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Rhetorical Ductus in Chaucerian Ekphrasis

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Abstract

My thesis investigates how the rhetorical device of ekphrasis functions in the poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer. Ekphrasis, as a detailed description of a work of visual art, figures prominently in Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, *The House of Fame*, and *The Knight's Tale*. Drawing upon the theories of the medieval arts of memory and particularly the work of Mary Carruthers on this subject, my thesis argues that Chaucer's ekphrases incorporate memory techniques, which connect the ekphrases integrally to the texts in which they are found. Chaucer's early uses of ekphrasis in *The Book of the Duchess* and *The Parliament of Fowls* guide the audience's interpretation and therefore contribute to the *ductus*, defined by Carruthers as the text's "overall direction" ("Concept" 196). In the case of *The House of Fame*, descriptions of visual art not only guide interpretation but also alter the text's *ductus* by directing the narrative through a more fully developed use of architectural memory structures. In *The Knight's Tale*, Chaucer's latest use of ekphrasis, the descriptions of the three oratories alter the text's *ductus* through their participation in a narrative sequence that especially enforces mutual recollections among the parts that share the same location. Chaucer's ekphrases also respond to medieval aesthetic ideals of variety as a source of harmony and pleasure. Chaucer's engagement with these ideals and with Boethian links among aesthetic, social, and cosmic harmony differentiates his ekphrases from classical examples. I last consider Chaucer's developing use of ekphrasis in relation to John Lydgate's *Temple of Glas*, which has an ekphrasis that acknowledges its own debt to Chaucer. Lydgate's integral connection of his ekphrasis to his narrative through memory techniques reveals his understanding of later developments in Chaucer's use of ekphrasis.

My findings advance knowledge by challenging theories of ekphrasis as a static disengagement from the world of the text and advocating its more active involvement.

Keywords: Geoffrey Chaucer, ekphrasis, *ductus*, image, John Lydgate, aesthetic theory, and harmony.

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Introduction

Painted walls figure prominently in three of Geoffrey Chaucer's four dream visions and in the *Knight's Tale*, the first of his *Canterbury Tales*. The *Book of the Duchess* (*BD*) includes a painted (and glazed) bedroom, while the *Parliament of Fowls* (*PF*), the *House of Fame* (*HF*), and the *Knight's Tale* (*KnT*) all describe decorated temple walls. They are the four major examples of Chaucer's use of the rhetorical device of ekphrasis, or the description of visual art in literature. Few critics have systematically discussed Chaucer's use of ekphrasis. Many treat ekphrasis as digression that serves a decorative purpose. As the work of Mary Carruthers on medieval arts of memory shows, however, medieval ekphrasis often involved descriptions of artifacts with painted stories that engaged the audience's memory and meditation on themes in a text. Other critics have regarded Chaucer's use of ekphrasis simply as a continuation of classical uses of the trope, but as Carruthers has shown, medieval aesthetic ideals differed from the antique. In the Middle Ages, variety was a greater source of both pleasure and harmony than uniformity. Chaucer's ekphrases reveal the influence of the medieval arts of memory and of medieval aesthetic ideals in their presentation of themes central to the rest of the texts in which they are embedded.

To begin, I will examine a dominant critical view that ekphrasis was ornamental as opposed to functional and show that this view opposes medieval treatments of ekphrasis. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoön* has perpetuated modern readings of ekphrasis as decorative and non-contributory to the action of a poem (Scott 308). These readings are related to Lessing's binaries between time and space, associated with literature and visual art, respectively (Lessing 120). Lessing reasons that because

language deals with actions, and actions occur consecutively, then poetry is bound to time (116), while painting, which deals with “bodies,” can only show actions and the succession of time through actions’ effects on bodies (102). Lessing generally calls poetic descriptions “tedious,” because they halt narrative when, because of the nature of language, they represent consecutively what could be seen simultaneously in a picture (126). Lessing, however, lauds Homer’s description of Achilles’ shield, as opposed to Virgil’s description of Aeneas’ shield, because Homer narrates the process of its creation and thus does not stall the narrative, while Virgil describes Aeneas’ shield in its already-completed state (126). Lessing laments that the description of Aeneas’ shield “is, in consequence, really an interpolation, solely designed to flatter the national pride of the Roman people. It is a foreign stream turned by the poet into his main river to make the latter more stirring” (128). Through the influence of Charles Sears Baldwin, Lessing’s sense of the uselessness of ekphrasis still manifests itself in modern textual criticism. Baldwin discusses ekphrasis as a source of amplification according to the style of rhetoric inherited by the Second Sophistic (17).¹ Baldwin distinguishes the sophists’ use of amplification from Cicero’s and Quintilian’s uses of amplification (17); for the sophists, it was “often purely decorative” because “[i]nstead of marking a stage of progress, it often merely dwells on a picture,” as opposed to Cicero and Quintilian, who “practised [it] as a means to oral clearness” (Baldwin 17). Baldwin states that the “two essential vices” he finds with ekphrasis as a source of amplification, as a result of the Sophistic

¹ The Second Sophistic of rhetoric belonged to “the renaissance of Greek ideals of art and life which begins in the second century after Christ and lasts in the West until about the middle of the fourth century” (Curtius 68).

influence, are that “it was extraneous” and thus did not contribute to sequential narrative and that “it habitually generalized and rapidly became conventional” (18-19).

Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Poetria nova* (*PN*) (c. 1200), however, which “[a]lmost immediately . . . was accepted as the definitive synthesis of rhetoric and poetics, of theory and practice” (Camargo, “Tria sunt” 949), promotes different standards. Geoffrey classifies description as a technique of amplification, but he does not argue for description for the sake of length and decoration:

cum sit lata, sit ipsa

Laeta: pari forma speciosa sit et spatiosa.

In celebri forma faciat res nubere verbis.

Si cibus esse velit et plena refectio mentis,

Ne sit curta nimis brevitatis vel trita vetustas. (*PN* 555-59)

(although the path of description is wide, let it also be wise, let it be both lengthy and lovely. See that the words with due ceremony are wedded to the subject. If description is to be the food and ample refreshment of the mind, avoid too curt a brevity as well as trite conventionality; Nims 35)

Therefore, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, whom Baldwin associates with sophistic rhetorical influence (189),² argues that words be carefully-considered so as to be functional and prevent conventionality.³

² Baldwin states, “Geoffrey’s poetic . . . is mainly the rhetoric of dilation. The sophistic of the ancient encomium, walking the schools once more, is now called *Poetria*” (189).

³ Ernest Gallo states that Geoffrey of Vinsauf and Matthew of Vendôme’s *Ars versificatoria* regarded neither “brevity” nor “expansion” “as an end in itself” (190). For example, Gallo cites Matthew of Vendôme (190): “Debent enim minus dicta suppleri, et inconcinna in melius permutari, superflua penitus aboleri” (“For things understated should be filled in, the inharmonious should be enhanced, and the

Nevertheless, numerous modern critics have been influenced by Lessing.⁴

Murray Krieger figures ekphrasis in terms of Lessing's idea of language's pretense to replicate the spatial quality of visual art. Krieger assumes that ekphrasis attempts mimesis and complains that it is the "illusionary representation of the unrepresentable, even while that representation is allowed to masquerade as a natural sign, as if it could be an adequate substitute for its object" (xv). The goal of medieval ekphrasis, however, was not mimesis, in spite of its incorporation of mimetic elements (Barbetti 8-9). Claire Barbetti argues that ekphrasis expresses the speaker's perceptions and instead guides the mind through meditation. Such readings as Barbetti's that consider medieval arts of memory thus better place us to understand Chaucerian ekphrasis.

Assessments of Chaucer's use of ekphrasis have not explored his ekphrases at length and generally have not taken into account the way in which they function as a memory device. Jean H. Hagstrum recognizes the influence of classical conventions on

superfluous completely discarded"; 4.2; Parr 93). Geoffrey of Vinsauf "insist[s] that all ornament be functional and not merely decorative" (Gallo 197). To illustrate, Gallo cites the following (197):

Verbi prius inspice mentem
 Et demum faciem, cujus ne crede colori:
 Se nisi conformet color intimus exteriori,
 Sordet ibi ratio: faciem depingere verbi
 Est pictura luti, res est falsaria, ficta
 Forma, dealbatus paries et hypocrita verbum
 Se simulans aliquid, cum sit nihil. Haec sua forma
 Dissimulat deforme suum: se jactitat extra,
 Sed nihil intus habet. (Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *PN* 739-47)

(First examine the mind of a word, and only then its face; do not trust the adornment of its face alone. If internal ornament is not in harmony with external, a sense of propriety is lacking. Adorning the face of a word is painting a worthless picture: it is a false thing, its beauty fictitious; the word is a white-washed wall and a hypocrite, pretending to be something whereas it is nothing. Its fair form conceals its deformity; it makes a brave outward show, but has nothing within; Nims 41)

⁴ W. J. T. Mitchell is one of the few critics who have challenged Lessing's idea that language as a temporal art attempts to mimic visual art's spatiality (Scott 308). Mitchell writes that descriptions of visual art are not different from other kinds of description, but when "the object of reference is a visual representation," then "(we suppose) the medium of language must approximate this condition" (*Picture* 159-60).

Chaucer's descriptions of visual art, particularly the practice of storytelling and allegorizing through descriptions of wall paintings in temples and palaces.⁵ While Hagstrum argues that Chaucer's ekphrases rely on convention and that they also, like their classical forebears, are influenced by works of art that the author would have viewed (42-43),⁶ he is baffled as to why the techniques of storytelling and allegorizing through mural descriptions "had so firm a hold on the medieval mind" (41). Thus, Hagstrum perpetuates Baldwin's ideas that ekphrasis is just decorative and non-functional, and he finds little originality in Chaucer's descriptions. Margaret Bridges comes to the opposite conclusion to Hagstrum in her study of Chaucer's extensive ekphrases in the dream visions (153). Because of the lack of visual imagery in Chaucer's ekphrases, Bridges denies their decorative function (153).⁷ For example, Bridges states that the inclusion of text within the paintings in *BD* expresses "the allegorical picture's increasing lack of ability to convey its own meaning" (155). Bridges states that Chaucer's catalogue of names in *PF*'s description of the paintings in the temple of Venus shows "the reluctance of these pictures to function as objects of visual perception" (153), and she argues similarly for *BD* (154). In regard to *HF*, Bridges maintains that the description of the paintings abandons pictorialism by instead narrating stories and abandons references that signal that they are depicted on the wall (155-56). While

⁵ Hagstrum references the influence of Virgil, Ovid, Statius, Apuleius, and Claudian (42).

⁶ Hagstrum refers to Joan Evans (408-12), George G. Williams (6-9), and Karl Brunner (55-62), who relate the works described in Chaucer's ekphrases to real-life art. In later chapters, I shall discuss further sources that find real-life models for Chaucer's ekphrases.

⁷ Roger Sherman Loomis (25) and James A. W. Heffernan (62) also argue that Chaucer's ekphrases lack visual imagery. V. A. Kolve argues, by contrast, that Chaucer "assumes and reflects" the visual art of his period ("Chaucer and the Visual Arts" 293).

Bridges argues that Chaucer's ekphrases function as examples of *mise en abyme* (153),⁸ and she applies the *mise en abyme* reading in the same way as Andrew Sprague Becker (155),⁹ she does not specify how the reader is to interpret the texts in the same way as the narrator does (155). She thus inappropriately opposes the verbal and the visual, which instead were always understood in the Middle Ages to be mutually enriching. Chaucer's lists "refer to texts and traditions in a general, schematic way" and "allude and evoke more than they quote" (Desmond 141).¹⁰ This is because they function as memory devices, and medieval models for the memory always conceived of memories in terms of images, as Carruthers explains. Both Bridges' and Hagstrum's works, the lengthiest assessments of Chaucer's use of ekphrasis throughout his *oeuvre*, do not adequately take into account medieval arts of memory.¹¹

In order to comprehend Chaucer's use of ekphrasis, I will now discuss Carruthers' writings on *memoria*, the medieval arts of memory. The arts of memory refer to rhetorical techniques not only to help students remember what they study but also to help

⁸ Also called "the mirror in the text" (Dällenbach 35), the *mise en abyme* refers to "any internal mirror that reflects the whole of the narrative . . ." (Dällenbach 36). The *mise en abyme* approach is one of the dominant ways in which critics have interpreted ekphrasis in the later twentieth century (Webb 36).

⁹ In Becker's analysis of the shield of Achilles in Homer's *Iliad*, the narrator's "response to visual images becomes a model for our response" to the text as a whole (4).

¹⁰ This is consonant with early examples of ekphrasis in epics, where ekphrasis would provide a familiar background to a person or object (Scott 303).

¹¹ John M. Bowers assesses how the device of ekphrasis works across Chaucer's texts. Bowers links Chaucer's increasing focus on making the artwork speak for itself in the ekphrases in *BD*, *KnT*, and *HF* with contemporary "Lollard iconophobia" and concerns with affective piety (61). Although Bowers associates Chaucer's ekphrases with the cultural milieu of late-fourteenth-century England, he supports the theory that the artworks that are described "remain merely decorative" (66). Suzanne Conklin Akbari argues that ekphrasis can "stand outside" of time while giving "structures for the ordering of narrative, and particularly for the orderly presentation of history" ("Ekphrasis" 205). Akbari argues that this is the case in Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune* and suggests that the ekphrases in both Chaucer's *HF* and *KnT* function in this way ("Ekphrasis" 205). *The Art of Vision: Ekphrasis in Medieval Literature and Culture* (edited by Andrew James Johnston, Ethan Knapp, and Margitta Rouse), in which both Bowers' and Akbari's papers are found, came to my attention too late to be dealt with in detail.

teachers or other more experienced readers remember what they had read. As Carruthers emphasizes, the arts of memory were not just sets of techniques for storing and retrieving information, but they were intended to inspire further composition and creativity (*Craft* 9).¹² The monastics who influenced the later use of these rhetorical techniques through the thirteenth-century revival of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (Carruthers, *Craft* 10)¹³ would thereby remind themselves of stories, which would trigger associations with other stories and would in turn facilitate their own meditations. Memories were always stored in the form of images (Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 16).¹⁴ Thus, “[b]ecause crafting memories also involved crafting the images in which those memories were carried and conducted, the artifice of memory was also, necessarily, an art of making various sorts of pictures: pictures in the mind, to be sure, but with close, symbiotic relationships to actual images and actual words that someone had seen or read or heard,” as well as memories that come from the other sensory input (Carruthers, *Craft* 10). Ekphrasis, as the description of works of art, is therefore among the rhetorical techniques that encourage recollection of images.

¹² Carruthers’ position on the function of memory techniques thus differs fundamentally from that of Frances Yates’ seminal work on the art of memory, in which Yates argues that these techniques were for retrieving information as opposed to then meditating and composing something new (Carruthers, *Craft* 9). See Yates (178).

¹³ The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* was attributed to Cicero.

¹⁴ Galenic theory described the process through which the mind understands and stores sensory information according to a model that divides the brain into cells. The foremost cell at the front of the brain, the “*ymaginativa*,” or the imagination, is where the mind first receives images from the sight and the other senses. The middle cell, the “*racio*,” or the reason, is where the brain judges the images, and the back cell, the “*memorativa*,” or the memory, is where the images are stored and recalled for later use (Trevisa 4.10). As medieval theories did not compartmentalize the senses, these mental images are not just visual; they are multisensory. Carruthers writes that a memory-image “is the final product of the entire process of sense perception, whether its origin be visual or auditory, tactile or olfactory” (*Book of Memory* 16).

While this is the most common modern definition, critics have variously defined ekphrasis. For example, Hagstrum uses a more narrow definition of ekphrasis as a description that gives speech to a work of art, but he refers more generally to descriptions of artwork as “iconic” (18 n 34). Hagstrum thus takes into account the development of the Greek noun *ekphrasis* from the verb “*ekphrazein*” (“ἐκφράζειν”)—“to speak out” (*OED*, “ecphrasis, n.”). In the Middle Ages, ekphrasis, called *descriptio*, was an extended description on any topic. The later narrowing of the definition of ekphrasis to a description of a work of art originates in the famous ekphrases of works of art, like the description of Achilles’ shield in Book 18 of Homer’s *Iliad*. The definition I use is the most common modern definition. Barbeti relies on “a redefinition” which considers the “powers of ekphrasis to translate composition into composition” (101-02). Barbeti does not limit these ekphrastic compositions created in the mind to the subject of works of art (102), and so she returns to the expanded definition of ekphrasis. While I agree with Barbeti’s understanding of ekphrasis as a composition in the mind, I have chosen to define ekphrasis such that the subject of the composition is a work of art, as opposed to other subjects. This is because even if compositions of works of art can function similarly to compositions of other subjects, and even if descriptions of works of art are not among the examples of description in medieval rhetorical handbooks, these descriptions are a common trope in medieval literature. I therefore apply this modern use of the term in order to articulate this poetic practice, for which there was not a name intended to define it in the Middle Ages.

I agree with Carruthers’ definition of ekphrasis as “a description of a work of art or architecture, imagined or actual” that serves as “a textual set-piece and ‘site’ for

mental-painting” (*Craft* 130). Carruthers provides as an example Virgil’s use of ekphrasis in the *Aeneid*, when Aeneas views the paintings of Troy on the walls of Juno’s Temple (*Craft* 196). This scene from the *Aeneid* begins,

namque sub ingenti lustrat dum singula templo,
 reginam opperiens, dum, quae fortuna sit urbi,
 artificumque manus inter se operumque laborem
 miratur, videt Iliacas ex ordine pugnās
 bellaque iam fama totum vulgata per orbem,
 Atridas Priamumque et saevum ambobus Achillem.
 constitit et lacrimans, “quis iam locus,” inquit, “Achate,
 quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?
 en Priamus! sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi;
 sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.
 solve metus; feret haec aliquam tibi fama salutem.”

Sic ait, atque animum pictura pascit inani
 multa gemens, largoque umectat flumine vultum. (Virgil 1.453-65)

(For while beneath the mighty temple, awaiting the queen, he scans each object, while he marvels at the city’s fortune, the handicraft of the several artists and the work of their toil, he sees in due order the battles of Ilium, the warfare now known by fame throughout the world, the sons of Atreus, and Priam, and Achilles, fierce in his wrath against both. He stopped and weeping cried: “Is there any place, Achates, any land on earth not full of our sorrow? See, there is Priam! Here, too, virtue finds its due reward; here, too, are tears for misfortune and

human sorrows pierce the heart. Dispel your fears; this fame will bring you some salvation.”

So he speaks, and feasts his soul on the unsubstantial portraiture, sighing oft,
and his face wet with a flood of tears.)¹⁵

For Carruthers, Aeneas’ “memory process is pricked by the act of weeping” (*Craft* 196). Memories are triggered by emotions, because they “are all and always emotionally ‘colored’” (Carruthers, *Craft* 14), meaning that, according to classical and medieval models of memory, they are organized in the mind based in part on the emotions with which they are associated (*Craft* 15). Once Aeneas recollects his memories of the Trojan War, he meditates on these memories, for Virgil narrates that Aeneas “*animum pictura pascit inani*” (“feasts his soul on the unsubstantial portraiture”; 1.464) (Carruthers, *Craft* 196).¹⁶ Through this process of meditation, Aeneas composes his story that he afterwards tells Dido. Carruthers connects the function of the painted walls in the *Aeneid*, as well as the shield of Achilles in Homer’s *Iliad*, with the function of real-life artifacts that draw stories to memory (*Craft* 197). Both the artifacts and descriptions serve this function because ekphrasis was a type of “*enargeia*, or vivid, sensuous word-painting” (Carruthers, *Craft* 130), which “summons in the mind the imagined structures required for inventive meditation” (Carruthers, *Craft* 222). This does not mean that the structures needed to be mimetic, though, as Carruthers asserts, “Even things one has never encountered oneself are ‘seen’ and thought about using an image, however inadequate it

¹⁵ All translations of Virgil come from H. Rushton Fairclough and face the original in the edition of the *Aeneid* from which I cite.

¹⁶ Carruthers translates “*pascit*” according to its literal meaning, “grazes,” and suggests that it “is an allusion as well to the rumination of meditating” (*Craft* 197).

may be to the real object” (*Craft* 121), and everyone adds details in the mental images conjured through *enargeia*, according to Quintilian (*Craft* 132).¹⁷ Carruthers identifies a number of Roman and medieval texts that begin with descriptions of artifacts that “serve as orienting maps and summaries of the matters which are developed within the work . . . a reader can hold the picture in mind as a way of recognizing the major themes of what follows” (*Craft* 199). When readers hold these pictures in mind, they form associations through *catenae*, or chains of recollection (*Craft* 146). The associations that are formed in these chains come from both inside and outside the text (*Craft* 147). This technique was used in the monastic architectural mnemonic developed from ancient rhetorical theory (Carruthers, *Craft* 12).¹⁸ The architectural mnemonic involved the formation of “patterns, edifices, grids” and “networks,” and memories would be stored within each of the rooms or compartments of these structures (Carruthers, *Craft* 23).¹⁹

Carruthers defines the direction given both in actual pictures and in descriptions of pictures to the mind through its process of recollection as *ductus*. Carruthers expounds the meanings for *ductus*:

¹⁷ To explain that memory-images were non-mimetic, Carruthers relies upon Isidore of Seville’s discussion of pictures in his *Etymologies*. He states,

Pictura autem est imago exprimens speciem rei alicuius, quae dum visa fuerit ad recordationem mentem reducit. Pictura autem dicta quasi fictura; est enim imago ficta, non veritas. Hinc et fucata, id est ficto quodam colore inlita, nihil fidei et veritatis habentia. (19.16.1)

(A picture is an image representing the appearance of some object, which, when viewed, leads the mind to remember. It is called ‘picture’ (*pictura*) as if the word were *fictura*, for it is a made-up (*fictus*) image, and not the truth. Hence also the term ‘painted’ (*fucatus*), that is, daubed with some artificial color and possessing no credibility or truth; Barney *et al.* 380)

Carruthers translates “nihil fidei et veritatis habentia” as “having no [qualities] of fidelity or truthfulness [to nature]” (*Craft* 337 n 68).

¹⁸ This technique is developed from the “master-builder” trope in 1 Cor.3.10-17 (Carruthers, *Craft* 17). Carruthers discusses Hugh of St. Victor’s use of the trope in the twelfth century (*Craft* 20).

¹⁹ Carruthers argues that Chaucer’s *HF* and *KnT* made use of the architectural mnemonic. See Carruthers, “Italy, *Ars Memorativa*, and Fame’s House” and “Seeing Things: Locational Memory in Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale,” which I will discuss further in chapters three and four of my thesis.

As a masculine noun of the fourth declension it usually means ‘guide’ or ‘command’. The noun also had the meanings of ‘course’ (often associated with water, as its English derivative, ‘duct’, still is), ‘way’ or ‘path’, and ‘directed movement’, such as extending a line, and is used often of drawing, whether figures, as in geometry, or letters. . . . (“Concept” 195)

The rhetorical sense of the term, Carruthers explains, “was defined in the fourth-century textbook of the Christian rhetorician, Consultus Fortunatianus” and subsequently used in Martianus Capella’s *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology* (“Concept” 195), where “ductus autem est agendi per totam causam tenor sub aliqua figura seruatus” (“[d]uctus indeed is the *tenor agendi* through the whole composition retained under each particular figure”; 235.1-25; qtd. and trans. in Carruthers, “Concept” 196). Carruthers defines *ductus* in its rhetorical sense, based on Martianus Capella, as “the overall direction, the governing movement, of the work” (“Concept” 196).²⁰ To explain how rhetorical *ductus* works, Carruthers uses another of its definitions, the aqueduct (*OLD*, “ductus, m.” def. 2) (*Craft* 116). As the various parts of the aqueduct convey the water, so the various rhetorical ornaments convey the mind through a work, and they create “varieties of movement: steady, slow, fast, turn, back up. They not only signal how something is to be ‘taken’ (like a pathway)—whether straight on (literally) or obliquely (metaphorically or ironically)—but can also give an indication of temporal movement, like time signatures in written musical composition” (*Craft* 116). The experience of a work’s *ductus* is “more like travelling through stages along a route than like perceiving a whole object”; it is “an

²⁰ The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (*OLD*) defines tenor as “[a] sustained and even course or movement” (“tenor, m.” Def. 1) and “[a] way of proceeding, course” (“tenor, m.” Def. 2).

ongoing, dynamic process rather than . . . the examination of a static or completed object” (Carruthers, “*Concept*” 190). Therefore, even though ekphrasis “slows down, even interrupts, the established *ductus* of a work,” it “often sends a reader in a new direction” (Carruthers, *Craft* 199), as opposed to stalling a narrative for decorative purposes. Knowledge of medieval arts of memory thus reveals problems with decorative theories of Chaucer’s ekphrasis and also with theories that claim that Chaucer’s ekphrases were non-pictorial, for the mind did not require extensive visual description in order to recall images.²¹

Along with the medieval arts of memory, medieval aesthetic ideals of variety as a source of pleasure and harmony should also be considered in relation to Chaucer’s ekphrases. Ideas of variety as diversity within unity and harmony differentiate medieval from classical uses of ekphrasis. Carruthers discusses changes in rhetorical understandings of variety from the classical period to late antiquity. Precepts on the purpose of variety in, for example, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, stress *dignitas*, or “the ‘suitability’ of the elements together as a whole” (Carruthers, *Experience* 156). *Dignitas* refers to “a formal coherence presented with grace that gives its perceivers both pleasure and a sense of being internally ‘right’,” and it relates to “variety,” because it comes from “the relationship among” multiple stylistic elements (Carruthers, *Experience* 138). Carruthers contrasts these ideas with Christian aesthetics exemplified in Augustine’s commentary on Psalm 44, where he “defined variety not in terms of *dignitas* but of *diversitas*,” or the “great differences which are nonetheless brought together”

²¹ Carruthers states of Augustine’s *Enarrationes in Psalmis* 74.9.11, “The strictures . . . are against overly ‘descriptive’ mental painting: among other things, such literal-mindedness may have been thought to distract one and to ‘freeze up’ the flexibility of an image whose function is cognitive” (*Craft* 317 n 46).

(*Experience* 156). Numerous medieval writings show that divergent qualities maximize pleasure. Thomas Aquinas states,

Sed si plura sensibilia deducuntur ad proportionatam mistionem, efficiuntur delectabilia: sicut in saporibus, quando aliquid secundum debitam proportionem est aut acutum, aut dulce, aut salsum; tunc enim sunt omnino delectabilia. Et omne, quod est mistum, est magis delectabile, quam quod est simplex; sicut symphonia, quam vox acuta tantum, vel gravis tantum . . . Sed excellentia corrumpit sensum, vel saltem contristat ipsum. (*Sententia 'De anima'*, 3, lectio 2, n 15)

(For if many sensations are perceived as a rational mixture, they are made more pleasurable; just so in tastes, when a thing is according to due proportion [secundum debitam proportionem] either sharp or sweet or salty; then indeed things are entirely pleasing, and all that is mixed is more pleasing than what is single: so a concord is [composed] as much of a high voice as a low . . . But excess destroys or at least diminishes a sensation; qtd. and trans. in Carruthers, *Experience* 47-48)

For Aquinas, who reveals that “medieval aesthetic experience is bound into human sensation” (Carruthers, *Experience* 8), pleasure results not only from diverse sensations but also from the integrity of these sensations (Carruthers, *Experience* 47). The individual qualities of the mixed sensations are retained as proportions, and Aquinas illustrates this with the analogy to musical harmony, which was conceived of in terms of proportions of different sounds (Carruthers, *Experience* 47).

Medieval ideas of musical harmony relied upon aesthetics of pleasure through variety as diversity. Medieval attitudes toward harmony were profoundly influenced by Boethius's *De institutione musica*. Boethius speaks of musical harmony in his classification of the three different types of music: the cosmic music of the spheres, human music, and instrumental music (1.2). The music created by the rotations of the planetary spheres of the Ptolemaic system, along with the "human music" that unites the body and the soul and that is a microcosm of the celestial music's mathematical proportions, could not be heard by humans. Thus, unlike the aesthetic theories of variety as a source of pleasure created through the various stimuli upon the senses, this type of music is not connected to the senses. Nonetheless, Boethius presents his theories through analogies with what can be heard or visualized and therein represents pleasurable variety. Boethius states of the cosmic music,

Etsi ad nostras aures sonus ille non pervenit, quod multis fieri de causis necesse est, non poterit tamen motus tam velocissimus ita magnorum corporum nullos omnino sonos ciere, cum praesertim tanta sint stellarum cursus coaptatione coniuncti, ut nihil aequae compaginatum, nihil ita commissum possit intellegi. Namque alii excelsiores alii inferiores feruntur, atque ita omnes aequali incitatione volvuntur, ut per dispares inaequalitates ratur cursuum ordo ducatur. (1.2)

(Although that sound does not penetrate our ears—which necessarily happens for many reasons—it is nevertheless impossible that such extremely fast motion of such large bodies should produce absolutely no sound, especially since the courses of the stars are joined by such harmonious union that nothing so perfectly

united, nothing so perfectly fitted together, can be realized. For some orbits are borne higher, others lower; and they all revolve with such equal energy that a fixed order of their courses is reckoned through their diverse inequalities; Bower 9)

Boethius reasons that musical harmony proceeds from the arrangement of the planetary orbits, and so it becomes associated with visual aesthetics. Boethius declares explicitly that harmony occurs through diversity. He further associates harmony with diversity in his analysis of the music of the human body:

Quid est enim quod illam incorpoream rationis vivacitatem corpori misceat, nisi quaedam coaptatio et veluti gravium leviumque vocum quasi unam consonantiam efficiens temperatio? Quid est aliud quod ipsius inter se partes animae coniungat, quae, ut Aristoteli placet, ex rationabili inrationabilique coniuncta est? Quid vero, quod corporis elementa permiscet, aut partes sibimet rata coaptatione contineat? (1.2)

(For what unites the incorporeal nature of reason with the body if not a certain harmony²² and, as it were, a careful tuning of low and high pitches as though producing one consonance? What other than this unites the parts of the soul, which, according to Aristotle, is composed of the rational and the irrational?

What is it that intermingles the elements of the body or holds together the parts of the body in an established order?; Bower 10)

²² While what Bower translates as “harmony” is not “harmonia” but “coaptatio,” “coaptare” means “[t]o fit together, make by joining” (*OLD*, “coapto-are”), which accords with the first definition for “harmonia” in the *OLD*: “[c]onjunction, coupling.”

Boethius analogizes this music which humans cannot hear with harmony of instrumental music created through the ordering of high and low pitches. Boethius, incorporating Galenic theories of health established through the balance of divergent humours, defines this type of music as an orderly conjunction of divergent aspects. This understanding of harmony applies to instrumental music as well.

While Boethian harmony was dependent on mathematical proportions, the senses enabled the apprehension of harmony in instrumental music. Boethius treats this topic throughout his text.²³ Boethius states, “Armonica est facultas differentias acutorum et gravium sonorum sensu ac ratione perpendens” (“Harmonics is the faculty that weighs differences between high and low sounds using the sense of hearing and reason”; 5.2; Bower 163). The senses, however, belonged to the first stage in the apprehension of harmony:

Sensus namque confusum quiddam ac proxime tale, quale est illud, quod sentit, advertit. Ratio vero diiudicat integritatem atque imas persequitur differentias. Itaque sensus invenit quidem confusa ac proxima veritati, accipit vero ratione integritatem. Ratio vero ipsa quidem invenit integritatem, accipit vero confusam ac proximam veri similitudinem. (5.2)

(The sense perceives a thing as indistinct, yet approximate to that which it is; reason exercises judgment concerning the whole and searches out ultimate differences. So the sense discovers something confused, yet close to the truth, but it receives the whole through reason. Reason itself comes to know the whole,

²³ See, for example, 1.9, 3.9-10, and 4.18 of *De institutione musica*.

even though it receives an indistinct and approximate likeness of truth; Bower 163)

Boethius describes sensory pleasure through the mixture of divergent qualities:

“Consonantia est acuti soni gravisque mixtura suaviter uniformiterque auribus accidens”

(“Consonance is a mixture of high and low sound falling pleasantly and uniformly on the ears”; 1.8; Bower 16). In the creation of this pleasing mixture, the different qualities remain distinct: “Et quoniam gravitas et acumen in quantitate consistunt, ea maxime videbuntur servare naturam concinentiae, quae discretas proprietatem quantitatis poterunt custodire” (“Since lowness and highness consist of quantity, those things which can retain the property of discrete quantity will be discovered best to preserve the nature of consonance”; 1.6; Bower 14). Boethius links these qualities of consonance to harmony when he discusses “[q]uae voces armoniae sint aptae” (“[w]hich pitches are appropriate for harmony”; 5.6; Bower 167) as follows:

[c]ontinuae quidem tales sunt, ut inter se earum differentia communi fine iungatur, nec habeat locum designatum vox acuta gravisque, quem teneant.

Discretas vero habent proprios locos veluti colores inpermixti, quorum differentia visitur suo quodam loco constituta. (5.6)

(continuous pitches are such that the difference between them is joined by a continuous line, and the high pitch—or the low—does not maintain a clearly defined position. Discrete pitches, on the other hand, have their own positions, just as unmixed colors do, between which a difference is perceived by virtue of a clearly established position; Bower 167)

He therefore answers in favour of the “[d]iscretæ”—the pitches which exhibit variety (5.6).²⁴ In Boethius, unity and harmony come precisely through variety. The most widely-used textbook on music theory in the Middle Ages, Guido d’Arezzo’s *Micrologus de disciplina artis musicae* (c. 1025), reveals that musical harmony involves diversity and creates sensory pleasure (Carruthers, *Experience* 160-61):

Nec mirum si varietate sonorum delectatur auditus, cum varietate colorum
gratuletur visus, varietate odorum foveatur olfactus, mutatisque saporibus lingua
congaudeat. (14.159)

(Nor is it any wonder if the hearing is charmed by a variety of sounds, since the sight rejoices in a variety of colors, the sense of smell is gratified by a variety of odors, and the palate delights in changing flavors; Babb 69)

Musical harmony in the Middle Ages was also mirrored in visual aesthetics, exemplified in Gothic architecture, as Guido’s comparison of aural and visual aesthetics suggests.

Gothic cathedrals’ attempt to manifest visually divine harmony found support from Boethius’ *De institutione musica* itself, which “taught . . . how to visualize the perfect consonances in geometrical terms” (von Simson 33). Boethius promotes what Otto von Simson calls a “doctrine of synesthesia,” as the consonances “are as readily perceived visually as they are acoustically” (von Simson 33).²⁵ The construction of

²⁴ Boethius writes,

Continuae quidem non aequisonae voces ab armonica facultate separantur. Sunt enim sibi ipsis dissimiles nec unum aliquid personantes. Discretæ vero voces armonicae subiciuntur arti. Potest enim distantium sibi que dissimilium vocum differentia deprehendi . . .
(Non-unison pitches that are continuous are not considered by the faculty of harmonics, for they are dissimilar from each other and yield no single entity of sound. Discrete pitches, on the other hand, are subject to the harmonic discipline, for the difference between dissimilar pitches separated by an interval can be comprehended; 5.6; Bower 167)

²⁵ Von Simson refers to Boethius’ statement, “Eodem namque modo auris afficitur sonis vel oculus aspectu, quo animi iudicium numeris vel continua quantitate” (“For as the ear is affected by sound or the eye by a

Gothic cathedrals based on the Boethian mathematical proportions of musical harmony, considered to be laws governing the universe, meant that the Gothic cathedral was “an attempt to reproduce the structure of the universe” (von Simson 35), in addition to the harmony of heaven (von Simson 37). It integrates proportion “in so thoroughgoing a fashion that virtually every element of a very complex structure can be seen to play an integral part in the total harmony” (Jordan 49). To illustrate, the tripartite structure of arches of a wall, which consists of an arcade, triforium, and clerestory, reveals that “[t]he total pattern consists of varied repetition, in varied proportions, of a basic geometrical figure” (Jordan 54).

Within the Gothic cathedrals’ creation of Boethian harmony, the artists incorporated multi-coloured decoration such as stained glass, as opposed to the decorated walls of the earlier Romanesque architecture. Medieval theories of colour stated that colours were created through multiplicity and mixture of light. In *De iride (On the Rainbow)*, Robert Grosseteste writes,

Cum autem color sit lumen admixtum cum diaphano, diaphanum vero diversificetur, secundum puritatem et impuritatem, lumen autem quadrifarie dividatur, secundum claritatem scilicet et obscuritatem et tunc secundum multitudinem et paucitatem, et secundum harum sex differentiarum connumeraciones sint omnium colorum generationes et diversitates, varietas coloris in diversis partibus unius et eiusdem iridis maxime accidit propter multitudinem et paucitatem radiorum solis. Ubi enim est maior radiorum

visible form, in the same way the judgment of the mind is affected by numbers or continuous quantity”; *De institutione* 1.32; Bower 49).

multiplicatio, apparet color magis clarus et luminosus; ubi vero minor est
 radiorum multiplicatio, apparet color magis attinens hyazantino et obscuro. (77)
 ([S]ince colour is light mixed with a transparent medium—the transparent
 medium being diversified according to purity and impurity, while light is divided
 in a fourfold manner (according to brightness and darkness and according to
 multitude and paucity), and all colours being generated and diversified according
 to the combinations of these six differences—the variety of colours in different
 parts of one and the same rainbow occurs chiefly because of the multitude and
 paucity of solar rays. For where there is a greater multiplication of rays, the colour
 appears clearer and more luminous, and where there is a smaller multiplication of
 rays, the colour appears more bluish and obscure; Lindberg 391)

Similar to theories of musical harmony, proportions of light are responsible for this
 diversity of colour within, as Grosseteste emphasizes, a single rainbow.²⁶ Gothic
 cathedrals' multicoloured stained glass therefore also create diversity within unity.

Visual harmony also becomes associated with musical harmony, cosmic harmony,
 and social harmony in Boethius' philosophy. Boethius reifies social harmony and divine
 harmony through the concept which has been called the "Great Chain of Being."²⁷

Boethius writes, in the *Consolation of Philosophy*,

Quod mundus stabili fide

Concordes uariat uices,

Quod pugnantia semina

²⁶ Von Simson also discusses Grosseteste's interest in the aesthetics of proportion in discussions of light in *De luce (On Light)* (198).

²⁷ Arthur O. Lovejoy analyzes this concept in *The Great Chain of Being*.

Foedus perpetuum tenent,

.....

Hanc rerum seriem ligat

Terras ac pelagus regens

Et caelo imperitans amor.

Hic si frena remiserit,

Quidquid nunc amat inuicem

Bellum continuo geret

Et quam nunc socia fide

Pulchris motibus incitant,

Certent soluere machinam.

.....

O felix hominum genus,

Si uestros animos amor

Quo caelum regitur regat. (2.m.8.1-30)

(In regular harmony

The world moves through its changes;

Seeds in competition with each other

Are held in balance by eternal law;

.....

What binds all things to order,

Governing earth and sea and sky,

Is love.

If love's rein slackened
 All things now held by mutual love
 At once would fall to warring with each other
 Striving to wreck that engine of the world
 Which now they drive
 In mutual trust with motion beautiful.

 O happy race of men,
 If the love that rules the stars
 May also rule your hearts!)²⁸

This harmony manifests itself through the orderliness of the variety found in the natural world and in the cosmos. Boethius conceives of it in moral terms as a guide for humanity's right conduct, for its source is divine love. While Boethius relies on a visual aesthetic of a chain instead of musical harmony, he expresses the same correlation between the cosmos and humanity in his musical theories. Because the same mathematical proportions govern the human body and spirit as the ratios of instrumental music, the sounds which match these proportions are pleasing and spur people to good action, while the sounds which do not can have the opposite effect (Boethius, *De institutione* 1.1).²⁹ Nature's account of God's creation of the world in Alan of Lille's *De*

²⁸ All translations of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* belong to H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester and face the original in the edition from which I cite.

²⁹ Boethius provides various examples, including the story of a drunken youth of Taormina, who was first incited by one mode of music to set fire to the house of his enemy but who then desisted after Pythagoras ordered that the mode of music be changed (*De institutione* 1.1).

planctu naturae features the same metaphor of the chain to depict the harmony of divine creation but also articulates the connection between visual and musical harmony:

Deus igitur mundiali palatio varias rerum species ascribendo, quas discrepantium generum litigio disparatas legitimi ordinis congruentia temperavit, leges indidit, sanctionibus alligavit. Sicque res generum oppositione contrarias, inter quas locus ab oppositis locum posuerat, cuiusdam reciprocae habitudinis relativis oculis foederando, in amicitiae pacem litem repugnantiae commutavit.

Subtilibus igitur invisibilis iuncturae cathenis concordantibus universis, ad unitatem pluralitas, ad idemptitatem diversitas, ad consonantiam dissonantia, ad concordiam discordia, unione pacifica remeavit. (8.28)

(Then God distributed throughout the cosmic palace the various orders of creatures, whom, though set at odds by the incompatibility of their differing kinds, he reduced to an acceptance of regular order, imposing laws and binding ordinances. And thus he converted from hostile conflict to peaceful friendship things conflicting by the opposition of their natures, whose very placement had set them in opposed positions, uniting them by a mutual kiss in a coexistence acceptable to both. Thus as all things were brought into concord by the subtle cords of an invisible bond, plurality returned to unity, diversity to identity, dissonance to consonance, discord to concord, in peaceful union.)³⁰

³⁰ All translations of Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae* belong to Winthrop Wetherbee, whose translations face the original in the edition from which I cite.

Alan of Lille exemplifies harmony from diversity in the creation of a palace that displays Boethian principles of harmony, similar to Gothic architecture.³¹ The use of *polyptoton*, or the repetition of a root word, in “oppositione,” “oppositis,” and “posuerat” highlights the unity of opposites now ordered in their correct positions. Through the cords which create consonance, the visual harmony of the palace also becomes associated with musical harmony.

In addition to visual and musical harmony, aesthetics of pleasure from harmonious diversity can also be found in medieval precepts on rhetorical description. Drawing upon metaphors for visual harmony, Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *PN* shows that diversity within unity was a virtue of description. Carruthers states that the *PN* “commends rich variety above all other qualities,” and she provides as example Geoffrey’s recommendation of this aesthetic in his first piece of advice for amplifying a work (*Experience* 152): “Hoc primo procede gradu: sententia cum sit / Unica, non uno veniat contenta paratu, / Sed variet vestes et mutatoria sumat” (“proceed first of all by this step: although the meaning is one, let it not come content with one set of apparel. Let it vary its robes and assume different raiment”; *PN* 220-22; Nims 26). Through his qualification “sententia cum sit / Unica,” Geoffrey demonstrates that this diversity must be unified. Variety in rhetoric is a source of pleasure, according to *PN* (Carruthers, *Experience* 152):

Sic igitur cordis digitus discerpat in agro

Rhetoricae flores ejus. Sed floreat illis

³¹ As von Simson states, “The first Gothic cathedrals were rising when these lines were written. It is most unlikely that the views of Alan . . . did not reflect—if they did not actually influence—the aesthetic philosophy and the architectural practice of his age” (32).

Sparsim sermo tuus, variis, non creber eisdem,

Floribus ex variis melior redolentia surgit. (*PN* 1225-28)

(Let the mind's finger pluck its blooms in the field of rhetoric. But see that your style blossoms sparingly with such figures, and with a variety, not a cluster of the same kind. From varied flowers a sweeter fragrance rises; *Nims* 55)

With his different metaphors for rhetoric, first the metaphor of clothing, and second the metaphor of the garden, Geoffrey follows his own advice. Therefore, just as Geoffrey provides a model for his audience throughout by employing rhetorical devices in the process of defining them, he models variety as a key component in description by providing varied examples and alerting the audience to this. When Geoffrey claims, “*Sint variata novis exempla secuta figuris, / Rebus ut in variis oculus spatietur et auris*” (“Examples of description, accompanied by novel figures, will be varied, that eye and ear may roam amid a variety of subjects”; *PN* 560-61; *Nims* 35-36), he indicates that diversity in rhetoric includes diversity in its subject matter and in its appeals to different senses. These rhetorical precepts of pleasurable and harmonious variety accordingly served as a model for descriptions in the Middle Ages, including ekphrases.

Aesthetic harmony, whether visual, musical, or rhetorical, and its associations with social and cosmic harmony were not unproblematized, however, in the Middle Ages. The senses, used to perceive aesthetic harmony, were acknowledged to be faulty. Boethius expresses this concern,³² as does the commentary tradition of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In Virgil's ekphrasis of Trojan paintings in Juno's temple (*Aeneid* 1.441-97), Aeneas

³² See the second citation from Boethius' *De institutione musica* 5.2 on page seventeen of the thesis.

“animum pictura pascit inani” (“feasts his soul on the unsubstantial portraiture”; 1.464).

In the most influential of the commentaries on the *Aeneid* in the Middle Ages, Bernardus Silvestris, interpreting Aeneas’ soul as his eyes, responds,

Hic oculos “pictura pascit inani.” Quia enim tunc novus est mundus ei et ipse est in nebula, scilicet ignorantia nec naturam mundanam intelligit; ideo placent ei hec et in eis admirationem habet. Per oculos intelligimus sensus quorum quidam sunt veri, quidam falsi quia sicut oculorum alter est dexter, alter sinister, ita intelligimus quod quidam sunt veri, quidam falsi; per picturas vero bona temporalia que ideo picture dicuntur quia bona non sunt, sed videntur et ideo Boetius ea “imagines veri boni” vocat. Atque ita oculos, id est sensus, saturat in picturis, id est in mundanis bonis. (*Commentary* 12)

(Aeneas “feasts his eyes on empty pictures.” Because the world is then new to him and he is wrapped in a cloud (that is, in ignorance), he does not understand the nature of the world; therefore these please him, and he admires them. We understand his eyes as the senses, some of which are true and some false; just as there is a right eye and a left one, so too we know certain senses are true and others false. We understand the pictures to be temporal goods, which are called pictures because they are not good but seem so, and therefore Boethius calls them “images of true good.”³³ And thus he fills his eyes (his senses) with pictures (that is, with worldly goods); Schreiber and Maresca 13)

³³ Earl G. Schreiber and Thomas E. Maresca note that Bernardus quotes Boethius’ *Consolation* 3.pr.9 (111 n 11).

In the *OLD*, “dexter” also means “[p]ropitious, favourable” (Def. 2) and has, as the *OLD* says, “a close connection” with the definition “[s]ituated on the right-hand side” (Def. 1). In the *OLD*, “sinister” also means “[a]dverse in nature or influence, harmful, baleful” (Def. 4) and “[p]erverted, immoral” (Def. 5). Bernardus Silvestris’ word choices in his simile comparing the two different members of vision to the true and misleading sensory impressions that one can have therefore draw upon multiple meanings in order to illustrate the favourable or destructive consequences that these impressions can have. Bernardus interprets Aeneas’ reaction to the paintings as an occasion of the senses’ operation without regard to reason.³⁴ Bernardus demonstrates, however, the way through which the senses’ delusions can be overcome in his commentary on the description of the doors of Apollo’s temple decorated by Daedalus in *Aeneid* 6.14-41. In this book, which represents Aeneas’ later maturity, Bernardus allegorizes when Aeneas sends Achates to bring back the Sibyl as his decision to study the trivium and the quadrivium (*Commentary* 36-38). The advice that the Sibyl gives Aeneas at the doors of the temple represents the instruction he receives in the trivium and the quadrivium, which he then applies to his impressions of the art he views (*Commentary* 36-38). Therefore, Bernardus emphasizes that sensory impressions needed to be tempered by reason. Because of the senses’ imperfections, what seems aesthetically harmonious may not be so in actuality.

In light of the integral connection between the medieval arts of memory and ekphrasis as well as the pervasive medieval aesthetic ideals of variety as a source of harmony and pleasure, the first four chapters of my thesis explore the importance of these

³⁴ Bernardus reads the *Aeneid* as an allegory for the stages of human life, beginning with infancy and ending with the wisdom of old age, and so *Aeneid* 1 allegorizes infancy as when a person cannot judge sensory impressions (Schreiber and Maresca xxii-xxviii).

memory techniques and aesthetic ideals to Chaucer's ekphrases. Chaucer's ekphrases incorporate memory techniques which connect the ekphrases integrally to the texts in which they are found. Chaucer's early uses of ekphrasis in *BD* and *PF* guide the audience's interpretation and therefore contribute to the *ductus* of the works.³⁵ In *BD*, the ekphrasis of the dreamer's chamber forces structure and meaning on stories of Troy. When later parts of the text allude to stories from the ekphrasis, the structure and meaning of the ekphrasis is redeployed. In *PF*, the ekphrasis of the temple of Venus presents courtly love as destructive, which prepares the audience for the later problems that the eagles' courtship brings. The ekphrases in *BD* and *PF* therefore anticipate and amplify the themes of their respective works, and the texts encourage mutual recollections between the ekphrases and the rest of the works. These ekphrases reinforce the dominant meaning in their respective texts—consolation in *BD* and the nature of harmony and the common good in *PF*. By contrast, in the case of *HF*, descriptions of visual art not only guide interpretation but also alter the text's *ductus* by directing the narrative through a more fully developed use of architectural memory structures. Dealing with the concern over the difficulty of obtaining truth from literature, the ekphrases of the temple of Venus and house of Fame guide readers toward finding their own truths, whereas the rest of *HF* presents the futility of searching for truth. By presenting

³⁵ *BD* is generally believed to be composed between 1368 and 1372 (Benson xxix). Larry D. Benson places the composition of *HF* between 1378 and 1380 and the composition of *PF* between 1380 and 1382 (xxix), but whether Chaucer wrote *PF* first or *HF* first is completely uncertain, as the dating is based mainly on "stylistic evidence" (Lynch, *Dream Visions* 93). As Kathryn L. Lynch writes about *HF*,

Although its four-beat line makes it metrically more similar to the *Book of the Duchess* than to the rest of Chaucer's poetry, which works in a five-beat line, some of the short lyrics, also composed in complex pentameter verse forms (for example, "An ABC" or "The Complaint to Pity"), are usually assigned an early date, complicating any simple division of Chaucer's career solely on the basis of metrics. In fact, many scholars and editors register some uncertainty about the date of the *House of Fame*. (*Dream Visions* 42)

perspectives that differ from the rest of the text, the ekphrases in *HF* alter the narrative and therefore become even more integrally connected to the narrative than the ekphrases in *BD* and *PF*, which contain less expansive glosses. Regardless of whether Chaucer composed *PF* or *HF* first, his ekphrases in *KnT* reveal his developing use of ekphrasis. In *KnT*, which contains Chaucer's latest ekphrases,³⁶ the descriptions of the three oratories alter the text's *ductus* through their participation in a narrative sequence that especially enforces mutual recollections among the parts that share the same location. The ekphrases enable interpretations which would not be possible were they absent. The memorial aspect of the ekphrases links the earlier fight between Palamon and Arcite in the grove, and its movement from ordered to disordered rhetoric, with the later disordered rhetoric that prevails after Theseus intervenes in the conflict by building the amphitheatre. It is this amphitheatre which contains the oratories so richly described in the ekphrases. By linking the earlier and later sections of the text, the ekphrases establish the incessant nature of chivalric violence. Unlike his other extensive ekphrases, which belong to the dream vision genre, the ekphrases in *KnT* belong to the epic romance genre. Regardless of genre, though, the ekphrases in *HF* and *KnT* both drive their narratives through fully interactive memorial and interpretive experiences. The ekphrases in *HF* and *KnT* alter the course of the narrative of their respective texts and therefore alter the *ductus*, meaning that they create multiple and alternative possibilities for meaning. My thesis consequently shows that all of Chaucer's ekphrases become sites to which the audience's memory returns in order to gain fuller understanding of the poems and that

³⁶ Chaucer composed an early version of *KnT*, *Palamoun and Arcite*, between 1380 and 1387, before its adaptation to the *Canterbury Tales*, which Chaucer began in the late 1380s (Benson xxix).

Chaucer's ekphrases in *HF* and *KnT* are indispensable to their audience's experience of the poems.

In addition to the arts of memory, Chaucer's ekphrases also engage with medieval aesthetic ideals of variety as a source of harmony and pleasure and with Boethian links among aesthetic, social, and cosmic harmony. In *BD*, the harmonized variety in the chamber decorations as well as the resolution that they map onto the Trojan narrative create aesthetic and social harmony that model metaphorically the man in black's later consolation for the death of his wife. *PF*, however, manifests concern over the senses' delusory apprehension of harmony.³⁷ Chaucer embeds the ekphrasis in *PF* within a garden of love that apparently exemplifies Boethian harmony, but the violence and despair that taint the garden forecast the ultimately unharmonious resolution to the dream narrative. *HF* reveals the same dangers of sensory delusion as *PF*, but the descriptions of the various ornamentation ordered into artificial memory structures link aesthetic to social harmony by encouraging the audience's meditations on truth. *HF* shows the importance of regulating sensory impressions through reason. In *KnT*, the rhetorical construction of the oratories appears to exemplify aesthetic, social, and cosmic harmony, yet the ekphrases ultimately thwart Theseus' attempts at ordering his universe. All of

³⁷ Suzanne Conklin Akbari's and Carolyn P. Collette's attention to optics in Chaucer's works treat this concern over sensory delusion. Akbari argues that in *BD*, "vision" acts "as a metaphor for knowing" but that his later dream visions, *PF* and *HF*, problematize this metaphor (*Seeing* 178). Collette says, "The belief that physical sight is linked to spiritual insight . . . coexisted with deep anxiety about the fallibility of the processes involved in seeing and remembering and their susceptibility to a variety of influences" (4). Collette argues that *KnT* manifests this anxiety through Palamon's and Arcite's "inner blindness ironically caused by sight" (43) as well as through the disjunction between "profound truth" and the Knight's and Theseus' vision (52).

Chaucer's major ekphrases therefore incorporate medieval aesthetic ideals of harmony and in turn contrast with classical examples of ekphrasis.

My last chapter considers some implications of my study of Chaucer's developing use of the rhetoric of ekphrasis for fifteenth-century Chaucerian literature by analyzing the ekphrasis in John Lydgate's *Temple of Glas* (*TG*).³⁸ Lydgate's ekphrasis of the temple of Venus acknowledges its own debt to Chaucer. Through an involved narrator who applies medieval memory techniques to the ekphrasis and integrates it seamlessly into the dream vision narrative, Lydgate draws upon techniques from Chaucer's ekphrases and reveals his understanding of later developments in Chaucer's rhetoric of ekphrasis. As in Chaucer's ekphrases, Boethian harmony figures prominently in Lydgate's ekphrasis in *TG*. The ordered description of a variety of images and its anticipation of the later harmonious union of lovers in the text figure harmony in aesthetic, social, and cosmic terms.

My thesis contributes to our understanding of Chaucerian aesthetics by revealing Chaucer's and Lydgate's engagement with medieval rhetorical and aesthetic ideals of *diversitas* over classical ideals of *dignitas*, which therefore further distinguishes their ekphrases from classical examples of the device. My findings also advance knowledge of Chaucer's poetics by showing that all of Chaucer's ekphrases participate in their narratives, and they advance knowledge of Lydgate's poetics by revealing the way in which his ekphrasis in *TG* breaches its static frame and creates a more interactive experience for the audience. The new possibilities for meaning about the nature of

³⁸ *TG* was written during the first quarter of the fifteenth century (Mitchell, *Temple of Glas*, Introduction).

authority and truth in *HF* and order in *KnT* generated by these texts' descriptions of visual art enable alternative readings of these two texts as a whole. They also particularly reveal the dynamic way in which Chaucer employs rhetoric. Therefore, in addition to their significance for Chaucer and Lydgate studies, my findings are significant to studies of ekphrasis generally. They challenge a prevailing theory of ekphrasis as a static disengagement from the world of the text. Rather than serving a merely ornamental purpose or revealing all at once the meaning of a text, ekphrasis can partake in a text's gradual unfolding of its meaning through its *ductus*.

Chapter 1

Ekphrasis Modelling Consolation in Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*

Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess* (*BD*) incorporates an ekphrasis of a chamber with windows depicting the story of Troy and walls depicting Guillaume de Lorris' and Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* (*RR*) near the opening of the dream. The speaker dreams that he wakes up in the elaborately decorated room that he describes. This ekphrasis creates *ductus* through its Boethian connections of aesthetic and social harmony and its *in medias res* epic pattern. The man in black, with whom the dreamer later converses, compares his mind to a tablet prepared to be decorated with artwork and represents the art of love, the subject of *RR*, as the artwork that decorates it. Then, in the course of calling to mind his experience of loving White, he compares himself and White to figures from the Trojan War. His mind becomes filled with images that resemble those of the decorated dream chamber. In this process, the man in black represents both himself and White as heirs to Trojan greatness. Even though Troy fell, Trojan civilization continued through Lavinia, named as one of the figures painted on the glass windows of the dream chamber. Metaphorically, and even literally,¹ Troy lives on through the man in black and his memories of White. Through the emphasis on harmony and the arrangement of Trojan figures, the ekphrasis metaphorically shows the man in black's pathway to consolation when he converses with the dream narrator about the

¹ Late fourteenth-century British continued to invoke legends of Trojan descendants' westward movement to Britain. On late fourteenth-century perceptions of London itself as the New Troy, see Sylvia Federico (1-28).

death of his lady White.² The ekphrasis thus celebrates the greatness of the man in black, and, by extension, John of Gaunt, for whom it is agreed that the poem was written to commemorate the death in 1368 or 1369 of his wife Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster (Wilcockson 329).

