

The Ends of Reading in the *Merchant's Tale*

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S CANDAL INHERES IN THE PERVASIVE, IMPIOUS Biblicism of Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*. Lawrence Besserman has tallied over sixty evocations of the Biblical text in the tale, from or concerning every major character in the story, including the pagan gods Pluto and Proserpina and the Merchant narrator.¹ None of these characters seem to possess the requisite moral authority to handle Biblical allusion responsibly, much less interpretation. They skew, mangle, inversely model, and in one notorious case (the narrator calling January's adaptation of the Song of Songs "olde lewed wordes" [2149])² even mock the Biblical text they present. The tale's fabliau structure is sacred historical as well: it moves from the conception and creation of an inadequate earthly Eden (the unappetizing *senex* January's acquisition of a toothsome bride May and her installation in a garden) to a fall within that paradise (May's arboreal sex with Damyan in front of her now blind husband). The most fruitful critical approaches toward harmonizing the tale's wide tonal range between exegesis and extramarital sex have been theological or doctrinal. That is, they have identified congruencies between the unashamed amorality of the tale's fabliau universe and the particular Bible story that gives it form: the Fall, the etiological Christian myth of immorality and amorality, an archetypal fall from paradisaic stasis into desirous narrative often highly sexualized in medieval interpretations. In one of his more felicitous readings, D. W. Robertson Jr. discusses January and Damyan as two men whose eyesights are blinded and focused, respectively, by the kind of self-centered desire that precipitated the Fall.³ Eric Jager sees May's and Damyan's fornication as "an act that dramatizes Augustine's glosses on the Fall as an abuse of writing, speech, and signs in general."⁴ Robert R. Edwards explores the competing ideologies of marriage within the tale as symptomatic of the accommodations and negotiations necessary between spouses, arguers, or reader and text in a fallen world.⁵ Finally, Jamie C. Fumo argues that the tale's Edenic pear tree also functions as a cross that reveals and instantiates, rather than redeems, the characters' sin.⁶ Whether

with reference to desire, language, marriage, or Crucifixion iconography, these critics all rightfully chart ways that the matter of the Fall and fabliau matter cooperate.⁷ In these readings the scandal is lesser or even illusory; the story surprisingly turns out to be something like orthodox in its theological implications. Yet a scandal remains, not in what the story says the Bible means but in how it uses the Bible, in the way January and May wield interpretive authority against the unfolding sacred historical form of their narrative, causing their own Fall by means of their own willfully obtuse exegesis. An authoritative authorship derived from reading the Biblical text into personal history turns against that very text and in erasing it fulfills it.

Despite its Biblical matter and form, the *Merchant's Tale* stages how the Bible itself became a symbol of contested interpretive authority to a Ricardian age gradually inflected by anxiety over an increasingly widespread access to the vernacular Biblical text.⁸ Greater access meant a broader pool of interpreters and a potentially catastrophic dilution of interpretive authority.⁹ People like the Merchant, January, or May could now read for their own selfish ends. Worse, that selfish reading could authorize the way they told their personal stories.¹⁰ Resisting the medieval conviction that tropology applies the sacred historical narrative to the life of an individual Christian in a way that creates each Christian as a figural repetition or microcosm of sacred history,¹¹ the major characters of the *Merchant's Tale* struggle for authorial agency over their own life histories that would otherwise achieve both internal and external coherence as subplots in the tale's sacred historical scheme.¹² An authority that leads to authorship is at stake here, a deeply Chaucerian use of Biblical material. Engagement with the Biblical text does not produce poetic authority for Chaucer, as does engagement with classical texts.¹³ Nor is Chaucer particularly interested in doctrinal or didactic authority, in "earnest" as opposed to "game." His texts do not co-opt Biblical authority either by retelling Biblical narratives directly or by staking out some unassailable exegetical high ground.¹⁴ The self-determining desiring agents of the *Merchant's Tale* instead provide a pointed example of how for Chaucer the Bible as a *topos* of contested interpretation synecdochically stands in for many other contested fields of interpretation—authority in the church (the *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*), authority in marriage and gender hierarchy (the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and the *Nun's Priest's Tale*), and social authority (the *Miller's Tale*)—as the broader category of which the others are subcategories.

In a fallen fabliau world, the perverse interpreters January and May both set their inventive, authorial agency against the sacred historical form of their relationship.¹⁵ The clarity of that form emerges throughout the story,

perhaps the prime example of the tale's celebrated literalizing effect.¹⁶ The characters are fallen from the beginning, but the tale must manifest that fall, as obviously as a literal woman among literal fruit yielding to a literal tempter up a tree, in order to accommodate the obtuse and willful interpreters who resist personal identification with the story.¹⁷ January eagerly reads and tells his life as a figural reclamation of paradise but repudiates the Biblical narrative that carries Paradise into Fall. May bluntly refuses to read the Biblical signs. In denying that she had sex with Damyan in the pear tree, she does not admit that her behavior has recapitulated the Fall; in claiming that January's restoration to sight is partial throughout an indefinite transition period, she denies him the epistemological possibility for a final redemptive reading. The tale metonymically represents the agency and authority to produce narratives of the desiring self as the capacity to decline reading the clear figural repetition of Biblical narrative. Thus it imagines the end of self-interested, desirous interpretive agency as the scandalous power to efface an authoritative and determinative textual metanarrative that would condemn or trammel that desire.

January is certainly an avid figural interpreter of Biblical texts, particularly Genesis and the Song of Songs, but a demonstrably poor one, because his predictions of personal paradise on the model of Biblical paradise fail to materialize. Critics have diagnosed his exegetical error most often as a literal or carnal misreading of spiritual meaning.¹⁸ This reading of January's strategy is justified but omits the temporal dimension of his fall in its emphasis on the spatial. January does not merely read the spiritual or abstract meaning as literal or concrete; more precisely, he reads the anagogical as literal. The anagogical meaning of a text is the mystical, upward, eternal, heavenly, eschatological sense; it refers the ultimate fulfillment of a literal phenomenon in space and time to God's perfectly realized kingdom that, because it is divine, is at once irretrievably future (or past) and outside space and time.¹⁹ Although January at least initially seems sincere in his attempt to reform his sexual indiscretions,²⁰ a conflation of anagogical and literal reveals a mismotivation, a transposition of the true end of desire from heaven to earth. What enables his belief in potential temporal satisfaction is his omission to read the Fall, the Biblical event that most fundamentally governs the figural meaning of his life in space and, especially, time. The Fall would have taught him to suspect his appetites, then to suspect any expectation that those perverted appetites can be satisfied on earth without considerable change to the appetites or their objects.

