a disorderly yet well-disguised nature of the world and its inhabitants. Within the socio-political space that he imagines, moreover, Chaucer presents the social vices in terms of their actions and attributes: a combination of envy, avarice, and doubleness, all of which induce betrayal and involve what the poet characterizes in another ballade as the break between one's actions and words, of late "so fals and deceivable" (*Sted* 3-4). It would seem Chaucer over-articulates the conventions of the French ballade as he does the *fin'amor* love lyrics to the point of ridiculousness, and to the point of revealing the genres' seams while prompting metapoetic reflection.[2] Chaucer's try at French forms might have also served as a veiled wink at fellow courtiers tied to the same genre and the problems of professional performance, dishonesty, and dissemblance raised in his verses[3]; at any rate they helped him pose problems he'd return to. As he composes more ambitious, character-centric narrative poems, Chaucer develops these lyrics' poetics of hypocrisy by assigning their word-deed dissonances to willfully wise and wretched characters. Chaucer lets his hypocrites further their own interests; in so doing they develop the narratives in which they operate. Chaucer moreover breaks from traditional poetic conceptions of hypocrisy by divorcing the habit from exclusively religious contexts and values. His ordinary hypocrites take up the practices of a secular world and inform the everyday decisions of its inhabitants. And lacking a Boethian double perspective, they're invited to will to their hearts' content, free to fool their circles to the point of inspiring new values within their communities, to the point of shaping future contingencies, thereby commanding history. Whether readers should praise or blame these characters' actions as moral, immoral, or point to them as outcomes of a simple "anti-humanism"[1] suitable for the doubleness of daily living, remains to be answered. But this much can be said: if they are to hold long-lasting sway, Chaucer's hypocrites, like all imposters, must avail themselves of language's powers to more purposefully create narratives in favor of their causes—a time-tested practice among men of the world, from politicians to "army-potent" strategists.

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[1] The definition of "trouthe" here is left open. See *MED* s.v. treuth (n.), 15.a.
[2] See Rogers, ""Buried in an Herte,"" which argues for Chaucer's exaggeration of French forms for comic effects.
[3] Butterfield, "Chapter 7: *Lingua franca:* The International Language of Love" in *Familiar Enemy* 234-65, revalues the form as a vehicle for French-English verbal and cultural exchange. The same line of thought is developed in Strakhov, "Tending to One's Garden."

CHAUCER'S ORDINARY HYPOCRITES: TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

A view of the rolls of the Westminster Parliament of 1388, better known as the "Merciless Parliament," tells two stories Chaucer would have lived through that illustrate how and to what ends sincere and insincere intentions can blur. Considered by one critic to be "the most singular abuse of parliamentary procedure ever seen" (Giancarlo, *Parliament and Literature* 166), the scene involves two factions: King Richard II and his men and a parliament that demanded their accountability. During this session, the king's advisors and friends are formally branded "false traitors to and enemies of the king and kingdom" by a parliament that demanded accountability from them (*Rolls VII* 84-85). Led by Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, the Lords Appellant weave a narrative that casts key members of the king's circle as manipulators of Richard's very thoughts and interests.[1] Rather than confront the king directly for possible misconduct, they accuse Alexander Neville, Robert de Vere, Michael de la Pole among several other "false traitors" of playing on Richard's tenderness of age and general innocence by leading him to believe—according to the rolls—"many false matters" that they'd "imagined and contrived" (84-85). These fabrications, the story goes, served to secure the king's full faith in a confederacy that then put his trust to vicious ends. The king is not only accused of having his judgment compromised, but of having his desires played with and ultimately his decisions controlled—it is this control that licenses parliament to charge that these men encroached the royal prerogative, a treasonous offence, and made enemies out of the king's *true* advisors—the Lords Appellant.[2] The misguiding counselors misinformed a poor, innocent Richard to the point that he willingly obeys them and subscribes to their "false conceptions, plots, and workings" to their personal advantage, and to the disadvantage of the crown and kingdom.[3] The king's overthrow would have followed were it not for these Appellants' timely intervention (84-85).[4] This is one version.[5]

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[1] By anti-humanism, I mean the idea that humans a) do not necessarily seek happiness by nature, and that they b) are not, when left to their own devices, essentially good.

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[1] For background, see Steel, *Richard II* 119-25. Richard's relations with parliament were poor well before the 1388 session or the 1386, "Wonderful Parliament" session. See Dodd, "Richard II" 72.

[2] "The *corona*," explains Bellamy, "was in fact the bond between the kingdom in the sense of those barons who must be consulted (often called the community of the realm), and the king," an arrangement that afforded sovereignty to the *corona* and not the king's person; should he or anyone encroach upon the rights of the crown, they would be called to account (*Law of Treason* 63-64).

[3] Such as the secret promotion of Robert de Vere to King of Ireland. *Rolls VII* 87.

[4] *Rolls VII* 94-95. See 88-89.

[5] Parliament's mistrust of Richard's command is readily observed in its reluctance to finance his campaigns against France. Ironically, England's military reversals since 1356 contributed to Parliament's reluctance to finance, through taxation, an ill-equipped, underpaid army. Parliament suspected the king's spending habits and furthermore demanded the removal of Michael de la Pole, chancellor and treasurer, whom it believes deceived them in failing to implement the naval defense it funded. See Sherborne, "Defence of the Realm" 98, 110-13; "Costs of English Warfare." Equally ironic is Richard's own preference for an end to armed conflict with France, a sentiment stifled by magnates set to profit from continued hostilities; the king's recourse to levying taxes and seeking loans from Londoners only damaged his image. See Tuck, *Richard II* 17-18, 157-58; Tuck, "Richard II and the Hundred Years' War" 125-29. Well before the Wonderful Parliament of 1386 and the Peasant Uprising of 1381, the Good Parliament of 1376 had established a tradition of challenging the king's government that would last through the reign of Richard II. See Holmes, *Good Parliament* 155-58, 195-98; Myers, *English Historical Documents IV* 357-58. In any case, from his abrupt accession to the throne, the ten-year-old king contended with continual councils that from the king's perspective must have sometimes appeared like virtual regencies.

The Appellants' narrative underscores the very mundane challenge of meting out justice in the world, for while the King's advisors are here framed as "false traitors" who plot the murder of those Lords and Commons not sympathetic to their cause, the Appellants forge their own history as the king's true allies and protectors of the crown. In this story, nothing is said of the opposition's own encroachments, ulterior motives, or corruptions, nor of the king's own protests against this version of events.[1] According to the *Westminster Chronicle*'s account of the 18 February 1388 parliamentary hearing of Brembre,

> ...the king offered a large number of different arguments in exculpation of Sir Nicholas whom, he protested, he had never known to be a traitor or to be, as far as he himself was aware, guilty or chargeable in the terms of the articles. In reply the lords flung down their gauntlets, as did countless others of those present, and declared that the charges against him were true. (311)

The next day Robert Tresilian, apprehended in asylum, would be drawn and hanged on charges of treason; the day after, Brembre.[2] Richard's men receive no trial, only cruel, example-setting punishments. Brembre, for instance, is drawn, hanged, disinherited, and stripped of all assets, while Usk is additionally dragged through the city streets and beheaded, his head fixed to the Newgate entrance.[1] Such a double-edged narrative serves as true fiction in the making, a model for Chaucer to emulate in his business-class hypocrites: neither mendicant nor fraternal, these princes, parliamentarians, and their pleasers spin entire narratives from false flattering and cunning. Above their wealth and fame, they secure social control. Thus understood, Chaucer's hypocrites diligently and artfully plot to induce felt political-economic outcomes and invent historical realities.

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[1] Biggs recently suggested that, leading up to the Merciless Parliament of 1388, the Lords Appellant supplanted administrators and clerks of parliament while installing into the Commons and parliamentary writing offices members sympathetic to their cause; having ensured the successful takedown of royalist opponents, they rewarded these members with enhancements to their estates. "The Appellant and the clerk" 66. See 58-65. Barron, "Deposition of Richard II," argues that Richard and his government weren't as unpopular or widely abusive as the chronicles—all written after his deposition—present him and his men to be. And according to Prestwich, "Parliament and the community" 16-20, fourteenth-century parliament wasn't respected by the general public, much less thought to represent them or serve their interests.

[2] See *Westminster Chronicle* 309-15. Richard must have viewed the execution of his men in 1388 as an act of treason, whose definition in the 1352 treason act included "the murder during the course of the rebellion of men loyal to the crown" (Bellamy, *Law of Treason* 105). Nonetheless, Tuck argues that the king's 1397 attacks against his opponents were preemptive in nature, a result not of vengeance for these personal injuries but the "political developments of the previous four years" (*Richard II* 157). Compare Barron, "Tyranny of Richard II," who argues that the king's tyranny of his people, refusal to repay loans, and extortion of his rivals, whose promised pardons he revoked, secured his untrustworthiness: "in the oft reiterated words of the deposition articles, 'quamplures... de Regno regem reputant infidelem'" ("very many... consider the king of the kingdom unfaithful"; 16-17); these misdeeds, Barron adds, were committed in desperate self-defense: "Richard's measures were too extreme to be the work of policy, too well organized to be the acts of a madman. Throughout his actions there runs the constant demand for lists of names; of those who had lent money and of those who had refused to lend; of those who came before the Council to seek pardons; of those who refused to contribute to the Essex fine; and of those who had sworn

Chaucer and his characters reinvent historical fictions in the poet's "book of Troilus" (*CT* X.1086), which approaches hypocrisy from profane love, an outgrowth of nonreligious courtly romance (not the pastoralia that shapes the Parson's Tale) whose love-as-illness, love-as-religion, love-as-performance, and love-as-letters traditions invite a poetics of hypocrisy.[2] By definition courtly love entails the performance of desires, dependent upon false appearances and deception—hence Troilus' instinct upon laying eyes on Criseyde to "dissimilen and hide" her effect on him (*Tr* I.322). Like the Trojan War it sketches in the background, the game of love is culturally gendered, aggressive, and subjugating.[3] The very cause of Troilus' woe is disingenuous; love's prey, his feelings are violently inflicted on him by spiteful gods, whose ill intentions to discipline the prince render his addiction to Criseyde more a capital punishment

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the required oaths. Richard needed to know who were his friends and who were his enemies because he was afraid" (17).

[1] See *Rolls VII* 104, 110.

[2] See Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages*; Heffernan, "Disease of Love"; Gilles, "Love and Disease"; Windeatt, "*Troilus and Criseyde*" 85-93. As Green once observed, the courtly love tradition exploits the ambiguity and artificiality of language, whether spoken or written, as in Troilus and Criseyde's (and Pandarus') letter writing; see his "Game of Love" 207, 212.

[3] See Hansen, *Fictions of Gender* 153-55.

than a joyous experience.[1] Chaucer's mashing of analogues moreover produces an altogether different genre that playfully impersonates disparate literary modes without identifying with a single one: the "history" and "tragedy" is at once serious, melodramatic, and humorously self-mocking, as Wetherbee and others have long noted.[2] He completed his highly original adaptation of Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* in the early to mid-1380s[3]; he endows the cast of Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* with attitudes indicative of his court environment, and has the struggle between "the relative selflessness of characters oriented to transcendent ideals and the selfishness of characters who find their objects of aspiration in this world" (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 91). Adopting a lower style than its source text, Chaucer frames his narrative poem's contemporary world and its inhabitants in a distant past; this enables him to compose conversations and construct settings applicable, hypothetically at least, to his present environment.[4] In terms of conversation topics, Chaucer's posts under Richard II would have encouraged him "to muse on the *bonum commune* and the duties that made him a member of this select professional community"; among other public virtues, he would have reflected on the art of diplomacy, or what Matthew Giancarlo calls the "alignment of talk against violence," namely physical violence (*Parliament and Literature* 132). Giancarlo does well to formulate from Chaucer's oeuvre a poetic of *parlement*, whereby discussion and negotiation serve as a mediating force between organizing bodies. I hesitate, however, to believe that Chaucer, a former witness to Parliament's assault on Richard's government as Shire-Knight to the Wonderful Parliament of 1386,[1] would have readily expected talk to replace or reduce physical violence: as he himself understood, "debate" connoted not only verbal negotiation but also physical violence. The courtier's posts as a law enforcer and maintainer of public order, moreover, would have found him on the side of the "state disciplinary apparatus" (Carlson, *Chaucer's Jobs* 8).[2] Chaucer may well have been an agent of violence, not a champion of its cessation.

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[1] *Tr* I.206-10; Compare the *Parliament of Fowls,* which casts Cupid in a deceitful light, under a tree, forging and filing his arrows, while his daughter, Wille, tempers them, and "with her wile" (*PF* 215), with her artful duplicity, she arranges them, some "to sle, and some to wounde and kerve" (217). See also section III (and IV) of Chaucer's *Complaint of Mars*, which expands on the idea of love as an invention by a cruel god meant to torment man.

[2] See Wetherbee, *Chaucer and the Poets*, Chapter 7, "Chaucer Alone"; Blamires, "Chaucer's *Troilus*" 435-36. For the stylistic versatility of *Troilus*, see Barney, "Introduction" xv-xvi. In addition to giving Boccaccio's high style a more conversational, informal flavor, Chaucer brings Troilus and Criseyde's two households closer socially. See Windeatt, "Chaucer and the *Filostrato*" 168-69.

[3] "[M]ore than 5500 of the 8239 lines of *Troilus and Criseyde* are Chaucer's independent work" (Barney, "Introduction" x). For the dating of the *Troilus* see ix.

[4] For Chaucer's turn to classical sources and other genres, such as dream poetry, to better depict his contemporary world, see Quinn, *Poetics of Disguise* 54. As for his characters, which Quinn refers to as "composite figures," they are based on a blend of "people he knew and characters in old stories" that "bear the names of personages long dead, but speaking like fourteenth-century English people, they inevitably remind one of the poet's contemporaries" (2-3).

The poet's clearest expression of such violence is found in his historical romance, in which Parliament plays a pivotal role as the source of Troilus' double tragedy, the death of a prince and city. Whether or not Chaucer intends to critique implicitly his own parliament's encroachments of power, the poet successfully represents the legislative body as an agent of very widely felt change. This agency is witnessed on both the Greek and Trojan side. Having captured a band of Trojan warriors, the Greeks prepare negotiations for a prisoner swap. Catching wind of this, Calkas seizes the opportunity to force the hand of his adoptive city. A Trojan emigre, Calkas betrays his native city not by his initial move but by offering strategic information to the Greeks at a time of war; before the consistory he reminds the citizens of the comfort he gave them, including advice on how to vanquish Troy.[3] Once more, the outlaw proposes to "teche" members of the council chamber how to win the war (*Tr* IV.84). All that he asks is for the inclusion of his daughter in the prisoner exchange. Moved by his oratory (literally reduced to tears), the emergency session takes Calkas at his word, and grants Troy Antenor for Criseyde—a fatal swap, since the traitor helps the invading Greeks remove the Palladium and thereby secure their victory.[1]

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[1] Strohm, "Politics and Poetics" 92-93; Crow and Olson, *Life Records* 367-69.

[2] For Chaucer's responsibilities as comptroller of the wool custom, and the abuses committed by the collectors of customs duties during his tenure, see Carlson, *Chaucer's Jobs* 8-15. For a summary of his duties as Justice of the Peace, see Crow and Olson, *Life Records*, 349-50, 355-59.

[3] See *Tr* I.78-84, IV.73-81. No one compelled Calkas to give such council—he claims to give it solely out of love for the Greeks (81-88).

Ambassadors are soon dispatched to Troy, where the trade is brought before Parliament for review. On this issue, Parliament assents so quickly that the narrative discloses the agreement to the swap before describing the main arguments for and against the exchange, as if they were moot: "Th'eschaunge of prisoners and al this nede / Hem liketh wel, and forth in they procede" (146-47). Hector's arguments against Criseyde's involvement on moral grounds—she is not a prisoner, nor is Troy in the business of "selling" women (176-82)—are met with a clamor likened to a conflagration reminiscent of Chaucer's bird parliament: "The noyse of peple up stirte thanne at ones, / As breme as blase of strawe iset on-fire" (183-84). The illusion of efficiency with which this assembly confirms the Greeks' offer underscores how easily a legislative body—and by extension, a medieval body politic or community—can fall into errors of judgment under the influence of a false idea necessarily promoted by misinformed entities.[2] Readers not only appreciate the power of parliament through the success of the negotiation, but by the extent of its effect on the fictional population: the Trojans in general and the story's main cast in particular. In the wake of the agreement, Troilus, his "friend" Pandarus, and Criseyde each re-present Parliament's agreement to the exchange as a unanimous inevitability; both Troilus and Pandarus speak in the same breath of the assembly's decision and Fortune's treacherous blow.[1] In this light, Calkas and the parliamentarians who realized the transfer function as Fortune's boots on the ground: their opportunism and rhetorical performance induce a decision with massive ramifications for the futures of their people.[2] In *Troilus*, Boethian Fortune thus functions to explain away and justify human actions.[3] These actions build on one another: ultimately Diomede will capitalize on Calkas' self-fulfilling prophecy to "win over" Criseyde, his prisoner.[4] The remaining characters likewise apply the *De consolatione*'s teachings to further their interests in *this* world.[5] In their textual existence, these characters speak not to human or divine love, for Troilus' love comes forced from supernatural spite, while Criseyde's is a fusion of conflicted feelings. Lacking the cover of a love narrative, on which too much *Troilus* scholarship has depended, the tragic love poem fails to articulate exactly what its characters live and die for, other than perhaps the virtues of necessities "neither ideal nor courtly," to echo Alfred David (*Strumpet Muse* 35).

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[1] See Barney, "Explanatory Notes" 1045, ll.202-06. The rhetorical and authoritative dimensions Calkas' rogation at *Tr* IV.71-133 has drawn much scholarly attention. See especially Beal, "What Chaucer Did," and Espie and Star, "Chaucer's Calkas."

[2] Or misinforming. Whether Calkas' propagandistic, loyalty-laced testimony reached them, or their own parliament pushed specific narratives ("we cannot have Antenor unless we trade Criseyde, and here is why we must absolutely do this...."), the Trojan members of parliament may themselves have needed some persuading on the swap. And given Antenor and Sinon's treachery in medieval versions of this story, it isn't wild to suppose that, aware of the many problems with the swap, disloyal men would push for it anyway; after all, wars run on deception, defection, and espionage.

Just as Chaucer can be described as a poet dedicated to a "public poetry" built on values of common love and common profit,[6] Calkas' statecraft and his effect on how others think, act, and understand their world bespeaks a concern for common losses and the limits of love, freedom, and friendship. While Book IV's parliamentary sessions announce the double sorrows that follow, more extensive displays of Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy, involving the poem's main characters, paint a more direct picture of how these sorrows are crafted and managed. In Troilus and Pandarus, Chaucer suffienctly estranges a friendship that continues to generate new critical interpretations on its obscure cultural and ethical meanings.[1] What exactly are Pandarus' intentions toward Troilus?[2] In playing their game of love, do these characters merely subscribe to their culture's ritualized, collective performance of emotions?[3] Does Troilus, in over-performing the tropes of depression, disease, and battle wounds, feign his desires for Criseyde?[4] Is "Tendre-herted" Criseyde—kind-hearted/devoted, vulnerable, naive, morally weak/impressionable—really blameworthy for quitting her dangerous game with Troilus, given her practical fears for her reputation as an unprotected, alien widow (*Tr* V.825), or is she betrayed by the "false folk" of her society, as Elaine Hansen has demonstrated?[5] Do her society's improper expectations of her excuse her decision to leave?[6] Is the decision even hers? Is she even a whole person?[7] What of the narrator's sleights?[1] What of the critics', what do they tell us about ourselves?[2] Evidently, *Troilus*' intricacies continue to raise more questions than answers. Without attempting to tackle all of them, I focus in the following section on one character who embodies the belief that Fortune favors the daring and who constitutes one of Chaucer's starkest *poetic* hypocrites, of a quite different value than the scriptual ones: Pandarus.

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[1] *Tr* IV.260-80, 376-92. For Pandarus, the decision comes "ful graunted... by oon assent" (346), comparable to the unanimous force of Fortune, whose "yiftes ben comune" (392), touching all indiscriminately. Troilus can't even entertain the possibility of having his father, King Priam, a member of parliament repeal the terms of the exchange. See 558-60. Criseyde likewise sees no point in contesting the decision, as she cannot imagine an alternative to what for her must come to pass. She tells Troilus: "My goyng graunted is by parlement / So ferforth that it may nat be withstonde / For al this world, as by my jugement" (1296-99). Like Pandarus and Troilus, Criseyde perceives Parliament as a powerful governing body capable of real-world implementation.

[2] "Calkas proves less a passive visionary, explaining a fixed Trojan destiny, and more a self-interested, active agent, orchestrating that very destiny" (Espie and Star, "Chaucer's Calkas" 383). See 388-89.

[3] Benson reasonably observes that in *Troilus* Fortune plays the contradictory double role of both deriving from the deterministic forces of destiny as well as human agency. See Benson, *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chapter 7, "Fortune" 149-78. For Calkas' self-fulfilling prophecy, see Giancarlo, "Structure of Fate" 238-48, with a helpful diagram on 247.

[4] Diomede "invokes Calkas's putatively determinative prophecy even while casting doubt on its source and using it to actively engineer his own future" (Espie and Star, "Chaucer's Calkas" 383). See 395-401.

[5] See Gordon, *Double Sorrows*, "Chapter II: Ambiguity and Boethius" 24-60. According to Gordon, the characters apply Boethius' arguments to arrive at conclusions opposing his own. See 46; McGerr, "Meaning and Ending."

[6] Middleton, "Public Poetry."

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[1] In Robertson's traditionist estimation, Pandarus and Troilus cannot be friends, for "friendship in Cicero, Boethius, St. Ailred, Andreas, Jean de Meun, Jehan le Bel, and, in fact, in almost any medieval account of the subject, is based on virtue and cannot lead to vice" (*Preface* 480).

[2] In a forthcoming essay, Richard Sévère, for instance, promotes a homosocial or "bromantic" reading of Troilus and Pandarus, the latter of whose true sexuality Criseyde seems to know.

[3] For emotions as social constructs, see Rosenwein and Cristiani, "History of Emotions" Chapter 2.

[4] A question explored at the 2018 NCS Congress by Timothy Arner.

[5] Criseyde "lives with endless contradictions... she is hated, demeaned, and scorned for the very qualities that her culture tells her are valuable and proper in a woman: obedience, submission, and flexibility" (Hansen, *Fictions of Gender* 143). As Cartlidge points out, Criseyde's friends "show remarkably little animus towards Criseyde's father—they even congratulate her on the prospect of her reunion with him" ("Absent Friends"228). As a "desolate widow" with possibly no friends—no counselors, no status, hence no means for a successful remarriage—Criseyde would be reasonable to seek protection and survival where it exists; see 232-33, 244-45; *MED* s.v. tender (adj.) 7.(a), 2.(a), 1.(a), 4.(b).

[6] For a reading of Criseyde as well-aware and weary of society's requirements of her see Wetherbee, Chaucer and The Poets, Chapter 6, "Character and Action: Criseyde and the Narrator."

[7] Hansen suggests no, she is not. See her *Fictions of Gender,* Chapter 6.

NO FRIENDSHIP IS AN ACCIDENT: PANDARUS NOW

More than any other character, Pandarus draws special attention for his obvious if unspecified opportunism and generally ill intentions. I have found only one scholar who, decades ago, once defended the character as "no mere shallow hypocrite, ready to turn his familiarity with the rules of the game to his own advantage," whose concerns for his niece are genuine, his friendship to Troilus true (Green, "Game of Love" 208-09). With his interests thoroughly hidden, it's far from clear that Pandarus doesn't manipulate this game to his advantage, and it's painfully apparent throughout the poem that his concerns for Criseyde are limited. Moreover, Pandarus doesn't befriend so much as assert a control over his superior.[3] His help initially unsought, it is Pandarus who asks Troilus for the job: "God spede us both two! / Yef me this labour and this busynesse, / And of my spede be thyn al that swetnesse" (*Tr* I.1041-43). Both have something to gain from this enterprise, though it is unclear what this advisor wants exactly. Wealthy in his friend, the prince soon comes to depend utterly on Pandarus. Readers are told earlier that

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[1] Such as his presentation of characters' actions as historical inevitabilities (Patterson, "Genre and Source" 202; Espie and Star, "Chaucer's Calkas" 392-95), or his own creation of culture and history: "Criseyde's very existence is a literary fiction; the poets invent the female inconstancy that they purportedly record.... Criseyde's story is here [*Tr* V.1058-68] represented as impinging on the real lives of other women, present and future" Mann, *Feminizing Chaucer* 15. For what it's worth, Chaucer cut out and modified much of the misogyny of his sources. See Windeatt, *Troilus* 86-89.

[2] Dinshaw, *Sexual Poetics*, "Chapter One: Reading Like A Man" 28-64; Gilles, "Love and Disease" 159-62; Van Dyke, "Amorous Behaviour" 253-57.

[3] See Mieszkowski, *Medieval Go-Betweens*, who differentiates between two traditions of matchmaking: a noble one, in which the go-between's intentions to unite a couple are noble and honest, and a lowly one, in which the go-between seeks only sexual conquest. "Chaucer's Pandarus combines two traditional figures from antithetical types of literature" (4).

> to Pandare alwey was his recours,
> And pitously gan ay tyl hym to pleyne,
> And hym bisoughte of reed and som socours. (II.1352-54)

Troilus comes to rely exclusively on this facilitator for the production of his illicit affair with Criseyde, Pandarus' widowed niece—which makes him the brother or brother-in-law to the infamous traitor Calkas.[1] Strangely, this fact has no bearing on Troilus' faith in Pandarus, the Falstaff to his Hal. The Trojan prince proves more submissive than this loose analogy suggests. Though he first conceals his affliction from his friend, Troilus soon seeks his inferior's counsel on the management of his affair; the latter's facilitation obscures their social divide.[2] Consider Pandarus' guidance when the parliamentary decision is reached: the prince-pleaser's first suggestion is that Troilus pursue other lovers.[3] He refuses of course, on idealistic grounds, reminding his lover's uncle that he plighted his troth to her and means to honor it.[4] The friendly advisor then recommends that the prince abduct his secret lover, but Troilus again declines as a matter of principle, refusing to go against his father's decision or dishonor Criseyde.[5] That Troilus asks his go-between why he has not entertained a third option—that Pandarus persuade

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[1] Boccaccio describes the Trojan people's outrage at Calkas' defection: they were barely prevented from burning down his house. Chaucer is more precise. He alludes to the actual punishment of traitors (a live burning): "seyden [the people that] he and al his kyn at-ones / Ben worthi for to brennen, fel and bones" (*Tr* I.89-91).

[2] Pandarus refers to Troilus in the informal, second-person singular "thou" and its forms, an indication of their friendship; otherwise addresses between Troilus and Criseyde and Pandarus and Criseyde are limited to the formal "ye." For the distinction between "ye" and "thou" see Skeat, *Complete Works V* 175. See Shimonomoto, *Language of Politeness* 63, 105.

[3] *Tr* IV.400-27.

[4] *Tr* IV.435-38. Eventually Troilus proposes that he and his partner "maketh vertu of necessite" and flee in secret (1586; 1506-26, 1600-05). Criseyde refuses on idealistic grounds similar to those of Troilus' initial response to the selfsame idea.

[5] *Tr* IV.526-74.

Criseyde not to leave[1]—indicates that Troilus expects Pandarus to determine or change Criseyde's (or anyone else's) mind as though he were his advocate, doing what it takes to please his client. And as his advocate, Pandarus can imagine any number of hypothetical scenarios that Troilus has not entertained or will not entertain, such as the possibility that Criseyde can betray her lover.[2] Buttered up by overstated overtures of loyalty, "In every cas I wol a frend be founde. / And if the list here sterven as a wrecche, / Adieu, the devel spede hym that it recche!" (IV.628-30), Troilus warms to the idea of an abduction, conceding that he will not "ravysshe hire, but if hireself it wolde" (637), to which Pandarus declares "Whi, so mene I... al this day," probing further, "[“]But telle me thanne, hastow hire wil assayed,/ That sorwest thus?" And he answerde hym, "Nay"" (638-40). Their brainstorming ends with Pandarus promising his "brother deere" to exercise caution around his father (650), deceiving him and others lest he send off Criseyde without prior warning; meantime, he vows to ascertain Criseyde's coordinates.[3] As a willful nominalist, Troilus' friend acts not according to fixed moral standards but panders him; their individual desires and decisions precede all interpersonal and political affairs and heavily inflect their environments.[4]

Of the two, Pandarus comes closest to typifying Fortune's dangerously playful, inscrutable attitude. The sincerity of his actions is constantly in question. Considering the disastrous end of the paramours' course, one wonders why this third wheel would have invested so heavily in such a high-risk relationship with no clear rewards to reap in return. Given his willingness to stop at nothing to satisfy his superior, it is unbelievable that he upholds the ideal value of *trouthe* or sworn allegiance, played on and put to personal, earthly ends.[1] The narrative maintains the tension inherent in this character's speeches and acts by not divulging his interests, be they noble or conflicted, leaving readers to guess: Is he an opportunist courting the royal favor by offering his friendship, his niece? Is it access that he seeks? After all, Troilus is a prince. Or is it simply the control over the lives of others that pleases him, as it pleased Fals-Semblant? Do his light deceptions give him a sense not only of control but freedom in a world not admitting of personal agency or distinction? Maybe subconscious motives are at play, known or unknown desires?[2] For his part, Troilus acknowledges his friend's help beyond what he deserves, and offers to starve for him "[a] thousand tymes" in return, offers to serve him as his "sclave...[f]or evere more, unto my lyves ende" (III.389; 390-92). Whatever the motives of this gentle churl,[3] Pandarus stands to take as much as he gives.

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[1] *Tr* IV.486-90. For all his brainstorming, the prince-pleaser at no point advises the prince to establish a legitimate relationship with his secret lover. This may have more to do with courtly romance conventions, which stipulates that lovers love in secret. See Boitani, *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento* 168-69. Compare Spearing, *Troilus & Criseyde* 32-33; Windeatt, ""Love That Oughte Ben Secree.""

[2] See *Tr* IV.610-16.

[3] *Tr* IV.645-58.

[4] For a useful study of Ockhamism in relation to Chaucer's *Troilus*, see Andretta, *Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde,"* especially Chapter Two, "A Basis for the Philosophy of *Troilus and Criseyde*." Though this study argues that Chaucer took an anti-Ockhamist stance in his *Troilus*, no substantial evidence is provided and expectedly so, since Chaucer never critiques the philosophy directly.

It might be enough for Pandarus to control his rich and famous friend, to verbalize and choreograph his whole affair, as almost all of his scenes involve his contrivance of future possibilities.[4] One case in point involves Pandarus' orchestration of the lovers' first formal meeting at the end of Book II. The lengthy scene is Chaucer's original addition to its Italian analogue. Pandarus vows his "Lord, and frend, and brother dere" to arrange within two days for Troilus to "come into a certeyn place" where he can sue for his lady's grace (II.1359, 1364). In effect, he intends to put to practice his philosophy that what furthers a man the most is to have the "layser" or opportunity to plead his case (1369). Pandarus creates this opportunity by fabricating an urgent, factual but fictitious situation, which he reports to Deiphebus, Troilus' brother. Reacting to the news that "some men" seek the wrongful possession of his niece's property (1418), Deiphebus vows to be "hir champioun with spore and yerde" (1427). Ingeniously, Pandarus prompts his distraught friend to throw a banquet for Criseyde's cause (unbeknownst to her). Deiphebus also invites a roundtable of influential friends, including his brother Troilus. He tells Pandarus:

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[1] For a related case study into the ambiguous import of the sacred and conventional expression "for God's love," heavily but variously used in *Troilus*, see Arner, "*For Goddes Love*."

[2] Hill, "Friendship in *Troilus & Criseyde*" 177-80, entertains the possibility that these subconscious desires are erotic in nature, directed vicariously toward either member of the affair. See Kelly, "Shades of Incest."

[3] "both *gentils* and *churls* are familiar with the basic skills of polite language, but they have totally different ideas regarding when and for what purpose they use their verbal skills. For *gentils*, politeness is associated with the ideal of interpersonal relationships, whereas for *churls*, it is just a means to flatter and control people for personal advantage" Shimonomoto, *Language of Politeness* 76.