My own argument is based on interpretation of *BD* as a diptych structure. While it has been argued that “repetitions of imagery and diction” (Ebel 200) among the dream frame, the early dream, and the conversation with the man in black are “not essential to” the meaning of *BD* (Ebel 206), Helen Phillips argues that “[t]he poem works by juxtaposition, a common medieval method of composition . . .” (“Structure” 109). For Phillips, the poem works like a common example from the visual arts, the “triptych,” a picture or carving with three compartments side by side that requires “comparison” of one part with another in order to interpret each part (“Structure” 109); however, Phillips says, “The *Book of the Duchess* goes further: in it the juxtaposed elements are all so shaped and moulded in the telling that they present the same pattern . . .” (“Structure” 109). Phillips draws parallels between the man in black’s conversation with the dreamer and the hart hunt that occurs at the same time (“Structure” 111-12). The end of the hart hunt, a common pun for “heart-hunting” (Leyerle 117), coincides with the end of the conversation between the dreamer and the man in black (Chaucer 1311-13). I interpret *BD* as a diptych composed of the ekphrasis and the conversation between the dreamer

² Others have argued that the ekphrasis provides a means of interpreting the rest of the poem. Nancy Ciccone argues that “the images provide a context for framing Blanche’s significance and consoling John of Gaunt’s grief” (206). Ciccone (206) and Martin Irvine (103) interpret the ekphrasis as a self-reflexive statement on the intertextuality on which the poem relies. Because of the memorial function of stained glass, David K. Coley interprets the ekphrasis as a *mise en abyme* or “recapitulation of the *Book of the Duchess* itself, an authorial nod toward the memorial function of the poem and a reinscription of the circumstances of its composition” (75).

and man in black. The ekphrasis forces structure and meaning on Troy as a source of consolation to the man in black, and the conversation's allusions to Troy redeploy the structure and meaning of the ekphrasis. Envisioning Troy as fulfillment in both the public and private spheres, the ekphrasis models the consolation that later enables the man in black to return to society after the death of his beloved.

The description of the dream chamber in *BD* constructs the man in black's pathway to consolation first through its emphasis on harmony. This harmony comes from the integrity within the variety of the decorations, as affirmed by the pleasure it creates for the dreamer, both in terms of aesthetics and content. When he prays to the gods for sleep, the dreamer says that to whomever fulfills his request, he will provide

al that falles

To a chambre, and al hys halles

I wol do peynte with pure gold

And tapite hem ful many fold

Of oo sute. . . . (257-61)

(all that belongs to a chamber, and I will have all his halls painted with pure gold and cover them with very numerous matching tapestries.)

At the end of his prayer, he declares, "to Juno, / . . . I shal soo do, / I trow, that she shal holde hir payd" ("to Juno . . . I shall do such, I believe, that she will consider herself pleased"; 267-69). He represents the most desirable decorations for gods in terms of varied uniformity when he says that he will have "al hys halles / . . . peynte with pure gold" (258-59) and will hang "ful many fold" (260) tapestries "[o]f oo sute" (261). When he had "unneth that word ysayd" ("hardly spoken that statement"; 270), he goes to sleep.

Here he represents the dream as divinely inspired, which validates his assertion that the decorations he has promised are so pleasing.³ The harmonious decorations that he then dreams of become the ones he promised to the gods.

BD begins representing the decorations' visual harmony through the musical harmony that fills the chamber in which the narrator dreams that he wakes up. Musical harmony is first associated with visual harmony when the birdsong causes him to view the furnishings of the chamber. The narrator states that he

looked forth, for I was waked

With smale foules a gret hep

That had affrayed me out of my slep

Thorgh noyse and swetnesse of her song. (294-97)

(looked forth, for I was awoken by a great heap of small birds, which had startled me out of my sleep through the noise and sweetness of their song.)

The dreamer later relates this "swetnesse" (297) specifically to harmony as the birds sing "[b]y noote" ("in harmony"; 303). His claim that "[w]as never herd so swete a steven / But hyt had be a thing of heven" ("so sweet a voice was never heard, except for if it had been a thing from heaven"; 307-08) invokes the heavenly harmony created by the movements of the nine spheres according to the Ptolemaic system of the cosmos. By associating it with sweetness, he represents the supreme pleasure that it creates. Though this music comes from outside the chamber, the ineffable sweetness and harmony penetrate it, as the dreamer declares that

³ The dream's origins still remain unclear. Steven Kruger discusses medical origins for the dream, arguing that the dream has an "intimate connection to his illness, and particularly to the state of melancholy" (67).

al my chambre gan to ryng
 Thurgh syngynge of her armonye;
 For instrument nor melodye
 Was nowhere herd yet half so swete,
 Nor of acord half so mete. (312-16)

(all my chamber began to ring through the singing of their harmonious music, for nowhere were either instruments or vocal music heard [that was] even half so sweet or of half so fitting harmony.)

He refers twice here to the harmony of the singing: “her armonye” (313) and “acord” (316). He also associates this harmony with sweetness because “instrument nor melodye / Was nowhere herd yet half so swete” (314-15). The contribution of each voice is the reason their collective “acord” is so “mete” (316). He states, “For ther was noon of hem that feyned / To synge, for ech of hem hym peyned / To fynde out mery crafty notes” (“for there were none of them who feigned singing, for each of them exerted himself to invent merry, skillful notes”; 317-19). They create harmony because their contributions are not all the same: “som of hem song lowe, / Som high, and al of oon acord” (“some of them sang low, some high, and all in complete harmony”; 304-05). Because the musical harmony fills the chamber and activates the dreamer’s gaze, it provides an additional level of harmony to the experience of viewing the images of the chamber. In the dreamer’s perspective, it is no longer the case that “[a] is ylyche good to me— / Joye or sorowe, wherso hyt be” (“all is equally good to me—joy or sorrow, wherever it may be”; 9-10); instead, the dreamer discerns true pleasure because he “responds avidly to the dream’s sensuously sumptuous surroundings” (Crampton 490).

Similar to the varied uniformity of the pleasing music, the chamber's decorations also create harmony and pleasure through their varied uniformity. The dreamer declares,

And sooth to seyn, my chambre was
 Ful wel depeynted, and with glas
 Were al the wyndowes wel yglased
 Ful clere, and nat an hoole ycrased,
 That to beholde hyt was gret joye. (321-25)

(And to tell the truth, my chamber was very well-painted, and all the windows were well-fitted with very clear glass, and not a window broken, so that it was a great joy to behold [it].)

He depicts the uniform variety of the decorations through the skilled craftsmanship of “al the wyndowes” (323), without any “hoole ycrased” (324). The integrity of this craftsmanship is hyperbolic because “[r]eferences to repairs to windows are frequent in medieval glazing accounts” (Marks 39). For example, “the Exeter Cathedral fabric records contain many payments to glaziers for repair of windows between 1285 and 1350” (Marks 39).⁴ As a result of this physical integrity of the contents, the dreamer declares that “to beholde hyt was gret joye” (325). This physical unity of the various pieces of glass constructs the visual aesthetic harmony of the chamber. The description therefore associates the dream chamber with aesthetic harmony in both a musical and a visual sense.

⁴ For these records, Richard Marks cites A. M. Erskine, 98.

In addition to aesthetic harmony, the images painted in the chamber are associated with narrative harmony. The statement “to beholde hyt was gret joye” (325) is not an end-stopped line because its sense continues when the dreamer declares,

For hooly al the story of Troye
 Was in the glasyng ywroght thus,
 Of Ector and of kyng Priamus,
 Of Achilles and of kyng Lamedon,
 And eke of Medea and of Jason,
 Of Paris, Eleyne, and of Lavyne. (326-31)

(For the entire history of Troy was made completely in the glasswork thus: of Hector and of King Priam, of Achilles and of King Lamedon, and also of Medea and of Jason, of Paris, Helen, and of Lavinia.)

The dreamer’s use of enjambment indicates that he rejoices in not only the physical integrity but also the narrative integrity of the glasswork. The dreamer’s pleasure that he derives from the artwork indicates the harmony of the great variety of parts in its narrative.⁵ Although its catalogue of names jumbles up a chronological order, it

⁵ Because of the vast scope of the narrative, the description creates dream-like hyperbole. In spite of the hyperbolically vast scope of the art, however, readers connect the art of the chamber to real-life artworks. According to Evans, there were painted windows in French castles, such as the Château de Beuvry and the Manor of Bicêtre, in the late-fourteenth century (410). Also see Camille Enlart (143). Though, based on surviving evidence, painted glass literary figures were not found in domestic glass windows until the fifteenth century, they were found in “enamelled goldwork,” such as Louis of Anjou’s silver dish (Evans 410). There were tapestries depicting *RR* belonging to Philippe le Hardi and Jean de Berry (Evans 410-11). See also Jules Guiffrey (208). Jennifer Eileen Floyd finds further precedent for the scenes in the chamber in tapestries with scenes of the Trojan War, which include illustrations, Latin texts, and vernacular glosses (308-09). Floyd reads the chamber in relation to “the extensive domestic architectural programs of John of Gaunt,” and she draws a parallel between the chamber in *BD* and Gaunt’s work at Kenilworth, which included private apartments with stained glass windows (311). Michael Norman Salda most recently posited an influence from frescoes decorating the painted chamber and the St. Stephen’s chapel in the Palace of Westminster designed like manuscript pages with images and Latin verse commentary underneath (118).

schematizes an *in medias res* epic pattern.⁶ The catalogue begins with the most worthy Trojan hero, Hector (328); the Trojan King, Priam (328); and the main Greek hero, Achilles (329). By listing the two main opponents in the Trojan War and the king of Troy during the war before listing King Priam's father Laomedon (329), the dreamer immediately evokes the height of the Trojan War. The catalogue then moves back in epic style to the context. Laomedon and the two names that follow, Jason and Medea (330), represent the earliest stages of the Troy narrative. Laomedon was the king of Troy who mistrusted Jason and the Argonauts when they landed on the shores of Troy during the quest for the Golden Fleece. As a result, the Argonauts vowed revenge on the Trojans and later returned to destroy Troy for the first time. In this first destruction of Troy, the Greeks captured Laomedon's sister, for which reason the Trojans decided that Paris would capture Helen. The dreamer then includes Paris and Helen (331), who represent the immediate cause of the second Trojan War. The description of the glasswork concludes with Lavinia (331), the bride Aeneas wins in Italy.⁷ This "schematic" ekphrasis (Desmond 141), therefore, without involving any narration, replicates the epic structure of narration *in medias res*. By incorporating the quest for the Golden Fleece, which is included in narratives like *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Sainte-Maure (715-2062), and by incorporating Lavinia, whom Aeneas marries at the end of the *Aeneid*, the pictorial programme depicts a hyperbolically comprehensive yet unified narrative.

⁶ As Bernardus Silvestris explains, *in medias res* is "quando a medio narrationem incipimus artificio atque modo ad principium recurrimus" ("when we artificially begin the narration in the middle and then return to the beginning"; *Commentary* 2; Schreiber and Maresca 4).

⁷ Lavinia was the daughter of King Latinus, King of Latium, located "at the mouth of the Tiber" (Fyler, Notes 353).

A third way in which the chamber represents harmony is through repetition in its rhetoric that unites the physical integrity of the glass with the narrative integrity. The dreamer states,

with *glas*

Were al the wyndowes wel *yglased*

Ful clere, and nat an *hoole* ycrased,

That to beholde hyt was gret joye.

For *hooly* al the story of Troye

Was in the *glasynge* ywroght thus. (322-27, emphasis added)

Polyptoton, or repetition of root words, in “glas” (322), “yglased” (323), “hoole” (324), “hooly” (326), and “glasynge” (327) creates *chiasmus* that centres on the declaration “to beholde hyt was gret joye” (325). This repetition unites the different aspects of the chamber’s harmony. The threefold integrity of the physical materials of the glass, the narrative of the glass, and the rhetoric of the dreamer’s description accentuates harmony that comes from unity of diversity.

Not only the description of the glasswork but also the entire description of the decorations with literary figures on both the windows and walls represents this pattern of *chiasmus* and likewise uses this rhetorical scheme to evoke harmony. The focus in the ekphrasis moves from painting—“my chambre was / Ful wel depeynted” (321-22)—to glazing (323, 327) and back to painting, when the dreamer states, “And alle the walles with colours fine / Were peynted, bothe text and glose, / Of al the Romaunce of the Rose” (“And all the walls were painted in fine colours, [with] both the text and gloss of all the Romance of the Rose”; 332-34). The way in which his gaze shifts from the painting to

the glasswork and back again replicates the experience of wonderment at an artwork that Theophilus expresses in the preface to Book 3 of *De diversis artibus* (c. 1120), in which he describes an imaginary church:

Nec enim perpendere valet humanus oculus, cui operi primum aciem infigat; si respicit laquearia, vernant quasi pallia; si considerat parietes, est paradysi species, si luminis abundantiam ex fenestris intuetur, inestimabilem vitri decorem et operis pretiosissimi varietatem miratur.

(Nor is the eye of man even able to decide upon which work it may first fix its glance; if it beholds the ceilings, they glow like draperies; if it regards the walls, there is the appearance of paradise; if it marks the abundance of light from the windows, it admires the inestimable beauty of the glass and the variety of the most costly work; 204-07)⁸

BD similarly evokes the wonderment of the shifting glance. The variation of Chaucer's dreamer's glances organized according to a pattern of *chiasmus* creates unified variety. The dreamer further relates the descriptions of the two visual arts media, glasswork and painting, through attention to colour. He states that "with glas / Were al the wyndowes wel yglased / Ful clere" (322-24), and this statement evokes the brilliancy of the colours of the glass because a medium's purity affects the generation of colour, according to Robert Grosseteste's *De iride* (77). The dreamer later describes the walls' "colours fine" (332). Attention to colour also unifies the description of the glasswork and the painted walls when the dreamer refers to the glasswork's representations "[o]f Paris, Eleyne, and

⁸ The translation belongs to Robert Hendrie and faces the original in the edition from which I cite.

of Lavyne. / And alle the walles with colours fine . . .” (331-32). The rhyming of “Lavyne” with “fine” links together the painted subject with the craftsmanship: the high quality of the materials. As Colin Wilcockson notes (968 n 291-343), Chaucer borrows this couplet from *RR*: “N’ouques Helene ne Lavine / Ne furent de couleur si fine” (“Neither Helen nor Lavinia . . . were of such perfect complexion”; 20831-32; Dahlberg 340). The narrator of *RR* compares Helen’s and Lavinia’s beauty to the image that Pygmalion creates. Therefore, the couplet in *RR* also occurs in the context of a description of a work of visual art’s craftsmanship.⁹ By borrowing ekphrastic lines from *RR*, the description moves seamlessly between the fine artistry of the glasswork and of the wall painting of “bothe text and glose, / Of al the Romaunce of the Rose” (333-34). As colour contributes to the seamless movement between the two subjects, it functions as *ductus*, which is how Lucy D. Anderson sees it functioning in another Middle English dream vision, *Pearl*. As Anderson argues, “The dynamic interaction produced by the

⁹ The focus on the artistry recalls the similar focus at the beginning of *RR*, which Chaucer translated. Fragment “A” of the *Romaunt of the Rose*, which contains ekphrasis but may or may not be Chaucer’s, is dated to before 1372 (Benson xxix). Bridges argues for the influence of the attention to the “craftsmanship” as well as the “emphasis on the emotional effect provoked by the portraits” of the ekphrasis in *RR* on Chaucerian ekphrasis (157 n 1). The ekphrasis of the paintings on the walls of the Garden of Mirth of *RR* begins with attention to the craftsmanship of the portraits:

Si vi un vergier grant e lé,
 Tot clos de haut mur bataillié,
 Portrait dehors e entaillié
 A maintes riches escritures.
 Les images e les pointures
 Dou mur volentiers remirai. (130-35)

(I saw a large and roomy garden, entirely enclosed by a high crenellated wall, sculptured outside and laid out with many fine inscriptions. I willingly admired the images and paintings [of the wall]; Dahlberg 32, with modifications)

When he views the image of “Vilanie” (“Villainy”; 156; Dahlberg 33), the narrator says, “Mout sot bien pointre e bien portraire / Cil qui sot tel image faire, / Qu’el sembloit bien chose vilaine” (“He who could produce an image of such a truly contemptible creature knew how to paint and portray”; 163-65; Dahlberg 33). Nevertheless, a greater proportion of the ekphrasis in *BD* is spent on the craftsmanship. By citing *RR*, the ekphrasis self-reflexively points to the source which influenced its attention to artistry and upon which it expands.

relationship between colour, physical and mental activity, and the Dreamer's location in the three separate *loci* of the poem generates the poem's *ductus* . . ." (28). The references to colour that link together the different components of the ekphrasis in *BD* draw attention to the harmony of the images in the dream chamber.

The contents of the painted walls, like the glazed windows, exemplify unified variety. As the dreamer says, "alle the walles with colours fine / Were peynted, bothe text and glose, / Of al the Romaunce of the Rose" (332-34). The claim that the walls depict "al" (334) of *RR* continues to create the dreamlike hyperbole of the chamber, and the dreamer reveals just how comprehensive the wall paintings are when he says that it depicts "bothe text and glose" of *RR* (333). This phrase has been variously interpreted. For example, Loomis suggests that "glose" (333) was added to rhyme with "Rose" (334), as opposed to being essential to the passage's meaning (25). Most commonly, "glose" means, according to the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*), "[a] gloss or explanatory comment on a text or word; a series or collection of glosses," and the *MED* cites *BD* 333 under this definition (Def. 1a).¹⁰ Wilcockson posits that "glose" could refer to illustrations of *RR* though, with the "text" as the captions accompanying the illustrations.¹¹ Wilcockson himself acknowledges, however, that an illustration is not one

¹⁰ Though Walter W. Skeat interprets "glose" literally as "commentary," he extends this meaning to translate "bothe text and glose" as "both in the principal panels and in the margin" (*Complete Works: Romaunt* 471 n 333). While this reading is too contextual, it draws on a possible interpretation of the chamber itself as a book, for Skeat argues that in this phrase Chaucer "likens the walls to the page of a book, in which the *glose*, or commentary, was often written in the margin" (*Complete Works: Romaunt* 471 n 333). Robert Edwards (194-95) and Salda (213) further support this interpretation of the chamber as a book. Edwards says that the images in the chamber "extend the conceit of the dreamer's falling asleep 'ryght upon my book' (274)" (194).

¹¹ Citing Ernest Langlois (211), Wilcockson discusses a scribal explicit to a manuscript of *RR*, which refers to the "texte et glose" (969 n 333-34). The manuscript "contains miniatures" without "commentary on the text" (Wilcockson 969 n 333-34). Coley is also influenced by Wilcockson's interpretation, as he suggests that the chamber contains pictures on the wall that gloss an accompanying text (68). James Wimsatt finds

of the definitions for “glose” in the *MED* (969 n 333-34). A comment on the text nevertheless need not be restricted to words. Sylvia Huot gives as example the marginal illustrations of a manuscript of *RR*, MS Bibl. Nat. fr. 25526 (*MS Mi*), claiming that there is conventional decorative “filler,” “images” that “imply a reading of individual words rather than of the poem as a whole,” and other images that “visualize more important textual metaphors” (286). F. N. Robinson suggests the possible influence on *BD* of a “manuscript in which both text and commentary were illustrated by pictures,” though he has not found such a manuscript of *RR* (774-75 n 333) and neither has Wilcockson (969 n 333-34).¹² Robinson speculates, though, that it is a “formula” for “the whole story” (774 n 333). The idea that the gloss was essential for representing the whole story makes sense based on extant manuscripts of *RR*. As Huot affirms, in a manuscript of *RR*, MS Bibl. Nat. fr. 24390 (*Ke*), “it can be difficult to know whether” the lines of verse that appear in the margins “were added as glosses or as insertions into the text” (66). Huot states that in other manuscripts of *RR*, “material that normally appears in the form of glosses has been absorbed into the text. . . . citations of the *Ars amatoria* frequently gloss the discourse of *Ami*. In *MS He*, a common Ovidian gloss about the usefulness of promises has become a couplet within the text . . .” (72). Hence, “[w]ith any manuscript text, and especially one that has the aspect of a compendium, the contours are never

further precedent for the chamber’s decoration with images and inscriptions in Watriquet de Couvin’s *Tournois des Dames* (*TD*) (63-64). In this poem, set in mid-October 1327, the poet visits the Count of Blois at Montferrant and has a vision after viewing a turret’s “verrieres peinte et escripte” (“painted and inscribed glass windows”; Watriquet de Couvin, *TD* 124), which depict a tournament of ladies defeating knights. In this vision, Veritez glosses the ladies’ defeat of the knights as the triumph of the body over the soul (Watriquet de Couvin, *TD* 290-431). Wimsatt considers this text to be a possible influence on *BD* 333 through the echo of Veritez’s statement that she has given the speaker “[I]a verité toute et la glose” (“all the truth and the gloss”; Watriquet de Couvin, *TD* 459) of the painted scenes (64).

¹² Robinson provides as an example of such a manuscript the Bible Moralisée (774-75 n 333).

really fixed, and the boundary between text and gloss is never well defined” (Huot 67). Because the gloss can be merged within the narrative itself, Chaucer’s dreamer’s statement that the wall paintings contain “bothe text and glose” of *RR* (333) indicates that the representation takes into account all that is essential to the story. The dreamer claims that the wall paintings link together all of the various texts and traditions found in the text and the commentary and claims that “alle the walles” (332) of the chamber represent this pictorial programme. The wall paintings therefore exemplify narrative harmony created through unity of variety.¹³

BD sets up the harmony of the chamber through the musical harmony that permeates it and that draws forth the dreamer’s vision of the painted images. The physical unity of the glass, the narrative unity of the glass and wall paintings, and the rhetorical unity of the description achieved through repetition and *chiasmus* all establish the harmony of the ekphrasis. The harmony of the artwork and its description forces meaning onto the Troy narrative on which the man in black will later draw. The harmony of the ekphrasis contributes to an orderly as opposed to tragic narrative. By constructing the Troy story as harmonious, the ekphrasis presents metaphorically the consolation that the Trojan allusions can bring to the grieving man in black.

By following the Troy narrative through to its aftermath, the glasswork in the chamber not only achieves narrative unity but also depicts a return of order for the Trojan people. The catalogue moves the story past the destruction of Troy by ending with

¹³ Edwards argues that here Chaucer is going “[a]gainst the tendency of mnemonics to reduce imagery to arbitrary symbols,” and rather, he “emphasizes opposite tendencies toward expansion and representation. The visual images of narrative are supplemented by texts which have already been amplified to include other episodes” (195).

Lavinia, the promise for the Trojans' future. As David Scott Wilson-Okamura states, Lavinia was interpreted as a virtuous choice for Aeneas; he cites Fabius Planciades Fulgentius' *Virgilianae continentiae secundum philosophos moralis* (*Exposition of the Content of Virgil According to Moral Philosophy*), which refers to Aeneas' marriage to Lavinia as "laborum uiam" ("the road of toils"; Fulgentius 104) (110). She was important according to the courtly tradition of interpretation of the *Aeneid*, which was "distinct from that of the grammarians and philosophers" and was "a tradition in which the twelfth, rather than the sixth, book of the *Aeneid* was regarded as the climax of the epic" (Wilson-Okamura 112).¹⁴ The ekphrasis therefore fashions the chamber decorations into a celebratory story of Troy that illustrates the *translatio imperii* motif of Trojans migrating westward to Italy. Trojan migration also continued further westward to Britain, named after the Trojan Brutus, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie* (13); thus, this celebratory story of Troy also particularly applies to the man in black.

The relevance of the decorations to the man in black's experience is revealed through the erotic emphasis in the last two lines of the ekphrasis. While disrupting the sequential flow of the narrative by imposing an epic structure, the characters Jason, Medea, Paris, Helen, and Lavinia are all legendary lovers. The juxtaposition of the Troy story "with the more overtly amorous *Roman de la Rose*" further emphasizes the importance of eros to the story (Rambuss 673). Jason and Medea's and Paris and Helen's relationships are associated with disastrous effects. After Medea has Jason's uncle Pelias

¹⁴ The sixth book of the *Aeneid* was regarded as the climax of the *Aeneid* according to the tradition of Bernardus Silvestris, whose commentary stopped after the sixth book (Wilson-Okamura 107).

killed, Jason famously abandons her, and Medea takes vengeance by murdering her two sons. In the case of Paris and Helen, the consequences of the relationship extend further, for Paris' abduction of Helen precipitates the Trojan War. Lavinia's insertion after these disastrous love legends, however, extends her association with political duty to the fulfillment of love.¹⁵ Medieval romances provide precedent for this interpretation. Francis Ingledew, speaking of the "eros of history" (5), writes that Virgil's Lavinia "is kept outside this circulation of martial deed and erotic passion to function as a political and reproductive, not amorous, sign" (45). Instead, according to the tradition of the mid-twelfth-century *Roman d'Énéas*, Lavinia became a celebrated figure of courtly love (Wilson-Okamura 112). According to Ingledew,

¹⁵ Lavinia's inclusion represents a more celebratory erotic focus than the Troy-focused ekphrasis from a source for *BD*, Guillaume de Machaut's *Fonteinne Amoureuse* (*FA*). *FA* is a dream vision in which the dreamer overhears a nobleman complaining because he must go into exile and leave the lady he loves. The nobleman recounts the story of Ceyx and Alcione, asking Morpheus that he would make him appear to his lady in her dream, the way the dead Ceyx appears to Alcione, in order that the nobleman might make his love known to his lady. The dreamer accompanies the nobleman and his entourage into the countryside, where he and the nobleman go off by themselves, discover the Fountain of Love, and view its carvings of the Troy story. The Troy story carvings on the Fountain of Love are of Venus, Paris, Helen, Achilles, Hector, Troilus, and Briseid, but most of the description focuses on Paris and Helen. As opposed to beginning with Hector and Achilles, *FA* begins with the story of Paris and Helen (1313-29), continues with the war and the battle between Hector and Achilles in the middle (1330-37), and finishes with Troilus and Briseid (1338-40). The description thus ends with erotic suffering — "Troillus moult se traveille / Pour la fille Calcas de Troie, / Briseyda . . ." ("Troilus suffered terrible pain / For the sake of Calchas's daughter from Troy, / Briseid . . ."; 1338-40; Palmer 161). This passage is juxtaposed with the preceding description of Achilles' slaughter of Hector, who "n'i pooit rien conquerer / N'a ses mortels cops contrestre" ("could in no way triumph / Or withstand the other's mortal blows"; 1333-34; Palmer 161), and of "tant de gens . . . / Que c'estoit une grant merveille" ("so many men / That it was a great wonder"; 1336-37; Palmer 161). According to this ekphrasis, love causes suffering privately for the lovers themselves but also precipitates mass destruction, even though Venus later fulfills a didactic role in which she uses Paris as an *exemplum* of intelligence because of his service to her (2119-64). Chaucer's ekphrasis in *BD* clashes with the destructiveness that his source's Trojan allusions present. Critics have not discussed the influence of the ekphrasis in *FA* on *BD* to any great extent. B. A. Windeatt, in his discussion of *FA* as a source for *BD* (26-40), and Wilcockson (969) do not link the ekphrasis specifically to Chaucer's. Phillips' edition of *BD* cites the ekphrasis without commenting further (135). On the relation between the Ceyx and Alcione episode in *FA* and *BD*, see R. Barton Palmer ("Rereading" 173).

One piece of the *Roman d'Eneas*'s revolutionary work is to make a Dido of the original Lavinia . . . The new Lavinia famously participates in the first extended medieval scene, thereafter a standard topos, in which the lady's sight of the martial figure engenders a spontaneous passion¹⁶ . . . when the passion not only proves mutual but is vindicated as Aeneas marries Lavinia, eros now helps to produce . . . the normative movements of history . . . (45)

Chaucer's catalogue likewise merges Lavinia's public and private roles by listing her as the final character in the decorations about the story of Troy and by grouping her with the lovers in the story. In associating her with both political fulfillment and erotic fulfillment, the ekphrasis of the chamber represents love as a bond that enables political and social stability. The Trojan allusions in *BD* represent the Boethian ideal of social harmony that corresponds to the aesthetic harmony that the birdsong, the skillful artistry of the decorations, and the complete subject matter of the decorations represent.

The ekphrasis constructs meaning for Troy that the man in black and dreamer's conversation later deploys as consolation for the man who has lost his beloved and who has consequently isolated himself from court life. Seamlessly transitioning from the chamber to the dreamer's encounter with the man in black in the forest sharpens the chamber images' connection to the man in black. The outdoor world becomes an extension of the chamber, as the dreamer's gaze upon the images in the chamber begins to transport him outside. As the birdsong outside had previously infiltrated the chamber and prompted him to look at it, so his view of the images of the chamber draws him

¹⁶ Ingledew cites Yunck (214-22) for this episode of the *Roman d'Énéas*.

outdoors, even before his physical departure from the chamber upon hearing the horn that signals the hart hunt. He states that “through the glas” of his windows, “the sonne shon / Upon my bed with bryghte bemes, / With many glade gilde stremes” (“the sun shone through the glass upon my bed with bright beams, with many bright, golden rays”; 336-38). Multiplicity and brightness of rays create more vibrant colour, according to Robert Grosseteste’s *De iride* (77), so these “many glade gilde stremes” (338) enable a clear view of all the Troy story represented on the glass. His greater knowledge of the Troy story decorations enables him to know more about the place outdoors where the man in black is. In dreamlike fashion, this clear view enables him to know what in real life he would not be able to know because “al the wyndowes” are “wel yglased” (323) and “[m]y wyndowes were shette echon” (“each one of my windows was shut”; 336). He states,

And eke the welken was so fair—
 Blew, bryght, clere was the ayr,
 And ful attempre for sothe hyt was;
 For nother to cold nor hoot yt nas,
 Ne in al the welken was a clowde. (339-43)

(And also the sky was so fair—the atmosphere was blue, bright, [and] clear, and it was truly very moderate, for it was neither too cold nor too hot, nor was [there] a cloud in all the sky.)

Gazing upon the multicoloured glass paradoxically leads him to see in his mind the uniformly blue, cloudless sky and feel the moderate temperature. Thus, “vision”

becomes “a metaphor for knowing” in *BD* (Akbari, *Seeing* 178).¹⁷ While the dreamer’s vision of the Troy images reveals the man in black’s world to him, the images, as I will later argue, colour the man in black’s understanding of himself and White.

The harmony of the chamber and of the *locus amoenus* where the man in black mourns also ties together the two scenes.¹⁸ Like the description of the chamber, this *locus amoenus* invokes a variety of multisensory details. A puppy leads the dreamer on a path that is “ful thikke of gras” (“very thick with grass”; 399) and contains “moo floures, swiche seven, / As in the welken sterres bee” (“seven times more flowers than are stars in the sky”; 408-09). It is “grene” (“green”; 398) and “ful softe and swete” (“very soft and sweet”; 399). The path that appeals to the senses of sight, touch, and smell therefore represents a harmonious paradise, the home of Flora and Zephyrus, as the dreamer imagines (402). There are more animals than the famous mathematician Albus can count (434-42) and trees with “many grene greves” (“many green branches”; 417) that are “so ful of leves” (“so full of leaves”; 418). Nevertheless, there is order amidst the multiplicity, for “every tree stood by hymselfe / Fro other wel ten foot or twelve” (“every tree stood by itself fully ten or twelve feet away from the others”; 419-20). As the man in black’s place of mourning extends the aesthetic harmony of the chamber, it also extends the celebratory Trojan narrative to the man in black’s life.

¹⁷ The senses are not misleading, in contrast to Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls*, as I argue in chapter two.

¹⁸ The French tradition from Guillaume de Lorris’ and Jean de Meun’s *RR* passed on to Chaucer the topos of the *locus amoenus*, the “pleasant place,” which comes from Virgil’s *Aeneid* 6.638 (Curtius 192) and involves multisensory description (Curtius 198). Wilcockson discusses the influence of *RR* 484-85, 705 on *BD* 304-05, of *RR* 667-68 on *BD* 306-08, of *RR* 124-25 on *BD* 339-43 (968 n 291-343), of *RR* 53-66 on *BD* 410-15, and of *RR* 1361-82 on *BD* 416-33 (970 n 402-33).

Troy first begins to heal the man in black through his conversation with the dreamer. The healing process begins because literary allusions facilitate his expression of his grief, even though at first, they cannot console him. When the dreamer suggests that he could possibly console the man in black, the man replies,

“May noight make my sorowes slyde,
 Nought al the remedyes of Ovyde,
 Ne Orpheus, god of melodye,
 Ne Dedalus with his playes slye.” (567-70)

(“Not all the remedies of Ovid, nor Orpheus, god of melody, nor Daedalus, with his cunning devices, can make my sorrows pass away.”)

By even listing Ovid’s *Remedia amoris*, which would have been viewed satirically by medieval readers,¹⁹ the man in black dissociates his love from any literary construction and mocks the very idea of consolation that the dreamer suggests. Later on, in the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer associates this work with the Wife of Bath’s practice of tormenting her husbands, when Geoffrey, the narrator of the *Canterbury Tales*, says that the Wife of Bath “[o]f remedies of love . . . knew per chaunce, / For she koude of that art the olde daunce” (“knew, as it happened, remedies for love, for she knew the tricks of the trade of that art”; 475-76). By contrast, the man in black cannot be ‘cured’ of his love for his lady White, whose perfection can never be compared to the shrewish behaviour of women in the *Remedia amoris*. The other literary allusions that he includes represent those who have used their powers to further either themselves or others in love. Orpheus

¹⁹ Peter L. Allen argues that the *Remedia* exposes the “literary love” represented in Ovid’s *Ars amatoria* as “a conventional and constructed fiction” (1). *RR*, according to Allen, presents this interpretation of Ovid and similarly “offer[s] this twofold lesson, creating an imaginary love and then dismantling it” (2).

uses his music to charm the Underworld and retrieve his wife Eurydice.²⁰ Even though Orpheus' songs bring his wife back until he turns back to look at her on their way out of the Underworld (Chaucer, *Bo* 3.12.45-59), and though the woods, rivers, and animals gather to hear him (Chaucer, *Bo* 3.12.1-13), "the songes . . . ne mighten nat asswagen hir lord Orpheus . . ." ("the songs . . . could not assuage their lord Orpheus"; Chaucer, *Bo* 3.12.15-17). In addition to his allusion to the ultimately bootless comforts of Orpheus' poetry, he refers to Daedalus, who brings about an impossible union by building Pasiphae's wooden cow that enables her to beget the Minotaur.²¹ Of the three examples of Ovid's *Remedia*, Orpheus, and Daedalus, only Daedalus actually unites lovers, and he does not use literature to do it. Not even Daedalus can comfort him though, as he says, so these literary allusions express the impossibility of consolation for his suffering through any means. When the man later represents himself as even more sorrowful than "Cesiphus" (Chaucer, *BD* 589) or "Tantale" (709), whose eternal experiences of torture were temporarily abated when Orpheus brought his music to the Underworld, he particularly stresses literature's inefficacy.

By dissociating himself from Orpheus to express his own grief, however, the man in black paradoxically becomes even more like Orpheus, who deals with his grief over his second loss of Eurydice by singing of the gods' losses of love.²² Like Orpheus, he cannot console himself through his complaints, but he depends on literary allusions to construct his grief.²³ Because these allusions enable him to express metaphorically the

²⁰ See Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* 3.m.12 and Chaucer, *Bo* 3.12.

²¹ See Ovid, *Ars amatoria* 1.289-326.

²² See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.72-739.

²³ The man in black's allusion to Daedalus' inability to relieve him of his sorrow is a double allusion to Iphis, who, when lamenting the impossible union with her beloved Ianthe, declares,

extent of his grief, his love becomes even more like a literary construction such as *RR*, however much he may deny it when he professes the uselessness of Ovid's *Remedia*. From the beginnings of his interactions with the dreamer then, he associates himself with classical allusions even in the process of trying to dissociate himself from them. Like Boethius as he speaks to Lady Philosophy in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, though, he regards himself as a victim of Fortune and therefore at first cannot take comfort from art.

The dreamer's own use of classical allusions encourages the man in black to move on from seeing himself as a passive victim of Fortune in order to begin to console himself. These allusions recall the ekphrasis of the chamber. Through his conceit of Fortune playing a game with him and taking away his "fers" ("queen chess piece"; 654) for White's death, he expresses his own helplessness. The dreamer warns him about the dangers of refusing to dismiss Fortune:

"Ne say nocht soo, for trewely,
 Thogh ye had lost the ferses twelve,
 And ye for sorwe mordred yourselve,
 Ye sholde be dampned in this cas
 By as good ryght as Medea was,
 That slough hir children for Jasoun." (722-27)

huc licet ex toto sollertia confluat orbe,
 ipse licet revolet ceratis Daedalus alis,
 quid faciet? num me puerum de virgine doctis
 artibus efficiet? num te mutabit, Ianthe?

(Though all the ingenuity in the world should be collected here, though Daedalus himself should fly back on waxen wings, what could he do? With all his learned arts could he make me into a boy from a girl? or could he change you, Ianthe?; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.741-44)

All translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* belong to Frank Justus Miller and face the original in the edition from which I cite.

(“Do not say so, for truly, even if you had lost the twelve queens, and you murdered yourself out of sorrow, you would be damned in that situation, just as rightly as Medea was, who slew her children on account of Jason.”)

The dreamer adds further examples of foolishness to this *exemplum*: the stories of Phyllis hanging herself after the time passed for Demophon’s return (728-31), Dido slaying herself when Aeneas left (731-34), Echo dying of her unrequited love for Narcissus (735-37), and Samson slaying himself on account of Dalilah (738-39). All of these characters, whom the dreamer compares to the man in black, either died (some through suicide) or committed murder as a result of rejection or betrayal by the ones they loved. The dreamer represents a literal interpretation of the man’s conceit of the chess piece when he states that “ther is no man alyve her / Wolde for a fers make this woo!” (“But there is no man alive here [who] would make this sorrow over a queen chess piece!”; 740-41), and after this statement, the man protests that the dreamer is clueless about his plight: “Thou wost ful lytel what thou menest; / I have lost more than thow wenest” (“You know very little what you mean; I have lost more than you suppose”; 743-44). The man may be correct, for none of the examples have to do with bereavement. For Julia G. Ebel and David Aers, this scene demonstrates failed attempts at connecting art with “individual experience” (Aers, “Chaucer’s *Book*” 203). Ebel declares that the narrator’s “limited grasp” of the commonplaces he uses “serves as a profound comment on the way in which habituation to the conventional can empty it of power and meaning” (205). Whether or not the dreamer is clueless or more knowledgeable than he seems,²⁴ however, only after

²⁴ In addition to Ebel and Aers, various critics such as Georgia Ronan Crampton (495), John Finlayson (198), and A. C. Spearing (70) regard the dreamer as naïve. Spearing, interpreting the man in black as John of Gaunt, supports this reading: “It would not do for Chaucer to lecture his noble patron on what his

the dreamer draws these parallels between the man and the classical allusions does the man begin to use classical figures for more than merely articulating his grief. The man in black's interactions with the dreamer and literature thus change his way of thinking, as he rejects self-identification with these inconsolable lovers. Consolation no longer is as impossible as it seemed for him.

Through the dreamer, the man in black articulates his experience in love in a way that recalls the ekphrasis. In response to the dreamer's request for "al hooly / In what wyse, how, why, and wherfore / That ye have thus youre blysse lore" ("everything completely, in what manner, how, why, and for what reason you have thus lost your bliss"; 746-48), the man aligns his mind with art. Although, as his previous rejection of Ovid's *Remedia* suggests (568), he dissociated his own experience from art, he now does the opposite. He is love's "thral" ("vassal"; 767) and therefore a courtly lover. He aligns himself with the tradition of Ovid's *Ars amatoria* and *Remedia amoris* passed on through *RR* (Lawlor 628), for his love is an "art" (Chaucer 788).²⁵ In order to show how easy it was for him to learn the art of love, he says,

"Paraunter I was therto most able,
As a whit wal or a table,
For hit ys redy to cacche and take

attitude should be towards his wife's death" (70). Bertrand H. Bronson posits the dreamer's tactfulness ("*Book*" 873), as does James R. Kreuzer, who argues that the dreamer shows "sensitive awareness of . . . the cathartic benefits of 'talking out' one's grief" (546). James Winny argues against any consistent characterization of the dreamer; for Winny, the dreamer is a conflicted figure "with a developed taste for literature and the arts" (61) but who at different times demonstrates qualities of "slow-wittedness" (61) in order "to supply information needed by the reader" (60).

²⁵ In *RR*, as Guillaume de Lorris writes, "l'Art d'Amors est toute enclose" ("the whole art of love is contained"; 38; Dahlberg 41).

Al that men wil theryn make,
 Whethir so men wil portreye or peynte,
 Be the werkes never so queynte.” (779-84)

(“Perhaps I was in that regard almost as capable as a white wall or a board is, for it is ready to receive and take all that men will make upon it, whether men will draw or paint on it, no matter how ingeniously made the works are.”)

He uses a variation of the Aristotelian *tabula rasa* motif for the mind before it has applied itself to study (Curtius 305), for he associates his mind before he learned the art of love with an artifact that is “whit” (780), or primed and ready for painting.²⁶ By analogy, he equates the art of love with ingenious paintings. He thus represents his mind after he learned the art of love as an artwork with representations of *RR*, similar to the walls of the chamber (Ciccone 210).²⁷ Chaucer borrows this variation of the *tabula rasa* motif from Machaut’s *Remede de Fortune* (Wilcockson 973 n 759-804):

Car le droit estat d’innocence
 Ressamble proprement la table
 Blanche, polie, qui est able
 A recevoir, sans nul contraire,
 Ce qu’on y vuet peindre et pourtraire. (Machaut 26-30)

²⁶ The representation of the mind’s contents as images also concords with medieval conceptions that all memories were stored in the form of images (Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 16).

²⁷ Ciccone treats the entire section on the man in black’s education in “*fin’ amors*” (Chaucer, *BD* 1088-1297), which combines his mature perspective with his experience as a younger person, as a parallel to the text and gloss of *RR* (216). Ciccone argues that the man in black’s “education in *fin’ amors* personalizes the topic of Guillaume de Lorris’s section of the *Roman*; each narrative records similar symptoms of lovesickness” (216).

(For the true state of innocence exactly resembles the white, polished table, which is able to receive without any interference whatever one wishes to paint or portray on it; Windeatt 58)

The differences in Chaucer's version make the metaphor more closely resemble his ekphrasis. Firstly, the man in black compares his mind not just to a "table" but also to a "wal" (780). He then states that the wall or tablet will receive whatever one draws or paints upon it, "[b]e the werkes never so queynte" (784). At the end of *BD*, the dreamer characterizes the entire dream vision as "queynt" ("strange"; 1330). Although this use of the word does not apply specifically to works of art,²⁸ it represents the wonderment that "queynte" artworks provoke. Though in his conversation with the dreamer, "queynte" serves a practical purpose of providing a rhyme for "peynte" (783), calling the works "queynte" recalls the artistic genius of the decorations in the chamber on which the description focused. In the course of the dream, the man in black unveils his memories, or the images that adorn his mind, and the description of the dream vision as "queynt" (1330) is a further reminder that his simile can be extended to represent the state of his mind after it has been changed by White as well as the dreamer.

When the man in black begins using Trojan allusions in order to articulate his memories, he does so in a way that reflects the opening ekphrasis. These allusions represent the tradition that focuses on the role of eros in the Troy story, just as the description of painted glass images in the chamber does. The allusions are distinguished, however, from the erotic tradition demonstrated in works such as Machaut's *FA*. As

²⁸ See the *MED*, Def. 3a for "queinte": "Strange, unusual; remarkable, marvelous; peculiar, special."

opposed to focusing upon the destruction and suffering caused by Paris' love for Helen or Troilus' betrayed love, the allusions resemble the description of images in *BD* that move from the disastrous loves of Jason and Medea and Paris and Helen to the fulfilled love that Lavinia brings. The man in black rejects the dreamer's previous comparison of him to Jason and Medea; instead, he replicates the ekphrastic catalogue's *in medias res* pattern that begins with the valour of the primary Trojan hero, Hector. As I will discuss, the first of the man in black's Trojan allusions represents him as a valorous warrior in his love for White. His subsequent Trojan allusions envision White as the continuation of Trojan civilization. Finally, the destruction of Troy metaphorically becomes her rejection of him, which of course was only temporary. Because she later accepts him, their love represents a continuation of Trojan civilization for him, despite her death. Alluding to the Trojan narrative of the ekphrasis to represent metaphorically his unrequited love that is later fulfilled is a source of consolation for him.

His initial Trojan allusions dismiss the dreamer's suggestion of his love's potential self-destructiveness and instead valorize it. He validates his love for White by asserting that he "wolde thoo / Have loved best my lady free" ("would still have loved my noble lady best"; 1054-55), even if he had

"hardy be

As was Ector, so have I joye,
That Achilles slough at Troye—
And therefore was he slayn alsoo
In a temple, for bothe twoo
Were slayne, he and Antylegyus

(And so seyth Dares Frygius),

For love of Polixena.” (1064-71)

(“been valiant, as Hector was, so may I prosper, whom Achilles slew at Troy—
and then he was also slain in a temple, because both of the two, he and
Antilochus, as Dares Phrygius says, were slain because of [Achilles’] love for
Polixena.”)

This allusion is the penultimate example, and the most amplified, in a catalogue of worthy possessions: “al the beaute / That ever had Alcipyades” (“all the beauty that Alcibiades ever had”; 1056-57); “al the strengthe of Ercules” (“all the strength of Hercules”; 1058); “the worthynesse / Of Alysander” (“the worthiness of Alexander”; 1059-60); “al the rychesse” (“all the riches”; 1060) of Babylon, Carthage, Macedonia, Rome, and Nineveh; and the wisdom of the goddess Minerva (1072). The entire catalogue is ultimately drawn from Machaut’s *Remede de Fortune* (Wilcockson 974 n 1056-74),²⁹ but that text does not mention Achilles. By digressing to note Achilles’ death

²⁹ In the *Remede de Fortune*, the speaker declares,

Et certainement, se j’eüsse
Tant de bien en moy que je fusse
Aussi sages com Salemons,
Et fust miens quittes tous li mons,
Et aussi preus comme Alixandres
Ou comme Hector, qui gueres mendres
Ne fu de li quant a valour,
Et s’eüsse autretant d’onnour
Comme ot Godefroy de Buillon,
Et la biauté qu’ot Absalon,
Et de Job la grant pacience,
L’estableté et la constance
De Judit et de Socratès,
Qui en un point estoit adès,
Car pour gaaingne ne pour perte
Ne se mouvoit, tant fust aperte ;
Et avec ce l’umilité
Qu’Ester ot, et la loiauté

after mentioning Hector, the man in black harkens back to the path set out in the description of the chamber, with its images of both Hector and Achilles. While he may represent his own “metaphorical death in his grief” by invoking Hector’s death (Ciccione 215), he dissociates himself from passively dying for love and the destruction that this can cause for others, just as he had previously rejected the applicability of the dreamer’s *exempla* of lovers. In associating himself with Hector, he dissociates himself from Achilles, who killed him, and he distinguishes the causes of Hector’s and Achilles’ deaths: Hector dies in battle, while Achilles, according to Dares, dies in a temple in pursuit of love. In his citation of Achilles’ death, he also mentions that Achilles’ love for Polixena caused the death of Antilochus, a non-lover bystander. Achilles’ love’s destructiveness to a bystander contrasts his death with the nobleness of Hector’s on the battlefield. As opposed to just focusing upon himself as a lover in isolation from the rest of society, the man shows his awareness of social bonds that love can ruin. Allusions to Troy thus draw forth the man’s consideration of social repercussions amidst his grief.

The man’s citation of Dares within the allusion also reveals how Troy leads him to consolation. Only in this allusion does the man in black include a citation, which draws attention to the fact that there are other versions besides this eroticized account of Achilles’ death. Dares was supposed to have written an eyewitness account that was

D’Abraham, a verité dire,
 Ne peüsse je pas souffire
 Pour dame amer de tel affaire. (107-27)

(And indeed, if I were as wise as Solomon, and the whole world were given to me, and I were as valiant as Alexander or Hector (who was scarcely less than him in valour), and if I had the honour of Godfrey of Bouillon, and the beauty of Absalom, and the great patience of Job, the firmness and constancy of Judith and of Socrates, which was always unchanging (for he did not change either for gain or for loss), and if together with this I had the humility of Esther and the faithfulness of Abraham, in truth, I would still fall short in the love of such a lady; Windeatt 59-60)

regarded as the most reliable source for the Troy narrative in the Middle Ages (Barney 1021). Citing this greatest authority most forcefully rejects the passivity as well as the social repercussions of Achilles' death. The original impetus for the man in black's catalogue of allusions that includes Hector and Achilles is the dreamer's statement:

“I leve yow wel, that trewely

Yow thoghte that she was the beste

And to beholde the alderfayreste,

Whoso had loked hir with your eyen.” (1048-51)

(“I well believe you that truly it seemed to you she was the best, and [she was] the fairest of all to behold to whomever had looked at her with your eyes.”)

In spite of attempts to objectify his opinion by claiming that “alle that hir seyen / Seyde and sworn hyt was soo” (“all who saw her said and swore that it was so”; 1052-53) and that he would feel the same regardless of whatever material and spiritual goods he possessed, the man in black ultimately relies on the authority of a Trojan perspective which he even clearly identifies as such, “Dares Frygius” (1070), in his response to the dreamer. Associating his own position with a Trojan point of view reveals Troy's role not in merely expressing his grief but in expressing his love. At the end of his catalogue of worthy possessions that could not have prevented his love of her, he says, “I moste nede” (“must necessarily”; 1074) have loved her but then corrects himself: “‘Nede?’ Nay, trewly, I gabbe now; / Noght ‘nede,’ and I wol tellen how: / For of good wille myn herte hyt wolde” (“‘Necessarily?’ No, truly, I talk nonsense now: not ‘necessarily,’ and I will tell you why: for my heart wished for it of my own free will”; 1075-77). His self-correction articulates his changing perceptions through the course of the conversation.

His articulation of his love for White through identification with Hector moves him away from self-representation as a victim of Fortune's wiles and towards an active choice to love her, in spite of the pain it has caused him.

His conversation further moves him from disastrous loves in the Troy story toward the fulfillment of love through Lavinia in his use of classical allusions for describing White. He explains further why he would wish to love her: "She was as good, . . . / As ever was Penelope of Grece. / Or as the noble wif Lucrece" ("She was as good . . . as Penelope of Greece ever was or as the noble woman Lucretia was"; 1080-82). Though words often fail him in describing her—he asserts that, in comparison with Lucrece, "[s]he was as good, and nothyng lyk / . . . / Algate she was as trewe as she" ("She was as good, and not at all the same, . . . even though she was as true as she"; 1085-87)—she increasingly resembles the images wrought in the chamber.³⁰ The first of his two conventional similes of wifely faithfulness is the wife of Ulysses, another key figure in the Troy story. The second, Lucretia, committed suicide after being raped by Sextus Tarquin. Just as the ekphrasis of the chamber moves from Hector and Achilles to Lavinia, the man in black's conversation moves from Hector and Achilles to classical

³⁰ Sarah Stanbury relates the man in black's reticence to describe her to descriptions of a specific kind of image: devotional objects (101). He relies on the inexpressibility topos elsewhere. For example, he says,

"But which a visage had she thertoo!
 Allas, myn herte ys wonder woo
 That I ne kan discryven hyt!
 Me lakketh both Englyssh and wit
 For to undo hyt at the fulle;
 And eke my spirites be so dulle
 So gret a thyng for to devyse.
 I have no wit that kan suffise
 To comprehende hir beaute." (895-903)

("But what a face she had as well! Alas, my heart is wondrously woeful that I cannot describe it! Both [my] English and intelligence to explain it to the fullest are lacking; and also my mental faculties are too dull for describing so great a thing. I have no intelligence that can suffice for comprehending her beauty.")

women (Ciccone 215). The ekphrasis and conversation hence “parallel each other structurally” (Ciccone 215). Because the war which ensued after her suicide banished the dictator King Tarquin, Lucretia, like Lavinia, served a key role in Roman politics (Ciccone 215).³¹ His comparisons of White to Penelope and Lucretia construct for him his wife’s goodness as well as her political importance. By associating her with goodness not just for him but also for society, he moves beyond his self-centred grief, as anticipated by the movement in the ekphrasis from disastrous loves to Lavinia, through whom both Roman and Trojan civilization continue.

The man in black explicitly reveals the consolation that comes from his mind’s reconstructions of White enabled by literary allusions. He states,

“whan I saugh hir first a-morwe
 I was warished of al my sorwe
 Of al day after; til hyt were eve
 Me thoghte nothyng myghte me greve,
 Were my sorwes never so smerte.
 And yet she syt so in myn herte
 That, by my trouthe, y nolde nocht
 For al thys world out of my thought
 Leve my lady; noo, trewely!” (1103-11)

(“when I saw her first thing in the morning, I was after cured of all my sorrow for the whole day; until it was evening, it seemed to me nothing could upset me, no

³¹ See Ovid, *Fasti* 685-852 and Livy, *History of Rome* 1.

matter how painful my sorrows were. And still she remains in my heart so that, by my faith, I would not want to keep my lady out of my mind for all this world; no, truly!”)

While he articulates the power of his experience of seeing her in the morning to console him for the short space of a day, he also associates these past comforts with her continued presence in his “herte” (1108) and also his “thought” (1110). His current strong desire never to forget her (1109-11) depends on a continuation of the way in which she remained in his heart and mind in the past: “*yet she syt so in myn herte / That*” he would not want to forget her in return for the world (1108-09; emphasis added). Accordingly, as her image brought him comfort when he was apart from her in life, so too can her image, which he links with the continuation and memory of Trojan civilization, console the man in black after her death.

The man in black reveals in particular how constructing his memory of White through Trojan allusions has the power to console him. First of all, the dreamer leads the man in black to muse upon the significance of White’s memory for him. After the man in black affirms that he never wants to forget his lady, the dreamer responds, “*Me thynketh ye have such a chaunce / As shryfte wythoute repentaunce*” (“It seems to me that you have such a chance [of doing that] as absolution without repentance”; 1113-14). The man in black interprets the religious analogy in terms of his memory and therefore his love for his lady as sins to be repented of (1117). He instead turns around the dreamer’s analogy so that forgetting her signifies a grave sin. Forgetting her evokes for the man the betrayal of Troy (1119-20), as well as other famous betrayals: Achitophel’s of David (1118) and Ganelon’s of Rowland and Olyver (1121-23). Forgetting her would make

him “wel / Wers” (“even worse”; 1117-18) than “Anthenor . . . / The traytor that betrayed Troye” (“Antenor, . . . that traitor who betrayed Troy”; 1119-20). The parallel between ceasing to love and remember her and betraying Troy adds further meaning to his earlier analogy between himself as a lover and Hector. When he had invoked Hector’s fight to the death for Troy, he had envisioned the extent of his own love for White. As this further analogy of Antenor betraying Troy clarifies, loving and remembering White are analogous to continuing to fight for and preserve Troy. He thereby further valorizes his love and memory of her. The destruction of Troy does not metaphorically become her death; the actual catastrophe is forgetting her.

When he alludes for a second time to the fall of Troy, he again sees beyond the catastrophe of her death because he associates Troy’s fall with her initial rejection of his love. He describes his reaction to that rejection:

“Allas, that day

The sorowe I suffred and the woo

That trewly Cassandra, that soo

Bewayled the destruccioun

Of Troye and of Ilyoun,

Had never swich sorwe as I thoo.” (1244-49)

(“Alas, the sorrow and the woe I suffered that day [were such] that truly

Cassandra, who greatly mourned the destruction of Troy and of Ilium, never had such sorrow as I then had.”)

Although the Troy story “provides the mourner with more figures for representing his grief” and “sometimes even intensifies” that grief “to hysterical proportions” (Rambuss

676), the man in black's analogy hyperbolizes not his present but his past sorrow. When he draws a parallel between mourning over unrequited love for White and mourning over the destroyed city of Troy, he represents sorrow that was overcome one year later when White accepted his love. The ekphrasis, which describes decorations of Troy's fall and its later continuation through Lavinia, therefore anticipates the man in black's image of Troy's destruction as the merely temporary trouble of White's rejection. This comparison between unrequited love for White and the destruction of the city of Troy can be extended to represent his fulfilled love with the continuation of Trojan civilization in the aftermath of Troy's fall. He therefore draws even closer parallels between White and Lavinia than he does in comparing White with the virtuous Penelope and Lucretia. Trojan allusions, then, enable him to construct his grief as well as provide him a conduit for moving beyond it. Constructing his memories through the story of Troy, even the most painful memory of her rejection that he represents in his final classical allusion, thus enables him relief from his present sorrow. He rises above his dependence on Fortune and instead finds happiness in that which does not depend upon Fortune: memory. The *translatio imperii* motif of the ekphrasis therefore replicates this movement in the man's conversation with the dreamer.