The conflation of anagogical with literal derives from January's conflation of two Biblical paradises: Eden and the New Jerusalem. His first recorded

words identify his aspiration to paradise: “Noon oother lyf, seyde he, ‘is worth a bene, / For wedlok is so esy and so clene, / That in this world it is a paradys” (1264–66). He returns to the same theme later, anxious whether the present and future aspects of this Biblical trope are mutually exclusive, whether having “myn hevene in erthe here” means he cannot go to Heaven (1647). Does he here mean Eden (Gen. 1–2) or the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21–22), the beginning or ending of Biblical narrative, respectively? The Bible opens and closes in stasis. January’s hopes depend upon this paradise being the New Jerusalem, a closing stasis.²¹ He has “folwed ay his bodily delyt / On wommen, ther as was his appetyt” (1249–50); he has indulged the errancy of sin. He requires a narrative closure that undoes his licentiousness by fulfilling his sexual appetites properly in marriage and that moves him from fall to salvation. “Hevene” in line 1647 could only appropriately designate the New Jerusalem, not Eden, because January fears he is preempting a future paradise.

The state January wants to read as the final satisfaction of the New Jerusalem the tale instead unfolds as Eden, auguring a story and a fall. The New Jerusalem simply does not fit the contexts in which the tale persistently places January’s comments. Immediately preceding January’s first equivalence of wedlock with paradise, a paraphrase of his prayer “to lyve under that hooly boond / With which that first God man and woman bond” (1261–62) alludes to the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis. When the marriage encomium expands upon January’s initial thesis that marriage is a worldly paradise, it retells the creation of Eve from Adam to prove “that wyf is mannes helpe and his confort, / His paradys terrestre” (1331–32).²² Aside from the tale’s climactic recapitulation of the Fall, it provides liberal hints throughout that the Eden it figures is both postlapsarian and perversely incomplete, from January’s labor at sex (1842)²³ to his reversion to bestial behavior and speech (1847–48)²⁴ to his fear of homicide (2076). Most importantly, the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21–22 is almost entirely de-eroticized. Although 21:2, 9 call her a bride, she is unmistakably a city also (21:2, 10) and a bride of a Lamb (21:9), neither readily identifiable erotic images. In order to construe his marriage as a future erotic paradise January must import images and assumptions from Eden anyhow.

That January misses the typological cues of his own story has led Besserman to query January’s “ignorance of, or his self-deluding obliviousness to . . . Eve’s seduction by the serpent, Adam’s fall, and the expulsion from Paradise.”²⁵ Theresa O’Byrne points out that the encomium accurately portrays an unfallen Eve and the conditions that produced her; although it contains “no hint whatsoever . . . of the Fall or its consequences,” that allusion should

imply an unstated warning for those who know the narrative thread.²⁶ These critics accurately sense the tension between the stories that January and the tale are telling, but January is not indictable for the simple error of forgetting that Genesis 3 follows Genesis 1 and 2. Instead, his desire for salvation leads him to read his way into the Biblical story and attach his life to the specifically anagogical aspect of a stabilizing iteration of Paradise that passes through the Hebrew and Christian imagination from Eden to the Promised Land and its capital Jerusalem, the kingdom of God that Christ announces, and eventually the eschatological New Jerusalem.²⁷

January's exegesis cannot accurately comprehend multiple signification.²⁸ On the brink of deciding to marry May, he is anxious about one issue only, essentially a rift between literal and anagogical paradise:

"I have," quod he, herd seyde, ful yooore ago,
 Ther may no man han parfite blisses two—
 This is to seye, in erthe and eek in hevene. . . .
 [There is] so parfit felicittee
 And so greet ese and lust in mariage
 That evere I am agast now in myn age
 That I shal lede now so myrie a lyf,
 So delicat, withouten wo and stryfe,
 That I shal have myn hevene in erthe heere.
 For sith that verray hevene is boght so deere
 With tribulacion and greet penaunce,
 How sholde I thanne . . .
 Come to the bliss ther Crist eterne on lyve ys?"
 (1637–39, 1642–50, 1652)

This moral anxiety (he thinks heaven must be earned by pain and penitence) begs an exegetical answer. January would not be asking whether earthly satisfaction invalidates heavenly reward if he had applied the medieval exegetical commonplace that Scripture and history had multiple cooperating senses. As an earthly representation of eternal bliss, his earthly paradise would not have to compete with that bliss but could foreshadow it. January, as we have seen, is aware of multiple interpretive levels; he has freely exercised figural reading, drawing parallels between the Bible and his behavior and circumstances. As a literal-minded reader, however, he mistakes the proper end of that figural chain, believing it fulfilled not at the end of history but the end of his earthly life. His happiness does not point beyond itself; rather, what he reads in the Bible points to his happiness. He seems to intuit that his interpretive paradigm must break down somewhere, but he characteristically misidentifies the point of that breakdown: not in a rift between literal and spiritual meaning, but in a reversal of their priority.

His conversion from sexual debauchery to the uninhibited exercise of sexual desire within the carnal bounds of marriage parodies numerous medieval accounts of the conversion from debauchery to chastity; we need look no farther for an example than the *Second Nun's Tale*. This genre ultimately descends from Augustine's fecund salvific commitment to Lady Continence in book 8 of his *Confessions*, itself inverting the Fall at a redemptive fig tree that recalls the cross as at once conferrer of salvation and moral exemplar of self-discipline. Indeed, the *Merchant's Tale* precisely inverts the narrative arc of Augustine's *Confessions*: from a conversion, a drastic reordering of loves, to disordered desires, a pear tree.²⁹ January's resolution opposes itself to his previous behavior "as doon thise fooles that been seculer" (1251); his move toward marital chastity is a kind of misplaced monastic impulse. His expectation for his conversion, trained on this Augustinian genre of conversion of *eros*, is that his story would stop after conversion. He hopes to "abyde" (1588, 1616) in a quiet place of safety protected by "hoolynesse" (1628) and characterized by motionless, tensionless "ese" (1628, 1633, 1643). His story does end in this ease—"This Januarie, who is glad but he?" (2412)—but also in its opposite, his cuckoldry unrepentantly accomplished and successfully concealed.