[4] Pandarus' operations are too extensive to cover. One can turn, for instance, to his solicitation of Troilus to confess his sorrows at Book I. Or the direction of his lively conversation with Criseyde to prop up Troilus and ply her with proposals at the beginning of Book II. Or his letter-writing experiment, conceived of by him for Troilus, who needs persuading: when he offers her the letter and finds her offended, Pandarus responds by amusing Criseyde with jokes. His funny distractions enable him to have her write Troilus a letter in turn. See *Tr* II.1005-1233. Each of these scenes contain massive expansions to or alterations from the source text.

> "Spek thow thiself also to Troilus
> On my byhalve, and prey hym with us dyne."
> "Syre, al this shal be done," quod Pandarus,
> And took his leve, and nevere gan to fyne,
> But to his neces hous, as streyght as lyne. (1457-61)[1]

Having gotten Deiphebus to create an event set for the following evening, Pandarus, as the narrative describes in one breath, heads straight for Criseyde's—not Troilus'—house to fill her in on the latest crisis before Deiphebus reaches her. Upon hearing of Poliphete's legal action against her, Criseyde, demonstrating her discretion, declares "lat hym han al yfeere" ("let him have everything"), thus jeopardizing the dinner.[1] Pandarus lies to change her mind, saying he had just returned from a meeting with Deiphebus, Hector, and "myn oother lordes moo" whom he turned against her disputant (1477, 1481). At this point Deiphebus drops by, inviting her to tomorrow's junket. Without skipping a beat, the narrative cuts to Troilus, through Pandarus:

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[1] Shimonomoto shrewdly notes that the status difference between Deiphebus and Pandarus is indicated by their addresses to one another: Pandarus addresses Deiphebus with "ye" while Troilus' brother addresses Pandarus with "thee." Additionally, Pandarus' impositions are elaborate and indirect while Deiphebus' responses and commands are to the point. See *Language of Politeness* 82-84.

> Whan this was don, this Pandare up anon,
> To telle in short, and forth gan for to wende
> To Troilus, as stille as any ston. (1492-94)

Note how the go-between's beeline for Troilus parallels his trip to his niece: the sentences' similar phrasing ("done"; "and...gan...to"; "as...as") and coordinated/paratactic arrangement lend his motions a deliberate quality as Pandarus cuts from Deiphebus' to Criseyde's to Troilus' house, all of whom are jolted to attention and action by this man on a mission. Pandarus' outlook on life comes across in his disclosure to Troilus of his ingenious scheme for the future dinner, which includes this motivational, forceful piece of advice:

> "Now is tyme... To bere the wel tomorwe, and al is wonne.["] //
> "Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleyne;
> Lat nought for nyce shame, or drede, or slouthe!
> Somtyme a man mot telle his owen peyne...
> Thow shalt be saved by thi feyth, in trouth.["] (1497-1503)

Pandarus imagines not abstract contingencies but tangible future-presents, in which Troilus is to "bear" himself, or wear himself, any number of contrived ways in order to elicit the most sympathy in unsuspecting others, for a man must not wait for opportunities to appear, but must create them. The go-between coaches Troilus not only to dissimulate but to *perform* exaggerated, even ungentle or churlish acts that otherwise would shame him for their foolishness—hence his advice to overcome any natural disinclinations against the idea; hence the theatrical requirement in the event: Pandarus expects a good show from his friend, "lat se now how wel thow kanst it make" (1522). Most provocative is the fact that he rallies him to act thus in the name of truth: your "feyth, in trouth" will save you, promises Pandarus. Sincerity, honesty, and truth are revalued and repurposed for the fulfillment—by any means—of a strong desire. The hypocritical ethos can thus involve not only the deception of others, but momentary suspensions of personal beliefs, if not wholesale self-deceptions.

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[1] About this scene, Wetherbee notes that "Criseyde's swift assessment of the pros and cons of what she takes to be a real situation suggests an experienced, practical politician.... This passage, moreover, is just one of many that allude to the web of shared experience that joins uncle and niece" (*Chaucer And The Poets* 182).

Pandarus' hypocritical poetic is ends-driven. Honest means may be leveraged to achieve a given end; facts can be stretched, exploited, or omitted in the process. In this case, half-truths are stretched to their fullest extent and geared toward unrelated ends: that Troilus happens to be under the weather will only enhance his performance, even if less of a performance will be required of him.[1] Faithful and fictious accounts of events are blurred. Consider how the counselor enters the mind of his superior, telling him his thoughts:

> "Thow thynkest now, 'How sholde I don al this?
> For by my cheres mosten folk aspie
> That for hire love is that I fare amys;
> Yet hadde I levere unwist for sorwe dye.'
> Now thynk nat so...["] (1506-10)

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[1] "Thow shalt the bettre pleyne, / And hast the lasse need to countrefete, / For hym men demen hoot that men seen swete" (*Tr* II.1531-33)

Whether Troilus genuinely dreads that others will discover his love is beside the point,[1] because Pandarus constructs, in his thinking out loud, the prince's hopes and fears for him. Insofar as he can convincingly articulate Troilus' point of view, Pandarus is able to call the shots of his more powerful friend: he can now tell him point blank how he'll behave the next night: *You'll go to the meal. Your malady will overtake you. You'll have to lie down. And say... And lie you right there... Say....*[2] Rather than have Troilus determine his future, or have the narrator construct the stanzas and scene that follows, Pandarus invents a scenario and consequent reality based on that scenario.

In keeping with Fortune's modus operandi, Pandarus' direction comes with quite unpredictable, even chaotic consequences. At the feast, Deiphebus unwittingly brings the topic of discussion to Troilus by lamenting his illness, unbeknownst to the guests, who proceed to praise the man. All of this comes as a surprise to Criseyde; his praise from such praiseworthy guests boosts her attraction for Troilus and massages her ego: "with sobre cheere hire herte lough. / For who is that ne wolde *hire* glorifie, / To mowen swich a knyght don lyve or dye?" (1592-94, my emphasis). Hiding her emotions behind a mask of composure, she wonders: how much more glorious is Criseyde, who has such vital power over such a knight? And how much more powerful is Pandarus, who likewise controls the fate of others: asked by the host to explain Poliphete's supposedly renewed lawsuit against Criseyde, the go-between incites the guests to react to the rumor:

> Answerde of this eche werse of hem than other,
> And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien:
> "Anhonged be swich oon, were he my brother!

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[1] I'd imagine what he really fears is unrequited love.

[2] See *TR* II.1513-21.

> And so he shal, for it ne may nought varien!" (1618-21)

With the scene's conclusion, the dangers of "debate" are again thrown into relief. The impromptu conference consents to the hanging of a man (the condign punishment of a traitor) on unclear, perhaps made-up charges. When the guests proceed to visit the bedridden Troilus in an adjacent room, he gives them a "tretys and a lettre," found by chance, "as hap was" (1696-97); it comes from Hector, who seeks counsel regarding this Poliphete character, asking "[i]f swych a man was worthi to ben ded" (1699). The weight of this question is met with such distress by the guests that they leave the room to pore over it more closely. Is this but the latest of Pandarus' tactics? Did he plant the letter, found "as hap was" by Troilus—was he in on the setup, or did he gather as much only as Pandarus, his "tong affile[d]," rehearsed the situation to him just now (1681)? The narrative leaves us no time to study these questions, instead it takes us to Criseyde, whose uncle whisks her to her would-be lover, to whom he whispers in transit how to handle Troilus' critical condition. Leaving her no more time to deliberate whether she's really interested in him, Pandarus mediates her perception both of Troilus and the world, which he has her understand as a place of fleeting chances and cruel gossip; yet when he urges her, one imperative after another, to outwit the suspicions of the people, what he means to say is this: *I've constructed this entire show (for you); the people are deceived, the time won. Act now! Don't blow it!*[1]

The scene described demonstrates how grossly Pandarus exceeds the role of an advisor to his friend or niece, falling woefully short of the role when needed most.[2] Troilus and Criseyde rely on him alone as their sole voice of reason; the effects are devastating to the lovers, who come to adopt his tactics. Consider Troilus' euphoria following his amorous exchange with Criseyde after the dinner—evidently Pandarus' planning paid off. Speaking "in a sobre wyse" (III.237), the go-between insists he is no pimp; pleading from both sides of his mouth, Pandarus urges Troilus not to publicize this potentially shameful affair and seems to regret the situation he's placed his niece in even as he promises to help his friend seal the deal with her.[1] Assuming a mask of his own, Troilus, looking "[f]ul soberly" on the matchmaker with a gravity that masks his joy (359), consoles his counselor that he is not a bawd, despite all appearances. He declares: "this that thow doost, call it gentilesse, / Compassioun, and felawship, and trist" (402-03). In divorcing actions from their names and associations, cultural or metaphysical, the prince here plays not with words but ethical norms.[2] Troilus goes so far as to offer his go-between any of his sisters in compensation for his help—a telling testiment to a strange, exchange-based "friendship"![3] In another highly theatrical scene involving the false accusation of an innocent (if not fictitious) character, Horaste, Troilus, under Pandarus' direction,[4] deceives Criseyde into professing her loyalty to him.[5] For her part, Criseyde, when she realizes she will not, after all, return to Troy, leads on her lover with promissory letters, in which she made "swich festes / That wonder was, and swerth she loveth hym best,"—promises Troilus suspected of being "botmeles" or baseless (V.1429-31).[6] Just as he provides the conditions for the lovers to come together, so, too, does Pandarus equip Troilus and Criseyde with the tools to manipulate or even dismantle their relationship.

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[1] See *Tr* II.1727-50; imperatives: "Avyseth," "bygynne," "Sle naught," "Thynk," "com," "Thynk," "com," "Com," "bryngeth."

[2] See *Tr* V.1723-43.

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[1] *Tr* III.239-343.

[2] Contrast Troilus' name-switching with Reason's refusal to euphemize in the *Roman de la Rose*. The Lover objects to Reason's use of the word testicles (*coilles*) in her description of Saturn's castration; Reason wagers that any euphemism, like "relics," would invariably take on the former's negative connotations (*RR* 5535-54; 6928-7184). In this way, gentility, compassion, fellowship, and trust take on a tinged meaning with Troilus' application. Chaucer was quite alive to the manipulation of words and their meanings to justify morally questionable ends: see Ashley, "Homiletic Topos" 272-75, 283-86.

[3] *Tr* III.413.

[4] Pandarus literally directs the scene, eliciting the proper emotions from Criseyde and drawing the lovers within a single [camera] frame: "he drow [Troilus] to the feere,/ And took a light, and fond his contenaunce,/ As for to looke upon an old romaunce" (*Tr* III.978-80).

[5] *Tr* III.771-1253ff.

[6] With Criseyde's second letter, *Tr* V.1590-1631, Troilus begins to realize that his lover will not return. 1632-45.

Beyond Troilus and Criseyde, Pandarus proves capable of provoking his community into taking into consideration the murder of a suspected traitor, a phenomenon Chaucer's readers would have recognized.[1] As Joseph Hornsby and others have observed, medieval communities were charged with protecting themselves against their own misbehaving members and with resolving internal conflicts[2]; the danger arises, however, when the community fails to apprehend its lawbreakers, or, worse, when it covers for them, or, worse still, when it falsely accuses its own, resulting in intentional or unintentional injuries to a person's reputation (or worse, as entertained above).[3] Readers may also find in Pandarus' oft-proclaimed brotherhood to Troilus what amounts in Chaucer's age to "a possible implication of connivance and dubious alliance, of self-advancement that neglects the total Christian community" (Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 96). As a composite figure, Pandarus epitomizes the conflicted interests of the king's men, including Chaucer himself, who vacillated between Lancastrian and Ricardian factions.[4] The counselor's many oaths to fulfill his friend's desire may assure readers of his loyalties, but they fail to establish the moral worth of his character; mere shadows of their essential nature, his pledges instead cheapen the value of the oath itself, since they are driven by short-term results devoid of ethical considerations.[5] As Owen Boynton observes,

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[1] In Chaucer's day, defamation, like the suspicion of heresy, was thought "capable of affecting the fate of an individual's soul and the health of society" (Forrest, "Defamation" 142).

[2] Beard, *Justice of the Peace* 165-67. See Hornsby, *Chaucer and the Law*; Kramer, "Understanding Contagion"; Forrest, "Defamation."

[3] See Forrest, "Defamation."

[4] Sanderlin, "Chaucer and Ricardian Politics," makes the case for Chaucer's circumspection due to his potentially precarious position and double alliances.

[5] For unattainable trouthe, an ideal that can't be realized in a corrupt world, see Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 102-03; Boynton, "*Trouthe/Routhe*" 229-31. For Pandarus over-insistence on his good intentions, see Hansen, *Fictions of Gender* 165-66.

> Chaucer's *trouthe* can be understood as that ideal of integrity, probity, and fidelity, which, caught up in the irresistible movement of history and the compelling fluctuations of desire, can never be spoken for, or spoken of, under ideal conditions, and so is never a perfect bond of language. ("*Trouthe/Routhe*" 229)

Throughout the poem, Chaucer seasons his original sources with additional terms of *trouthe* only to showcase the falsehood of its invokers.[1] *Troilus*' degraded oaths, moreover, come with abundant allusions to treason.[2] When Troilus recognizes the brooch he gave Criseyde on Diomede's coat, carried back to Troy by Deiphebus, his sorrow runs deeper than the loss of a lover, as it dawns on him that "His lady nas no lenger on to triste" (*Tr* V.1666), bringing about the collapse of the prince's complete understanding of trust in human relations. In his apostrophe to his absent lover, Troilus asks his lady "Where is your feith, and where is youre biheste?... Where is youre trouthe?" (1675-76). What pains and amazes Troilus isn't simply Criseyde's lack of love for him, but her capacity to "holden [him] in honde" or deceive him with false promises (1680). If Criseyde cannot be trusted, if she of all people can prove so treasonous, as Pandarus invites Troilus to believe, thereby deflecting personal blame,[3] then "Who shal now trow on any othes mo?" (1681): what hope remains for honesty in this world? With her troth betrayed, Troilus' world-word concord is forever altered.[4] Troilus' crisis runs much deeper than Criseyde's perceived betrayal, for "the untrustworthiness of words is not actually a problem that any woman causes, although she may embody it and certainly suffers from it" (Hansen, *Fictions of Gender* 173). The problem lies in the haphazard world these words aptly and paradoxically suit. For better or worse, Troilus and Criseyde's love runs on the lies of romantic language. Might this console them?

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[1] Patterson, "Genre and Source" 208-10.

[2] Quinn, *Poetics of Disguise*, 57, provides some character references to treason and loyalty oaths throughout the *Troilus*. Very often, oaths and allusions to treason (or the punishment of traitors) are made in the same breath. Compare Pandarus' promise to relieve his friend of his woe or else undergo punishment: "have my trouthe, but thow it fynde so/ I be thi boote, er that it be ful longe, / To pieces do me draw and sithen honge!" (*Tr* I.831-33).

[3] *Tr* V.1738. See Boynton, "*Trouthe/Routhe*" 231.

[4] "Allas, youre name of trouthe / Is now fordon, and that is al my routhe" (*Tr* V.1687).

The ethical vacuum left in the wake of troth's betrayal enables new modes of depicting characters and actions in a morally nonbinding universe. That hypocritical characters should fare better in such a universe only makes sense. Much of the success of Pandarus' exploits is owed to his "misuse" of older systems of seeing the world—a good indication of this exploitation can be witnessed in his application of age-old aphorisms to profane ends. As Helen Andretta points out, when Pandarus first attempts to ascertain the cause of his friend's sorrow, he justifies his own failure in love by claiming his bitter experiences will only serve to better counsel the prince on how to act based on his firsthand knowledge. Andretta notes that Pandarus applies the same analogy of knowing one phenomenon by experiencing its opposite (namely what is sweet from what is bitter) as is found in *Boece* (III.m1); in the latter, however, the message is to pursue true and worthy ends once the false ones are discerned. By contrast, Pandarus' message "seems Ockhamist in its rendering because of the emphasis on the logic of words and on experience. His advice is particularly related to Troilus's situation and has no universal significance as does Boethius's passage" (Andretta, *Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde"* 53). Whether or not he identified with Ockham's skeptical views, Chaucer's *Troilus* features relativists who derive their moral codes from cultural and sensory experiences, not revealed truths. Chaucer's narrator gives these characters a platform to express their emotions, but as an audience member to his own story he limits himself to accessing these emotions, leaving readers to guess their authenticity. Through his descriptions of their facial features, body language, and speeches, Chaucer shows just how complicated emotions can be, especially when feigned.[1] That emotions are shown through the fictitious lens of poetry renders them more so.[2]

NARRATIVE, PERSPECTIVE, POSSIBILITY: DIOMEDE IN LOVE

Book II's dinner scene raises a number of unanswered practical and ethical questions. The episode's outcome is left untold, at least for the time being. This openness heightens the suspense of the Book, which ends mid-scene and on a question:

> But now to yow, ye loveres that ben here,
> Was Troilus nought in a kankedort,
> That lay, and myghte whisprynge of hem here,
> And thoughte, "O Lord, right now renneth my sort
> Fully to deye, or han anon comfort!"
> And was the firste tyme he shulde hire preye
> Of love; O myghty God, what shal he seye? (1751-57)

The fate of Troilus is sealed not by a goddess and omniscient narrator, but by another character and an audience. From the beginning, the narrator, inexperienced in loving and writing, lags behind the story. He disowns all responsibility for the events as they unfold, as though, as translator, he comes across them for the first time with his audience.[3] Rather than provide closure to an eventful scene, the narrative defers to this audience, placing its young lovers in Troilus' position, leaving them with his perspective to predict the lover's next move—it is as though the narrator were another character or audience member, genuinely asking what will happen next.[1] At times, it becomes difficult to trust the narrator as a commentator due to his narrative noninvolvement: so often does he refrain from intervening that when he does, the reader may be inclined to second-guess him, as when he repeatedly cites Pandarus' loyalty to Troilus, as though his unalloyed companionship were the sole source of his actions. Is he being ironic? Readers can't tell, since the narrator, a duteous—if human—translator of old books, subjects readers to stretches of silence, and omits much.[2]

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[1] "While emotions may be expressed more or less dramatically, they are never pure and unmediated drives or energies. They are always mediated because they are "upheavals of thoughts"—as Nussbaum has put it—that involve judgments about whether something is good or bad for us. These assessments depend, in turn, upon our values, goals, and presuppositions—products of our society, community, and individual experience, mediators all" (Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities* 191).

[2] Rosenwein asks, "doesn't genre determine emotional expression? It is not for nothing that Aristotle chose the topic of rhetoric as the place to discuss emotions. Rules of rhetoric and their mastery allowed medieval writers to heap praise on someone one day, excoriate him or her the next" (*Emotional Communities* 195).

[3] Quinn observes that deferrals to an *auctor* increase toward the end of the *Troilus* to offset immediate responsibility for the outcomes of the plot. *Poetics of Disguise* 70-71. On a political level, she claims that the narrator's—and ultimately Chaucer's—deferral "enables him to reflect and reflect upon matters of concern to himself and to the king" (71).

The narrator's value lies in his presentation of the same characters in different lights without "divulging" their true colors, which come out on their own.[3] Characters are moreover left to impact—indeed create—the story's scenes, to the point that it becomes difficult to sort the narrator's responses from his characters', resulting in a diversity of thoughts and perspectives at a given moment.[4] To return to another abovementioned scene, the "good plit" (*Tr* III.1139) or happy calamity manufactured by Pandarus and Troilus to wrest from Criseyde a pledge of faithfulness evokes strong responses from both lovers, bringing Criseyde to sigh, to protest, to cry, to exhaust her energies: “Allas, what myght I more don or seye?” (1050). To his regret and surprise, Troilus is disturbed by the scene he helped create:

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[1] "Throughout [*Troilus & Criseyde*,] the translator's comments, whether professing ignorance or offering explanation or disapproval, are part of a calculated performance, the effect of which is to draw the audience into the poem, to share in the work of creation and judgment he seems so inadequate to perform. Yet the fictionalization of the narrator-translator is not total.... Chaucer makes it almost impossible for us to distinguish between the performance and the reality, and gives us further encouragement to think and feel for ourselves" (Spearing, *Troilus & Criseyde* 10).

[2] For the concept of Chaucer's narrator as a character rather than a detached, free-floating persona, see Foster, *Chaucer's Narrators*.

[3] See Woods, "Chaucer the Rhetorician," who analyzes the different aspects of Criseyde between the first and second halves of the story: "Criseyde's character is an essentially simple one which has been elaborated from two perspectives: a sympathetic one, that of the counsel for the defense, and a critical one, that of the prosecutor. It is Chaucer's circling around her character, moving from the perspective of the counsel for the defense to that of the prosecutor, which gives us the illusion that Criseyde is a modern, "well-rounded" character" (34). Although I disagree with Woods that Criseyde and Pandarus are cast sympathetically in the first half of the *Troilus*, and critically in the second (or that Troilus is cast likewise but vice versa), I do agree with the idea of a multiplicity of perspective from which the narrative describes these characters, thus highlighting their possible hypocrisies.

[4] A simple but salient manifestation of this mixing of roles comes early in the poem, when readers are granted access to Pandarus' deep thoughts on how best to engineer the love affair between his friend and niece: readers are told the thoughts are his only after the narrator reiterates Geoffrey of Vinsauf's famous analogy of constructing a house: readers would expect the analogy to refer to the author's poem, *not* Pandarus' "real-life" romance. *Tr* I.1065-71.

> For everi tere which that Criseyde asterte,
> The crampe of deth to streyne hym by the herte.
> And in his mynde he gan the tyme acorse
> That he com there... (1070-73)
> And therwithal he heng adown the heed,
> And fil on knees, and sorwfully he sighte.
> What myghte he seyn?... (1079-81)
> Therwith the sorwe so his herte shette
> That from his eyen fil there nought a tere,
> And every spirit his vigour in knette,
> So they astoned or oppressed were.
> The felyng of his sorwe, or of his fere,
> Or of aught elles, fled was out of towne;
> And down he fel al sodeynly a-swone. (1086-1092)

Readers are again put in Troilus’ shoes, from which they are to witness Criseyde’s distress, which affects him physically: he hangs his head, he falls on his knees, sighs. A swarm of emotions overwhelms his person, causing competing thoughts to run through the prince’s head—*this is all Pandarus’ fault*, he thinks, *I had nothing to do with this* (1076-77, 1084-85)—and yet he can’t express himself externally, neither crying, nor speaking, nor acting at all. His confusion of sorrow, or (and?) fear, or (and?) any other feeling flees his body, causing him to swoon. With deftness the narrative denotes Criseyde's response (she screams or sobs audibly?) not by describing it but by referring to Pandarus' actions: "'O nece, pes, or we be lost!' quod he, / 'Beth naught agast!'" (1095-96). The characters' acts and reactions push forward the narrative without resorting to lengthy, external, authorial explanations. At the same time, uncertainty concerning how the scene plays out—and how the characters themselves perceive the scene—enriches the scene by multiplying narrative possibilities: does Criseyde realize that Troilus' jealousy of Horaste is a fabrication? The lines are unclear.[1] At the level of diction, uncertainty is felt through ambiguous language: when Pandarus rouses Troilus, the same emotive expressions of anger and sorrow—pointed questions, rebukes, deep sighs, sinking hearts, apologies—are rehearsed, only now they are applied to a playful, conciliatory banter between the lovers.[2]

The characters' mixed emotions and uncertainties about the future are conveyed through a fast-paced, conversational narrative that grants a multiplicity of perspectives across the dialogue-heavy poem.[3] This commitment to "ordinary talk" on Chaucer's part—which includes, indeed highlights the "conflicting opinions and motives" that the sort of philosophical investigation witnessed in *Boece* strains to reconcile or dismisses outright (Miller, *Philosophical Chaucer* 27)—results in an ambage-heavy, "painted process" that registers on the narrative level, whereby ambiguous language serves to portray artificial, or otherwise hidden gestures and emotions that don't align.[4] Diomede's courting of Criseyde displays this painted process quite prominently; he engages Criseyde in a formal language Chaucer would have been familiar with as a courtier.[1] The Greek knight conceals no emotion from his would-be lover, though readers are left unsure whether his polished emotions are real or feigned. The narrative leaves open the possibility that the nobleman's courting of Criseyde amounts to a game that only simulates Troilus' levels of love. Taking heed of Troilus' own body language—"For ire he quook"; "With face pale...No word he spak" (*Tr* V.36, 86-87)—Diomede, no novice in the "craft" of love (88-89), determines to keep Criseyde for himself: "This Diomede... Whan that he saugh the folk of Troie aweye, / Thoughte, '*Al my labour shal nat ben on ydel*[']" (92-96, my emphasis).[2] Unlike the Trojan prince, who falls in love with Criseyde through supernatural intervention the instant he sees her, Diomede's wooing is prompted by his rivalry with Troilus and Troy itself. The warrior feigned ignorance of the cause of Criseyde's sorrow and of anyone named Troilus: only one passing reference is made to "som Troian" not worth loving (877).[3]

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[1] See *Tr* III.1149-69.

[2] See *Tr* III.1149-83.

[3] "In Chaucer's narratives, people think about the future, and typically they find it uncertain.... For Chaucer... uncertainty extends to the narrator, and what is reached by the ending is only a hypothesis" (Ronquist, "Chaucer's Provisions" 94).

[4] Bailey, "Controlled Partial Confusion"; O'Brien, "Sikernesse and Fere." Also see Yoshiuki, *Structure of Chaucer's Ambiguity*, whose Appendix B provides a useful list of words indicating instability in select works. For a careful study of gesture see Benson, *Medieval Body Language* 82-84, 151-70; Windeatt, "Gesture in Chaucer." For speech see Shimonomoto, *Language of Politeness*.

Diomede's hypocrisy—his performance of falling for Criseyde and daring pursuit of her—affords Chaucer many syntactic and descriptive nuances as a poet and narrator. Determined not to waste his rescue mission or his courtship, the Greek fighter marries personal and national strategies upon overseeing Criseyde. The connection between the craft of love and the art of persuasion—and deception—is brought closer in this worthy knight's initial, friendly conversation with his captive, comprising over fifty lines of dialogue original to Chaucer. The narrative does not give readers any sense of Diomede's love for his captive, leaving audiences to wonder at the motive behind his courteous words. Diomede's diplomatic attempts at allaying Criseyde's sorrows cover a rich range of verbs of saying: Diomede falls forth in speech (gestural); he asks (interrogative), beseeches (metalinguistic/verbum dicendi), swears (representative), prays (representative), knows (representative), tells (verbum dicendi).[1] Criseyde's suitor additionally overwhelms her with subtle imperatives: I pray you, command me, take not, give me your hand, be not my foe, wonder not.[2] By contrast, many of Criseyde's replies are unspoken or bodily expressed: she answers little, hears not much of her suitor's tales, thinks her heart will burst, espies, sinks[3]; still, even she is affected by her captor's words: Criseyde thanks (expressive), promises to gladly do (commissive), accepts (declaration), trusts (representative).[4] So calculating is Diomede that he later feigns having business with Calkas as a pretense to speak with his daughter. Entering her tent the day she had planned to return home, Diomede stifles her plan not by playing the romantic, at least not initially; instead, he appears as her friend. Catching up over cakes and wine, the two first converse "of this and that yfeere, / As frendes don" (853-54); specifically, their discussion concerns geopolitical affairs: it is explained that Diomede

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[1] See Shimonomoto, *Language of Politeness* 52-71, 109-10. The Diomede episodes discussed in this section have analogs in two thirteenth-century works—Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Old French poem *Le Roman de Troie* and its Latin prose translation by Guido de Columnis, *Historia Destructionis Troiae*—but Chaucer's borrowings of Diomede's scenes are both minor in volume and replete with alternations. see Lumiansky, "Story of Troilus" 727, 730; Young, *Origin and Development*, "Chapter III: The Relations of *Troilus And Criseyde* To The *Roman De Troie* And To The *Historia Troiana*" 105-39.

[2] Compare Diomede's craftiness as a warrior: in Benoît's version, he is introduced as "mout fu d'armes engeignos" ("very cunning in war"; *Troie* 5216; Windeatt 80).

[3] *Tr* V.136-37.

> gan first fallen of the werre in speche
> Bitwixe hem and the folk of Troie town;
> And of th'assege he gan hire ek biseche
> To telle hym what was hire opynyoun;
> Fro that demaunde he so descendeth down

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[1] *Tr* V.107, 108, 109, 113, 117, 120, 150.

[2] *Tr* V.131, 132, 135, 152, 159, 162.

[3] *Tr* V.176, 178, 180, 182.

[4] *Tr* V.183, 186, 187, 188. I apply the categories to verbs of saying from Mazzon, ""Stylistic variation in verbs of saying in *The Canterbury tales*." Politeness theorists will notice that Diomede employs several of Leech's politeness maxims, which include Tact, Generosity, and Modesty. For a review of Leech's maxims see Shimonomoto, *Language of Politeness* 46-51.

To axen hire if that hire straunge thoughte
The Grekis gise and wekes that they wroughte; //
And whi hire fader tarieth so longe
To wedden hire unto som worthy wight. (855-63)

The narrative reports these items without commenting on the scene or otherwise interrupting it, letting readers make what they will of Diomede's topical shift from the Trojan war to the elicitation of Criseyde's personal opinions on the event, to more personalized questions on her impressions of Greek manners; in the same breath (the same sentence anyway), Diomede asks what has kept his prisoner unmarried for so long—remember it's only been nine days! As with their first conversation, Criseyde's response is ambivalent: she misses Troilus, loves him, but obediently answers Diomede. The narrative only obscures her thoughts: "It semed nat she wiste what he mente" (868): what does it mean that she "semed" not to know what was happening? A widow and ex-lover, she should know that knights don't just enter your tent for small talk.

The unmasking of Diomede's "true intent" does little to resolve the scene's ambiguities and ambivalences. As though to fulfill his resolve to secure the lady for political purposes, or to satisfy his competition with Troilus, Diomede recalls the morning he seized the bridle of Criseyde's horse and led her out of Troy, also remembered as the lovers' last moment together.[1] Actually, Diomede flashes back to this moment for the very reason of invoking Troilus, even though he'd pretended not to know the cause of Criseyde's sorrows even though he took good stock of the lover that very morning.[2] Whatever his motive returning to that day, Diomede reconstructs a past devoid of Troilus, who's just "nought worth the while" (882), and helps

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[1] *Tr* V.92.

[2] *Tr* V.85-90.

Criseyde imagine—and one day realize—an alternative future to what she at that instant envisions. To this end, the son of Tideus pulls out all the stops to *display* his real feelings for Criseyde. In a scene reminiscent of Troilus' antics, Diomede plays the romantic, making overblown promises, "if ye vouchesauf, my lady bright, / I wol be he to serven yow... levere than be kyng of Greces twelve!" (922-24), before going fully into romantic mode:

> And with that word he gan to waxen red,
> And in his speche a litel wight he quok,
> And caste asyde a litel wight his hed,
> And stynte a while; and afterward he wok,
> And sobreliche on hire he threw his lok,
> And seyde, "I am, al be it yow no joie,
> As gentil man as any wight in Troie. (925-31)[1]

A mere glance at this stanza reveals the mechanical nature of Diomede's self-exposure, a step-by-step process of blushing, stammering, and turning away; of stopping in silence, of finally throwing a sober look[2] on her and speaking, of speaking so much that he exhausts one day and asks Criseyde for one more, to "telle yow my sorwe" at even greater length (945). Again, it isn't clear whether Diomede's words and deeds are genuine, but it's obvious his words are effective enough to hold Criseyde's divided attentions, though she continues to equivocate, promising nothing yet entertaining the possibility that "so it happen may / That whan I se that nevere yit I say / Than wol I werke that I nevere wroughte!" (991-93). With this enigmatic concession, Criseyde affords herself unprecedented freedoms, including the unthinkable betrayal of Troilus. Already she prepares for such a future, albeit ambiguously, diplomatically:

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[1] Compare Troilus' claims and bodily responses at the beginning of Book III.