Though he uses the Trojan allusions to show that catastrophe would come from either his or White's rejection of the other, rather than her death, the consolation the man receives is not explicit at the end of his conversation. Beginning with the question "where is she now?" (1298), the dreamer leads the man to assert, "She ys ded!" ("She is dead!"; 1309). The man offers no response to the dreamer's question, "Is that youre los? Be God, hyt ys routhe" ("Is that your loss? By God, it is a pity"; 1310). This end to the

conversation suggests for Palmer an “uncertain consolation” that is skeptical over dream visions’ “relevance” (“*The Book of the Duchess*” 381-82), and Phillips proposes that “any further consolation a reader finds must be earlier, either in an earlier statement or in some larger area of the poem” (“Structure” 107). John Leyerle interprets the hunt as a metaphor for the man’s “curative process of consolation,” pointing to examples of the man’s heart gladdening throughout the conversation (117).³² Accordingly, the end of the hunt signals metaphorically that the man has found a cure for his heart’s sickness (Leyerle 118). A further sign that consolation has been achieved in spite of the abrupt ending to the conversation is the return of “this kyng” (1314) to his castle. Kruger, for example, argues that at this point, there is a “forceful movement . . . gesturing towards the public sphere of masculine action . . .” (81). The king could be the man in black (Wilcockson 976 n 1314-29). Whether or not he is, though, if one reads the poem in a paratactic fashion the way Phillips suggests, the end of the dreamer’s conversation with the man in black could not only coincide with the performance of social duty but also lead to it. In these ways, the abrupt conclusion does not call into question the healing that occurs in the dreamer’s process of recollection.

The success of the conversation as a social bond may also be perceived in the positive effect it has on the other party, the dreamer. The dreamer decides to “[f]onde to put this sweven in ryme” (“attempt to put this dream into rhyme”; 1332) after he wakes

³² For example, as Leyerle says (115), the dreamer describes the sickness of the man’s “sorrowful hert” (“sorrowful heart”; 488) when he first encounters him (Chaucer 488-96). Later on in the conversation though, as Leyerle says (117), the man recalls the songs he would make for his lady before her acceptance of him “myn herte to glade” (“in order to gladden my heart”; 1172), and after his lady’s acceptance of his love, he asserts, “But if myn herte was ywaxe / Glad, that is no nede to axe!” (“But there is no need to ask whether my heart became glad!”; 1275-76).

up. No longer does he refer to the detrimental effects of his eight years' "sickness" ("sickness"; 36), the way he does in the poem's opening (1-43). According to Piero Boitani, "[t]he dream awakens within him the creative potential latent in his passion for reading and in his culture" (*English* 143). Creativity can be healing. For instance, Floyd argues that even early on when the insomniac dreamer promises a richly decorated chamber and halls to whichever god grants him sleep, *BD* shows the "power of art and especially narrative arts to console" (311). Floyd states that the "[d]reamer achieves a healing sleep not only through an act of reading but also through an act of composition, the ekphrastic catalogue of luxurious bedroom furnishings" (311).³³ If the man in black leads the dreamer to further creativity and potential relief, then this successful social interaction is a further demonstration of the social order associated with the king's return to the castle.

In conclusion, Chaucer's ekphrasis functions as *ductus* by providing a means of interpreting the dream vision's scene of the man in black. The *in medias res* pattern and the emphasis on eros for the decorations of Troy combined with the decorations of *RR* schematize the way in which the man moves from sorrow to resolution for his grief. In representing himself as a courtly lover, he reflects the paintings of *RR* in the chamber. As well, the man in black's metaphorical representation of his mind as a painted wall shows more clearly that the ekphrasis of a painted wall and windows provides a way of interpreting his situation. His identification with Hector, the first of the figures listed in the ekphrasis, begins this process of identification with Trojan allusions to articulate not

³³ Aers, who does not deal with the ekphrasis per se, suggests that *BD* shows that art can be consoling; however, its ability to console depends on the individual ("Chaucer's *Book*" 202).

only his grief but also his love. Just as the ekphrasis represents a movement from joyless to joyful love, so too does his conversation with the dreamer increasingly make explicit Troy as a metaphor for a fulfilled love that continues after death and that can be destroyed only by forgetting that love. By envisioning their love as a continuation of Trojan civilization that overcomes death, the man in black increasingly makes White more like Lavinia, the last of the figures named in the ekphrasis of the chamber. The ekphrasis thereby models his path to consolation. That the conversation between the dreamer and the man in black facilitates public duty as opposed to solitary bereavement is suggested by the dream's conclusion when the end of the conversation coincides with the end of the hunt and return to the castle. The consolation he achieves through dialogue also points to his successful social interaction. Troy can thus function as a metaphor for the man and White's fulfilled love as well as a metaphor for the successful merging of public and private that occurs. Both the subject matter of the ekphrasis and the aesthetic and social harmony it represents prove relevant to the man in black's experience. The social harmony that ensues after the man in black's mind becomes filled with the same subject matter as the dreamer's chamber mirrors the ekphrasis. Art enables love to be a social bond.

Chapter 2

The Ekphrastic Pathway through Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls*

Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls* (*PF*) integrates an ekphrasis of wall paintings of failed lovers in the temple of Venus. Mainly indebted to Giovanni Boccaccio's *Teseida*, this temple appears in the speaker's dream, in which Scipio Africanus from Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* brings the dreamer through a gate to a garden that exemplifies the *locus amoenus*. As discussed in the dreamer's paraphrase of the *Somnium*, known in the Middle Ages through Macrobius' *Commentary*, one achieves the common good by abstaining from worldly pleasure. The ekphrasis likewise depicts the disastrous results of pursuing worldly pleasure, particularly through one of the literary constructs of desire, courtly love.¹ The list of lovers painted on the walls of Venus' temple represents courtly love as a tainted construct in opposition to the harmony and common good that Nature promotes as she presides over the St. Valentine's Day mating rituals of the birds later in the dream. As rhetorical *ductus*, the ekphrasis provides cues that suggest the discordances that the male eagles' behaviour as courtly lovers will later

¹ While courtly love may have some basis in the medieval feudal system as an extra set of bonds that would cement more closely the lord-vassal relationship through the vassals' service to the lady, it could also have been solely a literary construction. Gaston Paris, in 1883, first coined the phrase "amour *courtois*" or "courtly love" to describe the love that he claims first appeared in Chrétien de Troyes' late-twelfth century *Chevalier de la Charette* (519). Aside from "the equivalent of the phrase . . . in Provençal, in a poem by the troubadour Pierre d'Auvergne" (Donaldson, *Speaking* 154), in the Middle Ages, this kind of love would have been called "*fin amour, amor honestus, cortezia*," or simply "love" (Donaldson, *Speaking* 155). As the aristocratic love usually between a knight and an unattainable lady that idealized the lady, courtly love has not been precisely defined in a way that all scholars would agree to (Donaldson, *Speaking* 155). Often, courtly love is not adulterous, though it has been defined that way (Donaldson, *Speaking* 155). Some would argue that the attainment of the beloved lady was the object, while others would argue that its object was the attainment of "a state of idealized frustration" (Donaldson, *Speaking* 157). E. Talbot Donaldson classifies "sublimation," which involves an ennobling process of transformation, as a chief characteristic (*Speaking* 163). Andreas Capellanus' late-twelfth century *De arte honeste amandi*, which codifies courtly love in its first two books but then dismisses it as sinful in the last book, reveals that early on, its ennobling status was called into question.

introduce. Situated within the temple of Venus, which is within a garden of love with music that evokes heavenly harmony, the temple paintings present the destruction that the verses over the garden gates warn about, in spite of the garden's and temple's pleasurable-ness. The harmony in the garden therefore turns out to be illusory, similar to the illusory Boethian harmony when the birds mate. Thus, the ekphrasis in *PF*, like the description of the chamber in Chaucer's *BD*, acts as a memory device that encourages comparisons between itself and the rest of the poem and guides the interpretation of the poem.

The dangers of courtly love demonstrated by the ekphrasis must be understood in the context of the central concern in *PF* with the common good.² The dream frame also separates the pursuit of eros from the common good. As the dream frame's paraphrase of Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* relates, the common good is the means of salvation in *PF*. The dreamer says that Scipio Africanus, who appears in his grandson Scipio's dream, tells Scipio that

what man, lered other lewed,

That lovedde commune profyt, wel ithewed,

. . . shulde into a blyful place wende

There as joye is that last withouten ende. (46-49)

² Various critics have discussed the idea of the common good in *PF*. Bruce Kent Cowgill argues that the poem's concern with the common good manifests itself in a "dichotomous allegory" that contrasts "the ordered state wisely governed according to natural law and the chaos of a state whose leadership is selfish and irresponsible" (315). For the idea of the common good in *PF*, see also Yasunari Takada ("Commune Profit' and Libidinal Dissemination in Chaucer") and Paul A. Olson's discussion of the theory of the common good in medieval politics ("*The Parlement of Foules*: Aristotle's *Politics* and the Foundations of Human Society").

(whatever man, learned or ignorant, endowed with virtues, who loved the common good . . . would go to a blissful place where there is joy that lasts without an end.)

Scipio Africanis also reveals the way to prolonged torment:

brekers of the lawe, soth to seyne,
 And likerous folk, after that they ben dede,
 Shul whirle aboute th'erthe alwey in peyne,
 Tyl many a worlde be passed, out of drede,
 And than, foryeven al hir wikked dede,
 Than shul they come into that blysfyl place . . . (78-83)

(breakers of the law, to tell the truth, and lecherous people, after they are dead, will whirl around the earth always in pain until many ages have passed, without a doubt, and then, forgiven for all their wicked deeds, they will come to that blissful place.)

Scipio Africanis, as presented by the dreamer, does not just warn against lechery, or an inordinate love of worldly pleasure, however, but holds any sort of worldly pleasure suspect. He reveals the insignificance of earth both in terms of its size (57-58) and its ability to bring happiness (64-65) and instructs Scipio “[t]hat he ne shulde hym in the world delyte” (“that he should not delight himself in the world”; 66). The dream frame thus distinguishes the pursuit of “commune profyt” (47) from eros.

The opposition in the paraphrase of the *Somnium* between the pursuit of the common good and the pursuit of eros is figured also in terms of a musical opposition

between harmony and discord.³ Scipio's trip up into the cosmos reveals to him "the melodye . . . [t]hat welle is of musik and melodye / In this world here, and cause of armonye" ("the melody . . . that is the source of music and melody here in this world and the cause of harmony"; 60-63). According to the Ptolemaic system, this music results from the rotations of "the nyne speres" ("the nine spheres"; 59) containing the planets and heavenly bodies that rotate around the earth. Though it is the source of earthly music, one can only hear this perfectly harmonious music when in heaven. Also, only when "besyly thow werche and wysse / To commune profit" ("you busily work and direct yourself towards common profit"; 74-75) can you "comen swiftly" ("swiftly come"; 76) to heaven. Accordingly, the poem configures harmony on a social and aesthetic level, and the experience of one coincides with the experience of another. The summary of the *Somnium* allegorizes this connection through, as David Chamberlain argues (56), its use of seven stanzas that mimic the seven tones of the nine spheres. The dreamer even claims that the original Latin has seven as opposed to nine chapters (Chaucer, *PF* 32).⁴ Because the summary of the *Somnium*, a text that teaches how to find heavenly bliss, replicates musical aesthetic harmony even in its structure, the pursuit of eros, discouraged by the *Somnium*, becomes more integrally connected to discord.

Although in the summary of the *Somnium* worldly love is separate from the common good, from social harmony, the description of the garden in which the temple and its painted images are contained connects love and musical harmony and thereby

³ J. A. W. Bennett argues that Chaucer's phrase "commune profyt" (*PF* 47) connotes "peace and general harmony" (Bennett, *Parlement* 33).

⁴ Chamberlain argues that the numerological allegory for the seven tones of the music of the spheres extends throughout the poem's structure, metre, and rhyme scheme (49-51).

seems to connect love with social harmony as well.⁵ This connection is only apparent though and does not go beyond an aesthetic connection. Instead, the description of the garden and temple illustrates specifically the dangers of courtly lovers' pursuits. By connecting courtly love and musical harmony, as well as other forms of sensory pleasure, the description of the garden shows the importance of Scipio Africanus' warning that earth is "dissevable" ("deceptive"; 65).

Even before the dreamer enters the garden though, the gold and black verses on the garden gate warn about the garden's coexisting joy and despair. As in *BD*, in *PF* the dreamer leaves the ekphrastic catalogue largely uninterpreted; instead, the verses on the gate gloss the temple ekphrasis. They anticipate how easily the senses can become deluded, the gold verses stating that the place to which the gate leads is "that blysfyl place / Of hertes hele and dedly woundes cure" ("that blissful place of heart's healing and deadly wound's cure"; 127-28), the black stating that it leads to the place of "mortal strokes of the spere" ("mortal strokes of the spear"; 135). The verses draw a parallel between the natural and the human realm, for according to the gold verses, the garden is "[t]here grene and lusty May shal evere endure" ("where green and vigorous May will always last"; 130), and, according to the black verses, the garden is "[t]her nevere tre shal fruyt ne leves bere" ("where trees will never bear fruit or leaves"; 137) and "[t]here as the fish in prysoun is al drye" ("where the fish are all dry in prison"; 139).⁶ The gold and black verses respectively advise, "[P]asse in, and sped thee faste!" ("Pass through, and

⁵ Ultimately drawn from Guillaume de Lorris' section of *RR*, the more immediate source for this scene is *Tes.* 7.50-66, which describes Venus' chief temple and the surrounding garden.

⁶ According to the *MED*, a "prisoun" may be "a fish pond," which is a figurative "prison for fish" (Def. 3).

betake yourself quickly!"; 133)⁷ and "[t]h'eschewing is only the remedye!" ("The avoidance [of this place] is the only remedy!"; 140). The verses relate this paradoxical joy and misery to love by describing a place of "hertes hele" (128), where dwell "Disdayn" ("Disdain" 136) and "Daunger" ("Standoffishness 136), personifications of the unattainable courtly woman's qualities. Scipio Africanis indicates to the dreamer that this enclosed place teaches about courtly love: "For this wrytyng nys nothyng ment bi the, / Ne by non but he Loves servaunt be" ("For this writing is not at all meant [to be] about you or about any unless he be Love's servant"; 158-59). By applying these verses to the literary construction of the lover who serves the beloved, Scipio Africanis reveals that the contrasting conditions in the garden allegorize the mercurial state of a courtly lover shifting between extremes of joy and sorrow. Even the gold verses hint at the vanity of their promise of bliss when they state, "This is the wey to al good aventure" ("This is the way to all good fortune"; 131), for they evoke the commonplace of the fickleness of Fortune and her wheel.

In order to understand how the ekphrasis reinforces the theme of courtly love's destructiveness, we must examine how Chaucer builds up the pleasurableness of the surrounding garden that entices lovers to danger. The eternal paradise of the *locus amoenus* conventionally used to depict courtly love immediately confronts the dreamer as he enters the garden, at first seeming to support the gold verses while opposing the black verses (Clemen 145). The harmonious birdsong conventional to the *locus amoenus* recalls also the musical harmony of Cicero's *Somnium* and therefore also seems to

⁷ Along with this translation for "sped" as "betake" (Def. 6b), another possible translation, according to the *MED*, is "be successful" (Def. 1a).

suggest that this garden contains heavenly bliss. Boccaccio's statement about the personified prayer of Palaemon before battle, "Quivi sentì pe' rami dolcemente / quasi d'ogni maniera ucei cantare" ("She heard birds of almost every kind singing [sweetly] through the branches"; *Tes.*7.52; McCoy 177, with modification), becomes the dreamer's rapturous assertion, "On every bow the bryddes herde I synge, / With voys of aungel in here armonye" ("On every bow, I heard the birds sing with the voices of the angels in their harmony"; Chaucer 190-91). Chaucer transforms Boccaccio's statement about the prayer, "Similmente quivi ogni strumento / le parve udire e dilettoſo canto" ("She seemed to hear, besides, delightful singing and every musical instrument"; *Tes.*53; McCoy 177) into an expression of the way in which the music of the garden rivals the harmony of the music of the spheres, for

[o]f instruments of strenges in acord

Herde I so pleye a ravyshyng swetnesse,

That God, that makere is of al and lord,

Ne herde nevere beter, as I gesse. (197-200)

(I heard instruments of strings play in harmony with such a ravishing sweetness that God, who is maker and lord of all, never heard better, as I suppose.)

In this hyperbolic representation of harmony, the inclusion of the Christian God rather than Boccaccio's many "spiritei, che qua e là volando / gieno a lor posta" ("spirits who flew about here and there and returned to their places"; *Tes.*7.53; McCoy 177) clarifies the heavenly associations of the place. Chaucer creates tripartite harmony when in addition to the harmonious birdsong and instruments, "[t]herwith a wynd, unnethe it myghte be lesse, / Made in the leves grene a noyse softe / Acordaunt to the foules song

alofte” (“[a]ll of a sudden, a wind, which could hardly be lighter, made in the green leaves a soft noise harmonizing with the birds’ song on high”; 201-03). This hyperbolic creation of harmony in an allegorical representation of courtly love therefore shows how enticing the pleasures of the world can be.

Just as Boethius reasons that musical harmony proceeds from visual aesthetics because of the configuration of the spheres (*De institutione musica* 1.2), so too does the garden abound in visual harmony. The visual imagery is such a great source of pleasure that it can even be enjoyed by those, such as the dreamer, who are not direct participants in courtly love, for, as Scipio Africanus advises before the dreamer enters the garden,

“But natheles, although that thow be dul,

Yit that thow canst not do, yit mayst thow se.

For many a man that may nat stonde a pul

Yet liketh hym at wrastlyng for to be.” (162-65)

(“But nevertheless, although you are benumbed, you can still see what you cannot do, for it is still pleasing for many a man who cannot withstand a tug to be at a wrestling match.”)

Because multiplicity and variety were considered more pleasing than uniformity in the Middle Ages, Chaucer makes the garden even more pleasurable than in his source when he increases references to multisensory details. This pleasing variety likewise creates harmony, according to medieval aesthetic theory. Piero Boitani notes Chaucer’s increased references to colour in comparison to Boccaccio; in fact, all of the references to colours are Chaucer’s own, except for the greenery (Chaucer, *PF* 184) and Venus’ gold hair (Chaucer, *PF* 267), which also feature in Boccaccio (Boitani, “Chaucer’s Temples of

Venus” 25).⁸ Boitani indirectly associates these features with harmony, as he states that the references to colour contribute to the poem’s Gothic features, since Gothic architecture relies on diverse decorations, such as colour, combined in harmonious proportions (“Chaucer’s Temples of Venus” 25). When the dreamer first looks about the garden, he sees trees that “[w]ere clad with leves that ay shal laste, / Ech in his kynde, of colour fresh and greene / As emeraude, that joye was to seene” (“[w]ere clad with leaves that always will last, each by nature of fresh colour as green as an emerald, such that it was joyful to see”; 173-75). A stanza cataloguing thirteen trees follows that Chaucer partly draws from elsewhere in the *Teseida*: 11.22-24 (Boitani, “Chaucer and Lists” 32). Therefore, this diversity of trees all of emerald colour represents harmony from diversity that pleases the dreamer. By contrast, Boccaccio’s description of the surroundings of Venus’ dwelling simply refers to the “altissimi pini” (“very tall pines”; *Tes.*7.50; McCoy 176), without stating their colour. While Boccaccio refers to the garden full “d’ogni fior novello” (“of every new flower”; *Tes.*7.51; McCoy 176) but not to the colours of the flowers, Chaucer’s dreamer sees “floures white, blewe, yelwe, and rede” (“white, blue, yellow, and red flowers”; 186). The dreamer’s description of the garden evokes the harmony of the different colours of the rainbow. Brightness and multiplicity abound in Chaucer’s garden, for “colde welle-stremes, nothyng dede, / . . . swymmen ful of smale fishes lighte, / With fynnes rede and skales sylver bryghte” (“cold springs, not at all dead, . . . abound in small, bright fishes, with red fins and silver-bright scales”; 187-89). These

⁸ See *Tes.* 7. 51, 65. Several critics have noted Chaucer’s attention to colour in the description of the garden. For example, Claes Schaar highlights Chaucer’s precision in rendering the particulars of the garden (393). Wolfgang Clemen refers to the dominance of both visual and auditory imagery—“the feast of beauty and splendour for eye and ear” (145).

details lacking precedent in Boccaccio perhaps make the description more vivid for Chaucer's audience because they resemble roach, a common fish in England.⁹ The details directly counteract the black verses' assertion that the gate leads to "[t]here as the fish in prysoun is al drye" (139). The visual details therefore further appeal to the bliss and fruitfulness of the gold verses.

The description appeals not only to the senses of hearing and sight but also to all of the senses. It is the place "[t]here as swetnesse everemore inow is" ("where [there] is always enough sweetness"; 185). In the following stanza that Chaucer adds to Boccaccio, the dreamer emphasizes pleasure that comes from the sense of smell as well as the senses of touch and sight:

Th'air of that place so attempre was
 That nevere was grevaunce of hot ne cold.
 There wex ek every holsum spice and gras;
 No man may there waxe sek ne old;
 Yit was there joye more a thousandfold
 Than man can telle; ne nevere wolde it nyghte,
 But ay cler day to any mannes syghte. (204-10)

(The air of that place was so temperate that there was never a disturbance from hotness or coldness. Every wholesome spice and herb also grew there; no man can become sick or old there; furthermore, there was a thousand times more joy

⁹ Records exist that state that roach was a dish in England during Chaucer's time (Harvey 94).

than of which one can tell, nor would it ever become night, but rather, [it was] always clear day to any man's sight.)

The life-giving properties of the garden create a paradise that recalls the gold verses' invitation to "hertes hele and dedly woundes cure" (128). In addition to the *locus amoenus*, these images exemplify the topos of the "eschatological paradise" (von Kreisler 21). According to Nicholai von Kreisler, "Of the various benefits with which Chaucer invests Boccaccio's park, the temperate climate (204-05), the capacity to bestow health and everlasting life (207), and eternal day (209-10) are the most conventional in medieval eschatological literature and the most rhetorically typical in their phrasing" (18). Because of the multisensory images that evoke not only the *locus amoenus* but also heaven, the garden extends its creation of auditory and visual harmony to create harmony that appeals to other senses as well.

The harmonious description of a garden of courtly love appears to manifest the Boethian philosophy of love as a social bond (Chamberlain 37),¹⁰ but in actuality, the pleasurableness of the garden only enhances its destructiveness. As medieval writers like Bernardus Silvestris discussed the importance of the senses' subjection to reason in order to perceive true harmony, so the garden and temple description warns of pleasures leading to a false apprehension of harmony where there is discord. Early on, the description hints at the black verses' truth, such as in the case of the catalogue of trees, which includes epithets for each tree to indicate its properties or uses. After naming "[t]he byldere ok" ("the builder oak/ the oak for building"; 176) "the hardy asshe" ("the

¹⁰ See Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* 4.m.2.6.

strong ash”; 176) and “[t]he piler elm” (“the pillar elm/the elm for making pillars or supports”; 177), the dreamer refers to the elm’s function as “the cofre unto carayne” (“the coffin for corpses”; 177). The dreamer further references death’s presence in this place of eternal youth and good health because the purpose of “the cipresse” (“the cypress”; 179) is “deth to playne” (“for lamenting death”; 179). Along with the epithets indicating pleasurable uses, such as “[t]he boxtre pipere” (“the piper boxwood tree/ the boxwood tree for making pipes”; 178), “[t]he saylynge fyr” (“the fir for sailing”; 179), and “[t]he olyve of pes” (“the olive of peace”; 181), the catalogue includes epithets hinting at the trees’ violent uses, such as the “holm to whippes lashe” (“holly for whips’ lashes”; 178), “[t]he shetere ew” (“the shooter yew/ the yew for arrows”; 180), and “the asp for shaftes pleyne” (“the aspen for smooth shafts”; 180).

The garden depicts the black-letter verses in full force once Cupid appears (McCall, “Harmony” 27). The violence of Cupid’s process of creating the arrows manifests itself even more clearly than in Boccaccio. In Boccaccio, the prayer sees “Cupido fabricar saette, / avendo alli suoi piè l’arco posato” (“Cupid with his bow placed at his feet, making arrows”; *Tes.*7.54; McCoy 177). While the bow in Boccaccio simply lies at Cupid’s feet, the bow in Chaucer lies “al redy” (“all ready”; 213) at Cupid’s feet. The prayer in Boccaccio sees Idleness barbing arrow shafts (*Tes.*7.54), but *PF* particularly emphasizes the violence that results from Cupid’s arrow penetrating the heart, an allegorical representation of falling in love. Cupid’s daughter “Wille” (“Desire”; Chaucer 214) takes the arrowheads and “couchede hem, after they shulde serve / Some for to sle, and some to wounde and kerve” (“placed them according to how they would serve: in order to slay some and wound and cut others”; Chaucer 216-17).

While the allegorical figures emphasize the pleasurable nature of the place—"Plesaunce" ("Pleasure"; Chaucer 218) replaces Boccaccio's "Leggiadria" ("Comeliness"; *Tes.*7.55; McCoy 177)—this pleasure is distinctly carnal and selfish because Boccaccio's "Affabilitate" ("Affability"; *Tes.*7.55; McCoy 177) becomes Chaucer's "Lust" ("Desire"; 219). The dreamer then sees the first distinctly negative personified figure: "the Craft that can and hath the myght / To don by force a wyght to don folye" ("the Craft that is able and has the power to cause a person to act foolishly by force"; 220-21). The various enticements to love—"Delyt" ("Delight"; 224), "Gentilesse" ("Nobility"; 224), "Beute" ("Beauty"; 225), and "Youthe" ("Youth"; 226)—lead one to folly, for they are mingled with the negative personifications "Foolhardynesse" and "Flaterye" ("Foolhardiness"; "Flattery"; Chaucer 227), which match Boccaccio's "Ardire" and "Lusinghe" ("Boldness"; "Flattery"; *Tes.*7.56; McCoy 177). The description, however, expands Boccaccio's "Ruffiania" ("Pandering"; *Tes.*7.57; McCoy 177) to "Desyr, / Messagerye, and Meede, and other thre— / Here names shul not here be told for me" ("Desire, Message-sending, and Reward/Bribery, and three others—their names will not be told here by me"; Chaucer 227-29). Chaucer's extended details about the action of pandering, along with the three figures whom the dreamer refuses to name, increase the negativity of the garden while still indicating its pleasurable nature through the addition of "Desyr" (227). Bertrand H. Bronson recognizes the increased negativity from Boccaccio in Chaucer's depiction of the outside of Venus' temple, as Boccaccio's temple with pure "rame" ("copper"; *Tes.* 57; McCoy 177) columns becomes a temple made of an impure copper alloy, "bras" ("brass"; *PF* 231), with "jasper" columns in Chaucer (*PF* 230) ("In Appreciation" 209-11). Other positive personifications congregate at the entrance to the

temple—“Dame Pees” (“Lady Peace”; 240) and “Dame Pacience” (“Lady Patience”; 242)—as they do in Boccaccio, but “Pacience” seems even less likely to last than in Boccaccio, where she is described as “in vista assai tapina, / . . . / palida nello aspetto . . .” (“very wretched in appearance and pale of countenance”; *Tes.*7.58; McCoy 178). Instead, Chaucer’s “Pacience” is “syttynge . . . / With face pale, upon an hil of sond” (“sitting . . . with a pale face upon a hill of sand”; 242-43). The imminent disappearance of this virtue signals the despair that permeates the garden. With the violence and despair amidst the garden’s harmony, the pleasure that the garden creates does not ultimately lead to the common good.

Similar to the garden, the temple represents the dangers of sensory pleasure. The description within the temple reveals through auditory imagery the way in which courtly lovers’ patience breaks down. The dreamer states,

Withinne the temple, of sykes hoote as fyr
 I herde a swogh that gan aboute renne,
 Which sikes were engendered with desyr,
 That maden every auter for to brenne
 Of newe flaume; and wel espyed I thenne
 That al the cause of sorwes that they drye
 Cam of the bittere goddesse Jelosye. (246-52)

(Within the temple, I heard a deep commotion of sighs hot as fire that rushed about, sighs which were brought forth by desire, which made every altar burn

with new flame; and I observed well then that the whole cause of the sorrows that they suffered came from the bitter goddess, Jealousy.)¹¹

If altars burn from sighs of jealousy, then due performance of rites of worship of the goddess of love involves suffering. These sighs indicate pleasure because they are “engendred with desyr” (248), but this pleasure is sorrowful and “bittere” (252). The noisy confusion of the “swogh” (247) overtakes the joyful tripartite musical harmony outside the temple. This is the ultimate result of what seemed so harmonious. In addition to this thwarted desire, Priapus remains forever frozen in the position where he is about to violate a nymph (Chaucer, *PF* 255-56). This fruitlessness from the God of Fertility allegorizes the ultimate frustration of courtly lovers and reveals why “Pacience” sits on a hill of sand at the temple’s entrance. When “[f]ul besyly men gonne assaye and fonde / Upon his hed to sette, of sondry hewe, / Garlondes ful of fresshe floures newe” (“men very diligently did attempt and try to set garlands of various hues full of fresh, new flowers upon his head”; 257-59), the beautiful blooms representing the harmony of the rainbow outside of the temple instead become more like flowers adorning a grave.

In spite of these images of frustration and an emphasis on the temple’s darkness,¹² the temple description continues to accentuate the pleasures of the senses. It repeatedly associates Venus with the colour gold: she is “on a bed of gold” (265), and “[h]yre gilte heres with a golden thred / Ibounden were, untressed as she lay” (“her gilt hairs were bound with a golden thread [in such a way that they were still] loose as she lay”; 267-

¹¹ See the *MED* definition for “swough, n. 1,” under which it correctly cites this passage: “(a) A rushing sound, as of water or wind; a roaring noise, murmuring sound, sough.”

¹² The dreamer says, “Derk was that place, but afterward lightnesse / I saw a lyte, unnethe it myghte be lesse” (“That place was dark, but afterwards, I saw a little light, which hardly might be less”; *PF* 263-64)—in other words, if there were any less light, it would be dark.

68).¹³ The repeated associations with the colour gold link Venus to the gold verses above the garden gate. When the dreamer declares that “no thikkere cloth of no defense” (“no thicker cloth affording any protection”; 273) than the “coverchef of Valence” (“kerchief from Valence”; 272) covered her as opposed to just the “veste . . . sottil” in Boccaccio (“flimsy robe”; *Tes.*7.65; McCoy 179), he makes the description more vivid and appealing to a late-fourteenth-century English audience, since Valence was a French site of textile production (Muscatine, Explanatory Notes 999). The dreamer affirms Venus’ appeal when he states that she “was wel kevered to my pay” (“was well covered to my satisfaction”; 271).¹⁴ In addition to these appeals to the sense of sight, the description also appeals to the sense of smell when he states, “The place yaf a thousand savours sote” (“The place gave off a thousand sweet odours”; 274), and to the sense of taste because Bacchus, god of wine, and Ceres, goddess of agriculture, are beside Venus (276). The description therefore focuses on the pleasures that Venus and, by extension, courtly love offer.

The ekphrasis of failed lovers painted on the walls of the temple, however, reminds that these pleasures are fickle. Venus’ association with the colour gold thus reveals that the gold verses’ promise of bliss is deceptive and transitory. The ekphrasis accentuates this deception first through the order in which it appears in the description of the temple. The arrangement differs from the *Teseida*, which orders the temple description such that the stanzas on Venus appear at the end in order to mark the end of

¹³ Boccaccio refers to her golden colour just once: “Ella avea d’oro i crini e rilegati / intorno al capo senza treccia alcuna” (“She had golden curls, unbraided and bound about her head”; *Tes.* 65; McCoy 179).

¹⁴ Winny writes, “It is only when [the dreamer] exchanges this fixed and timeless world for the natural simplicity of the birds’ gathering-place that he begins to become emotionally involved in the scene” (125). The dreamer’s pleasure that he expresses in the temple opposes this argument though.

the journey of Palaemon's prayer to Venus. Obtaining Venus' assistance is the object of the entire section. In *PF*, though, seeking help from Venus is completely futile. Before the description of the temple paintings, Chaucer adds "two yonge folk" ("two young people"; 278) who are "on knees" ("on [their] knees"; 278), crying to Venus "[t]o ben hire helpe" ("to be their help"; 279); however, the dreamer offers no indication of whether or not Venus will help. The young couple's cry is the last among the variety of discordant sounds associated with the temple, such as the ladies dancing around outside (Chaucer 232-33) and the sighs created by jealousy (246-48) (Chamberlain 52). By ending with the ekphrasis of a multitude of tragic love stories painted on the walls as opposed to Venus helping the young lovers, *PF* reveals the ineffectiveness of Venus' assistance and of the pursuit of pleasure through courtly love.

The ekphrasis reinforces the *Somnium*'s warning about earthly love and specifically shows the destructiveness of courtly love, as represented by the other figures in the garden and temple, by contrasting the scenes depicted on the wall with Diana's chastity.¹⁵ The dreamer states,

And ferther in the temple I gan espie

That, in dispit of Dyane the chaste,

Ful many a bowe ibroke heng on the wal

Of maydenes swiche as gonne here tymes waste

¹⁵ Critics like D. S. Brewer (45) and Bennett (*Parlement* 104-05) associate the painted temple characters with the "likerous folk" ("lecherous people"; 79) undergoing punishment, as discussed in the summary of the *Somnium* (45). Emil A. Mucchetti likewise dissociates common profit and the painted lovers (40). Bernard F. Huppé and D. W. Robertson Jr. argue that the ekphrasis illustrates the theme of "the futility of earthly love" (108).

In hyre servyse; and peynted over al
 Ful many a story, of which I touche shal
 A fewe, as of Calyxte and Athalante,
 And many a mayde of which the name I wante. (280-87)

(And I began to observe farther in the temple that, in defiance of the chaste Diana, very many a broken bow, belonging to maidens such as did waste their time in her service, hung on the wall; and [I observed] very many a story painted over all, a few of which I shall mention, such as Callisto and Atalanta, and many a maid the name of which I lack.)¹⁶

PF more strongly emphasizes the opposition between the painted figures and chastity than its source text, Boccaccio's *Teseida*, because in Chaucer's version, the presence of the bows marks "dispit of Dyane the chaste" (280), and the maidens "gonne here tymes waste / In hyre servyse" (283-84). Boccaccio's version offers no such moral commentary, even in the glosses, called the *Chiose*. This breach between Diana and her former devotees situates the entire ekphrasis within a courtly love framework. The first of the catalogue of painted lovers—Callisto and both of the two Atalantas who could be referenced here¹⁷—represent former devotees of Diana. Callisto, who had been a hunter

¹⁶ In line 284, "hyre" refers to Diana. Though it has been argued that Venus is the antecedent (Klassen, "A Note" 156), with "hyre" being parallel to "hire" in line 279, the interpretation of "hyre" as Diana more closely accords with the source passage in Boccaccio, which says of Palaemon's personified prayer, "Quivi molti archi a' cori di Diana / vide appiccati e rotti" ("She saw there the bows of many of Diana's devotees hung up and broken"; *Tes.*7.61; McCoy 178).

¹⁷ Both Atalantas are in Boccaccio, although the second is not named:

Quivi molti archi a' cori di Diana
 vide appiccati e rotti, intra' quali era
 quel di Calisto, fatta tramontana
 Orsa; e le pome v'eran della fiera
 Atalanta che 'n correr fu sovrana,
 e ancor l'arme di quell'altra altiera

in Diana's service, was raped and impregnated by Jupiter. She tried to hide the pregnancy but was sent out of Diana's service when Diana discovered the truth.¹⁸

Atalanta the runner, while not in Diana's service as a hunter, had committed herself to a life of chastity unless a man was able to outrun her, which Hippomenes does, and so she weds him.¹⁹ The other Atalanta is a virgin hunter of the Calydonian boar, who accepts the head and skin of the Calydonian boar killed by Meleager along with his love.²⁰ As a virgin hunter who then bears a son (Boccaccio, *Tes.*7.61), she stands for a former devotee of Diana. The breach between these women and the chastity that Diana represents opposes the enforced chastity of courtly lovers, who love someone unattainable and cannot consummate the relationship. Courtly lovers are forced to be servants of Diana. The broken bows that begin the description, however, signify that the loves painted on the wall will not represent chaste endurance of obstacles to the lovers' unions.

The maidens' stories, while introducing a list of lovers who have failed at chastity, also represent the dangers of such behaviour. Callisto is not only sent out of Diana's service but also transformed into a bear by Juno and, when about to be killed by her own son, stellified as Ursa Major. The love between Atalanta the runner and

che partorì il bel Partenopeo
nepote al calidonio Oeneo. (*Tes.*7.61)

(Among these was that of Callisto who was transformed into the northern Bear. And there were the apples of disdainful Atalanta who excelled in running, and the weapons, also, of that other haughty one who gave birth to comely Parthenopaeus, grandson of the Calydonian Oeneus; McCoy 178)

Charles Muscatine identifies Chaucer's Atalanta with the runner named by Boccaccio (Explanatory Notes 999). Robinson remarks that Chaucer "lacked the name" of the second Atalanta (794) and so included the statement that "many a mayde of which the name I wante" (287) was painted. Walter W. Skeat argues, rather, that Chaucer conflated the two as one person (*Complete Works: Romaunt* 514-15). Chaucer at least knew of the second Atalanta later when he wrote *KnT* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. See *KnT* (I.2070) and *Troilus and Criseyde* (5.1464-84).

¹⁸ For Callisto's story, see Ovid, *Fasti* 2.156-82 and Ovid, *Met.* 2.409-535.

¹⁹ For Atalanta the runner's story, see Ovid, *Met.* 10.560-707.

²⁰ For this Atalanta's story, see Ovid, *Met.* 8.260-546.

Hippomenes is likewise destructive. Hippomenes annoys Venus when he does not thank her or offer sacrifice for his victory;²¹ thus, Venus enkindles passion between the lovers so that they cannot avoid expressing that passion in the temple of Cybele, who subsequently becomes enraged and metamorphizes them into lions. The second Atalanta's acceptance of the head and skin of the Calydonian boar incites the jealousy of Meleager's uncles, who take back the gift but are then killed by Meleager, who is in turn killed by his mother in vengeance for killing her brothers. The love between Atalanta and Meleager is therefore responsible for this discord. The dreamer further amplifies the destructive effect of their behaviour when he says that of "[f]ul many a story," he will tell only "[a] few" (285-86), and there remain many other stories of maids "of which the name I want" (287). These stories all involve maidens whose love affairs have either metamorphized the maidens themselves or are linked to other deaths.

Like Diana's former devotees, the painted lovers catalogued in the second stanza of the ekphrasis also exemplify love's destructiveness. The multiplicity of names emphasizes how commonly destructive courtly love is:

Semyramis, Candace, and Hercules,
 Biblis, Dido, Thisbe, and Piramus,
 Tristram, Isaude, Paris, and Achilles,
 Eleyne, Cleopatre, and Troylus,
 Silla, and ek the moder of Romulus:
 Alle these were peynted on that other syde,

²¹ See Ovid, *Met.* 10.681-85. In Boccaccio's gloss to *Teseida* 7.61, Hippomenes annoys Venus for the opposite reason by incessantly thanking her.

And al here love, and in what plyt they dyde. (288-94)

(Semiramis, Candace, and Hercules, Biblis, Dido, Thisbe, and Pyramus, Tristan, Isolde, Paris, and Achilles, Helen, Cleopatra, and Troilus, Scylla, and also the mother of Romulus: all these were painted on the other side, and all their love, and in what circumstances they died.)²²

Chaucer's ekphrasis differs from Boccaccio's in that it includes nine more lovers than Boccaccio's, which includes Semiramis, who is unnamed,²³ Pyramus, Thisbe, Hercules, Iole, Byblis, and Caunus (*Tes.* 7.62). Plus, Chaucer's ekphrasis includes at least one lover from each pair in Boccaccio (Lowes 707).²⁴ Chaucer does not, however, include visual details from Boccaccio, who describes "a piè del moro / Piramo e Tisbe, e già le gelse tinte" ("Pyramus and Thisbe and the mulberries, already stained, at the foot of the wall"; *Tes.* 7.62; McCoy 178), "il grande Ercul . . . tra costoro / in grembo a Iole" ("the great Hercules on the lap of Iole"; *Tes.* 7.62; McCoy 178), and "Biblis dolorosa / andar

²² It seems to be that the broken bows and paintings of the stories of the maidens whose bows were broken are on one wall and the paintings of the other disastrous loves are on the other wall. The statement that the stories were "peynted over al" (284) is ambiguous because the dreamer does not specify until later that there is a painted wall that is not the same one on which the bows hang but the one opposite: "Alle these were peynted on that other syde" (293). While Bridges posits that the bows could be painted (152), the critical consensus is that the wall is painted with the stories of the maids. There is still further ambiguity, however, because the portraits of the maids could be either on the wall with the bows or on the wall with the portraits of the other lovers. Robinson's edition, Brewer's edition and the Riverside edition punctuate line 287—"And many a mayde of which the name I wante"—with a period, and Skeat punctuates with a semicolon. All four editions thus suggest the interpretation that the portraits of the maids are on the same wall as the bows. Lynch supports this reading as well (*Dream Visions* 105).

²³ Boccaccio identifies Semiramis as the "sposa di Nin" ("the bride of Ninus"; *Tes.* 7.62; McCoy 178).

²⁴ Chaucer includes all of the lovers from Canto 5 of Dante's *Inferno*, and so John Livingston Lowes posits this as a source (707). Lowes suggests that line 294 of the ekphrasis comes from Dante's *Inferno* (707): "e più di mille / ombre mostrommi e nominommi a dito, / ch'amor di nostra vita dipartille" ("And more / than a thousand shadows he numbered, naming / them all, whom Love had led to leave our life"; *Inferno* 5.67-69; Kirkpatrick 23). Brewer agrees with Lowes (46), as does Janet Smarr (116-17). While Chaucer adapted the description of the gates to Dante's *Inferno* for the gates to his garden in *PF*, it is still uncertain how much of the rest he knew at this stage of his career. This passage describing the gates could have been excerpted in rhetorical anthologies.

pregando Cauno pietosa” (“sorrowful Byblis piteously on her way to entreat Caunus”; *Tes.*7.62; McCoy 178). Even though the ekphrasis in *PF* lists the lovers’ names rather than focusing on visual details, the amplification of names amplifies the effect of love’s destructiveness from Boccaccio because they are all examples of lovers who “dyde” in some “plyt” (294). Boccaccio’s ekphrasis includes no such explanation, so “Chaucer’s own additions to the list of lovers . . . clarify and enhance the impression made by Boccaccio’s description” (Brewer 31). By categorizing all of the painted figures as lovers who died, *PF* points to the way in which love brings one to a particular “plyt” that results in death.

Although the “statement that on the wall of Venus’ temple were painted the plights in which the lovers died is inaccurate, since several of them survived their disastrous experience with love” (Donaldson, “Venus” 318), the lovers all represent a variety of ways in which one may suffer in love or cause suffering for others as a result of love.²⁵ Chaucer’s list might seem “more miscellaneous and less unified than Boccaccio’s” (Brewer 111), but the commonality of love that is “illicit” or “selfish” or both in the stories (Brewer 31) associates each of the loves with courtly love, which was commonly critiqued as a selfish form of love. The first on the list, Semiramis (Chaucer, *PF* 288), the Queen of Babylon, commits incest with her son and often exemplified

²⁵ It is unclear how familiar Chaucer would have been with the stories of the characters he lists. For example, Chaucer probably knew that Helen did not die of love when he wrote *Boece*, a translation of Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy*; Chaucer states that Agamemnon got Helen back for Menelaus (4.m.7.7). Benson dates *Boece* to after *PF* (xxix). Rather than consulting a voluminous source, Chaucer could have consulted a list of lovers from a source such as Jean Froissart’s *Paradys d’Amour* (lines 971-95). Brewer claims Chaucer “certainly knew” of this list, as he used it in *BD* (111). Brewer cannot locate the mother of Romulus (Rhea Silvia or Ilia) and Scylla in other lists of lovers (113). E. Talbot Donaldson argues that Chaucer’s identification of Rhea Silvia as the mother of Romulus suggests his use of the *Pervigilium Veneris*, which identifies her in this way (“Venus” 356), and Donaldson emphasizes that, like *PF*, Rhea Silvia is a “victim” of Venus in the *Pervigilium* (“Venus” 315-16).

cruelty and illicit love in the medieval world, as opposed to her reputation in antiquity as a heroine (Samuel 41). Semiramis' son kills her as a result of the affair (Justin 1.2.10). Candace (Chaucer, *PF* 288) is either Candace, the Indian queen in the legend of Alexander the Great, or Canace, who was forced by her father Aeolus to kill herself after falling in love and having a child with her brother (Muscatine, Explanatory Notes 999). Candace in the Alexander legend represents dangerous illicit love as well, for she tricks Alexander and holds him captive as her lover.²⁶ Hercules (Chaucer, *PF* 288) dies after his wife Deianira, jealous of his relationship with his lover Iole, sends him the tunic with the blood of Nessus, the centaur that he killed, in hope that the blood will cause him to fall in love with her again; however, the poisoned blood causes him to suffer, and so he kills himself, though he is subsequently deified.²⁷ Biblis (Chaucer, *PF* 289) falls in love with her twin brother and madly follows him after he rejects her. She is metamorphized into a fountain as a result.²⁸ Dido (Chaucer, *PF* 289) commits suicide after Aeneas leaves her to found a Trojan civilization in Rome.²⁹ This relationship, while not unlawful, was interpreted in the Middle Ages as a distraction to Aeneas' mission (Bernardus Silvestris, *Commentary* 12). Bernardus writes that in Carthage, “[R]egnum habet Dido, id est libido . . . In hac civitate invenit mulierem regnantem et Penos servientes quia in mundo isto talis est confusio quod imperat libido et virtutes

²⁶ See *Kyng Alisaunder*, lines 6648-6733 and 7578-7727 (Muscatine, Explanatory Notes 999). Chaucer seems more likely to be referring to Canace rather than Candace though because he refers to Canace in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* (*LGW*) F 265, G 219 and in the *Man of Law's Tale* 77-79. Skeat found that “Candace” was written instead of “Canace” in line 265 of a manuscript of *LGW* (Muscatine, Explanatory Notes 999) and thus concludes that “we have sufficient proof” of the confusion of Candace and Canace (515).

²⁷ See Ovid, *Heroides* 9 and Ovid, *Met.* 9.134-238.

²⁸ See Ovid, *Met.* 9.454-655.

²⁹ Chaucer tells Dido's story in the ekphrasis in *HF* 239-432.

opprimuntur” (“Dido, that is passion, rules . . . In this city he finds a woman ruling and the Carthaginians enslaved, because in this world such is the confusion that desire rules and virtues are oppressed”; *Commentary* 12; Schreiber and Maresca 13). The deaths of Pyramus and Thisbe (Chaucer, *PF* 289), whose parents forbid their love, are both suicides for each other’s love—Pyramus kills himself when he mistakenly believes Thisbe was killed by a lion while waiting to meet him, and Thisbe kills herself when she realizes what Pyramus has done.³⁰ The first two lines of this stanza, then, represent lovers whose affairs are all dangerous and resemble courtly love through the illicit nature of each relationship.

At the centre of the group of lovers in this stanza is the courtly love affair between Tristan and Isolde (Chaucer, *PF* 290), the wife of Tristan’s uncle King Mark. Although Tristan dies of a wound from a poisoned spear, his hope of seeing Isolde keeps him alive until his wife Isolde of the White Hands lies to him, convincing him that the other Isolde is not coming, and his lover Isolde dies of grief as a result of Tristan’s death.³¹ The same line involves another famous love triangle, as Paris abducts Helen (Chaucer, *PF* 290-91), wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, causing the Trojan War, during which Paris is killed by Ajax, though Helen survives and returns to Menelaus.³² In the Trojan tradition from Dares Phrygius, Achilles, who is between Paris and Helen in Chaucer’s catalogue (Chaucer, *PF* 290), is killed in a temple ambush just before he is about to marry the Trojan Polyxena—another inappropriate union because she is on the opposing side in the

³⁰ See Ovid, *Met.* 4.55-167.

³¹ See, for example, Thomas’ *Tristan*.

³² See, for example, John Lydgate’s *Troy Book* 4.3533-69, 4.6515-18.

war—and Chaucer’s *BD* associates Achilles’ love with his death.³³ Cleopatra (Chaucer, *PF* 291) kills herself for love of Antony during his war with Octavius, begun after Antony had left his previous wife, Octavius’ sister, for Cleopatra.³⁴ Troilus’ (Chaucer, *PF* 291) union with the widow Criseyde is also not socially condoned. Before Chaucer wrote *Troilus and Criseyde*, Boccaccio’s *Il Filostrato* detailed Troiolo’s suffering as a result of his courtly love relationship with Criseida. Troiolo, when he has proof that Criseida is unfaithful, becomes angrily incited to fight Diomede, Criseida’s new lover, in a battle in the Trojan War. Achilles kills Troiolo in the battle. After this concentration of Trojan figures in which Cleopatra is mixed comes Scylla (Chaucer, *PF* 292), who could either be the character in love with King Mynos or the character who was transformed into a monster. The Scylla who loves King Minos gives him her father’s lock of hair, which is significant because her father’s power depends upon this lock of hair. This betrayal of her father’s kingdom to Minos when he besieges it repulses even Minos himself, who refuses to protect her from her father’s revenge. As her father is about to kill her, she is changed into a bird called Ciris.³⁵ The other Scylla, while not a lover herself, still suffers as a result of another’s love for her, the sea-god Glaucus. When Scylla flees him, he seeks Circe’s help, but Circe, out of jealousy, instead transforms Scylla into a monster encircled by dogs’ heads in the place of legs.³⁶ The “moder of Romulus” (Chaucer, *PF* 292) is Rhea Silvia, who is raped by Mars and then gives birth to

³³ See *BD* 1068-71.

³⁴ See Chaucer, *LGW* 580-705.

³⁵ See Ovid, *Met.* 8.1-151.

³⁶ See Ovid, *Met.* 13.730-14.74.

the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus.³⁷ This union is also associated with her death, as Justin relates that she dies after being clapped in irons by her uncle, Amulius, at the discovery of her twin sons (43.2.4). All of the stories represent destruction, though not necessarily death, caused by illicit love. The connections among the characters listed side-by-side are loose. For example, though characters from two famous love triangles come together at the centre of the list of names—the stories of Tristan and Isolde and Paris and Helen—there is also a lover from a famous love triangle earlier, Hercules. Maureen Quilligan calls the list “dismissive” (177), but the arrangement of the names might also emphasize the disastrous effects of love, such as the absence of Iole and Caunus from Boccaccio’s *Teseida*. By leaving out Iole, *PF* leaves out the one in the pair who enjoys a happy ending—after Hercules’ death, Iole weds his son Hyllus, as Hercules commands (Ovid, *Met.* 9.279). From the pair of Biblis and Caunus, *PF* just names Biblis, thereby leaving out the one who prevents consummation of the illicit relationship. Caunus flees the incestuous advances of his sister and founds the city Caunus in southwestern Caria (Ovid, *Met.* 9.633-34). The absence of certain lovers from the pairs could thereby emphasize negative consequences of love.

The ekphrasis reiterates that these are negative consequences of not just love but courtly love in particular through the return at the end to the same type of character discussed at the beginning: one of Diana’s former virgins. Bennett suggests that Chaucer completely sets apart Callisto and Atalanta from the lovers in the following stanza (*Parlement* 101). Rhea Silvia, however, is a priestess of Diana. Her service to Diana is

³⁷ See Ovid, *Fasti* 3.9-45. The account in Justin 43.2.1-4 is ambiguous over whether she has the twins by Mars or a man, and it does not indicate whether it is a rape or a consensual union (43.2.3).

just not by choice, for her uncle forced her to remain a virgin so that she would not bear a male heir to reclaim the throne he usurped from her father. According to some sources, Rhea Silvia may have also been raped as Callisto was. Rhea Silvia therefore recalls the former maidens who have broken their bows, such as Callisto, and therefore ties the entire list of lovers to those with a former commitment to Diana. This association between the lovers and Diana hence promotes their connection to courtly love that requires service of Diana through the obstacles to the lovers' unions. When courtly lovers no longer serve Diana, though, they pursue a dangerous passion which can even be deadly, as the ekphrasis demonstrates. The figure outside the temple of "Pacience syttyng . . . / With face pale, upon an hil of sond" (242-43) therefore anticipates the destructive physical relationships to which courtly love descends in the ekphrasis, and the ekphrasis manifests the consequences of Cupid's arrows that have been prepared "[s]ome for to sle" (217).

The ekphrasis of temple paintings at the end of the description of the garden and the temple manifests more deeply the destructiveness of the black verses and ultimately the potential dangers of pleasure through courtly love that both the black and gold verses reveal.³⁸ In this way, ekphrasis functions as rhetorical *ductus* showing the metaphorical path to take in the text. It enables the audience to continue further along the same pathway: it "slows down . . . the established *ductus* of a work," without "send[ing] a reader in a new direction" (Carruthers, *Craft* 199). The black and gold verses gloss the

³⁸ Clemen also relates the images in the temple to the black verses (147).

meaning of the ekphrasis, and, reciprocally, the ekphrasis encourages the audience to pause and reflect over the negative consequences of courtly love that the verses imply.

Although the ekphrasis illustrates the dangers of worldly passion, particularly courtly love, this does not mean that *PF* completely denounces worldly passion. While the paraphrase of the *Somnium* precisely defines a single kind of love, the dream presents two kinds of pleasure: firstly, the kind embodied by the garden and temple, which birds such as the tercel will later embody and which destroys the common good, and secondly, one that leads to the common good, symbolized by Nature. Nature acts according to the “ese” (“ease, comfort”; 384) of all of the birds who come to mate on Valentine’s Day, and their mating occurs because, as she says, “I prike yow with plesaunce” (“I spur you on with pleasure” 389). As Brewer writes, “Nature stimulates the birds to their duty of procreation by legitimate and natural pleasure” (21). Nature is “the vicaire of the almyghty Lord, / That hot, cold, hevy, lyght, moyst, and dreye / Hath knyght by even noumbres of acord . . .” (“the deputy of the almighty Lord, Who has joined hotness, coldness, heaviness, lightness, moistness, and dryness in harmonious proportions”; Chaucer 379-81). Nature therefore represents the harmony of human music discussed in the threefold classification of musical harmony from Boethius’ *De institutione musica*, along with instrumental music and the cosmic music of the spheres (Chamberlain 48). Human music is not auditory but refers to the concord of the body and soul and also applies to the concord among the elements that make up the bodily humours according to humours theory (Chamberlain 35). *PF* therefore makes pleasure compatible with harmony.

By placing the ekphrastic stanzas at the boundary between the description of the temple and the description of Nature, *PF* employs them to contrast the two kinds of pleasure. The juxtaposition of the preceding stanzas on paintings with the stanzas on Nature that follow shows that courtly love is artificial and opposed to the common good that Nature represents. As *ductus*, the ekphrasis slows down the work in order to pause on the artificiality of courtly love.³⁹ The ekphrasis epitomizes the despair that courtly love brings even to those who are not lovers themselves, for the dreamer says immediately after the ekphrasis: “Whan I was come ayeyn into the place / That I of spak, that was so sote and grene, / Forth welk I tho myselven to solace” (“When I had come again to the place that I spoke about that was so sweet and green, I walked forth to comfort myself”; 295-97). The dreamer contrasts the temple and Nature and therefore the kind of love that each respectively represents through imagery of darkness and light. Intense darkness characterizes the temple (263-64), whereas Nature is

a queene

That, as of lyght the somer sonne shene

Passeth the sterre, right so over mesure

She fayrer was than any creature. (298-301)

(a queen who, just as the bright summer sun surpasses the stars in light, was fairer beyond measure than any creature.)

For the description of Nature’s garment, the dreamer specifically refers the audience to Alan of Lille’s *De planctu naturae* (Chaucer 316-18), which includes a description of all

³⁹ According to Theresa Tinkle, the temple description shows that aristocratic ideologies of Venus, women, and love are societal constructs rather than natural to humanity (173).

of the birds on her garment. Instead, in Chaucer, a multitude of birds actually surrounds her.⁴⁰ Alan of Lille's description associates her with harmony when he writes,

In huius vestis parte primaria homo, sensualitatis deponens segnitiam, directa ratiocinationis aurigatione caeli penetrabat archana. In qua parte tunica, suarum partium passa discidium, suarum iniuriarum contumelias demonstrabat. In reliquis tamen locis partes, eleganti continuatione concordēs, nullam divisionis in se sustinebant discordiam. (*De planctu naturae* 2.28)

(On the most prominent part of this garment Man, casting off the dulling effect of sensuality, probed into the mysteries of heaven, borne along a straight path by his rational faculty. But in this part the tunic had been torn apart, and clearly revealed the abuse it had suffered. Elsewhere, however, its parts were joined in elegant and unbroken harmony, and suffered from no divisive misalignment.)⁴¹

The brightness evoked by Chaucer's simile for Nature's beauty that creates antithesis between Nature and the dark temple likewise dissociates the harmony associated with her appearance from the temple. Chaucer's placement of a stanza on Nature's beauty right after one on painted images of destruction heightens the contrast between the courtly love of the paintings and the natural love of Nature.⁴²

The destructiveness of courtly love does, however, penetrate the scene presided over by Nature, and its result mirrors what the temple images prefigure and reinforce.

