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# Did John Donne Read Chaucer, And Does It Matter?

John F. Plummer III

Influence remains subject-centered, a person-to-person relationship, not to be reduced to the problematic of language.

Harold Bloom<sup>1</sup>

In place of the notion of intersubjectivity is installed that of intertextuality.

Julia Kristeva<sup>2</sup>

## I

Ovid's elegy 13 from *Amores* Book 1, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* Book 3, lines 1415-1527, and John Donne's 'The Sun Rising' all feature the separation of two lovers by dawn. While it seems generally, at least tacitly, accepted that both Chaucer and Donne were familiar with Ovid's poem, no one, to my knowledge, has ever claimed to see a chain of influence running from Ovid's elegy through *Troilus and Criseyde* to Donne's lyric.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, given the fall from grace suffered by the concept of influence in recent years, to advance such a claim might seem pointless even if it could be defended. I would nevertheless like to make this claim, both as a matter of plausible historical fact, and also as a way of re-examining the topic of literary influence.

Let me first suggest, provisionally and in an abstract way, some reasons I see to retain the notion of influence along with that of intertextuality, and let me then characterize in somewhat more detail what 'Chaucerian influence' might consist of for a seventeenth-century reader. I will then make the best case I can for detecting the influence of Chaucer's *Troilus* in Donne's 'The Sun Rising', while suggesting some of the critical implications of such an idea.

## II

The figures of Ovid, Chaucer, and Donne and their respective texts raise, in particularly rich ways, such issues as traditional notions of canonical authors and authority, learning, and regard for antiquity and trans-historically conceived notions of the subject. At the same time, in the ages-old and ubiquitous *aubade* tradition in which the three texts participate, we find literary conventions and *topoi* which escape the control of any author, exemplifying what Jonathan Culler has referred to as 'anonymous discursive practices, codes whose origins are lost, that make possible the signifying practices of later texts'.<sup>4</sup>

Contemporary critiques of the notion of intersubjective literary influence appear frequently to be motivated by a desire to counter the supposed explanatory authority of influence. To posit or search for a 'source' for a given text is seen in this view as an attempt to 'explain' the text, to limit the range of its meaningfulness.<sup>5</sup> Overlooked, perhaps, from such a perspective, is the potential of the idea of intersubjective influence to complicate and enrich, rather than limit, the meaningfulness of a given text or set of texts, for thinking about influence reminds us that writers, at least when they are being 'influenced', are also readers. As Culler has written elsewhere, 'It is his experience of reading, his notion of what readers can and will do, that enables the author to write, for to intend meanings is to assume a system of conventions and to create signs within the perspective of that system. Indeed, writing can itself be viewed as an act of critical reading, in which an author takes up a literary past and directs it toward a future.'<sup>6</sup> Put another way, as a single example, thinking about Chaucer reading Ovid as I myself read the *House of Fame* is enjoyable, enriches the pleasure I take as a reader, and reminds me further that being 'influenced' is not in fact a passive matter, that Chaucer's playful appropriations of Ovidian and Virgilian material demonstrate his independent agency as a reader and (re)writer.<sup>7</sup>

Culler observes that writing about the relation among texts tends to slide toward one extreme position or other. On the one hand, intertextuality 'is a difficult concept to use because of the vast and undefined discursive space it designates, but when one narrows it so as to make it more usable one either falls into source study of a traditional and positivistic kind (which is what the concept was designed to transcend) or else ends by naming particular texts as the pre-texts on grounds of interpretive convenience.'<sup>8</sup> Critiquing Harold Bloom, Culler complains that when one asks what texts constitute the intertextual space which allows another text to be meaningful, in Bloom's work 'they turn out to be the central poems of a single great precursor. And if we ask why this should be so, why the intertextual should be

compressed to a relationship between two individuals, the answer seems to be that a man can have only one father: the scenario of the family romance gives the poet but one progenitor.<sup>9</sup>

The group of *aubades* by Ovid, Chaucer, and Donne, I am arguing, may be regarded both in terms of anonymous intertextuality and also, potentially, as an instance of inter-subjective influence. But the relations among this group of texts and authors illustrate how complex in fact are the affiliations among even texts and authors said to be related 'simply' by influence. On the one hand, Donne and Chaucer are beyond doubt aware of the anonymous tradition of the *aubade*; it is likely that Ovid is as well.<sup>10</sup> So, Chaucer reading Ovid's elegy recognizes both what he might think of as a particular poem by a favorite author and an instance of an *aubade*. Similarly, Donne would see in Ovid's text both an individual poetic achievement and an instance of, or use of, the intertextuality of the *aubade* genre. What is more, if Donne had in fact read Book III of Chaucer's *Troilus*, he would recognize that Chaucer had also read Ovid's elegy. Further, Donne would be aware of Ovid's poem both in the original and in Marlowe's (English) version<sup>11</sup> as well, and could if he chose see Chaucer's poem as a translation or re-writing of Ovid's poem parallel to – though historically free of – Marlowe's translation. The complexity of the relations among these texts also undercuts the inevitability of Bloom's familial, progenitive trope. Even where we imagine Donne at his most 'influenced by authority', reading Chaucer who has read Ovid, Donne is in fact reading both Chaucer and Ovid at once, since he would also read Ovid himself *outside* the context of reading Chaucer.<sup>12</sup> In this instance at least, though one cannot deny that a man can have only one father, the presence of the father does not rule out the simultaneous direct influence of the grandfather. Indeed, the awkwardness of that observation itself begins to suggest how limited is the utility of genealogical tropes in conceptualizing influence.

Furthermore, Chaucer is not a simple 'father' to Donne even if we ignore Ovid. The lines between inter-subjective influence and intertextuality blur when we come to consider how unstable over time and complex, even contradictory, are such author-figures as Chaucer. Paradoxically (or at least ironically), while one might expect that the influence an authorial image might exercise to be directly proportional to that author's subjective control over his text's meaning, influentiarity is often a sign of the opposite, of anonymous, after-the-fact, revisionist activity over which the author has no control whatever and which (historically speaking) is more likely to reflect the cultural assumptions of the reader than of the author, because the image of an author current and most potent at any given historical point will be one constructed by contemporaries (e.g., fellow readers, teachers, scholars, reviewers) of the person

supposedly being 'influenced'. What we call Petrarchanism, for example, takes its name from the productions of one author but itself consists of a largely anonymous intertextual tradition. When Sidney writes a sonnet he is aware both that he is using a form whose greatest practitioner (as he might have believed) was Francis Petrarch, but also that he is engaged with the larger Petrarchan intertext over which Petrarch himself had no control at all, that is, the poetic output of those writers Sidney satirizes in sonnet 15 of *Astrophil and Stella*, who 'poor Petrarch's long-deceased woes / With new-born sighs and denizend wit do sing'. Similarly, the Chaucerian corpus of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions was well beyond Chaucer's control, made up as it was of both authentic works and anonymous apocrypha,<sup>13</sup> sometimes explicitly and always implicitly attributed to Chaucer, while the Chaucerian biographies in circulation with the corpus were likewise mixtures of fact and fiction. In sum, thinking about a relation of influence between Ovid and Chaucer and Donne is not simple, and any hopes (or fears) that identifying influence will settle issues, texts, or bets seem misplaced. Far from requiring or reinforcing a faith in a stable, trans-historical subject, this notion of influence is emphatically shaped by and within a matrix of particular cultural, textual, and historical specificities. Of course, by insisting upon the complexity and polysemous quality of such influence, and thereby denying that such influence inevitably attributes to Ovid or Chaucer an undue explanatory, progenitive, or signifying power, I also deny myself the right to produce my reading of that influence as a key or explanation of Donne's poem. To avoid the risk of making a wholly empty gesture, then, and to suggest that the answer to the title's question does matter, in what follows I will seek to highlight a few of the many particular features of this Chaucerian influence, especially its tendency to formulate itself as a meditation upon history and language.