[2] Beginning to end, the characters' changing faces dominate the poem as a means of revealing inner states of emotion. Diomede's courtship betrays the limits of facial expression as indicators of genuine feelings. Not all characters can be read by their facial features: "when we examine the kinds of characters to whom Chaucer gives humoural descriptions, and those to whom he devotes affective passages, a clear distinction soon appears. Humoural physiognomy is associated with simple and lowly characters who act in the world of the fabliau, whereas affective physiognomy is used of aristocratic figures with more complicated inner lives" (Friedman, "Another Look at Chaucer" 149). See 151; Somerset, "Training the "Lewed" Gaze."

> "To-morwe ek wol I speken with yow fayn,
> So that ye touchen naught of this matere.
> And whan yow list, ye may come here ayayn....
> If that I sholde of any Grek han routhe,
> It sholde be yourselven, by my trouthe! //
> "I say nat therfore that I wol you love,
> N'y say nat nay... I mene wel, by God that sit above!" (995-1004)

Attuned to art of double-talk, Criseyde maintains a dual loyalty to opposite knights at this moment, which is expressed poetically in her mixed response to Diomede's entreaty to further speak with her: I'll gladly speak with you so long as you don't touch on this matter of love (what else would they speak of!?); come whenever you like; if there were any Greek to whom I should show compassion, it should be you... *not* to say I love you or anything (not saying I don't!). The story's unhelpful narrator fails to resolve this ambivalence, reporting to readers that he found "in stories elleswhere" that Criseyde gives Diomede her "herte" in order to comfort him of her (former? ongoing?) love for Troilus (1044, 1050); he can only suppose or guess, "I wene," that it takes Diomede a long time to secure his lady's love (1088).[1] Instead it is Criseyde who attempts to explain her situation and absolve herself of any pending betrayal when she concludes her convoluted consent to Diomede's advances with the claim, "I mene wel," a claim to sincerity not dissimilar to Diomede's above self-comparison to being a "gentil man." The scene—and poem on the whole—might advertise these noble values, but as their very lines indicate, readers have no way of gauging the authenticity of Diomede or Criseyde's integrity of intention, since both know how to play the game of love, as we have been told and shown all along. Indeed, all main characters in *Troilus* appear to trade in one sort of faithfulness for another, tarnishing their reputations as a result.[1]

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[1] *Tr* V.1086-92.

If Criseyde opens new possibilities for her future self, her latest suitor deceptively demonstrates how certain realities can be foreclosed. To a great extent, the creation of certain futures works hand in glove with the destruction of others. The only way Diomede can persuade Criseyde to abandon her hopes of returning to Troy is by convincing her of the city's imminent destruction. To do so, he repeats her father's prediction that Troy will and must be destroyed, therefore all hope for the place and its people must be abandoned.[2] As a politically savvy knight, however, Diomede should know that the fate of Troy rests not in the gods' hands, but in the Greeks': as they motioned for a prisoner swap in the past, so, too, can they sue for peace now. Readers familiar with the Troy story would have known that a peace proposal would have been accepted, since the city was brought down precisely through a false gesture toward armistice. If Troy must burn, it is because Diomede and the Greeks decided it to be so. Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy demands such an ironically deterministic ending, arrived at through the trickery of his characters and the reckless turns of two-faced Fortune.

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[1] In Troilus' case, this might be articulated as his manhood, his princely nobility, or his commitment to his country; for Pandarus', his kinship, or his own honor. Criseyde accepts Diomede's love but betrays Troilus', as she herself laments: "Allas, for now is clene ago / My name of troughe in love, for everemo! / For I have falsed oon the gentilsete / That evere was, and oon the worthieste!" (*Tr* V.1054-57).

[2] *Tr* V.897-917.

CONCLUSION

Are humans free? To what extent? Different thinkers give different thoughts on what have been unanswerable questions. All agree, nonetheless, that humans crave agency and enjoy the *idea* of willfully choosing, even if that choice entails deferring to God as the Disposer of their affairs.[1] Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy can't answer the unanswerable, but it does spotlight the power of imagination and willful resolve inherent in the author's literary hypocrites, who needn't attract negative religious connotations. The hypocrites witnessed above intend to take the reins of history in hopes of altering its course and theirs. They rightly discern their world as a game and play by its rules. In addition to the rhetorical and theatrical efforts they exert, their attitudes matter, a mix of optimism, fortitude, cunning, and a pinch of recklessness.

Diomede's freedom comes a long way from the abstemious lifestyle espoused by the Parson; while *Troilus* adopts an outlook similar to that witnessed in Chaucer's moral lyrics—a chaotic world ruled by Fortune—Diomede does not stop at Fortune's decrees, but instead reacts to them, manipulates them to his advantage. Though the narrative is silent on the issue, Diomede's actions betray his belief that he is free to take fate into his own hands and try his luck with an uncertain, contingent future. So, too, does Pandarus choose to facilitate the love affair for a better tomorrow; likewise, after much deliberation the lovers decide to enter their relationship.[2] In alluding to their wretched world as a fixed game, governed by an arbitrary arbiter and replete with external forces that dominate the subject, these characters conveniently deny responsibility for their many consequential actions.[1] The narrator himself insists upon excusing them, citing "*This* wrecced world" as the occasion for their shared betrayals, the result, like their self-seeking ambitions, of a human condition, not a female one (V.1817, my emphasis).[2] It is to the author's credit that he presents these characters' betrayals without identifying the rightness or wrongness of their words and deeds, but instead inviting the readers to evaluate them for themselves, as Sheila Delaney, Robert Payne, and others have each demonstrated.[3] As a poetic function, not a philosophical or theological one, the literary effects of Fortune and her human equivalents' forces produce "the delight and excitement of narrative. If humans never ascended on the Wheel of Fortune or never descended... there would be no stories" (Benson, *Troilus and Criseyde* 161). The "maker's" wrought, anaphoric renunciations and referrals that close his "little" book likewise play on the tropes of false modesty, *occupatio*, and *contemptus mundi*.[4] The closing stanzas don't only or simply declare their author's faith, as Robertson and others have shown,[5] but conform to a tradition that renounces the poetic work of profane love even as it celebrates its completion, the stacked and measured *Lo here*s saluting "the illusory loveliness of a world which is man's only reality... in the very lines that reject that loveliness" (Donaldson, "Ending of

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[1] Ockham considered this the best option. Human agency needn't be all or nothing, of course, a point admitted by Bernard of Clairvaux (d.1153), according to whom "there are no purely free agents and no such thing as absolute autonomy. One must choose to serve one power, one law, or another, and the one who attempts to serve only his own will comes no closer to escaping God's law than does the one who consents wholeheartedly" (Bugbee, *God's Patients* (forthcoming) np; see his Chapter Three, "Action and Passion in Bernard and Chaucer").

[2] For Pandarus' voluntary role as go-between, see *Tr* III.484-90, 1674-80. For Troilus' decision to pursue Criseyde, see I.379-85. Criseyde's freedom might best be demonstrated by her decision not to return to Troy, since no one prevented her from leaving, rather she alone "took fully purpos for to dwelle" (V.1029).

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[1] See for instance *Tr* I.138-40, 225-31, *passim.*

[2] Mann, *Feminizing Chaucer* 24.

[3] Delaney "Alienation"; Payne, *Key* 223. Compare Dinshaw, who makes a similar argument: "By figuring the role of the reader in the narratives (Pandarus in Lollius, the narrator in *Troilus*), Chaucer makes the act of critical reading a major preoccupation of the entire poem.... Reading in *Troilus and Criseyde* is dominated at last by a desire to flee uncertainty, a desire for order and stability.... But in *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer... not only acknowledges instability and disorder in human experience but also exposes merely expedient resolutions of such disruptions. The narrative itself resists expedient ending and final closure" (Dinshaw, "Readers" 87).

[4] Chaucer's "retractions" recur throughout his oeuvre. For his false modesty, see Donaldson, "Ending of *Troilus*" 84-86, 96-97; Olson, "Making and Poetry" 273-76, 289-90. Olson observes that Chaucer never identifies himself as a poet, rather, he humorously colors himself a "makere": "The poet has his eyes on the laurel, the maker on his audience and often—what may amount to the same thing—his purse" (288). According to Papka, "the choice for interpretation of the ending is not simply between sincere or ironic use of Christian topoi, but rather is to be found in the very status of topos as text" ("Transgression" 268). For the *contemptu mundi* trope, see 273, note 28.

[5] Robertson, *Preface* 501-02; Wetherbee, *Chaucer And The Poets* 22; and more recently, Murton, "Praying with Boethius." For a similar reading of Chaucer's Retraction, see Allen and Moritz, *Distinction of Stories* 55-56.

Troilus" 98). Were he sincere in his verses' disavowal, the poet wouldn't have taken the care to preserve them.[1]

Along similar lines, if the author or narrator refers to the world as an evanescent "faire" or amusement, the possibility is left open to play in this fair however one wishes, for if no rules govern the cosmos,[2] a person can choose which values to live for or die by—in Troilus and Diomede's cases, their religion is love, whose code of conduct condones deception, adultery, fatalism, and the destruction of a nation. Furthermore, morality in *Troilus* makes virtue of necessity, whereby a person's creed conforms to the order of the day and not the other way around. The world remains unfree except for the quick-witted and self-important Calkases and Diomedes among us—and nothing is wrong with this reality, not from their perspectives at any rate. As Troilus puts it, "'Men may the wise atrenne, and naught atrede'" (*Tr* IV.1456). How are readers to judge the story's characters, whose standards of goodness, such as loyalty, can appear to us untenable, as in Troilus' case, or inappropriately subject to revision (Pandarus, Calkas, Criseyde)? Are these "good" hypocrites, noble not churlish? How should readers understand goodness given that the quick-witted imposters prevail in *Troilus*? Ethically speaking, if values of goodness are contingent and, crucially, designed for a contingent world, governed by contingent-minded gods who, Loki-like, hold no lasting values of right or wrong, should readers then rejoice that Criseyde escapes Troy's destruction?[1] Shouldn't they be pleased with Calkas, who serves not only himself but the common good for the Greek people? These difficult questions must have struck a chord with Chaucer's politically unstable age, if not with the poet himself, who understood from first-hand experience as Justice of the Peace the values of oaths, reputations, and the consequences of their being compromised.[2] More disturbing is the prospect of community-wide corruption, prompted by corrupt leaders and their complacent populace.

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[1] The tradition is not exclusively Christian. Compare Ibn Ḥazm's (d.1064) renunciations at the end of his prosimetric treatise/storybook on love, *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāmah*.

[2] The most direct expression of this comes throughout the Knight's Tale, set in a miserable world ruled by hypocritical gods: unknown, loose in their oath fulfillments, and capable of great disguises. The exposition of Theseus' shrines reveals the gods' contradictory elements, with each seeking a different outcome for her or his servant. More disruptive elements flash across the lines. The temple of Venus, for instance, hangs on its walls a series of conflicting emotions along with the allegories that inspire them, including Pleasure, Hope, Charms, Force, Lies, and Flattery. See *CT* I.1925-27. The goddess' deadly weapon, love, conquers scores of heroes and kings; tellingly, her rule is described as an unmatched "las" or snare (1951); her unkind, blind—arbitrary—son Cupid stands before her with sharpened arrows, a clear indication of love's masquerading, appearing sweet but painfully misleading and often lethal. See 1623-24, 1965-66. Equally misleading is Mars, whose chapel walls commemorate, among others, the "derke ymaginyng" and "compassyng" or plotting of Felony; the red anger of "crueel Ire"; and more subtle elements capable of greater harm: "The smylere with the knyf under the cloke… The tresoun of the mordyrynge in the bedde" (1995-97, 1999, 2001). As if it weren't disordered enough, "Meschaunce" graces this temple with "disconfort and sory contenaunce" (2009-10). The sum of this tour through Mars' temple takes Sun Tzu's memorable dictum "All warfare is based on deception" to a new level (*Art of War* 6).

Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy stems from the construction of hypothetical but real social problems; his public services, their liabilities to boot,[3] enlivened him to the dangers of professional association, and to the power of narrative to describe, manipulate, and fabricate political affiliations. Perhaps this is why the straightforward moral is so often withheld from his poetry, and why irresolution and verbal ambiguity prevail.[4] Indeed, in Chaucer's works, verbal ambiguity and specious language regularly accompany social dissonance. I end with an analogy that speaks to this coupling, witnessed inside the House of Fame, full of rumors on any and every mutable matter under the sun, from war to marriage to government regimes: its spread of indiscriminate gossip, true and false together, is compared to an outbreak of fire, "that encresing ever moo... Til a citee brent up ys" (*HF* 2077-80). What begins in political gossip ends in real violence. As Chaucer also shows, fictitious words not only make their marks on the physical world, but can have far more lasting influences on a community’s social values.

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[1] The question can be brought closer to Chaucer's age thanks to the philosophers. The untroublesome John Duns Scotus (d.1308), for instance, posited that divine command determined truth, falsehood, goodness, and badness, a position held by Ockham alongside many theologians; God could choose, so He willed, to "revoke the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," in which case we could blamelessly kill others" (Denery II, "Biblical Liars" 124-25).

[2] See Beard, *Justice of the Peace*, "Chapter III: Development Until the Tudor Period" 45-71.

[3] Chaucer's relation to Richard arguably cost him his London post as comptroller, prompting his retreat in 1386 to Kent's quiet countryside, where he nevertheless remained a participant in public affairs as Justice of the Peace until the close of the decade (1385-1389). Dodd, "Changing Perspectives" 309; Galway, "Chaucer, J.P. and M.P." 30-31.

[4] See Donaldson, "Chaucer and the Elusion of Clarity" 23-27.

CHAPTER THREE: HYPOCRISY LOVES COMPANY (AND VICE VERSA): CHAUCER'S COMPANIONS IN GUILT

> Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou dost the same things which thou judgest. —Romans 2:1[1]

The previous chapter introduced the concept of the sinner who *wills* actions deemed immoral by medieval Christian standards, and took a few of Chaucer's hypocrites as cases in point. It's hard to conceive of the sinner as a victim of or slave to his vices when they yield his desired outcomes, or the hypocrite whose very worldview—a fickle, fortuitous world—mimics his everyday deceit. Since he writes in the tradition of court poetry, Chaucer's conception of the hypocrite escapes a strictly religious definition, which understands hypocrisy as a sin with spiritual weight. Still, his poetics of hypocrisy entails some notable traits: trickery, disguise, lying or bending words, and above all the skill of performance. These hypocrites willfully embrace their roles and impact their community and greater world, for better or worse: Pandarus first succeeds, then fails in securing for Troilus his love, while Calkas and Diomede win Criseyde and vanquish Troy. Given Fortune's rule, how are audiences to value these characters' actions? By their outcomes?[2] Why blame, why not *praise* opportunists for dissimulating in a fickle world in order to survive or succeed?[3] If audiences absolve these opportunists for their dynamic hypocrisies, be they diplomatic or destructive, why not abandon moral realism altogether?[4]

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[1] "Propter quod inexcusabilis es, o homo omnis qui judicas. In quo enim judicas alterum, teipsum condemnas: eadem enim agis quae judicas" (Douai-Rheims).

[2] A consequentialist, for example, would judge the rightness or wrongness of an act based on its consequences.

[3] Jay, *Virtues,* Chapters 2 and 3 recounts a long and convoluted history of lying in western political theory and politics. For hypocrisy as a mode of self-defense, see 133-34; for war as deception, 138-39.

[4] By moral realism, I mean the belief in objective moral values external to human experiences of or beliefs about them. By contrast, proponents of moral ant-realism argue that the moral values assigned to human actions are themselves man-made, the result, say, of human projection on valueless experiences, such as pain and suffering. See

This chapter seeks to answer these questions by focusing on Chaucer's hypocrites in relation to those with whom they interact in three of his *Canterbury Tales*: The Friar's Tale, the Pardoner's Tale, and the Clerk's Tale. I discuss Chaucer's representations of legal consent as an occasion for community-wide hypocrisy in these tales before rounding out the chapter with a brief envoy on the Merchant's Tale. These tales give readers ample opportunity to study hypocrisy in relation to the hypocrite's victims and accomplices. The degree to which these characters resist, perpetuate, or mimic hypocritical behavior will help further articulate Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy as well as tease out his poetry's conceptions and critiques of normative ethics in society. My central thesis is that Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy understands the crafty vice as a basis for social interaction with negative potentials for the upkeep of divinely sourced natural laws. At the same time, however, this hypocritical poetic envisions a creative and perhaps constructive hypocrisy divorced from its vicious connotations, and envisions a world free of moral absolutes, even if this world remains a fictional one, confined to poetry.

In earnest and jest, Chaucer pokes holes at social-moral constructs. In the words of Alcuin Blamires, "much of Chaucer's creative attention is devoted to highlighting fissures between the ethical and the moral, and (to the delight of the reader) devoted to disturbing the ossified gendering of ethical and moral definition that predecessors had applied" (*Chaucer, Ethics, Gender* 238). According to Lynn Staley, Chaucer's response to the institutional crises of his day was not to defend these institutions' claims to authority, but to reimagine executive power by taking it to its abusive extreme.[1] Like Blamires and Staley, unnumbered scholars have

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Joyce, "Moral Anti-Realism." To the moral anti-realist, because our "ordinary moral thought and discourse involve untenable ontological commitments," all moral beliefs and claims are untrue (Olson, *Moral Error Theory* 1). For a useful introduction to moral skepticism, see the opening chapter to Sinnott-Armstrong, *Moral Skepticisms*, "What is Moral Epistemology" 5-15, and Zimmerman, *Moral Epistemology*.

[1] See Staley, *Powers of the Holy,* "Chaucer and the Postures of Sanctity" 179-259.

moreover done well to articulate the cultural prejudices Chaucer's stories so rudely magnify, such as the gendered, objectified, and silenced roles written for certain characters.[1] In this Chapter, I view Chaucer's *Tales* as an ethical catalogue, although not a *distinctio* in Allen and Moritz's allegorical sense: his *Tales* are far more open to interpretation than they allow.[2] Chaucer's *artes laudandi* and *vituperandi* are not always cut and dry—his wheat and chaff commix.[3] Thus while I don't adopt Allen and Moritz's classifications or interpretations of the *Tales*, I take from them the premise that Chaucer's stories get at related if not identical, particular social issues that address ethical matters. Rather than assume that Chaucer works with a consistent and identifiable "normative array," I see Chaucer as attempting to define and challenge just what his culture's normative and/or universal ethics are; unlike the "sub-literary and utilitarian" collections whose exempla form, say, a theological array, Chaucer's court poetry fails to produce a singlular, doctrinally pointed, didactic message.[4]

When it comes to hypocrisy, two relevant ethical peculiarities frame Chaucer's poetics. The first is that sin (or crime, or guilt) acts on communities of individuals. Recall Augustine's account of stealing pears: by his reckoning, "had I been alone I would not have done it (I remember thinking so at the time), yes, I would definitely not have done it alone. So what I loved about it was participating with others in doing what I did" (*Confessions* II.8). The second peculiarity speaks to the extent to which a prevalent vice is tolerated and accommodated within a given community. A case in point that bears on Chaucer's poetry is the medieval merchant, praised by the morally ambiguous Man of Law[1] for his prudence, sense of adventure, and above all the tales he brings home, "bothe of pees and of debaat" (*CT* II.130).[2] Condemned but relied on, merchants testified to the hypocrisies of overlapping institutions. While condemned by the Church for their fraudulent and usurious practices,[3] secular rulers, local communities, and the Church itself relied heavily on merchants.[4] Their indispensable influence would ultimately turn the tide of morality itself. Conscientious merchants who'd profited illicitly on interest tried to secure their restitution through massive gifts to the Church, sometimes in exchange for absolution.[5] Meanwhile, local communities bent market laws to their advantage, while court rolls indicate the readiness of many traders to work "beyond both moral norms... even the more pragmatic social norms of their community" (Davis, *Market Morality* 456).[1] Social customs can thus bend or break the law, be they human or divine.[2]

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[1] See for instance Blamires' readings of the Miller's and Second Nun's Tales in *Chaucer, Ethics, Gender*, esp. 53-54, 210-11.

[2] "The normative array or *distinctio* is essentially the same, but procedurally just the opposite; under this principle a single idea or thing is examined by subdividing it into its kinds, or parts, presumably exhaustively. Both typology and the *distinctio* are associative in their logic, and each tends to generate the other. A group of typologically related things, once related and named, forms a *distinctio*; the parts of a *distinctio*, once assembled and listed, are very often typologically related" (Allen and Moritz, *Distinction of Stories* 85-86); "The *distinctio*, most simply, is a list of the allegorical meanings of a thing. More elaborately, it is a list of the characteristics of a thing whose allegorical meanings all refer to the same object. Most broadly, in the use reflected in the practice of High of St. Cher, the *distinctio* becomes any classification of kinds considered as a meaningful and normative array" (90).

[3] See Allen and Moritz, *Distinction of Stories* 66.

[4] "the term 'normative array' really means only what a distinctio – or in broader terms, the mode divisivus of the forma tractandi – presumes: that is, since any medieval whole has parts, one can by inspecting the parts arrive at some conception of the whole. The fact that medieval exempla tend so often to occur, in medieval literature and in sub-literary and utilitarian collections, not singly or one at a time but in multiple, suggests for any such group of exempla the probability of a governing or outlining distinctio which implicitly arrays them, and whose name they, as an array, normatively define. This way of thinking is both natural and obvious for an age which wished to consider itself empiricist, and therefore confident of the meaningful existence of particulars, and at the same time metaphysical and theological, and therefore willing to think about particulars, in terms of normative universals" (Allen, *Ethical Poetic* 105).

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[1] See Chaucer's General Prologue profile of the sergeant at law, *CT* I.309-30. For negative conceptions of the lawyer-as-liar in the ancient and medieval world, see Brundage, "Vultures, Whores, and Hypocrites."

[2] The praise of medieval merchants appeared with the rise of economic nationalism. See Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought* 111-15, 118-23, 207. Europe's profit economy reversed the stigma of commerce so completely that by the thirteenth century "William Peraldus... included a moral justification of commerce per se in the midst of treating avarice in his very popular *Summa de vitiis*—intended as an aide for composing sermons to be preached, among other congregations, to the same urban populations which provided the manpower for this now valorized commercial activity" (Newhauser, "Introduction" 4-5).

[3] For an overview of medieval market deceptions and vices, including avarice, usury, false oaths, weights, and wares, see Davis, *Market Morality* 49-83. For ancient and medieval Christianity's rejection of usury as a mortal sin see Wood, *Economic Thought* 159-66.

[4] See Wood, *Economic Thought* 167. "The papacy was obliquely involved in lending money at usury to the clergy so that they could pay the money back to it in the form of taxes" (172). For cases in which usury was both practiced and condoned by many (while condemned by most), see 172-73, 204-05.

[5] The practice was critiqued by laymen and ecclesiasts alike. See Wood, *Economic Thought* 169-71, 186-87.

On the face of it, medieval ethicists recognized a natural law rooted in eternal law; like Plato and Aristotle, they point to positive law as a convenient embodiment of natural law.[3] Thomas Aquinas conceives of natural law as knowable by nature; it allows humans to "act freely and in accordance with principles of reason," which gives them their practical rationality (Murphy, "Natural Law Tradition" §1.1).[4] In the realm of canon law, the *Decretum Gratiani* espoused several foundational moral truths, such as the recognition of natural rights for individuals, human equality and liberty, and the doctrine that political power originates from the people who have entrusted that power to their ruler.[5] Despite all this, all manner of inequality and injustice persisted, and history has shown more than a few rulers abusing the power entrusted them. Do they act unnaturally and irrationally in such instances, or can their abuse proceed from their freedom to pursue the interests that please them? More disconcerting are the episodes of abuse that *aren't* recognized as unnatural, but are rather justified as rational, good decisions.[1] Even neutral decisions prove difficult to sort: medieval theologians and legislators differentiated between human and divine laws, but accounts of how they diverged and intersected in matters of agency and goodness aren't always clear.[2] If they do exist, moral principles can only spring from a divine source, such as inspired scripture, but the source itself may not be believed in for any number of reasons.[3] And if moral principles exist in Chaucer's or any time, laws remain human-enforced, subject to revisions and rejections.

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[1] In Newmarket and Clare, the administrative positions (such as bailiff, constable, ale taster, and juror) were filled by a wide number of families; the compositions of a town's officials and jurors alone would have "had a demonstrable impact on how market laws were interpreted. The regulations could not be enforced to such a stringent level as to antagonise a major portion of the community, especially when the enforcers themselves had a vested interest in the prosperity of retail trade" Davis, *Market Morality* 297. Davis echoes economic historian Richard Britnell's finding "the lenient punishments of trading offenders, in conjunction with the regularity of breaches of the assize, mean that it is inconceivable to think that there was any close connection between legal and moral precepts in the late Middle Ages…. Indeed, many medieval moralists warned that the law was not upheld strictly enough and market traders were negligent of their own spiritual welfare. If all assize presentments were effectively regarded as taxes by the public and officials, then moral considerations and criminal associations were perhaps being negated under such generalised accusations of malpractice. The assizes had become another means of assuaging collective guilt about not upholding the strictest moral standards in the face of the reality of everyday life"321-22; see 381-82, 450-51, 455-56.

[2] Denery II, "Biblical Liars" provides a relevant survey of medieval theological stances on lying from Augustine to Scotus. The author suggests that cultural circumstances over the centuries led to technical exceptions to lying-as-a-sin in the area of intentionality. "Perhaps every lie is a sin—indeed, Scotus is clear, as clear as Thomas, Alexander, and Augustine were before him, that every lie is a sin—but this does not prevent us from sometimes recognizing the need and even the merit in telling them" (126).

[3] For Plato and Aristotle on natural law, see Rommen, *Natural Law* 16-17.

[4] See Murphy, "Natural Law Tradition" §1.2.

[5] Kilcullen and Robinson, "Political Philosophy" §6.

Alternatively, if moral principles don't exist, morality diminishes to a mental construct. Objects, acts, or situations are not factually good or bad. Moral utterances reflect personal or collective feelings but not objective truths or facts. With this, "moral obligation, moral value, moral desert, moral virtue, and moral permission" go out the window (Joyce, "Moral Anti-Realism" §4). If morality doesn't come from a divine source, goes the anti-realist argument, it must come from ourselves and the public in which we find ourselves; man is left to think things good or bad, to measure everything.[4] However Chaucer regarded the laws of his day, his tales entertain different societies and cultures with dissonant valuations of right and wrong.[5]

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[1] Take, for instance, King Edward I's expulsion of the Jews from England or the persecution that fell in its wake.

[2] Although he affirms the existence of positive law (laws reliant on human authority), Thomas struggles to demonstrate how it derives from natural law without compromising the civilian's agency; see Murphy, *Philosophy of Positive Law*, "Chapter 2: Law's Positivity in the Natural Law Jurisprudence of Thomas Aquinas" 48-116.

[3] For Mackie, the sheer multiplicity of moral codes, many of which are unnatural in their transcendence of or opposition to personal intuitions and feelings, seriously challenges any claim to moral objectivity. See Mackie, *Ethics* 36-42.

[4] See Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution*; for a survey to and defense of moral error theory see Olson, *Moral Error Theory*. For a defense of moral realism, see Ritchie, *Morality to Metaphysics*; Lillehammer, *Companions in Guilt*.

[5] The Jewish community of the Prioress' Tale unlawfully murders an innocent schoolboy in retaliation for their "lawes reverence" they feel the boy has challenged (*CT* VII.564), while the Sultana of the Man of Law's Tale, aided by likeminded officials, conspires the murder of several innocents in the name of her sacred law. Whether or not Chaucer believed in such unjust mischaracterizations, he certainly had no difficulty entertaining morally divergent communities.

BLIND JUSTICE AT CHAUCER'S CONGRESS

One of Chaucer's most subtle expressions of a community's collective responsibility and the revaluation of norms comes at the end of his General Prologue, where the pilgrims elect Harry Bailly as their guide to Canterbury. The pilgrims arbitrate the value of a social practice when they unanimously consent that Bailly "wolde been oure governour," ruling over them in "heigh and lough," that is, in everything (*CT* I.813-18).[1] At a basic level, the pilgrims' decision to vote in Bailly as their official conductor strikes one as a bit inappropriate, given his social status and economic interest in hosting their return supper (796-801), not to mention his intention to "maken... disport" (775) along their pilgrimage, a rite that in essence would have meant "staying on the straight road and not "wandering by the way"" (Sumption, *Age of Pilgrimage* 8).[2] In agreeing to have the Host govern them for the duration of their journey, the pilgrims participate in a community-based revaluation of what it means to make a pilgrimage; this revaluation of social norms suggests the ease with which normative ethics may be enacted or tweaked according to the will of a people. In other words, decisions can be legitimated so long as enough parties consent.

In a similar manner, the concession to the Host in the General Prologue amounts to a conscious decision on the pilgrims' part to relinquish their decision-making power for the sake of the Host and his game. Harry Bailly's insistence that the pilgrims conform to his governance, and that gainsayers endure stringent financial penalties if they “rebel” against his rule (*CT* I.833),[1] confirms a general suspicion of the socially repressive nature of this particular fellowship, which one scholar argues mimics that of a guild.[2] In Chaucer’s age, unanimous assent would have (on certain occasions) been in order in guilds.[3] From a moral perspective, the pilgrims’ unanimous decision reverses the famous Roman legal maxim, phrased thusly by the French bishop and count William Durant the Younger (d.1330): “*Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus approbari debet*” (“*What touches all must be approved by all*”; Fasolt, “Quod omnes tangit” 225-26).[4] anything is acceptable so long as all—or all who matter—approve. In agreeing to a dubious norm, the riders relinquish moral responsibility, absolving themselves of praise or blame. All are guilty. All are innocent.

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[1] Writing on the contractual nature of the referendum, Joseph Hornsby notes the pilgrims' repetition of the Host's conditions, which ensures "that both parties to the proposal are aware of and agree to its precise terms" (*Chaucer and the Law* 81-82).

[2] At least in theory. In practice, Chaucer may have amused himself and audiences with the fact that the Canterbury pilgrimage was, indeed, a privileged distraction. For the subversive and sacriligous controversies surrounding pilgrimage see Carlson, "Robberies" 44-49. A social inferior to several of the pilgrims, Bailly's ascendancy "marks the final stage of the narrator's abrogation of responsibility for the conduct of the story. Though the luck of the draw (doubtless obsequiously rigged by Harry) assigns the first tale to the Knight, it has been made elaborately clear that the subsequent proceedings will have a life of their own; any order we are able, "of our curteisye," to detect in them will be a product of interactions that have little to do with traditional social values" (Wetherbee, *Chaucer* 38).

Insofar as the pilgrims resemble a parliamentary body,[5] their vote’s implications resemble that of *Troilus’* Trojan assembly, which ignored the concerns raised by concerned members.[6]

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[1] See *CT* I.805-06, 833-34.

[2] See Turner, *Chaucerian Conflict* 151-52. Although guilds claimed to be voluntary, artisans had no practical choice but to join the guild of their craft to secure their social and professional viability. Pappano makes the case that John of the Miller’s Tale lacks affiliation with a guild, which leaves him open to public ridicule, unprotected by his brothers. See Pappano, ““Leve Brother”” 261-63; see 264-66.

[3] Pappano, ““Leeve Brother”” 251, note 15. For the egalitarian nature of craft guilds see 251-52 and notes.

[4] I use this phrase to convey a sense of consent among individuals and not communal consent writ large. The phrase’s medieval applications in relation to consent on matters pertaining to the body politic remain a contested topic. Its restricted Roman usage specified groups of individuals in the sphere of private law, such as lawsuits. Many features of this limited sense persist in Chaucer’s age; still, by the close of the thirteenth century, “[r]enewed familiarity with Roman law, the recovery of the political theory of Aristotle, with its fully developed doctrine of the common good, and... the maturing of secular states directed by increasingly sophisticated structures all over Europe... culminated in the elaboration of constitutional theories and representative institutions, which combined to give proper form to the idea that public power derives from the people” (Fasolt, “Quod omnes tangit” 232). See 227-228, 232-33. A man of the church and world, Durant used this phrase when discussing the possibility that the pope or secular rulers convoke general councils composed of good advisers when enacting a law or ruling. See 234-40; see 246. “The maxim... meant that the people had a duty to assist in determining the proper course of action to take in fundamental questions of justice” (247). For a study into the development of ecclesiastical, feudal, and parliamentary structures of representation and consent, see Clarke, *Representation and Consent* 5, 13-14, 259-68, 311-16.