⁴⁰ See Alan of Lille, *De planctu naturae* (2.145-95) and Chaucer, *PF* (330-64).

⁴¹ Since the only part of Nature's garment that is not harmonious is the part depicting humanity's struggle between sensuality and rationality, Alan demonstrates the difficulties of controlling the senses through reason, which is a possible source for this theme in Chaucer's *PF*.

⁴² Smarr argues that Chaucer shows the influence of Alan of Lille's complaint "that human love has somehow turned perilously aside from the love that governs the rest of nature . . ." (117).

The process of the birds mating glosses the ekphrasis, then, because the tercel acts as a courtly lover, and a great deal of discord occurs among the social ranks as a result. As courtly love was the literary mode of love among the upper classes, the tercel is allegorically in the position to be a courtly lover because he is the bird that, according to Nature, hierarchically has the right to choose mates first (Chaucer 390-99). The first tercel, who is “royal” (330) and above all of the other tercel in rank, identifies himself as a courtly lover when he claims that he will “serve” the female eagle (419) and when he envisions her as a courtly lady who may “do me lyve or sterve” (“cause me to live or die”; 420), for in a courtly love relationship, the lover imagines he will die if his lady does not grant him “merci” (“mercy”) or “grace” to be with her (421). He grants her the power in the relationship, as he addresses her as “my soverayn lady, and not my fere” (“my sovereign lady and not my equal”; 416). The second tercel, though “[o]f lower kynde” (“of lower nature”; 450) than the first, nevertheless seems to profess an even more ideal form of courtly love because he “served hire” (“served her”; 453) longest. He does not express how deeply he loves her as the first eagle does though, and an oath—“by Seint John” (“by Saint John”; 451)—interrupts his speech. The third tercel likewise configures himself as a courtly lover who serves his lady. He suggests he has served in the greatest way of them all, even if not for a long time, for he declares, “A man may serven bet and more to pay / In half a yer, although it were no moore, / Than som man doth that hath served ful yoore” (“A man may serve better and more satisfactorily, although it were for no more than half a year, than some man does who has served for a very long time”; 474-76). He claims to be an ideal courtly lover: “I am hire treweste man / As to my dom, and faynest wolde hire ese” (“I am her truest man, in my opinion, and

most gladly would please her”; 479-80). *PF* comically problematizes their style of wooing because the birds come together every Valentine’s Day to mate; however, this Valentine’s Day, at dusk, the other birds still have not mated on account of the eagles (490). The poem then uses aural imagery to capture this social upset, just as the temple description uses sound to show that the perceived harmony of the garden is not real or lasting. Chamberlain declares that in the temple, “[a]ll is dissonance, and it coheres thematically with” the dissonance “begun by the royal eagle” (52).⁴³ After the eagles’ “cursede pletynge” (“cursed argument”; 495), “[t]he goos, the cokkow, and the doke also / So cryede, ‘Kek kek! kokkow! quek quek!’ hye, / That thourgh myne eres the noyse wente tho” (“the goose, the cuckoo, and also the duck cried ‘Cackle cackle! Cuckoo! Quack quack!’ so that the noise then went through my ears”; 498-500). Nature intervenes amidst the cacophony: “Hold youre tonges there! / And I shal sone, I hope, a conseyl fynde / Yow to delyvere, and fro this noyse unbynde” (“Hold your tongues there! And I shall soon, I hope, find counsel in order to deliver and free you from this noise”; 521-23). The eagles provide the other birds, representing the lower ranks of society, with a bad example that in turn creates chaos (Huppé and Robertson 125-26). Chaucer thus parallels the description of the paintings of the lovers in the temple with the tercel, who disrupt social order, to demonstrate that what is pleasurable may be destructive not only to oneself but to society. One’s own salvation is bound up with society’s, hence the poem’s earlier attention to the Macrobian vision of the necessity of pursuing the common good.

⁴³ H. Marshall Leicester Jr. also recognizes aural discord throughout the poem, as opposed to harmony, stating, “Instead of seeing a single unfolding vision, we hear many voices” (“Harmony” 19).

Nature may seem to support courtly love by advocating the first tercel, the most perfect courtly lover, as the appropriate match for the female eagle, but Nature simultaneously rejects courtly love even while supporting the first tercel. For example, in regard to the tercelet's advice that the female eagle choose the first tercel, Nature declares,

“If I were Resoun, thanne wolde I
 Conseyle yow the royal tercel take,
 As seyde the tercelet ful skylfully,
 As for the gentilleste and most worthi,
 Which I have wrought so wel to my plesaunce
 That to yow hit oughte to been a suffisaunce.” (632-37)

(“If I were Reason, then I would counsel you to take the royal tercel, as the tercelet very reasonably said, for [being] the noblest and most worthy, which I have made so well to my satisfaction that it ought to be enough for you.”)

The second and third tercels represent the less worthy matches (Huppé and Robertson 129), and choosing one of them, as Nature shows, would be a less rational choice. Her advocating the choice of the first tercel, however, does not mean that Nature celebrates courtly love. For example, the cuckoo asserts, “So I . . . may have my make in pes, / I reche nat how longe that ye stryve. / Lat ech of hem be soleyn al here lyve!” (“So long as I . . . can have my mate in peace, I do not care how long you strive [with each other]. Let each of them be single all his life!”; 605-07). The cuckoo's opinion that each male eagle should remain a single lover fighting with each other over a lady is shown to be ridiculous when the merlin retorts, “Ye, have the glotoun fild inow his paunche, / Thanne

are we well!” (“Yes, if the glutton has filled his stomach enough, then we are well!”; 610-11). The merlin emphasizes the cuckoo’s untrustworthiness by associating him with vice, and when he addresses the cuckoo as “[t]how morthere of the heysoge on the braunche / That broughte the forth . . .” (“you murderer of the hedge sparrow that hatched you on the branch . . .”; 612-13), he evokes the medieval allegorical representation of the cuckoo as “ever unkynde” (“always unnatural”; 358) in the dreamer’s earlier catalogue of the birds. Hence, the cuckoo’s views are not aligned with Nature, even though the cuckoo is the only one to talk about the common good since Scipio Africanus when he says that his speaking on behalf of the worm fowl in order to seek an end to the mating process is for “comune spede” (“common good”; 507).

While Nature further appears to support courtly love in her acceptance of the female eagle’s decision and her subsequent advice to the three male eagles, the birdsong at the conclusion of the Valentine’s Day mating indicates that perfect harmony has not been achieved. The female eagle tells Nature, “Almyghty queen, unto this yer be don, / I axe respit for to avise me, / And after that to have my choys al fre” (“Almighty queen, until this year is done, I ask for a period of delay in order to think to myself and after that to have my choice entirely freely”; 647-49). In refusing to accept any lover for a year, the female temporarily takes on the role of the disdainful courtly lady. Nature supports this choice and subsequently advises the tercels to be courtly lovers for the next year: “serveth alle thre” (“all three serve”; 660). When as a result of the female eagle’s decision, “[t]o every fowl Nature yaf his make / By evene acord” (“to every bird, Nature gave its mate, by mutual agreement”; 667-68), the birds then express their “blisse and joye” (“bliss and joy”; 669). Nature specifically reveals her own harmonious role as “the

vicaire of the almyghty Lord, / That hot, cold, hevye, lyght, moyst, and dreye / Hath knyt by even noubres of acord . . .” (“the deputy of the almighty Lord, Who has joined hotness, coldness, heaviness, lightness, moistness, and dryness in harmonious proportions”; 379-81) (Chamberlain 35). The “evene acord” (668) also echoes the musical harmony of the garden expressed through repetition of “acord”: the “instruments of strenges in acord” (197) and the sound of the wind in the leaves that was “[a]cordaunt to the foules song alofte” (203). The mating process is also connected to order musically through the birdsong that replaces the earlier cacophony of birds fearing that they could not choose their mates. All of the birds sing a roundel, an orderly composition with a particular metre and rhyme scheme, “[a]s yer by yer was alwey hir usaunce / . . . / To don Nature honour and plesaunce” (“as was always their custom year by year . . . in order to give honour and pleasure to Nature”; 674-76). The return to custom and the honour Nature receives signal a restoration of order. Thomas L. Reed Jr. even associates the birdsong with the harmony of the Great Chain of Being (221). While courtly love seems to have been successfully integrated with Nature, the eagles, the only birds whose wooing of their females the poem describes in detail, are left out of this blissful process of mating. The harmony in this scene therefore evokes the harmony of the garden in more ways than one: the harmony of both is only apparent. The roundel is even later replaced by what the dreamer calls the birds’ “shoutyng” (“shouting”; 693) that wakes him up. The birdsong, even during the roundel, was also never described as “[a]cordaunt” (203) in the way that the birdsong in the garden was earlier described. Therefore, this section of the dream becomes distanced from musical harmony and also from an allegory for the achievement of the common good. Forcing the female to choose a mate would be

unnatural, as Nature earlier stipulates that the female's agreement to mate with a male is a necessary condition in order for mating to occur (407-11). Courtly love, then, although accepted by Nature, can never be harmonized with Nature because, as Huppé and Robertson declare, "Nature cannot remedy what is unnatural" (141).

The dreamer's own attitude to his dream also highlights the persisting disorder at the end of the dream. After the dreamer finishes narrating his dream, he declares, "I hope, ywis, to rede so som day / That I shal mete som thing for to fare / The bet . . ." ("I hope, indeed, to read [something such] that someday I shall dream something in order to fare better"; 697-99). Critics have variously interpreted these lines. R. M. Lumiansky argues that they demonstrate an "unsuccessful search for a way of reconciling true and false felicity," meaning the reconciliation of worldly and heavenly pleasures (83). According to James J. Wilhelm, the narrator may be seeking happiness in love as opposed to salvation and is unsatisfied with what the dream says on the subject (205). The dream's apparent meaninglessness for the dreamer along with the dreamer's earlier characteristic confusion over the dream's origins (Chaucer 99-108), as opposed to an unqualified assertion of a divine source, further reveal the disorderliness at the end of the dream because they could make one question the validity of the dream's claims. Larry M. Sklute asserts, "The inconclusiveness of the *Parliament of Fowls* rests upon both the coexistence of paradoxical and contradictory elements in its form and upon the irresolution of its central argument" (119). Robert O. Payne warns not to be fooled by devices of balance and repetition that create a tight formal order in the poem, "suggesting a unity or harmony of its contents which is simply not in them" (143). Leicester says that *PF* becomes like Peter Abelard's *Sic et non*, which demonstrated the problem of

multiplicity of interpretations in the Middle Ages (“Harmony” 19-21).⁴⁴ Because of the medieval aesthetic of harmony from multiplicity, though, the potential for ambiguity at the end of *PF* does not remove the potential for harmony. The multiple perspectives that the birds raise during the parliament represent the pursuit of the common good because the parliament enables the opinions of all four groups of birds, as represented by speakers in parliament, to be heard (McCall, “Harmony” 25). As Reed says, while aligning *PF* with other Middle English debate poems, “the poets of the debate intentionally created false antinomies, balancing conflicting claims for the sheer joy of sustained variety” (215). The dreamer’s dissatisfaction and the eagles’ dissatisfaction reveal, however, that the poem’s diversity does not become resolved into a completely harmonious unity. The parliament and the birds’ mating, therefore, do not construct the Boethian aesthetics of love as a bond that harmonizes all of society, though *PF* shows love’s potential to be a social bond, if not for the artifice of the eagles.

The deceptive Boethian harmony at the end of the dream therefore recalls the deceptive Boethian harmony of the garden and temple that the ekphrasis earlier illustrates. In both cases, the source of the illusions is courtly love, so *PF* calls into question courtly love’s potential to be an ennobling force. The ekphrasis in *PF* therefore functions as *ductus* that clarifies but does not alter a text’s interpretation. In showing the specific dangers of courtly love, the ekphrasis continues the rhetorical pathway set out by the paraphrase of the *Somnium*, which represents all worldly pleasure as dangerous to the

⁴⁴ Leicester maintains that Chaucer’s awareness of the disunity in *PF* manifests particularly in his transitions, providing as example the list of birds (Chaucer 330-64)—“the longest and most formidable of the many lists in the poem”—after which the narrator “drops the subject in a way that recognizes the irrelevance of his list-making to the way his poem is developing: ‘But to the poynt: Nature held on hire hond / A formel egle . . .’ (372-73)” (“Harmony” 18).

common good and thus to salvation. The description of the garden and temple concretizes the warning of the paraphrase of the *Somnium*, however, in that it depicts worldly pleasure leading to destruction, no matter how pleasing or harmonious it may seem. By listing so many who have suffered as a result of love, the ekphrasis amplifies the theme from the *Somnium* paraphrase, showing that courtly love is destructive not just to an individual but to many and is therefore destructive to the common good. The ekphrasis subsequently guides the way in which one reads what follows—the eagles' courtly love matches the love of the temple images and likewise contrasts with Nature. Despite the eventual joyful mating of all the birds except for the eagles after the great dispute that the eagles' behaviour creates, the deferred choice of the female eagle, now in the role of the standoffish courtly lady, also defers complete harmony. Only with the mating and parliament of birds, however, does *PF* take the audience in a new direction of interpretation by suggesting that worldly pleasure can lead to the common good. The ending hints at the complete harmony that could have resulted without the introduction of any courtly artifice. Therefore, in contrast to Scipio Africanus' teachings, one can both take delight in the world and work for common profit. Chaucer's representation of courtly love, though, reminds that the pursuit of erotic desire can create selfishness to the detriment of the common good.

Chapter 3

Ekphrastic Truths in Chaucer's *The House of Fame*

In Book 1 of *The House of Fame* (*HF*), the narrator-dreamer, Geoffrey, describes painted or engraved images of Virgil's *Aeneid* in Venus' temple. In a second ekphrasis in Book 3, Geoffrey describes Fame's house with pillars supporting sculptures of literary authorities, such as Virgil, Ovid, and Claudian, who were cited throughout the first ekphrasis. Both ekphrases investigate literature's connection to truth and represent the difficulty of obtaining knowledge from literature.¹ For the temple of Venus' depictions of the Dido and Aeneas episode in the *Aeneid*, Geoffrey incorporates and expands upon Ovid's *Heroides*, which, in contrast to the *Aeneid*, shows greater sympathy for Dido's plight. With its harsh rebuke of Aeneas, this segment of the ekphrasis sharply contrasts with the rest. After the Dido and Aeneas episode, the description of the temple artwork continues to present Aeneas favourably. By juxtaposing these different accounts, one which unequivocally celebrates Aeneas and one which represents his immorality in breaking his vows to Dido, *HF* destabilizes literary truth, including that found in

¹ Criticism has widely recognized this theme that pervades the text as a whole. Most critics interpret the multiplicity of information that characterizes the poem as a source of confusion. Payne writes that "by the end of Book II," there is "a paralysis of exactly balanced uncertainties about books, dreams, and life which is in itself the principal 'meaning' of the poem as it stands" (138). See also Sheila Delany, who argues that "the tradition central to Chaucer's *House of Fame* is a critical and skeptical tradition, rooted in the awareness of coexistent contradictory truths and resulting in the suspension of final rational judgment" (1). For John M. Fyler, the poem explores "the imperfections of authority, experience, and the human mind that attempts by balancing them to make sense of things" (*Chaucer and Ovid* 23). Kathryn L. Lynch similarly argues that *HF* "suggests that even for a soul with insight and stability of purpose the world may be so singular, so diverse, so confusing, that knowledge and the dissemination of truth may still not be possible" (*Chaucer's Philosophical Visions* 82). John Watkins claims, "false appearances do not mask a finally accessible truth; Fame's arbitrariness has so confounded truth and falsehood that they cannot be discriminated" (354), and Jacqueline T. Miller writes that Chaucer's ekphrasis of the temple of Venus "exposes the disparity between (and therefore questions the status of) two traditional, authorized accounts" (109). Akbari argues, "The search for causes is central to the *House of Fame*: . . . at the end, the search is shown to be futile, undercutting the possibility of conveying truth through language" (*Seeing* 205).

Chaucer's literary authorities and in *HF* itself. Although Geoffrey expresses his confusion at the end of the ekphrasis, the irreconcilable perspectives in the description of the temple artwork do not sever literature from truth. The Ovidian-inspired account of Dido and Aeneas emerges from but does not maintain any close connection to the wall décor, as Geoffrey drops the earlier phrases that remind of the story's status as artwork. Geoffrey instead engages in his own reflections at this point. The ekphrasis is organized as an architectural mnemonic, a medieval artificial memory structure used for composing, remembering, and interpreting poems (Kolve, "Chaucer and the Visual Arts" 306).² By incorporating Geoffrey's reflections, the ekphrasis encourages the audience's further reflections instead of promoting an absolute or irrefutable perspective on the story. Chaucer's *HF* thus guides readers to find their own truths by encouraging critical thinking.

The conflict between Ovid and Virgil in the first ekphrasis prefigures the conflicting authors on the pillars in the house of Fame in Book 3. After his descriptions of the pillars, Geoffrey expresses his confusion over the great variety of stories. The irreconcilable oppositions of both of these ekphrases match the irrational behaviour of

² In addition to Kolve ("Chaucer and Visual Arts" 304-06), others have discussed at length Chaucer's use of the medieval arts of memory in *HF*. Beryl Rowland argues for the specific influence of the architectural mnemonic on Chaucer's *HF* by way of Bishop Thomas Bradwardine (48-53). Carruthers further explores Chaucer's use of the architectural mnemonic in *HF* but asserts that Chaucer acquired this tradition not from Bradwardine but from the Italian revival of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, where the architectural mnemonic was described ("Italy" 180-83). Carruthers states that the buildings described in the poem are "memory palaces for the narrator's musing on various aspects of the concept of Fame" ("Italy" 186). My argument on the architectural mnemonic as a site for further audience meditation in *HF* supports Laura Aydelotte, who argues that in *HF*, "buildings were being imagined . . . not just as storage houses for memory, but as pivotal spaces for transitioning between things remembered and things created: between the past and the future" (63). Aydelotte thus questions interpretations of ekphrasis as an interruption to a narrative in a genre like a "dream vision," which belongs to "non-linear narrative structures," as opposed to the linear narrative structure of the epic from which these interpretations developed (30).

Lady Fame, who makes discerning truth impossible, as well as the inseparable combination of truth and falsehood in the house of Rumour. The ekphrases mutually reinforce this theme of a futile search for truth that the rest of *HF* represents, but through their detailed organization as artificial memory structures, they support the audience's further consideration of literary truth's value. The rest of the text does not provide such guidance, so these ekphrases act as *ductus* in such a way that changes the direction of readers' pathways through the text. Chaucer expands the ekphrases' use of *ductus* from his other ekphrases in *BD* and *PF*, then. As examples of *ductus* that redirect the course of the text, the ekphrases alter the meaning of *HF* and are thus more integrally connected to the poem's narrative than the ekphrases of his other dream visions are.³

Outside of the ekphrases, *HF* presents truth as imperceptible. From the beginning, Geoffrey presents his dream as a source of confusion. Geoffrey calls into question the value of the dream and thus the poem in a fifty-eight-line opening to the

³ There have been critical debates over the extent to which the ekphrasis in Book 1 of *HF* connects to the rest of the poem. For example, Payne writes that the three sections of the poem "have almost no connection with each other" (133). By contrast, Paul G. Ruggiers, who compares the function of the *Aeneid* in *HF* with the function of the narrator's reading of Ceyx and Alcione's story in *BD* and his reading of Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* in Macrobius's *Commentary* in *PF* ("Unity" 19), connects the three sections of *HF* by interpreting Book 1 as an "exemplum" about which Books II and III comment ("Unity" 17). Ruggiers argues that Book 1's theme of "the fortunes of love" ("Unity" 19) becomes represented on a broader scale as "the mystery of adverse circumstance" and "the accident of fame" ("Unity" 22). Other critics similarly connect the ekphrases to the rest of the narrative. John Norton-Smith argues that ekphrasis "was often employed by writers of extended narrative to provide unity of plot and theme," and "[t]he traditional structural use of such description is an important poetic element which lends control to the total meaning of Chaucer's poem" (*Geoffrey Chaucer* 35). Norton-Smith argues that the similarities between the temple of Venus and the house of Fame reinforce Venus' and Fame's similar qualities of "deception and distortion" (*Geoffrey Chaucer* 52). J. A. W. Bennett argues that Chaucer's focus on Dido in the first ekphrasis "will serve obliquely to introduce" the poem's "twin themes" of fame and the narrator's quest to find love "tidings" (*Chaucer's Book of Fame* 26). Boitani cites the example of the two appearances of Aeolus, who is painted on the walls of the temple of Venus (Chaucer, *HF* 202-08) and who "will announce Fame's pronouncements with his trumpets" throughout *HF* 3.1623-867, in order to demonstrate the way in which "[w]ords, characters, [and] cultural references" will "foreshadow and throw back" the poem's themes ("Chaucer's Temples of Venus" 20).

Proem to Book 1. While Chaucer expresses reservations over the value of dreams elsewhere,⁴ *HF* contains his most fulsome denunciation. Geoffrey applies medieval dream theory to catalogue all of the types of dreams resulting from human and divine agency (21-40 and 41-51, respectively), yet he afterwards claims that “why the cause” of dreams “is, noht wot I” (“I do not know what the cause is”; 52). He does not locate his own dream or any dream within a reliable origin and thereby verify its authenticity. According to Delany, “the cumulative impression” resulting from the passage’s “piled-up clauses is of futility: it is hopeless to think of ascertaining the truth about dreams. The juxtaposition of so many opposed theories shows that too much information is as fatal to certainty as too little” (41). This uncertainty over the value of the dream itself colours the entire dream with skepticism about the truth of its contents.

In addition to his inability to locate a divine source for his dream in his opening discussion of the meaning of dreams, his ekphrasis of the temple of Venus represents

⁴ The narrator in *PF* similarly professes his ignorance over his dream’s source:

The wery huntre, slepyng in his bed,
 To wode ayeyn his mynde goth anon;
 The juge dremeth how his plees been sped;
 The cartere dremeth how his cart is gon;
 The riche, of gold; the knyght fyght with his fon;
 The syke met he drynketh of the tonne;
 The lovere met he hath his lady wonne.

Can I not seyn if that the cause were
 For I hadde red of Affrican byforn
 That made me to mete that he stod there. (99-108)

(The weary hunter, sleeping in his bed, immediately goes back to the woods [in] his mind; the judge dreams about how his cases are getting along; the carter dreams about his cart travelling; the rich [dreams] of gold; the knight [dreams he] fights with his foes; the sick person dreams he drinks from the barrel; the lover dreams he has won his lady. I cannot say if reading about Affrican beforehand might be what made me dream he stood there.)

Because he cannot locate the source of his dream, he calls into question its value. Pertelote, in Chaucer’s *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, argues that dreams are never meaningful but are caused by physical disturbances (VII.2908-69).

another of “the standard devices for assuring the truth of a medieval narrative” that he “repeatedly builds up . . . only to draw back from them, leaving the issue of truth for his readers to judge” (Taylor 38). The ekphrasis represents the futility of obtaining truth from his dream through an initial multitude of sensory input that confuses him. Geoffrey already introduced distrust of the physical senses by stating, “oure flessch ne hath no myght / To understonde” (“our physical senses do not have any power to understand”; 49-50) the future foretold in an ambiguous dream “aryght, / For hyt is warned to derkly” (“rightly, for it is foretold about too ambiguously”; 50-51). When describing his own dream, he begins,

as I slepte, me mette I was

Withyn a temple ymad of glas,

In which ther were moo ymages

Of gold, stondynge in sondry stages,

And moo ryche tabernacles,

And with perre moo pynacles,

And moo curiouse portreytures,

And queynte maner of figures

Of olde werk, then I saugh ever. (119-27)

(as I slept, it appeared to me in a dream that I was within a temple made of glass

in which there were more statues of gold, standing on sundry stages,⁵ and more

⁵ Mary Flowers Braswell (104) applies the following definition specific to Gothic architecture to “stage”: “the spaces or divisions between the set-offs of buttresses in Gothic architecture” (*OED*, “stage, n.,” Def. 1c). The *MED* cites Chaucer’s example under Def. 2a: “A raised platform used for public display, a stage; a base for a statue . . .” (“stage, n.”).

rich tabernacles, and more pinnacles with precious stones, and more curious portraits, and elaborate kinds of images of venerable artistry than I ever saw.)

He emphasizes this multiplicity of visual sensory input by repeating “moo” four times. As in the opening confusion over the multitude of dream theories, this abundance of imagery is so confusing that

[f]or certeynly, I nyste never
 Wher that I was, but wel wyste I,
 Hyt was of Venus redely,
 The temple; for, in portreiture
 I sawgh anoon-ryght hir figure
 Naked fletyng in a see. (128-33)

(for certain I never knew where I was, but I knew well it was truly of Venus, for in a painting I saw immediately her naked figure floating in a sea.)

Multiple information again does not lead him any closer to understanding his dream, though he recognizes Venus as the temple’s dedicatee. This description of Venus, specifically the marine Venus, was the standard depiction in medieval mythography, such as the works of Fulgentius, Isidore of Seville, Albricus Philosophus, Petrarch, Pierre Bersuire, and Boccaccio (Twycross 2). Chaucer’s description further supports this literary interpretation by incorporating other standard features of this version of Venus such as “[h]ir rose garlond whit and red” (“her white and red rose garland”; 135) and “[h]ir dowves” (“her doves” 137).⁶ He further marks the temple as Venus’ through the

⁶ Meg Twycross states that Chaucer got some of the details for the description of Venus from Bersuire’s *Ovidius moralizatus* (14). As Twycross explains, Chaucer substitutes the typical shell with the comb (*HF* 136), which she posits is an attempt to link Venus to the courtly tradition of *RR* (88).

depiction of Cupid, “[h]ir blynde sone” (“her blind son”; 138) as well as her husband Vulcan (138). The *chiasmus* “certeynly, I nyste never / Wher that I was, but wel wyste I, / Hyt was of Venus redely” (128-30) emphasizes the transition from confusion to clarity through textual interpretation. While textual interpretation brings him greater clarity, this clarity will be overturned again by the engraving on a tablet on the wall that he encounters.

The engraving calls into question the value of the images that he describes through its tentativeness:

I wol now synge, yif I kan,
 The armes and also the man
 That first cam, thurgh his destinee,
 Fugityf of Troye contree,
 In Itayle, with ful moche pyne
 Unto the strondes of Lavyne. (143-48)

(I will now sing, if I can, of the arms and also the man who first came, through his destiny, fugitive of the country of Troy, in Italy, with very much misery, onto the shores of Lavinia.)

This, as is well-known, translates the opening lines of the *Aeneid*: “Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris / Italiam fato profugus Lavinaque venit / litora” (“Arms and the man I sing, who first from the coasts of Troy, exiled by fate, came to Italy and Lavine shores”; Virgil 1.1-3). The major difference from Virgil is the addition of the phrase “yif I kan.” We are reminded of the dreamer’s last lines in the Proem to Book 1: “as I kan now remembre, / I wol yow tellen everydel” (“as I can now remember, I will tell you

every part”; 64-65). The phrase “yif I kan” is therefore not simply a rhyme-forced tag. Also, “such a metrical filler would be glaring in a context of close translation such as Chaucer provides here” (Dane 135). By reminding of the Proem, in which Geoffrey expresses his uncertainty over the entire dream as a source of truth as well as over his own ability to tell it correctly, this phrase further complicates the dream’s truth-value. Fyler interprets the personal pronoun “I” as Virgil and claims that “Chaucer makes Vergil himself question the possibility of poetic truth” (*Chaucer and Ovid* 33). The personal pronoun could also refer to the artist responsible for the tablet. The phrase suggests “the uncertain ability of art to be true to the facts” (Fyler, *Chaucer and Ovid* 33), and the ambiguous personal pronoun that could stand for Geoffrey, Virgil, or the engraver heightens this uncertainty. Several factors could inhibit the dream as a source of knowledge, including the dream’s source, the narrator’s memory, and the ability of Virgil or the artist of the paintings to tell Aeneas’ story.

HF further reveals the obstacles to discerning literary truth in the opposing perspectives that dominate the ekphrasis of the temple of Venus. As Karla Taylor argues, Chaucer “does not attempt to reconcile his sources, but instead stitches them together with such obvious seams that they are shown to be irreconcilable” (29). Beginning with the lines borrowed from *Aeneid* 1, the opening ninety-five lines of the description of the art adorning the temple summarizes the first three books of the *Aeneid* (Chaucer, *HF* 143-238). Chaucer’s use of the device of ekphrasis itself further connects this section of his text to the *Aeneid*, since Virgil describes the murals of Troy’s defeat on the walls of Juno’s temple in *Aeneid* 1.446-93 (Shannon 104). With the Dido and Aeneas episode beginning at line 239, Chaucer diverges from the *Aeneid* by making use of Ovid’s

Heroides 7 in addition to *Aeneid 4*.⁷ After the Dido and Aeneas episode, the remaining thirty-four lines of the description of the artwork form a highly abbreviated summary of the last eight books of the *Aeneid* (Chaucer, *HF* 433-67). The opening and closing sections that surround the Dido and Aeneas section differ from it in multiple ways. For example, the Dido and Aeneas episode overturns the senses' direct correlation with knowing in the sections that summarize the *Aeneid*. Geoffrey thereby returns to the sensory confusion that he experiences when he first enters the temple. The Dido and Aeneas episode also differs from the rest of the ekphrasis in its presentation of Venus and of Aeneas, thereby reflecting the "dual" tradition in which Virgil celebrates Aeneas and Ovid blames him for his treatment of Dido (Delany 50). In this ambiguous portrayal of Aeneas, Chaucer thus combines multiple literary traditions.⁸ Ovid's *Heroides* was a source for Chaucer's emphases on "the fickleness of Æneas and the disgrace of Dido" (Shannon 76), but *HF* introduces alterations to Ovid's Dido that make her an even more sympathetic figure and which therefore further contrast with Virgil's depiction of Dido and Aeneas.

The ekphrastic summary of the *Aeneid* that surrounds the Dido and Aeneas episode attaches certainty to sensory perception. Geoffrey simply reports what he saw, with variations of the phrase "I saugh."⁹ Within the Dido and Aeneas digression,

⁷ Edgar Finley Shannon compares Dido's lament in *HF* with the *Aeneid* as well as the *Heroides* (58-59). Bennett compares the conclusion of Dido's lament to Ovid's *Heroides* (*Chaucer's Book of Fame* 36).

⁸ Meyer Reinhold writes that "the Latin West inherited an ambivalent tradition about Aeneas. On the one hand stood the heroic figure of Vergil . . . On the other hand was the picture of the traitor and politician in Dares and Dictys" (204-05).

⁹ He repeats the phrase "I saugh" fifteen times throughout the course of the ekphrasis (Chaucer 127, 132, 151, 162, 174, 193, 198, 209, 212, 219, 221, 253, 433, 439, 451). His description of the scenes painted on the walls of the temple ends "[w]hen I had seen al this syghte / In this noble temple thus" ("when I had thus seen all this sight in this noble temple"; 468-69).

however, he abandons visual sensory cues. After Geoffrey states, “And after grave was how shee / Made of hym shortly at oo word, / Hyr lyf, hir love, hir lust, hir lord” (“And after how she made him, in short order, her life, her love, her pleasure, her lord was engraved”; 256-58), he does not draw attention to the materiality of the wall engravings for another 175 lines, when he states, “Thoo sawgh I grave how to Itayle / Daun Eneas is goo to sayle” (“Then I saw engraved how Sir Aeneas has gone in order to sail to Italy”; 433-34). Along with the abandonment of sensory cues, a series of proverbs about the problems of information gleaned from the senses characterizes the beginning of the Dido and Aeneas section. Geoffrey declares, “Allas! what harm doth apparence, / Whan hit is fals in existence” (“Alas! What harm outward appearance does, when in reality it is deceptive”; 265-66) and “Hyt is not al gold that glareth” (“Not all that glitters is gold”; 272). These proverbs universalize Dido and Aeneas’ situation so that it stands not only as an *exemplum* of the dangers of women’s faulty impressions of male lovers but also as an *exemplum* of the dangers of faulty sensory impressions in general.¹⁰ Clemen argues that the “widely applicable banalities” (83) contribute to the poem’s “mock-serious” effect (74). The proverbial wisdom that accentuates the difference between appearance and reality cannot be merely comical though, embedded as it is within a section of the

¹⁰ Even when Geoffrey states that Dido “demed” (“believed”; 263) that Aeneas “was good, for he such semed” (“was good, for he seemed so”; 264), he could be implying not only Dido’s faulty impressions of Aeneas but also Aeneas’ faulty impressions of himself. There are a range of meanings for “semed.” The following *MED* definitions for “semen, v. 2” are possible: “of persons, their countenance, speech, etc.: to appear to be . . .” (Def. 1a); “[t]o appear to someone’s perception, convey an impression, seem; also, seem to be” (Def. 3a); “[t]o imagine; imagine (that sth. is so), think; feel (as if sth. is so)” (Def. 9a). The first two definitions suggest that Dido’s judgment is based on her sensory perceptions of Aeneas to be other than what he was, and the last definition suggests Dido’s judgment is based on Aeneas’ own faulty perception of himself. From the context, “semed” means “seemed” or “appeared,” but there could also be connotations from the last definition, thereby universalizing the situation in order to show that men as well as women are subject to sensory delusions.

ekphrasis that makes distinguishing truth difficult by juxtaposing different perspectives from the section that precedes it.

Geffrey also calls into question the prior reliance upon the sense of sight, when in the Dido and Aeneas episode, he begins citing other authorities to support his views on what he has dreamed. Ten times he cites a specific source or a more general one such as a proverb. The first time, he states, “I wol seye a proverbe, / That ‘he that fully knoweth th’erbe / May saufly leye hyt to his yë” (“I will say a proverb, that ‘he who fully knows the herb may safely lay it on his eye”); 289-91). When Geffrey states that Dido’s lament is “[a]s me mette redely— / Non other auctour alegge I” (“as it appeared to me in a dream, truly—I cite no other author”; 313-14), he presents, in Miller’s view, “an ethic of self-reliance: rather than justify his tale by resting upon his status as a spokesman for what seems to be an already authorized truth, he instead asserts complete autonomy, proposing that the full responsibility and power to validate his narrative reside in the exercise of his own voice” (109). Though medieval writers appealed to “the authority of personal experience” (Taylor 42), Geffrey technically does not cite any “auctour” (Chaucer, *HF* 314), including himself, because the subject of “mette” (313) is not stated. Miller overstates her case because Geffrey disguises his responsibility for the ideas through an impersonal construction, “me mette” (313), which places him in an objective rather than subjective position and which was typically used to signal that a dream was from an outside, spiritual source, as opposed to his own physical or mental state. He also used this phrase to begin narrating the dream.¹¹ Rather than relying on his own voice, he

¹¹ He earlier states, “But as I slepte, me mette I was / Withyn a temple ymad of glas” (119-20). In Chaucer’s *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, Chanticleer uses the phrase “[m]e mette” (VII.2898) when reporting to Pertelote his dream, which he believes to be potentially significant.

increasingly cites other literary authorities after this point. He says that to learn further of Dido's death "[a]nd alle the wordes that she seyde, / . . . / Rede Virgile in Eneydos / Or the Epistle of Ovyde" ("and all the words that she said . . . read Virgil in the Aeneid or the Epistle of Ovid"; 376-79). Aeneas' story also calls to mind other famous lovers, whom he proceeds to list after he states,

But wel-away, the harm, the routhe,
That hath betyd for such untrouthe,
As men may ofte in bokes rede,
And al day sen hyt yet in dede. (383-86)

(But alas, the harm, the calamity that has happened as a result of such faithlessness, as men may often read about in books and always see it additionally in deeds.)

Though he appeals to both books and actions that people "sen" (386), books then dominate sensory experience as sources of authority in the ekphrasis. He says that "the story telleth us" ("the story tells us"; 406) about Theseus' betrayal of Ariadne. He similarly ends his account of Theseus and Ariadne by asserting that what he has told is "as the book us tellis" ("as the book tells us"; 426). Then in the excuse for Aeneas' actions, he says, "The book¹² seyth Mercurie, sauns fayle, / Bad hym goo into Itayle" ("The book says Mercury, without doubt, commanded him to go into Italy"; 429-30). Even after the Dido and Aeneas episode, when he returns to narrating what he has seen depicted on the temple walls, Geoffrey refers the audience to Virgil, Claudian, and Dante

¹² The "book" (Chaucer, *HF* 429) could be *Aeneid* 4.252-76 or *Heroides* 7.109.

for Aeneas' visit to the underworld (449-50). By shifting from Geoffrey's direct report of what he observed to his citation of multiple textual authorities, Chaucer reveals the need to authorize one's perceptions.

Geoffrey confirms that his faith in sensory perceptions is short-lived when at the end, the abundance of sensory impressions again overwhelms him as it had when he first entered the temple. After admiring the "noblesse" and "richesse" ("nobility"; "opulence"; 471-72) of the decorations, he asserts, "[b]ut not wot I whoo did hem wirche, / Ne where I am, ne in what contree" ("but I do not know who made them, nor where I am, nor in what country"; 474-75). He is still disoriented by his surroundings. Joseph E. Grennen argues that *HF* "can be regarded as a version of" Plato's *Timaeus*, "deliberately substituting a cosmos of unpredictable and jarring confusion for the arithmetical harmonies of the Platonic cosmos" (262). Grennen says that "it is a playful study of the epistemological problem, ending not . . . in any effective motion towards intellectual *claritas*, but in an ever more bewildering immersion in particulars" (262). Akbari agrees: "the experience of seeing offers the narrator, not a glimpse of Pythagorean unity, but overwhelming, dizzying multiplicity" (*Seeing* 209). When Geoffrey prays at the end of Book 1, "O Crist, . . . / Fro fantome and illusion / Me save!" ("O Christ . . . save me from phantasm and illusion!"; 492-94), he again expresses his bewilderment at his surroundings. By beseeching deliverance "[f]ro fantome and illusion" (493), he returns to his opening questions about the dream's truth-value because a "fantome" is one of the unreliable types of dreams that Geoffrey had listed (Chaucer, *HF* 11).¹³ Geoffrey therefore

¹³ This is the "*phantasma*" or "*visum*" classified by Macrobius (87-89).

reveals how the images in the temple and the meditations they inspire have upset his trust in sensory perceptions.

Sources for Geoffrey's confusion are the conflicting rather than unified perspectives that his description of the temple decorations juxtaposes. For example, his representation of Venus in these decorations is ambiguous. Bennett argues that the depictions in Venus' temple represent "the many-sidedness of love" (*Chaucer's Book of Fame* 24), and Boitani similarly argues that Chaucer's "presentation . . . rests on ambivalence. The Venus of the *House of Fame* is both good and evil" ("Chaucer's Temples of Venus" 20).¹⁴ The marine version of Venus represented in the painting that confirms for him that the temple was Venus' was associated with lechery.¹⁵ Chaucer does not explicitly make this connection, but the "juxtaposition" in line 138 "of Cupid

¹⁴ Boccaccio, in a gloss to the *Teseida*, which was the source for the temple of Venus in *PF*, describes different possible interpretations of Venus:

La quale Venere è doppia, perciò che l'una si può e dee intendere per ciascuno onesto e licito desiderio, sì come è desiderare d'aver moglie per avere figliuoli, e simili a questo; e di questa Venere non si parla qui. La seconda Venere è quella per la quale ogni lascivia è desiderata, e che volgarmente è chiamata dea d'amore. (*Tes.7. n 50*)

(This Venus is twofold, since [the] one can [and should] be understood as every chaste and licit desire, as is the desire to have a wife in order to have children, and such like. This Venus is not discussed here. The second Venus is that through which all lewdness is desired, commonly called the goddess of love; McCoy 199, with modifications)

¹⁵ In his *Mythologies*, Fabius Planciades Fulgentius writes,

etiam nudam pingunt, siue quod nudos sibi adfectatores dimittat siue quod libidinis crimen numquam celatum sit siue quod numquam nisi nudis conueniat. Huic etiam rosas in tutelam adiciunt; rosae enim et rubent et pungunt, ut etiam libido rubet uerecundiae opprobrio, pungit etiam peccati aculeo; et sicut rosa delectat quidem, sed celeri motu temporis tollitur, ita et libido libet momentaliter, fugit perenniter. In huius etiam tutelam columbas ponunt, illa uidelicet causa, quod huius generis aues sint in coitu feruidae; . . . Hanc etiam in mari natantem pingunt, quod omnis libido rerum patiatu naufragia . . . (2.1.670-71)

(they depict her naked, either because she sends out her devotees naked or because the sin of lust is never cloaked or because it only suits the naked. They also considered roses as under her patronage, for roses both grow red and have thorns, as lust blushes at the outrage to modesty and pricks with the sting of sin; and as the rose gives pleasure, but is swept away by the swift movement of the seasons, so lust is pleasant for a moment, but then disappears forever. Also under her patronage they place doves, for the reason that birds of this species are fiercely lecherous in their love-making; . . . They also depict her swimming in the sea, because all lust suffers shipwreck of its affairs; Whitbread 66-67)

and Vulcan,” whom Venus cuckolds with Mars and thus begets Cupid, further calls to mind Venus’ lechery (Koonce 94).¹⁶ Chaucer thus first establishes for her a malevolent role. While B. G. Koonce argues that Venus in *HF* is the goddess of lechery (111), she takes on a benevolent role when she “bad hir sone Eneas flee” (“urged her son Aeneas to flee”; 165) from Troy. Fyler points out how the early ekphrasis even augments Venus’ protective role in the *Aeneid* (*Chaucer and Ovid* 35). For example, through Venus’ prayers while “[w]epynge with ful woful chere” (“weeping with a very sorrowful demeanor”; Chaucer 214), Jupiter “graunted of the tempest lysse” (“granted respite from the tempest”; 220) while Aeneas is at sea, as opposed to the *Aeneid*, when Neptune calms the winds without Venus’ intercession (Rand 222).¹⁷ The description of the decorations further emphasizes her benevolence when Aeneas lands on Carthage and “gan hym to pleyne” (“began to make his complaint”; 231) about his misfortunes, and she “gan hym comforte” (“comforted him”; 235) in response. The opening summary of the *Aeneid* thus represents positive aspects of Venus.

With the Dido and Aeneas episode, as is the case with attitudes to sensory perception, the perspective on Venus changes. Venus now represents evil that matches the lechery of her painting. Venus is an active agent in the affair and in Dido’s resultant suffering, as Geoffrey states that she

made Eneas so in grace

Of Dido, quene of that contree,

¹⁶ See Ovid, *Met.* 4.167-89. Bennett writes, Chaucer avoids moralizing “when a more cogent effect could be obtained by poetic placing and proportioning . . .” (*Chaucer’s Book of Fame* 24).

¹⁷ See *Aeneid* 1.124-56. Bennett also argues that the narrator emphasizes Venus’ role in the ekphrasis (*Chaucer’s Book of Fame* 25).

That, shortly for to tellen, she
 Becam hys love and let him doo
 Al that weddyng longeth too. (240-44)

(put Aeneas into such a state of grace with Dido, queen of that country, that, to tell [of it] shortly, she became his love, and let him do all that pertains to marriage.)

Fyler argues that the dual emphasis on Venus' assistance to her son Aeneas, in conjunction with her role as "the direct agent of Dido's tragedy," is meant "to sharpen the contradictions in her behaviour" (*Chaucer and Ovid* 35). The Dido and Aeneas digression presents Venus differently from the rest of the ekphrasis, but it also presents different perspectives on Venus within itself.

Chaucer calls into question Venus' agency in Dido's suffering, so he further complicates her characterization. Even though Venus causes Dido to fall in love with Aeneas, the narrator places Dido in the subject rather than object position when he says, "she / Becam hys love and let him doo / Al that weddyng longeth too" (242-44). In the process of constructing his narrative persona as a skilled poet with little experience in love, he represents not only Dido's but also Aeneas' active role in the affair:

What shulde I speke more queynte,
 Or peyne me my wordes peynte,
 To speke of love? Hyt wol not be;
 I kan not of that faculte.
 And eke to telle the manere
 How they aqueynteden infere,

Hyt were a long proces to telle,
 And over-long for yow to dwelle. (245-52)

(Why should I speak more elaborately or trouble myself to paint my words to speak of love? It will not be; I do not have knowledge of that faculty, and also to tell the manner how they became acquainted with each other would be a long process and too long to delay you.)

Geffrey declares that Dido and Aeneas “aqueynteden infere” (250); therefore, both Dido and Aeneas are the subjects acting in this sentence. The narrator’s *polyptoton* through “queynte” (245) and “aqueynteden” (250) links together the action of speaking “queynte” (245) with Dido and Aeneas’ process of “[h]ow they aqueynteden infere” (250). The repetition of “queynte” constructs Dido and Aeneas’ agency because their actions eliminate Geffrey’s need for speaking “queynte.” Geffrey thus grants them agency over himself. He also states that Dido “[m]ade of hym shortly at oo word, / Hyr lyf, hir love, hir lust, hir lord” (“made him, in short order, her life, her love, her pleasure, her lord”; 257-58). Dido’s responsibility in making Aeneas “[h]yr lyf, hir love, hir lust, hir lord” (258) is emphasized through the *parison*, or “even balance of clauses, syllables, or other elements in a sentence” (*OED*, “parison, n.¹”), and the alliteration. The rapidity of the actions, as expressed through the *asyndeton*, or omission of conjunctions, creates Dido’s foolishness rather than her victimization as a result of Venus. Though Chaucer calls into question Venus’ agency in the tragedy, he also does not allow her any benevolent role in the affair either, so she continues to contrast with her positive depiction earlier in the ekphrasis.

By representing both Aeneas' and Dido's responsibility in their affair after Venus' instigation of it and later returning to her benevolent intercessory power, Chaucer does not allow the audience to form a firm opinion about Venus. Aeneas

[a]cheved al his aventure;

For Jupiter took of hym cure

At the prayer of Venus—

The whiche I preye alwey save us,

And us ay of our sorwes lyghte! (463-67)

(achieved all his adventure, for Jupiter took care of him at the prayer of Venus,

[to] whom I pray [that she] might always save us and might always ease us of our sorrows!)

She is not only a powerful intercessor for Aeneas but also a source to whom Geoffrey appeals for protection. By combining the different aspects of Venus, *HF* confounds the audience's perspective on her role.

Like its portrayal of Venus, the description of the temple decorations combines opposing characteristics of Aeneas. The early description places Aeneas in the audience's favour. Although in "a tradition going back to Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis . . . the Greeks owed their capture of Troy to the treachery of Aeneas and Antenor" (Clemen 84), the description of the scenes in the temple of Venus follows the *Aeneid* in dissociating Aeneas from this role as a traitor, instead inspiring sympathy for him through association with the betrayed Trojans. Geoffrey highlights Sinon's wickedness as the betrayer of Troy by describing his "false forswerynge, / . . . and his lesynge" ("deceitful perjury . . . and his lying"; 153-54), with the result that the "Troyens

loste al her joye” (“Trojans lost all their joy”; 156). Before describing the next image of the Greeks taking the Trojan citadel, Ilium, Geoffrey interrupts with “allas” (“alas”; 157). He says that Pirrus murdered King Priam’s son Polytes “[d]ispiteously” (“cruelly”; 161). The general Trojan bias then focuses specifically on Aeneas’ virtue. *HF* represents a “distinctly sympathetic” attitude to Aeneas by highlighting his “familial devotion” (Delany 50). For instance, Geoffrey says that he saw Aeneas carry his father Anchises away from the combat (Chaucer 168-69) and says that Aeneas “lovede” his wife Creusa “as his lyf” (“loved”; “as [he loved] his life”; Chaucer 176) (Delany 50). In addition to depicting Aeneas’ virtue, Geoffrey motivates the audience to sympathize with Aeneas by highlighting Aeneas’ distress and rebuking his enemies. Geoffrey states that “every herte might agryse / To see” (“every heart would tremble to see”; 210-11) the painting of the “tempeste” (“tempest”; 209) that endangers the lives of Aeneas and his crew. The opening further supports Aeneas through the divine favour that he receives. He leaves Troy because Venus “bad” (“commanded”; 165) him to and goes to Carthage because Venus “bad hym” (“commanded him”; 236). He receives also the favour of Jupiter, who stops the tempest (220). Geoffrey describes Juno, who through her petitions to Aeolus was responsible for the tempest, as “cruel” (198) and in an *apostrophe* to Juno states that he saw her “[r]enne and crye as thou were wood” (“run and cry as if you were crazy”; 202). By contrast, Geoffrey aligns himself with Venus, Aeneas’ mother, whom he calls “my lady dere” (“my dear lady”; 213). The opening of the ekphrasis therefore thoroughly supports Aeneas.

With the digression in the Dido and Aeneas episode, however, Aeneas becomes unsympathetic because he then takes on a traitorous role. Koonce argues that Geoffrey is

unreliable in his condemnation of Aeneas' treachery and "extravagant" sympathy for Dido (114). Koonce states that "in breaking this carnal bond Aeneas is re-establishing the bond of divine love" (115) because, in medieval commentary on the *Aeneid* in the tradition of Bernardus Silvestris, "the account of Aeneas' flight from Troy and ultimate arrival in Italy approximates the Christian concept of the exiled pilgrim, who, beset by the trials and temptations of the world and flesh, finally achieves spiritual peace by bringing his will into harmony with God" (109). Other medieval texts, however, such as the *Roman d'Énéas* (c.1160), presented more favourable interpretations of Dido. The *Roman d'Énéas* envisioned the *Aeneid* as "a romance, with Dido as its heroine" (Bennett, *Chaucer's Book of Fame* 27), and Bennett calls the *Roman d'Énéas* "the *Aeneid* as the Middle Ages (and Chaucer) saw it" (*Chaucer's Book of Fame* 27). In Chaucer's *HF*, Geoffrey berates Aeneas for his desertion of Dido, particularly through the repeated attention to "trouthe" as "the quality of standing by one's given word" (Richard F. Green 346) and Aeneas' heedlessness of it. Geoffrey refers to Aeneas' breaking of the bond seven times.¹⁸ First of all, Geoffrey indicates that Aeneas had previously bonded himself to Dido and then broken the bond when he states that Aeneas "to hir a traytour was" ("was a traitor to her"; 267) and later declares that Aeneas "betrayed" Dido "[a]nd lefte hir ful unkyndely" ("and very unnaturally left her"; 294-95). Geoffrey makes Aeneas look despicable when he states that a man

[w]ol shewen outward the fayreste,
 Tyl he have caught that what him leste;

¹⁸ See *HF* 267, 294, 297, 301, 321-22, 331, 384.

And thanne wol he causes fynde
 And swere how that she ys unkynde,
 Or fals, or privy, or double was.

Al this seye I be Eneas

And Dido . . . (281-87)

(will outwardly appear the fairest until he has gotten what pleased him, and then he will find excuses and swear that she is unnatural, or untruthful, or secretive, or was duplicitous. I say all of this about Aeneas and Dido.)

Men such as Aeneas make a mockery of their prior vows when, as an excuse to break them, they “swere” (284) oaths about the lady’s immoral character. Delany maintains that “Chaucer gives us no reason to think that Aeneas’s intention was to seduce Dido, or that he attributed any fault to her in justification of his departure,” so we are not to take Geoffrey seriously (53), but Chaucer does not provide any evidence that suggests his Aeneas does not make these excuses.

The next references to his betrayal come from Dido’s perspective, and though Dido’s point of view is not always trustworthy, Chaucer gives reason to trust it here. The third reference to Aeneas’ breaking of the bond occurs when Dido “saw al utterly / That he wolde hir of trouthe fayle” (“saw entirely that he would fail her in [his] loyalty”; 296-97). The next three instances come from Dido’s monologue. When Dido says, “Allas, is every man thus trewe, / That every yer wolde have a newe, / . . . / Or elles three, peraventure?” (“Alas, is every man thus true, that every year [he] wants to have a new [lover], . . . or else three, perhaps?”; 301-04), her lament is “inappropriate” to the narrative, for “an historical mission, not another woman, draws Aeneas from her”

(Delany 54). Dido refers to Aeneas' "bond / That ye have sworn with your right hond" ("bond that you have sworn with your right hand"; 321-22) and rebukes men in general in an *apostrophe*: "O, have ye men such godlyhede / In speche, and never a del of trouthe?" ("O, do you men have such goodness in speech and not a bit of loyalty?"; 330-31). In spite of her faulty perceptions though,¹⁹ here we can trust Dido's rebuke of Aeneas as a traitor not only because of Geoffrey's denunciation but also because, as Richard Firth Green says, Dido is described as married to Aeneas when she "let him doo / Al that weddyng longeth too" ("let him do all that pertains to marriage"; Chaucer *HF* 243-44) (347). Oaths would have been enough for marriage according to fourteenth-century canon lawyers "even without ecclesiastical blessing" (Richard F. Green 347).²⁰ If *HF* does not confirm that they are married, it certainly suggests that they are by associating Aeneas' actions with marriage and by indicating that he has sworn oaths to her. Even if their marriage is not certain, though, Aeneas' treachery is, and *HF* stresses how grievous an error treachery is: "Even Fame, for all her boasted fickleness, cannot bring herself to smile on those who have 'ydoon the trayterye'²¹ (*HF* 1811-22)" (Richard F. Green 347-

¹⁹ Dido's lament can be interpreted farcically. Dido, in an *apostrophe* to men in general, says,

though your love laste a seson,
Wayte upon the conclusyon,
And eke how that ye determynen,
And for the more part diffynen. (341-44)

(although your love might last for a period of time, wait for the conclusion and also how you end up and for the most part come out in the end.)

Lynch interprets this "lament for Aeneas's truth" as farcical because it "transforms the inconstancy of love to the disagreement of premiss and consequent in an argument" and therefore, by paralleling a philosophical dilemma, creates *bathos* (*Chaucer's Philosophical Visions* 71). For another perspective on Dido's ironic use of language here, see William S. Wilson (244-48).

²⁰ See Henry Ansgar Kelly (202-16) (qtd. in Richard F. Green 347).

²¹ The phrase "ydoon the trayterye" (1812) translates as "done [an act of] treachery."

48). Geoffrey's and Dido's repeated accusations of Aeneas' treachery therefore diminish his previous heroic status in the ekphrasis.

After lamenting Aeneas' own "untrouthe" ("faithlessness"; Chaucer, *HF* 384), Geoffrey reflects on various betrayals of other lovers that in turn amplify Aeneas' guilt.²² Chaucer "goes out of his way to emphasise that the perfidious lovers swear quite specific oaths of fidelity to their ladies" (Richard F. Green 347). He first lists Demophon, who "forswor hym ful falsly, / And traysted Phillis wikkidly" ("perjured himself very treacherously and wickedly betrayed Phyllis"; 389-90). Geoffrey accentuates Demophon's cruelty in breaking his oath, for he "falsly gan hys terme pace" ("wickedly passed by his appointed time [to return]"; 392) and "had doon hir such untrouthe" ("had shown her such faithlessness"; 395). Geoffrey uses similar grammatical structures linked together by *anaphora* of "and" to parallel the lovers' betrayals with one another and with Aeneas' betrayal of Dido when he declares,

how fals and reccheles

Was to Breseyda Achilles,

And Paris to Oenone,

And Jason to Isiphile,

And eft Jason to Medea,

And Ercules to Dyanira. (397-402)

(how false and callous Achilles was to Breseyda, and Paris to Oenone, and Jason to Hypsipyle, and again Jason to Medea, and Hercules to Deianira.)

²² Bennett points out that these examples derive from Ovid's *Heroides* and occur in almost the same order (*Chaucer's Book of Fame* 44).

He emphasizes the destructive consequences of the men's faithlessness to show how despicable such behaviour is, for Phyllis, "when she wiste that he was fals, / . . . heng himself ryght be the hals" ("when she knew that he was deceitful . . . hanged herself right by the neck"; 393-94), and Hercules' desertion of Deianira for Iole "made hym cache his deth, parde" ("led to his death, by God"; 404). He amplifies the last *exemplum* of Theseus and Ariadne the most as a means of criticizing Aeneas. The hold that the oath should have had on Theseus in turn strengthens the oath Aeneas made to Dido. For example, Theseus "betrayed" Ariadne (407), after

he had yswore to here

On al that ever he myghte swere

That, so she saved hym hys lyf,

He wolde have take hir to hys wif. (421-24)

(he had sworn to her on all that he could ever swear that, so long as she saved his life, he would take her as his wife.)