### III

When we turn specifically to examine Chaucer as a figure of authority in early modernity, we can hardly fail to be surprised by the degree to which this figure differs in 'life' and corpus from our current sense of him. The process reminds us, or ought to, that authors, especially 'influential' ones, are constantly in the process of being recreated and revised, along with other treasures from the past, according to the needs of the present. For Donne's generation as for several before it, Chaucer inhabited a curious temporal space, both accessible (through being ideologically compliant and malleable) and increasingly distant, the denizen of a rude, barely civil time, a 'mistie'

time in Sidney's phrase. All of which is to say he was not only a figure of the past, he had also become a figure of history, of *histoire*, whose story could and needed to be narrated according to contemporary needs. While he was a figure no longer directly accessible to living memory, and his significance appeared blurred and confused by the passage of time (whether measured in political, social, linguistic or religious terms), he was nevertheless an historical figure both in the sense of being 'storied' and in the sense of having accreted a considerable symbolic weight. Somewhat paradoxically, as Chaucer's age seemed increasingly distant from the present, he and his contemporaries like Gower and Wycliff, among other late medieval English authors, were being called on to epitomize, to legitimate, and to have helped originate, specifically English learning and values.<sup>14</sup> Equally paradoxically, as Chaucer's language became increasingly alien to Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean readers, Chaucer was held up as the great 'purifier' of the English tongue. The English language and English history, then, especially in their relation to one another, dominate Renaissance imaginings of Chaucer.

Renaissance editors of Chaucer were faced with the task of constructing his corpus, and, as Heffernan and Seth Lerer have recently reiterated,<sup>15</sup> were required to construct a particular image of Chaucer in order to make decisions on questions of the authenticity or spuriousness of particular texts. Such decisions do not take place in a vacuum; as Heffernan puts it, 'the judgement whether a text was genuine or not was often indebted to extra-textual biases: the complex political, social, moral and religious beliefs which informed the editor's historical imagination.'<sup>16</sup> For Tudor-Stuart editors, political and reformist and counter-reformist theological issues were of course prominent among such biases.

An illustration of the process may be seen in some of the work of William Thynne, Thomas Speght, and William Thynne's son Francis during the period from the 1520s through the end of the century.<sup>17</sup> As is well known, Thynne's 1532 edition gives us our first true collected works of Chaucer, and is in many ways a landmark event in the shaping of the Renaissance idea of Chaucer.<sup>18</sup> This edition includes in addition to authentic Chaucerian pieces a goodly number of spurious texts. Speght's first (1598) edition includes the same genuine works and further spurious texts, and provides the first 'life' of Chaucer to accompany a Chaucerian edition.<sup>19</sup> This edition provoked the *Animaduersions* of Francis Thynne<sup>20</sup> which propose some revisions of both the 'life' and corpus offered by Speght's first edition, and led him to issue a slightly revised edition in 1602.

Modern scholarship has in the main roundly criticised William Thynne's apparently promiscuous inclusion of so many non-Chaucerian texts in his edition.

Exceptionally, Skeat excused him on the grounds that 'those who, through ignorance or negligence, regard Thynne's edition of Chaucer as containing 'Works [wrongly] attributed to Chaucer' make a great mistake', for Thynne's title, *The Workes of Geffray Chaucer newly printed, with dyuers workes which were neuer in print before, &c.*, is 'strictly and literally true.'<sup>21</sup> The 'dyuers workes', Skeat argues, were understood to be by writers other than Chaucer. As Francis Thynne's arguments will demonstrate, however, the title could (and would) lead readers to assume that the 1532 edition contained only Chaucerian work. In 1561, as Skeat notes, Stow issued an essentially identical edition, with the altered title of *The Woorkes of Geffrey Chaucer, newly printed with diuers Addicions which were neuer in printe before*. Perplexingly, we cannot take the new title to bespeak a new understanding of Chaucer's corpus, for, as Skeat continues, 'Stowe did not really mean what he seems to say, for it was he who first added the words – 'made by Ihon lidgate' – to the title of 'The Flower of Curtesie', and who first assigned a title (ascribing the poem to *dan Ihon lidgate*) to the poem beginning 'Consider wel'.<sup>22</sup> Skeat claims that 'it is clear that Thynne's [1532] intention was to print a collection of poems, including all that he could find of Chaucer and anything else of a similar character that he could lay his hands on.'<sup>23</sup> But one is surely in no better position to guess at Thynne's or Stow's intentions than Chaucer's, and even if one were, the point remains that the *readers* of Thynne's editions and of the subsequent even more misleadingly titled editions of Stow and Speght were going to form their impression of 'Chaucer' based on the entire corpus included in the editions from 1532 through 1687.

While we can only speculate on William Thynne's reasoning for including most of the spurious pieces, it will be helpful to focus on two which come under dispute, the *Plowman's Tale* and the *Pilgrim's Tale*. In his *Animaduersions*, Francis Thynne tells a remarkable story of his father's proposing to include the *Pilgrim's Tale* in his first edition and being warned by the king himself that the bishops were likely to oppose his plan. William asked for and received Henry's protection for his person, but 'all whiche notwithstandinge, [he] was called in questione by the Bysshoppes, and heaved at by cardinall Wolseye, his olde enymye. . . .' In the end, writes Francis, 'the Cardinall caused the kinge so muche to myslyke of that tale, that chaucer must be newe printed, and that discourse of the pilgrymes tale left out.'<sup>24</sup> The *Plowman's Tale* was also disputed, says Francis, though he does not make clear whether that is because it too was anti-clerical or because – as he adds parenthetically – it was deemed by some to have been written not by Chaucer but by Thomas Wyatt senior.<sup>25</sup> In any case, Francis insists that both tales are genuinely Chaucerian and ought now to be printed.<sup>26</sup> Sometime between the (claimed) effort to print it in 1532 and Speght's *Works* in

1598, *The Pilgrim's Tale* was lost, to be rediscovered only in the eighteenth century, and only in fragmentary form, by Tyrwhitt.<sup>27</sup> There is a great deal of confusion here, increased by Francis Thynne's evidently imperfect knowledge of his father's editorial decisions which took place – after all – well before Francis' birth in 1545.