As this inversion of the conversion trope shows, January's movement toward religious comfort and stability, however sincere, parodies right models but reverses their patterns. Desiring to move from a sinful life toward eschatological paradise, he writes the Fall story exactly backward.³⁰ Because he can only imagine a salvation that is strictly material, and therefore fallen, a fortunate fall from his unwarrantedly happy stasis of conversion would require interrogators bent on unsettling his surety. The concerns Theophrastus and Justinus raise are functionally inverted temptations; they work like serpents at the ostensibly holy status quo of January's fantasies. Shaking off these good tempters by refusing to digest or interpret any perspective but his own, January ends his conversion experience as a perverse unread and creator, assuming for himself the ultimate agency of deity.

The Theophrastus *excursus* is to the marriage encomium what Justinus's set piece of advice is to the inquiring January: a heavy dose of pragmatic, fallen wisdom meant to counterbalance and undermine foolishly prelapsarian conceptions of marriage. The encomium-narrator permits Theophrastus to make three claims—a wife tends her man's goods as if they were half hers and not all his (1296–1300), treats her husband's sick body with much less assiduousness than his goods (1301–04), and readily cuckolds him (1305–06)—although he warns that Theophrastus has "an hundred thynges worse" (1307) to say. Justinus transfers this doctrine into the nar-

rative proper, repeating several of its salient points to January's face. Less concerned about January's health, Justinus bluntly confirms and elaborates the Theophrastian warning about cuckoldry: because of January's age "Ye shul nat plesen hire fully yeres thre" (1562). Justinus also provides a more detailed theoretical underpinning for Theophrastus's economic reservations. He imagines marriage as a commodity conferral, not receipt, and the commodity in question is the man's own body. A gift of such personal, subjective value requires that the giver trust the recipient to share his high subjective appraisal, and a young wife is not likely to value January's old carcass. At the least, January ought to give this most momentous economic exchange of his life the forethought and research that he would a major donation of land or livestock. January is trying to work a system of commercial exchange against itself, to buy a permanent private good in a fluid market, and Justinus's Theophrastian wisdom reminds him that his wife and marriage will remain subject to those market controls and vicissitudes.

In each case the controlling voice of the discourse, the encomium-narrator and January respectively, lets the dissenting voice have its say before declining to engage its reading of the situation.³¹ The effect is that we hear Theophrastus and Justinus, but their intended audience within the tale for all practical purposes does not. Theophrastus gets dismissed fore and aft; before the encomium ventriloquizes a word, it cautions us "What force though Theofraste liste lye?" (1295). Even angrier after sampling Theophrastus's position, the narrator calls down God's curse upon his bones before instructing: "Take no kep of al swich vanytee; / Deffie Theofraste, and herke me" (1309–10). So much for the authority of "clerkes" (1293) that Theophrastus was to represent. The encomium-narrator instead returns to the authority he uses for this initial movement of his speech: his own bare assertion. So also January, on hearing Justinus's argument, scorns the authority on which it rests:

"Straw for thy Senek, and for thy proverbes!
I counte nat a panyer ful of herbes
Of scole-terms. Wyser men than thou,
As thou hast herd, assenteden right now
To my purpos."

(1567–71)

Rather than thinking of Seneca or proverbs as authorities common to all parties, appeal to which could resolve a disagreement, January quarantines Justinus's authorities as Justinus's own. It is January's prerogative to "counte nat," to discount the subjective value of Justinus's wisdom in relation to January's situation and to other counselors whom January counts "wyser."

This self-determining authority January uses to override counsel he exercises ultimately by creating, out of the images in his own mind foisted onto unresisting matter pliable as wax (1430), his ideal paradises: woman, garden.³² This creative role echoes and perverts the divine creation of Eve and Eden. Casting himself repeatedly in the role of Adam, who in the Garden of Eden was passive in Eve's creation, merely a namer, January determines to make his own "help" (1328, 1331)³³ as God would have. God made Eve to divine specification out of a rib from Adam's side; January designs his Eve and impresses her image upon an already existing young woman named May. If the final product of his creation is any part of him she derives from his fantasy, not his side. God made Eve in Adam's image; January's desire makes May as unlike his own image as possible—young to his oldness, fresh to his staleness, inert to his coltishness, vulnerably lowly to his high degree. Despite these moral and ontological ineligibilities for divine authority, January repeatedly overrides objections and asserts the fulfillment of his wishes by the fiat of his bare word. The verbs depicting his selection process sharply emphasize his agency. At first he operates upon himself: "Heigh fantasye and curious bisynesse [presumably, his own] / . . . gan in the soule impresse / Of Januarie aboute his mariage" (1577–79). Then he "gan . . . devyse / Of maydens whiche that dwelten hym bisyde" (1586–87). "Devyse" is a crucial verb of transition here, combining in one action a sense of vision and making.³⁴ What January sees he can also design and accomplish; his vision is at work on eligible neighboring women. Eventually he "apoynted" (1595) May and "chees hire of his owene auctoritee" (1597), an authority the narrator immediately undercuts: "For love is blynd alday, and may nat see" (1598). When January lay awake at night, in his love-blindness then "he purtreied in his herte and in his thoght" (1600) a catalogue of May's imagined attributes, a vision that did not pierce past the sightlessness of his eyes in the dark, confined instead to an authoritative production and consumption within his own body.