Similar grammatical structures of *parison* and alliteration then highlight the severity of Theseus' treatment of Ariadne, and by extension, Aeneas' treatment of Dido: "For had he lawghed, had he loured, / He moste have ben al devoured, / Yf Adriane ne had ybe" ("For whether he had laughed or frowned, he would have been entirely devoured,²³ if it had not been for Ariadne"; 409-11), and "[s]he made hym fro the dethe escape, / And he made hir a ful fals jape" ("she made him escape from death, and he made her a very false trick"; 413-14). The equal grammatical weight creates antithesis between Theseus' and

²³ This means that whether he liked it or not, or no matter what, Theseus would have been devoured by the Minotaur without Ariadne.

Ariadne's exchange of falsity and life. This parallels Dido's rescue of the shipwrecked Aeneas, when she not only "made hym fro the dethe escape" (413) but also "[m]ade of him . . . Hyr lyf, hir love, hir lust, hir lord" (257-58). These echoes between the *exempla* and the description of Aeneas' treatment of Dido make Aeneas as reprehensible as the other men.

With Dido's lament, the ekphrasis further breaks down Aeneas' celebratory characterization, for Chaucer constructs Dido as a sympathetic character who has suffered as a result of Aeneas and who expresses her "still-faithful love" (Shannon 60).

Dido says,

Iwys, my dere herte, ye

Knowen ful wel that never yit,

As ferforth as I hadde wyt,

Agylte [I] yow in thocht ne dede. (Chaucer, *HF* 326-29)

(Indeed, my dear heart, you know full well that never yet, to the best of my ability, have I wronged you in thought or deed.)²⁴

Shannon argues that Chaucer's Dido expresses her "woe and distress" as she does in *Heroides* 7 rather than her "wrath as in the *Aeneid*" (59).²⁵ Her wrath toward Aeneas in

²⁴ Shannon compares Dido's tone here with *Heroides* 7.1-6, 29-30, 45-46, 61-64, 97-106 (59).

²⁵ Delany agrees that Chaucer's Dido contrasts with Virgil's, who "confronting her lover with his planned departure, indulges in a shrewish, nearly hysterical tirade in which she does not refrain from sarcasm and vindictiveness" (51). In the *Aeneid*, Dido expresses her desire for vengeance: "sequar atris ignibus absens / et, cum frigida mors seduxerit artus, / omnibus umbra locis adero. dabis, improbe, poenas" ("Though far away, I will chase you with murky brands and, when chill death has severed soul and body, everywhere my shade shall haunt you. Relentless one, you will repay!"; Virgil 4.385-87). Later, Dido curses Aeneas:

"at bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,
finibus extorris, complexu avulsus Iuli,
auxilium impleret videatque indigna suorum
funera; nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae

the *Aeneid* becomes directed toward fame in Chaucer. Dido introduces this concern with fame that brings misinterpretation when she cries out to Aeneas,

“O wel-away that I was born!
 For thorgh yow is my name lorn,
 And alle myn actes red and songe
 Over al thys lond, on every tonge.
 O wikke Fame! — for ther nys
 Nothing so swift, lo, as she is!

.....

That I have don rekever I never,
 That I ne shal be seyde, allas,
 Yshamed be thourgh Eneas.” (345-56)

tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,
 sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena.
 haec precor, hanc vocem extremam cum sanguine fundo.
 tum vos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum
 exercete odiis, cinerique haec mittite nostro
 munera. nullus amor populis nec foedera sunt.
 exoriare, aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor,
 qui face Dardanos ferroque sequere colonos,
 nunc, olim, quocumque dabunt se tempore vires.
 litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas
 imprecor, arma armis; pugnent ipsique nepotesque.”

(“yet even so, harassed in war by the arms of a fearless nation, expelled from his territory and torn from Iulus’ embrace, let him plead for aid and see his friends cruelly slaughtered! Nor yet, when he has submitted to the terms of an unjust peace, may he enjoy his kingship or the life he longs for, but perish before his time and lie unburied on a lonely strand! This is my prayer; this last utterance I pour out with my blood. Then do you, Tyrians, persecute with hate his stock and all the race to come, and to my dust offer this tribute! Let no love or treaty unite the nations! Arise from my ashes, unknown avenger, to harass the Trojan settlers with fire and sword—today, hereafter, whenever strength be ours! May coast with coast conflict, I pray, and sea with sea, arms with arms; war may they have, themselves and their children’s children!”; Virgil 4.615-29)

(“O, cursed [be the time] when I was born! For because of you my reputation is lost, and all my acts read and sung about throughout this land, by every tongue. O wicked Fame! For see, there is nothing so swift as she is! . . . That which I have done I shall never rectify so that I shall not be said to be shamed, alas, because of Aeneas.”)

Although Dido twice claims that Aeneas was instrumental in establishing her infamy—“thorgh yow” (346) and “thourgh Eneas” (356)—she recognizes herself as the agent of her actions when she declares, “That I have don rekever I never” (354). In the *Aeneid*, she states,

“te propter Libycae gentes Nomadumque tyranni
 odere, infensi Tyrii; te propter eundem
 extinctus pudor et, qua sola sidera adibam,
 fama prior. . . .” (Virgil 4.320-23)

(“Because of you the Libyan tribes and Numidian chiefs hate me, the Tyrians are my foes; because of you I have also lost my honour and that former fame by which alone I was winning a title to the stars.”)

The *anaphora* of “te propter” emphasizes Aeneas’ responsibility for how she has acted. Chaucer’s Dido, though, rages instead against misinterpretations of her story spread through “wikke Fame” (349) that will result in harsh judgments upon her. When she fears that “alle myn actes” will be “red and songe / Over al thys lond, on every tonge” (347-48), she implies her fear of widespread acts of interpretation, for she then fears what “seyth the peple prively” (“the people speak privately”; 360). She declares that according to people’s private reflections, “I shal thus juged be: / ‘Loo, ryght as she hath don, now

she / Wol doo eft-sones, hardely” (“I shall be judged thus: ‘indeed, just as she has done, she will now do again, certainly’”; 357-59). Her anger toward faulty interpretation rather than Aeneas therefore makes Aeneas more blameworthy for his treatment of her.²⁶

While Dido becomes more sympathetic by expressing her love for Aeneas and by refraining from blaming him entirely, Aeneas becomes less sympathetic when Geoffrey does not adequately exculpate him for abandoning Dido. He asserts,

But to excusen Eneas
 Fullyche of al his grete trespas,
 The book seyth Mercurie, sauns fayle,
 Bad hym goo into Itayle,
 And leve Auffrikes regioun,
 And Dido and hir faire toun. (427-32)

(But to fully excuse Aeneas of all of his great trespass, the book says Mercury, without doubt, commanded him to go into Italy and leave the region of Africa, and Dido and her fair town.)

This excuse does not dismiss the previous charges of treason against him, as Virgilian details that would create sympathy for Aeneas are left out. Shannon argues that Chaucer “deliberately suppresses” Aeneas’ “struggle against love in order to give obedience to the

²⁶ Koonce says that it is problematic that Dido calls Fame “wikke” (349) because “[w]ickedness is more properly ascribed to those who place their trust in the fickle judgment of men . . .” (118). As Shannon shows, though, Dido’s declaration, “O wikke Fame! — for ther nys / Nothing so swift, lo, as she is!” (349-50), is comparable to Virgil’s narrator’s statement, “Fama, malum qua non aliud velocius ullum” (“Rumour the swiftest of all evils”; 4.174) (58). Dido’s characterization of Fame as “wikke” (349) therefore does not instead highlight her misapprehension of her own wickedness.

commands of the gods” in Virgil’s *Aeneid* (57).²⁷ This excuse also “seems unconvincing after Dido’s hyperbolic complaint. It is further weakened because it follows the event whose motivation it is supposed to supply . . .” (Delany 54). In spite of the excuse’s weakness, though, Chaucer further complicates Aeneas’ character.

In the rest of the ekphrasis, Chaucer returns to the earlier positive representation of Aeneas. He again emphasizes Aeneas’ “devotion to family” as well as his “martial achievement” (Delany 55). The temple decorations depict his concern for his family when he “[t]o helle wente for to see / His fader, Anchyses . . .” (“went to hell in order to see his father, Anchises”; 441-42). He achieves martial success, for he forms a “treetee” (“treaty”; 453) with King Latinus, and “he Turnus reft his lyf, / And wan Lavina to his wif” (“he deprived Turnus [of] his life and won Lavinia as his wife”; 457-58). Aeneas overcomes the “sleight” and “compas” (“trickery”; “cunning”; 462) of Juno and “[a]cheved al his aventure” (“achieved all of his quest”; 463) as a result of Jupiter’s and Venus’ protection (464-65). In spite of this celebration of Aeneas’ character, though, this conclusion to the ekphrasis summarizes the last eight books of the *Aeneid* but takes one seventh of the lines of the Dido and Aeneas episode (Bennett, *Chaucer’s Book of Fame*

²⁷ Shannon cites the following as examples of Aeneas’ struggles (57): after listening to Dido’s complaint over his departure, “ille Iovis monitis immota tenebat / lumina et obnixus curam sub corde premebat” (“he by Jove’s command held his eyes steadfast and with a struggle smothered the pain deep within his heart”; Virgil 4.331-32) and “haud secus adsiduis hinc atque hinc vocibus heros / tunditur, et magno persentit pectore curas; / mens immota manet, lacrimae volvuntur inanes” (“even so with ceaseless appeals, from this side and from that, the hero is buffeted, and in his mighty heart feels agony: his mind stands steadfast; his tears fall without effect”; Virgil 4.447-49). Shannon also cites the following (57):

At pius Aeneas, quamquam lenire dolentem
solando cupit et dictis avertere curas,
multa gemens magnoque animum labefactus amore,
iussa tamen divum exsequitur classemque revisit. (Virgil 4.393-96)
(But loyal Aeneas, though longing to soothe and assuage her grief and by his words turn aside her sorrow, with many a sigh, his soul shaken by his mighty love, yet fulfils Heaven’s bidding and returns to the fleet.)

45). This final positive depiction of Aeneas therefore cannot take precedence over all of the lines spent on his negative portrayal. The multiple perspectives on sensory impressions, Venus, and Aeneas throughout the description of the temple artwork all cloud the text's meaning.

In spite of this uncertainty created by the multiple perspectives, however, the text does not dismiss authority or truth. Its organization according to an architectural mnemonic structure instead encourages the pursuit of truth through further reflection. This structure occurs in the Troy ekphrasis and also in the later ekphrasis of the house of Fame itself. Their resemblance to the orderliness of Gothic architecture further supports their architectural mnemonic role.²⁸

First, I will consider how Chaucer's ekphrasis of the temple of Venus acts as an architectural mnemonic, according to which "[o]ne is advised to place 'images' of topics or subjects one wishes to remember (called *imagines rerum*) on a set of buildings serving as "background 'places' (or *loci*) that occur in a rigid, easily reconstructible order" (Carruthers, "Italy" 181-82). Chaucer's description parallels the architectural mnemonic through its inclusion of images of the *Aeneid* in chronological order.²⁹ Geoffrey's description of the images as engraved also matches the *Ad Herennium*'s description of the architectural mnemonic (Carruthers, "Italy" 187):³⁰ "the backgrounds

²⁸ Coley connects the poem's Gothic architecture to its presentation of truth. Coley recognizes a similar amplificatory function of the temple of glass in *HF* and of the stained glass in the Palais de Justice's Sainte-Chapelle and maintains, based on the discussion of amplification in the *Poetria nova* of Geoffrey of Vinsauf, that the point of rhetorical amplification is not "subversion" (81). He therefore argues that the different opinions in the digression expand authority further (81).

²⁹ The description of the paintings does not follow the *in medias res* sequence of the *Aeneid*, but this is similar to "most medieval redactors of Virgil" (Bennett, *Chaucer's Book of Fame* 29).

³⁰ Geoffrey says that the images were painted (Chaucer, *HF* 211), but in the following line he says they were "graven" (212). He also uses the word "grave" or "graven" to describe the images eight other times (157, 193, 212, 253, 256, 433, 451, and 473).

are like a wax tablet, the images like letters stamped or incised into the wax, and the action of remembering like the ‘reading’ of a written text” (Carruthers, “Italy” 182).³¹ Also in the architectural mnemonic, the “perceptual, essentially visual nature of the recollective process is heavily stressed” (Carruthers, “Italy” 187). While Chaucer’s ekphrasis lacks extensive visual detail,³² Geoffrey’s use of the phrase “I saugh”³³ repeatedly invites the audience to visualize and bring multisensory scenes of the *Aeneid* before their minds.³⁴ Geoffrey demonstrates the multisensory appeal of the scenes that he visualizes when he twice exclaims, “hyt was pitee for to here” (“it was a pity to hear about”; 180, 189), first in response to Aeneas’ wife Creusa and their son Iulus’ escape from Troy and then in response to Creusa’s instructions to Aeneas when her ghost returns. Geoffrey also creates auditory images through short instances of direct speech—Anchises’ cry of “Allas, and welaway!” (“Alas, and oh!”; 170) as Aeneas carries him away from Troy—and indirect reports—Venus’ command to Aeneas to flee (165), Creusa’s ghost’s speech to Aeneas (185-92), Juno’s request to Aeolus (199-208), Venus’ prayer to Juno to save the Trojan navy from the storm at sea (212-18), and Aeneas’

³¹ See *Ad Herennium* (3.17.30).

³² Kolve (“Chaucer and the Visual Arts” 305) and Schaar (176) have remarked upon this lack of pictorial details.

³³ Norton-Smith argues that Chaucer’s use of the “I saugh” formula comes from his translation of Guillaume de Lorris’ description of the painted allegorical figures in *RR* (*Geoffrey Chaucer* 49). By contrast, the narrator does not use that formula in *BD* or in *PF*, though the narrator of *PF* says, “I gan espie” (“I began to observe”; 280). The narrator in *HF* thus purposefully uses the phrase as opposed to merely following a formula.

³⁴ Synesthesia characterizes the medieval arts of memory, whereby the audience immerses themselves so fully within the imagined world of the ekphrasis that the imaginative paintings begin to ‘speak.’ The “speaking images” indicate Chaucer’s use of the Italian humanist architectural mnemonic specifically (Carruthers, “Italy” 187), which Chaucer may have accessed through Dante (Carruthers, “Italy” 184). Carruthers writes that Bono Giamboni added the “requirement” that “the images speak” to his translation of the *Ad Herennium* (“Italy” 184).

prayer to Venus and her response (231-33).³⁵ The chronological arrangement of images of the *Aeneid* on the walls of the temple, their description as engraved images, and the multisensory quality of the images all create an architectural mnemonic ekphrasis.

The Gothic architectural techniques of the ekphrasis further support the ordered narrative required for the architectural mnemonic.³⁶ Within the chronological order of the various images of the *Aeneid*, Geoffrey “provides the element of contrast and variety which is characteristic of good Gothic art . . .” (Bennett, *Chaucer’s Book of Fame* 26). To illustrate, in the digression on Dido and Aeneas, Geoffrey shifts from a summary of scenes from the *Aeneid* depicted on the wall, to a commentary providing traditional folk wisdom, to Dido’s lengthy speech, to a list of Ovidian lovers, and back to the summary of the remainder of the *Aeneid*. Geoffrey constructs medieval ideals of aesthetic harmony through diversity exemplified in Gothic architecture and thus enables memory work to occur. The architectural mnemonic and other memory devices bring images before the mind in order to encourage “inventive meditation” (Carruthers, *Craft* 222), and in *HF*, this meditation accompanies the description of Dido and Aeneas. The description of

³⁵ Geoffrey may also be referring to accompanying *tituli*, which were “ubiquitous . . . in paintings, mosaics, tapestries, and sculpture” (Carruthers, *Craft* 223).

³⁶ Various critics have argued for the influence of Gothic architecture on the temple of Venus. Bennett discusses the Gothic influence on the interior of the temple combined with fantasy (*Chaucer’s Book of Fame* 12-13), and he suggests that Chaucer would have had the murals that once adorned the chapel of St. Stephen’s at Westminster in mind while he was writing *HF* (*Chaucer’s Book of Fame* 13-14). Aydelotte also argues that the St. Stephen’s Chapel at Westminster influenced the temple of Venus (49-56). Braswell cites the many “ymages / Of gold, stondynge in sondry stages” (“statues of gold, standing on sundry stages”; Chaucer, *HF* 121-22), “tabernacles” (Chaucer, *HF* 123), and “pynacles” (“pinnacles”; Chaucer, *HF* 124) in the temple to support her argument that the temple of Venus is a Gothic building (103-04). As Braswell explains, even though there was no such thing as medieval churches that were made of just gold and glass, there were reliquaries that “resemble miniature buildings” (104). Citing François Bucher (73), Braswell states that the Sainte-Chapelle in the Palais de Justice in Paris is an example of a building “based on reliquary designs” (104). Braswell relates the temple of Venus to these reliquaries, and she provides as example the reliquary of “the shrine of St. Margaret, or the *Châsse aux Oiseaux*, probably made in France in the late thirteenth century” (104-05). Evans had previously compared the temple of Venus to the miniature palaces adorning tables at royal feasts (408-09).

Dido and Aeneas' story becomes so immersive that Geoffrey drops the phrase "I saugh" and other references to the images as artwork as he imagines an extended monologue for Dido. When the ekphrasis introduces perspectives that diverge from the Virgilian account, including Ovidian-inspired ones, it teaches how to consider diverse perspectives without promoting a single absolute authority.³⁷ According to Jill Mann, Ovid's "version of Dido is recuperated from a *reading* of Virgil's text," and during this process, "the text frees itself into images in the reader's mind . . . permitting it to be restructured into a new meaning" as "literary authority passes from the author to the reader" (10). Thus, while the ekphrasis and the rest of the poem present obstacles to discerning truth from literature, the ekphrasis enriches the audience's understanding of its subject by challenging them to diversify their perspectives. Chaucer's art draws back from simplicity and therefore establishes *ductus* that leads an audience to greater understanding of literature's importance in promoting critical thinking.

The ekphrasis of Troy, by encouraging further meditation on truth, drives the rest of the text's meaning. It reinforces the themes of Geoffrey's flight with the Eagle that follows it in Book 2. Book 2 represents a world where order is parodied and where vision is problematized. Ruggiers does not think that Book 2 calls into question an orderly universe and argues that it provides "in Boethian terms the basic scientific and theological formula of the orderly universe" ("Unity" 23). Norton-Smith similarly argues that Book 2 presents "a vision of a well-ordered universe . . ." (*Geoffrey Chaucer* 57).

For example, the Eagle argues that

³⁷ Critics like Fyler (*Chaucer and Ovid* 36-38) and Clemen (80) have remarked upon the narrator's increasing incorporation of his own viewpoints. Fyler draws a connection between the narrator's techniques and "Aeneas's response to the paintings in Juno's temple (*Aen.* 1.446-65)" (Notes 980 n 314).

every kyndely thyng that is
 Hath a kyndely stede ther he
 May best in hyt conserved be;
 Unto which place every thyng
 Thorgh his kyndely enclynyng
 Moveth for to come to
 Whan that hyt is away therfro;

 And for this cause mayst thou see
 That every ryver to the see
 Enclyned ys to goo by kynde,
 And by these skilles, as I fynde,
 Hath fyssh duellynge in flood and see,
 And treës eke in erthe bee.
 Thus every thing, by thys reson,
 Hath his propre mansyon
 To which hit seketh to repaire,
 Ther-as hit shulde not apaire. (Chaucer 730-56)

(every thing in nature that [there] is has a natural place in which it may best be conserved, to which everything through its natural inclination moves in order to come there when it is away from it; . . . and for this same reason you can see that every river is inclined by nature to go to the sea, and for these reasons, as I find, fish have [their] habitat in the river and sea, and trees also are in [the] ground.

Thus, everything, by this argument, has its own dwelling place to which it seeks to return where it will not deteriorate.)³⁸

The *polyptoton* of the root “kynde” four times (730, 731, 734, 749) stresses the balance and logic of all that happens in the world; however, the Boethian aesthetic harmony and social harmony are only apparent. According to Lynch, “the Eagle commits some blatant and basic logical errors in his use of terms, his construction of propositions, and his drawing of inferences” (*Chaucer’s Philosophical Visions* 72). The Eagle “assumes his conclusion (the physical existence of Fame’s palace of sound) in the premises of an elaborate syllogistic argument” (Lynch, *Chaucer’s Philosophical Visions* 73) that speech “of pure kynde, / Enclyned ys upward to meve” (“by its inherent nature is inclined to move upwards”; Chaucer 824-25), just as everything “[m]oveth” (“moves”; 841) towards a natural place. Speech therefore “[h]ath hys kynde place in ayr” (“has its natural place in air”; 834). Fame’s house “[y]s set amyddys of these three, / Heven, erthe, and eke the see” (“is set midway among these three, heaven, earth, and also the sea”; 845-46), so the Eagle concludes that every speech “[m]oveth up on high to pace / Kyndely to Fames place” (“naturally moves up high to travel to Fame’s place”; 851-52). Through his syllogisms, the Eagle arrives no closer to knowledge than Geoffrey does in the temple of Venus.

In addition to the Eagle’s illogical reasoning, Chaucer uses him to call into question the sense of sight as a source of truth (Akbari, *Seeing* 203). Rather than representing the Eagle as a symbol of keen vision, he associates him with the sense of

³⁸ This theory comes from Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* 3.pr.11.95-187 (Fyler, Notes 983 n 734).

hearing (Akbari, *Seeing* 204). The sight was thought to have greater access to truth; as John Trevisa states, “þe siȝt is more sotile and more lifliche þan þe oþir wittis. . . . Also he is more worthi þan oþir wittis” (“the sight is more subtle and more lively than the other senses. . . . Also he is more worthy than other senses”; 3.17). Therefore, the Eagle’s dissociation from vision and association with an inferior sense weakens his access to knowledge. Chaucer returns to the same mistrust of the senses explored in Geoffrey’s experience of the temple of Venus.

While the temple of Venus negates absolute truth, the device of ekphrasis also moves beyond the uncertainties that the Eagle portrays. The ekphrasis does not confirm any ordered theories of the universe, but its structure, which incorporates aesthetic harmony and encourages meditation on multiple perspectives, promotes Boethian aesthetic and social harmony. In its depiction of harmony, the description of the temple contrasts with the Eagle’s parodic constructs of order. The ekphrasis thus constructs *ductus* that drives the narrative toward a different meaning rather than elaborating upon the meanings created elsewhere.

The second ekphrasis, the description of the house of Fame, also draws on the architectural mnemonic and Gothic architecture to promote further reflection upon truth. This ekphrasis returns to the themes that the first ekphrasis sets up and that the flight with the Eagle continues to demonstrate—the difficulty of distinguishing truth from falsehood in texts. The description of the material of the house of Fame, both its unsure foundation and its elaborateness, embodies this theme. With the description of the columns that uphold the house of Fame, however, Chaucer uses the architectural mnemonic which encourages the audience to begin to sort out truth and falsehood by considering diverse

literary points of view. Like the sculptures of the authors supported by the columns in the house of Fame,

“[w]han any speche ycomen ys

Up to the paleys, anon-ryght

Hyt wexeth lyk the same wight

Which that the word in erthe spak.” (1074-77)

(“when any speech has come up to the palace, it immediately becomes like the same person who uttered the speech on earth.”)

The authors, along with tidings, “make visible the idea behind Chaucer’s limited, well-defined narrators, that human beings speak in particular voices even when they claim to utter universal truths” (Taylor 34). The description of the house of Fame, like the description of the temple of Venus, rejects universal truth but leads to a greater knowledge of particularities.

The material structure of the house of Fame embodies the difficulty of distinguishing between truth and falsehood in texts. The house of Fame stands upon a “roche of yse” (“icy rock”; 1130), which causes Geoffrey to exclaim, “By Seynt Thomas of Kent, / This were a feble fundament / To biden on a place hye” (“By St. Thomas Becket, this would be a feeble foundation on which to build a high building”; 1131-33). Half of the foundation for the house of Fame contains engravings of the names of those whose “fames” (“reputations”; 1139) had been “wide yblowe” (“widely made known”; 1139), but because they had now become “[s]o unfamous” (“so unknown”; 1146), the letters had melted so much that “wel unnethes koude I knowe / Any lettres for to rede / Hir names by . . .” (“I could only scarcely recognize any letters by which to read their

names”; 1140-42). Bennett argues that the melting icy foundation for Fame’s house and the fragile glass of Venus’ temple portray the vanity of these places’ contents (Chaucer’s *Book of Fame* 11).³⁹ Considering the capriciousness of the goddess Fame, what survives may not necessarily be that which is true. Fame treats the petitioners at her house “[r]yght as her suster, dame Fortune, / Ys wont to serven in comune” (“just as her sister, lady Fortune, is accustomed to treat [others] in general”; 1547-48).⁴⁰ Kathy Cawsey argues that the “[t]he image of language depicted in Chaucer’s mountain of ice in many ways seems to be an image of manuscript transmission, a metaphor for the way some not-so-famous texts survive and other, more famous texts are lost” (976). The materiality of the house of Fame accordingly upsets distinctions between truth and falsehood.

The opulent architecture, like the temple of Venus, reflects the intellectual difficulties that the house of Fame brings. Geoffrey declares

[t]hat al the men that ben on lyve
 Ne han the kunnyng to describe
 The beaute of that ylke place,
 Ne coude casten no compace
 Swich another for to make,
 That myght of beaute ben hys make,
 Ne so wonderlych ywrought. (1167-73)

³⁹ Bennett also draws a parallel between these materials and the twigs that make up Rumour’s house (Chaucer’s *Book of Fame* 11). The house of Rumour “is founded to endure / While that hit lyst to Aventure, / That is the moder of tydynges” (“is founded to endure while it pleases Chance, who is the mother of tidings”; 1981-83).

⁴⁰ Wilbur Owen Sypherd relates Chaucer’s associations of Fame with Fortune to Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* (17).

(that all who are living do not have the skill to describe the beauty of that very place nor could lay any plan to make such another that might be its equal in beauty or made so wondrously.)

The house of Fame's challenges to the arts of describing and building lead to Geoffrey's perplexities. As the temple of Venus' opulence stuns him so that "I nyste never / Wher that I was" ("I never knew where I was"; 128-29), so too does the beauty of the house of Fame impede his intellectual faculty: "hit astonyeth yit my thought, / And maketh al my wyt to swynke, / On this castel to bethynke" ("it still astounds my mind and makes all my mind labour to think upon this castle"; 1174-76). The many pillars in Fame's hall on which stand various literary authorities overwhelm his senses, when he states,

The halle was al ful, ywys,
 Of hem that writen olde gestes
 As ben on treës rokes nestes;
 But hit a ful confus matere
 Were alle the gestes for to here
 That they of write, or how they highte. (1514-19)

(The hall was as full, indeed, of those who write ancient stories, as rooks' nests are on trees; but it would be a very confusing matter to hear all the stories of which they write or what they are called.)

Geoffrey's reaction resembles his earlier reaction to the disorienting multiplicity of the temple of Venus, which led him to declare that he does not know "where I am, ne in what contree" ("where I am, nor in what country"; 475) and to implore Christ, "Fro fantome

and illusion / Me save!” (“save me from phantasm and illusion!”; 493-94). Both the quality of the artwork and its diversity lead to Geoffrey’s state of perplexity.

Even amidst this confusion though, Geoffrey organizes his description such that it guides the intellect. Similar to the temple of Venus, the description of the house of Fame resembles an architectural mnemonic. First of all, the description of the many “mynstralles” (“minstrels”; 1197) and “gestiours” (“storytellers”; 1198) standing in the “sondry habitacles” (“sundry niches”; 1194) matches the architectural mnemonic structure of images within particular background places (Carruthers, “Italy” 187). The many minstrels standing in the niches of “the pynacles” (“the pinnacles”; 1193) resemble an ekphrastic description of building decorations and indeed have been linked to the thirteenth-century House of Musicians in Reims, France (Williams 6-9). They are also organized in an orderly fashion, with the oldest musicians, Orpheus, Orion, Chiron, and Glasgerion (Chaucer, *HF* 1203-08), arranged in the highest position, while the later musicians sit “under hem” (“under them”; 1210) (Carruthers, “Italy” 187). Geoffrey says that he “herde” (“heard”; 1201) these musicians, so they are also all speaking images “rather than silent,” as satisfies the architectural mnemonic (Carruthers, “Italy” 187). Another key technique of recollection is the arrangement of stories as figures on columns (Carruthers, “Italy” 188). Geoffrey sees a pillar of lead and iron with sculptures of historians such as Josephus the Hebrew, author of *The History of the Jews* (Chaucer, *HF* 1429-50); a pillar of iron with Statius, author of the *Thebaid* and the *Achilleid* (1456-63); an iron pillar with sculptures of the renowned authorities on the Trojan War: Homer,

Dares, Dictys, Lollius,⁴¹ Guido delle Colonne, and Geoffrey of Monmouth (1464-74); a tinned iron pillar with Virgil (1481-85); a pillar of copper with Ovid (1486-96); a pillar of iron with Lucan and other Roman historians (1497-1506); and a pillar of sulphur with Claudian (1507-12). Carruthers argues that the materials of the pillars suit the architectural mnemonic by enhancing memory of the stories that they support (“Italy” 188). For example, lead and iron suit the pillar of Josephus the Hebrew “of secte saturnyn” (“of the sect governed by Saturn”; Chaucer, *HF* 1432) and the other authors on his pillar, who “writen of batayles” (“write about battles”; 1441), because lead “withouten faille, / Ys . . . the metal of Saturne” (“without a doubt is the metal of Saturn”; 1448-49), and “yren Martes metal ys, / Which that god is of bataylle” (“iron is the metal of Mars, who is the god of war”; 1446-47). Geoffrey “hem nought be ordre telle” (“does not tell them in order”; 1453), but as befits the architectural mnemonic, he can discuss the contents of an architectural structure “at any point in the system” (Carruthers, “Italy” 188). The architectural mnemonic focuses this ekphrasis on the Troy story relevant to Book 1 and thus guides its audience to consider its theme of truth and falsehood in texts.

The *ductus* of the architectural mnemonic in Book 3 that parallels the Trojan story in the ekphrasis of Book 1 leads to further discernment of Aeneas’ contradictory character. Statius, for example, supports “the name . . . of cruel Achilles” (“the reputation . . . of cruel Achilles”; 1462-63). The adjective “cruel” evokes Achilles’ killing of Hector, the greatest Trojan hero (Bennett, Chaucer’s *Book of Fame* 141), but it also calls to mind the *exemplum* of Achilles as a cruel traitor like Aeneas when he was

⁴¹ Lollius has not been identified, but Chaucer may have mistakenly thought that Lollius was a Trojan War authority (Kittredge 47-133).

“fals and reccheles . . . to Breseyda” (“false and callous . . . to Breseyda”; 397-98). The Trojan pillar likewise hints at Aeneas’ treachery. The architectural mnemonic brings before the audience’s minds the speaking authorities. Geoffrey states that “[b]etwex” (“between”; 1476) the authorities on the Trojan pillar

was a litil envye.

Oon seyde that Omer made lyes,

Feynyng in hys poetries,

And was to Grekes favorable;

Therfor held he hyt but fable. (1476-80)

(was a little enmity. One said that Homer told lies, dissembling in his poems, and was favourable to Greeks; therefore, he regarded it as just a fable.)

This attack on Homer’s bias originates in Dares Phrygius (Fyler, Notes 988 n 1477-80), who was also responsible for the tradition of Aeneas as a betrayer of Troy. The pillars that follow engage more directly with Aeneas’ conflicting reputation. The description of the pillar of Virgil that follows directly contrasts with Dares’ point of view. Virgil “bore hath up a longe while / The fame of Pius Eneas” (“has increased the fame of Pious Aeneas for a long time”; 1484-85). After emphasizing Aeneas’ piety, he introduces the perspective of Ovid, which he had contrasted with Virgil’s in the description of Venus’ temple. By placing Ovid’s pillar “next” (“beside”; 1486) Virgil’s, he therefore evokes the previous conflicting perspectives that he cited in the description of the temple of Venus. The description of the house of Fame accordingly opens up Book 1’s consideration of Aeneas’ character to further interpretation.

Nevertheless, no absolute interpretation on Aeneas' character emerges. Ovid's perspective brings further confusion because after Geoffrey describes Ovid's pillar, he states that

this halle, of which I rede,
Was woxen on highte, length, and brede,
Wel more be a thousand del
Than hyt was erst, that saugh I wel. (1493-96)

(this hall of which I tell had grown a thousand times larger in height, length, and breadth than it was at first; I clearly saw that.)

The house of Fame may not have actually grown any larger though, for the beryl out of which it is constructed

shoone ful lyghter than a glas
And made wel more than hit was
To semen every thing, ywis,
As kynde thyng of Fames is. (1289-92)

(shone more brightly than a glass and made everything seem much more than it was, indeed, as is a natural property of Fame.)⁴²

⁴² Beryl's property of distorting reality matches the description of the goddess Fame, who at first seemed so lyte

That the lengthe of a cubite
Was lengere than she semed be.
But thus sone in a whyle she
Hir tho so wonderliche streighte
That with hir fet she erthe reighte,
And with hir hed she touched hevене. (1369-75)

(so little that the length of a cubit was longer than she seemed to be. But in a short time later she then so wondrously stretched herself that she reached earth with her feet and she touched heaven with her head.)

This indication of possible distortion of truth after the articulation of multiple perspectives does not eliminate the importance of and encouragement of a continual search for meaning. Like the earlier description of the temple of Venus, this description enables the audience to consider diverse perspectives as opposed to presenting a mass of unparticular confusion.

The description of the house of Fame also resembles the description of the temple of Venus in its presentation of variety as a source of harmony on an aesthetic and social level. It represents harmony on an aesthetic level through its parallels with Gothic architecture.⁴³ Variety abounds in the house of Fame, for, as Kendrick argues, “Chaucer’s pillars . . . are made of various metals (materials that require mining, mixing,

This distortion of reality likewise matches the spreading of rumours in the house of Rumour. When a person tells something that was told to him to somebody else, he “gan somewhat for to eche / To this tydyng in this speche / More than hit ever was” (“began to add something to this news in this speech, [making it] more than it ever was”; 2065-67). He similarly tells a third person the news,

[w]ere the tydyng soth or fals,
 Yit wolde he telle hyt natheles,
 And evermo with more ences
 Than yt was erst. Thus north and south
 Went every tydyng fro mouth to mouth,
 And that encreasing ever moo,
 As fyr ys wont to quyke and goo
 From a sparke spronge amys,
 Til al a citee brent up ys. (2072-80)

([whether] the news were true or false, he nevertheless would still tell it and always with a greater addition than it had at first. Thus, northwards and southwards every news went from mouth to mouth and [was] always increasing as a fire is accustomed to ignite and spread from a spark that leaped astray until an entire city is burnt up.)

⁴³ Braswell cites the “[b]abewynnes and pynacles, / Ymageries and tabernacles” (“gargoyles and pinnacles, carvings and tabernacles”; Chaucer 1189-90) and as many “wyndowes / As flakes falle in grete snowes” (“windows as flakes [that] fall in great snowfalls”; Chaucer 1191-92) as examples of Gothic architectural features, though she does not argue for specific visual references (106). Braswell posits minstrels’ galleries in English Gothic cathedrals as sources for the description of the house of Fame musicians (107) as well as the Sainte-Chapelle of the Palais de Justice as a source for the interior description (108). Laura Kendrick compares the Great Hall of the Palais de Justice with the house of Fame’s pillars “on eyther syde, / Streight doun to the dores wide, / Fro the dees” (“on each side from the dais straight down to the wide doors”; Chaucer, *HF* 1419-21) (123). In both cases, the pillars are topped with “folk of digne reverence” (“people worthy of reverence”; Chaucer, *HF* 1426) (Kendrick 123). Aydelotte also links the St. Stephen’s Chapel at Westminster to the house of Fame (49).

molding) to represent the varied ‘matter’ of poets’ and historians’ literary fabrications” (128). Amidst this variety, unity dominates in the entire house of Fame’s construction out of beryl but “[w]ythouten peces or joynynges” (“without sections or joints”; 1187). The house of Fame extends this visual aesthetic harmony to musical harmony with the nine muses surrounding Fame. Geoffrey declares, “And Lord, the hevenyssh melodye / Of songes ful of armonye / I herde aboute her trone ysonge” (“And Lord, the heavenly melody of songs full of harmony that I heard sung around her throne”; 1395-97). He also declares that “al the paleys-walles ronge” (“all the palace walls rang”; 1398) forth with the harmonious music. With the architectural mnemonic encouraging meditations on truths, even without representing any definite conclusions, the description of the house of Fame supports harmony on a social level too.

The way in which the ekphrasis supports a search for truth contrasts with the depictions of the goddess Fame and the house of Rumour. Fame’s depiction as a capricious figure like Fortune represents truth as completely incomprehensible. Rather than always granting petitioners the reputations that befit their actions, Lady Fame gives them whichever reputations she feels like giving them. For example, when people petition her for a “good fame, / . . . / In ful recompensacioun / Of good werkes” (“good reputation . . . in full recompense for good works”; 1555-58), she refuses their request because “me lyst hyt noht” (“it does not please me”; 1564). Fame confounds truth when she spreads a “shrewed fame” (“wicked reputation”; 1619) about “goode folk” (“good people”; 1608), which prompts Geoffrey to think, “Allas, . . . what adventures / Han these sory creatures!” (“Alas, . . . what fortunes these pitiful creatures have!”; 1631-32). Fame behaves contradictorily when to others she declares, “ye shul han better loos, / Right in

dispit of alle your foos, / Than worthy is . . .” (“you shall have [a] better reputation, directly in defiance of all of your foes, than is appropriate [for you]”; 1667-69), and when she grants the “gret renoun . . . / As they that han doon noble gestes, / And acheved alle hir lestes” (“renown [as] great . . . as they [have] that have done noble deeds and achieved all their desires”; 1736-38) to those who request it, even though they acknowledge that they “ydel al oure lyf ybe” (“[have] been idle all our life”; 1733). This incomprehensible truth resulting from capriciousness occurs in the house of Rumour as well. The house of Rumour illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing truth from falsehood through the influence of Fortune. Geoffrey discusses “[a] lesyng and a sad soth sawe, / That gonne of aventure drawe / Out at a wyndowe for to pace” (“a lie and a true, genuine statement that went by chance to pass out from a window”; 2089-91). Both the lie and the truth decide to be each other’s “owne sworn brother” (“own sworn brother”; 2101). So as to represent further how truth can be indistinguishable from lies, one of the two says (which one is not specified),

“We wil medle us ech with other,
 That no man, be they never so wrothe,
 Shal han on [of us] two, but bothe
 At ones, al besyde his leve,
 Come we a-morwe or on eve,
 Be we cried or stille yrouned.”
 Thus saugh I fals and soth compounded
 Togeder fle for oo tydyng. (2102-09)

(“We will each of us mix with the other, so that no man, however angry he may be, shall have [only] one of us two but both at once, entirely without his leave, whether we come in the morning or evening or are shouted or whispered quietly.”

I thus saw falsehood and truth compounded together fly as one piece of news.)

Neither Fame nor the house of Rumour even begins to clarify truth. Only through the descriptions of the temple of Venus and the house of Fame does *HF* suggest ways of seeking meaning in literature.

In conclusion, though the ekphrases in *HF* enable the audience to pause for reflection on the work’s themes, they also alter the text’s *ductus* by taking the audience in an entirely new direction. The ekphrases in *HF* therefore contrast with the ekphrases in both *BD* and *PF* on account of the more deeply involved narrator who presents the architectural mnemonic. While “this poem parodies the logical systems that attempt to organize and give meaning to worldly diversity” (Lynch, *Chaucer’s Philosophical Visions* 64), the ekphrases still promote a search for truth, albeit not absolute or universal truth from literature. Because the rest of the narrative presents this search as futile, when the ekphrases demonstrate how to find meaning from literature, they alter the meaning of *HF*.

Chapter 4

Ekphrastic Conveyance of Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*

The Knight's Tale (*KnT*), the first of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, contains his only extensive ekphrases outside of the dream visions: the descriptions of the images in the oratories of Venus, Mars, and Diana. Chronologically Chaucer's latest, the ekphrases combine the technique of catalogues used in *BD* and *PF* with the speaker's narration and interpretation of stories used in *HF*. The descriptions of these images are similarly multisensory. In contrast to Chaucer's other uses of ekphrasis though, the descriptions satisfy a practical function for the narrative in their role within a sequence of elaborate rhetorical figures describing the same physical space. First of all, in this space, Palamon and Arcite engage in individual combat for Theseus' sister-in-law, Emily. Conventional epic similes compare the combatants to hunters and animals. In the same grove where they fought one-on-one, Theseus commands an amphitheatre to be built so that the knights will continue the battle, with armies of one hundred knights each. The description of each oratory within this amphitheatre shows balance both within itself and with each of the other descriptions of oratories and relies on conventional classical allusions. The structure created by balanced descriptions and conventions, however, breaks down in the alliterative description of the battle. At this point, the breakdown in rhetoric marks the uncontrollable chaos of the narrative. When Arcite dies, Theseus then builds Arcite's funeral pyre in this same location. The long *occupatio* describing the pyre, though tightly balanced, becomes a ridiculous attempt at reasserting order because of its unconventionally great length. The common location for these central actions in the narrative creates events and rhetoric that mutually enforce recollections of each other,

an illustration of “locational memory” and also the architectural mnemonic (Carruthers, “Seeing Things” 105-06). The breakdown in convention for the *occupatio* recalls and resembles the earlier breakdown in the rhetoric describing the tournament as well as recalls and contrasts with the balance and convention of the ekphrases and the individual combat similes. These rhetorical patterns create the narrative movement from order to disorder, for the ekphrases describe Theseus’ attempts at enforcing aesthetic, social, and cosmic order,¹ which, as the Knight’s breakdown in rhetoric for the battle scene shows, ultimately fail.² Even within the orderliness of the ekphrases though, the chaotic subject matter of the images prefigures order’s dissolution. As *ductus*, the ekphrases in *KnT* therefore show the pathway to take in interpreting the tale through foreshadowing and also direct the course of the tale through their participation in a rhetorical sequence reinforced by “locational memory.”³

¹ For discussion of Theseus’ creation of order on an aesthetic, social, and cosmic level, see Charles Muscatine (“Form” 911-29). Paul G. Ruggiers has likewise found a stable universe in the tale: “All the deities used in the tale, even the fury that starts up out of the ground, are but manifestations of the power of the Prime Mover” (*Art* 157).

² Many critics have found destructiveness within the tale’s implementation of order. See Elizabeth Salter (33), Joseph Westlund (526), Kathleen A. Blake (8), Joerg O. Fichte (353), David Aers (*Chaucer, Langland* 176-79), Lee Patterson (224), and Ronald B. Herzman (343). Even Muscatine himself recognizes “an ever-swelling undertheme of disaster” within the orderliness of the descriptions of the oratories (“Form” 928), though he argues that disorder is ultimately contained (“Form” 929).

³ Because the amphitheatre is purposely built during the narrative, Chaucer departs from the dream vision tradition of describing pre-existent works of art, but contrary to Lessing’s ideals of narrative decorum, according to which works of art should be described during the process of their creation (126), the Knight describes the amphitheatre in its finished state. Various critics have recognized the ekphrases’ thematic importance, if not their narrative importance. Robert M. Jordan claims that “balance is attained at the sacrifice of continuing forward movement of the narrative. . .” (161) and that “it is difficult to justify the elaborate description of the arena . . . as a contribution integral to the enlargement of the action” (172). Richard Neuse calls the lists the poem’s “central symbolic *locus*” (302). John P. McCall states, “Theseus’s allegorical theater stands as a central statement” about “all that was said and done before its construction and all that follows after” (*Chaucer* 64). H. Marshall Leicester Jr. argues that the ekphrasis “patently takes time out from the story, interrupting it to concentrate on decorative detail. The effect of this technique is to draw attention away from the story as a succession of events and place it more on scenic factors, on the panorama of the world of the tale rather than its motion” (*Disenchanted* 264). He states, however, that the amphitheatre represents “a symbolic image” of Theseus’ society’s “most central concerns” (*Disenchanted* 265). Carruthers argues that the action’s situation in central locations makes the themes more memorable,

Before the action that occurs within the single location, the Knight incorporates a mini ekphrasis to anticipate thematically the purpose of the large-scale ones. The smaller ekphrasis first of all anticipates the way in which Chaucer will use the larger ekphrases for Theseus' attempts at instituting order. After the weeping Theban women entreat him for assistance, Theseus fights Creon, the new king of Thebes, who "wol nat suffren" ("will not allow"; I.945) their husbands' bodies "[n]either to been yburyed nor ybrent, / But maketh houndes ete hem in despit" ("either to be buried or burned but out of defiance makes dogs eat them"; I.946-47). As Theseus rides to battle, "[t]he rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe, / So shyneth in his white baner large / That alle the feeldes glyteren up and doun" ("the red picture of Mars, with spear and target, so shines on his large white banner that all the fields glitter all about"; I.975-77). By illuminating all of the surroundings, Theseus' banner depicting the god of war foreshadows his own victory over the surrounding area. Theseus also has a "penoun / Of gold ful riche, in which ther was ybete / The Mynotaur, which that he wan in Crete" ("pennon of very rich gold, which was adorned with the Minotaur, which he defeated in Crete"; I.978-80). Boccaccio's *Teseida*, Chaucer's immediate source for *KnT*, does not mention the Minotaur; Chaucer instead borrows Theseus' image of the Minotaur on his shield from Statius (DiMarco, Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 829 n 980).⁴ By adding these details that combine the symbolism of Mars with Theseus' own past exploit to his adaptation of the *Teseida*, Chaucer emphasizes Theseus as a consummate warrior who dispenses order. Theseus' "personal conquest of the monstrous product of Pasiphae's lust" makes him a

but beyond the descriptions' mnemonic function, they "serve no commensurate narrative purpose" ("Seeing Things" 103).

⁴ See Statius, *Thebaid* 12.668-73.

figure of rationality (Richard H. Green 132).⁵ The ekphrasis of Theseus' symbols of Mars and the Minotaur thus foreshadows not only his conquest of Thebes but also his later attempts to order the passions of Palamon and Arcite according to chivalric conventions of publicly battling in lists, rather than fighting in private. The description of the symbols foreshadows the order that the later ekphrases evoke, and like these later ekphrases, it also potentially evokes disorder. While opposing Pasiphae's lust in defeating the Minotaur, Theseus still could not conquer his own passions. He became Ariadne's lover so she would teach him how to overcome the Minotaur and escape the labyrinth. He also famously abandoned Ariadne for Phedra.⁶ The text does not directly refer to this aspect of the story, yet the story's association with Theseus' own passions seems just as valid a reading as that offered by Green. When Theseus later pardons Palamon and Arcite for fighting in the grove outside Athens, even though Palamon was supposed to be in prison and Arcite was supposed to be exiled, he declares that once "a servant was I" ("I was a servant"; I.1814) of love. Theseus states that he "hath ben caught ofte in his laas" ("has often been caught in its [i.e. love's] snare"; I.1817), a statement which will later align Theseus with the lovers painted in Venus' oratory, who "so caught were in hir las, / Til they for wo ful ofte seyde 'allas!'" ("were so caught in her snare until they for woe very often said 'alas!'" ; I.1951-52).⁷ Theseus' self-identification with Palamon's and Arcite's passions enables him to pardon them and create the orderly amphitheatre in the first place, yet his "impenitent reminiscing on his

⁵ Audiences would have been prepared to interpret Theseus as a source of order based on Statius, Ovid, Virgil, Lucan, and Dante (Richard H. Green 129-30).

⁶ This story figures prominently in Chaucer's ekphrasis in *HF* (405-26), in which Geoffrey denounces Theseus' abandonment of Ariadne for Phedra.

⁷ Vincent DiMarco compares I.1817 and I.1951-52 (Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 834 n 1817).

own past” as a lover by victimizing himself, combined with the earlier emblem of the Minotaur, alludes to the story of his abandonment of Ariadne in a way that contrasts with the order he strives to create (Aers, *Chaucer, Langland* 182). Therefore, Theseus does not entirely become a figure of rationality even at the moment where he opposes disorder in the most grandiose way. The ekphrasis of Theseus’ banner and pennon thus metaphorically represents the way Theseus imposes order in having the amphitheatre built yet will not permanently maintain it. The *ductus* of this small ekphrasis, though it does not serve a narrative purpose in and of itself, directs the audience’s interpretation of the later ekphrases and therefore integrates them more fully in the narrative.

The beginning of the rhetorical sequence into which the ekphrases are integrated occurs when Palamon and Arcite, having come together after seven years, resume their quarrel over the love of Emily and fight each other in a grove outside Athens. By stating that “in the grove, at tyme and place yset, / This Arcite and this Palamon ben met” (in the grove at the set time and place, this Arcite and this Palamon are met; I.1635-36), the Knight entrenches the grove more firmly within the action. Specifically, the Knight makes the grove the location for chivalric action. Though V. A. Kolve opposes Palamon and Arcite’s “fighting in the wild wood, without ceremony, rules, or judge” with “the theatre that Theseus builds for this tournament” that “is made consciously to stand at the furthest possible distance from all that is disorderly and self-destructive in man” (*Chaucer and the Imagery* 112), this individual combat scene that occurs before Theseus intervenes in the conflict still partakes in the chivalric order that Theseus later promotes when he builds the amphitheatre. For example, rules of chivalry still govern Palamon and Arcite’s fight because “two harneys hath he dight, / Bothe suffisaunt and mete to

darreyne / The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne” (“he prepared two suits of armour, both sufficient and suitable for engaging in the battle between the two of them on the battlefield”; I.1630-32), thereby making good Arcite’s “trouthe” (“pledge”; I.1610) that he will “bryngen harneys” (“bring armour”; I.1613) in order to ensure a fair fight. They also “heelp for to armen oother / As freendly as he were his owene brother” (“helped to arm [the] other [in] as friendly [a way] as [if] he were his own brother”; I.1651-52). As they prepare for the fight, epic similes articulate rhetorically the orderliness of their chivalric world:

To chaungen gan the colour in hir face;
 Right as the hunters in the regne of Trace,
 That stondesth at the gappe with a spere,
 Whan hunted is the leon or the bere,
 And hereth hym come russhyng in the greves,
 And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
 And thynketh, “Heere cometh my mortal enemy!
 Withoute faille, he moot be deed, or I,
 For outhur I moot sleen hym at the gappe,
 Or he moot sleen me, if that me myshappe.”
 So ferden they in chaungyng of hir hewe,
 As fer as everich of hem oother knewe. (I.1637-48)

(The color in their faces began to change; just as the hunters in the kingdom of Thrace, he who stands at the gap with a spear when the lion or the bear is hunted and hears him come rushing in the branches and break both [the] boughs and the

leaves and thinks, “Here comes my mortal enemy! Without fail, he must be dead or I, for either I must slay him at the gap or he must slay me, if it be misfortunate for me!” They fared just so in changing their hue insofar as each of them knew [the] other.)

Chaucer does not depart from convention here because, as DiMarco notes, Chaucer’s sources, the *Teseida* and *Thebaid*, likewise rely on such epic similes that compare the heroes to hunters (Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 833 n 1638-46).⁸ The Knight continues to use epic convention to describe the fight itself:

⁸ When Palaemon and Arcites are about to fight in the battle theatre, Boccaccio’s *Teseida* says,

E ciaschedun per sé divenne tale,
 qual ne’ getuli boschi il cacciatore,
 a’ rotti balzi accostatosi, il quale
 il leon, mosso per lungo romore,
 aspetta e ferma in sé l’animo equale,
 e nella faccia giela per tremore,
 premendo i teli con forza sudanti,
 e li suoi passi trieman tutti quanti;
 né sa chi venga né quale e’ si sia,
 ma di fremente orribili segni
 riceve nella mente, che disia
 di non avere a ciò tesi l’ingegni;
 e ’l mormorar che sente tuttavia,
 con cieca cura in sé par che disegni,
 per quel talora sua tema alleggiando,
 e ancora tal volta più gravando. (7.106-07)

(Each one of them became like the hunter who awaits the lion near the broken cliffs, and, stirred by the lion’s prolonged roar, buoys up his dauntless spirit. As he clutches his perspiring weapons hard, his face grows cold with trembling and all his steps waver.

And he does not know what is coming or who that comer might be, but he senses the terrifying signals of the quivering presence in his soul, so that he wishes that he had not spread the snares. Yet the growling that he hears seems aimed at him with blind caution so that sometimes his fear is alleviated and sometimes aggravated; McCoy 187)

In Statius’ *Thebaid*, when Tiresias contacts spirits to see the future, Eteocles is

qualis Gaetulae stabulantem ad confraga silvae
 venator longo motum clamore leonem
 exspectat firmans animum et sudantia nisu
 tela premens; gelat ora pavor gressusque tremescunt,
 quis veniat quantusque, sed horrida signa frementis
 accipit et caeca metitur murmura cura. (4.494-99)

([e]ven as a hunter waits for a lion that long shouting rouses from his den in the rough of a Gaetolian forest, steeling his courage and gripping his weapon that sweats with the effort; fear

Thou myghtest wene that this Palamon

In his fightyng were a wood leoun,

And as a crueel tigre was Arcite;

As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,

That frothen whit as foom for ire wood.

Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.

(You might think that this Palamon might be a crazy lion in his fighting and [that] Arcite was as a cruel tiger is; they began to strike [each other] as wild boars that foam at the mouth as white as foam because of crazy anger. They fought up to the ankle in their blood; I.1655-60)

When the Knight moves from comparing Palamon and Arcite to hunters before the fight to comparing them to fierce animals themselves during the fight, he captures the descent into bestiality that the conflict creates. These conventional similes, which derive from Boccaccio and Statius (DiMarco, Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 833 n 1638-46, n 1658), introduce the same disorder that they represent in these sources.⁹ This disorder that

freezes his face and his steps tremble as he wonders what creature approaches, how big—but he hears the roaring, dread sign, and measures the sound in blind trepidation.)

All translations of the *Thebaid* belong to D. R. Shackleton Bailey and face the original in the edition from which I cite.

⁹ Boccaccio's *Teseida* states,

Qual per lo bosco il cinghiar ruvinoso,
 poi c'ha di dietro a sé sentiti i cani,
 con le sete levate e isquamoso,
 or qua or là per viottoli strani
 ruggiando va fuggendo furioso,
 rami rompendo e schiantando silvani,
 cotale entrò mirabilmente armato
 Palemon quivi da ciascun mirato. (7.119)

(Splendidly armed and under the gaze of all, Palaemon entered as the furious and scaly wild boar does, bristles on end when he hears the dogs behind him, and flees roaring furiously through the forest over unfamiliar paths, breaking branches and rending trees; McCoy 189)

Statius' *Thebaid* similarly uses animalistic imagery to describe Polynices and Eteocles' duel:

pervades chivalric order forecasts the disorder of Theseus' intervention when he has the amphitheatre built for the tournament.

In the second rhetorical description of the grove, Theseus commands the amphitheatre to be built and the tournament to be held within it in order to regulate the conflict further. The text again highlights that the action occurs within this particular location, for Theseus declares, "The lystes shal I maken in this place" ("I shall make the lists in this place"; I.1862). In this way the tale differs from Boccaccio's *Teseida*, where the amphitheatre already exists at the time when Theseus orders that the tournament occur.¹⁰ *KnT* also contrasts with the *Teseida* in that Chaucer's amphitheatre contains the oratories while Boccaccio's does not (*Tes.*7.23, 42).¹¹ By altering Boccaccio to make Theseus responsible for the amphitheatre's and oratories' construction, Chaucer makes Theseus ultimately responsible for the order that the structures embody.¹² The ekphrases

fulmineos veluti praeceps cum cominus egit
 ira sues strictisque erexit tergora saetis:
 igne tremunt oculi, lunataque dentibus uncis
 ora sonant; spectat pugnas de rupe propinqua
 venator pallens canibusque silentia suadet:
 sic avidi incurrunt . . .

(Even as a rush of anger drives boars like thunderbolts against each other, raising their backs in spiky bristles; their eyes quiver with fire, their crescent faces resound with their hooked tusks; the hunter watches the bout from a nearby rock, paling and bidding his dogs be silent: so avidly they run at one another; 11.530-35)

¹⁰ Teseo commands Palaemon and Arcites, "a battaglia nel teatro nostro / sarete insieme col seguito vostro" ("you will come together with your entourage for combat in our theater"; *Tes.*5.97; McCoy 136). In this pre-existent theatre, "le genti sedeno / a rimirare gli arenarii diri / o altri che facesser alcun gioco . . ." ("People used to sit on these steps to watch cruel gladiators or others engage in some game"; *Tes.*7.110; McCoy 187). Kolve states, "As the reference to gladiatorial combats and games makes clear, Teseo's theatre holds an accustomed place in the public life of the city" (*Chaucer and the Imagery* 106).