Tyrwhitt believed the *Pilgrim's Tale* to have been written between 1536 and 1559 (at least four years *after* Thynne's first edition), and it is, as Tyrwhitt wrote, 'impossible that anyone who had read it should ascribe it to Chaucer',<sup>28</sup> especially as it quotes Chaucer twice by name and refers at one point to a printed book. Certainly any modern reader would reject the fragment as spurious on grounds of style and language as well. The question is, then, how did Francis Thynne, apparently blind to the clear evidence, persuade himself that the *Pilgrim's Tale* was authentically Chaucerian? One answer may well be that Francis had never had a chance to read the *Pilgrim's Tale*. Another answer may be ideological. The process of forming the Chaucerian corpus coincided quite precisely with the process of re-forming the English church, and the Preface to Thynne's 1532 edition (actually written by Sir Brian Tuke) seeks to establish and clarify connections between Henry VIII's political and theological power and legitimacy (on the one hand) and the power of an Authoritative Chaucer to stand for and adumbrate true English values on the other hand.<sup>29</sup>

If Tyrwhitt is correct that *The Pilgrim's Tale* dates from no earlier than 1536 then obviously Francis Thynne is mistaken in believing his father intended to print it in his first edition, but it appears to have been very important for Thynne Junior to believe his father had stood up to the Bishops and was prepared to risk censure for letting Chaucer shine forth in his full reformist glory. As a locus of English values and authority, Chaucer was necessarily understood to be proto-Protestant. The story is all the more compelling for including the claim that William enjoyed the personal protection of Henry himself. One can be blinded, it must be admitted, by any number of extra-literary motives. Francis Thynne also reminds us that, as his uncle John Thynne told him, Chaucer might have been banned from being printed by the Acte for thadvancement of true Religion (34 Hen. VIII) 'had yt not ben that his woorkes had byn counted but fables' (*Animadversions*, p. 10). In John Foxe's second enlarged edition of *Actes and Monumentes*, Foxe wonders that the Bishops could have failed to see Chaucer's reformist zeal, no matter how concealed 'vnder shadowes couertly, as vnder a visoure', for, he writes, 'excepte a man be *altogether blynde*, he may espye him at the full'. But because, he continues, the Bishops took his works 'but for iestes and toyes',<sup>30</sup> they exempted Chaucer from their censure.

On the one hand, then, we have Francis Thynne 'blind' to the implausibility of his father's having intended to publish the *Pilgrim's Tale* and to the – to our eyes –



obvious non-Chaucerian qualities of both *Pilgrim's* and *Plowman's Tales* because of his evident desire to find in Chaucer a harbinger of Henry's reformation and English political grandeur. By contrast, Foxe enjoys mocking the bishops for their blindness to Chaucer's reformism. To pursue and conclude this ocular trope in a more literally visual way, we might recall the often remarked fact that artistic forgeries of 'antique' work vary from generation to generation in how they represent 'antiquity'. Sir Kenneth Clark makes the point, speaking of restoration, that 'no artist can resist bringing an old work of art into line with the style of his own time'. 'Forgery', he adds, 'supplies confirmation for the historical imagination of its time.'<sup>31</sup>

As Derek Pearsall has recently demonstrated in an article on Chaucer's tomb, Catholicism, during the short reign of Mary Tudor, also sought to (re)appropriate Chaucer as a foundational figure. In 1556, Chaucer's body was moved from its original location to the tomb it now occupies by Nicholas Brigham, an officer in Mary's Exchequer. The architecture and placement of the tomb, Pearsall demonstrates, seek to identify Chaucer as emphatically Catholic, and he argues that 'the reburial of Chaucer was part of [a] larger programme of counter-reformation, a move to reappropriate England's greatest poet to the traditional faith. Just as the Protestant reformers had made Chaucer into a covert Wycliffite and honorary Protestant [. . .] so now Catholics were to redeem him for orthodoxy and at the same time demonstrate the natural and inevitable continuity of that orthodoxy. Given Chaucer's large and varied output, and his way of writing, it is not surprising that both cases could be made to the perfect satisfaction of their advocates.'<sup>32</sup>

If, by turns, Chaucer's poetic corpus was being restored as Protestant, and his physical corpse enshrined as Catholic, his biography was also being constructed under ideological constraints. Speght's Chaucer was educated at both Oxford and Cambridge, studying at Oxford with John Wyclif, 'whose opinions in religion he much affected.'<sup>33</sup> This Chaucer was much in the favor of powerful lords, and was, in the second year of Richard II, taken with his lands into the protection of the King himself upon the occasion of being imperiled 'by fauouring some rash attempt of the common people.'<sup>34</sup> Chaucer's enjoyment of such patrons seems only just, given the Renaissance estimation of his learning and literary prominence. Pearsall makes the point that Speght withdrew Chaucerian attribution of the 'Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse' (giving it to Hoccleve instead), presumably on the grounds that 'a learned and serious poet does not write comically self-deprecating appeals for money.'<sup>35</sup> For John Leland, Chaucer stands to English letters as Dante to Florentine, Petrarch to Italian, and Homer and Virgil to Greek and Latin respectively. He is both an appropriator (translator) of 'foreign' languages and the progenitor of his native tradition, and his aim was

to render English 'as polished as possible in all respects [. . .] Nor did he cease from his labors until he had carried our language to that height of purity, of eloquence, of conciseness and beauty, that it can justly be reckoned among the thoroughly polished languages of the world.'<sup>36</sup> While it was admitted that Chaucer's language was sometimes difficult (in 1546 Peter Ashton remarked that Chaucer's words 'by reason of antiquitie be almost out of vse',<sup>37</sup> and Speght's edition would include a glossary of *hard* words), he was nonetheless universally acknowledged to be, in Spenser's phrase 'well of English vndefiled' (*Faerie Queene*, 4.2.32). Commenting on the writing of history, Roger Ascham opines that liveliness in description of places and persons (both their exterior appearance and state of mind) are essential qualities for the historian. He finds these in Thucydides and Homer and 'very praiseworthy' in Chaucer as well.<sup>38</sup> The same complex of associations – Chaucer wrote a difficult but Classical (and yet English, not Latin) language and is the patriarch of English poets – is audible as George Gascoigne argues that 'our father Chaucer hath vsed the same libertie in feete and measures that the Latinists do vse: and who so euer do peruse and well consider his workes, he shall finde that although his lines are not alwayes of one selfe same number of Syllables, yet beyng redde by one that hath vnderstanding, the longest verse and that which hath most Syllables in it, will fall (to the eare) correspondent vnto that which hath fewest syllables in it [. . .]'.<sup>39</sup>

Much of the apparent self-contradiction of Renaissance attitudes towards Chaucerian language is owing to the twin vicissitudes of linguistic change, especially the great vowel shift, and corrupt editions. The second Speght edition of 1602 was, as noted above, issued with a large number of changes, in response to Francis Thynne's *Animadversions*; the result was unfortunately not a better text. The 1602 Speght variant readings which have no manuscript support, and which may be presumed to reflect Speght's own editorial work, point to a pattern of uniformly distributed tinkering with the text, modernizing, ill considered rationalizing, and regularizing of meter, sometimes all at once. Particularly striking is the persistent addition of syllables to lines already regular, betokening an incomprehension of the syllabic value of final -e in Chaucer's verse. Such was, it bears remembering, the 'Chaucer' that Donne probably read. We know that this was the Chaucer that Ben Jonson read, for his copy of the 1602 Speght has survived in the Folger Shakespeare Library.<sup>40</sup> Anyone reading *Troilus and Criseyde* in a sixteenth-century edition will marvel that Chaucer's reputation as a poet survived at all.<sup>41</sup> But it did, and probably for the simple reason that someone had to fill the position of purifying and originating Englishman, and even the Chaucer represented by Renaissance editions came closer than anyone else to qualifying. One might say that the very difficulties which Middle English posed to

Elizabethan and Stuart readers, seeking their cultural roots in anxious times, threatened to set them adrift from any poetic history, let alone grandeur. The necessity of such a national poetic history to go along with Tudor-Stuart dynastic history and a national ecclesiastical history – no matter how mythical – prompted them to construct such (to our eyes) tortured arguments, arguments which sought simultaneously to distance Chaucer from the present in symbolic time, assigning him the role of English Homer or Vergil, and to bring him sufficiently near (again symbolically) to allow him to function as a plausible generator or patriarch of present English culture.