[5] At least one scholar likens the General Prologue scene to parliamentary procedure: Giancarlo, *Parliament and Literature*, 172-73, goes so far as to count the pilgrims’ voting in of Bailly to guide them as the first vote in secular literature. See *CT* I.775-87, 810-21.

[6] See *Tr* IV.211-217.

The episode called into question the intentions informing the parliament's decision making and drew the narrator's blame that these men should fool themselves to justify the unjustifiable and end up the cause of their own ruin.[1] Even the ruling class can justify offensive actions. The narrator ascribes this to a "cloude of errour" that impedes them from discerning "[w]hat is best," yet the parliamentarians know exactly what they want in this instance, and consciously ignore all other options (*Tr* IV.196-200).[2]

Chaucer's cynical assessment of the Trojan assembly carries over to his Canterbury "compaignye," a category well thought of by many recent scholars. To list a few prominent readings, David Wallce optimistically interprets Chaucer's Canterbury company as a poetic application of the social, political, and economic energy surrounding contemporary guilds, then subject to parliamentary scrutiny. For him, this voluntary "urban association" exists to instill solidarity among its constituents (*Chaucerian Polity* 154).[3] Gervase Rosser supports Wallace by asserting that "the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries stand out as the period of maximum proliferation of new fraternities" ("Parish and Guild" 33). Matthew Giancarlo similarly acknowledges Chaucer's debt to associational formations; equating the pilgrim assembly with parliament, he considers the General Prologue to rehearse "the specific, real-world practices of parliamentary assembly and *parlement*" (*Parliament and Literature* 170): the Prologue not only makes poetic use of the various estates, but also the *shires* or administrative districts that "gathered only at parliament-time," a feature that gives credit to the idea that Chaucer drew on the world of parliament for the poetic purpose of capturing "a comprehensive and geographically national "portrait"" (170-71). Chaucer's politically neutral "representation *of* representation" through "the developing sense of *parlement* and the developing institutions of parliaments" enables him to show in his poetry previously unseen social persons (177-78): Harry Bailly plays the "speaker" of the twenty-nine pilgrims that comprise his small "commons" (174). Paul Strohm shares Giancarlo's aesthetic sentiment that Chaucer creates "a socially diverse group drawn from the most dynamic fourteenth-century social strata, whose social and vocational conflicts will provide good possibilities for staging a diverse collection of tales" (*Social Chaucer* 28), but rejects the notion that the pilgrims depict "an accurate cross-section of late fourteenth-century English society" (67); rather, the pilgrims represent a utopian community that persists in its efforts to resolve conflict and achieve social cohesion.[1] Each of these interpretations of the Canterbury company shares in its optimism about a real or potential social development in late fourteenth-century England, one that celebrates the formation of the diverse elements into a unified body, gathered under such common ideals as brotherhood, the common good, or justice.[2]

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[1] *Tr* IV.185-86.

[2] The 2003 destruction of Iraq is just one of countless operations that have been built on known deceptions, sold to a willfully gullible public to secure ulterior ends.

[3] See Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity* 83, 90-94; *Rolls* VII 122.

Their optimism notwithstanding, these scholars temper their narratives of fourteenth-century progress with the admission that the new political and economic entities of the later Middle Ages, in cutting across strata, threatened to disrupt standing social practices by enabling "upstarts" such as the petty aristocracy to create temporary forms of association, including "affinities, congregations, confederacies, covens, and other gatherings," associations that would wield coercive economic or political control or, in the case with craft guilds, incite economic or civil disturbance (Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow* 57; 59; 61). Given late fourteenth-century London's broad suspicion of associations for fear of intrigue, it makes sense that guilds and other coalitions would be thought of as potential sites of disturbance and betrayal. The associations themselves regulated against internal unrest,[1] and at the same time shielded its members and propped up their reputations,[2] giving special incentive (or peer pressure) for "voluntary" members to join.[3] Even as these new groups produced an ideology that would inspire a poetic of "civil order, sworn association, the common good, voluntary restraint, princely redress, and selfless mediation" (73),[4] because these conflicted ideas remained subject to the manipulation of "any of the contestants for political power" (73), not all literary depictions were so positive.[5] In Chaucer's *Tales*, readers are shown varieties of questionable communities, subject to their microlanguages.

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[1] See Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 144-45, 154-57, 179-82.

[2] For two recent studies that cast medieval guilds in an overwhelmingly favorable light as community- and charity-promoting establishments, see Rosser, *Art of Solidarity*; Dumolyn, "I Thought of It at Work." For the rise and fall of London's guilds, see Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, "From Guilds to Companies" 199-234.

Rather than construct positive images of social cohesion amidst this time of social exclusivity and instability,[6] Chaucer gives us pilgrims who, through their tales, reveal the interpersonal hypocrisies that belie oath-bound or otherwise sacred or legal relationships: essentially, they're based on reciprocal interests spurred by selfish ambitions.[7] Very rarely do associations form in these tales with such ends in mind as the common good or diplomacy over violence. Once stripped of their noble ideals, oaths become the justifications of such acts as adultery (Franklin's Tale), forced marriage (Wife of Bath's Tale), and the dark art of alchemy (Canon's Yeoman's Tale). The individuals who come together do so on grounds that shake the foundations of traditional medieval morality.[1] Chaucer's hypocrites point out the doubleness of their culture and challenge the assumption that the natural laws observed in Chaucer's day dictate the actions of man and not the other way around, a prospect that lends the *Tales* cautionary weight, leveled not against the charlatains who set their minds to arts unknown so much as the unknowing pupils who fall for their mechanics.

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[1] See Turner, *Chaucerian Conflict* 143-45; Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity* 94. That ordinances should work to suppress violence and other infractions attests to their problematic presence within these associations.

[2] Compare Pappano, ""Leve Brother"" 253: "The Miller's attempt to appease the Reeve, "leve brother Osewold," in terms similar to the Host's—here the authority in charge of the storytelling—reflects a... movement away from a higher, external authority towards a fraternal negotiation of differences."

[3] See Rosser, "Parish and Guild" 36-38. As he notes, guilds were more exclusive than parishes in that members enjoyed a higher degree of social mobility and economic independence. See 33, 35. "Guilds repeatedly found ways to link their goods to the benefit of the commons and the realm, thus seeking to justify and perpetuate their claims to product monopolies and to elevate their own place in the social order. Their sense of corporate brotherhood... is hence projected onto their privileged understanding of the good of the entire city and/or realm—and in a reverse logic, protecting the realm means protecting the guild" Pappano, ""Leve Brother"" 254. See Davis, *Market Morality* 217.

[4] See Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow* 70-72; Middleton "Public Poetry."

[5] Suspicion against guilds would lead to their crackdown and eventual abolishment with the Henrician Chantries Act of 1545 and Edwardian Chantries Act of 1547. See Kreider, *English Chantries* Chapters 7 and 8, 165-210.

[6] See Kermode *Medieval Merchants* 12-14.

[7] This may explain why Chaucer's tales so often involve, in one form or other, business and marriage.

THE DEVIL'S UNKIND TO HIS OWN: THE FRIAR'S TALE

The mockery of sworn association comes out starkly in the Friar's Tale, or Brother's Tale,[2] which plays heavily on the term, brother being "a man bound to another by an oath of loyalty."[3] The two main characters, maliciously disguised as bailiffs, insist upon the term of endearment, employing it in their discourse no fewer than 18 times. That the criminal-minded characters of these two tales are even able to enter agreements with one another lends credence to the moral anti-realist's assessment of promises as "a device which enables people whose motives are mainly selfish to give one another reciprocal non-simultaneous assistance with consequential benefits to all" (Mackie paraphrasing Hume, *Ethics* 114). Only the like-minded can enter gentlemen's agreements, and in the Friar's Tale, hypocrisy extends beyond the perpetrator of the crime in question. It revolves around a racketeering summoner whose fraudulent acts are highly hypocritical. The scenes described surprisingly lack metapoetic commentary: the narrative merely describes hypocrisy in action without identifying or evaluating it for the audience. Although he calls his summoner a “false theef” (*CT* III.1338) and makes occasional asides throughout the tale that describe him in unflattering terms in order to annoy the Summoner, the Friar leaves his audience appreciating the summoner’s doubleness with minimal direction. The irony in the exposition speaks for itself when the narrative describes a strict archdeacon who rigidly punishes fornicators, witches, pimps, slanderers, adulterers, church robbers, and other despised antisocial persons, whose very circles the summoner, the archdeacon’s faithful servant, “redy to his hond” (1321), traverses. Professionally speaking, the Friar’s character plays multiple parts: “He was, if I shal yeven hym his laude, / A theef, and eek a somnour, and a baude” (1353-54). Possessing the diligence and skills of a clever imposter, this go-between runs a smooth operation, fabricating a summons at will and relying on a network of “bawdes” and “wenches”—ever at *his* beck and call, “redy to *his* hond”—to gather intelligence as his “approwours prively” or secret agents (1339, 1343, 1355, my emphasis).[1] Robbing the robbers and the robbed, the summoner dominates the very market his church boss tasks him to shut down; his peculiar talents and interests enable him to employ sly lechers and other fornicators for his monetary advantage.[2]

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[1] Chaucer's shady pledgers are not without literary precedent. Compare the written contract Theophilus creates and enters with the Devil (*SEL* "St. Theophilus"; he has it voided), or the oath Herod upholds to Salome, which obligates him to behead John the Baptist. See Matthew 14:1-.11. "Because deceptive speech violates the fundamental social and divinely sanctioned compact on the function of speech, for [the pastoral writers inheriting Augustinian doctrine on lying] it threatens not just religious teaching but all honest communication between human beings, all basic social institutions which depend upon trust in the spoken word" (Craun, *Lies, Slander, Obscenity* 47). See 45.

[2] The term *friar* derives from the Old English *frere* or *fredre*, ultimately from the Latin *frater*: brother, friend, or sibling. See *OED* s.v. friar (n.). That this tale is presented by a friar only heightens the hypocrisy surrounding brotherhood, since the Friar himself is a hypocrite: Huberd's portrait counts as one of the more biting satires in the General Prologue. See *CT* I.208-69. This friar's value, like the Pardoner's, lies not in his sincerity but in his ability to expand on the world of hypocrisy beyond himself.

[3] *MED* s.v. brōther (n.), 4a. For brief treatments of brotherhood in the Pardoner and Friar's Tales, see Strohm, *Social Chaucer* 96-99. In the Pardoner's Tale, this term of union is invoked three times to describe the rioter's bonds to one another, twice by the rioters themselves. See below.

Eventually, this double agent’s operations bring him into contact with an unfamiliar yeoman, whom he meets en route to a typical robbery. Their dialogue attests to Chaucer’s alertness to the theatrical nature of hypocrisy. Asked about his plans for the day, the summoner clothes his intention to defraud an old widow in ambiguous language; he says he intends to

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[1] See *CT* III.1355-74.

[2] According to Hahn, archdeacons and their subordinates really did crack down on the sins of “ordinary folk.” See Hahn, “Chaucer’s *Friar’s Tale*” 74-75.

"ryden, for to reysen up a rente / That longeth to my lordes duetee" (1390-91), which is technically true—the summoner does intend to collect a rent, though his lord will likely never see it. Intrigued, the yeoman then asks the summoner if he is a bailiff: the summoner lies in the affirmative. The yeoman lies in turn, claiming to be a bailiff, too, and promptly offers his newfound brother gold and silver with no strings attached. Upon their professional lie and the empty promise of wealth is their brotherhood established. The two seal their bond with a handshake, as though to mock the gesture's real-world applications:[1] each "in ootheres hand his trouthe leith, / For to be sworne bretheren til they deye" (1404-05). One can't help but see the sad joke that "troth/truth lies" in the phrase "trouthe leith"; in a variant text the line reads "trouthe pleith" for it to mean "each pledged his troth of allegiance to the other," though one could also see a pun, "trouthe pleieth": truth plays.[2] Whether Chaucer intended something like these meanings for this phrase is unknowable, but given the plot of this and other tales, it is clear he entertained the view that "troth lies" and "truth plays"—that promises are made to be broken, while "truth" itself, in the moral sense of right and wrong, is a mere illusion that dissembles in various costumes, or perhaps it disguises its real message in the fake roles it plays in the same way poetry, while it bears the face of a lie, conveys truth through its fiction.[3] Whether deception is right or wrong, the simple *pleasure* of fakery is apparent. In the case of these two bailiffs, their reaction to their newfound brotherhood is to make merry: the two shake hands, and "In daliance they ryden forth and pleye" (1406); the summoner's call to "have a pley" with the carter demonstrates the circular fun of their labor and love for amusement, although each will prove to hold differing notions of play (1548).

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[1] "According to available evidence, ecclesiastical, manor, borough, and city courts enforced oral agreements made in good faith on the condition that certain legal formalities were observed. Generally the local courts required only what ecclesiastical courts required - a promise supported by an oath or pledge of faith. Often the pledge of faith or oath would be coupled with another ritual like the exchange of a handshake, drink, or wed" (Hornsby, *Chaucer and the Law* 69). See 75.

[2] The variant is found in Harley 7335, British Library. Manly, and Rickert, *Text of the Canterbury Tales VI* 145.

[3] The phrases "trouthe leith" and "trouthe pleith" call to mind the broader conception of poetry as a lying truth. "In linking his *comedìa* to a "truth that has the face of a lie"—"ver c'ha faccia di menzogna" (*Inf.* 16.124)—Dante defines *comedìa*: it is truth that has the appearance of a lie but that is nonetheless always a truth" **(**Barolini, "Inferno 16: Cortesia and Wealth Management (II)").

Riding forth, the summoner and yeoman slowly reveal their true natures to one another. Ever interested in advancing in his career as a thief, the former banks on his imagined association with the latter to learn the latest tricks of the trade; he asks him, under the pretext of bailiffship, "Teche me...[s]om subtiltee, and tel me *feithfully* / In myn office how that I may moost wynne; / and spareth nat for conscience of synne" (1418-22, my emphasis). Two steps ahead of him, the pretend bailiff lures his sworn brother into his actual profession by describing the summoner's own situation back to him:

> "Now, *by my trouthe*, brother deere," seyde he,
> "As I shal tellen thee a *feithful* tale,
> My wages been ful streite and ful smale.
> My lord is hard to me and daungerous,
> And myn office is ful laborous,
> And therfore by extorcions I lyve.["] (1424-29, my emphasis)

To reassure the summoner and satisfy his request, the disguised yeoman opens his lie by giving his word of honor to tell his tale truly. His expression pokes fun at the state that troths are reduced to in this story, here used to deceive those gullible enough to think one's word still means anything. His guard down, the summoner, who should know well that pretensions to honesty often indicate their opposite, falls for the yeoman's "feithful tale" when the latter renews their affinity with his confession of making a living "by sleyghte or by violence" before adding, "I kan no bettre telle, feithfully" (1431, 1433). The admission defies the bailiff's claim to truth:

Do honest extortioners exist? Perhaps the bailiff's polite term of address—I shall tell *thee* a faithful tale—enables the summoner, who shifts from a formal to informal address, to relax in kind.[1] In this strange way, the two men are united by their dishonesty to one another.

Assured by this false display of sincerity, the summoner will open up to this disguised yeoman and perfect stranger—a risky move.[2] Perhaps he yearns for a community of his own, and so turns to this "brother" at his first hint of deviance, perhaps that's why he asks to know this yeoman's true name?[3] Enjoying the attention, the latter indulges the former's request[4]; at this point the yeoman gets oddly sincere with the summoner, seeming to reveal his honest self:

> I am a feend; my dwellyng is in helle,
> And heere I ryde aboute my purchasyng,
> To wite wher men wol yeve me any thyng.
> My purchas is th'effect of al my rente.
> Looke how thou rydest for the same entente,
> To wynne good, thou rekkest nevere how;
> Right so fare I, for ryde wolde I now
> Unto the worldes ende for a preye. (1448-55)

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[1] Nathan, "Pronouns of Address in the "Canterbury Tales"" 193, cites Skeat's distinction between ye and thou: the former applies to superiors and expresses "honour, submission, or entreaty," while the latter is used among equals (but can also evoke antagonism). As for the summoner's shift in tone, compare for example *CT* III.1417,1419, 1423 (formal) to 1444, 1531, 1551, 1553 (informal); the summoner does revert momentarily to a formal address upon first learning his interlocutor's true identity (1456-60). See Nathan, "Pronouns of Address in the "Friar's Tale."" Socially speaking, the false bailiffs' use "of the singular non-honorific pronoun... serves as a marker of in-group membership" (Shimonomoto, *Language of Politeness* 63).

[2] See *CT* III.1438-42. In going so far as to curse his confessors, the summoner undermines his entire community's efforts, through their participation in confession and other sacraments, to foster lifestyles that strengthen their bonds as a Christian society.

[3] *CT* III.1444.

[4] The fiend even repeats the question back to its asker, "Brother… wiltow that I thee telle?" as though to confirm the summoner's desire to know him (*CT* III.1447).

The fiend doesn't introduce himself so much as relate the summoner's own situation back to him: he rides about the land, making a living on what he can fleece from unsuspecting men. If he doesn't believe in the goodness of man, the summoner nonetheless bonds with fellow outlaws. Disarmed by his new friend's false sincerity, fooled by their apparent similarities, and blinded by their camaraderie, the summoner forgets that he, too, rides about the lands in search "for a preye," yet it doesn't cross his mind that he's prey to this fiend, who plays him as the greater hypocrite, a surprise that flips the summoner's fortunes. That his performance could have such an influence on the tale demonstrates the poetic potential of dissimulation as an entertaining narrative vehicle.

Uncomprehending of the import of the fiend's divulgence, the summoner, who suspected the bailiff of really being a yeoman, fails to see beyond this first-order disguise, and instead inquires into the mechanics of his brother's true self. Hypocritical to the core, the fiend lacks a fixed shape, assuming whatever form the occasion demands:

> Somtyme lyk a man, or lyk an ape,
> Or lyk an angel kan I ryde or go.
> It is no wonder thyng thogh it be so;
> A lowsy jogelour kan deceyve thee,
> And pardee, yet kan I moore craft than he. (1464-68)[1]

Lousy conjurers can't match this fiend in terms of craft, yet the summoner fails to appreciate the obvious hint that if a mere conjurer "kan deceyve thee," as he is told, then the craftier fiend stands to deceive him all the more decisively. Clearly the fiend's world seduces the summoner, who should've walked away from this so-called brother the moment he found his work to mirror his. Instead, he puts his blind faith in him *on account of* this fact.[1] The summoner's unfazed admiration for a constitutionally misleading fiend invites the conclusion that this knowing dupe *deserves* the trap he rushes into. Ironically, the fiend's sincere words absolve him of his brother's impending misfortune, while the summoner's only incriminate him:

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[1] Compare Fals-Semblant, discussed in my Introduction, or the Guthlac's devils in Chapter One.

> ["]*But o thyng warne I thee, I wol nat jape*…
> I wole holde compaignye with thee
> Til it be so that thou forsake me."
> "Nay," quod this somonour, "that shal nat bityde!
> I am a yeman, knowen is ful wyde;
> My trouthe wol I holde, as in this cas.
> *For though thou were the devel Sathanas,*
> *My trouthe wol I holde to my brother*,
> As I am sworn, and ech of us til oothter,
> For to be trewe brother in this cas;
> And bothe we goon abouten oure purchas. (1513-30, my emphasis)

Interrupting his inquirer from asking more digressive questions, the fiend clarifies his intended destination for the summoner; the choice of keeping or parting company with the fiend remains entirely his: the fiend confirms as much, and on this score, he does not deceive him—as he says, "I wol nat jape," an echo of the summoner's earlier preference for deception.[2] Conversely, the summoner does deceive himself, using the pretense of troth to maintain ties with the fiend.

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[1] The fiend himself, responding as to an engaged summoner's technical questions, explains how his people rely on feigning, dead bodies, and fair speech to deceive their victims, leaving his aspirant apprentice no reason not to suspect his powers of appearing as other than he seems.

[2] *CT* III.1440. See *MED* s.v. jāpe (n.). For a useful assessment of the non-humorous connotations of jape, see Cartlidge, "Wayward Sons and Failing Fathers" 135, 151-152, 158.

Invoking both his status as a yeoman to highlight his abilities as a loyal attendant, as well as the word he'd already given, the summoner divorces sworn association from its more important preconditions: the purpose for which the word is given and to whom it's given. The summoner, whose own reputation as a faithful yeoman is quite compromised, only fools himself when he claims to uphold his alliance were this fiend Satan himself—liar and traitor extraordinaire. Like the Pardoner's rioters, the starry-eyed summoner relies on his brother to make him rich, therefore he can speak of fair divisions between them: "Taak thou thy part… And I shal myn… And if that any of us have moore than oother / Lat hym be trewe and parte it with his brother" (1531-34). From the fiend, the summoner hopes for fairness but should only expect betrayal, for he miscomprehends the moral makeup of his brotherhood. Their pledge being morally unreal—nonbinding in any naturally or socially legal way—nothing keeps the dishonest from breaking it. As if to play on the paradox of a dishonest pledge and sacred bond, the narrative sees the summoner not betrayed but punished according to the terms presented. Alive to his intentions, it is the summoner who leads the fiend to the poor widow, whom he means to rob. The ironic sincerity of the interaction seals the summoner's self-fashioned fate, sending him to the Devil he'd paid lip service to earlier.[1] But does he desire, in the end, to join him in fellowship, and if so, is this his reward? Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy feeds on such narrative and moral tensions.

WHERE BE YOUR GIBES NOW?: THE PARDONER AT WORK

The Pardoner's Tale gives readers another glimpse into the social dynamics of secretive, illicit associations. In this tale, life pares down to a dash toward death. The story's three rioters seek out—and find!—a semi-personified Death. The fast-paced plot relates in just over two hundred lines the precariousness of the world, rendered unpredictable by the everyday betrayals of its hypocritical inhabitants. Ultimately, the mutual fraud of the tale's three rioters enshrines their partnership, an amoral brotherhood rooted in hedonism.[1] Though they appear to inhabit an essentially conformist institution—a gang—the rioters nevertheless struggle to have their three-man community cohere. Given Chaucer's Flemish setting for this tale, the rioters have been thought to stand in for nationwide depravity.[2] These antisocial persons serve not as outcasts so much as representative citizens of a debauched social order whose promise of social or spiritual remedy is withheld.[3] Chaucer's eye-opening display of chaos, then, offers his audiences an alternative society and culture to consider.

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[1] See *CT* III.1571-1644.

Chaucer's poetic hypocrisy surrounds the rioters' pledge to one another, which comes on the heels of their declared war against Death:

> [“]Herkneth, felawes, we thre been al ones
> Lat ech of us holde up his hand til oother,
> And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,
> And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth…”

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[1] See *CT* VI.463-71.

[2] Spiritually speaking, fourteenth-century Flanders is marked by a general indifference to religious practices, be they mainline or heretical. See Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* 247-49, 355. At the time, the region ailed from war, plague, and famine. Political turmoil and mass corruption additionally led to heavy violence across the country's populous urban scenes. Not surprisingly, this general negligence of political, social, and religious order complemented the sexual depravity of late medieval Flanders. Sex was so conspicuous in Ghent, writes Nicholas, that “there is little evidence of prostitution, although Bruges had numerous brothels”; meanwhile, “Flemish prostitutes were familiar in France and England” (315). In his day, Chaucer would have known Flanders for the major financial center that it was, a hot spot whose “innovation, craft specialization, and increasing urbanization will open new social and economic possibilities *and* incubate new forms of psychic disturbance... *while* identifying newly projected threats to personal and social well-being” (Wallace, *Premodern Places* 113; see Chapter Two: “In Flaundres” 91-138).

[3] Writing on the Pardoner's harangue on these vices, Larry Benson observes the stark lack of spiritual solutions offered against them: “self-examination, prayer, and repentance go unmentioned” (*Chaucer's Drama of Style* 58). Compare the remedies enumerated in the Parson's Tale.

> Togidres han thise thre hir trouthes plight
> To lyve and dyen ech of hem for oother,
> *As though he were his owene ybore brother*. (VI.696-704, my emphasis)

In a ceremony reminiscent of the pilgrims' pledge to the Host, the three lawbreakers resolve to work as one body against a common but unknown enemy; in raising his hand, each member bears witness to his sworn brotherhood to the small company. Even if readers overlook this problematic testimony and assume that the rioters' hearts are in the right place despite the folly of their chase, they can't excuse their treachery when they soon betray their brotherhood, an event hinted at in the above, ironic terms of the men's agreement to live and die for one another *as though they were brothers*. This operative term, *brother*, implies sworn association; it also assumes shared interests and companionship. Given their habits, it comes as no surprise that these brothers call off their hunt upon sighting eight bushels of gold coins—confirmation of their non-commitment to their "slain" companion who inspired their campaign against Death. In shifting focus to the confiscation of the florins, the brothers prove faithless even to each other.

An understanding of these bandits' shared worldview sheds light on their opportunistic, social abandon. Like Chaucer's characters discussed in the previous chapter, the rioters believe in a fortuitous world, an attitude reflected in the tale's lines themselves, which both describe and impersonate disorder. Upon their fatal find, the worst among the company is reported the first to speak:

> "Bretheren," quod he...
> ["]This tresor hath Fortune unto us yiven
> In myrthe and joliftee oure lyf to lyven,
> And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.["] (777, 779-81)

Addressing his sworn brethren, the speaker spins the treasure before them as Fortune's reward, meant to support a life of "myrthe and joliftee"—the lives they lead right now.[1] Despite his claims that they won "so fair a grace" from Fortune (783) and that "al this gold is oures" (786), knowing they'd otherwise face public scrutiny, the rioter must improvise the plan to steal away with "oure owene tresor" under the guise of night (790). Upon his further advice, the three draw straws to see which among them should fetch them bread and wine from town.

It's worth noting here that as characters, these companions in guilt remain anonymous: readers are told that the worst speaks first and the youngest is sent to town, but the company's collective character renders them interchangeable, which agrees with their collective identity. It's their identity as "loyal outlaws" that gives their vow to "lyve and dyen ech of hem for oother" a poetic hypocrisy, for like the summoner's adherence to the fiend, the rioters' words betray them by proving true. Other markers of the tale similarly stand out for their disparities of expression and meaning. The poetic presentation of the Old Man's appearance and speech has left scholars only guessing the "true" identity behind his inscrutable disguise, while probably no reader has found the directions he gives to find Death—the concurrent site of the florins—*not* staged. As for the florins, these appear to divert the rioters by their "faire and brighte" appearance but both expedite their mission and elicit their hypocrisies by transforming them from friends to foes and having them play Death's lieutenants in the blink of an eye (774).[2] I write "play" advisedly, since the dicers' mutual fraud produces a zero-sum game with losers but no winners.

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[1] Chaucer's hypocritical poetic jumps out in these words, from the rioter's conclusion that if they secure the gold the gang will live in "myrthe and joliftee" and enjoy "heigh felicitee" (*CT* VI.780, 787) plays on "the Boethian term for the highest happiness which resides only in God and in goodness, and which is always contrasted with the gifts of Fortune" ("Chaucer's Pardoner Again" 18-19).

[2] To be fair, the rioters do at least follow old man's instructions and reach the tree in the first place.

Like all cases of poetic hypocrisy examined in this study, their deception is described as a performance. The men's sworn association proves an empty act, seeing that it's in the name of brotherhood that two of the rioters agree to stab to death their third member. Sitting over unearthed heaps of gold, they gradually arrive at this agreement through one thief's art of persuasion and fake fraternity. As soon as their youngest sets off for provisions, the two hatch their plot:

> "Thow knowest wel thou art my sworen brother;
> Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
> Thou woost wel that oure felawe is agon.
> And heere is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
> That shal departed been among us thre.
> But nathelees, if I kan shape it so
> That it departed were among us two,
> Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?" (808-15)

The speaker counsels his co-conspirator with "wordes fewe" (820), enough to bring his friend's deeds closer to the former's words, meant to flatter the latter with overtures of fraternity and friendship. He plays on their previous oath in order to break it, and invokes brotherhood while he misdirects both rioter and reader from his actual appeal—"Thy profit." In fact, brotherly honor and personal profit are posed in opposition in the speaker's pseudo-syllogism:

1. Our brother isn't here.
2. Here is gold.
3. We two are brothers: this gold is yours and mine to split.

In order to “shape” the future scenario he imagines, moreover, the schemer contrives a narrative that omits crucial information. He claims to do a “friendly turn” for one brother at the expense of another, who will soon return with provisions; considering the gross abundance of the treasure, with eight bushels equaling sixty-four gallons in dry measure, the three should want to cooperate—they’d have their work cut out for them.

A brother indeed, the co-conspirator needs no persuading to buy into this plot—his only question is how the two can make away with all the gold, not whether it would be ethical to betray their brother. Nor does it cross his mind that if this third member can be betrayed so readily, then so, too, can he. Incredibly, the co-conspirator instead responds with a renewal of his sworn association, promising the other, “by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye” (823). From here they get to work, as the two men’s deception will need serious play. The first advises the second on the third companion:

> Looke whan that he is set, that right anoon
> Arys as though thou woldest with hym pleye,
> And I shal ryve hym thurgh the sydes tweye
> Whil that thou strogelest with hym as in game,
> And with thy daggere looke thou do the same. (826-30)

In playful but imperative couplets, earnest and game dance uneasily together, as the brothers imagine of a scenario that, when entertained, will bring them death. Told to wrestle with him as though in jest, the conman is directed to help murder their brother amidst their pretending to play with him, thrusting their daggers into their game. As for this third party, he, too, proves a hypocrite when it comes to living for anyone other than himself: rather than feed his brothers, he poisons them posthumously. True to his order, he, too, makes the conscious choice to murder his friends, as though to play the killer were an aim in itself.[1] Since the two brothers' stated goal is to return to their shared pleasures—the very "lustes" that bound them (832)—it makes no sense to lessen their numbers; perhaps all three simply get carried away in their imaginings. Whatever their motive or influences, the rioters face the consequences of their antisocial community; their bad faith helps deliver the rough justice that awaits them. In all ambivalence, the three choose and make their rendezvous with Death. Though their end might surprise them, none can claim their unfortunate outcomes were unpredictable or even unintended, since their fraud, fed by hazardous games, creates the very chaos that consumes them. Just as each had planned the murder of his brother, so each executes it.[2] In only eighty-two lines—seventy-four detailing their plots, a mere eight their execution—the author creates a vacuum of fellowship to impress upon readers the paradoxes of hypocritical communities.

The idea of hypocritical communities has possible applications for Chaucer's audiences. Following a tirade against homicide, gambling, and other habits acted out in the tale, the Pardoner asks pointedly why man is "so fals and so unkynde" to his Creator (903) before shifting in the next line to a new game, a pitch for fake pardons. Though before the pilgrims the Pardoner's no hypocrite (he's quite open about his intentions, after all, which match his deeds), he openly *performs* hypocrisy, a display that draws more attention to his company's inconsistencies than his own. The Pardoner achieves this in two principal ways. First, he rebukes "mankynde" for being "so fals and so unkynde" to his Creator (900-03), before accusing his immediate audience, through his mock-sales pitch, of superstitiously consuming brand name relics:

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[1] See *CT* VI.849-50.
[2] See *CT* VI.879-88.

> Now, goode men, God foryeve yow youre trespas,
> And ware you fro the synne of avarice!
> Myn hooly pardoun may yow alle warice,
> So that ye offre nobles or sterlynges,
> Or elles silver broches, spoones, rynges.
> Boweth youre heed under this hooly bulle!
> Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of youre wolle!
> Youre names I entre heer in my rolle anon;
> Into the blisse of hevene shul ye gon. (904-12)

A believer in man’s fallen state, the Pardoner jokingly hints at his audience’s inherent susceptibility to avarice (and sin in general). In a sarcastic attempt to rid them of the vice, he advertises bogus relics, meant to feed the Pardoner’s own greed while at the same time fueling the unnamed vices of the pilgrims—what else would interest them in purchasing these relics other than to buy their absolution, enter “the blisse of hevene” (912),[1] or ward off the chance calamities of a fortuitous world? Aware of his membership in the present company, the Pardoner jokes about the superstitious services he offers them:

> It is an honour to everich that is heer
> That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer
> T’assoille yow in contree as ye ryde,
> For aventures whiche that may bityde.
> Paraventure ther may fallen oon or two
> Doun of his hors and breke his nekke atwo.