¹¹ Boccaccio does not describe the temples of Venus and Mars where Palaemon and Arcites pray; instead, he describes the houses of Venus and Mars to which Palaemon's and Arcites' personified prayers respectively travel. Chaucer draws details for the descriptions of Venus' and Mars' temples from Boccaccio's descriptions of their houses. Emilia's prayer does not travel to Diana's house (*Tes.*7.70-93).

¹² Kolve writes that the amphitheatre "allows Chaucer to assess, in an unusually comprehensive and exploratory way, the possibilities of creating human order within a world apparently governed by chance" (*Chaucer and the Imagery* 105). Many others, such as John Halverson (615), P. M. Kean (1-52), and McCall (*Chaucer* 64), have discussed the amphitheatre as a source of order.

therefore show the way in which Theseus asserts his control over Palamon and Arcite's rivalry over Emily, as the description of Theseus' Minotaur pennon anticipates.

The opening description of the amphitheatre as a whole first establishes the order that Theseus creates on aesthetic and social levels. The Knight frames the description of the amphitheatre in such a way that it exemplifies Theseus' control. As Jordan argues, with the building of the lists, "the emphasis shifts from Palamon and Arcite to Theseus, for the tourney is very much the Duke's spectacle" (156). Through his "dispençe" ("expenditures"; I.1882), Theseus has built "the lystes royally" ("the lists royally"; I.1884). The Knight also emphasizes Theseus' command over the skills of all of the labourers,

[f]or in the lond ther was no crafty man
 That geometrie or ars-metrike kan,
 Ne portreyour, ne kervere of ymages,
 That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
 The theatre for to maken and devyse.
 And for to doon his ryte and sacrificise,
 He estward hath, upon the gate above,
 In worshipe of Venus, goddessse of love,
 Doon make an auter and an oratorie;
 And on the gate westward, in memorie
 Of Mars, he maketh hath right swich another,
 That coste largely of gold a fother.
 And northward, in a touret on the wal,

Of alabastre whit and reed coral,
 An oratorie, riche for to see,
 In worshipe of Dyane of chastitee,
 Hath Theseus doon wrought in noble wyse. (I.1897-1913)

(for there was no skillful man in the land who knows of geometry or the art of measurement, nor painter, nor carver of images to whom Theseus did not give food and wages in order to make and contrive the theatre. And in order to do his rite and sacrifice he has eastward above the gate in honour of Venus, goddess of love, had an altar and an oratory made; and above the westward gate, in memory of Mars, he has made another just so, which cost fully a cartload of gold. And northward, in a turret of white alabaster and red coral on the wall, Theseus has had an oratory, rich to see, made in a noble manner in honour of the chaste Diana.)

By stressing the opulence of the amphitheatre, including “of gold a fother” (I.1908) required to make the oratory of Mars and the “alabastre whit and reed coral” (I.1910) used to create the oratory of Diana that is “riche for to see” (I.1911), the Knight celebrates the grandeur of Theseus who directs its creation. The amphitheatre’s aesthetics reflect Theseus’ social power through the expensive materials that represent chivalric society. Repeatedly the Knight emphasizes the nobility associated with these decorations. For instance, the oratory for Diana “[h]ath Theseus doon wrought in noble wyse” (“Theseus has had made in a noble manner”; I.1913). The oratories contain “noble kervyng” (“noble sculpture”; I.1915), and what is more, “swich a noble theatre as it was / I dar wel seyen in this world ther nas” (“I correctly dare say that in this world there was

not such a noble theatre as it was”; I.1885-86). The amphitheatre also represents an appropriate chivalric forum to determine whom Emily will marry. In spite of the lists’ grandiose size of “a myle” (“a mile”; I.1887) in circumference, any late-fourteenth-century audience would recognize their conventionality. George Neilson (184-85) draws a parallel between Theseus’ lists and the ordinances of Thomas of Woodstock (1355-97), duke of Gloucester. Woodstock states that lists used for judicial combat should be built with “a gate in the Est, and an oothir in the West . . .” (“a gate in the East and another in the West”; 307). In Theseus’ lists, “[e]stward ther stood a gate of marbul whit, / Westward right swich another in the opposit” (“eastward there stood a gate of white marble, westward, on the opposite side, another just so”; Chaucer I.1893-94). The emphasis on the splendour and consummate nobility of the decorations therefore showcases his ability to provide social control.

While the lists’ commonality with other lists creates social order, their uniqueness creates order on a cosmic level. Because “swich a place / Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space” (“there was no other such place on earth [constructed] in so little time”; I.1895-96), their construction represents a godlike feat. Aesthetic orderliness contributes to the cosmic orderliness, for its massive layout resembles a zodiac, according to Douglas Brooks and Alastair Fowler (128). The Knight states, “Round was the shap, in manere of compas” (“The design was round, in the shape of a circle”; I.1889), and the amphitheatre has oratories located in precise positions: Venus’ in the east, Mars’ in the west, and Diana’s in the north. If Theseus directs such an otherworldly construction that captures the zodiac, he therefore symbolically represents control over the cosmos. The opening

description of the amphitheatre thus presents Theseus' creation of aesthetic order that in turn supports social and cosmic order.

The descriptions within each oratory continue to represent the amphitheatre as Theseus' orderly creation.¹³ The descriptions of Venus' oratory in forty-nine lines (Chaucer I.1918-66), Mars' oratory in eighty-four lines (I.1967-2050), and Diana's oratory in thirty-eight lines (I.2051-88) are "irregular in size" but "similar in shape" (Jordan 174). The thirty-eight-line description represents greater rhetorical balance than in the *Teseida*, where Diana's temple receives minimal description—"Fu mondo il tempio e di bei drappi ornato, / al quale ella pervenne . . ." ("The temple to which she came was clean and adorned with beautiful hangings"; 7.72; McCoy 180). In each of Chaucer's oratory descriptions, the Knight first describes the paintings on the walls and then describes the statues of each of the gods, and in each case, the Knight represents similar types of paintings and rhetorical strategies.

The descriptions of the paintings resemble each other in their inclusion of allegorical or classical figures. The description of Venus' oratory lists

Plesaunce and Hope, Desir, Foolhardynesse,
 Beautee and Youthe, Bauderie, Richesse,
 Charmes and Force, Lesynges, Flaterye,
 Despense, Bisynesse, and Jalousye. (I.1925-28)

¹³ Patterson links the symmetrical oratory descriptions with order and relates this order not only to Theseus but to the Knight's "narratorial control" (224). Blake similarly argues that the creation of order "is reflected in the way the narrative itself is managed. We are conscious from the first that the manager uses a strong hand" through his "careful alternation of balanced blocks of material" (17).

(Pleasure and Hope, Desire, Foolhardiness, Beauty and Youth, Mirth, Riches, Charms and Force, Falsehood, Flattery, Expenditure, Attentiveness, and Jealousy.)

As well, the description includes “Lust” (“Desire”; I.1932) and “Ydelnesse” (“Idleness”; I.1940), the porter of Venus’ garden painted on the wall. Then the Knight alludes to the classical figures “Narcisus” (“Narcissus”; I.1941), “Ercules” (“Hercules”; I.1943), “Medea” (I.1944), “Circes” (“Circe”; I.1944), “Turnus” (I.1945), and “Cresus” (“Croesus”; I.1946), along with the biblical “Salomon” (“Solomon”; I.1942). The description of Mars’ oratory repeats this pattern of first listing allegorical figures and then listing classical figures.¹⁴ While the description of Diana’s oratory does not contain any description of allegorical figures, the Knight’s opening statement about the oratories associates all three descriptions with allegorical significance:

But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse

The noble kervyng and the portreitures,

The shap, the contenance, and the figures

That weren in thise oratories thre. (I.1914-17)

(But I had as of yet forgotten to describe the noble sculpture and the paintings—the design, the appearance, and the illustrations—that were in these three oratories.)

¹⁴ Allegorical figures include “Felonye” (“Wickedness”; I.1996), “Ire” (“Anger”; I.1997), “Drede” (“Fear”; I.1998), “open werre” (“open warfare”; I.2002), “Contek” (“strife”; I.2003), “menace” (“menace”; I.2003), “deeth” (“death”; I.2008), “Meschaunce” (“Misfortune”; I.2009), “Woodnesse” (“Madness”; I.2011), “Compleint” (“Grievance”; I.2012), “Outhees” (“Outcry”; I.2012), “Outrage” (“Violence”; I.2012), and “Conquest” (I.2028). Classical figures include “Julius,” “Nero,” and “Antonius” (I.2031-32).

“[C]ontenance” (I.1916) connotes the physical appearance of the people in the sculpture and paintings, while “figures” (I.1916) connotes the allegorical meaning of the sculpture and paintings; according to *MED*, “figure” can mean “[s]omething having symbolic significance, symbol” (Def. 3a) as well as “design, drawing, diagram, or illustration” (Def. 5a). Though the description of Diana’s oratory contains no explicit discussion of allegorical figures, it continues the pattern of the descriptions of the other oratories by including painted classical figures: “Calistopee” (“Callisto”; I.2056), “Dane” (“Daphne,” I.2062), “Attheon” (“Acteon,” I.2065), “Atthalante” (“Atalanta”; I.2070), and “Meleagre” (“Meleager”; I.2071).

The descriptions of the statues of each of the gods also follow similar patterns. Each description contains a roughly equivalent number of lines: twelve lines for Venus’ statue (I.1955-66), ten lines for Mars’ (I.2041-50), and fourteen lines for Diana’s (I.2075-88). In each case, the Knight begins by describing how the gods are positioned. Venus’ statue was “fletyng in the large see” (“floating in the large sea”; I.1956), Mars’ statue “upon a carte stood / Armed” (“stood upon a chariot, armed”; I.2041-42), and Diana’s statue “on an hert ful hye seet” (“sat very high on a hart”; I.2075). After indicating the position of each god, the Knight then describes the god’s appearance and accoutrements, with the point of view moving from lower to higher up the statue. When describing Venus, the Knight states that “fro the navele doun al covered was / With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas” (“from the navel down all was covered by green waves, bright as any glass”; I.1957-58). The focus then moves up to the “citole in hir right hand” (“citole in her right hand”; I.1959), to the “rose gerland” (“rose garland”; I.1961) on her head, and then to “[a]bove hir heed hir dowves flikerynge” (“her doves fluttering above her

head”; I.1962). When describing Mars, the Knight states that he was “[a]rmed” (“armed”; I.2042) and then focuses on Mars’ countenance that “looked grym as he were wood” (“looked grim as if he were crazy”; I.2042). When describing Diana, the Knight states that she has “smale houndes al aboute hir feet, / And undernethe hir feet she hadde a moone” (“small dogs all around her feet, and underneath her feet she had a moon”; I.2076-77). The description next moves to her “gaude grene” (“yellowish green”; I.2079) clothing, to her “bowe in honde and arwes in a cas” (“bow in hand and arrows in a case”; I.2080), and then to “[h]ir eyen” that “caste she ful lowe adoun” (“her eyes”; “she cast far down below”; I.2081). The last aspect of each description of the gods is the figure or figures accompanying each god. After describing Venus, the Knight describes Cupid in front of her (I.1963-66). After describing Mars, the Knight describes first the Martian figures that are used in geomancy, “Puella” and “Rubeus” (I.2045), and then the wolf, which is “biforn hym at his feet / With eyen rede” (“in front of him at his feet with red eyes”; I.2047-48) and which “eet” (“ate”; I.2048) from a man. After describing Diana, the Knight describes the woman who “travaillynge was hire biforn” (“was in labour in front of her”; I.2083). With these symmetrical descriptions of the statues in combination with the paintings, the Knight enacts Theseus’ implementation of order.

The descriptions also resemble each other through phrases that encourage visualization and further reflection. The amphitheatre as a whole resembles one of the structures of the architectural mnemonic which encouraged memories by placing them in different rooms or locations within the edifice (Carruthers, *Craft* 23).¹⁵ Carruthers finds

¹⁵ See also Carruthers, “Seeing Things” (93-106). Kolve similarly argues that Chaucer’s incorporation of the descriptions of the temples “into the theatre itself, concentrating it into a single narrative image,” enables the contents to be “more potent in the memory” (*Chaucer and the Imagery* 114).

cues that encourage the memory in phrases like “by ordre,” when the Knight states, “alle the circumstances / Of love, which that I rekned and rekne shal, / By ordre weren peynted on the wal” (“all the relevant aspects of love, which I listed and shall list, were painted sequentially on the wall”; Chaucer I.1932-34), and when he refers to the temple constructed “in memorie / Of Mars” (“in memory of Mars”; I.1906-07) (“Seeing Things” 103). As part of the architectural mnemonic, the Knight includes repeated variations of phrases of vision, such as “I saugh” (“I saw”).¹⁶ Spearing mistakenly regards Chaucer’s use of the formula as a flaw deriving from “the assumption that, when a symbolic setting is being described, there must be someone present to see it” (175). Although the source passage in Boccaccio repeatedly uses the expression “vide” (“she saw”; *Tes.*7.33; McCoy 173) to tell what Palaemon’s and Arcites’ prayers saw, the Knight’s use of the first-person account fulfills its own purpose. Kolve’s observations about Chaucer’s use of the phrase in *HF* can be applied to *KnT*. Kolve states that in *HF*, the “series of ‘I saugh’ events” are “clearly intended to make us ‘see’ in our turn, and then move out into kinds of experience not accessible to sight alone” (“Chaucer and the Visual Arts” 305). Therefore, “[r]eading, seeing, hearing, and remembering” become “interchangeable” (Kolve, “Chaucer and the Visual Arts” 305). Collette supports this reading when she argues that the phrase “invites the reader to use visual images stored in the mind to stimulate the imagination, to join with the Knight to comprehend the broader meaning of

¹⁶ In the description of Venus’ temple, the Knight uses the expressions “maystow se” (“you can see”; I.1918), “to biholde” (“to behold”; I.1919), “may ye seen” (“you can see”; I.1947), “for to se” (“to see”; I.1955, 1960), and “as it is often seene” (“as it is often seen”; I.1965). Beginning with the description of Mars’ oratory, the Knight repeats “I saugh” ten times: I.1995, 2005, 2011, 2017, 2028, 2056, 2062, 2065, 2067, and 2073. Additional phrases the Knight uses in the descriptions of Mars’ and Diana’s oratories include “to biholde” (“to behold”; I.1978), “for to se” (“to see”; I.1984), and “as men may see” (“as one can see”; I.2061).

what is localized in the names Venus, Mars, and Diana” (48).¹⁷ They contribute to the ekphrases as *enargeia*, which forefronts scenes in one’s mind for further meditation (Carruthers, *Craft* 222). The phrases of visualization encourage the audience to apply to the ekphrases their own experiences or readings as well as earlier events in the text. To demonstrate, the Knight’s final use of the phrase “I saugh” at the end of the description of Diana’s oratory models additional memory work for the audience. The Knight states, “Ther saugh I many another wonder storie, / The which me list nat drawn to memorie” (“I saw many other wonderful stories there, which it does not please me to draw to mind”; I.2073-74). Here the Knight provides “an invitation to the audience to draw both into and from their own memories in order to add to” the ekphrasis (Carruthers, “Seeing Things” 105). The other ekphrases of the paintings in each oratory end similarly, as the Knight states, “Suffiseth heere ensamples oon or two” of classical figures painted on the walls of Venus’ oratory, “[a]nd though I koude rekene a thousand mo” (“One or two examples suffice here, even though I could tell of a thousand more”; I.1953-54). After discussing the three classical figures painted on the wall of Mars’ oratory, the Knight similarly states, “Suffiseth oon ensample in stories olde; / I may nat rekene hem alle though I wolde” (“One example in old stories suffices; I am unable to tell them all even if I desired to”; I.2039-40). Intimating the vast pictorial programmes of each oratory at the same places of each description and appealing to the sense of sight throughout construct descriptions that similarly encourage recollection.

¹⁷ The text does not make an explicit connection between the Knight’s personal experience and use of the phrase, though Collette argues that the Knight “repeatedly emphasizes that he has *seen*, that is, visually experienced, lived through, and conceptualized many of the forces and principles that operate within the tale as a whole” (46). Patterson similarly argues that the Knight speaks from repressed personal experience (226).

As medieval arts of memory operated not solely through visual but through multisensory stimuli, the ekphrases similarly incorporate multisensory imagery. Explicit appeals to senses besides vision in Venus' oratory include the paintings of the "sikes colde" ("anguished sighs"; I.1920), the figures that "for wo ful ofte seyde 'allas!'" ("for woe very often said 'alas!'" ; I.1952), and "on hir heed, ful semely for to se, / A rose gerland, fressh and wel smellynge" ("a rose garland, fresh and fragrant, very seemly to see on her head"; I.1960-61). The walls of Mars' oratory depict the forest surrounding his temple in Thrace, "[i]n which ther ran a rumbel in a swough" ("in which there spread a rumble in a rushing sound of wind"; I.1979). Also, from Mars' temple "came a rage and swich a veze" ("came a rush of wind and such a rush"; I.1985).¹⁸ Similar to the painted images in Venus' oratory, the sculpted woman in front of Diana's statue "[f]ul pitously Lucyna gan . . . calle / And seyde, 'Help, for thou mayst best of alle!'" ("very pitifully called on Lucyna and said, 'Help, for you can best of all!'" ; I.2085-86). Stanbury argues that in instances of the descriptions of the temples, such as this one, "the boundaries between art or image and reality increasingly blur . . . the images described increasingly seem to take on animation and dimensionality" (104). Andrew James Johnston, agreeing with Stanbury, states that this description represents the convention of describing an artwork in so lifelike a manner that it begins to speak out (184). The Knight may not necessarily be extrapolating beyond the visual evidence by representing the artwork speaking, as visual artworks such as portraits and statues often imply an

¹⁸ Similar to *HF*, the "visibile parlare" ("visible speech"; Dante, *Purg.*10.95) of the marble carvings on the first terrace of Dante's Purgatory possibly influenced Chaucer (Boitani, *Chaucer and Boccaccio* 84). Boitani highlights, though, that Dante only gives the impression that the marble carvings can speak rather than stating that they actually speak (*Purg.*10.40, 43-45, 79, 83) (*Chaucer and Boccaccio* 84).

emotion or even a speech on the part of the object through *tituli*. The sounds of the decorations in Mars' oratory like the "rumbel in a swough" (I.1979) and the "rage and swich a veze" (I.1985), however, as Piero Boitani recognizes, are non-representable (*Chaucer and Boccaccio* 84). The "rage" also "made al the gate for to rese" ("made all the gate shake"; I.1986). The repeated appeals to a variety of senses thus animate the subjects of the artwork in the audience's mind.

The kinds of visualizing expressions that the Knight uses also encourage the audience to immerse themselves within the descriptions. Though he begins with statements such as "maystow se" (I.1918) and "to biholde" (I.1919) to describe the decorations in Venus' temple, he then turns to the first person "I saugh" to describe the decorations in Mars' and Diana's temples. Once generalities give way to first-person perspectives, the type of description also begins to evoke narrative events that involve the passage of time. For example, the ekphrasis of Venus' temple begins, "First in the temple of Venus maystow se / Wroght on the wal, ful pitous to biholde, / The broken slepes, and the sikes colde" ("First in the temple of Venus you can see the interrupted sleeps and the anguished sighs made on the wall, very pitiful to behold"; I.1918-20). Though he may engage the audience's sense of hearing, he does not indicate narrative succession. The Knight still does not present a coherent narrative for the paintings' contents when he states, "I saugh" the decorations in Mars' temple. For example, he says, "Ther saugh I first the derke ymaginyng / Of Felonye, and al the compassyng; / The crueel Ire, reed as any gleede" ("There I saw first the malicious plotting of Wickedness, and all the scheming; the cruel Anger, red as any glowing coal"; I.1995-97). The description of Diana's temple though evokes events as they occur in time. The Knight

states, for example, “Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee, / Whan that Diane agreved was with here, / Was turned from a womman til a bere” (“There I saw how woeful Callisto, when Diana was upset with her, was turned from a woman to a bear”; I.2056-58). The Knight continues with a similar pattern:

Ther saugh I Attheon an hert ymaked.

For vengeaunce that he saugh Diane al naked;

I saugh how that his houndes have hym caught

And freeten hym, for that they knewe hym naught. (I.2065-68)

(There I saw Acteon made [into] a hart out of vengeance for when he saw Diana completely naked. I saw how his hounds had caught him and devoured him, for they did not know him.)

The Knight therefore presents not just a series of images but a series of narrative events and encourages further the practice of the medieval arts of memory. He models for the audience the process of conjuring the scenes in his mind.¹⁹ The descriptions’ similar subjects, similar spatial organization in depicting the statues, and similar encouragement of the medieval arts of memory (though the later descriptions encourage the memory more than the earlier ones) all establish Theseus’ amphitheatre as orderly. The multitude of decorations in this vast structure all described in a similar way within each oratory creates aesthetic order.

¹⁹ Leicester regards the description of Mars’ temple as more vivid than “the static catalogues of allegorical names in the temple of Venus” (*Disenchanted* 276). Leicester provides as an example that which cannot be represented visually—“the derke ymaginyng / Of Felonye, and al the compassyng” (“the malicious plotting of Wickedness and all the scheming”; I.1995-96)—and concludes, “[s]uch effects keep us aware that what we have before us in the Knight’s language is not really a description of a scene but his own ‘derke ymaginyng’ . . .” (*Disenchanted* 277).

The closing frame for the description of the amphitheatre further contributes to the symmetrical descriptions, confirms the orderliness of the amphitheatre, and further accentuates Theseus as the source of harmony. Similar to the opening, the Knight reminds that Theseus “at his grete cost arrayed thus / The temples and the theatre every deel” (“at his great cost thus prepared the temples and the theatre in all respects”; I.2090-91).²⁰ The Knight also declares, “Whan it was doon, hym lyked wonder weel” (“When it was done, [it] pleased him very much”; I.2092). Theseus’ response to what is ultimately his own creation, as the closing frame reminds, echoes God’s pleasure over his creation in Genesis 1, and a later simile even specifically supports his Godlike function in the text:

Duc Theseus was at a wyndow set,
 Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
 The peple preesseth thiderward ful soone
 Hym for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
 And eek to herkne his heste and his sentence. (I.2528-32)

(Duke Theseus was seated at a window, arrayed exactly as if he were a god on a throne. The people push toward there very soon in order to see and give him great honour and also to listen to his command and his decision.)

The Godlike pleasure that Theseus derives from his amphitheatre epitomizes the structure’s harmony as well as Theseus’ role as the harmonizer. The symmetrical descriptions combined with Theseus’ pleasure also represent the medieval aesthetic of pleasure derived from uniform variety. As Jordan argues, “the structure of the tale is . . .

²⁰ Robert Epstein draws attention to the way in which the ending of the Knight’s description reflects credit upon Theseus as the affluent patron who provides excellent resources (61).

governed by the conventions of Gothic practice, and the achieved unity is a ‘multiple unity’—an aggregate of individual unities—rather than an organic or ‘unified’ unity” (152).²¹ This closing frame for the ekphrases and the opening frame that depicts a typical chivalric social structure expanded to represent the cosmos thus construct the oratories in terms of aesthetic, social, and cosmic order.

Palamon’s, Emily’s, and Arcite’s prayers to the gods within each temple also correspond to the balance of the oratory descriptions. For example, the prayers occur “at the hours dedicated by astrology to those deities,²² and each prayer is answered by some supernatural event”²³ (Muscatine, “Form” 916). The prayers exhibit balance within themselves, as each speaker begins with “rhetorical *pronomination*” (Muscatine, “Form” 916).²⁴ Each prayer also includes similar elements of “a reference to the deity’s relations

²¹ Herzman likewise aligns Chaucer’s literary style with Gothic cathedrals (351-52). Herzman argues that the text shows the impossibility of achieving heavenly harmony on earth, though, like a Gothic cathedral, *KnT* still tries to replicate this harmony and direct the mind towards it (346-47).

²² Palamon prays to Venus “in hir heure” (“at her planetary hour”; I.2217). Emily gets up and goes to Diana’s temple when “[u]p roos the sonne” (“the sun rose up”; I.2273). Emily goes to Diana’s temple to pray during the first hour of sunlight on Monday, which represented the moon’s planetary hour and thus Diana’s, the moon goddess according to the planetary tradition of the gods (DiMarco, Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 837 n 2217). Arcite prays to Mars at the “heure of Mars” (“planetary hour of Mars”; I.2367), which follows Diana’s.

²³ The “statue of Venus shook, / And made a signe” (“statue of Venus shook and made a sign”; I.2265-66) to show that she would fulfill his request after “a delay” (I.2268). In Diana’s temple, one of the fires upon her altar “queynte / And quyked agayn” (“was extinguished and then rekindled”; I.2334-35), while “after that anon / That oother fyr was queynt and al agon” (“immediately after that the other fire was extinguished and all gone”; I.2335-36) with “a whistelynge” (“a roaring sound”; I.2337). From this flame, “bloody dropes many oon” (“many drops of blood”; I.2340) came out. In Mars’ temple, first “[t]he rynges on the temple dore that honge, / And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste” (“the rings that hung on the temple door and also the doors clattered very hard”; I.2422-23). After Arcite offers more incense, the statue of Mars declares, “Victorie!” (“Victory!”; I.2433).

²⁴ Palamon addresses Venus with the descriptive phrases “Faireste of faire, O lady myn, . . . / Doughter to Jove and spouse of Vulcanus, / Thow gladere of the mount of Citheron” (“Fairest of the fair, o my lady, . . . daughter of Jove and spouse of Vulcan, you bringer of joy from the mountain of Citheron”; I.2221-23). To Diana, Emily declares,

O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
 To whom bothe hevne and erthe and see is sene,
 Queene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
 Goddess of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
 Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire . . . (I.2297-301)

with the opposite sex,²⁵ a self-description by the speaker,²⁶ a humble assertion of incompetence,²⁷ a request for assistance,²⁸ and a promise to worship²⁹ (Muscatine, “Form” 916). Through the similarities among the three prayers that occur within the three similarly described temples, the Knight again creates systematized rhetoric for the same space. This rhetoric employed by not only the narrator but by the characters themselves promotes Theseus’ amphitheatre as a site for systematized speech and action.

(O chaste goddess of the green woods, to whom both heaven and earth and the sea are visible, queen of the dark and low kingdom of Pluto, goddess of maidens, who have known my heart very many years and know what I desire.)

To Mars, Arcite declares,

O stronge god, that in the regnes colde
Of Trace honoured art and lord yholde,
And hast in every regne and every lond
Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,
And hem fortunest as thee lyst devyse . . . (I.2373-77)

(O strong god, who in the cold lands of Thrace are honoured and held as lord and have in every kingdom and every land all the control of battles in your hand and grant them fortune as it pleases you to devise.)

²⁵ Palamon refers to Venus as the “spouse of Vulcanus” (“spouse of Vulcan”; I.2222) and lover of “Adoon” (“Adonis”; I.2224). Emily describes Diana’s punishment of “Attheon” (“Acteon”; I.2303) after he saw her bathing. Arcite refers to Mars’ liaison with Venus (I.2383-90).

²⁶ Palamon refers to “my bittre teeris smerte” (“my bitter, painful tears”; I.2225). Emily describes herself as a “mayde” who belongs to Diana’s “compaignye” (“maiden”; “following”; I.2307-08). Similar to Palamon, Arcite describes “my peynes smerte” (“my bitter pains”; I.2392) and describes himself as the “lyves creature” who was “with love offended moost” (“living creature”; “most offended by love”; I.2394-95).

²⁷ Palamon says, “taak myn humble preyere at thyn herte. / Allas! I ne have no langage to telle / Th’effectes ne the tormentz of myn helle” (“take my humble prayer to your heart. Alas! I do not have any language with which to tell of the effects or the tortures of my hell”; I.2226-28). Emily implores Diana, “As keepe me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire” (“Keep me from your vengeance and your anger”; I.2302). Arcite calls himself “yong and unkonnyng” (“young and ignorant”; I.2393).

²⁸ Palamon says, “I ne axe nat tomorwe to have victorie, / . . . / But I wolde have fully possessioun / Of Emelye . . .” (“I do not ask to have victory tomorrow, but I want to have full possession of Emily”; I.2239-43). Emily, who desires “to ben a mayden al my lyf” (“to be a maiden all my life”; I.2306), asks Diana to “fro me turne away hir hertes” (“turn away their hearts from me”; I.2318) and if not to “sende me hym that moost desireth me” (“send me the one who most desires me”; I.2325). Arcite implores Mars, “do that I tomorwe have victorie” (“cause me to have victory tomorrow”; I.2405).

²⁹ Palamon promises, “Thy temple wol I worshipe everemo, / And on thyn auter, where I ride or go, / I wol doon sacrifice and fires beete” (“I will honour your temple forevermore, and on your altar, wherever I ride or walk (whatever I do), I will offer sacrifice and kindle fires”; I.2251-53). Emily promises, “whil I lyve, a mayde I wol thee serve” (“while I live I will serve you as a maid”; I.2330). Arcite promises to “honouren” Mars’ temple “moost” (“honour the most”; I.2407); to “alwey moost labouren / In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes stronge” (“always labour most for your pleasure and at your valiant crafts”; I.2408-09); to hang in his temple “my baner” and “alle the armes of my compaignye” (“my banner”; “all the arms of my following”; I.2410-11); and to “[e]terne fir . . . fynde” (“provide eternal fire”; I.2409) in his temple.

In spite of the tight rhetorical control of the three ekphrases and the three prayers, neither the oratories nor the orations foreshadow an ultimate harmony. Instead, the violent subjects of the three ekphrases foreshadow the chaos that will occur in the amphitheatre and that will take over the narrative. The rhetorical balance invites recollections of Palamon and Arcite's confrontation in this location, for the Knight continues the narrative of order among violence the way that the epic similes that describe Palamon and Arcite fighting in the grove first create this pattern. These ekphrases' resemblance to Palamon and Arcite's individual combat therefore reveals that Theseus' construction of the amphitheatre has brought about no substantial change. In this way, ekphrases function as *ductus* that conveys or carries the narrative. The ekphrases show not only Theseus' attempts at order but also the uselessness of these attempts. Even though the rhetoric maintains order, the highly chaotic subject matter prefigures the later dissolution of order. Instead, the Knight's description

reveals the chivalric dynamic of a will to power that brings into existence the powerlessness it seeks to avoid. For it is exactly here, in Theseus' amphitheater, that the forces will emerge to overwhelm Theseus, his world, and his authority. . .

. . . Endowed with the power to imagine his own gods, Theseus is nonetheless able to imagine only his own helplessness: power portrays itself as weakness.

(Patterson 224)

All of the descriptions show the way in which the gods instigate human suffering.³⁰

While, as Chaucer's *PF* and *HF* demonstrate, paintings of suffering commonly adorn

³⁰ McCall argues that the oratories "represent natural and potentially destructive aspects of the soul," though he claims that when "joined together (in the theater of which they are parts) they suggest a broad picture of human nature as an ordered, balanced whole. . ." (*Chaucer* 64). Westlund argues that "[i]n

temples of gods in medieval literature,³¹ the decorations of the oratories are more chaotic than the corresponding descriptions of Venus' and Mars' houses in Boccaccio.

The Knight begins describing Venus' oratory by listing suffering courtly lovers' actions, which are "ful pitous to biholde" ("very piteous to behold"; I.1919). He arranges them through his use of *parison*, or repeated grammatical structures within successive linguistic units: "The broken slepes, and the sikes colde, / The sacred teeris, and the waymentynge" ("The interrupted sleeps, and the anguished sighs, the sacred tears, and the lamentation"; I.1920-21). In spite of this orderly rhetoric, Chaucer amplifies suffering in the ekphrasis. The "sikes colde" (I.1920) and "sacred teeris" (I.1921) respectively are derived from Boccaccio's "di Sospiri . . . un tumulto" ("storm of Sighs"; *Tes.*7.59; McCoy 178) and "lagrime" ("tears"; *Tes.*7.59; McCoy 178) (Boitani, *Chaucer and Boccaccio* 92), but the others are "*fresh* details of the sorrows of love" in Chaucer's abbreviated version of Boccaccio (Salter 25). The ekphrasis omits any details of nature's joyous renewal in the garden of Boccaccio's Venus.³² Instead, the Knight moves on to describe allegorical personifications of courtly love largely derived from Boccaccio.³³

describing the temples the narrator dwells upon the extensive disorder brought about by the three divinities" and does not reconcile everything into a harmonious whole (529).

³¹ As my other chapters show, each of Chaucer's descriptions of Venus' temple represents this subject.

³² See Boccaccio, *Tes.*7.51-52.

³³ Boccaccio's twenty-seven allegorical figures in the *Teseida* (7.50-66; McCoy 176-79) parallel those in *KnT* as follows:

Teseida

"Vaghezza" ("Yearning")

"Voluttà" ("Voluptuousness")

"Ozio" ("Idleness")

"Memoria" ("Memory")

"Leggiadria" ("Comeliness")

"Addornezza" ("Elegance")

"Affabilitate" ("Affability")

"Cortesia" ("Courtesy")

"I' Arti c'hanno potestate / di fare altrui a forza far follia"

KnT

"Desir" ("Desire"; I.1925) or

"Lust" ("Desire"; I.1932)

"Plesaunce" ("Pleasure"; I.1925)

"Ydelnesse" ("Idleness"; I.1940)

omitted

omitted

"array" ("adornments"; I.1932)

omitted

omitted

"Force" ("Force"; I.1927)

Among the list of personifications, the ekphrasis introduces positive qualities of “Hope” (“Hope”; I.1925), “Despense” (“Expenditure”; I.1928), and “Bisynesse” (“Attentiveness”; I.1928), and it omits no negative figures from Boccaccio; Chaucer does not include Boccaccio’s “Memoria” (7.54), “Leggiadria” (7.55), “Affabilitate” (7.55), “Gentilezza” (7.55), “Cortesia” (7.55), “Pace” (7.58), “Pazienza” (7.58), and “Martiri” (7.59).³⁴ Boitani states that Chaucer “curiously enough” omits “Gentilezza” and “Cortesia” (*Chaucer and Boccaccio* 91). Especially after the Knight’s initial repeated emphasis on the “noble” quality of Theseus’ amphitheatre (I.1885, 1913, 1915), the absence of these qualities in a traditional depiction of courtly love accentuates instead the link between violence and this form of regulated desire in chivalric society. The Knight significantly also only attaches visual details to one personification: “Jalousye, / That

(“the Arts that have the power to force others to commit follies”)
 “Van Diletto” (“Vain Delight”)

“Gentilezza” (“Nobility”)
 “Bellezza” (“Beauty”)
 “Piacevolezza” (“Charm”)
 “Giovanezza” (“Youth”)
 “Ardire” (“Boldness”)

“Lusinghe” (“Flattery”)
 “Ruffiania” (“Pandering”)

“Pace” (“Peace”)
 “Pazienza” (“Patience”)
 “Promesse” (“Promises”)
 “Arte” (“Arts”)

“Sospiri” (“Sighs”)
 “Disiri” (“Desires”)
 “Martiri” (“Martyrdoms”)
 “Gelosia” (“Jealousy”)
 “Ricchezza” (“Opulence”)
 “Lascivia” (“Lust”)

³⁴ With the omission of “Martiri,” Chaucer removes an allusion to death but at the same time gets rid of the positive connotation of holiness.

possibly “Desir” (“Desire”; I.1925)
 or “Lust” (“Desire”; I.1932)
 omitted
 “Beautee” (“Beauty”; I.1926)
 “Charmes” (“Charms”; I.1927)
 “Youthe” (“Youth”; I.1926)
 “Foolhardynesse”
 (“Foolhardiness” I.1925)
 “Flaterye” (“Flattery”; I.1927)
 “Bauderye”
 (“Mirth/Matchmaking”; I.1926)
 omitted
 omitted
 “othes” (“oaths”; I.1924)
 possibly “Lesynges” (“Falsehood”;
 I.1927)
 “sikes” (“sighs”; I.1920)
 “desirynges” (“desire”; I.1922)
 omitted
 “Jalousye” (“Jealousy”; I.1928)
 “Richesse” (“Riches”; I.1926)
 “Lust” (“Desire”; I.1932)

wered of yelewe gooldes a gerland, / And a cokkow sittynge on hir hand” (“Jealousy, who wore a garland of yellow marigolds and [had] a cuckoo sitting on her hand”; I.1928-30). This vivid portrait of Jealousy accompanied by a cuckoo, which symbolizes cuckoldry, focuses the description on the destructive cause of Palamon and Arcite’s fight and further removes the conflict from a harmonious resolution through chivalric ritual.

The Knight’s catalogue of Venus’ various victims, who are depicted in a painting of her garden surrounding her house, represents chaos more explicitly than Boccaccio’s description of painted lovers does. The Knight states,

Nat was foryeten . . .
 . . . Narcisus the faire of yore agon,
 Ne yet the folye of kyng Salomon,
 Ne yet the grete strengthe of Ercules —
 Th’enchautementz of Medea and Circes —
 Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,
 The riche Cresus, kaytyf in servage. (I.1940-46)

(Narcissus the fair of long ago was not forgotten, nor yet the folly of King Solomon, nor yet the great strength of Hercules, the enchantments of Medea and Circe, nor Turnus, with the bold, fierce spirit, the rich Cresus, wretched in captivity.)

Rather than following Boccaccio’s *Teseida* (7.61-62), Chaucer’s list juxtaposes a new assortment of lovers.³⁵ Narcissus, Medea, Circe, and Turnus are frustrated lovers. Both

³⁵ Of Boccaccio’s Callisto, Atalanta the runner, Atalanta the huntress, Semiramis, Pyramus, Thisbe, Hercules, Iole, Caunus, and Biblis (*Tes.*7.61-62), Chaucer only keeps Hercules in the description of Venus’ oratory. Callisto and Atalanta (*Tes.*7.61) are in Chaucer’s description of Diana’s oratory (I.2056, 2070).

Narcissus and Turnus even die as a result of their love—Narcissus while pining away for his own beautiful reflection³⁶ and Turnus in battle with Aeneas for Lavinia (Virgil, *Aeneid* 12.919-52). Jason abandons Medea, even though she had used magic to help him obtain the Golden Fleece and to restore his father Aeson's youth.³⁷ Glaucus, Picus, and Ulysses spurn Circe in spite of her magic.³⁸ Hercules does not suffer unrequited love but rather abandons his own wife, Deianira, for Iole; in spite of his strength, he dies as a result of Deianira's love for him because she sends him a poisoned tunic, which was supposed to serve as a love potion, but he kills himself before the tunic's poison does.³⁹ While Solomon neither experiences unrequited love nor dies for love, Solomon's son loses most of the kingdom, aside from one tribe, on account of his father's "folye" (Chaucer I.1942) in worshipping his wives' gods.⁴⁰ In keeping with the miscellaneous quality of Chaucer's lists, Croesus, King of Lydia, who first escapes execution but later is hanged after he returns to waging war, is not even a legendary lover.⁴¹ Following the list of figures, the Knight provides a moral:

³⁶ See Ovid, *Met.* 3.407-510 and *RR* 1439-614.

³⁷ See Ovid, *Met.* 7.162-293.

³⁸ DiMarco (Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 835 n 1944) draws a comparison between Medea and Circe's juxtaposition here and in *RR* when la Vieille advises Bel Accueil that

[o]nques ne pot tenir Medee
 Jason pour nul enchantement;
 N'onc Circé ne tint enement
 Ulixès qu'il ne s'en foïst
 Pour nul sort que faire en poïst. (14404-08)

(Medea could never hold Jason with any enchantment, any more than Circe could keep Ulysses from fleeing, no matter what fate she could create; Dahlberg 246)

For the story of Circe's love for Glaucus, see Ovid, *Met.* 14.8-74 and for Circe's love for Ulysses and Picus, see *Met.* 14.248-440. Ulysses marries Circe but then deserts her after a year.

³⁹ See Ovid, *Heroides* 9 and Ovid, *Met.* 9.134-238.

⁴⁰ See 1 Kings 11:1-13.

⁴¹ See *RR* 6489-622 for the story of Croesus. Bennett posits that Chaucer could have added Croesus because Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae* lists him, among others, as an example of Cupid's power to transform circumstances to their opposites: "Dives eget Cressus" ("Wealthy Croesus is poor"; Alan of Lille 9.31) (*Parlement* 101 n 2).

Thus may ye seen that wysdom ne richesse,
 Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe ne hardynesse,
 Ne may with Venus holde champartie,
 For as hir list the world than may she gye. (I.1947-50)

(Thus you can see that neither wisdom nor riches, beauty, nor trickery, strength, nor boldness can contend successfully with Venus, for she may rule the world as it pleases her.)⁴²

The Knight lists attributes that correspond with those figures: “Narcisus the faire” (I.1941) corresponds with “[b]eautee” (I.1948); Solomon, in spite of his “folye” (I.1942), with “wysdom” (I.1947); Hercules with “strengthe” (I.1943, 1948); Medea and Circe, responsible for “enchaumentz” (I.1944), with “sleighte” (I.1948); Turnus, who has a “hardy fiers corage” (I.1945), with “hardynesse” (I.1948); and “riche” Cresus (I.1946) with “richesse” (I.1947). The moral therefore unifies these miscellaneous figures, who all suffer in spite of their worthy attributes, as victims of Venus. Boccaccio’s *Chiose*, the glosses to the *Teseida*, also represent the stories of the lovers as *exempla* of Venus’ power. Boccaccio states, “Queste istorie e forse molte altre testimonianti le forze di Venere vedute dalla orazione di Palamone, dice l’autore che l’orazione pervenne al luogo là dove era Venere” (“When Palaemon’s Prayer had seen these stories and perhaps many others witnessing to the powers of Venus, the author says she arrived at the place where Venus was”; *Tes.7* n 50; McCoy 207). Whether Chaucer had access to the *Chiose*,

⁴² As further support that Chaucer used *De planctu naturae* as a source, Alan’s list ends in a similar manner to Chaucer’s, for Nature declares about Cupid, “Cuncta ferit fulminis ira sui, / in quem non poterit probitas, prudentia, formae / gratia, fluxus opum, nobilitatis apex” (“The fury of his thunderbolt strikes everyone, and good character, wisdom, beauty, abundant wealth, lofty nobility are powerless against him”; Alan of Lille, *De planctu naturae* 9.56-58).

however, is unknown (Pratt, “Conjectures” 745-63),⁴³ but regardless, the Knight’s explicit moral about the painted figures emphasizes Venus’ power. The Knight’s moral demonstrates rhetorical control through *anaphora* and *polysyndeton* of “ne,” but the Knight’s rhetorical control only heightens the violence of the description by articulating the variety of qualities that have no power against Venus. By extension, this moral implies that Theseus also cannot regulate Palamon and Arcite’s conflict that results from eros.

Through their rhetorical similarities with the preceding fight in the grove, the painted figures in Venus’ oratory reveal that Theseus’ attempts at control will ultimately fail. These rhetorical echoes all point to the powerlessness of all possessions beside love. Similar to the Knight’s statement that “wysdom ne richesse, / Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe ne hardynesse, / Ne may with Venus holde champartie” (I.1947-49), the Knight earlier claims, right after Palamon agrees to Arcite’s terms for their private fight in the grove,

O Cupide, out of alle charitee!

O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!

Ful sooth is seyde that love ne lordshipe

Wol nought, his thankes, have no felaweshipe. (I.1623-26)

(O Cupid, lacking in all charity! O ruler, who will have no equal with you! Very truly [it] is spoken that neither love nor lordship will willingly have any equal partnership.)

⁴³ Boitani presents evidence that Chaucer may have known of the glosses (*Chaucer and Boccaccio* 190-97).

The Knight's later statement about Venus in the oratory description, "For as hir list the world than may she gye" (I.1950), echoes Theseus' earlier declaration when he intercedes in Palamon and Arcite's conflict in the grove: "The god of love, . . . / How myghty and how greet a lord is he! / Ayens his myght ther gayneth none obstacles" (The god of love, . . . how mighty and how great a lord he is! No obstacle avails against his might"; I.1785-87). These echoes between the two scenes reinforced by the same location reveal that even though the amphitheatre attempts to control Palamon's and Arcite's passions, Theseus' imposition of chivalric ritual fails to restrain them and eros prevails as a chaotic force the way it did before Theseus intervened.

The description of Venus' statue, in spite of its conventionality, also reinforces disorder. Instead of following Boccaccio's description of Venus lying on a bed (*Tes.*7.64-65), Chaucer's statue features her traditional mythographical representation that in the later Middle Ages came from the *Libellus de Imaginibus Deorum* attributed to Albricus Philosophus and from Pierre Bersuire (Twycross 2-3) and that was known as the "Venus-of-the-Seashell—*Aphrodite Anadyomene*" (Twycross iii).⁴⁴ This mythographical representation of Venus conventionally holds a conch shell as opposed to the "citole" (Chaucer I.1959) that the Knight's holds, but the astrological Venus of the Albumasar illustrations conventionally holds this instrument (Twycross 51-61). Twycross argues, "If Chaucer did know of the Venus of the Albumasar illustrations, then the *citole* would be an astrological embellishment" similar to the astrological figures Puella and Rubeus who accompany Mars (61). The Knight also continues to stress the statue's

⁴⁴ Boccaccio depicts the live Venus, while Chaucer depicts a statue, so Chaucer's mythographical Venus fits her conventional depiction in artwork and iconography (Twycross 62).

conventionality by stating that the sculpted Cupid who accompanies the sculpted Venus has two wings and is blind, “as it is often seene” (“as it is often seen”; I.1965). This mythographical portrayal of Venus represents lechery as opposed to desire regulated by marriage, so even by asserting convention the decorations present passion in need of regulation.⁴⁵ Therefore, closing the description of the oratory with this conventional iconographical portrait emphasizes the chaotic aspects of Venus.

Similar to the ekphrasis of Venus’ oratory, the Knight makes the description of Mars’ oratory more chaotic than in Boccaccio as well. The description of the painting of Mars’ Thracian temple, his house, painted on the walls of the oratory depicts a cold, bleak location, just as Boccaccio describes it when the prayer visits.⁴⁶ Chaucer’s description introduces cacophony created through stops in order to emphasize the bleakness of the “**knotty, knarry, bareyne trees olde**” (“knotty, gnarled, barren old trees”; I.1977).⁴⁷ Chaucer’s personifications are mostly the same as Boccaccio’s that accompany Mars’ house,⁴⁸ and for some, Chaucer uses the same modifiers.⁴⁹ In other

⁴⁵ See Fulgentius, *Mythologies* 2.2.670-71.

⁴⁶ See Boccaccio, *Tes.*7.30-31.

⁴⁷ I have marked the stops with bold type.

⁴⁸ Chaucer leaves out Boccaccio’s “cieco Peccare” (“Blind Sin”), “Omei” (“Alas!”), “Differenza” (“Difference”), and “Stupore” (“Bewilderment”) (*Tes.*7.33-35; McCoy 173) (Boitani, *Chaucer and Boccaccio* 85). He also leaves out Boccaccio’s “l’Impeti” (“Impulses”; *Tes.*7.33; McCoy 173), “Crudele Intenza” (“Cruel Design”; *Tes.*7.33; McCoy 173), and “ogni forza con gli aspetti elati” (“all Coercions, each with arrogant mien”; *Tes.*7.37; McCoy 174). Boitani tentatively suggests, however, that Chaucer may have derived the “rage” (“rush of wind”; I.1985), which likewise comes through the door of Mars’ house, from Boccaccio’s “l’Impeti” (*Chaucer and Boccaccio* 85). With “rage,” Chaucer substitutes a different meaning from “l’Impeti,” so “rage” seems to be merely a substitute rather than a derivation. Chaucer adds “the derke ymaginyng / Of Felonye, and al the compassyng” (“the malicious plotting of Wickedness and all the scheming”; I.1995-96), “Armed Compleint” (“Armed Grievance”; I.2012), “fiers Outrage” (“fierce Violence”; I.2012), “Conquest” (“Conquest”; I.2028) (Boitani, *Chaucer and Boccaccio* 85), “open werre, with woundes al bibledde” (“open warfare, all covered with blood from wounds”; I.2002), and “Outhees” (“Outcry”; I.2012).

⁴⁹ His description of “cruel Ire, reed as any gleede” (“cruel Anger, red as any glowing coal”; I.1997) parallels Boccaccio’s “l’Ire rosse come foco” (“Wrath, red as fire”; *Tes.*7.33; McCoy 173); “pale Drede” (“pale Fear”; I.1998) parallels Boccaccio’s “la Paura pallida” (“pale Fear”; *Tes.*7.33; McCoy 173);

cases, he adds more “vivid” details to represent each personification’s particular violent quality (Boitani, *Chaucer and Boccaccio* 85).⁵⁰ For example, Boccaccio’s “con volto sanguinoso / la Morte armata” (“armed Death with his bloody looks”; *Tes.* 7.35; McCoy 173) becomes Chaucer’s “colde deeth, with mouth gapyng upright” (“cold death, with mouth gaping upwards”; I.2008); Boccaccio’s “la Vertù tristissima / . . . di degne lode poverissima” (“unhappy Valor, the least to merit praise”; *Tes.* 7.34; McCoy 173) becomes Chaucer’s “Meschaunce, / With disconfort and sory contenaunce” (“Misfortune, with dismay and a sorrowful countenance”; I.2009-10); and Boccaccio’s “l’allegro Furore” (“Merry Madness”; *Tes.* 7.35; McCoy 173) becomes Chaucer’s “Woodnesse, laughynge in his rage” (“Madness, laughing in his rage”; I.2011) (Boitani, *Chaucer and Boccaccio* 85). In other cases, he replaces the personifications entirely with concrete actions; for example, Boccaccio’s “con gli occulti ferri i Tradimenti” (“Betrayals with their secret weapons”; *Tes.* 7.34; McCoy 173) become “[t]he tresoun of the mordrynge in the bedde” (“the treason of the murder in the bed”; I.2001), and Boccaccio’s “le ’nsidie con giusta apparenza” (“Intrigues with their fair appearance”; *Tes.* 7.34; McCoy 173) Chaucer could have interpreted as “[t]he smylere with the knyf under the cloke” (“the smiler with the knife under the cloak”; Chaucer I.1999) (Boitani, *Chaucer and Boccaccio* 85). These changes lead Salter to argue that “[b]y comparison, Boccaccio is mild and diffuse” (27). Chaucer’s additions to Boccaccio, including these concrete details of violence as well as allegorical figures like “Felonye” (I.1996) and “fiers Outrage” (I.2012), represent the

“Contek, with bloody knyf” (“strife, with a bloody knife”; I.2003) parallels Boccaccio’s “Discordia . . . sanguinenti / ferri avea in mano” (“Discord . . . holding bloody weapons . . . in her hand”; *Tes.* 7.34; McCoy 173); and “sharp manace” (“violent menace”; I.2003) parallels Boccaccio’s “aspre Minacce” (“harsh Threats”; *Tes.* 7.34; McCoy 173) (Boitani, *Chaucer and Boccaccio* 85).

⁵⁰ See also Salter (26).

inglorious side of war. When the description “yokes together sorts of violence habitually separated,” it “stresses the connections between those valued or glorified in aristocratic culture and those officially condemned” (Aers, *Chaucer, Langland* 178). The description exposes the “terrible, mad violence . . . behind the chivalric veils it usually wears” (Leicester, *Disenchanted* 276). These decorations therefore undercut the harmonious purpose of the amphitheatre.

Chaucer not only makes Boccaccio’s personifications more concrete but also introduces other vivid images of war and violence mainly from the astrological tradition of planetary influence. The Knight introduces images that do not parallel Boccaccio’s when he states, “The sleere of hymself yet saugh I ther— / His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer— / The nayl ydryven in the shode anyght” (“I also saw the slayer of himself there—his heart’s blood has bathed all his hair, the nail [having been] driven into the temple at night”; I.2005-07) and describes “[t]he careyne in the busk, with throte ycorve” (“the corpse in the woods, with throat cut”; I.2013). When the Knight conjures images of “[a] thousand slayn, and nat of qualm ystorve; / The tiraunt, with the pray by force yraft; / The toun destroyed, ther was no thyng laft” (“a thousand slain and not killed by the plague; the tyrant with the prey taken away by force; the destroyed town; there was nothing left”; I.2014-16), he demonstrates the influence of Boccaccio’s paintings adorning the inside of Mars’ house.⁵¹ While Boccaccio states of Arcites’ prayer, “Videvi

⁵¹ Boccaccio’s paintings depict
 le prede, di notte e di giorno
 tolte alle terre; e qualunque sforzato
 fu era quivi in abito musorno;
 vedeanvisi le genti incatenate,
 porti di ferro e fortezze spezzate. (*Tes.*7.36)

ancor le navi bellatrici” (“She also saw warlike ships there”; *Tes.*7.37; McCoy 174), Chaucer includes the more vivid and destructive description, “Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres” (“I also saw the burned ships dancing [on a stormy sea]”; I.2017). While Boccaccio depicts “i voti carri” (“empty wagons”; *Tes.*7.37; McCoy 174), Chaucer has the more graphic image of “[t]he cartere overryden with his carte— / Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun” (“the carter run over by his cart—he lay down under the wheel far below”; I.2022).⁵² In addition to these images of war that Boccaccio depicts, Chaucer introduces further examples of violence outside of war such as “[t]he hunte strangled with the wilde beres; / The sowe freten the child right in the cradel; / The cook yscalded, for al his longe ladel” (“the hunter strangled by the wild bears; the sow devouring the child right in the cradle; the cook scalded, for all his long ladle”; I.2018-20). These images represent the astrological tradition of Mars as a planet responsible for various forms of violence (Curry 122), as the Knight then states, “Noght was foryeten by the infortune of Marte” (“Nothing concerning the evil influence of Mars was forgotten”; I.2021). The Knight continues to represent this astrological tradition by incorporating “of Martes divisioun, / The barbour, and the bocher, and the smyth, / That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his styth” (“those influenced by Mars, the barber and the butcher and the smith who forges sharp swords on his anvil”; I.2024-26). In the depiction of the final allegorical figure which does not derive from Boccaccio he draws again upon this

(the depredations made day and night on ravished lands. And anyone ever subjected to violence was here in somber garb. Enchained peoples, iron gates, and demolished fortresses could be seen here; McCoy 174)

⁵² Boitani argues that the aforementioned passages from Boccaccio “may have suggested certain images to” Chaucer (*Chaucer and Boccaccio* 85). DiMarco draws a parallel between the image of the carter and Statius’ “vacui currus protritaque curribus ora, / paene etiam gemitus” (“empty chariots and heads by chariots crushed, groans too almost”; *Theb.*7.58-59) (Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 836 n 2022-24).

astrological tradition, for the smith, a profession under Mars' influence, makes "sharpe swerdes" (I.2026), such as "the sharpe swerd" ("the sharp sword"; I.2029) over Conquest's "heed / Hangynge by a soutil twynes threed" ("head, hanging by a thin thread of twine"; I.2029-30). As a result of these violent details that represent not just war but all manners of destruction, Chaucer creates a bleaker description than Boccaccio's and represents a scene even more desolate than the typical forest scenes found on wall murals and hangings (Evans 412).⁵³ The final personified figure of Conquest, which evokes the sword of Damocles, represents "the precarious triumph of war" (Salter 26) and forecasts the all too precarious victory of Arcite.⁵⁴

The description of paintings of classical figures represents additional violence to Boccaccio's description of Mars' house. These include paintings of "the slaughtre" ("the slaughter"; I.2031) of the Roman emperors Julius, Nero, and Antonius (I.2031-32), which could be paintings of the actual people or symbolic astrological figures (Leicester, *Disenchanted* 282).⁵⁵ Julius Caesar was betrayed and killed by Brutus and his fellow conspirators.⁵⁶ Both Nero and Antony killed themselves: Nero, infamous as a tyrant

⁵³ As Kolve notes, "[n]othing that survives from the visual arts during Chaucer's lifetime furnishes adequate equivalents to these temple paintings" (*Chaucer and the Imagery* 115).

⁵⁴ Chaucer would have known the story of the sword of Damocles from Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*: "Expertus sortis suae periculorum tyrannus regni metus pendentis supra verticem gladii terrore simulavit" ("Knowing by experience the dangers of his own position, one tyrant likened his fears as king to the terror of the sword hanging over Damocles' head"; 3.pr.5.15-17) (DiMarco, Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 836 n 2029).

⁵⁵ When the Knight states, "Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn, / Yet was hir deth depeynted ther-biforn / By manasyng of Mars, right by figure" ("Although at that time they were unborn, their death through the menace of Mars was nevertheless previously painted exactly according to the configuration of the planets"; I.2033-35), he suggests that symbolic astrological figures adorn the oratory (Leicester, *Disenchanted* 282). According to Robert A. Pratt, Chaucer drew this passage from the *Megacosmos* of Bernardus Silvestris ("Chaucer's Use" 618). Bernardus Silvestris, in the *Megacosmos*, refers to neither Julius nor Antony but states, "In stellis . . . / Fulgurat in Lacia nobilitate Nero; / . . . / . . . prelia Roma gerit" ("In the stars . . . Nero shines in Latian nobility . . . Rome wages war"; *Cosmographia* 3.47-50; Wetherbee 76).