Stephen Surigo of Milan's Latin epitaph of Chaucer, first printed by Caxton and reprinted through the sixteenth century, addresses the Pierian Muses to claim that as Virgil honored them by teaching the Latin tongue to speak more beautifully, so Chaucer, 'by the verses [that he composed] in his [British] mother tongue he made it [as] illustrious as, alas, it had once been uncouth [. . .]'.<sup>42</sup> The dedication to Henry VIII that Sir Brian Tuke wrote for Thynne's 1532 edition likewise focuses on the twin themes of Chaucer's language and his place in English history. Tuke praises Chaucer (at length) for elevating English from the depths to which it had fallen; indeed, he writes, 'it is moche to be marueyled howe in his tyme whan doutlesse all good letters were layde a slepe throughout the worlde as the thyng whiche either by the disposycion & influence of the bodies aboue or by other ordynaunce of god semed lyke and was in daunger to haue vtterly perysshed suche an excellent poete in our tonge shulde as it were (nature repugnyng) spryng and aryse'.<sup>43</sup> Chaucer's achievement, Tuke continues, would have been thought a marvel had he lived in the time of Demosthenes, when eloquence and learning flourished among the Greeks, or of Cicero, 'prince of eloquence amonges latyns lyued', and so much the greater must his accomplishment be judged to have arisen during so rude a time as it did.<sup>44</sup> Putting it even more vigorously, Robert Braham in 1555 wrote that Chaucer was ill appreciated in his day, 'when in dede al good letters were almost aslepe, so farre was the grosenesse and barbarousnesse of that age from the vnderstandinge of so deuyne a writer'.<sup>45</sup> Precisely because of Chaucer's role in rescuing English as a language from such barbarism, Tuke finds it scandalous that his texts have languished in relative obscurity and have been poorly edited when they did appear. These failings are, ultimately, political failings: to neglect one's history is to neglect one's political duties. Accordingly, says Tuke (writing in the person of editor Thynne), 'lamentyng [. . .] the neglygence of the people / that haue ben in this realme who doutlesse were very remysse in the setting forthe or auauancement either of the histories therof / to the great hynderaunce of the renoume of such noble princes and valyant conquerours & capitayns as haue ben in the same / or also of the workes or memory of the famous and excellent clerkes in all kyndes of

scyences that haue florissshed therin / of which bothe sortes it hath pleased god as highly to nobilytate this yle as any other regyon of christendome: I thought it in maner appertenant vnto my dewtie / and that of very honesty and loue to my countrey / than to put my helpyng ha[n]de to the restauracion and bringynge agayne to lyght of the said workes [. . .].<sup>46</sup> This argument leads Tuke-Thynne happily enough to the moment of dedication to Henry itself, in whose 'wysedome' and 'authorite' language and history meet most productively and potently. Henry is supplicated to accept this 'ornament of the tonge of this your realme', and to extend over it 'the shyld of your most royall protectyon and defence' against unnamed detractors, foreign and native born, of 'the glorie hertofore compared / and meritoriously acquired by dyuers princes / and other of this said most noble yle [. . .].'<sup>47</sup> The Chaucer, then, who was available to influence Donne was quite different from our current sense of him. His authority included – if it was not bounded by – his learning, especially his work as a purifier and elevator of the English language, and his standing as a forefather of the English church and English civic values. As one who could be placed in a line with Homer and Thucydides, and author of *Troilus and Criseyde*, he was a mediator of history, both the grandeur of classical antiquity and the English past, into the present.

#### IV

'The Sun Rising' has consistently enjoyed an admiring response from its readers. It has been offered as a splendid example of Donne's persona as irreverent lover, as his reaffirmation of the centrality and importance of man in the universe, the new Copernican ideas notwithstanding,<sup>48</sup> and as a 'masterfully comic application of rhetorical rules, [. . .] a witty exercise.'<sup>49</sup> The sources of 'The Sun Rising' have traditionally been understood to be two: the long tradition of the *aubade*, or Dawn Song in general,<sup>50</sup> and more specifically Ovid's *Amores* I.xiii, in which the Ovidian lover complains indignantly to Aurora for her having arrived so early in the morning as to disturb his love-making. As the case is put by Redpath, 'It is probable that the idea of this poem was suggested to Donne by Ovid, *Amores* I. xiii; but, if it was, Donne has made many startlingly original departures.'<sup>51</sup> Leishmann argues that 'we can say with certainty that it was partly inspired by the thirteenth elegy of the First Book of Ovid's *Amores*, and that in spite of the characteristic differences between them, Ovid's impudent address to Aurora, telling her not to be in such a hurry, suggested Donne's impudent address to the sun.'<sup>52</sup> Pinka finds Donne's poem to be 'apparently derived' from Ovid's elegy, A. J. Smith refers to it as a 'a genre piece looking back to

Ovid', and Gransden adds that 'Donne's wittily reductive tone clearly derives from *Amores* I.13.'<sup>53</sup>

I have no wish to deny here the importance of either the *aubade* tradition as a whole or Ovid's *Amores* in particular in shaping Donne's poem. The motifs and conventions of the *aubade* tradition were everywhere available to a reader like Donne, and Ovid's *Amores* were very well known. Marlowe's translation of them into English was available (and indeed Marlowe cites this elegy in particular with terrifying irony, 'lente currere noctis equi', in his *Dr. Faustus* [1594 production, 1604 publication]). I would like to suggest, however, that we might think of Donne as having read Ovid's poem over Chaucer's shoulder. Several of the important differences between 'The Sun Rising' and Ovid's elegy, I will argue, could have been caused by Donne's memory of *Troilus and Criseyde*, III. 1415-70, a dawn song voiced by the two lovers as day terminates their first night of love, itself based on Ovid's poem.

It may be helpful to divide this argument into three parts: a consideration first of the external, literary-historical evidence, followed by an examination of the internal evidence, those specific similarities between Donne's poem and Chaucer's which lead me to feel Donne had the *Troilus* passage in his mind, and finally a consideration of the possible critical implications that would follow our beginning to imagine Chaucer's text as 'intertext' between Ovid's and Donne's.