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[1] See *CT* VI.913-15, 931-33.

> Looke which a seuretee is it to yow alle
> That I am in youre felaweshipe yfalle,
> That I may assoille yow, bothe moore and lasse,
> Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe. (931-40)

Tellingly, the Pardoner throws the debt of gratitude on the pilgrims, making it *their* honor to have so "suffisant" or competent a pardoner in their midst: he satisfies a market.[1] That he finds himself in their fellowship guarantees (or so he mockingly states) that he will profit from the chance calamities that might befall them, even if his services can't avert Fortune's blows: mischance can strike a pilgrim off his horse, while Death remains a close companion. This riveting *memento mori* serves to hold audience attentions and keep the Pardoner in business. Without their compliance—their complicity—he wouldn't sell a thing. If the pilgrims are anything like the audiences he alleges to attract, they have themselves to thank for the power they have given the Pardoner over them. It's with this attitude that the Pardoner promises, "by myn heigh power" (913), to fully absolve the pilgrims; so long as *they* "offren, alwey newe and newe, / Nobles or pens, whiche that be goode and trewe" (929-30) will the Pardoner offer his Pope-procured relics and pardons, admittedly as "faire as any man in Engelond" (921)—a detail that winks at the mass-production of this merchandise.

It's possible that some pilgrims might be in on the wink, enjoying the Pardoner's "moral thyng" as a show (325). In this case, could it be that the post-tale sales pitch is part of the act, with fake relics serving as memorabilia? Perhaps.[2] In pointing out the group's collective hypocrisy upon making pilgrimage but failing to forgo their worldly amusements, he at least creates the opportunity for honest self-reflection, something Harry Bailly has failed to induce. The taverner's retort to the Pardoner's pointed joke may itself be a bad form of joking;[1] regardless, his reaction against a storyteller's mockery of himself, a man whose sole purpose on this pilgrimage is to "maken… disport" (I.775)—and win their money in the process—is deservedly defensive, since what the Pardoner implies rings true. After all, his tale did just ridicule man's endless love of entertainment, whose dangers build on its diversionary nature. The episode's conclusion attests to the company's love of games, regardless of the intention behind the Pardoner's bizarre sales pitch. Whether aimless or critical, the Pardoner's prank at Bailly's expense provokes a response from the latter that silences the former, thereby disrupting the play that had been in progress. The Host's pronouncement, "I wol no lenger playe / With thee, ne with noon oother angry man" (VI.958-59), indicates that the two had been playing until the Host called off the game with his own onslaught of crude humor. Ironic is one word that characterizes the host's refusal to play anymore, since he can't take insults as he gives them.

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[1] The people who purchase from the Pardoner have given him a place in their society. See Beichner, "Pardoner as Entertainer."

[2] Historically speaking, many pilgrims did—and do—return with souvenirs alongside their stories. See Fowler, *Literary Character* 1-2; Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims* 14.

Hypocritical is another. The Knight's conciliatory injunction, "lat us laughe and pleye" (967), abets the idea that this company really does want to have a good time, just as the rioters do, though to lesser degrees.[2] Then again, the abusive tone employed by Bailly, namely his reference to castration,[3] reveals the ease with which words can precipitate physical violence, as it does both in the tale and Chaucer's professional life. That the knight, on behalf of the company, must amend the situation in order for them to keep playing may indicate the company's addiction to entertainment and preference for distraction, of society's inherent organization in terms of play, not simply of getting along but of glossing over the real problems, in this case posed by a storyteller. And what is their distraction from? Perhaps death, though it remains with them, especially insofar as they practice vices.[1] Perhaps it is a life free from unnecessary illusions that the Pardoner calls for, one full of sincere acts and fearless, unapologetic expressions. Bailly may have mistook the Pardoner's *memento vivere* for a *memento mori*, but it scarcely matters. In the end, the pilgrims will hear what they intend to hear, and tweak the narrative to suit a general sentiment or to allow what might seem socially convenient to transpire. They remain the arbiters and editors of their morality.

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[1] Bailly's occupation as tavern owner might account for his defensiveness here: "If taverns and alehouses were the devil's churches, the tavern keepers and alehouse keepers were his ministers and thereby rivals to the ministers of Christ." (Martin *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender* 64).

[2] According to Currie, "Chaucer's Pardoner Again," the Pardoner successfully criticizes his present audience of pilgrims, whom he compares both to the usual dupes who fall for his antics as well as to the revelers whose pride and avarice get the better of them. In short, she gives much more credit to the Pardoner than most other scholars.

[3] See *CT* VI.945-55.

PRAISE KILLS: KISSING UP AND OTHER NOBLE LIES IN THE CLERK'S TALE

The rioters' bold, if rash, resolve to overthrow standing ethical norms echoes loudly in Chaucer's Clerk's Tale, a story so morally problematic that its scholars have tended to read it allegorically. Others have alternatively brought out useful findings from a comparative analysis between Chaucer and Boccaccio's respective stories. David Wallace in particular reads Chaucer's translation as a more favorable guide than his source on proper marriage and political rule, both presumably intended for Richard II.[2] Carolyn Dinshaw and Elaine Hansen have additionally shed helpful light on the tale's gendered power dynamics: the former on the politics of exclusionary male reading, the latter on the paradox of female subordination.[3] Instead of approach the Clerk's Tale from these well-articulated new historicist and feminist angles, I will scrutinize Griselda and Walter's subjects' ethically problematic actions and reactions to point out that Chaucer's is far from a pleasant "translation," and do so without crediting Chaucer or the Clerk as being sympathetic readers of Griselda, as Dinshaw and many others have understandably done. If anything, Chaucer's poetics of hypocrisy emerges from a firsthand familiarity with deceptive speech and action.

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[1] According to the Pardoner, true death is the failure to obey God by making habits of the vices: "But, certes, he that haunteth swiche delices / Is deed, whil that he lyveth in tho vices" (*CT* VI.547-48).

[2] See Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity*, "Chapter 10: "Whan She Translated Was": Humanism, Tyranny, and the Petrarchan Academy" 261-98.

[3] See Dinshaw, *Sexual Poetics*, "Chapter five: Griselda Translated" 132-55; Hansen, *Fictions of Gender*, "Chapter Seven: The Powers of Silence: The Case of the Clerk's Griselda" 188-207; "the tale of patient Griselda addresses central questions about women and power and articulates a clear paradox. Woman's insubordination is... a derivative of her subordination" (189); "To prove her "wommanhede," Griselda must suffer and submit; the more obviously unsuitable part of her virtue—her allegedly inherent but nevertheless unnatural manliness and power—must be punished and contained" (191).

The Clerk's Tale poses the indecencies of an autocrat against the corrupted and corrupting voice of his people. It tells of an active aggressor and his passive victim: Walter, the bachelor marquis of an Italian plain who spends his days hunting and hawking, and his wife Griselda, his subject. Oddly enough, the two reflect one another in their deception, or at least operate along the same continuum in a society run by complacency rather than civic or civil duty. Walter and Griselda seem to communicate to one another through lies alone. Were it not for his subjects, who show an unshaking support for him, and worry over the man and his marquisate, the lusty bachelor wouldn't have considered their demand to "hastily" assume the "blisful yok" of marriage, as he presently does (IV.140, 113). To express his total autonomy on this and all matters, Walter proposes to choose his spouse based on natural-born goodness, not heredity or wealth, a detail that gives his selection of Griselda, a commoner, a more deliberate bent.[1] The marquis proceeds to break the marchioness into her new world, or simply break her.

No one can justify Walter's actions beyond their allegorical scope. They are reckless at best. Although it is clear that the marquis, in deciding to wed, conforms to the demands of his people, his autocracy disrupts all efforts to interact fairly or naturally with the populace, whose interactions he whimsically treats like a game. Walter's people fail to take this contingency into account when they demand that he take a wife—they never suspect that he could deceive them or his spouse, or undermine his governance with chaotic play.[1] The people simply don't know their marquis and have no control over him. The same cannot be said of the marquis, whose power distorts every relationship he enters. Walter's position complicates his reason for choosing Griselda as his wife, upon whom he often set his eye while "he on huntyng rood paraventure," as though she were similar game, with her acquaintance the product of chance adventure (234). Whether he marries her for the sake of her exemplary work ethic or as a political ploy, the complete motive behind Walter's choosing Griselda is hidden from the public. His decision rests neither on love, nor spiritual union, nor companionship, and given the manufactured calamities that will befall her, Griselda's former-age-like innocence—perceived as a state that knows no dissimulation—fascinates Walter as a trait to be tested and toyed with.[2] Walter's request for the hand of Janicula's daughter further highlights the inappropriateness of the whole arrangement. Asked to have his daughter in matrimony, the father has no choice but to consent:

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[1] Griselda's drastic translations from commoner to governess and back again (*CT* IV.372-85, 400-06) remind one of similar plotlines, whereby socially obscure individuals are deliberately transformed into beauty queens for the indulgence of another, socially prominent figure. See for instance the 1999 film *She's All That*, based on Shaw's play *Pygmalion.*

> "Lord," quod he, "my willynge
> Is as ye wole, ne ayeynes youre likynge
> I wol no thyng, ye be my lord so deere;
> Right as yow lust, governeth this mateere." (319-22)

Considering his emotional states—stupefaction, embarrassment, complacency, and above all fear[3]—Janicula's immediate consent isn't his own; he can't pretend, as Walter-the-suitor does, that the Marquis is other than he is.[4] The same can be said of Griselda's "I do": she would have done well to review the conditions of the contract-cum-wedding vow, spectacularly thrust upon her, her father, and the people: instead of simply propose to her, the marquis very publicly asks his subject to submit, with “good herte” and no resistance ever, to Walter’s every impulse, no matter if it pleases or displeases her (351). “Swere this,” he demands, “and here I swere oure alliance” (357). While not pausing to mull over his conditions, Griselda does wonder “upon this word, quakynge for drede” (358); despite her suspicions, however, her all too sincere response problematically transfers all agency to her lord and master: “as ye wole youreself, right so wol I” (361). Griselda and her compatriots are faultless for expecting the best from their marquis, but prove culpable when they fail to shift their attitudes when he wills what clearly harms them.

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[1] The worst they suspect is that he would "bigile" them by backing out of his marriage agreement (*CT* IV.252).
[2] For a "Former Age" description of Griselda's world, see *CT* IV.199-203.
[3] See *CT* IV. 316-17.
[4] When Walter later tests her by pretending to divorce her, Griselda accepts her husband's decision without putting up a fight; instead, she confirms his decision, revealing that she never considered herself worthy of being in such a relationship. Likewise, her father expected the Marquis to dump his daughter on account of their stark differences of

Walter’s actions not only surprise the tale’s characters but the narrator, too. He reports at the top of the tale’s *tercia pars* that the desire befalls the Marquis to “tempte” his wife, thus he intends to “affray” or terrorize her in order to test her loyalty (452, 455). This information is supplemented by a commentary in which the narrator notes how Walter has tested her already, only to find her “evere good” (457), which begs the question why he should test her now.[1] In other words, the main plot says one thing—Walter wants to test his wife’s loyalty and obedience to him—while a subtext simultaneously challenges it—Walter already knows how faithful Griselda is to him as wife, marchioness, and subject. The result: new narrative doors for readers to open: does Walter test her for his own perverse pleasure? Does he do so to sabotage his own marriage and return to the good old bachelor days? To demonstrate to all the dangers of blindly complying with the will of the masses, as he had done? Or does he simply intend to make an

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estate; his and Griselda’s immediate acceptance of Walter’s divorce begs the question why they would agree to a marriage they both considered enormously inappropriate. See *CT* IV.901-10.

[1] Such narrative commentary on Walter’s inconsistencies is absent from Chaucer’s analogues, at least Boccaccio and Petrarch. At the same time, Chaucer mutes criticism of Walter’s erratic actions throughout the tale. Compare Boccaccio and Philippe de Mézières’ stories, which hold more critical stances of the character. In Boccaccio’s version, Dioneo refers to his Gualtieri’s governance as “a monstrous folly”; he adds, “I counsel not any to imitate, for it was a thousand pities that weal betided him thereof” (*Decameron* 516).

example of her? Whatever his reason, Walter's intentions evade the narrative, which fails to keep up with Walter's schemes, and leaves readers to make sense of his actions and Griselda and the people's reactions to them—an exercise that requires a more active attention to the story's details, an interpretation of their sum's meaning, and a critical reflection on the tale overall.

Closer reflection would force readers to question the innocence of Walter's victims, who naively first endorsed his right to act as he pleased, assuming he would serve them well. Yet this is no excuse for their unnecessary allowance of the pain he inflicts on his own people, beginning with his wife, whose abuse openly violates the spirit of his wedding agreement. None of Walter's actions at the beginning of part three of the tale warrants Griselda's compliance: in his effort to "test" her,[1] the Marquis first reminds his wife of the great favor he'd showed her in pulling her out of poverty and setting her on so high an estate, adopting a tone at once confessional and grave: "Taak heede of every word that y yow seye; / Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tweye" (475-76). Walter's reminder, along with his fabricated—or is it a real projection of his own insecurities?—rumor of fellow noblemen disgruntled both by the commoner's sudden promotion over them as well as the birth of her daughter, serve as emotional blackmail that threaten Griselda into agreement with his people's wish—which Walter luridly sets up as the execution of their daughter. The shocking lack of emotional outpouring on Griselda's part[2] should disturb rather than assure her husband, since her failure to question his men's logic—or her husband's, who foolishly believes that their immoral desire to get rid of his daughter should be satisfied for the sake of keeping their good favor[3]—betrays her incompetence as a policymaking counselor and Marchioness, a mother, and finally a wife. As John Bugbee incisively asks, "how patient is 'patient Griselda' if she does not inwardly suffer" but instead rides her husband's uncaged will (*God's Patients* n.p.)?[1] As his counselor and wife, Griselda ought to have censured Walter for entertaining these people's alarming desires. In the very least, she could have advised him on how better to handle the situation; doing so would not constitute a breach in her initial vow never to question his authority, since the hypothetical directly endangers Walter and his household. Worse still, Griselda's stoic compliance with the seeming execution of her daughter, snatched from her hands by an acting officer, renders her an accessory to the murder of an innocent life, and not just any life, but the daughter of the royal marquis. Griselda's sumission to the people's whims amounts to an intolerable encroachment on the royal prerogative. The governess fails to apply the moral clause that a subject like herself brings to any contract she enters, namely that obedience obtains not for unethical actions: such situations demand disobedience. Griselda thus fails the test.

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[1] Whatever that means. If anything he tests her sanity and his.

[2] *CT* IV.498-500. In Boccaccio's version, Griselda does suffer with every trial, yet manages not to bear her emotions on her face, maintaining rather a firm countenance.

[3] See *CT* IV.486-90.

A new picture of Griselda emerges in light of Walter's trial, one of an incredibly collected victim whose abnormal calmness must confuse her husband and thwart his loyalty tests; if readers grant her enough imagination, perhaps they would even take her non-reaction as a game of her own.[2] Despite having no access to her inner workings, readers nevertheless sense Griselda's performance—her hypocrisy, her wearing of masks—with her every interaction with Walter, especially when he tests her. When he does so a second time with the fake news of the people's dissatisfaction with his marriage, Griselda's own experiences should tell her otherwise, such as their excitement over the birth of her son.[1] Besides, she should have remembered that the people consented unconditionally to Walter's marriage before it was consummated—the pledge they gave and its terms of allegiance were rather public.[2] Griselda should also have known better than to give over another child without a perfectly justified fight. But she wears her mask still, to her husband's astonishment. Equal to the challenge, she embraces Walter's order with words that lack sincerity, that counterfeit real, hidden feelings:

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[1] See Chapter One of this forthcoming volume, "Concerned with Constancy: The Clerk's and Man of Law's Tales" n.p. Bugbee situates Chaucer's Griselda alongside William of Auvergne's influential *De virtutibus et vitiis,* which discusses the phenomenon of false patience: "Real patience, it seems, must involve suffering, and not only in the now-archaic sense of undergoing the action of other agents" (n.p.).

[2] Griselda's emotional outpouring upon her reunion with her children (*CT* IV.1079-85) clearly signals her strong hope for such a homecoming. In light of this, the scarcity of noted grief in the tale leaves open the possibility that she held out on the possibility that her children were alive.

> "I have," quod she, "seyd thus, and evere shal:
> I wol no thyng, ne nyl no thyng, certayn,
> But as yow list. Naught greveth me at al,
> Though that my doughter and my sone be slayn—
> *At youre comandement*, this is to sayn. (645-49, my emphasis)

In this context, Griselda's citation of her initial vow, to desire nothing but what Walter desires, does little more than spotlight its severe inadequacies, since her husband abuses it. On this note, the mother, both grieving and not, gives credit where credit is due: she cites Walter, not the people, as the arbiter of his children's fate. Taking her vow to its illogical conclusion, Griselda furthermore mocks her marriage contract and lets her marriage fail by refusing to advise or resist the marquis. She tells him flatly, "dooth with youre owene thyng / Right as yow list; axeth no reed at me" (652-53), a vexing statement considering her reputation as a wise counselor for all.[3] By refusing to challenge his demands, Griselda encourages the notion that actions are morally relative, and gives Walter the illusory impression that the law begins and ends with him, regardless of the treasonous nature of his commandment, the murder of his heir. For his part, Walter similarly contains his emotions, left undisclosed. One would think that the point of his tests is to evoke an emotion out of his wife, yet he instructs the opposite, warning her not to "outreye" or break out in a passion (643). Likewise, one wonders whether Walter's false reports are entirely so; it could be that the popular anxieties over Griselda's ignoble stock are his own.[1]

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[1] *CT* IV.614-16.

[2] See *CT* IV.162 -82, 365 -71.

[3] See *CT* IV. 393-441. Griselda's unbending compliance to Walter's every whim proves just as detrimental as Placebo's unsound counsel to January's marriage bid in the Merchant's Tale: both destabilize Walter's governance. Although it compares counsel in the Merchant's Tale to the Tale of Melibee, Walling's recent discussion of the dangers that flattery and antifeminism pose to the masculine self proves relevant to Walter's abuse of his harmfully-obsequious counselor-wife. See Walling, "Placebo Effects" esp. 15-23.

The wife and husband's emotional dissimulation leaves the narrator—readers, too—to guess their inner states. Their many facial expressions, which Chaucer augments from his sources,[2] confuse genuine and simulated emotions; the narrator can only conjecture Griselda's sorrow upon her catching wind of the people's support for her divorce and remarriage: "I deeme that hire herte was ful wo. / But she, ylike sad for everemo, / Disposed was, this humble creature" (753-55); the narrator can only suppose that such an arrangement would hurt Griselda but supplies no hard evidence for this. On the other hand, Griselda's "sadnesse," her restraint or self-sufficiency, would imply that she has no genuine need for her husband.[3] Her own words clarify nothing. Instead, they reveal both an unrealistic, and unbelievable, devotion to, and a general lack of surprise at, her husband's decision to leave her. Ever conscious of their class divides,[4] Griselda emphatically negates her place as a marquis' wife: "I ne heeld me nevere digne in no manere / To be youre wyf, no, ne youre chamberere" (818-19). Such strong words don't reveal grief so much as they confirm or even validate Griselda's claim that she never belonged in Walter's house as a maid, much less a wife; with God as her witness, she testifies that she only viewed herself as his "humble servant," and ever shall (824). If she really means what she says and deems herself unworthy of Walter, then Griselda's divorce should come as a relief, yet she shows no hard feelings over their unsuccessful marriage, and goes so far as to claim that even if she were to die through some misfortune, she would never repent giving her heart to him so sincerely, in hool entente" (861).[1] Griselda's readiness to give up her life as a Marchioness and return everything her husband gave her—including his love and the royal pomp that came with her new clothes—demonstrates her complete disinterest in Walter's world, and shows him its worthlessness in her eyes. If there is one response Walter could not have expected, it is that Griselda would assume *his* costume, ""Lefte I my wyl and al my libertee, / And took youre clothynge["]" (656-57), and act as monstrous as he pretends to be. In this way, each mirrors and mocks the other's stoicism, their important seriousness.[2]

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[1] See *CT* IV.481-83, 631-33. Upon testing his wife a final time with a divorce, Walter spells out that he married Griselda for her "trouthe" and "obeisance," and likewise specifies that he did *not* do so for her "lynage" or "richesse" (794-95), an indication of his current consciousness of the issue.

[2] See Bestul, "True and False Cheere" 501. For a review of medieval conceptions of outward facial beauty either matching inward purity or else simulating it, see 502-04. Though Bestul takes for granted that Griselda's expressions stand for truth and Walter's for falsehood, he does concede that it's possible Griselda "is holding back" her emotions "in spite of what the narrator seems to tell us"; unlike his other tales, "Chaucer gives us reason to wonder whether we are dealing with the serenity of perfect obedience or repressed emotion. In the other pathetic tales, the issue never arises" (513). See Somerset, "Training the "Lewed" Gaze."

[3] For a discussion of Griselda's "sadnesse," see Mann, "Satisfaction and Payment," especially 38-39. Mann usefully observes that Griselda's "sadnesse" and that of the Shipman's merchant overlap in meaning: both types entail "the suppression of private emotion, to create a serene façade for the outer world" (46). Mann differentiates between these two types, though she doesn't need to in my opinion. She says, "But what was, in *The Clerk's Tale*, a supremely heroic endeavor to meet misfortune with serenity becomes in *The Shipman's Tale* an attempt to make the keeping up of appearances into a bulwark against mishap" (46). See also Stillwell, "Chaucer 'Sad' Merchant."

[4] *CT* IV.814-17.

Just as readers must search for Griselda's actual emotions from the layered lens of an unforthcoming narrative, so, too, do they search for Walter's. Readers are shown only a glimpse of the "routhe and pitee" Griselda's responses elicit from Walter (893),[3] but for the most part they are told the opposite, namely how pleased he is with his wife's meek compliance with his bidding, despite acting upset at the situation.[1] Simultaneously, readers are given a different glimpse into the palatine's mind through free indirect discourse:

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[1] Griselda does contrast, at least, Walter's mistreatment of her with his seeming kindness on "[t]he day that maked was oure mariage" (*CT* IV.854). Griselda won't admit to Walter's mistreatment of her or the heartache she suffered at his hands, but the narrative inadvertently entertains the idea that the marquis' cruelty knows no limit when his divorcée entreats him not to send her back to her village stark naked—she begs him not to do so only since she knows he'd do it. See 876-82.

[2] "Christians condemned the Stoics' (putative) quest for extirpation of the irrational passions as impossible and destructive.... Griselda looks something like the Christian Middle Ages' notion of a Stoic sage, or at least of one with pretensions to being a Stoic sage, claiming to have reached a state where no further struggle is necessary. By contrast Custance, with her anguished response to her sufferings and with her perpetual prayer for help in governing her own internal state, looks very much like an attempt to present a picture of the proper Christian, as opposed to Stoic, response to the world's vagaries" (Bugbee, *God's Patients* n.p.).

[3] See *CT* IV.888-89.

> This markys wondred, evere lenger the moore,
> Upon hir pacience, and if that he
> Ne hadde soothly knowen therbifoore
> That parfitly hir children loved she,
> He wolde have wend that of som subtiltee,
> And of malice, or for crueel corage,
> That she hadde suffred this with sad visage. (687-93)

Walter can't believe that Griselda could possibly endure his inhumane trials without breaking down or doing or saying *something*, and for an instant the thought crosses his mind that she herself may be ill-intentioned, playing a game of her own with "som subtiltee" underway—some ingenuity, some fine deceit.[2] The indirect discourse continues without providing clarity for anyone involved with this tale: unable to verify his suspicions, Walter can only coax himself into believing that it is only Griselda's love for him, edging out her love for her children, that enables her to shed no real feelings.[3] Given his belief in the goodness of his own deeds, Walter can't consider Griselda's similar performance as morally perverse. This innocent, devout wife's total acceptance of her husband's whims and non-resistance to his crimes, however, render her a hypocrite at best and criminal at worst. As head, Walter serves as an example for his members, the people.[1]

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[1] *CT* IV.512-15, 668-72.
[2] *MED* s.v. soltiltē (n.).
[3] *CT* IV.694-95. The narrator isn't satisfied. Confused, he questions the efficacy of these games.

Like Griselda, the "unsad" or inconstant people under Walter's rule share in their leader's guilt by condoning his criminal actions (995).[2] The narrative expresses the people's opposition to the marquis' crimes, with his "sclaundre" or dishonor spreading "ofte and wyde" across the land (722), namely the rumor that "of a crueel herte he wikkedly, / For he a povre womman wedded hadde, / Hath mordred bothe his children prively (723-25). Walter's fictional crimes result in his people's real hatred of him,[3] a calamity given their prior love to him. Despite their disappointment, the Marquis refuses to cease tormenting his wife and people, "nathelees, for ernest ne for game, / He of his crueel purpos nolde stente" (733-34), a clear indication of his indifference to the opinion of his people, whose falsified dissatisfaction he ironically cited earlier as a pretense for the faked murder of his children. Insofar as they recognize the reprehensibility of his alleged actions yet soon overlook them, they, too, are guilty of normalizing his crimes. As the narrative reports, the "rude peple" welcome Walter's divorce once they catch sight of his next wife, his daughter in disguise (750).[4] The narrative treats the people to a serious censuring for their hypocritical support of Walter. In free indirect discourse that covers a stanza, the subjects' love of appearances is related through their admiration for the young bride and her brother's noble miens; so pleased are they that they commend the Marquis for his "governaunce" (994), a big leap to make in any case. The subsequent stanza-long lament of the city's "sadde folk" scolds the fickleness of a "stormy peple" that delights in rumors and judges falsely, and whose "constance yvele preeveth" (1002; 995; 1000).[1] Given opposite views of the same people, readers are left to construct an image that makes sense to them. Do the people fail or pass Walter's test and earn his approval for consenting to his every decision?[2] Readers must at least credit the folk for judging wisely based on what they actually see, a noble bride-to-be whose arrival promises to bring balance and order to a turbulent marquisate.[3]

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[1] Such a model marks a key difference between a society that adheres to scriptural laws and norms versus one that accepts government on earth as a man-made affair. Under the former system it is "reason, not will" that is "the fundamental category of human discourse, and the truth, not force, the primary instrument of political success.... government is considered a duty, rather than a right, and justice, not liberty, is the highest goal which it is asked to pursue"; the latter entails far different possibilities: "Those who rule can now be considered as sovereigns properly speaking. They come to acquire those divine qualities that were previously reserved to God. They are limited by nothing but their own will, and decisions emanating from their will *ipso facto* have the force of laws. Because there is no transcendent authority to which they are responsible, they can exercise their power as though they owned it" (Fasolt, "Quod omnes tangit") 252.

[2] Included in this collective guilt is the Pope, who knowingly agrees to help Walter stage the whole event by forging the church's own papal bulls to allow for the fake divorce and remarriage to take place. See *CT* IV.736-49. This is possibly Chaucer's addition, at least not Boccaccio's or Petrarch's.

[3] *CT* IV. 726-32.

[4] See *CT* IV.981-87.

The Clerk's Tale forces its characters and audiences to reconsider the relationships between governance, societal norms, and moral customs. In *this* fictional world—a fickle world said to be misruled by Fortune—are Walter's actions categorically unethical? Aren't his people's adjustments to his whims wiser than their attempt to challenge their reckless marquis? In such a world, morally real intentions and actions needn't add up. What matters, rather, is the consensus reached by the general public, whether implicit or explicit: Walter's people don't approve of his troubling removal of his children or senseless abuse of his wife, but overlook these crimes for one reason or another, thereby confirming their leader's ability to bend, break, or invent laws as he sees fit, as he pretends to do by producing divorce bulls with the Pope's blessing—a statement on institutional hypocrisy if ever there was one.[1] The Pope's participation in such a consequential prank illustrates the agency required of all of the dissimulation discussed above, for while both the characters and narrator of the Clerk's Tale invoke Fortune as a decisive, if vague, force in their world, invoked as an excuse for the calamities that strike, such as Walter's eviction of Griselda, it must be remembered that the tale's disasters are caused by the actions performed by its characters.[2] This blend of hypocrisy, megalomania, and moral relativism takes deception to more imaginative heights—to the realm of self-deception.

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[1] Unless this appears in his French sources, the criticism of the people is Chaucer's addition. Johnson, "Prince and his people" 19, who cites Severs, *The Literary Relationships of Chaucer's 'Clerk's Tale,'* finds this diatribe to be wholly Chaucer's.

[2] It helps to compare the people's complacency in Chaucer's tale to the subjects of Boccaccio's version; they rightly and publicly and privately scrutinize Gualtieri's actions. When, for instance, he declares his intent to replace his wife, the narrator notes that Gualtieri "was roundly taken to task by many men of worth" *Decameron* 520; even when the marquis finally lifts the veil of his performance, his joyous people still "held the trials which he had made of his lady overharsh, nay, intolerable" (*Decameron* 523). For a contextualization of Griselda's story among Chaucer's sources, see Middleton, "The Clerk and His Tale."

[3] Staley Johnson sees the people's responses as hypocritical performances in themselves: "It becomes all too apparent that popular homage to Walter (in both a feudal and a religious sense) is written upon the knees and lips and not at all upon the heart. Obedience is merely grudging acceptance rather than "perfect liberty of service."" ("Prince and his people" 19). In other words, they, like Griselda, evade their duty to voice their opposition to Walter's games.

ENVOY: THE MERCHANT'S TALE

As a concluding case in point, consider Damian and May, the old knight's servant and wife in the Merchant's Tale. While it remains a mystery why May would marry so incompatible a partner as January, the fact of her union should, by standards accepted in Chaucer's time, preclude all other relationships. It didn't. In hypocritical fashion, this "gentil squier" and "gentil man," in January's words, and "servant traytour" in the narrator's relies on the misapplication of his skills and privileges and the creation of opportunities to achieve his hidden end, a tryst with May (1907; 1924; 1785).[3] The narrative makes the subtle observation, moreover, that Damian's trickery is a skill in its own right:

> He kembeth hym, he preyneth hym and pyketh,
> He dooth al that his lady lust and lyketh,
> And eek to Januarie he goth as lowe
> As evere dide a dogge for the bowe.

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[1] The image of institutional corruption that comes to mind with the Pope's willingness to play along in Walter's game is simply too strong to need any intentions on Chaucer's part; it speaks for itself. See *CT* IV.736-49.

[2] For narrative and character ascriptions to Fortune to explain human actions, see *CT* IV.69-70, 754-56, 897-98. Similar ascriptions are made in the Merchant's Tale that follows; Fortune finds its way into May's love for Damian and January's blindness, yet it's the characters who act. See 1967-86, 2057-68.

[3] See *CT* IV.1907-12.

> He is so plesant unto every man
> (For craft is al, whoso that do it kan)
> That every wight is fayn to speke hym good,
> And fully in his lady grace he stood. (2011-18)

Paradoxically, Damian creates and performs his nobility by choosing to present himself in the ways that will earn May and January's respective trusts and pleasures; compared to a trained dog, the squire creates his good reputation by acting pleasantly with all, who in turn speak well of him—a ruse, seeing that the narrative aside, "craft is al, whoso that do it kan," at once implies the trickery and rarity of his winning personality. With craftiness the ingredient of his social success, Damian enables himself to adopt different external behaviors; he can appear one way "unto every man"—noble, gentle—but act otherwise for January's wife. Specifically, he abuses his close position to the old knight and initiates, "[i]n a secree wise," a nonverbal exchange with May when he falls ill and she happens to visit him (1937). Damian and May learn to speak in signs; their nonverbal communication typifies their doublespeak: both have earned a reputation in the eyes of many, including January, for being noble and consider themselves fully respectable, but justify to themselves their illegitimate affair.[1] It is as though May and Damian have created a special law among themselves that would enable them to betray their normal codes of conduct when together. May must dissimulate, meanwhile, for much of her waking life, since it is spent in the forced "compaignye" of her blind husband, who reminds her to uphold her "covenant" (2182; 2176). At the mere suggestion that January could part company from or even betray her husband, May lets out an emotionally-rich set of responses. First she weeps, then "[b]enygnely" defends her honor, reminding her husband that she has "a soule for to kepe" like he does, and that she had "assured" her wifehood to him the day she took her vows (2186; 2188; 2191). Either genuinely believing in her innocence, or confident in her dissimulation's success, May requites the old knight's "untrust and repreeve" (2206) with a vow of her own:

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[1] For nonverbal communication see *CT* IV.2104-06, 2150-51;

> I prey to God that nevere dawe the day
> That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may,
> If evere I do unto my kyn that shame,
> Or elles I empeyre so my name,
> That I be fals; and if I do that lak,
> Do strepe me and put me in a sak,
> And in the nexte ryver do me drenche.
> I am a gentil womman and no wenche. (2195-2202)

Although no one would deny that she suffers as the victim in a loveless marriage, and that, in principle, she is a "gentil womman," May's asseveration is quite bewildering, since she delivers these lines amidst smuggling Damian into January's garden, giving him the "signe" to enter, then signaling him to "clymbe upon a tree" where she soon meets him (2150; 2210).[1] May's conscious dissimulation indicates an ability—to say the least—to dissociate her promises (and words in general) from her intentions and deeds, although more is at play here. Readers have no reason to doubt that May values her name and cherishes her life, as she claims, therefore other factors not admitted to must motivate her to risk losing both, be it the love of life that has driven her into Damian's arms, desperation, or the excitement of the dangerous affair itself. Whatever her motivation, May must put in the effort and muster the courage and artistry to fool her husband while she cheats on him, before his eyes—even *after* his vision is momentarily restored.

