

The Medieval Period, Day Fourteen



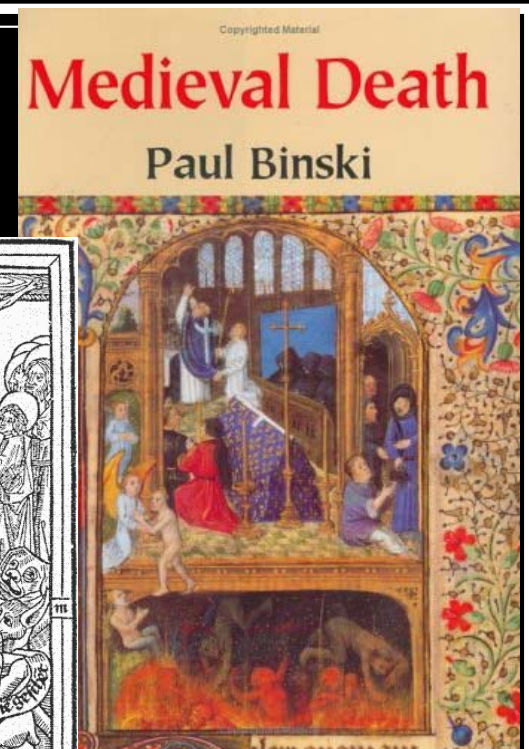
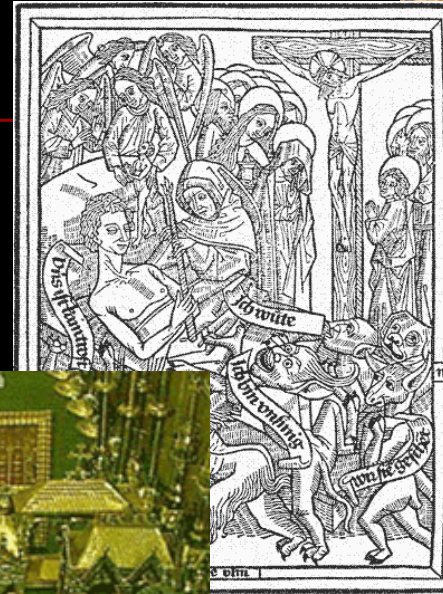
*The
Not Quite Dead
Author*

To Do Today:

- Review some terms and ideas from our last class
- Prepare for our mid-term exam—a week from today!
- Discuss the tales told by the pilgrim ‘Chaucer’ and how they shape our notion of the author ‘Chaucer.’ Compare medieval and modern notions of authorship.

More terms and images from our last class:

- liminal
- scatological
- reliquaries
- “*Ars Moriendi*”
the art of dying



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Our Medieval Mid-Term

The three sections should give you the opportunity to demonstrate both

- Knowledge Acquisition (Sections I and II) and
- Skill Development

What is an Author?

Medieval

“Fourfold is the manner of making a book. For one writes another's words, by adding and/or changing nothing; and that one is called merely a **writer**. Another writes another's words, by adding, but not from his own; and that one is called a **compiler**. Another writes both his own words and another's, but the other's as the principle ones, and his own as those annexed for evidence; and that one is called a **commentator**, not an author. Another writes both his own and another's, but his own as the principle ones, the other's as things annexed for confirmation; and such ought to be called an **author**.”

—Bonaventure, 13th c.

“I know what will happen after I am gone. When I shall be decaying, then, for the first time, it shall be salted; and every defect in it remedied by my decease, and in the most remote future its antiquity will cause the authorship to be credited to me, because, then as now, old copper will be preferred to new gold... In every century its own present has been unpopular, and each age from the beginning has preferred the past to itself”

—Walter Map, 12th c.

Modern

“the explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end.... the voice of a single person, the author, confiding in us.”

“a text is not... the message of the Author-God... a text is made up of multiple writings drawn from many cultures”

—Roland Barthes, 20th c.

How does Chaucer present Authorship?

“For other tale certes can I noon, / But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon”
(Prologue to Sir Thopas 708-9)

“it is the beste rym I can”
(Prologue to Melibee 928)

“Al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine”
(Retractions 1083)

The Tales of Chaucer

Beyond their forms (tail rhyme/prose), what are the differences between *Sir Thopas* and the *Tale of Melibee*?

Why do you think Chaucer the poet depicts himself as a pilgrim telling such different tales?