As noted earlier, even critics who compare Ovid, Chaucer, and Donne decline to claim that Donne knew Chaucer's *Troilus*. How plausible is it he did? We can begin<sup>54</sup> to answer that question by noting the probable date of 'The Sun Rising': Leishmann holds that the poem was 'certainly written after Donne's marriage'<sup>55</sup> in 1601, and both Redpath and Gardner feel confident in dating the poem after the 1603 accession of James I because of the 'patent reference' in the lover's injunction to the sun to 'Go tell court-huntsmen that the King will ride' to James's habit of rising early to hunt.<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, there seems to have been a heightened awareness of Chaucer around the turn of the century. Ann Thompson notes that 'there is an unusual cluster of Chaucerian plays around 1599-1602, which makes one wonder if Speght's new edition of Chaucer in 1598 (the first since 1561) was responsible. No less than five plays (including Shakespeare's *Troilus*) were produced during this period. It is clear from looking at their earlier work that the dramatists involved were not reading Chaucer for the first time in 1598, but the new edition may have refreshed their memories and drawn their attention to a new source of plots.'<sup>57</sup> In his *Variorum* edition of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, Harold Hillebrand writes that most scholars agree that the play 'belongs substantially to 1601-02', and notes that the Stationers' Register for February 7, 1602/3, shows an entry for 'The book of Troilus and Cressida as yt is

acted by my lord Chamberlens Men.<sup>58</sup> Further evidence of broad interest in *Troilus and Criseyde* among Stuart readers, and of a growing recognition on their part that Chaucer's language was 'dating', is Sir Francis Kynaston's publication in 1635 of a Latin translation of books 1 and 2 of *Troilus*.<sup>59</sup> The congratulatory epigrams, apostrophes, and supplementary dedicatory materials by various hands which head the volume suggest the degree to which Kynaston's contemporaries were aware of, and valued – or felt they ought to – Chaucer's poem. Also reflecting the sense that Chaucer's texts had become alien but essential to preserve is a seventeenth-century English modernization of books 1-3 of *Troilus*, edited by Herbert G. Wright, who also points out that Bodleian Library, MS Add. C. 287 contains all five books of the *Troilus* in Latin, followed by the *Testament of Criseyde*, a project he is able to date to August, 1639.<sup>60</sup>

The case cannot be made beyond dispute, but it seems easier to believe that Donne had perused one or the other of the contemporary editions of Chaucer's poetry than that he had not, especially given that, as one of his biographers writes, Donne 'was by habit an avid and voracious reader, [. . .] and almost everything in print seems to have come under his scrutiny'.<sup>61</sup> Given as well the public prominence of the story of *Troilus* at about the date of 'The Sun Rising's' composition, and the fact that, as Spurgeon points out, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *Troilus* 'is by far the most popular, the most generally known and the most often quoted of Chaucer's poems',<sup>62</sup> it is reasonable to imagine his having read Chaucer's *Troilus* in particular.

We may, then, turn to an examination of the internal evidence. Let me repeat here first, however, that in arguing the case that Donne read Chaucer's *Troilus* I do not deny either Donne's awareness – which is clearly intimate – of Ovid's elegy or his own inventiveness. I would simply modify such a judgement as Redpath's that the differences between 'The Sun Rising' and Ovid's elegy have their entire origin in 'Donne's own brilliant invention'<sup>63</sup> with the reminder that the classical and medieval use of *inventio* includes the reshaping of found material.

Arguably the most striking difference between Ovid's elegy and Donne's poem is the difference of addressee, the shift from Ovid's Aurora to the 'unruly Sun'. But this shift has of course already occurred in *Troilus*: Criseyde complains first to the 'blacke' and 'rake night' (III.1429, 1437), and *Troilus* complains first to the 'cruell day' (III.1450), and then 'eke the sonne Titan gan he chide' (III. 1464).<sup>64</sup> Chaucer is participating here in a medieval confusion of Tithonus and Titan; the former is, as in Ovid, Aurora's husband and brother of Priam. While she successfully sought his immortality from the gods, she neglected to ask for his eternal youth. Hence, as Ovid implies, as spouse of so aged a husband she does not daily linger abed. The confusion,

or mingling, of Tithonus and Titan begins as early as Virgil's *Georgics*, and is found in Boccaccio's *Filocolo* 2.222, l. 173.<sup>65</sup> All that said, however, the substitution of sun/Titan for Aurora was nowhere so easily and forcibly available to Donne as in Chaucer's poem.

It is frequently observed that Donne's lover is highly impudent, more so than the essentially ironic Ovidian lover. As Redpath puts it, in Donne's poem, 'the sun is contemptuously apostrophized as an old busybody',<sup>66</sup> as seen most obviously in the lover's addressing him as 'busy old fool' (l. 1).<sup>67</sup> But Troilus has also already taken this step:

[...] *O foole*, wel may men thee dispipe  
That hast all night the dauning by thy side  
And suffrest her so sone vp fro thee rise [...]  
(III.1465-67, emphasis mine).

In fact both Chaucer's Criseyde and Troilus are consistently quite brazen and peremptory in address: Criseyde says of the 'blacke nyght' that she (or he?) fails in her duty to offer rest to humans and beasts alike, so that 'Wel oughten bestes to plain, & folk to chide' (III.1433), and accuses night of doing 'to shortly thine office', of being 'rakle', and engaging in 'unkinde vice' (III.1436-38); Criseyde wishes that 'God maker of kinde' would bind the night so firmly unto their hemisphere that s/he would never go again under the ground, because ' [...] for thou so highest out of Troie / Haue I forgone thus hastily my ioie' (III.1437-42). Troilus then chimes in with equal irreverence: the day is 'cruel', the accuser of their joy, and is envious of their love. In the familiar second person singular, he enjoins the sun to 'hold your bed, ther thow & thi morw' (III.1469).

In a set of 'bright eye' images remarkably parallel to those in 'The Sun Rising' and not found in Ovid's elegy, Troilus accuses the sun of envious spying: 'What has thou lost' he asks, and 'why sekst thou this place?' (III.1455). Comparing the sharp beams of light that stream through the chinks of shutters and doors, Troilus complains that 'euery bore hath one of thy bright eyen' (III.1453). The peeping in at every bore here is clearly evocative of Donne's images of the sun 'calling' on the lovers 'through windows and through curtains' (l. 3), and could have provoked the optical / ocular imagery of the 'reverend beams' which the lover may 'eclipse [...] with a wink' (l. 13). In the 1602 Speght edition, as it happens, the relevant passage reads 'For euery *bowre* hath one of thy bright iyen' (emphasis added). The reading of 'bowre' (boudoir) for 'bore' would likely not have confused Donne, but might have

stopped him long enough to set up an associative imagistic chain or cluster involving eyes, bowers, the sun, and love, and perhaps have nudged him toward his brilliant and inventive reversal of field with which he concludes the poem, demanding not that the sun depart but that he stay in the lovers' bower as its center. A combination of dismissiveness and a disregard for clarity, luminosity, and the quotidian occupations it facilitates, then, heard again in 'The Sun Rising', is brilliantly voiced by Troilus's invitation to the sun to sell his light elsewhere:

Go sell it hem that smale seales graue  
We woll thee not, us nedeth no daie haue.