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[1] *CT* IV.2348-53. See also 2116-24.

In her fortunate world, un-governed by opportunism, personal wellbeing, and wit, the young wife can justify this tryst by redefining marriage just as her husband had done. In claiming nobility even as they flout the bonds of friendship, servitude, and marriage, May and Damian present these associations to readers as potentially broken institutions, requiring amendments to their old laws, such as a clause on one-time lovers, or long-time lovers in dysfunctional marriages. the fact that their actions question the sanctity, legality, and goodness of marriage in particular forces readers to reconsider the rightness or wrongness of their affair.[1]

May must inevitably lie to herself in the process of realizing her plans and changing, if momentarily, her bleak circumstances. Not one to be bested, January literally unsees the double treachery witnessed in the pear tree to maintain his equally illicit but socially sanctioned "marriage."[2] His perennial blindness drives home the fact that hypocrisy's common outcome will always entail the deception of a victim, who may be the perpetrating hypocrite, and may not be without blame. Still, Chaucer presses us on this question of blame, for in his world, deception from hypocrisy, from dissimulation and lying, dominates a character's field of vision to color all social relations and realities. Within the relational systems of the Clerk's, Merchant's, and many more Tales, husbands, wives, and the general public may not necessarily need to trick one another to get by in a false world, but they choose to, and in so choosing, they revalue for themselves what's right and wrong, if implicitly or unofficially.

Chaucer invests his *Tales* with questions of sovereignty, consent, ordinance, and the responsibilities of the ruler and ruled. In his worlds, social standards fail to satisfy the diverse interests of a given group, with members left to improvise and agree on positive laws rather than universal laws of nature. In this way, the Pardoner's rioters can claim to uphold their oath—as a matter of convenience, not any inviolable obligation to the oath itself; even if a community does recognize morally real laws, nothing but their conscience keeps them from bending or breaking them. The result is the same: expedient faithfulness both undermines and challenges the innate principles on which natural laws are built; it chips away at the divine image in which man was made while turning men into devil's officers, to borrow the Pardoner's phrase.[1] This is one angle.

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[1] Of course, the fabliau genre enables the tale's bawdiness, but the questions come up nonetheless.
[2] *CT* IV.2354-67.

From another angle, the entire Canterbury enterprise leaves no doubt about the company's addictions to disport. I don't mean useful play, or entertainment balanced by instruction. I mean willful distraction as the end in itself, deemed good by its adherents. Even a ponderous story like the Clerk's Tale remembers death only for the Host and company's amusement.[2] This is what's hoped for in a world divested of morally real principles. Social problems invariably stem from a community's conflicted ideals, intentions, and actions in face of the laws of the land, but might these "contradictions" proceed from man's inherent mutability? Whatever the source, the conflicts exist in Chaucer's contingent universe, where the odd luxury of dissimulation—the skillful application of hypocrisy—fosters survival in a masked community. Paradoxically, then, hypocrisy threatens community norms and undermines its economy of trust but also allows people to play by earth's rules, get by, and sometimes get along. The enterprise of poetic hypocrisy rests on this notion of play—of improvising, acting, imagining, and creating in *this* world. *Memento vivere*.

Real problems multiply with hypocritical play. Victims might not be innocent, and pain and suffering might not be bad, yet people are still wronged, deceived, and cheated no end.

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[1] See *CT* VI.463-84.

[2] The Clerk's Prologue emphasizes Harry Bailly's penchant for distractive stories from an otherwise somber, or simply boring, pilgrimage. See *CT* IV.9-15. Tale engages the Host's interest enough to garner a response from him. See 1212a-g; Middleton, "The Clerk and His Tale" 136-40, 147-50.

Wickedness now resides everywhere, not just in high places. Under this rubric of moral relativity, non-associates are less likely to come together on common terms.[1] Without the direct force of moral absolutes dictating their every thought and action, Chaucer's characters must double their efforts to cooperate and coexist. They must learn to trust, and trust in one another's trust. In trust they trust.

Given the inevitability of interdependence, Chaucer's hypocritical community members would do well to play nice. The poet suggests as much throughout his *Tales*, which repeat the lesson of the guilty victim, an open warning that "A gylour shal hymself bigyled be" (I.4321). You get what you give. Recall the humiliating ends of the Reeve's "proude" miller, whose cheating first piques the interest of Aleyn and John, who in turn take a beating for their violations.[2] This sense of poetic justice exists beyond this tale, since it is Robyn the Miller's depiction of an incompetent carpenter that provokes the Reeve, a carpenter, to call him out on his hypocrisy: "He kan wel in myn eye seen a stalke, / But in his owene he kan nat seen a balke" (3919-20).[3] What worth could this charge have in a "ful tikel" world—variable, harsh, joyous (3428)?[4] Not much if the pilgrims don't play nice.

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[1] "Chaucer is ironically substituting for the traditional moral view of social structure a vision of a world where morality becomes as specialised to the individual as his work-life" (Mann, *Estates Satire* xi).

[2] See also the Shipman's and Summoner's Tales.

[3] More than a friendly competition of tale-telling, in exchanging insults through forms of impersonation, Chaucer's pilgrims demonstrate "the many different ways in which people evade responsibility for their words and actions: the many ways in which people defend themselves against shame by refusing to acknowledge weakness and culpability and by shaming others instead" (McTaggart, *Shame and Guilt* 128-29). See Knapp, *Social Contest*; Jensen, "Male Competition"; Brinkman, "Wrestling for the Ram"; Benson, "Literary Contests"; Fein et al., *Rebels and Rivals*; Park, "Tale-Telling Tactics"; Ginsberg, *Tellers, Tales, and Translation*.

[4] *MED* s.v. tikel (adj.(1 and 2)).

Chapter Four: The Hypocrites As The Arabs Saw Them

The bedouins are the most faithless and hypocritical. —*Qur'an*[1]

No one takes us for a ride. We outstrip in rashness the rashness of the reckless.

—‘Amr ibn Kulthūm (d.ca. 584)[2]

This chapter offers a brief and selective sketch of hypocrisy's contours within the prominent medieval Arabic works (especially *adab* literature) that play with the vice. By no means is it meant to cover all that classical and early postclassical Arabic literature say on the matter. Rather, its aim is first to delineate key terms that define hypocrisy in the Arabic literary corpus, and second to demonstrate how hypocrisy evolved in meaning and value across time and place. I end with a turn to Chaucer's Iberian contemporary as one more practitioner of poetic hypocrisy, the prolific chancellor-poet Muḥammad al-Salmānī, better known as Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d.1375). Like Chaucer, he humors audiences with the common vice, but to achieve this he takes fatefully different approaches from the famed English poet.

Key Terms

The classical Arabic corpus enjoys a store of terms that each give some sense or other of insincerity, deception, or the intention-action-speech disjunction. The terms I offer are based on the authoritative lexica that rely heavily on pre-Islamic poetry and the earliest Islamic sources for attestation, namely *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* by al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d.786), *Kitāb Tahdhīb al-Alfāẓ* by Ibn al-Sikkīt Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq (d.858), and *Lisān al-ʿArab* by Ibn Manẓūr (d.1311-12), who bases his entries on classical and postclassical sources. Their broadest term for lying, *al-kadhib*, necessarily entails misinformation through speech.[3] Other specific terms denote fabricated speech; Ibn Manẓūr defines *aḥādīth mulaffaqah* as *akādhīb muzakhrafah* ("adorned lies").[1] Excessive blandishment culminates in *madḥ*, a term that, in addition to flattering speech, refers to the genre of panegyric poetry. Together with its opposite poetic mode, *hijā'* ("lampoonery"), *madḥ* is known for the incongruities it broadcasts, especially its false praises on the poem's patron. *Hijā'*, on the other hand, attacks ideas, places, or people (real or imagined) on several grounds—in the case of the latter: feigned bravery, feigned generosity, miserliness, and religious hypocrisy.[2]

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[1] "al-Tawbah" ("Repentance") 9:97.

[2] ألا لا يجهلنّ أحد علينا   فنجهل فوق جهل الجاهلين.

[3] See *Kitāb al-‘Ayn* and *Lisān al-‘Arab* s.v. كذب.

Other terms specify false appearances. Those who engage in *ryā'* or *tamadduḥ* act out, as in ostentation, to garner public praise.[3] al-Farāhīdī glosses *al-taṣannu'* as the presentation of a beautiful appearance while holding contrary and hidden thoughts or intentions.[4] The lexicographer similarly glosses *al-id'hān* as the false appearance of lenience.[5] More generally, *takhalluq* calls for the assumption of a false appearance.[6] Other terms come closer to the act of trickery. *al-Khad'* and *takhādu'* encompass both variability in outward character—*talawwun*—as well as beguilement, which is the very definition for *khatl*.[7] The former derives from the lizard's or antelope's retreat to its lair,[8] while the latter comes from the hunter or predator's faint footsteps in pursuit of its game or prey.[1] A more playful though no less hazardous term, *al-taḥāmuq*, means the feigning of idiocy, presumably to pull off a deceit or, as later authors see it, to survive in the modern world.[2] One of the few other terms to entertain the *craft* of deception is the noun *muḥtāl*; along with its many variations, it refers to an adept at dealing with affairs—literally a smooth operator.[3]

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[1] *Lisān al-'Arab* s.v. لفق. For other terms denoting false speech, from flattery to perjury to rumor, see خلب; مدح; هتر ; زور; ملق ; رجف ; see *Qur'an* 68:8-13. *al-Alfāẓ*, Gate 42, "Mendacity" 236-40 offers an additional set of terms referring to inauthentic speeches, namely broken promises and mixed truths. As usual, the section samples several lines of verse, including that of al-'Ajjāj and al-A'shā.

[2] For terms encompassing all but the last quality, see *al-Alfāẓ*, Gate 7, "Miserliness" 66; Gate 28, "Cowardice and Weak-heartedness" 163; Gate 42, "Mendacity" 236. See *EI^2* s.v. "Madīḥ, Madḥ"; *EI^3* s.v. "Hijā'"; van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*; Abū Ḥāqah, *Fann al-Madḥ*; 'Ajlān, *al-Hijā' al-Jāhilī*; Nāṣīf, *Arwa' mā Qīla.*

[3] *Lisān al-'Arab* s.v. أري, مدح.

[4] *Kitāb al-'Ayn* s.v. صنع. Ibn Manẓūr adds that this false appearance is assumed under the pretense of doing or being good.

[5] *Kitāb al-'Ayn* s.v. دهن, citing *Qur'an* 68:9, where the term denotes the Mekkan polytheists' desire for the Islamic message to slacken. *Lisān al-'Arab* s.v. دهن defines the term as *cheating* before equating it to hypocrisy and dissimulation by name: "ودهن الرجل إذا نافق.... والمداهنة والإدهان كالمصانعة" (320).

[6] "وفي الحديث: من تخلّق للناس بما يعلم اللهُ أنه ليس من نفسه شانه الله؛ قال المبرد: قوله تخلّق أي أظهر في خُلقِه خلاف نيّته"(*Lisān al-'Arab* s.v. خلق p.139). Several terms of pretense derive from the *tafa''ul* form, or else use of the verb *takalluf*, for instance, *takallafa al-ḥuzn* ("*he pretended to be sad*").

[7] *Lisān al-'Arab* s.v. خدع; *Kitāb al-'Ayn* s.v. ختل.

[8] "خدع الضبُّ إذا دخل في وِجاره مُلتوياً، وكذلك الظبي في كناسه"(*Lisān al-'Arab* s.v. خدع p.29).

This rich vocabulary notwithstanding, a sense of a word-deed disruption appears in pre-Islamic poetry not through specific terms but from descriptions of how to act and how not to act. In the famous *Lāmiyyat al-ʻArab*, for example, al-Shanfarā al-Azdī (d.525) offers these telling boasts:

1. O sons of my mother... I am more inclined to other folk than you...
3. A noble man can find a place of refuge from insult away from you, and the one who fears ill-treatment has a place to which he can retire...
5. I have folk [to keep me company] without you: swift wolf; sleek, spotted [panther]; and shaggy-maned, loping [hyena].
6. They are the [real] folk: they do not spread abroad any secret entrusted to them, nor do they desert anyone because of what he has done.
7. Anybody may be unyielding and bold, but I am bolder [than others] when the first chasers come forward [to start a fight].
8. If hands are stretched out to food, [mine are] not the swiftest of them, for the greediest of the tribe are the swiftest....

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[1] *Lisān al-ʻArab* s.v. ختل, quoting the verses of Ruways, al-Farrā’, Ta’abbaṭa Sharran, al-A‘shā. Modern lexicons attribute the term to *khitl*, a rabbit’s burrow.

[2] *Lisān al-ʻArab* s.v. حمق. The *Maqāmah* prosimetrics of al-Ḥarīrī and al-Hamadhān, as well as Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Akhbār al-Ḥamqá wa-al-Mughaffalīn* (*Reports of the Stupid and Foolish*), are good cases in point.

[3] *Lisān al-ʻArab* s.v. حول; compare الشعوذة s.v. شعذ; مكر. In modern usage the term carries negative connotations, referring to a fraud who cunningly deceits by clever means to achieve her or his ends.

14. I am not one who cannot endure thirst and pastures his flocks [only] towards evening...
15. Nor am I cowardly [or] faint-hearted, staying at home with his wife, consulting with her about how he should act on his affairs;
16. Nor am I a timorous weakling...
17. Nor am I a laggard who stays in his tent, dallying...
52. And [I am] not one [who is] impatient through neediness, nor one who makes a show of his poverty, nor am I boastful, putting on airs under [the influence] of wealth.
53. No acts of folly sweep away my self-control, nor am I seen to be an eager questioner, nor one who retails ill-natured gossip as the result of idle chatter.

(Jones, *Poetry* 260-63)

Relying more on images than terms, al-Shanfarā and poets of his era express the shame of surviving a battle or failing to stand ground at the decisive hour, sentiments quite similar to the Old English poetic prescriptions studied in Chapter One. It must be emphasized, however, that these feelings have nothing to do with morality as we recognize it, for al-Shanfarā, like the predators he befriends, is also a cold-blooded murderer of innocents. Rather, hypocrisy is condemned for the worldly—especially martial—dangers it might throw him into, nothing more.

In terms of terms, however, the most precise and important one for *hypocrisy* must be *nifāq*, which al-Farāhīdī glosses straightforwardly as "الخِلاف والكُفْر" ("disagreement and denial (of faith"); *Kitāb al-'Ayn* 252). He offers no etymology, but the surrounding terms raise a few possibilities, namely *al-nafaq* ("*tunnel*")[1] and *al-nāfiqā'*, the hidden exit of the jerboa's burrow, which the desert rodent taps with its head when it needs to escape. He cites a verse that draws the relationship closer:

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[1] See Ibn al-Sikkīt. *al-Alfāẓ* 95.

للمؤمنين أمورٌ غير مُحزِنةٍ   وللمنافقُ سرٌّ دونَه نَفَقُ

(“For the believers are matters not upsetting
Yet for the hypocrite, a secret: under him: a tunnel”; 252)

The singular dissembler is here contrasted against a body of believers; like the jerboa, she or he seeks subterranean asylum against the community she or he lives amongst. Ibn Manẓūr repeats this same etymology in greater detail, citing Abū ‘Ubayd[1]:

سمي المنافق منافقاً للنفق وهو السَّرَب في الأرض، وقيل إنما سمي منافقاً لأنه نافق كاليربوع و هو دخوله نافقاءه [هكذا]... وله حجر آخر يقال له القاصعاء، فإذا طَلِبَ قصّع فخرج من القاصعاء، فهو يدخل في النافقاء، ويخرج من القاصعاء، أو يدخل في القاصعاء ويخرج من النافقاء، فيقال هكذا يفعل المنافق، يدخل في الإسلام ثم يخرج منه من غير الوجه الذي دخل فيه.

> (The *munāfiq* (*hypocrite*) was thus named after *al-nafaq* which is a burrow in the ground. It’s said that the *munāfiq* was thus named because the hypocrite acts like the jerboa, whose burrow’s entrance is the *nāfiqā’*... it has another chamber called the *qāṣi‘ā’.* If necessary, it hits this side to leave from it; it therefore enters from the *nāfiqā’* and exits from the *qāṣi‘ā’*, or enters from the *qāṣi‘ā’* and exits from the *nāfiqā’*. It’s said that the hypocrite acts this way: he enters Islām then leaves it from a front other than the one from which he entered; *Lisān al-‘Arab* 326)

The entry goes on to define *nifāq* in the context of Islam—in fact, Ibn Manẓūr specifies the term itself as *uniquely* Islamic:

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[1] Ibn Manẓūr also cites al-Jawharī, Ibn Birrī, and Abū Zayd as etymological authorities. Each echoes Abū ‘Ubayd’s above explanation.

وهو [النفاق] اسم إسلاميّ لم تعرفه العرب بالمعنى المخصوص به، وهو الذي يَسْتُرُكُفْرُهُ ويظهر إيمانه وإن كان أصله في اللغة معروفاً.

> (... *al-Nifāq* is an Islamic term that the Arabs did not previously know by its specific name [of a jerboa's entrance and exit from different faces of its lair]. [*al-Munāfiq*] means he who hides his disbelief and shows his faith, despite its source in the language being known; 327)[1]

More than any other term encompassing an aspect of hypocrisy, be it false speech, ostentation, market fraud, or deception for personal gain,[2] *nifāq* and its grammatical forms count as the most significant word for hypocrisy mentioned in the early Islamic sources due to their contextual import.[3]

In the Qurʾānic and Prophetic Traditions

As it is introduced in the Islamic corpus, hypocrisy or *nifāq* emerges within the budding Islamic community following the migration to Medina.[4] Numerous narrations that take up hypocrisy clearly conceive of it as a common, "benign" vice among ordinary Muslims.[5] The Messenger ﷺ thus identifies four traits of hypocrisy that any believer can possess but hope to overcome: lying, breaking promises and covenants, and acting wrathfully when disagreeing with others.[1] In narrations, the hypocrite is identified as one who overeats, speaks immodestly, and indulges in excessive flattery, all acts unbecoming to the believer.[2] Institutionally, the scholars and religious leaders are most vulnerable to picking up the habit, as one prophetic narration articulates: "أكثر منافقي هذه الأمة قراؤها" ("The majority of the hypocrites of this nation is its Qur'ān reciters"; al-ʿĪsā, *Qiṣaṣ al-Nifāq* 15).[3]

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[1] al-Īsā supports this claim that this term for and mode of hypocrisy, *nifāq*, is uniquely Islamic. See *Qiṣaṣ al-Nifāq* 15.

[2] See for instance *Qur'an* 16:92, 83:1-17; 104:1-3; 107.

[3] The term exceeds all others by some measure. *Nifāq*'s plural agentive forms—*al-munāfiqūn*, *al-munāfiqāt*—appears 32 times throughout the *Qur'an*, while *nifāq* itself is mentioned three times (*Qur'an* 9:77, 97, 101). See ʻAbd al-Bāqī, *al-Muʻjam al-Mufahras* 887-888, 930.

[4] Several volumes have appeared that treat of hypocrisy in an Islamic frame, most of them thin treatises. Among the oldest is *Ṣifat al-Nifāq wa-Dhamm al-Munāfiqīn* (*The Description of Hypocrisy and Blaming of the Hypocrites*) by Abū Bakr al-Firyābī (d.822) and *Ṣifat al-Nifāq wa-Naʻt al-Munāfiqīn* (*The Description of Hypocrisy and Characteristics of the Hypocrites*) by Abū Naʻīm al-Aṣbahānī (d.1038). Like all these works, Hilāl al-ʻĪsā's recent—and in my eyes most useful—volume, *Qiṣaṣ al-Nifāq wa-Akhbār al-Munāfiqīn* (*Tales of Hypocrisy and Reports of the Hypocrites*) relies heavily on the Qur'an and Ḥadīth, but also includes early Islamic poetry.

[5] The Qur'an additionally exposes the hypocrisies of previous peoples, such as certain of the Children of Israel. See for instance *Qur'an* 2:40-44; 3:69-72; 5:41.

Equally abundant are the accounts of malignant hypocrites, whose obscure intentions and identities amidst a still growing society rendered them all the more threatening than open enemies, who were many. Thus the hypocrites' motivations varied widely. Some might dissemble to boost their reputations or secure some form of status, yet when it comes to worship or the duties of fundraising or military service, they're missing in action.[4] Others may cheat or testify for their advantage or the disadvantage of someone else.[5] Still others might vacillate between taking the Messenger ﷺ or someone else as their leader, dislike his companions, and prefer their own rulership or valuation of good and evil.[6] The worst sort actively collude with Islam's enemies and prefer that the religion die out.[7] Ultimately, Satan himself appears as the hypocrite *par excellence*, the very inspiration for human deception and moral revaluation, a leader to the false and treacherous.[8]

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[1] See *Sunnah*, "*Bukhārī*" 2459.

[2] See *Sunnah*, "*Bukhārī*" 5396, 7178; "*Tirmidhī*" 2027.

[3] This makes up but one of many narrations of varying grades of authenticity against false scholars. See al-Firyābī, *Ṣifat al-Nifāq* 34-40; ʿĪsā, *Qiṣaṣ al-Nifāq* 113; *Sunnah*, "*Muslim*" 1063a.

[4] See *Qur'an* 4:142; 8:49; 47: 20-23; 47:20, 38; 48:11-16; *Sunnah*, "*Muaṭṭa' Mālik*" Book 8, Ḥadīth 5, Book 15, Ḥadīth 46; "*Nasā'ī*" 3097; "*Bukhārī*" 3493, 3494; "*Muslim*" 114, 797a, 865; "*Tirmidhī*" 3008; "*Ḥadīth Qudsī*" 6.

[5] See al-ʿĪsā, *Qiṣaṣ al-Nifāq* 15-19.

[6] See *Qur'an* 4: 60-66; 9:34-37, 67; 16:116; "The parable of the hypocrite is that of a sheep that hesitates between two flocks, sometimes following one, and sometimes following another, not knowing which to follow" (*Sunnah*, Nasā'ī 5037); "The sign of Belief is to love the Ansar, and the sign of hypocrisy is to hate the Ansar" ("*Bukhārī*" 3784; see 17). For a catalogue and description of hypocrites of the community of *al-Madīnah* see Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah II* 102-52. For an overview of the most infamous hypocrite of early Islam, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl, see Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* IV.188-96, VIII.125-32; 9:80-84, 107-10; Guillaume, *Life* 277-79, 491-92.

[7] See *Qur'an* 2:13-14; 4:138-44; 47:25-29; 58:8, 14-19; 59:11; *Sunnah*, "*Bukhārī*" 7124.

[8] See *Qur'an* 4:115-21; 7:16-18, 27-30; 15:39-42; 17:61-64; 38:82-85; 59:16-17. That Satan washes his hands of those who follow him reiterates the limits of nonmoral associations, as previously witnessed in the Friar's and

Although the hypocrites of early Islam posed the gravest threat to the first community of believers, their anonymity paradoxically prevented the first Muslims from confronting these fifth columns.[1] The Messenger ﷺ was loath to punish these men on account of the distress this would cause the community, and on account of the pledge of faith they had given, however superficially.[2] At any rate, this type of hypocrisy exhibited in the actions of Islam's original imposters amounted to faithlessness.[3] At multiple points in the Qur'an the hypocrites (*al-munāfiqūn*) are thus contrasted against the believers (*al-mu'minūn*) and grouped with the polytheists, two clear indications of their closer proximity to them than the Muslims.[4] After Islam's early years, this highly contextualized understanding of *nifāq* settled on the broader connotations with which I opened this section: the term and its forms would soon refer not to disbelief but to all aspects of insincerity and doubleness, whether within a necessarily Islamic frame—as articulated by exegetes in the centuries to follow—or not, as articulated by the poets, who gathered that all effective hypocrisy requires acting talent, charisma, and deft planning.

Pardoner's Tales. See 8:48; 14:22; 59:16. Ibn al-Jawzī's famous twelfth-century treatise *Talbīs Iblīs* (*The Devil's Imposture*) catalogues Satan's ruses among various social circles, among them mystics, philosophers, and litterateurs. The author defines *talbīs* as the reversal of good and evil, the presentation of what is wrong or false as good and true. See Gate Four.

[1] Though a fraction of the hypocrites plotting against the Messenger ﷺ was revealed to him, only God knows them entirely and possesses the authority to deal with them. *Qur'an* 9:101.

[2] al-Miqdād ibn 'Amr al-Kindi once asked the Messenger ﷺ the hypothetical question whether it would be permissible to kill an enemy combatant on the battlefield if, at a sudden disadvantage, he declared his faith, apparently to escape death: "Suppose... we fought, and he struck one of my hands with his sword and cut it off and then took refuge in a tree and said, "I surrender to Allah (i.e. I have become a Muslim)," could I kill him, O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), after he had said this?" Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "You should not kill him." Al- Miqdad said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! But he had cut off one of my two hands, and then he had uttered those words?" Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) replied, "You should not kill him, for if you kill him, he would be in your position where you had been before killing him, and you would be in his position where he had been before uttering those words" (*Sunnah*, "*Bukhārī*" 4019; see 6938, which affirms the sanctity of the pledge of faith even among hypocrites. See also 4269, about a real-life instance of this very situation).

[3] "Hudhaifa said, 'In fact, it was hypocrisy that existed in the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ) but today it is Kufr (disbelief) after belief'" (*Sunnah*, "*Bukhārī*" 7114).

[4] For hypocrites posed against believers see Qur'an 9:67, 71; 29:11. For hypocrites lumped with polytheists see 9:73, 33:73; 48:5-6; 66:9.

Some Belles-Lettres (*Adab*)

Apart from its scriptural context, hypocrisy took root within the urbane court culture of Abbasid Baghdad, and for that matter the cosmopolises that would sprout across Islam's spreading regions.[1] *Madḥ* and *hijā'* traditions were kept alive during this time, the latter critiquing the decadence and avarice of Baghdad's elite classes, satirized (or at least described) in the poetry along the themes of sexual debauchery, imbibing (or its description (*waṣf al-khamr*)), and such superstitions as astrology (*al-tanjīm*); popular topics included friendship betrayed, backbiting, cowardice, and, of course, hypocrisy.[2] The poetry validate the terms' above definitions, homing in on the themes of hidden intentions clouded by misleading actions, insincere displays of kindness, generosity, or piety, and betrayal. Though often elegizing the present conditions, these verses nevertheless play with paradoxes and puns.[3] The Shiite poet 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Ṣūrī (d.1028) gapes at the hypocrisies of unnamed Umayyad rulers who put their fortunes—allegedly acquired ignobly—to virtuous use:

17- نفر من أمية نفر الإس   لام من بينهم نفور إباق
18- أنفقوا في النفاق ما غصبوه   فاستقام النفاق بالإنفاق[4]

([Concerning] a group (*nafarun*) among the Umayyah: Islam
    Has fled (*nafara*) from them—the flight (*nufūru*) of a slave [from his master!]
They hypocritically gave charity (*anfaqū fi-al-nifāqi*) what they acquired by force
    Such that [their] hypocrisy was rectified with charity [*fastaqāma al-nifāq bi-al-Infāqi*!])

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[1] Similar trends crop up in the early Umayyad dynasty, which I don't touch on here. For a study Umayyad culture, analyzed through the biting verses of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, see Farrin, *Abundance*, Chapter 6, "Flyting" 115-29.

[2] See al-Ḥārithī, *Shi'r al-Hijā'*. The above categories are the author's. I count his discussions on lying, envy, and cowardice as partaking in a level of hypocrisy, which is more an umbrella term for all acts of deception, but see the author's own section on the vice, replete with biting verses: 105-18.

[3] For the beautification of the ugly and uglification of the beautiful, see my Introduction.

[4] al-Ḥārithī, *Shi'r al-Hijā'* 110.

One of the greatest Abbasid poets, al-Mutanabbī (d.965), goes so far as to curse the hypocrites:

حوشيت من صحبة خوان   يأتي من الغدر بألوان
ولعنة الله على كل من   له لسانان ووجهان[1]

(I’ve been swarmed by the friendship of traitors
Whose treachery comes in colors [sc. varieties]
God’s Curse on everyone
Who has two tongues and two faces!)

For those familiar with the warrior and court poet, al-Mutanabbī’s vituperations should come as a surprise, given his career, marked by intense rivalries and shifting alliances that contradict his rich encomia.

From other cultures, new genres emerge in the Abbasid world, including advice literature. The Abbasid courtier of al-Mansūr’s reign, ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (d.756), lends hypocrisy real moral nuance in his book of political fables, *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*. The tale of the hoodwinked Camel, for instance, entertains the vice less as a necessary evil than a practical tactic—a skill for survival. It tells of a lion who hosts a camel; the two live in harmony with the former’s company of lackeys—a crow, wolf, and jackal—until one day an elephant impales the lion, the group’s hunter. Dismayed at the prospect of starving or having to gather their own food, the lion’s “friends” conspire to trick their leader into preying on their honored guest, whom they defraud royally. Having witnessed the other offer themselves as food for the sake of the community only to be turned down (they would taste horrible), the fat camel humorously offers himself only to be preyed on at once. Though their tactics violate the principles of hospitality, their subtle counsel and admittedly creative ruse secures their personal survival, while the camel, though a victim, proves blameworthy for his artless gullibility.[1] The tale's dark humor more accurately reflects its author's harsh world than the ideals it attempts but fails to uphold; the fabulist himself meets a cruel and vicious end closer to the camel's.[2]

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[1] al-Ḥārithī, *Shi‘r al-Hijā’* 117.

Other men of letters conceived of hypocrisy in less violent and more playful ways—though no less cynical. The city genre of the *maqamah* ("*assembly*") takes word-craft and work-craft to new heights with its ornate prosimetrics about street-smart imposters versed in *al-kudyah*, or fraudulent begging. Imitating the *isnād* form of ḥadīth literature as many *adab* works do, the episodic, modern sketches narrate a smooth-speaking imposter's antics in a given metropole. Though the hypocrisies of the religious elite are offered for ridicule at many turns, this ridicule reaches all sectors of society, liable to duping and exposure. The sketches of the late tenth-century adīb (belletrist) Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d.1007) recount the exploits of Abū al-Fatḥ al-Iskandarī, a witty beggar who assumes an array of costumes and identities from place to place. In "al-Maqāmah al-Khamriyyah" ("The Wine Assembly"), al-Iskandarī, secretly drunk, leads the morning prayer but scolds the drunk among the congregation; at night he resides not at the masjid but the bar. When the tale's narrator recognizes the man for who he is, al-Iskandarī offers these verses of wisdom:

> Stop blaming—what a mingler you take me to be!
> I'm whom every Tihāmī and Yamanī knows.
> I'm from every dust—I'm from everywhere.

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[1] See Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah* 41-42.