⁵⁶ See Chaucer's *Monk's Tale* (VII.2695-726).

among his subjects, killed himself after they revolted against him,⁵⁷ and Antony committed suicide in his war against Octavius, which was begun after Antony had left his previous wife, Octavius' sister, for Cleopatra.⁵⁸ The Knight relates all of their deaths to the "manasyng of Mars" (I.2033) and implies that Antony's results from love. He states,

So was it shewed in that portreiture,

As is depeynted in the sterres above

Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love.

Suffiseth oon ensample in stories olde. (I.2036-39)

(As is foretold in the stars above who will be slain or dead for love, so it was shown in that painting. One example in old stories suffices.)

He names Antony last, and Chaucer represents him elsewhere as a legendary lover.⁵⁹ By relating Mars' astrological influence to death on account of love, the Knight aligns Mars more closely with Venus, which he also does by including the figure of Puella as an accompaniment to Mars' statue (I.2045). Puella can signify Venus' influence as well

⁵⁷ See Chaucer's *Monk's Tale* (VII.2519-50) and *RR* 6183-488. Chaucer's account of Nero seems to derive from *RR* (Cavanaugh 933 n 2463).

⁵⁸ See Chaucer, *LGW* (580-705).

⁵⁹ In *LGW*, Chaucer associates Antony's death with love of Cleopatra:

But love hadde brought this man in swich a rage

And hym so narwe bounden in his las,

Al for the love of Cleopataras,

That al the world he sette at no value.

Hym thoughte there nas nothyng to hym so due

As Cleopatras for to love and serve;

Hym roughte nat in armes for to sterve

In the defence of hyre and of hire ryght. (599-606)

(But love had brought this man into such a passionate desire and so tightly bound him in its snare, all for love of Cleopatra, that he set all the world at no value. It seemed to him that there was nothing so fitting to him as loving and serving Cleopatra; it did not matter to him [if he died] in battle in defence of her and of her rights.)

(Skeat, *Complete Works: Notes* 83 n 2045). Venus' temple, particularly its portrayal of legendary lovers, also resembles Mars' in terms of its destructiveness. The mutual resemblances create a "conflict . . . not so much between Mars and Venus, War and Love, as between two types of violence . . ." (Salter 28). Melding Mars and Venus together through their violence, rather than distinguishing the powers of each, the Knight negates any possible peaceful resolution to the conflict, whether Mars or Venus aids the knights.⁶⁰

For the description of the statue of Mars armed in a chariot with a wolf, Chaucer draws on the same mythographical tradition from which his description of Venus' statue is derived. This tradition developed from Albricus Philosophus' *Libellus de Imaginibus Deorum* (Seznec 190). Also as in the case of the description of Venus' statue, conventionality cannot overcome the chaotic attributes of Mars, who "looked grym as he were wood" ("looked grim as if he were crazy"; I.2042). Chaucer's description introduces to Albricus Philosophus' the disturbing detail of the wolf that "of a man . . . eet" ("ate from a man"; I.2048). Immediately after, the Knight states, "With soutil pencil was depeynted this storie / In redoutynge of Mars and of his glorie" ("This story was painted with a subtle brush in honour of Mars and of his glory"; I.2049-50). The non-moralizing narrator's appreciation of aesthetic skill belies the violence and inglorious images of Theseus' demonstration of power and justice (Epstein 63).

The continued violent subjects represented in Diana's oratory overtake the narrator's attempt at drawing back from the scenes' violence. The description of Diana's

⁶⁰ Blake argues that as a result of the gods' similar violence, "grounds for" Palamon's and Arcite's "reasoned choosing" of which god to pray to "are remarkably scant in the *Knight's Tale*" (7).

oratory demonstrates the same themes as the descriptions of Venus' and Mars' oratories: the gods' instigation of human suffering. The first painted story, Callisto's, emphasizes her suffering more than Boccaccio does in his description of her broken bow adorning Venus' oratory. Whereas Boccaccio states that Venus' oratory contains the bow "di Calisto, fatta tramontana / Orsa" ("of Callisto, who was transformed into the northern Bear"; *Tes.*7.61; McCoy 178), the Knight describes Callisto as "woful" ("woeful"; I.2056) and stresses Diana's anger and responsibility for Callisto's affliction—Callisto became transformed into a bear and subsequently the constellation Ursa Major⁶¹ "[w]han that Diane agreved was with here" ("when Diana was upset with her"; I.2057). Diana casts Callisto out from her service when she discovers that she hid her pregnancy after Jupiter raped her, but Jupiter's wife Juno turns Callisto into a bear out of jealousy over Jupiter's pursuit of Callisto.⁶² The Knight, however, "leaves the actions of Jove and Juno in the background and concentrates on the anger of Diana as the principal cause of Callisto's fate . . ." (Leicester, *Disenchanted* 288). The next story depicting Daphne, whom her father Peneus changes into a laurel tree in order to help her escape the advances of Apollo,⁶³ does not explicitly represent Diana's anger or responsibility for transformation, but it implies such. The Knight relates Daphne to Diana when he clarifies, "Ther saugh I Dane, yturned til a tree— / I mene nat the goddesse Diane, / But Penneus doghter, which that highte Dane" ("I saw there Daphne turned into a tree—I do not mean the goddess Diana but Peneus' daughter, who was called Daphne"; I.2062-64).

⁶¹ *KnT* mistakenly identifies her with Ursa Minor, the location of "the loode-sterre," or "North star" (I.2059) (DiMarco, Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 836 n 2056-61).

⁶² See Ovid, *Fasti* 2.156-82 and Ovid, *Met.* 2.409-535.

⁶³ See Ovid, *Met.* 1. 452-567.

He also does not tell that Peneus caused the metamorphosis. The last two stories that the Knight sees depicted in Diana's oratory more explicitly identify Diana as the agent of punishment. The Knight sees "Attheon an hert ymaked, / For vengeaunce that he saugh Diane al naked" ("Acteon made into a hart out of vengeance for when he saw Diana completely naked"; I.2066).⁶⁴ The description emphasizes his suffering too because as a result of his metamorphosis, "his houndes have hym caught / And freeten hym . . ." ("his dogs have caught him and devoured him"; I.2067-68). The Knight then sees "[h]ow Atthalante hunted the wilde boor, / And Meleagre, and many another mo, / For which Dyane wroghte hym care and wo" ("how Atalanta hunted the wild boar and Meleager and many more others for whom Diana caused trouble and distress"; I.2070-72).⁶⁵ The Knight emphasizes the violence in the oratory decorations by referring to the "many another mo" (I.2071) who became Diana's victims and by saying that the oratory contains "many another wonder storie, / The which me list nat drawn to memorie" ("many other wonderful stories, which it does not please me to draw to mind"; I.2073-74).

The ekphrasis of Diana's statue once again reveals the violence that lurks behind the orderliness of convention. Diana's statue represents her "traditional image . . . with her accoutrements of the chase . . . but it is revised and complicated by the details that allude to her other natures and functions" (Leicester, *Disenchanted* 290). For example, she sits "on an hert" ("on a hart"; I.2075) and has "smale houndes" ("small dogs"; I.2076). Her sculpture represents her as the goddess of the Underworld, as she looks

⁶⁴ See Ovid, *Met.* 3.138-252.

⁶⁵ For the story of Atalanta and Meleager hunting the boar that Diana sends, see Ovid, *Met.* 8.260-444.

“[t]her Pluto hath his derke regioun” (“where Pluto has his dark region”; I.2082). The statue also presents her as the goddess of childbirth because the sculpted woman in labour in front of her begs for her assistance as “Lucyna” (I.2085). This woman whose “child so longe was unborn” (“child was unborn for so long”; I.2084) yet whom Diana ignores by looking instead toward the Underworld represents another victim rather than beneficiary of Diana. The Knight immediately afterwards states, “Wel koude he peynten lifly that it wroghte; / With many a floryn he the hewes boghte” (“He who made it knew well how to paint in a life-like way; he bought the hues with many florins”; I.2087-88). According to Johnston, “Not only does the narrator remind his readers that it is, after all, only a picture they see, but he simultaneously forestalls too intensive an engagement as he withdraws from the artifact emotionally by highlighting not only its materiality but also its ultimate origin in processes of economic exchange” (185). Similar to the ending of the ekphrasis of Mars’ oratory, the Knight again attempts to contain a violently lifelike scene as the artwork that Theseus commissioned.⁶⁶

When the tournament actually occurs within the amphitheatre, it confirms the undermining of Theseus’ authority that the oratory descriptions prefigure. For the next event that occurs within the location, the tournament, controlled rhetoric breaks down completely, first through the alliterative verse that dominates the description of the battle.⁶⁷ Various critics have recognized the heavily alliterative passage that resembles

⁶⁶ Johnston reads in these lines the “ineluctable conflict” between the visual and verbal and classical and medieval (181).

⁶⁷ I have highlighted the alliteration in the battle scene:

In goon the speres ful sadly in arrest;
 In gooth the sharpe spore into the syde.
 Ther seen men who kan juste and who kan ryde;
 Ther **shy**veren **sh**aftes upon **sh**eeldes thikke;

the tradition of Chaucer's northern contemporaries.⁶⁸ "Chaucer made his Parson speak disapprovingly of alliteration" as "a thing out of the unrefined North" (Baum 55-56) when he states in the prologue to his tale, "I am a Southren man; / I kan nat geeste 'rum, ram, ruf,' by lettre" ("I am a Southern man; I cannot tell a story in alliterative verse: 'rum, ram, ruf'"; X.42-43). When the Parson uses the nonce words "rum, ram, ruf" to depict northern alliterative verse, he displays the regional attitude that alliterative verse lacked control. Salter states, "Poetry of this tradition had long been famous for its descriptive skill in dealing with battle-narrative" (17), but after methodically describing the structure in which the battle takes place, the Knight's use of a form that could be regarded as unregulated in Chaucer's region, though it maintains the rhyming couplets, marks the breakdown of Theseus' chivalric rituals. The confusion over who or which side does what, such as the statements "He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal; / He foyneth

He feeleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.
 Up **s**pryngen **s**peres twenty foot on highte;
 Out goon the **s**werdes as the **s**ilver brighte;
 The **h**elmes they **t**ohewen and toshrede;
 Out **b**rest the **b**lood with **s**terne **s**tremes rede;
 With **m**yghty **m**aces the **b**ones they **t**obreste.
 He **t**hurgh the **t**hikkeste of the **t**hrong gan **t**hreste;
 Ther **s**tomblen **s**teedes **s**tronge, and doun gooth al,
 He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal;
 He foyneth on his **f**eet with his tronchoun,
 And **h**e **h**ym **h**urtleth with his **h**ors adoun. (I.2602-16)

(The spears go very firmly into the lance rest; the sharp spur goes into the flank. Men see who can joust and who can ride there; spear-shafts shiver there upon [contact with] thick shields; he feels the prick through the spoon-shaped hollow at the end of the breastbone. Spears spring up twenty feet high; swords go out as bright [as] silver; they hew to pieces and cut into shreds the helmets; the blood burst out in strong red streams; they broke the bones to pieces with mighty maces. He began to thrust through the thickest of the throng; strong steeds stumble there, and all go down; he rolls under foot as a ball does; on his feet he stabs with his spear-shaft, and he knocks him down with his horse.)

⁶⁸ Dorothy Everett writes, "while it is true that the passage as a whole is not written in alliterative verse, there are lines in it (e.g. 2605, 2610, 2611) which could have come straight from a poem in that metre" (202). Paul F. Baum also regards this scene as heavily alliterative (56), and he says alliteration functions here as "an ornament, not a regulative principle . . ." (55). Salter declares that "this is the nearest Chaucer ever comes to composing in" this alliterative style (17).

on his feet with his tronchoun, / And he hym hurtleth with his hors adoun” (I.2014-16), further contributes to the disarray.

The Knight does not rely on alliterative verse for the entire description of the battle. Alliteration describes the mass fight, but when the Knight focuses on Palamon and Arcite, he returns to conventional epic similes that described them when they had fought individually in the grove:

Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
 Whan that hir whelp is stole whan it is lite,
 So crueel on the hunte as is Arcite
 For jelous herte upon this Palamon.
 Ne in Belmarye ther nys so fel leon,
 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
 Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
 As Palamon to sleen his foo Arcite. (I.2626-33)

(There was not any tiger in the valley of Gargaphia when her cub is stolen when it is little [that is] so cruel on the hunt as Arcite is toward Palamon because of a jealous heart. Nor in Benmarin is there so cruel [a] lion that is hunted, or crazy because of his hunger, or so desires the blood of his prey as Palamon to slay his foe Arcite.)⁶⁹

⁶⁹ DiMarco notes that the simile probably derives from the following (Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 839 n 2626-28):

Ma qual la leonessa negli ircani
 boschi, per li figliuo' che nel covile
 non trova, sé con movimenti insani
 messa in oblio, la sua ira gentile
 mugghiando corre e per monti e per piani,

By using the same kind of rhetoric for the same kind of scene—Palamon and Arcite fighting each other individually—he presents Theseus’ ineffectual intervention in the conflict. This replication of the earlier rhetoric reveals the incessant violence of the world of the tale. No less than the alliteration, then, the epic similes articulate a lack of control. The similes’ depiction of Palamon and Arcite specifically, rather than the melee, particularly demonstrates that nothing has changed after Theseus got involved in their problems: surrounded by the chaos of the melee, Palamon and Arcite still end up fighting in a one-on-one combat like beasts, exactly the way they had before.

The destruction that results from this lack of control manifests itself in the final event that occurs in the location of the grove, the construction of Arcite’s funeral pyre. The pyre reveals the chaos in the tale because the Knight can no longer rhetorically reassert order in its description. Arcite dies because, after he wins the tournament, Saturn sends a Fury that spooks Arcite’s horse, which fatally injures him. The funeral pyre for Arcite is the second elaborate construction that Theseus commissions to be built in the grove; therefore, the scene enforces recollection of the structure earlier built in this location. Chaucer reveals the significance of the location for meditation upon the earlier

né mai la fa se non affanno umile;
 cotal correndo Diomede andava,
 veggendo Ulisse preso che si stava. (*Tes.*8.26)

(But just as the lioness, who does not find her cub in the lair in the Hyrcanian woods, forgets her safety in her mad movements, and roaring her noble wrath runs through mountains and plains in a way that she would not have done except for this lowly sorrow, so Diomedes went racing about when he saw that Ulysses had been captured; McCoy 215-16)

The Knight’s simile of a mother animal crazed for the loss of her young belongs to traditions for describing animals. For example, Trevisa states, “þe pard is swiþe cruelle whan his whelpes ben ystolen, as þe glose seiþ *super Oze xiii*” (“The leopard (or panther) is very cruel when its cubs are stolen, as the gloss says about Hosea 13”; 18.83). Trevisa similarly states that the lioness is “more cruel þan þe leoun and nameliche whanne sche haþ whelpes, for sche putteþ hire to perile of deþ for hire whelpes. And for defens of hem sche dredeþ nouzt nouþer spareþ þe schot of hunters” (“more cruel than the lion and namely when she has cubs, for she puts herself in danger of death for her cubs. And in order to defend them she neither fears nor avoids the shot of hunters”; 18.66).

scenes by changing the pyre's location in Boccaccio to the grove where Palamon and Arcite fight. Though Boccaccio says that Theseus "pensò che nel bosco, ov'e' rancura / aver sovente soleva d'amore, / faria comporre il rogo dentro . . ." ("thought that he would have the pyre built in the grove where Arcites often used to make his complaints to Love"; *Tes.*11.13; McCoy 291), he does not say that Palamon and Arcites ever fought in this grove. In Chaucer's alteration of Boccaccio, the Knight impresses the grove's location upon the audience's minds. He says that Theseus

took conclusioun

That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swoote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amoureuse desires,
His compleynte, and for love his hoote fires,
He wolde make a fyr in which the office
Funeral he myghte al accomplice. (I.2857-64)

(reached the conclusion that in that same grove, sweet-smelling and green, where Arcite and Palamon first had the battle over love between themselves, where he had his amorous desires, his lament, and his hot fires for love, he would make a fire in which he would fully accomplish the funeral rite.)

Like the oratory descriptions, the Knight uses highly-structured language to describe the construction of the pyre, the mourning for Arcite during the funeral, and the games at the

funeral wake. He uses the rhetorical device of *occupatio*,⁷⁰ which he structures through *anaphora* and *polysyndeton*. The *occupatio* begins, “But how the fyr was maked upon highte, / . . . / . . . shal nat be toold for me ” (“But how the fire was made on high . . . shall not be told by me”; I.2919-24), and then continues with details linked together through repetition of the phrases “Ne how” (“Nor how”), “Ne what” (“Nor what”), and “Ne who” (“Nor who”) seventeen times in total.⁷¹ In some instances, the Knight organizes the details already linked by “Ne” with further repetition:

Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
 And thanne with drye stikkes cloven a thre,
 And thanne with grene wode and spicerye,
 And thanne with clooth of gold and with perrye,
 And gerlandes, hangynge with ful many a flour. (I.2933-37)

⁷⁰ Geoffrey of Vinsauf defines “[o]ccupatio” as “quando dicimus nos nolle dicere quod dicimus” (“when we say we don’t wish to say what we say”; *Documentum* 2.3.167; Parr 93).

⁷¹ The seventeen uses of these phrases include “Ne hou the goddes ronnen up and doun” (“Nor how the gods ran everywhere”; I.2925); “Ne hou the beestes and the brides alle / Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle” (Nor how all the beasts and birds fled for fear when the wood had fallen; I.2929-30); “Ne how the ground agast was of the light” (“Nor how the ground was frightened by the light”; I.2931); “Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree” (“Nor how the fire was laid first with straw”; I.2933); “Ne how Arcite lay among al this” (“Nor how Arcite lay among all this”; I.2939); “Ne what richesse aboute his body is” (“Nor what riches are around his body”; I.2940); “Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse, / Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse” (“Nor how Emily, as was the custom, lighted up the fire for [the] funeral service”; I.2941-42); “Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr” (“Nor how she swooned when men made the fire”; I.2943); “Ne what she spak” (“Nor what she spoke”; I.2944); “ne what was hir desir” (“nor what her desire was”; I.2944); “Ne what jeweles men in the fyre caste” (“Nor what jewels men cast into the fire”; I.2945); “Ne how somme caste hir sheeld, and somme hir spere” (“Nor how some cast their shield and some their spear”; I.2947); “Ne how the Grekes, with an huge route, / Thries riden al the fyr aboute ” (“Nor how the Greeks, with a huge crowd, ride thrice all around the fire”; I.2952-53); “Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde” (“Nor how Arcite was burnt to lifeless ashes”; I.2957); “Ne how that lyche-wake was yholde / Al thilke nyght” (“Nor how that wake was held all that night”; I.2958-59); “ne how the Grekes pleye / The wake-pleyes ” (“nor how the Greeks play the funeral games”; I.2959-60); and “Ne who that baar hym best” (“Nor who conducted himself best”; I.2962).

(Nor how the fire was laid first with straw, and then with dry tree trunks cut in three, and then with unseasoned firewood and a mixture of spices, and then with a gold cloth and with precious stones, and garlands, hanging with very many flowers.)

In addition to *anaphora* of “And thanne,” the Knight also emphasizes the orderly rituals of the mourning Greeks who

[t]hries riden al the fyr aboute

Upon the left hand, with a loud shoutynge,

And thries with hir speres claterynge;

And thries . . . the ladyes gonne crye. (I.2952-55)

(ride thrice all around the fire, upon the left-hand, with loud shouting, and thrice with their spears clattering; and thrice the ladies did cry.)

These rhetorical devices mirror the prescribed funerary rituals, and fittingly, the *occupatio* ends in the usual way: “But shortly to the point thanne wol I wende / And maken of my longe tale an ende” (“But I will then quickly get to the point and make an end of my long tale”; I.2965-66).⁷² Through his methodical rhetoric, the Knight reflects Theseus’ attempts to reassert order in his new elaborate construction after his previous one, the amphitheatre, failed.

⁷² The Knight uses *occupatio* elsewhere, such as in the description of Theseus’ defeat of the Amazons and marriage to Hyppolita (I.875-88), which ends, “But al that thyng I moot as now forbere. / . . . / The remenant of the tale is long ynough” (“But I must now forgo all that. . . . The remainder of the tale is long enough”; I.885-88); in the description of the funeral rites for the Theban women’s dead (I.994-1000), which ends, “But shortly for to telle is myn entente” (“But my intent is to narrate briefly”; I.1000); and in the description of Theseus’ feast for all of the knights competing in the tournament (I.2190-207), which ends, “Of al this make I now no mencion, / But al th’effect; that thynketh me the beste” (“I do not now mention all of this but all the substance [instead]; that seems the best to me”; I.2206-07).

In spite of the elaborately balanced rhetoric, however, Theseus' and the Knight's attempts at reasserting order fail. The *occupatio*, at forty-eight lines (I.2919-66), is Chaucer's longest *occupatio* (Bennett, *Knight's Tale* 146 n 2060-106) and contains the longest sentence in all of Chaucer's poetry (DiMarco, Explanatory Notes to *KnT* 840 n 2919-62). The unconventional length of the rhetorical device opposes the orderliness of the rhetorical balance. As Geoffrey of Vinsauf writes, "Utendum est in locis suis ad jocum excitandum duobus coloribus rhetoricis, scilicet *occupatione* et *praecisione*" ("Two rhetorical colors are to be used in their own places to arouse mirth, namely *suggestion (occupatio)* and *breaking-off (praecisio)*"; *Documentum* 2.3.167; Parr 93). The *occupatio* of the funeral pyre likewise serves a comedic purpose. Jordan interprets the description of Arcite's funeral pyre as "a comedy of rhetorical manners" because "the narrator is struggling at cross-purposes with himself both to condense his description and to tell us what he is leaving out" (181).⁷³ For example, the Knight states,

But how the fyr was maked upon highte,
 Ne eek the names that the trees highte,
 As ook, firre, birch, aspe, alder, holm, popler,
 Wylugh, elm, plane, assh, box, chasteyn, lynde, laurer,
 Mapul, thorn, bech, hasel, ew, whippeltree —
 How they weren feld shal nat be toold for me. (I.2919-24)

⁷³ Others have hesitated to read the *occupatio* as ironic. For example, according to Stephen Knight, this *occupatio* gives "a sense of speed" as well as "intensif[ies] the emotion" (145). W. Nelson Francis argues that the Knight is "solemn" in his use of *occupatio* (1140). Most recently, Martin Camargo stated that in *KnT*, Chaucer uses "highly figured language with little apparent irony" ("Chaucer" 204).

(But how the fire was made on high, nor also the names that the trees were called, such as oak, fir, birch, aspen, alder, holm oak, poplar, willow, elm, plane, ash, boxwood tree, chestnut, linden, laurel, maple, thorn, beech, hazel, yew, dogwood—how they were felled shall not be told by me.)

While abbreviating Boccaccio,⁷⁴ the Knight still includes even more kinds of trees than Boccaccio does.⁷⁵ He even achieves such specificity in telling the names of the trees that he incorporates *praecisio*, or breaks off mid-sentence, no longer able to assert that he will not tell the names. Instead, he says, “How they weren feld shal nat be toold for me” (I.2924). The Knight thus subverts himself by providing too much detail even for an *occupatio*. Though he uses a conventional epic catalogue of trees,⁷⁶ the Knight’s description becomes unconventional and resists containment because of its great length and the multitude of detail. Chaucer accordingly problematizes the Knight’s attempts at order. By extension, he problematizes Theseus’ attempts at control through the funeral ceremony and all of its rituals. Theseus’ ceremonies for the funeral represent chivalric society’s merely “aesthetic solution, not a practical one” for dealing with Arcite’s violent death that “creates a ritual pattern . . . which acts as a kind of surrogate, or consolation, filling in for the lack of any humanly perceptible divine plan into which his death might fit and by which it might be justified” (Blake 16). The Knight’s rhetoric mirrors Theseus’ aesthetic focus; the Knight “although pretending otherwise, . . . concentrates on the substantial, visual, material elements of a funeral ceremony” that “are only potentially

⁷⁴ The Knight condenses Boccaccio’s description of the funeral in *Tes.*11.13-91.

⁷⁵ Chaucer includes a total of three more trees than are in the corresponding scene in 11.22-24 of Boccaccio’s *Teseida* (Boitani, “Chaucer and Lists” 40-41).

⁷⁶ The topos of the catalogue of trees originates in the catalogues of Homer and Hesiod (Curtius 195).

related to the darker mysteries of the universe” (Ruff 94). Attention to aesthetic details does not even provide aesthetic order though because the rhetoric’s conventionality breaks down.

The Knight constructs his narrative through the shifts in his rhetoric for describing the events in the grove. The same location of the grove enables comparison of the rhetoric that describes each of the events that occur there. He begins with conventional epic similes to describe Palamon and Arcite’s conflict and then turns to similarly constructed ekphrases of the oratories within the amphitheatre Theseus builds for a large-scale version of Palamon and Arcite’s conflict. While the descriptions of both the one-on-one combat and the oratories present controlled rhetoric that mimics the chivalric order Theseus promotes, they nonetheless involve violence that foreshadows the large-scale violence to come within this location. The similarity between the orderly descriptions of the violence before Theseus intervenes and of the aesthetic scenes of the oratories for which he is responsible demonstrate that, rather than changing or resolving the conflict, he will just replicate it on a grander scale. What has been represented rhetorically as a place of order then becomes the opposite as the violent subjects of the aesthetically ordered ekphrases become the reality of the tournament. With the alliteration that pervades the battles in the amphitheatre, Chaucer introduces a verse form that, based on evidence from Chaucer’s own verse, was regarded with suspicion as a means of regulating language in his region and time. Within the description of the tournament, the Knight returns to animalistic epic similes for describing Palamon and Arcite fighting one-on-one, so that the conflict does not seem any closer to a resolution than before Theseus’ involvement. In fact, resolution of the conflict seems even less

likely as a result of the wide-scale violence Theseus has introduced. For the final scene in the grove, the construction of Arcite's funeral pyre, Theseus once again intervenes in Palamon and Arcite's quarrel through an elaborate construction, this time by providing a chivalric funeral worthy of the winner of his tournament. As in his description of the amphitheatre, the Knight once again relies on balanced rhetoric for a structure that contributes to chivalric social order. Just as Saturn challenges Theseus' authority when he has a Fury kill the victor of Theseus' tournament, though, so too does the rhetoric describing the funeral for this victor defy preconceptions through an *occupatio* of exceptional length and detail. This unconventional rhetoric represents Theseus' lack of control in a different way. Now, unable even to mask violence through convention, Theseus' reassertion of order is shown to be impossible.

This narrative movement from chivalric order to chaos reveals the futility of Theseus' Boethian relation of aesthetic, social, and cosmic harmony in his later speech before he negotiates the marriage of Palamon and Emily.⁷⁷ Theseus declares,

The Firste Moevere of the cause above,

.....

. . . with that faire cheyne of love . . . bond

The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond

In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee. (I.2987-93)

⁷⁷ For the source of this passage, see Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (2.m.8.1-30).

(The First Mover of the First Cause above, . . . with that fair chain of love . . . bound the fire, the air, the water, and the land in definite bounds, from which they may not flee.)

Theseus here articulates Boethian aesthetic harmony, in which a chain of love descends from God, here understood as Jupiter (I.3035), binding all of the universe in social and cosmic harmony. Because of the First Mover's establishment of "[c]ertereyne dayes and duracioun / To al that is engendred in this place" ("[s]pecific [numbers of] days and [a specific] duration to all that is engendered in this place; I.2996-97), "[t]hanne may men by this ordre wel discern / That thilke Moevere stable is and eterne" ("[t]hen one can by this order well discern that that same Mover is stable and eternal; I.3003-04). Theseus assumes the role of Jupiter's agent on earth who also binds people together in love, for after the speech, "[b]itwixen" ("between"; I.3094) Palamon and Emily "was maad anon the bond / That highte matrimoigne or mariage" ("was made right away the bond that is called matrimony or marriage"; I.3094-95). The "blisse and melodye" ("bliss and melody"; I.3097) of this wedding evoke the musical harmony of the spheres in the Ptolemaic universe. This harmony that the Knight and Theseus both assert clashes with the previous violence in the amphitheatre concluded not by Theseus or Jupiter but by Saturn, whom Theseus does not name in his speech. As the previous narrative sequence of events within the location of the amphitheatre reveals, aesthetic balance does not necessitate social and cosmic harmony. Ordered rhetoric describes Palamon and Arcite's initial quarrel and the amphitheatre itself, which supports a Boethian ideal of aesthetic, social, and cosmic order for Theseus' intervention but also supports similarities between the conflicts before and after he intervened. His intervention therefore seems ineffectual.

Once the rhetoric no longer supports the linkage of aesthetic, social, and cosmic order, reasserting order becomes impossible. The narrative bolstered by locational memory hence shows that Theseus fails as an instrument of Boethian harmony.

The ekphrases within the narrative sequence create *ductus* in a way similar to Chaucer's dream visions in which the chaotic contents symbolically foreshadow later events in the poem and guide its interpretation. The ekphrases also create *ductus* in a different way from the dream visions: they do not just serve a symbolic function, but the Knight's ekphrastic language enacts the authority that Theseus imposes. By describing a structure of aesthetic, social, and cosmic order, the ekphrases convey the narrative from the chivalric conflicts before Theseus' intervention to the chaotic battle that directly results from his imposition of chivalric order. The ekphrases reveal the chaos that can result from chivalric order. Chaucer's *KnT* thus integrally connects the ekphrases to the narrative.

Chapter 5

The Temple of Glas: Lydgate's Ekphrastic Reaction to Chaucer

This chapter applies my study of Chaucer's developing use of the rhetoric of ekphrasis to understanding better how John Lydgate reacts to Chaucer. I turn to Lydgate's *The Temple of Glas* (*TG*), a dream vision poem that features ekphrasis that cites Chaucer as a source. In *TG*, the narrator dreams that he enters the temple of Venus, and the ekphrasis occurs characteristically near the beginning of the dream vision when the dreamer observes the paintings of legendary lovers adorning Venus' temple. In the temple, he overhears a lady petitioning Venus for consolation because she loves a man whom she is not free to be with. This same man prays to Venus that the lady be merciful and allow him to serve her as a courtly lover. In accordance with Venus' bidding, the man then makes a complaint to his lady, and Venus joins them together in a ceremony, promising them that in time, if they are true to each other, their desires to be with each other will be fulfilled. Although the lady has a prior bond, Venus unites them amidst the muses' harmonious singing in a way that is sinless and warns them both that they will need to endure great suffering.

By obtaining joy through suffering, the lovers demonstrate the Boethian theory that knowledge comes from opposites (Norton-Smith, Introduction, Notes 177). This theory applies also to medieval conceptions of harmony: because knowledge of something comes from knowing its opposite, knowing unity comes from knowing diversity, and Boethian aesthetics configured harmony as unified diversity. The ekphrasis reinforces this theme by loosely collecting a variety of stories of love, both tragic and celebratory, including stories of lovers who have suffered and later were

rewarded for it, and by including the harmonious marriage of Mercury and Philology towards the end. In spite of the misery that many of the images represent, the joy and harmony emphasized at the end of the ekphrasis construct meaning for the miscellany of suffering represented earlier. Through its metaphorical representation of Boethian theory, the ekphrasis anticipates the harmony at the end of *TG* when Venus assures the man and woman that their suffering will lead to their lasting happiness. Specific characters in the ekphrasis, which later reappear as Venus' exemplary models for the lady and man, as well as the ekphrastic images of the dart and the chain, which also figure in the lady's and man's complaints and in Venus' resolution of them, further reinforce connections between the ekphrasis and the lady and man's situation.

The theme of harmony from diversity and the repeating images that enable the audience to draw connections between the ekphrasis and the rest of the narrative reveal that Lydgate's ekphrasis integrates themes and techniques from Chaucer's ekphrases. Lydgate's *TG* responds to Chaucer's *PF*, where the tercels and female eagle remain unmated as the music of the birds wakes up the dreamer at the end; instead, the harmonious singing of the muses wakes up the dreamer in *TG* (Schick 121). Unlike *PF* which leaves the courtly lovers dissatisfied, Lydgate's *TG* presents a courtly love relationship that involves suffering but also satisfaction. While *TG* most clearly invokes *PF*, it combines techniques from Chaucer's later ekphrases to integrate its ekphrasis more fully in the narrative.¹ The ekphrasis does not alter the direction of the narrative and the

¹ My argument contrasts with the arguments of those who claim the ekphrasis merely serves a decorative purpose. Derek Pearsall asserts that the ekphrasis and the lovers' complaints "are evidence only of Lydgate's encyclopaedic tendencies, not of any allegorical intention," unlike Chaucer's temples of Venus in *PF* and *KnT*, which are "at once pictorially decorative and meaningful" (106). C. S. Lewis even asserts that "[n]early all that is of value" is in the poem's "stanzaic speeches," as opposed to sections such as the

ductus of *TG* as in Chaucer's *HF* and *KnT*, but its narrator who breaches the static frame of the ekphrasis and creates an interactive memorial experience for the audience reveals the influence of these later Chaucerian ekphrases.

The Boethian system of contraries figures prominently in *TG*'s ekphrasis and throughout the poem. According to this system, things are known by their opposites, and suffering is necessary for pleasure (Norton-Smith, Introduction, Notes 177).² Lady Philosophy discusses this system of contraries (Norton-Smith, Introduction, Notes 177):

“bonis semper adesse potentiam, malos cunctis viribus esse desertos agnoscas
licebit, quorum quidem alterum demonstratur ex altero. Nam cum bonum
malumque contraria sint, si bonum potens esse constiterit, liquet inbecillitas mali;
at si fragilitas clarescat mali, boni firmitas nota est.” (Boethius, *Consolation of
Philosophy* 4.pr.2.3-9)

(“that good men always possess power, and that the wicked are deprived of all their strength, you may learn, since indeed the one is proved from the other. For since good and evil are contraries, if it is established that good is powerful, the weakness of evil is clear; and if the frailty of evil is evident, the strength of good is known.”)

Based on this philosophy, diversity enables a more complete and unified understanding of goodness. The physical senses direct apprehension of harmony from diversity. Light

description of the temple of Venus, with “the poet’s own narration in couplets,” which succumb to Lydgate’s “fatal garrulity” (240). Spearing maintains that Lydgate “is interested in” details of the setting “simply for their own sake, as a magpie is attracted by anything shiny, and it is hard to believe that the local details are governed by any larger scheme of significance” (173).

² John Norton-Smith first read *TG* as an allegory of the Boethian system of contraries (Introduction, Notes 177), and his reading has been influential ever since.

and colour are discussed in relation to the Boethian system of opposites in the poem, as Venus declares, “folk . . . reiossh[e] more of liȝt / That þei wiþ derknes were waped and amate” (“people that were enshrouded with darkness and confounded . . . also rejoice more about light”; 400-01),³ and “white is whitter if it be set bi blak” (“white is whiter if it is set beside black”; Lydgate, *TG* 1250), echoing Chaucer’s *TC* (Schick 119).⁴ She also declares, “no wiȝt preiseþ of sugre þe swetnes / But þei afore haue tasted bitternes” (“no person praises the sweetness of sugar unless they have tasted bitterness before”; 403-04), and “swete is swettir eftir bitternes” (“sweetness is sweeter after bitterness”; 1251). Because of these sensory experiences, Venus counsels the lovers, “of ȝow too / Shal loue be more, þat it was bouȝt with wo” (“[the] love between you too shall be greater because it was bought with woe”; 1255-56). Venus applies sensory experience to spiritual struggles of suffering necessary for fulfillment in love. *TG* thus teaches that aesthetic harmony, perceived through the senses, as well as social harmony created through love, are constructed from diversity. *TG* connects aesthetic harmony from diversity with social

³ All citations of Lydgate’s *TG*, unless otherwise noted, come from John Norton-Smith’s *John Lydgate: Poems*.

⁴ “Eke whit by black, by shame ek worthinesse, / Ech set by other, more for other semeth, / As men may se, and so the wyse it demeth” (“Also white beside black, and disgrace beside honour, each set beside the other seems [to be] more [intense] because of the other, as men may see, and thus the wise judge it”; Chaucer, *TC* 1.642-44). Judith M. Davidoff argues that Lydgate interprets the Boethian system of contraries primarily in terms of an opposition between light and dark (104). As Davidoff points out (113), Lydgate’s dreamer states that the sun’s

liȝt so in my face
Bigan to smyte, so persing euer in one
On euere part, where þat I gan gone,
That I ne myȝt noþing, as I would,
Abouten me considre and bihold. (24-28)

(light began to smite my face so much, piercing so continually everywhere I went that I could not examine and behold anything around me as I wished.)

Only when “skyes donne” (“dark clouds”; 30) have “iblent” (“obscured”; 32) the sunlight can the dreamer “biholden me aboute” (“observe around me”; 34).

harmony from diversity and thus articulates more explicitly the philosophy that informs not only Chaucer's *TC* but also Chaucer's works that use extended ekphrases.

The ekphrasis at the beginning of *TG* incorporates this Boethian philosophy, for it anticipates the later theme of the good that comes from suffering and the social harmony that can come from discord. The description represents this theme by first drawing attention to the aesthetic order of the paintings. The dreamer states,

And riȝt anone, as I gan walken soft,
 If I þe soth ariȝt report[e] shal,
 I sauȝe depeynt opon euere wal,
 From est to west, ful many a faire image
 Of sondri louers, lich as þei were of age
 Isette in ordre, aftir þei were trwe,⁵
 Wiþ lifli colours wondir fressh of hwe. (42-48)

(And immediately, as I began to walk at an easy pace, if I must tell the truth correctly, I saw painted upon every wall, from east to west, very many a fine image of various lovers, set in order as they were in their prime,⁶ according [to how] they truly were, with lifelike colours wondrously fresh of hue.)

⁵ Def. 10c for "trwe" in *MED* is "true to its original; also, accurately represented." This word is ambiguous, however, as J. Allan Mitchell's edition states, "'trwe' may refer to fidelity or a true likeness" (n 46-47).

⁶ An additional interpretation of "age" could be "period in history" (*MED*, "age, n.," Def. 5a). Norton-Smith's supposition that "Lydgate may be misremembering the *Monk's Tale*" seems plausible (Introduction, Notes 181). At the end of the prologue to his tale, the Monk states,

Though I by ordre telle nat thise thynges,
 Be it of popes, emperours, or kynges,
 After hir ages, as men writen fynde,
 But tellen hem som bifore and som bihynde,
 As it now comth unto my remembraunce,
 Have me excused of myn ignoraunce. (Chaucer VII.1985-90)

The opening description establishes that these images were painted in an orderly way by ascribing an “est to west” (45) layout. While it has been variously argued that the statement that they were “[i]sette in ordre” (47) indicates an order based on fidelity or historical chronology, what seems more likely, based on the following line’s emphasis upon the “lifli colours” of the paintings (48), is that the description states that they were in order, without elaborating how, and that they were true to life. When elaborating on the specific figures in the paintings, the narrator does not explicitly connect them with a specific order, but he conveys a sense of order through phrases that link the images in a specific sequence. The description incorporates the phrases “first of al I saugh” (“first of all I saw”; 55), “next I saugh” (“next I saw”; 62), “nygh bi Venus saugh I” (“near to Venus I saw”; 64), “aldernext was” (“next of all was”; 70), “forþirmore, as I gan behold” (“furthermore, as I looked”; 111), and “vppermore depeint” (“farther up”; 137). The description therefore presents order in an aesthetic sense as a result of the ordered layout of the images in the temple. This layout constructs meaning for the temple’s images of suffering and discord.

The description further projects meaning onto suffering through its diverse collection of distressed and joyful love. These juxtaposed stories function as Boethian contraries that illustrate the text’s larger theme of suffering necessary for joy. The ekphrasis thus reveals “the medieval passion for a certain kind of encyclopaedism” (Pearsall 40), but this does not mean that “it is only necessary that people should have

(Even if I do not tell these things, whether they are of popes, emperors, or kings, according to their times, as men find written, but tell some earlier [when they should have been told later] and some later [when they should have been told earlier], just as they come to my memory, forgive me for my ignorance.)

been of different sexes to be enrolled in this catalogue, which ends not because Lydgate has exhausted a category but because he has, for the moment, exhausted his memory” (Pearsall 40).⁷ Coley’s application to Chaucer’s *HF* of Wolfgang Kemp’s discussion of paratactic relationships between stained glass panels to create narratives (81) applies also to Lydgate’s painted glass in *TG*. According to Kemp, the “adjacent but not independent pictorial panels” are “an expression of the idea that homogeneity can only be attained through heterogeneity . . .” (220). As a verbal counterpart to stained glass, the description of the paintings in the temple relates the images through their placement as opposed to an explanation. It presents these relations grammatically through *polysyndeton* of “And.”⁸ Through the series of juxtapositions that begin initially with lovers making sorrowful complaints and lead up to the joyful, harmonious marriage of Mercury and Philology, the ekphrasis constructs a pattern of Boethian joy through sorrow.

⁷ Mitchell also defines the temple images in terms of miscellany. He writes that the images are of “‘sondri lovers’ (line 46), both faithful and faithless, divine and human, married and adulterous, grouped together according to no self-evident organizing principle” (*Temple of Glas*, Introduction).

⁸ The following are examples of images joined by *polysyndeton*: “And first of al I saugh” Dido (“And first of all I saw”; 55); “And next I saugh the compleint of Medee” (“And next I saw the complaint of Medea”; 62); “And nygh bi Venus saugh I sit Addoun” (“And next to Venus I saw Adonis sit”; 64); “And aldernext was” (“And next of all was”; 70) Alcestis; “And hou that Tesbie her hert[e] did[e] rife / Wiþ þilk[e] swerd of him Piramus” (“And how Thisbe pierced her heart with the same sword of that one, Pyramus”; 80-81); “And al þe maner hou þat Theseus / The Minatawre slow” (“And all the manner of how Theseus slew the Minotaur”; 82-83); “And hou þat Phillis felt of loues hete / The grete fire of Demophon” (“And how Phyllis felt love’s heat, the great fire, for Demophon”; 86-87); “And mani a stori, mo þen I rekin can, / Were in þe tempil” (“And many a story, more than I can tell of, was in the temple”; 91-92); “And hov þat Paris wan / The faire Heleyne” (“And how Paris won the fair Helen”; 92-93); “And hov Achilles was for Policene / Islain” (“And how Achilles was slain for Polixena”; 94-95); “And hov þe Sabyns in hir maner halowe / The fest of Lucesse ȝit in Rome tovne” (“And how the Sabines still, according to their custom, honour the feast day of Lucretia in the city of Rome”; 100-01); “And forþirmore, . . . / I sawȝ hov Phebus with an [arow] of gold / Iwoundid was” (“And furthermore, I saw how Phoebus was wounded by an arrow of gold”; 111-13); “And hou þat Ioue gan to chaunge his cope / Oonli for loue of þe faire Europe” (“And how Jove changed his cloak [i.e. appearance] solely because of love of the fair Europa”; 117-18); “And hou þat he bi transmutacioun / The shap gan take of Amphitrioun / For his Almen” (“And how he by metamorphosis took the shape of Amphitriou for his Alcmena”; 121-23); “And vppermore depeint” (“And painted farther up”; 137) was the story of Canacee and her brother.

Sorrowful lovers fill the opening of the ekphrasis. The dreamer declares,
 And, as me þouȝt, I sauȝe somme sit and stonde,
 And some kneeling with billis in hir honde,
 And some with compleint, woful and pitous,
 Wiþ doleful chere to putten to Venus,
 So as she sate fleting in þe se,
 Vpon hire wo forto haue pite. (49-54)

(And, as it seemed to me, I saw some [of the lovers] sitting and [some] standing, and some kneeling with petitions in their hand, and some with complaints, woeful and pitiful, to put in a sorrowful manner before Venus, as she sat floating in the sea, so that [she might] have pity upon their misery.)

The initial miserable lovers include Dido, who “deceyued was of Eneas, / For al his hestis and his opis sworne” (“was deceived by Aeneas, despite all his promises and his sworn oaths”; 58-59) and “saugh þat ded she most[e] be” (“realized that she must die”; 61). Lydgate’s description of the bootless complaint of Medea, another popular example of a betrayed woman, echoes the language used to describe Dido: “And next I saugh the compleint of Medee, / Ho[u] þat she was falsed of Iason” (“And next I saw the complaint of Medea, how she was deceived by Jason”; 62-63). After these images of betrayal, the ekphrasis represents the misery of Venus herself by describing “al þe maner hov þe bore . . . slough” (“the entire manner how the boar slew”; 65) Adonis, “[f]or whom she wepte and hade pein inouȝe” (“for whom she wept and had a lot of pain”; 66).⁹

⁹ For the story of Venus and Adonis, see Ovid’s *Met.* 10.

The ekphrasis counters the three examples of sorrowful stories with three stories with happy endings. The three stories with happy endings involve intense pain and suffering for the three women who remain faithful to their husbands while kept apart from them: Penelope, Griselda, and Alcestis. The dreamer declares that he “saugh . . . also hov Penelope, / For she so long hir lord ne myzt[e] se, / Ful oft[e] wex of colour pale and grene” (“also saw how Penelope, because she could not see her lord [her husband] for so long, very often became pale and green in colour”; 67-69).¹⁰ The formulaic transformations of Penelope’s complexion to “pale and grene” (69) highlight her suffering.¹¹ “Pale” is the colour one would expect from a lover making a complaint, based on Ovid’s *Ars amatoria*: “Palleat omnis amans: hic est color aptus amanti” (“But let every lover be pale; this is the lover’s hue”; *Art of Love* 1.729).¹² The principal male lover in *TG* similarly “bledip inward til he wex pale of hwe / And hap his wound vnwarli fressh and grene” (“bleeds inwardly until he becomes pale of hue and has his wound unawares freshly and newly”; 616-17). He later is described as being “of hwe deedli pale and wan” (“deathly pale of hue and wan”; 937) after Venus tells him to make known his love to the lady. The description of the next painted image focuses on suffering but also on virtue and the reward of it. The dreamer declares,

And aldernext was þe fressh[e] quene,

¹⁰ For the story of Penelope’s grief while waiting for Ulysses to return from the Trojan War, see Ovid’s *Heroides* 1.

¹¹ J. Schick notes, for example, the use of the phrase in Chaucer’s *BD* to describe the Black Knight after he makes his complaint, as the flow of blood to his heart made “[h]ys hewe chaunge and wexe grene / And pale” (“his colour change and become green and pale”; 497-98) (74). He also cites Lydgate’s use of the phrase in the *Troy Book* to describe Helen’s sorrow over her abduction: “Now pale and grene sche wexep of hir cher” (“She now becomes pale and green of face”; 2.3920) (74).

¹² The translation belongs to J. H. Mozley and faces the original in the edition from which I cite. This association between lovers and paleness was widely perpetuated in the Middle Ages by Bartholomaeus Anglicus (19.12) and Trevisa’s translation of Bartholomaeus (19.13), which both cite Ovid’s *Ars amatoria*.

I mene Alceste, the noble trw[e] wyfe,
 And for Admete hou sh[e] lost hir life,
 And for hir trowth, if I shal not lie,
 Hou she was turnyd to a dai[e]sie. (70-74)

(And next of all was the fresh queen, I mean Alcestis, the noble, faithful woman, and how she lost her life for Admetus, and, if I must not lie, how she was turned into a daisy because of her fidelity.)¹³

In the description of the image of Griselda, he does not even mention any of the trials that Walter puts her through such as taking away and pretending to have their children killed but just her virtues.¹⁴ He says, “Ther was [also] Grisildis innocence, / And al hir mekenes and hir pacience” (“There was also Griselda’s innocence, and all her meekness, and her patience”; 75-76). Even though the description does not evoke the happy ending for each woman, by then shifting focus from the suffering of the women to their virtue, the ekphrasis suggests the potential positive effects of suffering.

In spite of the previous positive focus on the lovers who were rewarded for their faithfulness, the ekphrasis quickly returns to its focus on suffering with two pairs of lovers, Tristan and Isolde and Pyramus and Thisbe, who face a prior marriage and parental wishes that respectively keep them apart. When the speaker declares, “There was eke Isaude—and meni anopir mo— / And al þe turment and al þe cruel wo, / That she hade for Tristram al hir liue” (“There was also Isolde—and many more—and all the torment and all the cruel misery, which she had for Tristan all her life”; 77-79), he

¹³ See Chaucer’s *LGW F* 510-16.

¹⁴ For the story of Griselda, see Chaucer’s *Clerk’s Tale*.

amplifies Isolde's suffering by implying that many other woeful lovers were shown in the visual representation upon which the ekphrasis is based. Pyramus and Thisbe follow, who represent a similar kind of suffering.¹⁵ Pyramus and Thisbe are kept apart by their parents, and their story is recounted at the moment when Thisbe kills herself out of love for Pyramus, because he had killed himself when he thought she was killed by a lion:¹⁶ "Tesbie her hert[e] did[e] rife / Wiþ þilk[e] swerd of him Piramus" ("Thisbe pierced her heart with the same sword of that one, Pyramus"; 80-81).

With the following stories of betrayal in love, Theseus and his son Demophon, the ekphrasis also emphasizes the centrality of suffering to the experience of love. The narrator states that there was

al þe maner hou þat Theseus
 The Minatawre slow amyð þe hous
 That was for-wrynk[l]ed bi craft of Dedalus,
 When þat he was in prison shette in Crete.
 And hou þat Phillis felt of loues hete
 The grete fire of Demophon, alas,
 And for his falshed and [for] his trepas
 Vpon þe walles depeint men myzt[e] se
 Hov she was honged vpon a filbert tre. (82-90)

(And all the manner how Theseus slew the Minotaur in the middle of the house
 that was made utterly convoluted through the craft of Daedalus, when he was shut

¹⁵ Chaucer associates Pyramus and Thisbe with Tristan and Isolde in the paintings of Venus' temple (*PF* 289-90).

¹⁶ See Ovid, *Met.* 4.55-167.

in prison in Crete. And how Phyllis felt love's heat, the great fire, for Demophon, alas, and because of his falsehood and his trespass, men could see painted upon the walls how she was hanged on a filbert tree.)¹⁷

Theseus defeats the Minotaur and escapes from the house of Daedalus through the thread of Ariadne, who afterwards becomes his lover but whom he then abandons for her sister Phaedra.¹⁸ While the speaker details where and how Theseus slew the Minotaur, he does not mention the love affair, though this is a painting on a wall depicting "sondri louers" (46).¹⁹ The story of Phyllis and Demophon, Theseus' son, that follows implies Theseus' love affair though. Chaucer's *LGW* groups these stories together on a painted wall:²⁰

"And whan thyne olde auncestres peynted be,²¹

In which men may here worthynesse se,

Thanne preye I God thow peynted be also

That folk may rede forby as they go,

¹⁷ See *MED*, Def. d for "wrinklen (v.)": "ben wrinkled" means "to be constructed so as to be filled with turnings or confusingly twisted or contorted paths." The gloss in Norton-Smith's edition is "formed in extreme convolutions" (182).

¹⁸ See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 8.152-76 and *Heroides* 10.

¹⁹ The description of Theseus and the Minotaur is one of the points at which the ekphrasis has been most troubling to critics. Pearsall calls the depiction of this story "a strange quirk of association" (40). Mitchell compares the absence of Ariadne in the story of Theseus and the Minotaur to her absence in the narration of the story in Chaucer's *KnT* (*Temple of Glas* n 82-85). In Chaucer's *KnT*, see the description of Theseus' pennon "in which ther was ybete / The Mynotaur, which that he wan in Crete. / Thus rit this duc, thus rit this conquerour" ("on which there was embroidered the Minotaur, which he conquered in Crete. Thus rides this duke; thus rides this conqueror"; l.979-81).

²⁰ This grouping of the stories occurs also in a catalogue of lovers in the parliament of exemplary lovers near the end of John Gower's *Confessio amantis* (CA):

And Phillis ek I myhte see,

Whom Demophon deceived hadde;

And Adriagne hir sorwe ladde,

For Theseus hir soster tok

And hire unkindely forsok. (8.2554-58)

(And I could also see Phyllis, whom Demophon had deceived, and Ariadne endured her sorrow, for Theseus took her sister [as a lover] and unnaturally forsook her [Ariadne].)

Phyllis' transformation into a filbert tree appears to come from Gower CA 4.866-70 (Schick 75-76).

²¹ The ancestors are sculptured in Ovid's *Heroides* 2.67-78.

‘Lo! this is he that with his flaterye
 Bytraised hath and don hire vilenye
 That was his trewe love in thought and dede!’
 But sothly, of oo poynt yit may they rede,
 That ye ben lyk youre fader as in this,
 For he begiled Adriane, ywis,
 With swich an art and with swich subtilte
 As thow thyselven hast begyled me.” (2536-47)

(“And when your old ancestors are painted, in [such a way] that men may see
 their worthiness, then I pray to God that you will also be painted so that people
 can read as they pass by, ‘Attention! This is he who through his flattery had
 betrayed and acted wickedly to her who was his true love in [both] mind and
 deed!’ But truly, of one particular they may further read: that, because of this,
 you are like your father, for he for sure beguiled Ariadne, with such cunning and
 with such trickery as you yourself have beguiled me.”)

Demophon, like Theseus, betrays the female who saves his life.²² The absence of details
 about Theseus as a lover thus does not detract from his relevance to the ekphrasis as a
 lover responsible for betraying another.

Lydgate amplifies this theme of suffering created by love through the story of
 Paris and Helen’s affair. Drawing upon the tradition of the *Ovide Moralisé*, where Helen

²² See Chaucer’s *HF*: “For had he lawghed, had he loured, / He moste have ben al devoured, / Yf Adriane
 ne had ybe” (“For whether he had laughed or frowned, he would have been entirely devoured, if it had not
 been for Ariadne”; 409-11). See also Chaucer’s *LGW*, when Demophon’s ship on the way home to Athens
 after the Trojan War is shipwrecked on Thrace, where Phyllis is queen, and “syk he was, and almost at the
 deth” (“he was sick and almost dead”; 2436).

is complicit rather than raped or abducted,²³ *TG* stresses the suffering that accompanies not just a one-sided passion but also a mutual passion such as the love between the male and female protagonists in the poem.²⁴ The dreamer states that the temple contains paintings of

hov þat Paris wan

The faire Heleyne, þe lusti fressh[e] quene,

And hov Achilles was for Policene

Islain vnwarli within Troi[e] toune. (92-95)

(how Paris won the fair Helen, the attractive, fresh queen, and how Achilles was slain unsuspectingly because of Polixena within the city of Troy.)

While Helen does not suffer death as a result of love, her love affair is responsible for the Trojan War, and the dreamer evokes destructive consequences of the affair by describing also the tragic love affair of Achilles that occurs during the war and as a result of which both Achilles and Polixena are killed.²⁵

Even if *TG* constructs Paris and Helen's union as consensual, the allusion that follows to Tereus' rape of Philomela evokes other Trojan narratives' presentation of Paris and Helen's affair as a rape. In doing so, the allusion links together and accentuates the suffering that eros creates in each story. The dreamer says that there was "writen"²⁶ eke

²³ See *Ovide Moralisé* 12.112-737.

²⁴ Other medieval versions characterize Paris and Helen's affair as a rape. Chaucer's *TC* describes Helen's "ravysshynge . . . / By Paris don" ("rape . . . done by Paris"; 1.62-63). In Lydgate's version in his *Troy Book*, however, when Paris leads Helen away with him to Troy, Paris "fonde no maner resistance" ("received no kind of resistance"; 2.3834) from Helen, and they had also previously expressed their love for one another (Lydgate, *Troy Book* 2.3729-30).

²⁵ Achilles later returns from the dead to demand Polixena as a sacrifice after the war (Hyginus 110).

²⁶ Whether or not the dreamer refers to captions accompanying the images, the use of the word "writen" marks the importance of calling to mind other texts to supply narrative details in the ekphrastic description.

þe hole tale, / Hov Philomene into a nyȝtyngale / Iturned was, and Progne vnto a swallow” (“written also the whole tale of how Philomela was turned into a nightingale and Procne [was turned] into a swallow”; 97-99). These transformations during Procne’s husband Tereus’ pursuit of her and her sister Philomela conclude the suffering that began when Tereus raped Philomela and cut out her tongue so that she could not tell about it.²⁷

The next story of rape to which the ekphrasis alludes, Lucretia’s rape by Sextus Tarquin, however, presents eventual positive consequences. By juxtaposing the destructiveness of rape with Lucretia’s story, the ekphrasis shows again that not all suffering ends in tragedy. The images do not depict Lucretia’s rape by Sextus Tarquin, after which she committed suicide, and because of which Brutus declared a war, which led to the banishment of King Tarquin. Instead, they show “hov þe Sabyns in hir maner halowe / The fest of Lucesse ȝit in Rome tovne” (“how the Sabines still, according to their custom, honour the feast day of Lucretia in the city of Rome”; 100-01). This feast day is the *Regifugium*, the Flight of the King, which was celebrated on February 24, and, as Mitchell states, the “Sabines who observe the feast day of Lucretia are mourning the sexual exploitation of their ancestors, but also celebrating a political watershed — the advent of Roman republicanism” (*Temple of Glas* n 100).²⁸ The Sabines’ celebration of the feast day of Lucretia evokes the rapes of their own ancestors. Although Philomela and the Sabine women would not be considered “louers” (46), the proposed subject of the depictions on the temple walls, their stories represent the destructive consequences of others’ lust. The Sabine women are eventually reconciled to their ravishment though.