To complete the inversion and accomplish the typological fusion of Adam and God in himself, January "made a gardyn" (2029). That January makes the garden is like God; he is unlike God in what he makes. In Genesis the garden is a place of pleasure (*paradiso voluptatis* in the Vulgate) in which Adam works diligently (2.15); in the *Merchant's Tale* it is only a place of sexual play. In Genesis the garden is a community full of animals, an emblem of the cosmos in right order; in the *Merchant's Tale* only January has the key to the garden, and he lets in only his Eve (2044–45), although she lets in the tempter. January is not interested in delegating authority to agents he has empowered, certainly not in creating helpers for them. As elsewhere in this

marriage, he means this garden to disregard May's agency. She is not even a meaningful participant in the sex it enables: "Thynges whiche that were nat doon abedde, / He in the gardyn parfourned hem and spedde" (2051–52). January builds a private community of two to govern only for his pleasure. In the steps of his creator, he makes and orders a fertile world as large, and as small, as his desire, an ultimate appropriation of deity.

Not content with the role of God as creator, January also figures God the Son when he addresses to his wife a loose translation of passages from the Song of Songs (2138–48). The standard medieval exegesis of Song of Songs refers its blatant eroticism between a royal couple typologically to Christ's love for the Church. January draws on an Old Testament book that medieval allegorical exegesis had rewritten into a foreshadowing of the Christian contemplative, mystical life, but against the grain of that exegesis which consistently feminized all Christians in relation to Christ,³⁵ he reads himself into the divine, masculine position. In the symbol-structure of the Song of Songs, the woman's body is a garden, an application January quotes and literalizes but whose point he misses. Rather than May being his garden, he suggests the garden he has built as a place of liaison with her: "The gardyn is enclosed al aboute; / Com forth, my white spouse!" (2143–44). In ontological terms January here not merely invokes a divine identity but seeks to live it out by practicing the ecstatic liberties of the Song of Songs, as if his delusion could persist in and through time. In terms of sacred history, he and May-the-Church are no longer in Eden but in a new Edenic garden that the old Eden only prefigured, a mystical Christian experience that is as close as humans can get on earth to the New Jerusalem. To put it mildly, January has wholly unearned the comparison he here implicitly claims, the history of his relationship with his bride in no way comparable to the salvific and sustained intervention of Christ on behalf of his Church.

Although January progressively unwrites his fallen condition in order to end his story in the stasis with which the Bible opens and closes, the *Merchant's Tale* from the beginning clarifies a precisely inverted sacred historical logic moving away from Edenic satisfaction into the narrative play of desires seeking fulfillment. It decisively affirms a climactic and determinative Fall in opposition to January's agency by means of his squire Damyan, "lyk to the naddre in bosom sly untrew" (1786) in his illicit obsession with May, January's wife and stand-in for Eve. The tale gradually makes the Fall more obvious to the materialistic January by materializing it in a woman, tempter, garden, fruit, and tree. This narrative logic is analogous to the story's providential or authorial meaning, conferred from outside the intentions of its characters. Providential history builds a figural sign so that its participants

can change their own subjective readings of their stories and arrive at a reliably objective conclusion at least on which Bible story they figure. In that way history is kind, accommodates. The tension that sustains the narrative is hermeneutical and reaches its natural point of resolution when January's sight is restored and he sees the iconography of a sexualized Fall: May and Damyan copulating in the pear tree of his garden.³⁶ The stage is set for January to read the truth about his story, finally, to admit that someone has admitted a phallic snake into Paradise and yielded to its temptation. His eyes see what his imagination has so far refused to recognize. For a moment he understands the dissolution of the stasis he has so painstakingly created for himself—"He swyved thee; I saugh it with myne yen" (2378)—but the tale's final dominant agent, May, removes his access to the certain, clear sign by refusing to acknowledge it. Characters in a postlapsarian Eden cover up their sin in order to pretend it does not exist. Whereas the fallen January has tried to substitute one Bible story for another to produce an interpretation more acceptable to him, May in this Fall-within-a-Fall simply and far more successfully effaces the sign.

By this time, the story has thoroughly established May as a reader, text, and author in her own right.³⁷ Written from the fantasies of January's mind, and claimed by Damyan's amorous letter, she obeys both authoritative texts literally, being all they fantasize, but more. She asserts her independence by co-authoring a cycle of memoranda pursuing an affair with Damyan and carrying on that affair in intent and act in the margins of the identity January has crafted for her.³⁸ David Aers has argued that May's desire for Damyan is in part a desire for agency;³⁹ that agency also surfaces in the mobility her relationship with Damyan gives her between text- and author-functions. Medieval *inventio* reprises old material, rewrites its way into a heritage of sources (Biblical, classical, Arthurian) by reinterpreting and representing it, probing the unstopped chinks where some new perspective could emerge. Authorship is inventive glossing; in typical medieval fashion May embodies the whole of this fluid process we conceptualize as separate stages: reading, interpreting, writing.⁴⁰

In deluding January that he has not seen her having sex with Damyan, however, May not only rewrites but unwrites. She drains both literal and figural meaning from the scene: no sex, no Fall. Her first explanation for the incontrovertible event January witnesses bends the issue back into his subjectivity, his blindness: "As me was taught, to heele with youre eyen, / Was no thing bet, to make yow to see, / Than strugle with a man upon a tree" (2372–74). She tries to write another story, create another sign for him to interpret, although its reliance on his self-reflexivity hints at her strategy

to come. This explanation fails because he knows what he saw and she can substitute no other sign: "in it wente!" (2376). Her second explanation reduces the event to his blindness. There is no external sign that he can meaningfully see: "Ye han som glymsyng, and no parfit sighte" (2383). As Michelle Kohler explains, "She converts *his* 'wordes' into proof of his faulty vision, rather than allowing his vision to prove the faultiness of *her* words."⁴¹ What he sees *means* his (recovering) blindness. His interpretation is merely a solipsistic exercise because he has imperfect access to signs even if he were able to understand them. "Som glymsyng, and no parfit sighte" paraphrases Pauline descriptions of fallen language, a language that calls out for eschatological clarification: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face."⁴² By affirming that January's epistemological faculty is fatally compromised, in the way that postlapsarian epistemology is compromised, May is ironically able to conceal the story's Fall and permit the gladness with which the story ends.⁴³ The fig leaves with which the postlapsarian Adam and Eve camouflaged their nakedness were anti-signs after all, signifying absence not presence. Rather than calling to mind themselves, fig leaves, they were meant merely to erase the fruit underneath.