[2] According to urban legend, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ was tortured to death for heresy; he was dismembered alive enough to watch his members thrown into a fire. It appears all prince-pleasers whose works have come down to us share Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's cynical views. The itinerant courtier Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d.1023), for instance, spared no efforts to verbally flay al-Ṣāḥib ibn ʿAbbād, whom he served for three years before being turned away without payment. al-Tawḥīdī looks back at these years with self-disgust, wincing at how he and his cohort kissed up to the prominent statement for no other purpose than to line their pockets. See his *Akhlāq al-Wazīrayn* 85-87, 106.

Now I hold the prayer chamber, now the bar;
So acts whoever's sensible this age![1]

al-Iskandarī typifies just one of many notorious but comically glib trickster-beggars to appear on the Abbasids' tenth-century literary scene, who like their authors must live by their eloquence and wit. Just as the hypocrites of Medina existed as an anti-community,[2] so, too, do these tricksters form a network. The notorious Banū Sāsān of the tenth-century odes "evolved their own jargon or argot as a means of private communication and as a means of excluding from their activities inquisitive members of the *akhshā*, the outsiders and non-beggars" (Bosworth, *Islamic Underworld* xi).[3] The popularity of professional beggars playing blind or maimed, alongside different classes of imposters who sport myriad props, costumes, and gimmicks,[4] might reflect their prevalence in the societies themselves. Whatever their inspiration, they persist in the literature, and culminate in ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jawbarī's (d.ca.1264) fanciful thirteenth-century book of anecdotes, *al-Mukhtār fī Kashf al-Asrār wa-Hatk al-Astār* (*Selections on the Exposure of Secrets and Pulling of Curtains*),[1] whose short tales spotlight society's finest frauds, from those who claim prophethood, religious knowledge, or holiness, to laymen in diverse fields, including cosmetics, cookery, the natural sciences, medicine, and metalwork, to workers of several culture-specific superstitions.

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[1] *daʻ min al-lawmi wa lākin   ayyu dakkākin tarāni*
anā man yaʻrifuhu kullu   tahāmin wa yamāni
anā min kulli ghubārin   anā min kulli makāni
sāʻata alzamu miḥrā-   ban wa ukhrā bayta ḥāni
wa kadhā yafʻalu man yaʻqi-   lu fī hādhā al-zamāni (al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 422-23)

[2] The Qur'an refers to hypocrites exclusively in the plural, although they suffer internal divisions. See 59:11-15. Given what's preceded of the oxymoronic paradox of a community of fakers and oath-breakers, this comes as no surprise.

[3] See Bosworth's excellent study into the tenth-century Abbasid underworld, which includes "skilful thieves and burglars, footpads and brigands, and also those in the no-man's land between criminality and conventional behaviour, like entertainers and mountebanks of diverse types, beggars of differing degrees of ingenuity, quack doctors, dentists and herbalists, and so forth. Above all, there was a rich array of tricksters who used the Islamic religion as a cloak for their predatory ways, well aware that the purse-strings of the faithful could be easily loosed by the eloquence of the man who claimed to be an ascetic or mystic, to be a worker of miracles and wonders, to be selling relics of the Muslim martyrs and holy men.... These practitioners of downright roguery were only a level or two below the widespread class of popular preachers and religious storytellers, who were influential amongst the common people and who brought to the masses a much more comprehensible and palatable version of the faith than the systematised and legalistic doctrines preached by the representatives of the official religious institutions" (*Islamic Underworld* ix).

[4] Consider for instance the party-crashers (*al-ṭufayliyūn*) who live to eat and entertain and subsist on banquets. These interlopers earn their seats at the table through their wit, humor, and ingenuity. They could disguise themselves but often don't need to since they amaze audiences with their music, poetry, and gripping conversations. Like the imposters of the assemblies, the party-crashers give a lighter touch to the hypocrite, whose environments are almost always celebratory. And like the assemblies, anecdotes about the party-crashers are rich in wordplay, religious humor, and push the envelope of decorum. See al-Baghdādī, *Art of Party-Crashing*; Selove, *Ḥikāyat Abī al-Qāsim*.

Though they all entertained audiences, much of the literature that poeticized hypocrisy also induced social reflection. Ibn Marzubān (d.921) opens in his thin manifesto *Faḍl al-Kilāb ʻalā Kathīrin mimman Labisa al-Thiyāb* (*The Superiority of Dogs over Many of Those Who Wear Clothes*) with a complaint of the modern condition:

> al-Fuḍayl ibn ʻIyāḍ [(d.ca.803)] said: A man cannot be counted among the God-fearing until his enemy feels safe from his treachery. Then he exclaimed: Good heavens!... How can his enemy feel safe from him when even his friend is afraid of him? Someone said: Gone is the age of good company and of those who lend and borrow. So be wary of your friends, as you are wary of your enemy. Take everything seriously and take care not to pass on to him any of your secrets, for he will reveal it at some moment when things are not right between you. (Smith and Abdel Haleem, *Superiority of Dogs* 6-7)

By quoting verses and voices present and past, Ibn Marzubān indicates that these troubles are shared across time and place, not just tenth-century Baghdad. For sure, the descriptions of hypocrisy closely resemble the very dissimilar periods and cultures studied in chapters previous:

> The following lines by Diʻbil b. ʻAlī al-Khuzāʻī [(d.ca.835)] were recited to me:
>
> *He is an enemy who has assumed the garb of a friend,*
> *sharing your morning and evening drink.*

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[1] I imagine that professional beggars have existed as long as cities have.

He has two faces (وجهان), the outward one that of a cousin,
the hidden one that of an experienced bastard!
He pleases you to your face, but harms you behind your back;
such is the behaviour of all bastards!...

Finally, Ibn Abī Ṭāhir al-Kātib recited the following poem to me:

Wretched Time has changed what you used to know
and changed is friends' affection.
Men have become equal in deceit and cunning (واستوى الناس في الخديعة والمكر);
and each is now double tongued (فكل لسانه اثنان)! (7)

From here, Ibn Marzubān contrasts man's miserable human relations with the company of the dog, his real best friend. In building his case for its transparency, sincerity, and unblinking loyalty in sketch after sketch, the author invites readers to ponder the nature of hypocrisy, to wonder whether it exists as a cultural byproduct of, say, urban living, or whether it constitutes man's very identity, inherent in his DNA.

No *adīb* or belles-lettrist states the case for hypocrisy-from-nature more emphatically than Abu al-ʻAlā' al-Maʻarrī (d.1057), who devotes a chapter in his *Risālat al-Ghufrān* (*Epistle of Forgiveness*) to false flattery.[1] al-Maʻarrī composes the epistle for the poet Ibn al-Qāriḥ, mocked unsparingly for his excessive praise of the former. The cynical belletrist takes as a central thesis the notion that people

> coexist by means of deceit; they have come to invent novel ways of lying. If Queen Shīrīn had said to Kisrā, "May God make me your ransom, whether you are staying here

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[1] "God is my witness that I am glad when someone finds fault with me, because he speaks the truth about his misgivings about me, and that I am worried by false praise (*thanā'in makdhūb*), which leaves me like a hunted animal so thirsty it is unable to feed.... May God forgive him who thinks well of someone who does evil and who performs the pilgrimage in the intercalary month!" (van Gelder and Schoeler, *Epistle* 15).

> or traveling," she would be merely have been (*sic*) beguiling him and dissembling (la-khālabat'hu... wa-nāfaqat'hu).[1] (van Gelder and Schoeler, *Epistle* 3)

As al-Ma‘arrī elaborates on the thought, hypocrisy hangs over all existence, and as he identifies it in animals—wild predators—the philosopher-poet lends them emotions inherent in humans. The relation is brought closer with al-Ma‘arrī's immediate juxtaposition of animal and human hypocrisy, a provocative overlap of primal and civilized states, a blurring of instinctive and intellectual interiorities that merits quotation at length:

> Many a lion cub dissimulates (*nāfaqa*) towards a lion, secretly harboring rancor and envy. Many a lioness flatters the male, liberally displaying her affection but loath to touch him. Many a lion has vented his rage on a whelp, wishing he could bury it in a deep place.... Many wolves have been beguiled by she-wolves, while calamities were hidden in their hearts!...[2] Many a king has treated his queen with a gentle disposition, after which she prepared his perdition. Someone may say, "I would give my own father to ransom you, you have done well, you acted perfectly!" But if he could he would cut his jugular vein, for all he did was flatter and feign. A cockerel will sometimes spit out for a hen a grain of wheat, being friendly to her in the cold or the heat, while extraordinary rancor rankles his heart. *Manājib* are the many and few....[3] Perhaps that deceitful fowl wishes the mother-of-eggs to die, rather than wanting to protect her. He says to himself with his inner voice, "I wish the slaughterer would come in the morning to this cackling hen, for she is utterly hateful!" Or he will say, "If I were put into a cauldron or into an oven, so

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[1] "وتَعايَشَ العالَمُ بِخِداع، وأضْحَوا من الكَذِبِ في إبداع. لو قالت شيرين الملكة لكَسْرى: جعلني اللهُ فداءَك في إقامةٍ أو سُرى، لخَالَبَتْهُ في ذلك ونافَقَتْهُ" (al-Ma‘arrī, *Epistle* 2). In Arabic, asking to make oneself or one's close ones (say, your parent or child) a ransom for another expresses endearment for that other.

[2] al-Ma‘arrī here offers a few words on the meaning of "calamities" (*filaq*).

[3] Another explanatory digression on a difficult word.

> that I would meet my end for nothing, then this hen would marry a cockerel in the prime of youth who would properly love her henceforth." ... How can my sincere friend [Ibn al-Qāriḥ], who is so reluctant to stay away, say that he yearns to meet me as a bereft she-camel yearns for her calf, whereas she forgets it as soon as she is made to carry a load? She may moan three or four times, after which she thinks of it no more![1] (3, 5, 7)

By naturalizing hypocrisy so, al-Ma‘arrī effectively strips it of a moral charge that would have condemned the behavior as antisocial and religiously subversive. Rather, for the poet, hypocrisy makes up the very fabric of human nature, and by extension society. Inevitably, it proceeds from religion as a byproduct:

> When one reverts to the facts, then what the tongue utters says nothing about a person's firm belief, for the world is formed with a natural disposition toward lying and hypocrisy (*al-kadhib wa-al-nifāq*). It is possible for a man to proclaim something openly, showing his religiousness, while he does this merely in order to adorn himself with a fine appearance, wishing to gain praise or some other intention of the deceptive world (*al-khālibah*), "mother of extinction." Perhaps a number of people have come and gone who were outwardly devout but heretics inside.[2] (41)

al-Ma‘arrī clearly disapproves of inauthenticity of all flavors, secular or sacred; the very purpose of his epistle is to target poetasters and clerical hacks who envy his likes for lack of craft, and call good bad and bad good. But he also plays the hypocrite well, for throughout the rambling letter al-Maʻarrī asphyxiates Ibn al-Qāriḥ in oppressive praise, pedantry, and artificial cares. The letter, in short, is but a long performance of friendship whose hypocrisy doesn't poke fun so much as mimic an existential quality of old mother earth, mother calamity,[1] which the correspondent compares to an inscrutable vehicle that conducts man constantly to his destruction even as he stands in place.[2] If this is right, the sensible action would be to renounce the world and everything in it, as al-Maʻarrī dutifully does. But as a poet by trade who struggled to strike a bond and band in the patronages he courted, he must playfully laugh at and aestheticize the idea of a false world full of false friends.

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[1] "كم من شِبلٍ نافَقَ أَسَداً، وأضْمَرَ له غِلاً وحَسَداً! ولَبُءَةٍ [هكذا] تُدَاجِي هِرْماساً، تَنْبذُ إليه المِقةَ وتُبْغِضُ له لِماساً! وضَيْغَمٍ نَقَمَ على فُرْهُودٍ، ووَدَّ لو دَفَنَه بالوهود.... وكم خالبت الذئابَ السلق، وفي الضمائر تُكَنُّ الفِلَقُ، أي الدواهي... ومِلِكٍ سانى مِلِكةً، ثمّ ضعتْ له مَهْلَكةً! يقول القائل: بأبي أنت، جادَ عملُكَ وأتْقنتَ! ولو قدر لبتَّ الوَدَج، وإنما جامَل وسَدَج. ولعل بعض العتارف يلفظ إلى البائضة حَبّة البُرِّ، ويأْنسُ بها في حَرٍّ وقُرٍّ، وفي فؤاده من الضِّغْن أعاجيبُ، وتكثر وتقلّ المناجيب... "ولعلّ ذلك الصاقع يرقُبُ الأُمّ الكَيْكة حِماما، ولا يرقب لها ذِماما. يقول في النفس المتحدِّثة: ليت الذابح بَكَّر على المُنْتَقِضَة، فإنها عينُ المُبْغِضة. أو يقول: لو أني جُعلتُ في قِدْر، أو بعضِ الوُطُسِ فلحقتُ بالدّهْر، لتزوَّجت هذه من الدّيكة شاباً مقتَبِلاً، يُحْسن لها حباً قَبَلاً.... وكيف يقول الخليل المُخلص، وهو عن الهِجران متقلِّص: إنّ حنينه حنين والهٍ من النُّوق، وهي الذاهلة إن حُمِل عليها بعضُ الوسوق، وإنما تسْجَع ثلاثاً أو أربعاً، ثمّ يكون سُلُوُّها مُتْبعا؟" (al-Ma‘arrī, *Epistle* 2, 4, 6).

[2] "وإذا رُجِعَ إلى الحقائق، فَنُطقَ اللسان لا ينبئ عن اعتقاد الإنسان، لأن العالَم مجبول على الكذب والنِّفاق، ويُحْتَمَلُ أن يُظهر الرجل بالقول تديّناً، وإنما يجعل ذلك تزيّناً، يريد أن يصل به إلى ثناء، أو غرض من أغراض الخالبة أمّ الفَناء، ولعله قد ذهب جماعة هم في الظاهر متعبدون، وفيما بطن مُلْحِدون" (al-Ma‘arrī, *Epistle* 40).

Excursus: On the Assassinations of Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Diplomat and Man of Letters

Muḥammad al-Salmānī (d.1375), better known as Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb ("Tongue of the Faith; Son of the Orator"), served as secretary and wazir in the Naṣrid court of Granada for nearly three decades. About half this time, the latter half, was spent under Muḥammad the Fifth "*al-Ghaniyy Billāh*" ("The Sufficient in God Alone"). His high-ranking secretary, Ibn al-Khaṭīb occupied Muḥammad V's most refined position in court as its ambassador and chronicler. As such, he made his reputation as its eminent *maddāḥ* or panegyrist—according to Ibn Khaldūn, his contemporary, Ibn al-Khaṭīb sought to unify al-Andalus and the Maghreb with his pacific odes and letters.[3] And as a top wazir and privy counselor, the accomplished belles-lettrist enjoyed unprecedented powers of attorney, acting as Ṣulṭān in Muḥammad V's absence.[1] So this was a very good time, historically speaking, to be a wazir.[2] By 1362, Ibn al-Khaṭīb became second to none but the king himself.[3]

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[1] *Umm dafr* (أم دفر) rended "Mother Stink" by van Gelder and Schoeler. See *Epistle* 66-67.

[2] "As for the Sheikh's [Ibn al-Qāriḥ's] reference to his old age, God (praised be He!) has created gall as well as honey, a desire for the Fleeting World as well as abstemiousness from it. When an intelligent person looks at it closely he sees that life only draws him to harm and drives his body onward on its course. Even he who stays in one place is like a traveler: divine decrees never confirm him in one state. A morning smiles or an evening, but he does not abide with either for long. Day and night are like rapacious wolves, and one's life is a herd on the move; they raid the shepherd and annihilate and destroy the grazing flock" (van Gelder and Schoeler, *Epistle* 123).

[3] See Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh VII* 440-41.

This decades-long appointment to the Naṣrids' inner circle would end in calamity. In 1371, Ibn al-Khaṭīb requests—and receives—al-Ghaniyy Billāh's permission to inspect Granada's coasts; having reached Gibraltar, he flees to the Maghreb, where the Marīnid court of 'Abd al-'Azīz welcomes him with open arms.[4] To ease the shock of his departure, Ibn al-Khaṭīb sends back a letter in which he pledges allegiance to the ruler and explains away his escape as a mere spiritual retreat.[5] Elsewhere, however, the minister cites his wish to unburden himself of the responsibilities of his post as the main impetus behind his unannounced retirement.[6] Though he promises to return to his country, the fugitive wazir—as good as stateless with the abrupt death of 'Abd al-'Azīz in 1372—makes no effort to do so,[7] and it isn't long afterward that Muḥammad V hunts him down for treason.[8] As for the agents responsible for apprehending him, they are the minister's former student and fellow wazir Ibn Zamrak, as well as the chief justice whom Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself appointed,[9] Abu al-Ḥassan al-Nabāhī[10]; they accuse him, among other charges, of apostacy.[1] Several other wazirs of the Maghrib, in whose way Ibn al-Khaṭīb stood over the years, share in the conspiracy to imprison and strangle him.[2] With so many killers after him, what would compel a powerful minister to forgo a lord's protection and abandon a whole kingdom, family, assets, and all?

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[1] See Zaghal, *al-Iqtirāb wa al-Ightirāb* 110.

[2] For the prominence of the office of the wazir during the Naṣrid reign see Shabānah, *Adab al-Wizārah* 49-53; Bū Falāqah, *al-Tārīkhī wa al-Adabī* 16-17; al-Sāmarrā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Wizārah* 90-91; for the significance of the kātib or secretary, a type of wazir, see 174-75.

[3] For an incisive survey of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's political life, see Vidal-Castro, "Ibn al-Khaṭīb."

[4] Ibn al-Khaṭīb had secured 'Abd al-'Azīz's guarantee of protection prior to his escape. See 'Inān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 132-33.

[5] 'Inān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 133-36 reproduces the letter in full.

[6] See 'Inān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 136-37, quoting from one of the wazir's final works, *A'māl al-A'lām* ("*Acts of the Illustrious*"). In one passage, quoted on 133, Ibn al-Khaṭīb specifies that he made all preparations for a smooth escape with no goal other than to be free over his own affairs.

[7] Actually, the opposite occurs; rather than return, Ibn al-Khaṭīb instead *sends* for his family. See Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh VII* 445.

[8] For Muḥammad V's fear that his wazir, a traitor, was colluding with the kings of the Maghreb, see 'Inān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 162, citing Ibn Khaldūn.

[9] 'Inān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 157.

[10] Al-Maqarrī, *Nafḥ I* 84-85.

A closer look at Ibn al-Khaṭīb's later years helps account for his fateful defection. They serve as an objective correlative to the insecurity of al-Andalus—or what's left of it—by the 1360s. Externally, it remains a battleground between Christian and Muslim fighters, while internally, pretenders to the throne jockey for power. Granada also remains a site of shifting allegiances. To illustrate the era's turbulence, Muḥammad V himself is forced to seek asylum in Fes after his ouster in 1358, at the hands of his brother, Ismā'īl II.[3] With the help of Pedro the Cruel, he regains the throne in 1362. It is thus easy to sense the insecurities that Ibn al-Khaṭīb would have felt in his own land of Granada, which he refers throughout his hefty compilation *Rayḥānat al-Kuttāb wa Nuj'at al-Muntāb* (*The Secretaries' Aroma and the Guest's Plea for Food*) as "القطر الغريب الوحيد؛ الجزيرة الغريبة؛ الأمة الغريبة؛ غربة الإسلام؛ وطننا الغريب" ("The lonely, unfamiliar place; the foreign island; the alien nation; Islam's distant land"; Zaghal, *al-Iqtirāb wa al-Ightirāb* 27).

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[1] In a letter sent to Ibn al-Khaṭīb, al-Nabāhī accuses the wazir of abandoning his post; of earning his wealth by un-Islamic means; of fleeing with hordes of wealth; of obstructing justice with respect to a murder case. See 'Inān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 172.

[2] Namely the wazirs 'Uthmān bin Abī Yaḥyā, Muḥammad bin 'Uthmān, Mas'ūd bin Māssī, and Sulaymān bin Dāwūd. In addition to being strangled in prison, Ibn al-Khaṭīb is forced into hiding to avoid capture; his books are burned, as is his corpse—this earned him the laqab "Dhul-Maytatayn" ("The One of the Two Deaths"). For a recap of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's turbulent times in the Meghreb, from his escape to 'Abd al-'Azīz's court to his capture and imprisonment, see al-Maqarrī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb VII*, 99-107. For his book burning, see *al-Iḥāṭah* I.36-37.

[3] Apparently the desired heir to his father's throne. See Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh VII* 405.

A MUCH-NEEDED VACATION

The seeds of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's estrangement with Muḥammad V are first sown during this 1358 stint abroad. Rather than remain by his king in Fes, Ibn al-Khaṭīb instead heads south to Salé, where he enjoys one of the most peaceful, productive, and spiritually enlightening times of his life.[1] Though under Abū Sālim al-Marīnī's patronage then, he serves no court and instead takes to traveling to clear his head, chronicle, worship, and wax poetic. Ibn al-Khaṭīb had already embraced the idea of settling down in the Meghreb when his king—reinstalled in a violent counter-coup—summons him back to Granada, where he enjoys newfound authority as the king's head of chancellery,[2] and picks up the *laqab* or nickname "Dhu al-Wizāratayn" ("The One of the Two Ministries," that is, the pen (as chancellor and secretary) and the sword (as deputy governor).[3] Despite reaching such heights of power, it is perhaps on account of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's distance from al-Ghaniyy Billāh during their years of exile that the wazir strives to establish himself professionally and poetically. An equally plausible explanation for Lisān la-Dīn's creative output during the 1360s might be his continued efforts to court the favor of rulers *other than* Muḥammad V.[4] To take one example, during his time in Salé, Ibn al-Khaṭīb composed for Abū Sālim's prominent wazir ʻUmar al-Fawdawdī *al-Ishārah Ilā Adab al-Wizārah* (*Advice on the Manners of the Ministry*), a treatise that serves as a mirror for ministers.[5] The treatise concisely covers all aspects of the wizārah or wazirship, including how to deal with conspirators.

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[1] ʻInān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 80. Zaghal, *al-Iqtirāb wa al-Ightirāb* 127-128, cites Ibn al-Khaṭīb's split from al-Ghaniyy Billāh during this period as possibly his earliest attempt to seek employment and protection elsewhere.

[2] See Zaghal, *al-Iqtirāb wa al-Ightirāb* 89.

[3] ʻInān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 106. Ibn al-Khaṭīb may have preferred to remain in Salé; upon the occasion, he likens himself to a slave stripped of agency, powerless over his movements and impelled to return to Granada. See 104.

[4] Namely the Marīnids. During his 1358 exile, Ibn al-Khaṭīb held strong relations with the Marīnid ruler Abū Sālim; afterward, he reached out to his short-lived successor, Abū Zayyān Muḥammad II, and, as aforementioned, secretly corresponded with Abū Fāris ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz I to escape to his court in 1371. None of these relations appears to have been mediated by al-Ghaniyy Billāh. Citing Ibn Khaldūn, ʻInān (*Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 132) even suggests that Ibn al-Khaṭīb worked for ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz.

[5] See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nufāḍat al-Jirāb III* 97, cited in Zaghal, *al-Iqtirāb wa al-Ightirāb*.

All in all, the work functions as a *Ministernspiegel*, both offering practical counsel on the post while emphasizing its essential role in relation to the king and kingdom. Stylistically, the treatise's arrangement in *saj'* (rhymed prose) sets it apart from other pieces of advice literature, as does its presentation as a beast fable, à la *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*.[1] These two tweaks add an agile and playful touch to an otherwise ponderous tradition.[2]

The premise is as follows: a leopard-minister, Abū Farwah, serves his lion-king a lifetime.[3] One day, the leopard reminds him of their economic and political breakthroughs over the decades, but fears his old age will harm the commonwealth going forward. He therefore asks to retire, though not without recommending that a member of his household—his son—assume his lofty seat beside the king. For his part, the king validates the leopard's services and intends to reward him for his honesty and probity; he accepts Abū Farwah's nomination and appoints his son to the wazirship.[4] For the rest of the fable, the leopard counsels his son—in polished prosimetrics—on the qualifications, expectations, and significance of the position, whose rare qualities he packages thus:

> وكان الوزير فيهم يشترط فيه أن يكون قديم النعمة، بعيد الهمة، مكين الراحة والرحمة، كريم الغيب، نقي الجيب، مسدد السهم، ثاقب الفهم، واثباً عند الفرصة، واصفاً للقصة، مريحاً في الغصة، موفور الأمانة، أصيل الديانة، قاهراً بالهدي، مستشعر العفة، معتدل الكفة، حذراً من النقد، صحيح العقد، راعياً للهمل، نشيطاً للعمل، واصلاً للذمم، شاكراً للنعم، خبيراً بسير الأمم، ذا حنكة بالدخل والخرج، عفيف اللسان والفرج، غير مغتاب ولا عيابة، ولا ملق ولا هيابة، مجتزئاً بالبلاغ، مشتغلاً عند الفراغ. مدثراً للصدق، صادعاً بالحق، حافظاً للأسرار، مدثراً للأبرار، مبايناً بطبعه لخلق الأشرار، وقد فاق قدر هذه المرتبة بين الأقدار، وأعطى وزانها – والحمد لله حقه – عند الاعتبار.[5]

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[1] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nufāḍat al-Jirāb III* 97.

[2] The tradition is rich in Arabic literature: many treatises on politics and the wizārah had been composed prior to Ibn al-Khaṭīb's age. See Shabbānah, *Adab al-Wizārah* 3-4.

[3] Is he named thus because of his penchant for his prey's skins?

[4] See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Adab al-Wizārah,* 56. The exchange of power from father to son transpires with high ceremony and much enthusiasm from the other animals present to witness the event. 57.

[5] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Adab al-Wizārah* 62

> ([Among the Greek sages,[1]] the wazir was required to be long rooted in the life of abundance [sc. not an upstart]; perspicacious; rooted in calmness and kindness; well-kept; kempt; precise; piercing; seizing opportunities; distinct at story-telling; calm under distress; fully faithful; fixed in his obedience; compelling in his leadership; clothed in chastity; fair upon appraisal; frugal; true to his word; tending to the neglected; industrious; constant; grateful; versed in the history of the nations; shrewd in the ins and outs of things; verbally and physically continent; neither a backbiter nor a blamer; nor smarmy nor timorous; content; diligent when in leisure; devoted to honesty; judging with the truth; a keeper of secrets; devoted to the innocent; able by his makeup to discern and expose the character of the malevolent. No doubt, the worth of this class soared, down the ages, its worth given and enhanced upon its study—all recognition to God His Trueness.)[2]

Reading Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s treatise as the calling card or resumé or a free agent might help explain why he goes to great lengths to establish the utter sincerity and loyalty of the wazir. The exceptional qualities contained in his catalogue mirror his hardy prosimetrics—the rhyming terms are not only pretty, but all-encompassing, signifying the wazir’s completeness as an artist of sound counsel—an artist of good taste, grooming, intellect, and strength. Crucially, the wazir’s cunning is informed by a rigorous ethical code, as the compendium stresses honesty, loyalty, integrity, and decency as hallmarks of the successful minister. Ibn al-Khaṭīb epitomizes the necessity of the wazir's incorruptibility with self-gratulatory metaphors; the minister is the messenger, relaying to the Doctor (the king) the maladies of the ill masses. More than a messenger, he is the stick on which the king leans, with which he walks, the sieve with which he sifts friends from foes; he is his talon, his mirror, his hearing, his hands. And if the king is corrupted, the leopard explains, it is the wazir who can remedy him, whereas all is lost if vice versa.[1] Ideally, then, the wazir functions as the Doctor's doctor.

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[1] See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Adab al-Wizārah*, 61. Ibn al-Khaṭīb establishes the legitimacy of the wazirship by citing the post’s high position among the ancient Greeks.

[2] The wazir is similarly promoted in Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s *Maqāmah al-Siyāsiyyah* (*Political Assembly*, 88), a prosimetric *Fürstenspiegel*:

وليكن معروفاً بإخلاص تدولتك، معقود الرضاء الغضب برضاك وصولتك، زاهدا عما في يديك، مؤثراً لكل ما يزلف لديك، بعيد الهمة، راعياً للاذمة، كامل الألة، محيطاً بالأيالة، رحب الصدر، رفيع القدر، معروف البيت، نبيه الحي والميت، مؤثراً للعدل والإصلاح، درباً بحمل السلاح. ذا خبرة بدخل المملكة وخرجها، وظهرها وسرحها، صحيح العقد، متحرزاً من النقد، جاداً عند لهوك، متيقظاً في حال سهوك، يلين عند غضبك، ويصل الإسهاب بمقتضبك، قلقاً من شكره دونك وحمده، ناسباً لك الإصابة بعمه.

Nowhere else is the minister's staying power and centrality as a stabilizing force within the court more heightened than in Abū Farwah's advice on the proper treatment of the wazir's own enemies. Conspirators must be confronted, he asserts, but only in the politest manner possible. The leopard takes it for granted that the wazir will almost inevitably attract ambitious plotters eager to dispossess him of his fat perch nearest the ruler. The way to ward off adversaries, the leopard instructs, is to break their asperant spirits not through brute force and intimidation, but through kindness and sound advice.[2] Abū Farwah continues:

> ولا تكشف في المجاهد وجها، ولا تبد فيهم غيبة ولا نجها واكسر سورة حسدهم بإحسانك، وسوغهم بالمعروف من وجهك ولسانك. واصطنع اضدادهم ممن ضلع عليهم، ومثل لديهم، تحرس غيبك، وتدافع عيبك، وتجلو ريبك، من غير أن يحسن منك لهذا الغرض بفاقة، ولا يشعر بإضافة، فإنك تنشر نيتهم المطوية، وترميهم من أشكالهم بالبلية، ثم تتلقى بعد ذلك فوارطهم بحسن الإقالة، وتتغمد سقطاتهم بالجلالة. وتكرم بكرم العفو على سؤاتهم السوالف، وتخليهم وما بقلوبهم من الحسايف. فإن تسلط الجاهل على نفسه فيما قصر عنه من عدل، أو اخطأ نيله من فضل، أعز على حوبائه من ظفر بأعدائه. ولا تركن إلى مزورته، ولا لمن حركت جسده وأثرته.[3]
>
> (Don't expose the faces of your enemies, and don't plot behind their backs, but rather break their envy with your excellence, assuage them with your good face and words. Pit

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[1] See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Adab al-Wizārah* 60.

[2] See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Adab al-Wizārah* 77.

[3] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Adab al-Wizārah* 77-78.

> against them their rivals who overpower or match them in order to guard your secrets, protect your faults, and eliminate your doubts without seeming to pursue this goal out of any need, as you will expose their hidden intentions, and cause their peers to ruin them. Then you will meet their abuse with the best dismissal—you'll cover their failings with majesty. Be generous with the generosity of forgiveness regarding their past faults. Yet abandon both them and the enmity in their hearts; surely, an unrestrained man's demands for himself—due to his lack of moderation or mistaken virtue—are worthier to him than the defeat of his enemies. Neither trust your enemy's friends, nor anyone you've seemingly impressed and influenced.)

On one level, the leopard validates the Qur'ānic injunction to rebuff vicious acts with better-mannered ones,[1] yet he appears to do so with political purposes in mind, ultimately the exposure and removal of enemies. The leopard here advocates a wazir's commitment to the high ethical standards of restraint, compassion, and even clemency toward conspirators, leaving their downfall to those of their ilk while preserving one's own public image and popular approval.[2] Such advice complements Abū Farwah's closing reminders to his son that it is God who guides, protects, and grants success to whom He pleases[3]—appeals that resonate with Ibn al-Khaṭīb's own piety found through his writing. The younger leopard then pounces on his new post, while his father contently retreats to a life of seclusion and worship.

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[1] The phrase being *idfaʻ bi-allatī hiya aḥsan*; see *Qur'ān*, 41:33-35.

[2] See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Adab al-Wizārah* 80-81.

[3] See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Adab al-Wizārah* 82.