(III.1462-63)

Troilus's injunction to Titan to 'go sell' his light elsewhere carries all the contempt of a medieval prince for a pedlar.

Let me conclude this brief marshalling of parallelisms between Donne's and Chaucer's texts by pointing tentatively to another possible echo of Donne's reading of Chaucer: in his 'Canonization', another of the four poems Gardner calls 'celebrations of union',<sup>68</sup> we hear the lover dismiss a friend's criticism and advice (that he not love). Whatever negative epithets may be hurled at him and his mistress, the speaker welcomes them:

Call us what you will, we are made such by love;  
Call her one, me another fly,  
We are tapers too, and at our own cost die,  
And we in us find the Eagle and the Dove.

(II. 19-22)

It seems not impossible to detect here the ghost of Criseyde's claim, immediately following the *aubade* voiced between her and Troilus, that she will never forsake him:

The game ywis so ferforth now is gon  
That first shal Phebus fallen from the sphere  
*And euerich Egle been the Doues fere*  
And every rocke out of his place sterte  
Er Troilus go out of Creseides herte.

(III.1494-98, emphasis added)



Interestingly, in the 1602 edition Speght introduced the editorial innovation of identifying sententious phrases with a pointing hand in the margin, and the 'Egle and Doues' line was accorded this distinction.

The *topos* to which Criseyde here gives voice, the *adynaton*, can serve as a point of comparison between the three texts and their handling of common matter and metaphor. The *adynaton* is defined ('the stringing together of impossibilities') and described, and its antique roots sketched, by Curtius.<sup>69</sup> The *impossibilia* are of several kinds, normally involving reversals of nature, and have served an infinite variety of rhetorical strategies. One important species of this *topos* is the 'Not until the rivers run dry and birds refuse to sing' variety, commonly used as part of a lover's vow (cf. Criseyde's above), though available for other kinds of avowals as well, as for example its magnificent deployment in the opening lines of Dylan Thomas's 'Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London'. A second version of the *adynaton* is its contribution to the myriad versions of the inexpressibility topos, for example, 'If all the sky were parchment, and all the seas were ink, and all reeds were pens and all humans good scribes, it would still not be possible to list the vices of this king (or the beauties of this woman or the virtues of the Virgin). . . .' The bibliography<sup>70</sup> itself on this subject would inevitably call forth such a disclaimer. As Gransden notes, we can see the Ovidian lover's complaint to Aurora as 'a mock request to Dawn to perpetrate an *adynaton* [ . . . ].'<sup>71</sup> The speaker cites the historical / mythical instances of night standing still for Jove while he made love to Alcmena, and for Luna's enjoyment of Endymion. Criseyde, of course, asks why the night did not hover over her and Troilus as long as when Alcmena lay by Jove, and then wishes that the night be fastened to their hemisphere, never again to leave. Troilus then demands that Titan regain his bed and linger there, prolonging the night. Donne's lover, finally, demands first that the sun take its light, facilitator of daily tasks and dreary business, elsewhere, and then, in an ironic and brilliant after-thought, demands that the Sun, poor decrepit thing, take up permanent station within the lovers' bedroom.

Whereas Ovid hints playfully at the possibility of the impossible, Donne demands it, decrees it, and – rhetorically speaking – accomplishes it. Ovid lists those disagreeable tasks brought on by dawn, cites the parting of lovers as the most crowningly distasteful, and implies that Aurora's seeming indifference to lovers stems from the age and impotence of her own bedmate. If she could have Cephalus in her bed again, however, he is certain she would cry out '*lente currite, noctis equi*', (in Marlowe's translation) 'Stay night and runne not thus'. An *adynaton* might be accomplished, in other words, by providing a suitable lover for Aurora's bed. Donne, in strong contrast, imperiously demands first that the Sun leave, then that he stay

permanently in, their chamber. Mediating between these two positions, Ovid's wry evocation of mythic, ahistoric narratives of amorous deities, and Donne's metaphysical high-handed dismissal of history altogether ('hours, days, months, which are the rags of time') one can situate Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. By this I mean the narrative poem itself, emphatically concerned as it is with time and history, in particular the (hi)story of a doomed city (doomed in advance by being re-narrated), and concerned with the temporal distance between its narrator and the story he narrates, and further concerned about linguistic change wrought by history and the future. But I also mean *Troilus and Criseyde* the characters, caught up most tragically in history, destroyed by it. Between Ovid and Donne, the former 'reminding' us of past *adynata*, gods' impossible desires realized out of time, and the latter using an argumentative lyric voice to demand the impossible and then ending his song so as to effect it, *Troilus and Criseyde* remember Jove and Luna, wish for the impossible halting of time, and promise each other timeless devotion in tropes built upon impossibilities: 'first shall Phebus fallen from the sphere'. History and time as lived by humans – not gods – is thus evoked by memories, hopes, and promises, the very stuff of narrative. Donne's lover makes no promises here (though he does frequently in the *Songs and Sonnets*), but simply declares nature to be suspended because it is surpassed by their love: 'Nothing else is' (l. 22). Chaucer's lovers cannot do this; they are constituted by a narrative while Donne's speaker is lyric. For them the outcome is tragic – *Troilus* does eventually experience time as standing still, but only once he has lost *Criseyde*. In Book V he asks the Moon to 'ren faste aboute thy spere' in anticipation of *Criseyde*'s return (V.656), and complains that Phaethon has come back to life to steer his father's horses amiss again, the days seem to pass so slowly:

The day is more, and lenger euery night,  
Than they ben wont to be, him thought tho  
And that the sunne went his course vnright  
By lenger way than it was wont to go  
And said, iwis I drede me euer mo  
The sunnes sonne Pheton be on liue  
And that his fathers cart amisse he driue.

(5.659-65; fol. 187<sup>v</sup> in Speght 1598)

In an ironic sense time does stand still, for time cannot bring her back once *Criseyde* has broken her promise.

Donne shifts the sun from its association with the quotidian – where he and

Ovid and Chaucer all began – to an association with importance, with value, in other words, away from both history and myth and towards symbol. He is thus able to demand that the sun stay in their room ('stay' not so much in terms of time as of position) as the centre of all value. Donne is able to do this because, again, the voice of his poem is not in history. Troilus and Criseyde are, in a history which will collapse in upon them long before rivers run uphill.

The *adynaton* is about time and history understood or imagined in some fashion *contra naturam*. Ovid's poem evokes it by memory, a nostalgic glance back towards an epoch of divinity; there is no serious hope for its operating here in his life. Chaucer evokes it to force our recognition of the tragic quality of history, tragic no matter how slowly or quickly that history moves. In bringing together in one passage two uses of the *adynaton*, the lovers' pleas for a suspension of nature's laws on the one hand, and Criseyde's promise on the other hand to engrave Troilus in her heart until Phebus fall from his sphere, Chaucer suggests the fruitlessness of such gestures, for we already know this is a promise that will not be kept.