The perpetuation of this "glad" paradise depends upon a continued, indefinite suspension of interpretation. May suggests that because January has been blind for some time and abruptly shocked into sight, "Til that youre sighte ysatled be a while / Ther may ful many a sighte yow begile" (2405–06). If January should stumble upon another similarly compromising situation between May and Damyan, or several, "many," May creates a category of illegible sights into which she can classify them for an unspecified "while." Not only January, but now also May and Damyan, enter into a paradise of erotic indulgence.⁴⁴ January's unreliable sight, she implies, is the true state of the world, applicable to many more than the newly seeing: "Ful many a man weneth to seen a thing, / And it is al another than it semeth. / He that mysconceyeth, he mysdemeth" (2408–10). Men misinterpret all the time. January might usefully consider it as his permanent state. The narrator thinks it a possibility for anyone, ironically inviting the "goode men" in his audience "to be glad" as January (2416). Erotic gladness in the framework of this tale is indefinitely perpetual like this when men decline to read certain or uncertain signs like January, when they trust the creations of their internal desires above external signs.

May can seize this interpretive authority because the tale has no authorial presence to ground meaning. God is missing from Eden. No one holds May accountable for her deception, either by decisively revealing the truth she conceals or by punishing her for her misdeeds. Pluto gives January his

sight back, but Proserpina in return empowers May's answer. The two argue and Pluto concedes. They are demonstrably fallen deities, within and not transcending the fabliau world.⁴⁵ January is the garden's creator, in the place of God but too confused not to comply with May's strategy. If there is a divine agent in the tale, it is the sacred historical logic that moves underneath its surface, negotiating with the various intentions of its characters to reveal the truth of their fallen state to the audience. Compatible with the story's Biblical origins, it permits its protagonists a tragic, Edenic agency.⁴⁶

May's is the story's interpretive Fall. January's story begins when he doggedly engages sacred history and the biblical text and continues as that engagement continues, wrong at every turn. His folly is not that he expects the interpretable intersection of such meaning with his own life, but that, fallen from the beginning and garbled by his desires and fantasy, he cannot interpret well, always only having "som glymsyng, and no parfit sighte." He trusts that there is sacred meaning and tries to find it. May does not merely garble the connection between sign and meaning but breaks it and provides the story its point of no return.

Thus she, more successfully than her husband, perversely achieves paradisaical stasis through an authoritative dismissal of engagement with a given text. Interpretation creates text, clears room for authorial agency, narrativizes. Whereas medieval exegesis aspired to an ever-increasing plenitude of interpretive meaning from the Bible as singular text, the *Merchant's Tale* leaves its audience with a plenitude of sacred historical meaning from which its characters have exiled themselves, locking themselves instead into a false, static, and infertile paradise.⁴⁷ Their final unreading of the literal and symbolic meanings of their events permits each program of accommodation to fallen realities: the compromises and equilibriums between desiring agents,⁴⁸ the rhythms of natural calendar time as opposed to the linearity of sacred history,⁴⁹ the failed semiotics and epistemology of a world abstaining from and learning to cope without redemption. The garden of the *Merchant's Tale* ends as and must always be a *regio dissimilitudinis*, because its inhabitants decline their figural similarity to sacred history.

We leave May and January in their garden and return to the sign they will not read: the Biblical tree tangled and conflated with pear-tree fabliaux, classical gardens, the *Romance of the Rose*, the *hortus conclusus* in the Song of Songs. On the one hand the sign is clear enough: January is destructively foolish and May is reprehensibly shrewd. Don't do as they, repellent characters both. On the other hand the sign is stunningly multivalent, as a burgeoning critical discussion continues to reveal.⁵⁰ The tree bears interpretive fruit. Its allusions are so various that discerning their priority and

tenor and cumulative tone is nearly impossible, then as now, in a world with so many different readers reading for so many different motives. What the sign means is less clear than what the sign does, particularly what the sign does under the control of different interpreters, rewriters, unwriters. This Bible-tree indisputably exists in the *Merchant's Tale*, and indisputably casts a definitive moral authority over the scene, and that moral authority is explicable to a certain degree, for practical purposes. But the potency of the authority is up for grabs in this fabliau world, and the wrong person gets hold of it, and erases in a flash the sign that gave her such authority, leaving behind only the authority derived from its interpretive erasure to endorse her play. More so than in his higher-profile revisions of classical texts, Chaucer invites the audience of the *Merchant's Tale* to consider the ethics of appropriating morally authoritative texts, the Bible being the supreme example available to him. He warns equally of the dangers of engaging and disengaging such texts to arrive at a predetermined end. A morally authoritative text dictates its own end, and that end, at least in this fallen world, always opens into interpretive performance shaped like an unfinished story.

NOTES

My thanks go to the Marco Institute of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, under whose auspices I conducted this research as a Lindsay Young Visiting Faculty Fellow.

- 1 Lawrence Besserman, *Chaucer's Biblical Poetics* (U. of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 136; his wider commentary on those allusions occurs on 117–37.
- 2 All citations of Chaucer are to *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed., ed. Larry Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).
- 3 D. W. Robertson Jr., "The Doctrine of Charity in Mediaeval Literary Gardens: A Topical Approach through Symbolism and Allegory," *Speculum* 26 (1951), 43–45. The article is an early manifesto of Robertson's exegetical critical program, a program that occasioned heated controversy before falling catastrophically out of favor. Alan T. Gaylord, "Reflections on D. W. Robertson Jr., and 'Exegetical Criticism,'" *Chaucer Review* 40 (2006), 311–12, 314–21, nimbly provides a short history of Robertsonian criticism and its discontents. The seminal critique of exegetical criticism is E. Talbot Donaldson's essay "Patristic Exegesis in the Criticism of Medieval Literature: The Opposition" in his *Speaking of Chaucer* (London: Athlone Press, 1970), 134–53; its coup-de-grâce is Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 18–39.
- 4 Eric Jager, *The Tempter's Voice: Language and the Fall in Medieval Literature* (Cornell U. Press, 1993), 241.