²⁷ See Ovid, *Met.* 6.424-605.

²⁸ For Lucretia, see Ovid, *Fasti* 2.685-852, and for the Sabines, see Livy, *History of Rome* 1.

They bring peace between Romulus and their own families once they have married and given children to the Romans.²⁹ The ekphrasis therefore again collects stories in a pattern of Boethian contraries.

Lydgate maps this Boethian pattern of suffering and discord followed by joy and harmony onto the description of the paintings of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* that follows the description of the paintings of the Sabine women.³⁰ The dreamer declares,

There saugh I also þe sorov of Palamoun,
 That he in prison felt, and al þe smert,
 And hov þat he, þurugh vnto his hert
 Was hurt vnwarli þurugh casting of an eyȝe
 Of faire fressh, þe ȝunge Emelie,
 And al þe strife bitwene him and his broþir,
 And hou þat one fauȝt eke with þat oþir
 Wiþin þe groue, til þei bi Theseus
 Acordid were, as Chaucer telliþ us. (102-10)

(There I also saw the sorrow that Palamon felt in prison, and all the pain, and how he was hurt unsuspectingly right to his heart by the casting of an eye of³¹ the fair,

²⁹ See Livy, *History of Rome* 1.13.

³⁰ This section is the key to Seth Lerer's interpretation of the entire ekphrasis. In addition to its length, Lerer finds the passage essential because it is "the only one that cites an author for its telling," and it "occurs in the center of the catalogue of lovers" (69). Lerer interprets the ekphrasis as a replication of a Chaucerian anthology like the manuscripts containing Lydgate's *TG*, such as Tanner 346 (65).

³¹ In *KnT*, Emily does not cast eye beams on Palamon; rather, Palamon "cast his eye upon Emelya, / And therwithal he bleynte and cride, 'A!' / As though he stongen were unto the herte" ("cast his eye upon Emily, and with that, he turned pale and cried, 'Ah!' as though he were stung in the heart"; Chaucer I.1077-79). Lydgate may be confusing this part of *KnT* with *Troilus and Criseyde*, when Troilus

[w]as ful unwar that Love hadde his dwellynge
 Withinne the subtile stremes of hire yen;
 That sodeynly hym thoughte he felte dyen,

fresh, young Emily, and all the strife between him and his brother, and also how the one fought with the other within the grove until they were reconciled by Theseus, as Chaucer tells us.)

The focus first on the “sorow” (102) and “smert” (103) that Palamon experiences when, according to Lydgate’s recapitulation of *KnT*, “he, þurugh vnto his hert / Was hurt” by Emily’s eye beams (104-05) and the resultant “strife bitwene him and his broþir” (107) show the necessity for suffering and discord before anyone can be “[a]cordid” (110).

Absent are any references to Arcite’s violent death. The description instead accentuates a harmonious conclusion to the story.

The following depictions that stress the sorrows that even the gods experience on account of love continue to develop the Boethian theme that pervades the ekphrasis of the necessity of suffering for joy in love. The ekphrasis includes images where the gods’ desires are thwarted (Phoebus’ pursuit of Daphne) and where they enjoy success in love (Jove’s pursuit of Europa and Alcmena),³² as well as Venus’ and Mars’ union, though Vulcan catches them. The gods experience pain, for “Phebus with an [arow]³³ of gold / Iwoundid was, þuru3oute in his side” (“Phoebus was wounded with an arrow of gold right through his side”; 112-13), and Daphne evades his advances because she “vnto a laurer tre / Iturned was, when [that] she dide fle” (“was turned into a laurel tree, when she fled”; 115-16).³⁴ Juxtaposed with this are paintings of the gods successfully obtaining

Right with hire look, the spirit in his herte. (Chaucer 1.304-07)
(was fully unaware that Love had his dwelling within the delicate streams of her eyes when suddenly it seemed to him he felt the vital spirit in his heart die right with her look.)

³² For the story of Jove and Europa, see Ovid’s *Met.* 2.833-75.

³³ Tanner 346 has “anoro,” which Norton-Smith emends to “an arow” (Mitchell, *Temple of Glas* n 112).

³⁴ Cupid’s golden arrow is specifically associated with suffering in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*:
eque sagittifera prompsit duo tela pharetra

their desire in spite of suffering and degradation, such as Jove's descent into bestiality.

He

gan to chaunge his cope

Oonli for loue of þe faire Europe,

And into [a] bole, when he did hir sue,

List of his godhode his fourme to transmwe. (117-20)

(changed his cloak [i.e. appearance] solely because of love of the fair Europa, and it pleased him to transform his appearance out of his divinity into a bull, when he pursued her.)

The cases where the gods enjoy success in love also involve suffering. For example, in the painting, Jove “bi transmutacioun / The shap gan take of Amphitrioun / For his Almen” (“by metamorphosis took the shape of Amphitriou for his Alcmena”; 121-23) because he “was . . . hurt, for al his deite, / Wiþ loues dart, and myȝt it not ascape” (“was hurt, despite his divinity, by love's dart and could not escape it”; 124-25). The ekphrasis epitomizes the necessity of suffering in love by representing how love can lead to pain and irrationality for even the most powerful. This suffering in love extends again to Venus herself, when the dreamer declares, “There sauȝ I also hou that Mars was take / Of Vulcanus and wiþ Venus found, / And wiþ þe cheynes invisible bound” (“There I saw

diversorum operum: fugat hoc, facit illud amorem;
quod facit, auratum est et cuspidē fulget acuta,
quod fugat, obtusum est et habet sub harundine plumbum.
hoc deus in nympha Peneide fixit, at illo
laesit Apollineas traiecta per ossa medullas. (1.468-73)

(There he took from his quiver two darts of opposite effect: one puts to flight, the other kindles the flame of love. The one which kindles love is of gold and has a sharp, gleaming point; the other is blunt and tipped with lead. This last the god fixed in the heart of Peneus' daughter, but with the other he smote Apollo, piercing even unto the bones and marrow.)

also how Mars was captured by Vulcan and found with Venus and bound with the invisible chains"; 126-28). The fulfillment of Venus' desire involves unwanted bondage for her.

After beginning with love complaints and then incorporating both disastrous and celebratory stories, the description of the paintings in the temple ends with the celebrated union of Mercury and Philology and then the story of Canacee and her brother, another story that shifts from suffering to a joyful union. The ekphrasis as a whole therefore completes the thematic movement from discord to harmony. The story of the marriage of Mercury and Philology, when contrasted with the story of Venus, Mars, and Vulcan, most fully exemplifies the Boethian philosophy of contraries in the ekphrasis by depicting a deity's perfect harmony from the bonds of marriage as opposed to distress from bondage.³⁵ The dreamer says,

Ther was also al þe poes[i]e
 Of him, Mercurie, and Phil[o]log[y]e,
 And hou þat she, for hir sapience,
 Iweddit was to god of eloquence,
 And hou þe Musis lowli did obeie,
 High into heuen þis ladi to conuei,
 And with hir song hov she was magnified
 With Iubiter to bein istellified. (129-36)

³⁵ Bryan Crockett likewise reads the story of Venus, Mars, and Vulcan as a contrast to the story of Mercury and Philology (75).

(There was also all the poetry of that Mercury and Philology, and how she, because of her wisdom, was wedded to the god of eloquence, and how the muses humbly agreed to convey this lady high into heaven, and how she was glorified through their song to be set among the stars with Jupiter.)³⁶

Since Philology was rewarded with the marriage “for hir sapience” (131), the story shows joy arising from rewarded virtue. The story invokes the harmony of heaven, with the muses conveying Philology into heaven so that “with hir song . . . she was magnified / With Iubiter to bein istellified” (135-36).³⁷ The harmony that this story represents extends beyond the happiness of a particular couple, Mercury and Philology. It relies on the extended metaphor of earthly love to embody the ideals of medieval education, that eloquence and wisdom, the trivium and the quadrivium, must be combined (Stahl, Johnson, and Burge 24).³⁸ The placement of this story toward the end of the ekphrasis creates a comedic resolution to the ekphrastic narrative.

The movement from discord to harmony that the ekphrasis creates culminates in the last images that the dreamer describes: the story of Canacee and her brother in Chaucer’s *Squire’s Tale*. The dreamer states,

³⁶ For Mercury and Philology, see Martianus Capella’s *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii (De rethorice)*.

³⁷ Schick notes other allusions to the marriage of Mercury and Philology in Lydgate (80). In the *Siege of Thebes*, it serves as a foil to Edippus’ wedding. The narrator says that at Edippus’ wedding there was no “heuenly Armony” (“heavenly harmony”; Lydgate, *Siege of Thebes* 830) from the muses, unlike when Mercury married “this lady virtuous” (“this virtuous lady”; 835). Lydgate’s poem “On Gloucester’s Approaching Marriage” requests that Hymen “[m]aake a knotte feythful and entiere, / As whylome was betwene Phylogonye / And Mercurye . . .” (“make a faithful and complete knot, as once was [made] between Philology and Mercury”; *Minor Poems* 178-80). In these other cases, the wedding of Mercury and Philology exemplifies harmony.

³⁸ Ernst Curtius discusses the story’s importance to the Middle Ages, explaining that “[i]n the twelfth century there stands beside and above the *ars dictaminis* the antique ideal: rhetoric as the integrating factor of all education. The concept was common to Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine. It survives in Martianus Capella’s idea of arranging a marriage between Mercury and the maiden Philology. . . .” (76-77).

And vppermore depeint men myȝt[e] se,
 Hov with hir ring, goodli Canace
 Of euere foule þe ledne and þe song
 Coud vndirstond, as she welk hem among;
 And hou hir broþir so oft holpen was
 In his myschefe bi þe stede of bras. (137-42)

(And farther up men could see painted how excellent Canacee, with her ring, could understand the language and the song of every bird, as she walked among them, and how her brother was so often helped by the steed of brass in his affliction.)

Although the description provides no details about Canacee herself as a lover,³⁹ the description of the properties of Canacee's ring would lead the audience to recall the story of the falcon forsaken by her lover, which Canacee hears with the ring. The falcon's lover betrays her but, as the Squire assures, "this faucon gat hire love ageyn / Repentant" ("this falcon got her repentant lover back"; Chaucer V.654-55). The brass steed helping Canacee's brother "[i]n his myschefe" (*TG* 142) also recalls when he "wan Theodora to his wif, / For whom ful ofte in greet peril he was, / Ne hadde he ben holpen by the steede of bras" ("won Theodora for his wife, for whom he would have been very often in great peril, had he not been helped by the steed of brass"; Chaucer V.664-66). The description in *TG* evokes the anticipated happy ending to the *Squire's Tale* and thus further extends

³⁹ Haldeen Braddy suggests an affiliation between Canacee in the *Squire's Tale* and the incestuous Canace possibly catalogued in Chaucer's *PF* 288 because of possible suggestions of incest in the *Squire's Tale*: "And after wol I speke of Cambalo, / That faught in lystes with the bretheren two / For Canacee er that he myghte hire winne" ("And after I will speak of Cambalo, who fought in lists with the two brothers for Canacee, so that he might win her"; Chaucer V.667-69) (288-89).

the harmony of Mercury and Philology's marriage.⁴⁰ Consequently, the arrangement of the images in the ekphrasis illustrates metaphorically the Boethian philosophy of contraries that, as Venus later instructs, must govern the lady and man.

In addition to metaphorically representing the philosophy that the rest of the poem promotes, the description of the images in the temple anticipates Venus' later role. It highlights her lecherous representation throughout the poem.⁴¹ Venus "fleting in þe se" ("floating in the sea"; 53) is the lecherous Venus of Chaucer's *HF*, 130-33 (Schick 73),⁴² though, as Tinkle explains, she lacks "a mythographic gloss" in *TG* (132). This Venus

⁴⁰ The description alludes to the ending of the *Squire's Tale*, which the Squire never gets to tell after the Franklin interrupts him, and represents for various critics Lydgate's deference to Chaucer's authority as well as Lydgate's exercise of his own authoritative voice. Lerer argues that the inclusion in the ekphrasis of both *KnT* and *Squire's Tale* expresses fifteenth-century Chaucerians' negotiation of their relationship to the authority of their literary father, as the Squire does for his father the Knight (61). According to Larry Scanlon, the "juxtaposition of" images of the *Marriage of Mercury and Philology*, one of the "foundational texts" of the dream vision genre, "implicitly offers Chaucer as Martianus's peer. That is, it makes Chaucer a defining authority for the genre . . ." (79). Scanlon further argues that Lydgate's "citation is itself a rewriting of a tale Chaucer ostentatiously left unfinished . . . and it authorizes Lydgate's rewriting of Chaucer's corpus as a whole through the erotic concerns of the *Parliament*" (79-80). Later continuations of the tale were not yet completed at the time at which Lydgate was writing (DiMarco, Explanatory Notes to *Squire's Tale* 891), but BL Lansdowne 851 (c.1410) contains a brief link between the *Squire's Tale* and *Wife of Bath's Tale*, in which the Squire does not get interrupted but says,

Bot I wil here nowe maake a knotte
 To þe time it come next to my lotte,
 For here be felawes behind an hepe treulye,
 Þat wolden talke ful besilye
 And haue her sporte as wele as I,
 And þe daie passeþ fast certainly.
 Therefore Oste, takeþ nowe goode heede
 Who schall next tell, and late him speede. (Hanna 1129)
 (But here I will now make a conclusion until the next time it falls to my lot, for here are truly a heap of fellows behind, who very eagerly want to talk and have their fun as well as I, and the day certainly passes fast. Therefore, Host, now consider carefully who shall tell [a tale] next, and let him prosper.)

For Jamie C. Fumo, the tale places Chaucer in a superior position to Martianus Capella. Fumo interprets the "uppermore" positioning in terms of Chaucer's relation to Martianus, and by extension, Lydgate's relation to Chaucer (191-92). Fumo argues that "the erasure of the link between" the "details from the *Squire's Tale* and the point of their inclusion in the list," meaning their relation to erotic love, "highlights the sheer authoritative value of the tale in the *Temple of Glas*'s reshaping of Chaucer's oeuvre and Lydgate's self-conception as heir to Chaucer's literary authority" (191).

⁴¹ Tinkle argues that Venus represents "natural desire" as opposed to a regulated form of desire (154).

⁴² See chapter three of my thesis, which discusses the different representations of Venus in *HF*.

concord with her additional portrayals on the wall in her love affairs with Adonis and with Mars (Lydgate, *TG* 64-66, 126-28). By stating that Venus “wepte and hade pain inouze” (“wept and had a lot of pain”; 66), Lydgate accentuates her suffering as one of the grieving lovers. This image leads Crockett to assert that Venus’ assistance is ineffectual (75). He cites Lydgate’s *Reson and Sensuallyte*, in which Diana blames Venus for Adonis’ death, in spite of Venus’ counsel against him hunting wild animals,⁴³ as evidence of her powerlessness (75). While this scene associates her with lechery, it need not represent her powerlessness, for lovers petition her to take pity upon them precisely because she has experienced similar pain. For example, in the version of *TG* in MS Additional 16165 and MS Gg. 4. 27, the lady’s complaint finishes, “Nowe for the joye whylome that ye founde / With Mars your knight, upon my compleynt ruwe / For love of Adon⁴⁴ that was so fresshe of huwe” (“Now, because of the joy that you once found with Mars, your knight, [and] for love of Adonis, who was so fresh of hue, take pity upon my complaint”; Lydgate, *TG*, Boffey, *Fifteenth-Century* 360-62).⁴⁵ The ekphrasis thus represents Venus as lecherous but with the potential to help others.

⁴³ See Lydgate’s *Reson and Sensuallyte*:

Al that she taught him for his prowte
Was voyde out of hys retentyf,
For which, in sooth, he loste hys lyf,
Throgh hys vnhappy mortal chaunce,
Caused by the Aqueyntaunce
Which he hadde with Venus. (3734-39)

(All that she taught him for his benefit had gone from his memory, for which, truly, he lost his life, through his unfortunate, fatal situation, caused by the association which he had with Venus.)

⁴⁴ MS Additional 16165 has “yowe” instead of “Adon,” so “Adon” is supplied from MS Gg. 4. 27 (Boffey, *Fifteenth-Century* 20).

⁴⁵ In Chaucer’s *KnT*, Palamon makes a similar appeal: “For thilke love thow haddest to Adoon, / Have pitee of my bittre teeris smerte, / And taak myn humble preyere at thyn herte” (“For that love you had for Adonis, have pity upon my bitter, painful tears, and take my humble prayer to your heart”; I.2224-26) (Norton-Smith, “Lydgate’s Changes” 169).

Because of the ambiguity of the morals she endorses, Venus' lecherous role does not conflict with what Pearsall calls her "didactic" role (107) that she takes on in order to advise the lovers throughout the poem.⁴⁶ The degree to which Venus acts morally in counselling the lovers in *TG* has been the subject of critical disagreement. Venus' exhortations to virtue lead Anna Torti to regard Venus as "a substitute for both God and the Establishment" (235). Janet Wilson similarly calls Venus "the mouthpiece of virtue in the poem" (28). By contrast, Crockett reads the poem as an "ironic allegory" (69) and states that Venus "endorses the value of actively pursuing Fortune" (80).⁴⁷ Venus urges the lady, though, "[w]herso þat fortune fauour or be foo, / . . . / To loue him best . . ." ("whether fortune be favourable or a foe, . . . to love him best"; 519-22). The ballad at the end celebrates that Venus "without synne / Þis man fortunod his ladi forto wynne" ("without sin destined this man to win his lady"; 1346-47), which therefore accentuates Venus' role as a lawful, chaste goddess, but it does not refute any suggestions that the lady is already married because the narrator might be speaking a bit indulgently. The poem never specifies what kind of attachment prevents her from marrying the man she loves, so the ceremony in which Venus binds the two lovers could be adulterous.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Venus takes on an immoral didactic role in the *Ovide Moralisé* 11.2195-372 while advising Paris on how to obtain Helen.

⁴⁷ The setting of the glass temple also constructs Venus' inconstancy; in addition to being composed of glass, the temple "foundid was, . . . / Not opon stele, but on a craggy roche / Like ise ifrore" ("was founded . . . not upon steel but on a craggy rock like frozen ice"; Lydgate, *TG* 18-20). Crockett reads the poem ironically and interprets the setting in terms of "slipperiness and impermanence" (73). Pearsall (106) and Scanlon (71-72) have discussed the influence of the glass temple of Venus and icy foundation for the house of Fame in Chaucer's *HF* on Lydgate's temple of Venus.

⁴⁸ Critics have variously interpreted the lady's prior attachment as marriage, betrothal, religious vows, or a political restriction. See Mitchell (*Temple of Glas* n 335-69). Lewis argues that the lady is already married (241). Others have argued that the poem celebrates a lady's forthcoming marriage. Henry Noble MacCracken proposes that *TG* was written for the wedding of William Paston and Agnes Berry in 1420 (135). Though this theory is now generally discounted, scholars accept MacCracken's contention that different versions of the poem were made for different ladies because of the different mottos and colours of dress of the lady in the manuscripts (133). Kelly argues that the poem represents a clandestine union,

Bianco (“New Perspectives” 112-13) argues that in the ceremony, Venus “supports only the transient love with which she has always been associated” because Jove and Mars are witnesses to the ceremony (Lydgate, *TG* 1232-35). The ekphrasis shows Jove and Mars in key roles of transient lust in the depictions of Jove transforming himself into multiple forms in pursuit of different ladies and of Mars committing adultery with Venus (Lydgate, *TG* 117-28). Mitchell states, however, “It is always the case that the unsavory and sexually promiscuous behavior of the gods is a liability, but perhaps they are meant here only as benign influences” (*Temple of Glas* n 1232-33).⁴⁹ He thus argues that “for Lydgate ancient mythology is adaptable, multivalent, and employed for limited and local effects” (*Temple of Glas* n 1232-33). Jove behaves in opposite ways in his depictions on the walls of the temple and in the ceremony, where he acts as a witness who will “[e]uermore be wreke / On which of 3ou his troupe first doþe breke” (“always be avenged on whichever of you first breaks his pledge”; 1234-35). Whether or not her role befits Christian morality, Venus guides the lovers to constancy toward one another. Through its imagery of Venus’ lechery and benevolence that anticipates Venus’ later instruction,

which he compares to Troilus and Criseyde’s relationship in Chaucer’s *TC* (291-93). Others who have not taken the lady to be married already have posited different real-life figures represented by the man and lady in the poem. For instance, Susan Bianco argues that the text’s “extended metaphor” (“New Perspectives” 105) of the chain connects the lady with Joan of Navarre, who had a chain on her heraldic arms, and that the version of the poem in the Tanner manuscript is about her wedding to Henry IV in 1403, with the obstacle to marriage being their awaiting a papal bull (“New Perspectives” 105-06). Bianco had earlier argued that the poem is in the tradition of French *dits amoureux*, which incorporate heraldic symbols to identify real people (“A Black Monk” 60). Mitchell posits that it was made for the occasion of the clandestine wedding of Katherine of Valois and Owen Tudor in the late 1420s (“Queen Katherine”). The version of the poem in Julia Boffey’s edition, based on a manuscript copied by Shirley, begins with the statement that the poem was “fait a la request d’un amoureux par Lidegate, Le Moygne de Bury” (“made at the request of a lover by Lydgate, the monk of Bury”; 24).

⁴⁹ Mitchell cites Chaucer’s *TC* 3.625 as an example, where “it is the teaming up of Saturn and Jove that produces the great rainstorm that, for better or for worse, helps bring Troilus and Criseyde together while Troilus worries about the bad aspects of Mars and Saturn at his birth (*TC* 3.715–19), which he asks Venus to avert, through her supplication of Jove, ‘Thy fader’” (*Temple of Glas* n 1232-33).

the ekphrasis guides audience interpretation without changing the nature of the *ductus* throughout the text.

In addition to its metaphorical anticipation of the lady and man's union as well as its construction of Venus, *TG* integrates the ekphrasis within the text when the ekphrasis breaches its static frame. In opposition to Krieger's conception of ekphrasis as "a device intended to interrupt the temporality of discourse, to freeze it during its indulgence in spatial exploration" (7), the ekphrasis enables fluid transitions between the earlier and later segments of the text. It begins, though, with visual cues which may seem to describe moments frozen in time. *TG* follows Chaucer's *BD*, *HF*, and *KnT* in its early emphasis upon the medium of the artwork when the dreamer declares that he "sauȝe depeynt opon euere wal, / . . . ful many a faire image / . . . / Wiȝ lifli colours wondir fresh of hwe" ("saw painted upon every wall . . . very many a fine image . . . with lifelike colours wondrously fresh of hue"; 44-48). The ekphrasis begins as the description of various lovers gathered around Venus,

somme sit and stonde,

And some kneling with billis in hir honde,

And some with compleint, woful and pitous,

Wiȝ doleful chere to putten to Venus. (49-52)

(some sitting and [some] standing, and some kneeling with petitions in their hand, and some with complaints, woeful and pitiful, to put in a sorrowful manner before Venus.)

Only the descriptions of the first two paintings, however, Dido's and Medea's, represent lovers making their complaints in solitude. Even within the description of the painting of

Dido, the ekphrasis breaks free of a static visual description because she “said: ‘alas, þat euer she was borne’” (“said, ‘alas, that she was ever born’”; 60).

The ekphrasis develops associatively in moving from lovers complaining to key episodes in their stories. With the story of Venus and Adonis, the ekphrasis first departs from its scheme of lovers presenting petitions or complaints, “somme sit and stonde, / And some kneling” (49-50). The dreamer says, “And nygh bi Venus saugh I sit Addoun, / And al þe maner hov þe bore him slough, / For whom she wepte and hade pein inouze” (“And I saw Adonis sitting next to Venus and the entire manner how the boar slew him, for whom she wept and had a lot of pain”; 64-66). The dreamer therefore begins to describe the lovers’ trials, without specifically referring to their complaints. Whether describing the lovers themselves or elements of their stories, the dreamer starts with the key words “I saugh,” “I saugh how,” and “how” (meaning “I saw how”). Lydgate incorporates other visual cues for the images by indicating their positions. For example, he states, “first of al I saugh” (55), “next I saugh” (62), “nygh bi Venus saugh I” (64), “aldernext was” (70), and “forþirmore, as I gan behold” (111). The story of Canacee and her brother is “vppermore depeint” (137). The narrator also includes the visually-descriptive phrases “Vpon þe walles depeint men myȝt[e] se” (89) and “men myȝt[e] se” (137). The paintings could depict multiple images of the same story, but in spite of the visual cues, Lydgate may also be exceeding the coverage that a visual representation has, so as to introduce a temporal dimension. For example, he states, “saugh I also hov Penalope, / For she so long hir lord ne myȝt[e] se, / Ful oft[e] wex of colour pale and grene” (“I also saw how Penelope, because she could not see her lord [her husband] for so long, very often became pale and green in colour”; 67-69). The ekphrasis breaches its

static frame by narrating the lovers' stories rather than focusing on the lovers praying to Venus and also by narrating them in a way that exceeds the paintings' visual coverage. Therefore, the ekphrasis of the paintings in the temple becomes less isolated from the actual events in the temple.

TG creates a steady progression in the narrative when it breaks out of ekphrasis into description of actual persons present in the temple, likewise making their petitions and complaints. As soon as the ekphrasis finishes, as if in extension of it, the narrator states,

And forþermore in þe tempil were

Ful mani a þousand of louers, here and þere,

In sondri wise redi to complein

Vnto þe goddes, of hir wo and pein. (143-46)

(And furthermore, fully a thousand lovers were in the temple, here and there, ready to complain of their woe and pain in various ways to the goddess.)

Lydgate's introduction of real supplicants echoes the prior reference to "ful many a faire image / Of sondri louers," which began the ekphrasis (45-46). Schick even seems to think that these lovers are also painted on the wall (cxxi), but this interpretation is excluded by the statement "And right anon I herd othir crie" ("And I immediately heard another cry"; Lydgate 196) of the maidens who were sent to religious institutions as children to become nuns. He represents speech in the ekphrasis such as in the instance of Dido (60), though he never explicitly says, "I herd" (196). Janet Wilson argues that the ekphrasis, in its unclear shift from paintings of lovers to actual people, exemplifies Lydgate's inconsistency in *TG* (28). The difficulty in demarcating the transition points

though suggests the text's connection between the lovers on the walls gathered around Venus "fleting in þe se" (53) and the actual lovers in the temple, including the main lady who "knelid" ("kneeled"; 250) in front of "þe statue of Venus" ("the statue of Venus"; 249). The male and female lovers, in their diversity, resemble the assortment of lovers painted on the walls. Lydgate's dreamer sees lovers complaining about "Ielousie" ("Jealousy"; 148), exile (152), "Daunger" ("Standoffishness"; 156), "Disdain" ("Disdain"; 156), "pouerte" ("poverty"; 159), duplicity (167), the "Riches" ("Riches"; 175) of other lovers, a marriage with a much older man (179-83), forced religious life (196-208), marriage "[w]ipoute fredom of eleccioun" ("without freedom of choice"; 211), fickleness (215-20), women's "beaute" ("beauty"; 226) that causes "[a] man to loue to his confusioun" ("a man to love to his ruin"; 228), "couetise and slouth" ("covetousness and sloth"; 244), "hastines" ("hastiness"; 245), and "reklesnes" ("recklessness"; 246).⁵⁰ Through the unclear transitions and resemblances between the lovers on the wall and the actual lovers in the temple, the ekphrasis becomes more closely integrated into the narrative of *TG*.

Through the fluid transition from the lovers painted on the walls to the actual lovers in the temple, the lovers on the walls become specifically associated with the female and male protagonists. The sorrows of the painted lovers parallel the sorrowful complaints that the lady and man make to Venus.⁵¹ The lady speaks of Venus as the "Cheif recounford after þe blak nyzt, / To voide woful oute of her heuynes" ("Chief comfort to release the woeful out of their sadness after the black night"; 330-31).

⁵⁰ Julia Boffey also sees variety in this description, referring to the "inclusiveness of this court, . . . with complaints generated by a huge range of circumstances" ("Forto compleyne" 122).

⁵¹ Torti speaks of the glass walls functioning as mirrors for the lady (228).

Because “þat I nold is redi aye to me, / And þat I loue, forto swe I drede” (“what I do not want is always available to me, and what I love I fear to pursue”; 351-52), she declares, “Deuoide of ioie, of wo I haue plente” (“Devoid of joy, I have plenty of woe”; 349). The man, in his complaint to Venus, describes “my soris” (“my sorrows”; 602), “myn aduersite” (“my adversity”; 611), and “þis turment” (“this torment”; 614). Kneeling down before Venus he says,

“Sip 3e me hurten wiþ 3our dredful myzt

Bi influence of 3our bemys clere,

And þat I bie 3our seruise nov so dere,

As 3e me brouzt into þis maledie,

Beþ gracious and shapeþ remedie.” (717-21)

(“Since you hurt me with your awe-inspiring power by influence of your bright beams and I purchase your service now so dearly, as you brought me into this sickness, be gracious and arrange for a remedy.”)

Through their complaints, the lady and man become like the various sorrowful lovers depicted on the walls of the temple.

Because the actual lovers in the temple are in continuum with those painted on the walls, *TG* connects the lovers with those painted lovers that experience a joyful resolution to their sorrow as well as with those that do not. The poem later reinforces the connections between those lovers that experience joy and the lady and man through repeated allusions to the painted lovers as well as the images of bondage and Cupid’s golden arrow. After the lady makes her complaint, Venus alludes to figures painted on the walls of the temple. She declares,

“Grisild[e] was assaied at[te] ful
 That turned aftir to hir encrease of ioye;
 Penalope gan eke for sorowis dul
 For þat [her] lord abode so long at Troie.
 Also þe turment þere coude no man akoye
 Of Dorigene, flour of al Britayne:
 Thus euer ioy is ende and fine of paine.” (405-11)

(“Griselda was tested fully, which afterwards turned to her greater joy. Penelope also became dispirited because of sorrows, because her lord abided so long at Troy. Also, no man could soothe the torment of Dorigen, flower of all of Brittany: thus joy is always the end and result of pain.”)

Along with Griselda and Penelope described in the ekphrasis, Venus adds the example of the faithful wife Dorigen from Chaucer’s *Franklin’s Tale*, who considers committing suicide rather than being unfaithful to her husband Arveragus with the suitor Aurelius. Aurelius, however, later releases her from her unthinking vow to be his lover if he caused the rocks on the coast of Brittany to disappear, and she lives happily ever after with her husband. When Venus states that “euer ioy is ende and fine of paine” (411), she “recalls a variety of lines from Chaucer that characterize the contingencies of Fortune (for example, from the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*: ‘For evere the latter ende of ioye is wo’ [8.3205]⁵²)” (Scanlon 88).⁵³ Venus therefore invokes Fortune’s endless cycle that will be sure to bring sorrow again after happiness. This “apparent denial of historical

⁵² This line translates as “For woe is always the conclusion of joy.”

⁵³ See also *TC*: “The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupieth” (“Sorrow always follows the end of bliss”; 4.836).

contingency” demonstrates “not the inevitability of happy endings, but the transformative power of suffering” (Scanlon 88). Venus invites the lady “to be tested and endure” (Scanlon 89), as paralleled by the suffering of the saints to which she refers after naming Dorigen (Scanlon 88): “For holi saintis þuru3 her passioun / Have heuen iwonne for her souerain mede” (“For the holy saints, through their passion, have won heaven for their sovereign reward”; Lydgate, *TG* 414-15). While Venus cannot guarantee the joyful resolution to the lady’s suffering that Griselda, Penelope, and Dorigen experience, the lady can increase in virtue through her suffering. Similarly, in the ekphrasis, the focus lies on Griselda’s virtue—her “innocence,” “mekenes,” and “paciencie” (“innocence”; “meekness”; “patience”; 75-76)—as opposed to her eventual happiness. Nevertheless, the association of the lady with such figures as Griselda and Penelope suggests at least the potential for this lady’s later happiness. The ekphrasis therefore introduces these characters as *ductus* that directs the interpretation of the later narrative.

The male lover’s comparison of his own fidelity to famous lovers from the ekphrasis as well as Venus’ advice to him connect the themes of the ekphrasis more closely with the rest of the text. His modelling of himself upon tragic lovers proves problematic and requires Venus’ intervention and proposition of new models. Two of the lovers he mentions, Pyramus (780) and Achilles (785), were already included in the temple ekphrasis, and he adds Antony (777) and Hercules (787).⁵⁴ He states that he will be faithful to his lady just as “vnto Tesbe 3ung[e] Pirus / Was feipful found til hem departid deþe” (“young Pyramus was found faithful to Thisbe until death separated

⁵⁴ Hercules was alluded to earlier in the painting of Jove’s union with Alcmena (Lydgate, *TG* 121-25), by which Hercules was conceived (Ovid, *Met.* 9.23-24).

them”; 780-81). He also aspires “[t]o loue as wel as did Achilles / Vnto his last þe faire Polixene” (“To love [his lady] as well as Achilles loved the fair Polixena until his last”; 784-85). He thus associates himself with lovers who undergo great suffering and death for their beloveds. The description of the walls of the temple previously illustrates Achilles’ tragedy, for he “was for Policene / Islain vnwarli within Troi[e] toune” (“was slain unsuspectingly because of Polixena within the city of Troy”; 94-95). The other examples, Antony and Hercules, also suffer death as a result of their love affairs. Some of these tragic lovers to which the man compares himself suggest potential inconstancy. He says he will “bene as trwe as was Antonyus / To Cleopatre while him lasted breþe” (“be as true as Antonius was to Cleopatra while his breath lasted”; 778-79). While Antony was faithful to Cleopatra for the rest of his life, he had been inconstant previously when he abandoned his wife, Octavius’ sister, for her.⁵⁵ Loving as well as Achilles did “[v]nto his last” (785) likewise raises problems. Although Achilles was killed in Troy because of his love for Polixena, his spirit later demands Polixena’s sacrifice. Most troubling is the lover’s assertion that he will love his lady “as the gret[e], famous Hercules, / For Dianyre þat felt þe shottes kene” (“as the great, famous Hercules, who felt the sharp darts for Dianeira”; 787-88). Hercules is famous for being a faithless lover, as he betrays Dianeira for Iole, for which reason, in *HF*, he is included in the painting of Venus’ temple.⁵⁶ All of his *exempla* reinforce the applicability of the tragic lovers from the ekphrasis to his own situation, but they also lead Venus to push him beyond these *exempla*.

⁵⁵ See Chaucer’s *LGW* (591-95).

⁵⁶ See Chaucer’s *HF* (397-404).

Venus teaches the lover how to apply the Boethian philosophy of contraries to his life. He states that he is “[h]anging in balaunce bitwix hope and drede” (“hanging in balance between hope and doubt”; 641), but then “Drede” turns into “Dispeire” (“Despair”; 656). Venus advises him, however, when she tells him to make his love known to the lady,

“And al biforne late Hope be þi guide,
 And þouze þat Drede would[e] with þe pace —
 It sitteþ wel; but loke þat þou arace
 Out of þin hert wanhope and dispaire.” (892-95)

(“And before all, let Hope be your guide, and it is fitting if Doubt would stride alongside you; but see to it that you root hopelessness and despair out of your heart.”)

He should not be too presumptuous concerning requital of his love, but she forbids outright despair. Presumptuousness does not fit in with a Boethian philosophy of suffering that will make him more constant. Similar to her advice to the lady, Venus exhorts the male lover to be “constant as a walle” (“constant as a wall”; Lydgate, 1153), which is “the figure Chaucer uses to describe Griselda at the moment when her constancy finally overwhelms Walter’s desire to test it” (Scanlon 90).⁵⁷ Walter commands Griselda never to “grucche” (“complain”; Chaucer, *Clerk’s Tale* IV.354) about what he does to her. Similarly, on numerous occasions, Venus instructs the man never to “grucche” about

⁵⁷ Walter observes that Griselda is “ay sad and constant as a wal” (“always steadfast and constant as a wall”; Chaucer, *Clerk’s Tale* IV.1047).

his suffering.⁵⁸ Scanlon states that *TG* thus “takes literally the Clerk’s Petrarchan moral—that Griselda’s example applies to ‘every wight, in his degree’ (4.1145)⁵⁹” (91).⁶⁰ Venus’ advice to the man and the later bonds that she forms between him and the lady therefore align the man and lady with the varied group represented in the ekphrasis as opposed to the man’s solely tragic *exempla*.

In addition to repeated allusions to characters from the ekphrasis, the repeated bondage imagery in the ekphrasis and in the depictions of the man and lady mutually reinforce recollections of each other. The ekphrasis introduces the poem’s pervasive imagery of bondage first through the act of vision. It describes a painting of how Palamon “þurugh vnto his hert / Was hurt vnwarli þurugh casting of an eyȝe / Of faire fressh, þe ȝunge Emelie” (“hurt unsuspectingly right to his heart by the casting of an eye of the fair, fresh, young Emily”; 104-06). According to the Petrarchan and Virgilian “piercing eye motif” (Miskimin 354), the lady shoots eye beams that wound and enslave a man as her devoted lover. Eyebeams therefore function similarly to a chain. The male

⁵⁸ Venus tells him that she rewards him for obeying her “so humb[e]lie / Wiþoute grucchyng” (“so humbly, without complaining”; 852-53). She later advises, “Lete reson bridel lust bi buxumnes / Without grucching or rebelloun” (“Let reason bridle lust by obedience, without complaining or rebellion”; 878-79). His lady similarly advises “not of oure disease / To grucch agein . . .” (“not to complain about our tribulation”; 1085-86). Venus later states,

“And so to ȝow more sote and agreeable
Shal loue be found, I do ȝou plein assure,
Wiþoute grucching þat ȝe were suffrable
So low, so meke, pacientli t’endure.” (1264-67)

(“And so love will be found more sweet and agreeable to you, I do fully assure you, if, without complaining, you were willing to endure so humbly, so meekly.”)

Recall that on the walls of the temple are depicted Griselda’s “mekenes and hir pacience” (76).

⁵⁹ This phrase from Chaucer’s *Clerk’s Tale* translates as “every person, as befits his rank.”

⁶⁰ Jonathan Stavsky, who argues for “Lydgate’s [m]any Griseldas” (244), discusses Griselda’s importance throughout Lydgate’s corpus, in demonstrating the varying morals that are suggested by her behaviour in the *Clerk’s Tale* and argues that Lydgate “play[s] these voices off against one another” in his works (216). He states that Lydgate would be contrasting the depiction of Griselda in *TG*—and his interpretation agrees with Scanlon’s (241)—with a more ironic interpretation in texts such as “A Ballade, of Her That Hath All Virtues” (219).

lover experiences this chainlike bondage from the lady's eyes when he falls in love with her in the temple. This experience causes him to be "bound" (568), even though he "whilom was so fre" ("once was so free"; 568). The man recognizes that he is "embraced" ("embraced"; 575) by the god of love's "fire cheyne" ("fiery chain"; 574). This form of bondage represents what Tinkle calls "natural desire" (154). Tinkle contrasts it to the bondage of "legal duty" imposed by "human law" (154). The painted images in the temple represent this form of bondage in the image of when Vulcan, after discovering Venus and Mars in the act of adultery, punishes them by binding them "wip þe cheynes invisible" ("with the invisible chains"; 128). The lady's initial complaint to Venus similarly represents her societally-imposed bondage:

"I am bounde to þing þat I nold:

Freli to chese þere lak I liberte,

And so I want of þat myn hert[e] would,

The bodi knyht, alþouze my þouzt be fre." (335-38)

("I am bound to that which I do not want, freely to choose [only] where I lack

liberty, and so I lack that which my heart wants, the body tied, although my mind is free.")

The lady further speaks of being "departid euen on tweyn, / Of wille and dede ilaced in a chaine" ("divided exactly in two between will and deed, fastened by a chain"; 354-55).⁶¹

⁶¹ In the version of MS Additional 16165 and MS Gg. 4. 27, the lady even identifies herself with Venus' bondage to Vulcan. The lady declares, "We ben oppressed (allas that harde stounde!) / Right as yourself were with Vulcanus / Ageyns youre wille and your hert bounde" ("We are oppressed (allas, the hard time!), just as you yourself were with Vulcan and your heart bound against your will"; Lydgate, *TG*, Boffey, *Fifteenth-Century* 357-59).

The ekphrasis therefore prefigures these two different forms of bondage that the man and lady experience.

The ekphrasis and later Venus, however, represent the transformative power of suffering and bondage. As the description of the paintings in the temple explains, Palamon's bondage to Emily through her eye beams eventually leads to harmony with his brother when in the grove he and Arcite "bi Theseus / Acordid were" ("were reconciled by Theseus"; 109-10). Similarly, the man's bondage to the lady leads him to integrity. Venus says to the lady,

"For vnto 3ow his hert I shal so lowe,
 Wiþoute spot of eny doubelnes,
 That he ne shal escape fro þe bowe
 (Thou3 þat him list þuru3 vnstidfastnes)
 I mene of Cupide þat shal him so distres
 Vnto your hond[e] wiþ þe arow of gold,
 That he ne shal escapen þou3 he would." (440-46)

("For I shall humble his heart, without spot of any duplicity, towards you, so that he shall not escape from the bow (although it may please him [to do so] through unsteadfastness) of Cupid I mean, who shall so distress him with the arrow of gold that he shall not escape from your possession, even if he wanted to.")

With Cupid's "arow of gold" (445), *TG* again echoes the description of the temple paintings, where Cupid's golden arrow wounds Phoebus (112). Cupid's arrow binds this man because it will cause him to be in the lady's "hond[e]" (445), and "he ne shal escapen þou3 he would" (446). It also ensures his faithfulness by enabling his heart to be

“[w]iþoute spot of eny doubelnes” (441). Much later, Venus says that the lover “is bound vnder hope and drede / Amyd my cheyne that maked is of stele” (“is bound under hope and doubt amidst my chain that is made of steel”; 1119-20). The steel chain recalls Venus’ promise to the man that the lady “shal be as trw as eny stele” (“will be as true as any steel”; 866) (Mitchell, *Temple of Glas* n 1120). Venus thus shows that suffering and bondage are essential for the lover to learn constancy.⁶²

The poem uses the images of the chain to show that bondage can actually lead to greater happiness. The harmony that results from the bondage through the chainlike beams from Emily’s eyes juxtaposed with the golden arrow of Cupid wounding Phoebus in the story that follows invokes the harmony that will ensue for the man and lady. The man and lady achieve this harmony when Venus formally unites them in a ceremony, as the dreamer declares,

Me þouzt I saw with a golden cheyne

Venus anon enbracen and constrein

Her boþ[e] hertes, in oon forto perseuer

Whiles þat þei liue and neuer to desseuer. (1106-09)

(It seemed to me that I saw Venus immediately embrace and constrain both of their hearts with a golden chain in order to remain constant in unity while they live and never to sever.)⁶³

⁶² The poem focuses on the corrective power of bondage for the man. Venus tells the lady “I haue bound” the man she loves “so lowe vndir youre cheine” (“I have bound”; “so low under your chain”; 523). The lady’s chain binds the man, rather than the other way around, for the lady is, as Venus tells her, “euer . . . of oon entent / Withoute chaunge or mutabilite” (“always . . . of one mind without change or mutability”; 384-85) and has “in your peynes ben so pacient / To take louli youre aduersite” (“in your pains been so patient to take your adversity humbly”; 386-87).

⁶³ Crockett notes the erotic chain imagery in *TG* (92 n 69).

The bonds between the lover and lady also “interchange with the ‘bemes’ of Venus” (Miskimin 354) because Venus unites the lover and lady. She has “bemys gladsome” (“joyful beams”; 329) and “briȝt bemes” (“bright beams”; 705). The man states in his complaint to her, however, “ȝe me hurten wiȝ ȝour dredful myȝt / Bi influence of ȝour bemys clere” (“you hurt me with your awe-inspiring power by influence of your bright beams”; 717-18). These descriptions thus further connect her bondage and the suffering she causes with happiness. In spite of this bond, the man and lady do not achieve immediate satisfaction of their desires, as Venus tells the man, “And þenk in fire hou men ar wont to fyne / This purid gold to put it in assay: / So þe to preue þou ert put in delay” (“And think how men are accustomed to refine pure gold in fire to put it to the test: so you are put in delay in order to test you”; 1191-93). Nevertheless, Venus assures him, “tyme shal come þou shalt for þi sufferaunce / Be wele apaide and take for þi mede / Thi liues ioy and al þi suffisaunce” (“the time shall come when you shall be well rewarded for your patience and take for your reward your life’s joy and all your satisfaction”; 1194-96).

The harmony from the bond between the lover and lady also evokes the harmonious marriage bond between Mercury and Philology, who was “magnified” (“glorified”; 135) by the “song” (135) of the muses, as depicted in the temple. When the man and lady are united, the dreamer states,

for þe ioy[e] in þe temple aboute

Of þis accord, bi gret solempnyte

Was laude and honoure within and withoute

ȝeve vnto Venus and to þe deite

Of god Cupide, so þat Caliope

And al hir sustren in hir armonye

[Gan] with her song þe goddes magnyfie. (1299-1305)

(because of the joy from this accord praise and honour were ceremoniously given to Venus and to the deity of the god Cupid everywhere around the temple, so that Caliope and all her sisters in their harmony began to glorify the goddess with their song.)

Aesthetic harmony occurs through the music of the muses. Orpheus (1308), whose music charmed animals as well as inanimate objects, and Amphion (1310), who through his music, built the walls of Thebes,⁶⁴ join in with the muses and therefore contribute to their harmony. The lovers' union also embodies social harmony. Venus wants the lovers to be "[o]f oon accord vnto 3oure lyues ende" ("in complete harmony until your lives' end"; 1242). She promises that the lovers will be "[p]erpetuelli" ("perpetually"; 1323) united in their love only after, as Bianco recognizes, "euere louer of lou3 and hei3 degre" ("every lover of low and high rank"; Lydgate, *TG* 1315) requests that the two lovers will always be faithful to one another ("New Perspectives" 108). Bianco argues that "the traditional courtly exclusivity of the *dit amoureux* is decisively abandoned" when the crowd in the temple "plays the decisive role in the resolution of the narrative's conflict"

⁶⁴ See Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*:

thys prudent Amphyoun,

With the swetnesse and melodious soun

And armonye of his swetë song

The Cytè bylt that whilom was so strong. (201-04)

(this prudent Amphion, with the sweetness and melodious sound and harmony of his sweet song, built the city that once was so strong.)

(“New Perspectives” 108).⁶⁵ The social harmony of this union leads to aesthetic harmony because Venus grants this request, and “with a melodiſs ſowne, . . . [a] ballade nwe” (“with a melodious ſound, a new ballad”; 1336-38) to Venus ſtarts up in the temple as a reſult. The dreamer wakes up becauſe of the “heuenli melodie” (“heavenly melody”; 1362) and “armonye / Puruſoute þe temple” (“harmony throughout the temple”; 1364-65). *TG* conſtructs one of the “dream-worlds” that “are in many ways idealizing fantasies of ſocial aſſimilation or integration, where courts are models of well-ordered and concord-diſpenſing harmony” (Boffey, “Forto compleyne” 128). The lovers’ union with Venus’ “golden cheyne” (1106) therefore evokes the Boethian chain of love that orders the world (Norton-Smith, “Lydgate’s Metaphors” 92),⁶⁶ eſpecially its manifeſtation in *RR* as a golden chain.⁶⁷ The union of the man and lady further demonſtrates the Boethian quality of harmony through variety becauſe the lovers of varying ſocial ſtanding, who had previously preſented complaints over a variety of iſſues, now bring about this union of the man and lady that reſults in heavenly harmony. The harmonious images painted in the temple, as deſcribed in the latter part of the ekphraſis, ſymbolically prefigure this ending.

⁶⁵ Bianco, who interprets the lady and man as Joan of Navarre and Henry IV, ties this example of “support . . . right across the ſocial ſpectrum” to the poem’s purpoſe “to celebrate and gain ſupport for a royal marriage. Such a marriage ſhould be ſeen by his audience to be both neceſſary and deſirable” (“New Perspectives” 109).

⁶⁶ See Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* (2.m.8).

⁶⁷ See *RR*, where Nature confeſſes,

“Si gart, tant m’a Deus enouree,

La bele chaeine doree

Qui les quatre elemenz enlance

Trestouz enclins devant ma face.” (16785-88)

(“Thus, ſince God has honored me ſo much, I keep the beautiful golden chain that binds the four elements, all of them bowing before my face”; Dahlberg 282)

In conclusion, the ekphrasis in *TG*, because it symbolically prefigures the union of the man and lady, functions as *ductus* that conveys the audience's understanding of the narrative. The painted images on the walls of the temple of Venus envision the Boethian system of contraries, for harmonious images are described only after images of suffering. Similarly, the man and lady suffer as a result of their inability to be with one another, and even when they are united by Venus' gold chain, they will have to endure further delay before the complete satisfaction of their desires. Lydgate connects the ekphrasis more integrally to the man and lady's experience that dominates the narrative through a seamless transition between painted lovers and actual lovers in the temple and through repeated images such as legendary lovers, chains, and the golden arrow of Cupid. In his breach of the static frame of the ekphrasis and repeated images, Lydgate follows similar techniques as those found in Chaucer's ekphrases. While the description of the images in the temple does not require a specific position in a narrative sequence like the description of the temple images in Chaucer's *KnT*, it more actively commands the *ductus* of the narrative like Chaucer's *HF*.

Conclusion

A popular critical perspective on ekphrasis has regarded it as superfluous to narrative context. As my chapters reveal, however, this perspective does not necessarily always apply. Chaucer's ekphrases in *BD*, *PF*, *HF*, and *KnT* and Lydgate's ekphrasis in *TG* critically connect to the texts in which they are found. Regardless of genre, then, ekphrasis is neither merely decorative nor symbolic yet detachable.

While each of Chaucer's ekphrases serves its narrative, Chaucer's ekphrases in *BD* and *PF* have lesser narrative importance than his ekphrases in *HF* and *KnT*. Chaucer's ekphrases in *BD* and *PF* amplify the meaning of their texts rather than create it. In *BD*, Chaucer's earliest of the four texts, ekphrasis serves a metaphorical function by figuring the Troy story as a movement from destruction to harmony. The setting for the artwork, the contents of the artwork, and the arrangement of the rhetorical description construct aesthetic harmony that accords with and stresses the social harmony of the artwork's version of the Troy story. This harmony that the ekphrasis attaches to Troy later becomes attached to the man in black when he configures his pain and his comfort for his loss of his beloved in terms of Troy. These allusions therefore support recollections of the Trojan images in the ekphrasis. Instead of acting as a static object that indicates the narrative's development all at once, though, the ekphrasis introduces the metaphor from which the man in black will obtain comfort during his process of consolation. The ekphrasis in *BD* therefore integrally relates to the text's meaning, yet it does not change the meaning of the rest of the text.

In *PF*, the ekphrasis amplifies the text's moral warning about the potential destructiveness of worldly pleasure when one succumbs to selfishness. In an even more

detailed way than in *BD*, in *PF* the setting for the artwork constructs a harmonious world of pleasure, for the harmony of the garden where the temple of Venus containing the paintings resides evokes celestial harmony. In further elaboration of the poem's opening teachings about what constitutes the common good, though, violence taints the garden of courtly love, and therefore, the pleasure it creates proves to be illusory. The paintings depicting loves leading to death further expose the destructive reality of the garden and metaphorically enact the discord that the tercels' courtly wooing will introduce to Nature's harmony. Through its courtly love framework, the ekphrasis supports recollections of itself during the tercels' courtship. The ekphrasis in *PF* thus prepares the audience for the later narrative progression, without introducing any new developments in the narrative.

The rhetoric of ekphrasis, however, fulfills a different function in *HF*. In Geoffrey's description of artwork of Troy in Venus' temple, he integrates multiple perspectives on knowledge gleaned from the senses, on the nature of Venus' power, and on Aeneas' morality. These different perspectives seem to confound truth, and in this respect, the ekphrasis amplifies further the confusion of truth and falsehood that the rest of the text represents in Geoffrey's conversation with the Eagle, in the ekphrasis of Fame's house itself that describes conflicting authorities, in Lady Fame's irrational behaviour, and in the activities of the house of Rumour. Through their amplification of themes in the rest of the narrative, the ekphrases of the temple of Venus and of Fame's house engage with their narratives in a similar way to the ekphrases in *BD* and *PF*. They contrast with Chaucer's rhetoric of ekphrasis in *BD* and *PF* though by presenting alternative ways of interpreting their narratives. These ekphrases, organized as memory

palaces, offer ways in which the audience can contemplate truth more seriously, and therefore, through their incongruities support attempts to order and understand the world. Although the ekphrases in *BD* and *PF* are architectural too, the more developed supports to the memory in the ekphrases in *HF* in turn support their even more dynamic role in the narrative. They therefore surpass the function of amplifying themes in the narrative by creating a different way in which the narrative can be read.

Although the order in which Chaucer wrote *PF* and *HF* cannot be determined, both were certainly composed before the finished version of *KnT*. Both *PF* and *KnT* use Boccaccio's description of the temple of Venus in the *Teseida* for their descriptions of visual art, yet the more integral connection of the visual arts description in *KnT* as opposed to *PF* indicates that over time, Chaucer used the rhetoric of ekphrasis to different effect. In *KnT*, the ekphrases of the oratories exemplify harmony through the organization of their contents and through the oratories' participation within Theseus' larger scheme of ordering Palamon and Arcite's quarrel. This scheme brings forth order in a social and a cosmic sense in addition to an aesthetic sense. Along with the artwork's arrangement within a building that stimulates the memory, the placement of the building itself within a common location for central actions in the narrative solidifies the ekphrastic link to the narrative. The repeated location enables comparison of the rhetoric for each scene. By metaphorically showing the later breakdown in order during the tournament, the ekphrases reveal the illusoriness of the harmony that Theseus seems to create. The ekphrases change their narrative through their presence because they are the expression of the order that Theseus imposes on the story, yet they reveal that these attempts at order fail.

Whether they reinforce the themes of their narratives or alter them, Chaucer's ekphrases all build the *ductus* of their respective texts. Each conveys the audience through the text. In *BD* and *PF*, the ekphrases contribute to the *ductus* by supporting the interpretations that the rest of the work sets out, rather than creating new ones. In *HF* and *KnT*, the ekphrases contribute to the *ductus* by changing its direction and setting forth new paths to interpretation. The effect of each ekphrasis on the *ductus* of the work is therefore inseparable from its effect on the narrative.

Aesthetic ideals of harmony through diversity also connect all of Chaucer's ekphrases. They all explore aesthetic harmony's relationship to social harmony. While the ideals are unproblematic in Chaucer's *BD*, each of his subsequent ekphrases shows how these ideals can become complicated. *PF* and *KnT* uncover social and cosmic discord within aesthetic harmony. *HF*, however, while complicating its presentation of aesthetic harmony, points toward truth, without fully revealing how to make sense of its incongruities.

Lydgate's *TG* reveals the influence of Chaucer's ekphrases both through the connection of the ekphrasis of Venus' temple to the rest of the narrative and through its aesthetic ideals of harmony through diversity. As in all of Chaucer's ekphrases, Lydgate's description of the paintings of lovers in Venus' temple metaphorically relates to the rest of its narrative. When the description loosely groups together tragic and celebratory love stories and finishes with stories about harmonious relationships, it forecasts Venus' eventual harmonious union of the man and woman who have suffered as a result of the grave obstacles to that union. The dreamer's integration of the stories painted on the walls with the stories of the lovers physically present in the temple further

strengthens that connection between the painted lovers and the actual lovers in the text. The ekphrasis harmonizes the stories so that they represent the Boethian philosophy of knowledge obtained through opposites, which is a further manifestation of the philosophy of harmony through diversity. Like *BD*, then, these ideals do not become complicated. In amplifying the theme that suffering must accompany the attainment of joy, though, the ekphrasis maintains an even firmer hold on the narrative and its *ductus* than the ekphrases in Chaucer's *BD* and *PF* do. Its more interactive narrator who introduces images that get repeated later enhances the memorial function of the ekphrasis. Hence, the ekphrasis does not alter the narrative and the *ductus* because it does not encourage a new way of interpreting the text, but it contributes to a more fully interactive memorial and interpretive experience. *TG* therefore demonstrates the influence of Chaucer's later ekphrases too and reveals the significance of Chaucer's developing rhetoric of ekphrasis to an early fifteenth-century author.

While negating interpretations of Chaucer's and Lydgate's rhetoric of ekphrasis as merely decorative, my thesis also offers alternative readings to the interpretation of ekphrasis as a symbol of the text's themes but that all the while is disengaged from the narrative like a static object. Each ekphrasis shares a more dynamic relationship with the rest of the text because, rather than revealing its entire meaning, it partakes in its *ductus*, or the audience's journey through the work.

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