I her forewordinges alle of yowre blysse
 If yowre thynke of anye as in my speche
 As thus, though that I telle com what woe
 Of yowdes than ye han, I shal blysse
 Comfiteres in this litel tretys here
 To enforse with the effect of myn intente
 And though I nat the othe wordes seye
 As ye han seyd, yet to yowre alle I praye
 Althowgh I nat for as in my sentence
 Shal ye nooche, for I shal differre
 After the sentence of this tretys lyte
 After the which this maye tale I write
 And they for the which I shal praye
 And lat me tellen, al my tale I praye

Explicit

Here begynneth Chaucers tale of melibee



A long man called welles myghty and yowre bigat
 In on his wyf that called was prudence a doghter
 Which that called was cythere. Upon a day bi-fel
 He for his desport us went in to the felde to playe
 His wyf and eke his doghter. And he left in his house of which
 The wyf was faste yshene. This of his othe-fors he had it eppes
 And gotten laddes to the galles of his house and by synnecres
 Deen curtes and betten his wyf and comided his doghter. With
 fyve mortal comides in fyve condynges. This is to sayn in
 his feet, in his handes, in his eyes, in his nose, and in his mouth
 And lepen his for deed and senten addey. And welles was
 tomynges was in to his house and saugh al this myghty. He hit a
 mad man partyng his clothes, gan to wepe and crye. And he
 re his wyf as forforth as she doghter bi-doghter him of his weping
 for to styrte but nat for thy he gan to crye and wepen eke longer
 the woe. This noble wyf prudence remounges his wyf upon the
 sentence of Ovide in his booke that cleped is the remedie of love.
 And as he saith he is a fool that despondeth the wodey to wepen in
 the deeth of his child, til she haue sent hy-fille as for a certeyn
 tyme. And thanne shal man don his diligences with amiable
 wordes hy to recomferte, and yowen hy of hy weping for to
 styrte. For which reson this noble wyf prudence, suffred hy
 housbonde for to wepe and crye as for a certeyn space. And then
 she saugh hy tyme she cryde hy in this wise. Alas my
 lord quod she why wylle ye yowr self for to be hit a fool for so
 the it aperteth nat to a wepyn man to maken othe a wepyn yowp

¶Explicit.

Here begynneth Chaucers tale of Melibee

[Look at the pilgrim portrait in the left margin—what relation does it seem to have to the text? What about the Latin note beside the text below the portrait?]

¶Ovidus de remedio amoris

[Ovid from *Love's Remedy*]

Approche neer, and looke up myght
 moche say yowr eyes, and lat this man haue place
 he in the ceasty is chape, as wel as I. . . .
 This was a popet in an dym tenebrice
 ffor any couenyn smal and fayr of face
 he cometh elyght, by his contenance
 ffor ou to no light, dooth he daunce

Oy uos com what, oye oother folke han sayd
 Dulle is a tale, of myghte and that anon
 boost quod I, ne beth nat yuele a payd
 ffor oother tale, certes fan I noon
 But of a yym, I demed longe agoon
 ye that is good quod he, now shul ye here
 Com seynter thyngs, me thynketh by his chere

Here bigynneth Chaucers tale of Thopas

Tisteth lordes in good entent,
 And of soltelle prayment,
 Al of a knyght, was fayr and gent,
 In bataille, and in toumyment,
 Bydon he was, in for outwe,
 In flaunders, al byonde the see,
 His fader was, a man ful free,
 And lord he was, of that outwe,
 Oye Thopas, was a doghty swain,
 Whit was his face as parymentayn,
 His rode is by, scaylet in grayn,
 And I yow telle, in good certayn,
 His hery, his berd, was by, saffroun,
 That to his gydel, laughre addoun,
 Of smygges, was his hosen down,
 His rode, was of sylkaton,
 He fouds hunte, at wilde deer,
 And yow an hantynge, for euer,
 They to he was, a good archer,
 Of shaftynge, was they noon his peer,
 Ful many a mayde, byght in bouy,
 They moore, for hym, than any,
 But he was chaast, and no lechour,
 And othere, as is the cembul flour,
 And o bifel, on a day,
 For othe, as I yow telle may,
 He forth, upon his steepe gay,
 And in his hand, a lauuncay,

¶ Explicit

¶ Heere bigynneth Chaucers tale of Thopas

[Look at the system of brackets and paraph markers on the page—what does this form of writing emphasize?]

Next Week: Performative Language

- Read the Friar's prologue and tale and the modern Austin extract, handed out in class (you are not assigned the Searle extract). Both of these readings deal with the power and function of words. What do words do? What power do we have over words/what power do words have over us?
- Continue Preparations for Mid-Term Exam