- 5 Robert R. Edwards, "Narration and Doctrine in the Merchant's Tale," *Speculum* 66 (1991), 342–67. On the tale's doctrine of marriage, see also Theresa O'Byrne, "'To Take a Wyf It Is a Glorious Thing': Januaria's Thesis on Marriage in the Merchant's Tale (IV.1263–1392)," *English Studies* 93 (2012), 150–68.
- 6 Jamie C. Fumo, "An Interpretive *Crux* in Januaria's Garden: Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale* and the Crucifixion," *Mediaevalia* 23 (2002), 1–37.
- 7 This mutual cooperation between sacred historical and fabliau matter is unusual in the fabliau genre. Although fabliaux may absorb Biblical texts and plotlines into the marrow of their structure, usually the fabliau parodies or subverts the Biblical material. For instance, "The Child Who Was Melted in the Sun" features a woman who falsely claims immaculate conception. Even when a story like "Brunain, the Priest's Cow" purports to prove a priest's homiletic point that "God would return double to him / Who gave from the heart" (8–9), and a giving peasant does receive two cows by the end of the tale, at the priest's expense, God's agency is much reduced in the concluding moral, in favor of "a lot of luck" (69, 70). I am indebted to Gabriel Ford for directing me to these analogues from *The French Fabliau B.N. MS. 837*, Vol II, Garland Library of Medieval Literature Series A 17, ed. and trans. Raymond Eichmann and John DuVal (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985).
- 8 Access to the vernacular Bible is a cornerstone of the movement that came to be known as Wycliffite, but only one of its many manifestations. On Wycliffism, see especially Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); her discussion of Chaucer's complex relation to the movement as it emerged in his lifetime occurs on 390–94. Frances M. McCormack, "Chaucer and Lollardy," *Chaucer and Religion*, Christianity and Culture—Issues in Teaching and Research, ed. Helen Phillips (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), 35–40, provides a recent and succinct overview of the scholarship. Andrew Cole, *Literature and Heresy in the Age of Chaucer*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 71 (Cambridge U. Press, 2008), 75–99, argues that Chaucer owes part of his self-definition as vernacular author and translator to the General Prologue of the Wycliffite Bible. The vernacular Bible partially determined Chaucer's project of vernacular authorship and translation, as it did all its contemporary authors in English.
- 9 Theresa Tinkle, *Gender and Power in Medieval Exegesis*, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 101–16, argues for the Wife of Bath as a positive Chaucerian example of this kind of personal reading.
- 10 Katherine C. Little, *Confession and Resistance: Defining the Self in Late Medieval England* (U. of Notre Dame Press, 2006), describes the Wycliffite practice of defining the narrative self according to Biblical models by means of confession.
- 11 The authoritative critical description of medieval tropology is Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. E. M. Macierowski, 3 vols. Ressourcement: Retrieval & Renewal in Catholic Thought (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 2:127–77. On tropology as invention that comprises rhetoric, ethics activated in praxis, and the process that moves from one to the other, see Ryan McDermott, "Beatus qui verba vertit in opera: Langland's Ethical Invention and the Tropological Sense," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 24 (2010), 169–204.
- 12 Medieval authors often employ typological or figural (synonyms derived from Greek and Latin, respectively) repetition to form allusively resonant characters. "Figure" is originally a theological term designating characters like David and Joseph, whom me-

dieval readers would see as at once historical in their own right and antecedent of the character and story of Christ. Figural allegory, the titular allegory of history in Stephen A. Barney's *Allegories of History, Allegories of Love* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979), would consequently preserve a meaningful historicity or literal sense for its characters while providing a surplus of spiritual implication. All scholarly discussions of figure in medieval literature derive ultimately from Erich Auerbach's 1938 essay "Figura," trans. Ralph Manheim, in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature, Theory and History of Literature 9* (U. of Minnesota Press, 1984), 11–76. Warren Ginsberg, *The Cast of Character: The Representation of Personality in Ancient and Medieval Literature* (U. of Toronto Press, 1983), 71–97, describes how a penchant for paratactic characterization survived even when links to specifically Biblical material were no longer necessary but characters were still constructed through echoes internal and external to the work. David Anderson, *Before the Knight's Tale: Imitation of Classical Epic in Boccaccio's "Teseida"* The Middle Ages Series (U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 166–74, 219, explains how Boccaccio and Chaucer apply techniques of figural characterization within the classical material of the *Teseida* and *Knight's Tale*.

- 13 The precedents are many; see, for example, *The Dream of Scipio in The Parliament of Fowls*; the mysterious Lollius and "Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace" (5.1792) in *Troilus and Criseyde*; and Cupid in *The Legend of Good Women*. A recent study of Chaucer's classical authorization is Fumo, *The Legacy of Apollo: Antiquity, Authority, and Chaucerian Poetics* (U. of Toronto Press, 2010).
- 14 The fitful and schematic vignettes of the *Monk's Tale* are exceptions that prove the rule. Chaucer's reluctance to retell Biblical stories is in stark contrast to his frequent practice of reinventing authoritative classical stories, measuring his narrative authority more directly with authors of classical material. For Chaucer's general reticence to claim literary authority directly, see Alastair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., The Middle Ages Series (U. of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 209–210.
- 15 For Patterson, *Negotiating the Past*, 337–44, the *Merchant's Tale* is a story of the creation of agency without social or historical identity, but he argues that the agency so created is primarily the Merchant's. Jager, *The Tempter's Voice*, 273, claims that January, May, and Damyan all privatize language, subverting its social function for private pleasure. On the medieval nexus of authority, authorship, and self-interested agency as it relates to the Bible, see Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 20 (Cambridge U. Press, 1994), 37–40; authority over authorizing texts asserts control both over the past that produced those texts and the present in which their implications manifest.
- 16 Robert B. Burlin, *Chaucerian Fiction* (Princeton U. Press, 1977), 212–13, gives an eloquent and paradigmatic assessment: "The Merchant would apply the same treatment to all systems of value [as to the despiritualized sacrament of marriage]: allegorical or spiritual levels of meaning are ruthlessly crushed onto a flat, literal plane; symbolic objects are left only their naked physicality; and abstractions such as 'love' and 'holiness' suffer systematic reification." Jager, *The Tempter's Voice*, 252–69, reads the tale closely for examples of carnal reading and writing from January, May, and Damyan. These discussions assume parallel or synonymous conceptual oppositions between allegorical and literal, spiritual and carnal, immaterial and material. Janette Richardson, *Blameth Nat Me: A Study of Imagery in Chaucer's Fabliaux* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 127–28, argues that the tale's second half literalizes its figures of speech in the first half, in particular the paradise-hell theme. Douglas A. Burger, "Deluding Words in the 'Merchant's Tale,'" *Chaucer Review* 12 (1977), 104, argues that the transposition of word into thing is symptomatic of a fabliau plot.