WHO'S WHO AND WHO'S NOT

Ibn al-Khaṭīb wrote often enough as a political theorist and could put propaganda to any meter.[1] His treatise on the ministry stands out not so much for its emphasis on the value of his post—everything he wrote did this—as for its subtle removal of the wazir from the scene altogether. Sadly for our advisor, retirement never comes so easily. Instead, Ibn al-Khaṭīb struggles in an increasingly claustrophobic Naṣrid court, where rivals aggravate his post-exilic distance with the king through rumors of misconduct and intrigue. As for Abū Farwah's advice on elegantly handling adversaries, it goes unheeded completely. Though a skilled poet of *hijā'* or verse lampoons his whole life, Ibn al-Khaṭīb's invectives in poetry and prose take noticeably more vicious and personalized turns in his later years. One late, prosimetric work, pointedly titled *al-Katībah al-Kāminah fī man laqaynāh bil-Andalus min shu'arā' al-mi'at al-Thāminah* (*The Band Lying in Ambush Among Those We've Encountered in al-Andalus From The Eighth-Century Poets*), sees Ibn al-Khaṭīb at work on his dominant genre—the biographical sketch.[2] Traditionally cataloguing the early pioneers and scholars of Islam and hadith scholars, the genre under Ibn al-Khaṭīb blends with others—namely *Faḍā'il la-Buldān* (*The Excellences of the Lands*), which spotlights the superiorities of a city, nation, or people—to register al-Andalus' prominent placement within the *adab* canon of Islam's greatest cities and celebrities.[1] In this spare volume, a catalogue focused on the poetry of the writing classes, Ibn al-Khaṭīb's telegraphic style displays his powers of precision in diction. Composed around 1373, the collection resembles the wazir's previous biographical volumes in its general organization, its focus on eminent men,[2] and its attention to their poetry and *adab*. The *Katībah*'s biographies are grouped by *ṭabaqah* or social class (Preachers and Ascetics; Orators and Educators; Judges; Secretaries and Poets) and divides between deceased and living persons. Like his many prior biographical sketches, *al-Katībah* comprises a *Who's Who* of the movers and shakers of his lifetime, and intends to advertise Ibn al-Khaṭīb's status both as an established member of Granada's elite as well as its first-class literary critic. Ibn al-Khaṭīb literally writes into existence a milieu of aristocratic *shu'arā'* and *udabā'*. In so doing, he both legitimates select professional classes (including his own wazirship); for good measure, he lists his grandfather, father, and son among his entries.[3] The general reverance shown by Ibn al-Khaṭīb toward his predecessors culminates with his inclusion among them: concluding his magnum opus *al-Iḥāṭah fī Akhbār Gharnāṭah* (*The Comprehensive Collection on the Happenings of Granada*) is a two-hundred page autobiography that reproduces much of his own poetry. In effect, the wazir means to epitomize the best of his betters, and means to eclipse them:

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[1] See Damaj, "Estado En Ibn Al-Jaṭīb." The essay spotlights the wazir's active engagement in al-Ghaniyy Billāh's administration; it takes up five works of prose and poetry in which Ibn al-Khaṭīb promotes himself as co-governor alongside the sultan. For a glimpse of his reformist aims in the areas of security, economic development, and domestic prosperity, see 91-97. Specifically, the minister wanted to implement reforms that would hold sultans accountable for misuse of funds; impede favoritism in the court; fight financial corruption and the overpayment of the army; challenge favored court officials; and replace court officials. Damaj concludes that Ibn al-Khaṭīb ultimately *couldn't* execute his reforms in an authoritarian society—a possible factor in his retirement.

[2] Ibn al-Khaṭīb authored numerous biographical collections, his most notable being *al-Iḥāṭah fī Akhbār Gharnāṭah* (*The Comprehensive Collection on the History/Events of Granada*). Many of the wazir's biographies also appear in miscellaneous compilations, such as his works *Rayḥānat al-Kitāb wa Nuj'at al-Muntāb* (*The Secretaries' Aroma and the Guest's Plea for Food*) and *Nufāḍat al-Jirāb fī 'Ulālat al-Ightirāb* (*Suitcase Dustings Concerning the Consolations of Expatriation*).

> وقنعتُ باجتماع الشَّمل بهم، ولو في الكتاب. وحرصت على أن أنال منهم قُرباً، وأخذُ من أعقابهم أدبا وحباًّ، وكمال قال، ساقي القوم، آخرُهُم شُرباً.[4]

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[1] For the biography of lands, see 'Inān, *al-Iḥāṭah* I.4-5; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭah* I.83-87. For a classical example of the biographical dictionary, or *'Ilm al-Rijāl* (*The Science of Men*), see *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* (*Lives of the Luminary Nobles*) by Shams al-Dīn al-Dahabī (d.1348).

[2] And occasionally women. See for instance Ibn al-Khaṭīb's entry on Umm al-Ḥusayn Bint Aḥmad al-Ṭanjālī in his short work of biographical sketches (found in the *Rayḥānah*), *Awṣāf al-Nās fī al-Tawārīkh wa al-Ṣilāt* (*People's Profiles in Times and Ties*) 111-12.

[3] See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭah* I.153-56 (grandfather); *Awṣāf al-Nās* 82-84; *al-Iḥāṭah* III.386-90 (father); *al-Katībah al-Kāminah* 279-82; *al-Iḥāṭah* III.435-36 (son).

[4] *al-Iḥāṭah* IV.438.

> (And so, I resolved to gather these men if only in a book; I took care to draw near them, to take from their legacy out of respect and love ... as a cupbearer for a nation, its last to drink.)

Though it resembles his previous biographical compilations, *al-Katībah* distinguishes itself by its greater attention to personal acquaintances, many of them alive at the time of the work's composition; its emphasis on Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself in the lives of the biographees; and its more frequent deployment of strong invectives—so venomous in their defamatory intent as to appear novel in the aesthetics of their abuse.[1] Each of the *Katībah*'s biographies proceeds thus: a biographical sketch with attention to the biographee's personality and character, followed by a sample of that biographee's poetry. When it comes to the poetry sampled, *very* frequently Ibn al-Khaṭīb will specify that the referenced verse had been dedicated to him personally, or recited before him and other dignitaries on one occasion or other. Ironically, this formula holds for Ibn al-Khaṭīb's enemies, which gives his libelous remarks against former allies a sharper intention than comic relief, namely proof of their indebtedness to and betrayal of their friend and teacher; proof of their lowly character and his innocence of their slander against him.

To cite just a few of his character assassinations, Ibn al-Khaṭīb takes a swipe at the deceased philosopher ʻAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Raqqāṣ:

> رجل متهور، وفي أقبح الأطوار متطور، يأوي إلى أبوة خاملة، وحماقة على حملة العلم حاملة، إلا أنه ظهر باجتهاده، وترفع عن وهاده، واستمرت حاله على تكلف، إلى أن مات قتيلاً في سبيل تخلف.[2]

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[1] That's not to say Ibn al-Khaṭīb didn't inflict good burns over the years. Far, far from it. See al-Maqarrī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb VII* 131-37; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭah* I.187; al-Khaṭīb, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 242; ʻInān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb*, 107; Miftāḥ, *Dīwān Ibn al-Khaṭīb* I.25; Basbaḥ, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb*, 61-63; Zaghal, *al-Iqtirāb wa al-Ightirāb* 96.

[2] *al-Katībah al-Kāminah* 94.

> (A reckless man who excels in the ugliest fashions; constitutionally dull, [he is] a genius of imbecility, which he struggled to overcome and elevated himself thereby until he died of stupidity.)

The wazir's relationship with al-Raqqāṣ isn't clear, but it is assumed he had a bone to pick with the man, since Ibn al-Khaṭīb's contentions with the victims of his invectives are usually well-known. Among his former companions mentioned in the *Katībah* for instance, all praised in earlier biographies, we have his main accuser of apostasy, the chief justice al-Nabāhī.[1] Here, he's compared to an ape and a donkey; his intellectual and physical traits are cruelly made fun of; even his parents are insulted in the process. Curious attention is brought to his superstitious dabbling with magic—an ironic enormity given al-Nabāhī's sanctimonious charges against the minister. One fictional anecdote has al-Nabāhī sitting in the company of *fuḍalā'* or virtuous men; the judge attempts to interpret the epithet Ibn al-Khaṭīb had mockingly invented for him, "*ja'sūs*" ("short and ugly; of lowly constitution and character") by misquoting (and rendering incoherent) the famous Qur'ānic verse, "*...wa-lā taja'sasū wa-lā yaghtab ba'ḍukum ba'ḍā*."[2] Of course, the virtuous men at once correct al-Nabāhī : *wa-lā tajassssasū* (never spy on one another)—a loaded term however Ibn al Khaṭīb intended it. Ibn al-Khaṭīb closes al-Nabāhi's entry with a sample of his poetry; ironically, the verses offered sing the wronged wazir's praises![3]

Another, Ibn Zamrak, Ibn al-Khaṭīb's ex-student and ex-protégée who co-conspires with al-Nabāhī, is said to have been born out of connivance, with a tongue naturally disposed to nonsense. The wazir calls him thankless, he calls him a deceiver who dirtied the waters with intentions unknown, and uses Ibn Zamrak’s own verses against him to cite his debauchery. This entry ends with a long poem in which Ibn Zamrak eulogizes his teacher in the extreme.[1] The secretary Aḥmad ibn Farkūn—whom Ibn al-Khaṭīb claims to have raised himself as the boy’s godfather—meets a similar fate on the page. Like al-Nabāhī and Ibn Zamrak, his initial biography in the *Iḥāṭah* is canceled with this unremitting hit-piece.[2] After insulting him and his father, Ibn al-Khaṭīb recounts his many favors on this wayward child, who he claims betrayed him without elaborating. The poetry cited of Ibn Farkūn is impious and borderline blasphemous in its immoderate glorification of his ex-teacher.[3] With these scathing entries, Ibn al-Khaṭīb achieves multiple objectives: he demonstrates his former friends’ hypocrisy by exposing their indebtedness to him, and reaffirms—with his exceptional, rhyming diction and powers of poetic recall—his place among Granada’s choice *udabā’*.

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[1] In his long entry on the judge, Ibn al-Khaṭīb takes pains to clear his friend al-Nabāhī's bad name. *al-Iḥāṭah* IV.88-100.

[2] The injunction is extracted from verse 12 of Chapter 49 of the Qur'ān, al-Ḥujurāt (The Rooms): "Believers, avoid much assumption—surely some assumption is a sin. Don't spy on one another. Don't talk behind each others' backs. Would one of you like to eat the dead flesh of his brother? You would hate that. Be mindful of Allāh. Surely, Allāh is Ever-accepting of repentance, Merciful."

[3] For al-Nabāhī's entry, see Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Katībah al-Kāminah* 146-52.

ASSASSIN AMONG ASSASSINS

It is tempting to brand Ibn al-Khaṭīb a two-faced minister who praised his friends no end only to spare no indecency against them; his ability as an *adīb* to flip effortlessly between *madḥ* and *qadḥ* throws into question the sincerity of his extreme endorsements or expressions of hatred. Both perform emotions familiar to the language game of *adab* literature. His friendships seem to have been open always to revaluation and correlated to a person’s political wellbeing, and it’s clear he kissed up to more rulers than his own. Still, the wazir often went after important peers on principle,[4] and did so at the risk of his reputation, ultimately the cost of his life. At the level of language, the undue praise and blame in his corpus constitutes great poetry and literature. As for his works' message, Ibn al-Khaṭīb consistently praised and blamed essential ideas underpinning—and transcending—a figure's character: generosity, protection, justice, and serving the Islamic cause are regularly praised, while dimwittedness, bad manners, mediocrity, and treachery are blamed intensely. Whether as a rhetorical or ethical engagement (or both), I suspect that the wazir's commitment to a prescriptive poetics—and their potential to relieve Ibn al-Khaṭīb of his troubles, first by consoling him, second by winning over his royal readers to his cause—spurred him to write in spite of his accusers.

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[1] For Ibn Zamrak’s entry, see Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Katībah al-Kāminah*, 282-88; for Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s praise of him, see *al-Iḥāṭah* II.301-08. Ibn al-Khaṭīb showers his ex-friend and student with enormous praise in these pages, and generously samples his poetry, indicative of his approval of them at the time.

[2] For Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s praise of Ibn Farkūn’s genius, manners, and skills as a secretary, see *al-Iḥāṭah* I.220-21.

[3] For Ibn Farkūn’s entry, see Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Katībah al-Kāminah* 305-07.

[4] Such as the Maghrebi wazir Omar bin ‘Abd Allāh (blamed for ousting Abū Sālim), the Maghrebi religious scholar Aḥmad al-Qabbāb (blamed for turning down an invitation), or the Maghrebi judge Muḥammad bin Abī Ramānah

We know from the records that Ibn al-Khaṭīb's invectives reached al-Nabāhī, who mentions them in a long letter he sent to the fugitive wazir.[1] It's clear then that the renowned diplomat-poet either openly provoked or responded to the judge's injustice against him. In either case, the point stands that he never kept quiet through his troubled final years, and for a man of his political stature, it's easy to imagine how this would have wracked the nerves of his former court. Invectives such as those reviewed demonstrate the negative effects that Ibn al-Khaṭīb's environment of intrigue and fleeting alliances produced on him. In it, he grew more embittered, more mistrustful of people,[2] more desperate to survive, perhaps to the point of defecting to the Marīnids.[3] Yet his flights for survival in al-Andalus and the Maghreb don't appear to have

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(blamed for arriving late to greet the wazir when he visited his city, Miknās); see 'Inān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 94; *Dhamm al-Wathīqah* 6-7; *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb VII* 136-37.

[1] See al-Maqarrī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb VII* 116-19.

[2] See 'Inān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 173; 'Abbās, *al-Katībah al-Kāminah* 8-9, citing Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *A'māl al-A'lām* 316.

[3] 'Inān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 132, suggests that Ibn al-Khaṭīb had worked for 'Abd al-'Azīz while active in Muḥammad V's court. Citing Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar VII* 335 and 337, he explains that 'Abd al-'Azīz was wary of the emirs who fled to Granada, prompting Ibn al-Khaṭīb to convince al-Ghaniyy Billāh to apprehend the sultan 'Abd al-Raḥmān and his wazir, Omar ibn 'Abd Allāh. And when he did defect to the Marīnid court, Ibn al-Khaṭīb had secured from 'Abd al-'Azīz protection and asylum (132-33). As for Ibn Khaldūn (*Tārīkh VII* 501), despite showing great respect for his contemporary, he criticizes Ibn al-Khaṭīb for his love of wealth and land and enormous waste of both, blames him for abandoning his Naṣrid post, and considers his flight to 'Abd al-'Azīz a sign of his connivance and fraud. (I am very grateful for Professor Francisco Vidal-Castro for first suggesting that Ibn al-Khaṭīb worked as a double agent and for referring me to Ibn Khaldūn's judgment on the matter.)

sapped his writerly energies; rather, they lent his later works a crueler depth, to which his final verses, allegedly composed in prison, attest:

[المتقارب]

1- بَعُدْنا وإن جاوَرَتْنا البُيوتْ   وجئنا بوعظٍ ونحن صُمُوتْ
2- وأنفاسُنا سَكَنَتْ دفعة   كَجَهْرِ الصلاة تلاهُ القُنُوتْ
3- وكُنَّا عظاماً فَصُرْنا عِظاماً   وكُنَّا نَقوتُ فها نحنُ قوتْ
4- وكُنَّا شُمُوسَ سماءِ العُلا   غَرُبْنَ فناحَتْ علينا السُّمُوتْ
5- فكم جَدَّلَتْ ذا الحُسامَ الظبا   وذو البخت كم جَدَّلَتْهُ البُخُوتْ
6- وكم سيق للقبر في خِرْقَةٍ   فتىً مُلِئَتْ من كساه التُّخُوتْ
7- فقلْ للعِدا ذَهَبَ ابنُ الخطيبِ   وفاتَ، ومَنْ ذا الذي لا يَفُوتْ
8- ومن كان يَفْرَحُ منهم له   فَقُل: يفرحُ اليومَ من لا يموتْ[1]

(1- We've grown distant though houses neighbor us.
Silent, we've brought advice.
2- Our souls found peace all at once,
As the vigil supplication follows the public prayer.
3- We used to be bones, and so, bones we'll become.
We were the cream of the crop, now, fodder.
4- We used to be suns of the high skies.
We've set: the azimuths mourn us.
5- How many blades' edges braided the swordsman?
How many favored ones have fortunes thrown?
6- How many were hurled to their graves in rags?

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[1] al-Maqarrī, *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb VII* 107.

A young man's shroud filled with dreck?

7- So tell the enemies Ibn al-Khaṭīb has gone and left.

Who among us won't?

8- To whomever among them who gladdens at his expense, tell:

Glad today is he who does not die.)

These somber lines encapsulate the two-faced nature of the ministry: a position of power and influence but often overlooked, a high life that can crash at any moment, to the mirth of every enemy, known and unknown. The verses confirm the wazir's negative thoughts against the transience of life, which he stresses more heavily in such later works as *Rayḥānat al-Kuttāb* or *Nufāḍat al-Jirāb*, especially the conciliatory epistles contained therein; these letters aggressively write off the world and everyone in it for their fraudulent nature, and call for recourse in God alone. In one tough letter, addressed to an unknown notable, blamed for loving the world, the wazir unloads an onslaught of interrogatives:

أين الصدقات إذا حدقت إلى الأكف الحدقات؟ أين زلف الليل؟ أين الزكاة المتوعد ممسكها بالويل؟ أين الجهاد وارتباط الخيل؟ أين الحج وركبانه يتدافع تدافع السيل؟ أين تلاوة القرآن الذي تطمئن به القلوب؟ أين الخلق الذي لا يصح دونها المطلوب؟ أين الحظ المغلوب؟ أين الصبر والسكون وانتظار الفرج ممن يقول لشيء كن فيكون؟ أين قيدها وتوكل؟ أظنه أشكل؟ أين الأنفة من الأشتهار؟ أين الأنيس بالخلوة بياض النهار؟ عدل عن ذلك كله إلى البخل على المساكين، والسلاطة على الدكاكين....[1]

(Where are the friendships when the friends fixate on wealth?[2] Where is the early evening supplication? Where are the alms that promise woe for its withholder? Where is the defensive war, the cavalry engagement? Where is the Ḥajj, its pilgrims flooding forth?

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[1] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Zawājir wa al-ʿIẓāt* 178.

[2] I translate أكف, saddles, figuratively to mean money. See *Lisān al-ʿArab*, s.v. أكف. I similarly take pupils, حدقات, to stand for people.

> Where's the Qur'ān's recitation with which hearts are assured? Where are the manners, *sine qua non*? Where is the ill fortune: where is the patience and peace, relief's victory from the One Who says "Be" and it is? Where's the determination, the reliance? I assume it a difficult matter? Where is the pride of fame? Where's the private companion in open daylight? Forget all this—consider the greed against the needy, the control over the shops...)

Such cynical questions condemn as guilty whoever fails to lead a virtuous, Islamic life in preparation for the hereafter. The passage—one among many—shows Ibn al-Khaṭīb's familiarity with a type of personage and man of influence who stands for everything he presumably opposes: impiety, indecency, and greed writ large. Whether or not Ibn al-Khaṭīb's many surviving renunciatory epistles ultimately reflect his "sincere" feelings isn't exactly unknowable, but what is apparent from the style of these rhetorical questions and repeating constructions is his mastery of the art of letter-writing.

So perhaps it is out of a *poetic* principle, if not an ethical one, that the edgy wazir defames his enemies. Even in his guiltiest point—as a minister in desertion of his post—Ibn al-Khaṭīb can still admonish his king. He writes in one passage from the letter with which I opened this excursus:

> وأنا قد رحلت، فلا أوصيكم بمال، فهو عندي أهون متروك، ولا بولد، فهم رجالكم وخدامكم، وممن يحرص مثلكم على الإكثار منهم، ولا بعيال فهي من مربيات بيتكم، وخواص داركم. إنما أوصيكم بحظي العزيز—كان—علي بوطنكم، وهو أنتم، فأنا أوصيكم بكم، فارعوني فيكم خاصة، أوصيكم بتقوى الله، والعمل لغد، وقبض عنان اللهو في موطن الجد، والحياء من الله الذي محّص وأفال، وأعاد النعمة بعد زوالها "لينظر كيف تعملون" وأطلب منكم عوض

> ما وفرته عليكم، من زاد طريق، ومكافأة وإعانة، زادا سهلا عليكم، وهو أن تقولوا لي، غفر الله لك ما ضيعت من حقي خطأ أو عمدا، وإذا فعلتم ذلك فقد رضيت.[1]

> (I've left. I therefore entrust you not with property—for me it's the least important, forfeited; nor with my children, for they are your men and servants whom those of your station would take care to redouble; nor with my dependents, for they count among your household's nursemaids and most precious members. Rather, I entrust you with what's my dearest fortune in your nation, and that's you: I entrust you with yourselves so take care of yourselves for me. I entrust you with the piety of God, with fruit-bearing works, with the seizure of play's reins at the earnest hour; with meekness toward the God Who returned His blessings to you after its depletion "to study how you respond."[2] In return for my favors on you, I ask for a journey's provisions, for compensation and aid, these on top of my request—effortless for you—that you tell me, "God forgive you! you haven't squandered, intentionally or unintentionally, what's owed me." Were you to do this I'd be content.)

In an artful display of loyalty and friendship, the absent ex-minister writes away the gravity of his desertion. He claims innocence and looks back with confidence on a job well done, and goes so far as to mention *his* favors on his ruler, here admonished, even as he abandons him. As for why he would ever step down from so mighty a post, crossing his king in so doing, the minister foolhardily brags of his inherent power and unstoppable charm, to the envy of lesser men:

> واعلموا أيضا، على جهة النصيحة، أن ابن الخطيب مشهور في كل قطر، وعند كل ملك، واعتقاده، وبرُّه، والسؤال عنه، وذكره بالجميل، والإذن في زيارته، نجابة منكم، وسعة ذرع ودهاء.... ونختم لكم هذه الغزارة بالحلف الأكيد،

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[1] ʻInān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 136.
[2] See *Qur'ān* 7:129, 10:14.

> أني ما تركت لكم وجه نصيحة في دين، ولا في دنيا، إلا وقد وفيتها لكم، ولا فارقتكم إلا عن عجز، ومن ظن خلاف هذا فقد ظلمني وظلمكم، والله يرشدكم ويتولى أمركم.[1]
>
> (Know as well, in the spirit of counsel, that Ibn al-Khaṭīb is famous in every land, before every king. Good faith in him, kindness toward him, checking on him, thinking well of him, and granting to visit him, these demonstrate your nobility, capacity, and craft.... I end this outpouring with the express oath that I left for your no directive pertaining to spiritual or worldly affairs except that I fulfilled it for you. I never parted company with you except out of debility. Whoever suggests otherwise has wronged me and wronged you. God guide you and handle your affairs.)

Ibn al-Khaṭīb's well-worded excuses don't quite hide the point that he isn't sorry, a fact articulated in his luckless later years, which sees the performance of his innocence on the page, to the chagrin of all opponents. Rather than lay low, the vacated wazir sharpens his tones on paper instead of lay low, hide in docent chronicling, or cease writing completely. These years emboldened rather than silenced a man of letters, and his corpus fares all the better for this. It speaks to an *art* of sincerity in a time of insecurity—a perfect storm of praise and blame, fact and fiction. That his writing cost him his life proves his integrity as an assassin among assassins, and testifies to the power of words.

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[1] ʻInān, *Ibn al-Khaṭīb* 136.

CONCLUSION: WHO‘S AFRAID OF HYPOCRISY?

> Deceivers follow the poets. Don’t you see that they wander at every valley, and that they say what they don’t do? Save for the poets who kept faith, did good, remembered God much, and prevailed after they were wronged. —*The Qur’an*[1]

> All the world’s a stage.... —Shakespeare (d.1616)[2]

> Aggressively we all defend the role we play. —The Killers, “Exitlude” (2006)

Like their Anglo-Saxon and later English neighbors, the Arabs had no shortage of terms for hypocrisy, an state of mind and mode of operating, known by many faces, its cultural, religious, and ethical profiles sometimes overlapping. Whether or not it should surprise us, the concepts prove *cross*-cultural insofar as the different literatures explored over the course of this dissertation echo similar understandings of deception and dissimulation, expressed by similar tropes and schemes; whether or not the similarities arise from “traveling texts,” it is evident that the cultures studied share enough of an understanding of hypocrisy—less a sin *per se* and more a platform for the skillful performance of the other vices—to either take from or simply resemble one another.

Insofar as it is a social construct, hypocrisy’s meanings rely on their institutional settings at any given moment. In pre-Islamic poetry, hypocrisy possessed no ethical charge other than tribal betrayal of protocol, as in friendship or battle. In early Islam, the vice referred especially to essentially to certain *non*-Muslims who worked to undermine the new community of believers. And in the empires’ courts and sprouting cities, hypocrisy is presented as an inevitable vice, virtuous to those who occupy an orb of masks, cloaks, and daggers. While there’s nothing funny about the original *munāfiqūn*, housed in the lowest grade of hell,[1] hypocrisy’s potentials to entertain and instruct were both recognized and maximized by *udabā’* far and wide.

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[1] “al-Shu‘arā’” (“The Poets”) 26:224-27.
[2] *As You Like It,* 2.7.139-66.

We now have enough shades of the “vice” to sort its positive and negative values. Insofar as hypocrisy inheres in human nature, its viciousness can no longer be taken as a given. And insofar as humans appear to possess meaningful agency, the decisions of when, why, and how to deceive, and even the judgment of whether it will have been a morally “good” or “bad” deception, remain with them. In other words, if goodness or badness aren’t in the eye of the beholder, they appear to be so. The practice of necessary, everyday deceptions presumes to recognize right and wrong as moral absolutes. Only human intentions—sincere or insincere—provisionally surmount them.

What’s more, deception was never unethical to need surmounting, for the scriptures endorse this recognition. In the *Qur’an*, God is the ultimate thwarter of plotters, deceiving the deceivers and besting conspirators at their game—really God’s.[2] And though he himself neither lied nor betrayed, condemned both constantly, and enjoyed well before his prophethood the reputation of being *al-ṣādiq* and *al-amīn* (*the honest*; *the trustworthy*), the Messenger ﷺ permitted white lies that reconciled between people (such as friends or spouses), as well as the deception of enemys in wartime.[3] Islam permits dissimulation in face of torture, popularly though imprecisely referred to as *taqiyyah* (*prudent dissembling*; lit. *fear*).[4] As an alternative to lying, “Islamic legal tradition condones the use of ambiguous language as a means to protect oneself from the effects of a forced oath or of one’s refusal to take such an oath” (Stewart, “Dissimulation” 473).[1] Such *tawriyah* or wordplay “allows the performer to view himself as having bested his opponents in a clever manner rather than simply giving in.... It is... the weapon of the clever, which serves to avoid coerced assimilation while at the same time mocking the enemy” (479-80).[2] Language, then, conceals truths as much as it reveals them, a perfect contrast to the nonverbal communications of infants, the unspoken languages of true lovers, friends, and rivals, understood feelingly, unfailingly, unstoppably.

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[1] *Qur’an* 4:145-47.

[2] *Qur’an* 2:8-13; 4:136-43; 7:182-83; 8:30; 68:44-45; 86:15-17.

[3] See *Sunnah*, “*Riyāḍ*” Book I, Ḥadīth 249; “The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “War is deceit” (*al-ḥarbu khudʿatun*)” (“*Bukhārī*” 3030).

[4] The Qur’an and Ḥadīth allow declarations or displays of apostacy in face of compulsion or immediate threat. See *Qur’an* 16:106; Stewart, “Dissimulation” 452-53; see 448-54. Even as it permits pretend disbelief, 16:106 and the faith on the whole above all emphasize the enormity of actual disbelief. For historical applications of *taqiyyah* see Rubio, “La *taqiyya* en las fuentes cristianas” who argues for the active practice of *taqiyyah* among the Moriscos; Bernabé-Pons, “*Taqiyya, niyya*” argues against its intentional practice. The latter, 501, citing *Qur’an* 4.97-99, draws

As accomplished diplomats and poets, both Chaucer and Ibn al-Khaṭīb mastered the art of sincerity, which makes them *hypocrites* in the ancient sense of *actors*. Their great displays of regret and repentance, renunciation and religiosity are deployed at strategic points within their “*adab*” oeuvres: Chaucer is always never good enough: he disowns the poetry he takes every care to list and preserve; Ibn al-Khaṭīb excels at rejecting the only world he knows, never retiring from the court despite appearing to want to, never retiring his caustic pen. Both participate in traditions of earnest and game and engage an assortment of rhetorical and generic traditions without confining themselves to a fixed protocol. Through their poetics of hypocrisy, characters are formed (including “narrators” and “authors”); whereas Chaucer’s poetics focuses on fictitious characters with real-life features and refrains from passing judgment, Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s gives his contemporaries a fictional life only to blame and assassinate their characters. The

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attention to the fact that believers are far from required to endure hostile environments, in fact they’re reminded that God’s earth is wide and encouraged to flee to safety to avoid jeopardizing their lives and faith.

[1] “The famous philologian Ibn Durayd al-Azdī (d. 321/933) penned *Kitāb al-malāḥin* in order to serve the needs of people who faced mandatory oaths. In it he presents 183 oaths that are double-entendres or amphibologies, the obvious meaning intended for the tyrannical ruler or his agents who are administering the oath, and the other, not-so-obvious meaning understood internally by the oath-taker” (Stewart, “Dissimulation” 473). See 473-78.

[2] See Stewart, “*Taqiyyah* as Performance.” Whether or not they knew of such doctrine, ministers counseled their rulers to deceive and enforce in ways that could blur the permissible and impermissible. See Kechichian and Dekmejian, “*Sulwan*” 76-80.

authors' different presentations of inconsistency, deceit, and betrayal entertain audiences and invite them to muse on the philosophical and ethical implications of their letters.

No doubt, Chaucer and Ibn al-Khaṭīb's environments of fear and intrigue affected their writing for the better, if at the cost of their livelihood, safety, and/or integrity. But to sell out in these cramped political circles is to agree to participate in it at all; the conscientious need not apply. According to the Anglo-Arabic letters studied here, the poet's role is not to convey necessary spiritual instruction or arrange words well, but to please and provoke in support of a cause or at the behest of a patron or social superior.[1] Intentions always matter, even if they're never fully apparent. Inentions are also often too complex to be considered inconsistency. Poetic hypocrisy brings out this complexity, it enables colorful expressions of social identities, emotions, relationships, and even fashions.[2] We know not every pious politician is authentic—the weak performance tells us this. Not every brother is a brother. Conversely, not every hypocrite is inconsistent, false, or bad. And in literature, dissimulation aspires to the beautiful, it becomes an art, a way for authors, characters, and audiences to try on different masks, to face their own.[3] These literatures' cultures evidently enjoyed and ailed from no shortage of frauds, given their recurrence. And given our “post-truth” crises of tolerance, communication, and social cohesion, we could learn from these recurrences.

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[1] "Poetry aligned with the interests of power need not be vicious," writes Cannon, "and in perfect keeping with its penchant for turning a fact into its opposite, propaganda tends to become positive and celebratory only when power has reached a difficult pass, as, for example, in the set of tricky successions that followed the deposition of Richard II, at which point it became almost obligatory, even for an accomplished poet, to cobble together an obsequy in praise of the current king. Chaucer was in fact the first to get in on this act with a begging poem addressed to the newly crowned Henry IV" (*Middle English Literature* 91); see Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity* 117-18. Donald Howard put it this way: "The artist effaces or disguises himself, throws attention on the 'realities' of his story, the 'true history' he purports to relate. But the authenticity he offers is not in realities or history or even in tidings. It is in appearances, in the way things *seem*. It is therefore a wholly mentalistic or psychological phenomenon: the tiding reported by the writer and acknowledged by the reader can be true or false. It has its authenticity in inner experience—in the mentalistic world of Rumor and Fame" ("Chaucer's Idea" 54). See 44-46, 52-53.

[2] See Hodges' wonderful scholarship on Chaucer's "costume rhetoric," which analyzes social identity dynamics through fashion's effects on character and environment. See her *Chaucer and Costume* and *Chaucer and Array*; "[I]n the Middle Ages simulative hypocrisy was ordinarily a matter of dress... a costume or official garb which the simulator donned either to deceive or impress his fellow human beings. "O hypocrita, cucullus non facit monachum", the medieval proverb ran, "hypocrite, the cowl does not make the monk!"" (Amory, "Whited Sepulchres" 39).

[3] See Leicester, *Disenchanted Self* 10-11, 416-17, *passim*; Knapp, *Social Contest* 5; Ganim, *Chaucerian Theatricality*.

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