Donne dismisses time and history outright, as is his prerogative as lyric poet. He, and the love that he places equally outside history, do not need and are not affected by the rags of time. Whereas the *adynaton* functions temporally in Ovid and Chaucer, or diachronically, Donne announces his shift in direction with the synchronic copula: 'She is all States, and all Princes I, / Nothing else is' (ll. 21-22). Donne's poem is thus effectively a rejection of the very *topos* upon which it is built, akin to Shakespeare's sonnets 18 and 130. This rejection or radical reformulation of the Ovidian *adynaton*, I submit, might profitably be conceived of as a consequence of Donne's reading Ovid through Chaucer's tragic vision.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Semiotiké* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> Two readers who place Donne's, Ovid's, and Chaucer's texts together are Setsuko Ikuno, 'Aubade: Chaucer and Donne', *Kiyo Tsurumi Joshi Daigaku*, no. 10 (December, 1972), pp. 49-54, and K. W. Gransden, 'Lente cvrrite, noctis eqvi: Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* 3.1422-70, Donne, *The Sun Rising* and Ovid, *Amores* I.13', in *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature*, ed. by David West and Tony Woodman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 157-71. While both scholars offer astute comparative readings of Ovid, Chaucer, and Donne, neither appears – perhaps wisely – to commit on the question of Donne's awareness of Chaucer's text; Gransden indeed implies that there is none.

<sup>4</sup> *The Pursuit of Signs – Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 103.

<sup>5</sup> A clear analysis of the relations between intertextuality and theories of reading which accord less power to the author and more to the reader is given by Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein in 'Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality', in their *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 3-36; see especially pp. 16-17.

<sup>6</sup> 'Prolegomena to a Theory of Reading', in *The Reader in the Text*, ed. by Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Clayton and Rothstein make this point in 'Figures', pp. 6-7, and cite Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), who suggests reversing the terms of 'agent' and 'patient' in art historical discussions of influence.

<sup>8</sup> *Pursuit of Signs*, p. 109.

<sup>9</sup> *Pursuit of Signs*, p. 108.

<sup>10</sup> The Classical Greek tradition of the *aubade* with which Ovid can be presumed to be familiar is characterized, and examples thereof printed, by J. H. Mozley in *Eos: An Inquiry into the Theme of Lovers' Meetings and Partings at Dawn in Poetry*, ed. by Arthur T. Hatto (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), pp. 255-63. A particularly interesting analogue is by Meleagar of Gadara (2nd-1st c. B.C.E): 'Dawn, you plague of lovers, why are you so sluggish in wheeling round the pole, now when someone else lies warm in Demo's blanket? Yet when I held that slender darling in my arms, quickly you stood over us, with malice in the light you shed.'

<sup>11</sup> The translation was first published in about 1594-95.

<sup>12</sup> In 'The Unheard Voice: The Role of the Jailer's Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*' (unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Leeds, June, 1995), Lesley Conroy describes a similarly complex relationship among Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, and Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. She argues that Shakespeare's 'presentation of the Pyramus and Thisbe legend, though drawing mainly on the Ovidian text, was subtly altered by the Chaucerian version' (p. 19), and that Shakespeare's echoes of *LGW* in the course of his use of Ovid indicate '[his] knowledge of Chaucer [...] and his willingness to widen his perspective on classical material by using Chaucer's somewhat idiosyncratic retelling of the narrative' (p. 18). She notes, too, that of course Shakespeare knew the *Metamorphoses* both in the original and in Golding's English translation (1565-67).

<sup>13</sup> In 'Aspects of the Chaucerian apocrypha: animadversions on William Thynne's editions of the *Plowman's Tale*', in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. by Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1990), pp. 155-67 (p. 161), Thomas Heffernan notes that 'with Speght's edition of 1602 virtually forty per cent of the canon was spurious, and hence Renaissance response to Chaucer was largely shaped by the editorial judgements of Pynson, Thynne, Stow and Speght'.

<sup>14</sup> For examples of Tudor historiographic motivations in antiquarianism, see the description of the activities of Bale and Leland by James Simpson, 'Ageism: Leland, Bale, and the Laborious Start of English Literary History, 1350-1550', in *New Medieval Literatures*, ed. by Wendy Scase, Rita Copeland, and David Lawton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 212-35.

<sup>15</sup> Heffernan, 'Aspects', and Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). The figure and reputation of Chaucer in the Renaissance has also been explored in E. Talbot Donaldson, *The Swan at the Well: Shakespeare Reading Chaucer* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1985) and Alice S. Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1975).

<sup>16</sup> Heffernan, 'Aspects', p. 156.

<sup>17</sup> The works of William Thynne and Thomas Speght are examined in detail in *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*, ed. by Paul G. Ruggiers (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1984) by James E. Blodgett (pp. 35-52) and Derek Pearsall (pp. 71-92) respectively. Thynne's 1532 edition is studied further by Brian Donaghey, 'William Thynne's Collected Edition of Chaucer: Some Bibliographical Considerations', in *Texts and Their Contexts: Papers from the Early Book Society*, ed. by John Scattergood and Julia Boffey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 150-64.

<sup>18</sup> The 1526 Pynson included *The Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus*, and other texts, but was

printed in three separately paginated volumes.

<sup>19</sup> John Leland's life of Chaucer (ca. 1500-52) was part of his *Commentarie de Scriptoribus Britannicis*. The book was not printed until 1709, but was mined in manuscript by other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century biographers. See further in Derek Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), I, 90-96.

<sup>20</sup> *Animaduersions vppon the Annotacions and Corrections [. . .] sett downe by Francis Thynne*, ed. by G.H. Kingsley; revised ed. F.J. Furnivall, EETS, o.s. 9 (London: Trübner, 1865). Henceforth cited as *Animaduersions*.

<sup>21</sup> Walter W. Skeat, *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. Supplementary Volume. Chaucerian and Other Pieces* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), p. ix.

<sup>22</sup> *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. ix-x.

<sup>23</sup> *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, p. x.

<sup>24</sup> *Animaduersions*, p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> *Animaduersions*, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Thynne also argues in passing that Speght was wrong to place *The Plowman's Tale* before *The Parson's Tale* in his first edition.

<sup>27</sup> And printed by Furnivall in *Animaduersions*, pp. 77-98.

<sup>28</sup> *Animaduersions*, p. 8, note 1.

<sup>29</sup> As in, for example, such collocations as 'Wherfore, gracious *soueraigne lorde* / takyng such delyte and pleasure in the workes of *this noble clerke* [. . .]' (emphasis added), and the lament upon the loss to the realm itself of glory through the general neglect with which Chaucer's texts have been treated, as printed in the facsimile edition, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Works, 1532*, ed. by Derek S. Brewer (London: Scolar Press, 1969), sig. Aiiib-Aiiia.

<sup>30</sup> *Ecclesiasticall history containyng the Actes and Monumentes* [. . .], STC 11223 ([n.p.]: J. Daye, 1570), II, 965. Emphasis added.

<sup>31</sup> 'Forgeries', *History Today*, 29 (1979), 724-33 (pp. 726 and 731). As Hans Tietze put it in *Genuine and False: Copies, Imitations, Forgeries* (London: Max Parrish, 1948), p. 14, 'almost all the remnants of classical antiquity [. . .] excavated before the nineteenth century (and even well within it) have been more or less radically restored. The specialists who dominated the Italian art-market of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provided their customers with statues and busts magically restored to their original beauty – in the opinion of art-lovers of the period'.