- 17 Eugene Vance, *Mervelous Signals: Poetics and Sign Theory in the Middle Ages*, Regents Studies in Medieval Culture (U. of Nebraska Press, 1986), 281–87, reads *Troilus and Criseyde* as an analogous instance of characters (the narrator, Pandarus, Troilus, and Criseyde) who through bad reading, writing, and speaking fail to perceive their militant language of amorousness as figurally repeating broader historical patterns.
- 18 Jager, *The Tempter's Voice*, 251–55, and Mary C. Schroeder, "Fantasy in the 'Merchant's Tale,'" *Criticism* 12 (1970), 167–79.
- 19 de Lubac, *The Four Senses of Scripture*, 179–87. Although this eternal kingdom is realized partially in the Church on earth, "time must ultimately lead to what no longer belongs to time" (186).
- 20 Derek Pearsall, *The Canterbury Tales* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 197–99 and especially 202–05, provides resources for a comparatively sympathetic reading of January: earnest though foolish, victimized both by May and the narrator, idealistic, and (at least when speaking to his wife in the garden about their mutual contract) self-aware.
- 21 Michael A. Calabrese, "May Devoid of All Delight: January, the *Merchant's Tale* and the *Romance of the Rose*," *SP* 87 (1990), 276–77, links January's desire for stasis with his mercantile habit of avarice and hoarding. May is certainly for him a good to be hoarded.
- 22 Here I assume that the encomium does not directly represent January's speech or thoughts and that its concluding transition to January's perspective, "For which this Januarie, of whom I tolde" (1393), marks a decisive break from a perspective that, unidentified, is nevertheless not January's. In doing so I follow Donald R. Benson, "The Marriage 'Encomium' in the *Merchant's Tale*: A Chaucerian Crux," *Chaucer Review* 14 (1979), 48–60; and especially Edwards, "Narration and Doctrine," 351–52.
- 23 Wolfgang E. H. Rudat, "Chaucer's Merchant and His Shrewish Wife: The Justinus Crux and Augustinian Theology," *Cithara* 35 (1995), 25.
- 24 On the bestiality of both January and May, see Donaldson, "Patristic Exegesis," 35–36, 45.
- 25 Besserman, *Chaucer's Biblical Poetics*, 117.
- 26 O'Byrne, "To Take a Wyf" 159. She sees the encomium as an innocent January's.
- 27 V. A. Kolve, *Telling Images: Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative II* (Stanford U. Press, 2009), 101, 105, suggests that January's penchant for stasis derives from his eponymous deity's characteristic as the god of two faces, here hung up between a lecherous past and a doddering future. I here suggest that January wants to relieve that temporal tension by escaping the passage of time entirely.
- 28 M. C. Bodden, "Via erotica / via mystica: A *Tour de force* in the *Merchant's Tale*," *Intersections of Sexuality and the Divine in Medieval Culture: The Word Made Flesh*, ed. Susannah Mary Chewning (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 51–73, puzzlingly reads the tale's equivalence of mystical and erotic language as Chaucer's satiric commentary on the failure of mystical language to sequester itself from carnal vocabulary and metaphors. Were the situation in the tale normative and not some contorted extreme case, were there not a highly developed medieval metacommentary on the metonymic relationship between

mystical and erotic discourse (some of which Bodden herself acknowledges [62–63]), and were the characters in the story remotely reliable as readers and speakers, her argument would have more merit, but it seems to me that the problems with the Merchant's, January's, and May's languages are theirs alone.

- 29 No one has proven that Chaucer knew the *Confessions*, but the *Merchant's Tale* structural reversal of its conversion and pear-tree Fall is tantalizing. Chaucer *could have known* the *Confessions*; they had made their way to England by his time. Teresa Webber, "The Diffusion of Augustine's *Confessions* in England During the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey*, ed. John Blair and Brian Golding (New York: Clarendon Press, 1995), 29–45, posits two manuscripts from which that diffusion spread. Linda Olson in a series of articles—"Reading Augustine's *Confessiones* in Fourteenth-Century England: John de Grandisson's Fashioning of Text and Self," *Traditio* 52 (1997), 201–57; "Untangling the Thread of Internal Progress in a Benedictine Community: An Abridgement of Augustine's *Confessiones* from Medieval Norwich," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 3rd ser., 1 (2001), 41–79; "Did Medieval English Women Read Augustine's *Confessiones*? Constructing Feminine Interiority and Literacy in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Abroad*, ed. Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 69–96—chronicles medieval English personal appropriations of the *Confessions* through idiosyncratic annotating, reading, and editing practices. Chaucer knew and deferred to Augustine's authority (invoking his name directly in *Tale of Melibee* 1617 and 1643, *Nun's Priest's Tale* 3241, and a plethora of *Parson's Tale* references). Jager, *The Tempter's Voice*, 278, 288–89, draws multiple parallels from the *Merchant's Tale*'s pear tree scene to the plot of the *Confessions*, chiefly in the importance of language to both climactic moments, but, as Marcia Colish, "Review," *Modern Philology* 93 (1996), 501, has pointed out, misses the possibility that the pear tree is itself an allusion to the *Confessions*. Seth Lerer, "The *Canterbury Tales*," *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Seth Lerer (Yale U. Press, 2006), 270, mentions the parallel pear trees in passing.
- 30 I trace these inversions to an apex in January's creation of woman and garden. Kenneth A. Bleeth, "The Image of Paradise in the *Merchant's Tale*," *The Learned and the Lewed: Studies in Chaucer and Medieval Literature*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Harvard U. Press, 1974), 52–55, identifies three significant inversions of Genesis and its medieval exegetes: January as perverse creator, May's mounting January to climb the tree (like sensuality superseding reason), and her lack of shame when January's eyes are opened.
- 31 Mike Rodman Jones, "January's Genesis: Biblical Exegesis and Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*," *Leeds Studies in English* 39 (2008), 60, links January's willful disregard of received counsel with the tale's disregard of traditions of exegesis to which it alludes: "It is January's similarly assertive performance of receiving counsel, coupled with his flagrant and implacable refusal of it, that shapes the meaning of much of the *Merchant's Tale*. It is just this ostentatious awareness of a long clerical tradition of exegesis on Genesis which acts to highlight the ruthless, megalomaniacal drive toward masculine sexual prerogative . . . that characterizes January's palimpsest of Genesis."
- 32 Lorraine K. Stock, "'Making It' in the *Merchant's Tale*: Chaucer's Signs of January's Fall," *Semiotica* 63 (1987), 177–80.
- 33 January does not use this term for May, but the encomium emphasizes it in a detailed discussion of the first marriage. John M. Fyler, *Language and the Declining World in Chaucer, Dante, and Jean de Meun*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 63 (Cambridge U. Press, 2007), 15, sees the tale's citation of the term as satirical: "Chaucer's Merchant uses Genesis 2.18—'Let us now make an helpe unto this man / Lyk to hymself'—only sarcastically, because such paradisaical likeness is now a chimera."