<sup>32</sup> 'Chaucer's Tomb', *Medium Ævum*, 64 (1995), 51-73 (p. 62).

<sup>33</sup> *The workes of our antient and learned English poet, Geffrey Chaucer*, STC 5077 (London: [Adam Islip?], 1598), sig. b.iii. The copy consulted is in the Special Collections of the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

<sup>34</sup> *The workes of our antient and learned English poet*, unpaginated.

<sup>35</sup> In Ruggiers, *Editing Chaucer*, p. 86.

<sup>36</sup> Leland's *De Gallofrido Chaucero* is printed in Eleanor Prescott Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* (New York: Peter Smith, 1933), p. 3; the quotation is from the translation printed in Brewer, *Heritage*, I, pp. 92-93. On Leland's text see further in note 17, above. The comparison to Dante and Petrarch (and Alan of Lille) is echoed by Speght in 1598.

<sup>37</sup> In his Preface to *A Shorte treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles, compyled by Paulus Jouius* [. . .] translated out of Latyne into englysh by Peter Ashton, STC 11899 ([n.p.]: E. Whitchurche, 1546), unpaginated.

<sup>38</sup> *A Report and Discourse written by R. Ascham, of the affaires of Germany*, STC 830 (London: J. Daye, [1570]), sig. Aiii.

<sup>39</sup> 'Certayne Notes of Instruction' appended to *The Posies of George Gascoigne Esquire*, 1575, ed. by John W. Cunliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), p. 467.

<sup>40</sup> STC 5080, copy 3.

<sup>41</sup> Puttenham's remarks in *The arte of English poesie, 1589* [By] George Puttenham (Menston (Yorks.): Scholar Press, 1968), p. 62, probably reflect both the loss of knowledge of how to read final -e and lack of awareness of the level of corruption of Chaucerian printed editions: 'But our auncient rymers, as Chaucer, Lydgate, and others, vsed these Cesures either very seldome, or not at all, or else very licentiously, and many time made their meetres [. . .] of such vnshapely wordes as would allow no conuenient Cesure, and therefore did let their rymes runne out at length, and neuer stayd till they come to the end [. . .]'.  
<sup>42</sup> Printed in Caroline F.E. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion (1357-1900)*. The Chaucer Society, 2nd ser., no. 55 (London: Oxford University Press, [1923]) pp. 59-60. The translation, by R.G.G. Coleman, is printed in Brewer, *Heritage*, I, 79.

<sup>43</sup> *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Works, 1532*, sig. Aii-Aiii.

<sup>44</sup> *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Works, 1532*, sig. Aiib.

<sup>45</sup> In his 'Preface to the Reader' in his edition of Lydgate's *Auncient historie* [. . .] of warres betwixte the Grecians and the Troyans, STC 5580 (London, 1555), unpaginated.

<sup>46</sup> *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Works, 1532*, sig. Aiib-Aiia.

<sup>47</sup> *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Works, 1532*, sig. Aiia.

<sup>48</sup> In *The Soul of Wit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 14, Murray Roston writes that the poem 'constitutes a challenge to the New Philosophy itself, provocatively reaffirming in the face of all contrary scientific evidence the pre-eminence of man in the cosmic pattern, and the impregnability of his inner experience'. Further, 'the ludicrous

depiction of the sun as a weary, ageing factotum functions metaphorically to shrink and reduce to subservience the awe-inspiring vastness and eternity of the newly discovered solar system [ . . . ]' (p. 77).

<sup>49</sup> Patricia G. Pinka, *This Dialogue of One* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1982), p. 113.

<sup>50</sup> Thus Pinka, *Dialogue*, p. 108.

<sup>51</sup> *Songs and Sonets of John Donne*, ed. by Theodore Redpath, 2nd edn (New York: Saint Martin's Press: 1983), p. 233.

<sup>52</sup> J.B. Leishman, *The Monarch of Wit: An Analytical and Comparative Study of the Poetry of John Donne*, 4th edn (London: Hutchinson, 1959), pp. 184-85.

<sup>53</sup> Pinka, *Dialogue*, p. 114; A.J. Smith, *John Donne: The Songs and Sonnets* (London: Edward Arnold, 1964), p. 25; Gransden, '*Lente cvrrite, noctis equi*', p. 168.

<sup>54</sup> To begin before the beginning, merely as an aside, Donne's mother's father was the epigrammatist and composer of interludes, John Heywood (1497?-1580?). According to the *DNB*, Heywood 'celebrated [Queen Mary's] marriage in a ballad of which the allegory recalls that of Chaucer's "Assembly of Fowls"'. His somewhat better known 'Mery Play between the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and Neybour Pratte' is, according to the same source, 'a contest of words between the friar and the pardoner, on whose behalf the author coolly borrows a considerable portion of the 'Prologue of the Pardoner' [ . . . ].'

<sup>55</sup> *Monarch of Wit*, p. 187.

<sup>56</sup> Redpath, *Songs and Sonets*, p. 234, note 7; Helen Gardner, *The Elegies, and The Songs and Sonnets* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. lix.

<sup>57</sup> *Shakespeare's Chaucer: A Study in Literary Origins* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978), p. 30. Shakespeare's play, its handling of some of the political implications of classical material, and its relationship to Chaucer's poem are explored in Heather James's *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; an admirable survey of the great variety of 'Trojan' material abroad in the period is available in Robert Kimbrough, *Shakespeare's 'Troilus and Cressida' and its Setting* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964).

<sup>58</sup> *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Troilus and Cressida*, ed. by Harold N. Hillebrand (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1953), p. 365.

<sup>59</sup> *Amorvm Troili et Creseide. Libri duo priores Anglico-Latini* (Oxford: Iohannes Lichfield, 1635).

<sup>60</sup> *A Seventeenth-Century Modernisation of the First Three Books of Chaucer's 'Troilus and Criseyde'*, ed. by Herbert G. Wright, *The Cooper Monographs on English and American Literature*, no. 5 (Bern: Francke, 1960).

<sup>61</sup> Robert Bald, *John Donne, A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.



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<sup>62</sup> *Five Hundred Years*, p. lxxvi.

<sup>63</sup> *Songs and Sonets*, p. 233.

<sup>64</sup> All quotations of *Troilus* will be taken from the 1598 Speght edition specified in note 34 above, but for the convenience of readers parenthetical reference will be given by book and line number to *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by L.D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). The citations from Book III are from fols 173<sup>v</sup>-174<sup>r</sup> of Speght.

<sup>65</sup> See further in *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 1043, note to l. 1064.

<sup>66</sup> Redpath, *Songs and Sonets*, p. 233.

<sup>67</sup> Citations of Donne's poems will be from Redpath; line references will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>68</sup> Gardner, *The Elegies*, p. liii.

<sup>69</sup> E. R. Curtius, *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages* (New York: Pantheon, 1963), pp. 95-98.

<sup>70</sup> An excellent brief guide to the literature is James Marchand's 'The Adynata in Alfonso X's Cantiga 110', *Bulletin of the Cantigueiros de Santa Maria*, 1 (1988), pp. 83-90.

<sup>71</sup> '*Lente cvrrite*', p. 160.