- 34 "To inspect (sth.), examine, look upon, observe" and "To form (sth.), fashion, shape, or construct" are definitions one and five, respectively, of "devisen", Middle English Dictionary, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu>
- 35 This feminization occurs perhaps most famously in Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, 4 vols., trans. Kilian Walsh (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1971–80). For the general tendency, see Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Cornell U. Press, 1990).
- 36 I am reading the competition between these narratives (January's and the tale's) as intrinsic to the effect of the tale, in much the same way as Edwards, "Narration and Doctrine," 366, reads its competition between ideologies of marriage: "The question is not about aesthetic unity but hermeneutics". I see the tale as privileging one sacred historical narrative in the melee, unlike its reluctance to adjudicate decisively between ideologies of marriage.
- 37 Christian Sheridan, "May in the Marketplace: Commodification and Textuality in the *Merchant's Tale*," *Studies in Philology* 102 (2005), 38.
- 38 Sheridan, "May in the Marketplace," 33–42. R. A. Shoaf, *Dante, Chaucer and the Currency of the Word: Money, Images and Reference in Late Medieval Poetry* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1983), 198, argues that May's writing to and with Damyan nearly literalizes their adultery, constituting its early stages. On May and Damyan as authors of sign language, see Jager, *The Tempter's Voice*, 271–83.
- 39 David Aers, *Chaucer, Langland, and the Creative Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1980), 157.
- 40 This claim recasts Sheridan, "May in the Marketplace," 42–43, on May as exemplary medieval text because she exfoliates interpretation and blurs the boundaries between reader and author.
- 41 Michelle Kohler, "Vision, Logic, and the Comic Production of Reality in the *Merchant's Tale* and Two French Fabliaux," *Chaucer Review* 39 (2004), 144, emphasis hers.
- 42 1 Cor. 13.12 (Douay-Rheims). Parallel passages include 2 Cor. 5.7 and Rom. 8.24–26. On the link between *Merchant's Tale* 2383 and this verse, see Fumo, "An Interpretive Crux," 25.
- 43 Bleeth, "The Image of Paradise," 59–60, sees May as parodic Marian redemptrix, enabled by January's folly in yielding to her deception.
- 44 May's startling description of January's renewed sight, "as he that hath a day or two yseyn" (2404), even returns January to an original Adam, presiding again over a world without interpretable signs.
- 45 Karl P. Wentersdorf, "Theme and Structure in the *Merchant's Tale*: The Function of the Pluto Episode," *PMLA* 80 (1965), 522–27, demonstrates how Pluto and Proserpina mirror the relationship between January and May more closely than Adam and Eve would, although the tale more explicitly offers the Edenic parallel. Pluto and Proserpina look like January and May as they are, not as they could or should be. As pagan deities, they are immanent, not transcendent.

- 46 Shoaf, *Currency of the Word*, 199–209, sees the tale's allegorical resonances in tension with its annihilation of signification, but attributes the attack on the sign to the Merchant, not his characters, and in doing so must posit Chaucer as origin of the meaning the Merchant tries unsuccessfully to destroy. If the Merchant attacks signification he does so through his characters. The story does, however, demand a prior or external authorial presence encoding sacred historical meaning that the characters resist, an authorial presence that emulates a divine presence in history.
- 47 On the pear as medieval contraceptive, see Carol F. Heffernan, "Contraception and the Pear Tree Episode of Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*," *JEGP* 94 (1995), 31–41.
- 48 Edwards, "Narration and Doctrine," 360–65, 367.
- 49 Kolve, *Telling Images*, 94–170.
- 50 For sacred historical analogues other than Genesis, see Alfred L. Kellogg, "Susannah and the *Merchant's Tale*," *Speculum* 35 (1960), 275–79; Bruce A. Rosenberg, "The 'Cherry-Tree Carol' and the 'Merchant's Tale,'" *Chaucer Review* 5 (1971), 264–76; Emerson Brown Jr., "Biblical Women in the Merchant's Tale: Feminism, Antifeminism, and Beyond," *Viator* 5 (1975), 387–412; Douglas Wurtele, "Ironical Resonances in the 'Merchant's Tale,'" *Chaucer Review* 13 (1978), 66–79; Bleeth, "Joseph's Doubting of Mary and the Conclusion of the 'Merchant's Tale,'" *Chaucer Review* 21 (1986), 58–66; and, in greatest detail, Fumo, "An Interpretive Crux," 1–37.

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