"IT LYTH NAT IN MY TONGE": OCCUPATIO AND OTHERNESS IN THE *SQUIRE'S TALE*

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Taking place at the Mongol court at "Sarray, in the land of Tartarye" during the birthday celebrations of the fabled Ghengis Khan (V 9),[1] Chaucer's *Squire's Tale* is confined to a non-Christian cast of characters, and this tale of exotic eastern marvels has garnered much recent attention as medievalists have begun to examine the precolonial discourse of Orientalism.[2] In the process, criticism on the tale has shifted somewhat away from formal concerns about both the Squire's flawed use of the rhetorical trope of non-description called occupatio and the poem's separation into narrative sections long deemed to comprise a disjointed and singularly inartistic whole. Far from accidental or stylistic features of the text, however, the Squire's egregiously bad use of occupatio and his self-conscious admissions of rhetorical inadequacy in Part One (*prima pars*) of the tale serve to contain the foreign, acknowledging Mongol cultural difference but failing to present the concrete terms on which such difference rests. In tactically mobilizing this rhetoric of failure, however, the *Squire's Tale* suggests limitations, not merely to the Squire's English, but to the English language itself. Recognizing that Part Two (*pars secunda*) of the tale offers plot developments that are neither anticipated by earlier events nor resolved by the poem's abortive ending a few lines into the fragmentary Part Three (*pars tercia*), I argue that the tale is unified not by its narrative elements but rather by the way its linguistic anxieties are revealed and processed. In contrast to the overt difficulties of description and translation evinced in Part One, Part Two shows the Squire effortlessly recording in English a conversation between the Khan's daughter Canacee and a bird from a foreign land, thereby constituting a fantasy resolution to the Squire's rhetorical dilemma and recouping the English language as a fit medium of translation precisely at the moment of its potential debasement. Such fantasy resolutions, however, are rarely seamless, and while in Part Two of the tale Chaucer temporarily resolves these

anxieties, they ultimately resurface in the poem's ambivalent representation of Canacee.

The *Squire's Tale* takes place during the two-day celebration of Ghengis Khan's birthday at his court in the city of Sarai. Part One of the tale describes the festivities, focusing especially on the arrival of an emissary bearing gifts from the King of Arabia and India. Part Two begins with a brief account of how the drunken court retires for the evening, followed by an encounter between the Khan's daughter and a bird on the morning after the revelry. Much scholarship on the *Squire's Tale* has been devoted to finding Chaucer's sources for the tale, both in western and eastern literary traditions. Poets, chroniclers, missionaries, and papal legates wrote about the Mongol Empire, and, as critics have shown, both parts of the tale have sources from which Chaucer borrows, but no single source exists as a template for this tale of the Mongol world.[3]

Chaucer, in other words, drew on many sources for his depiction of the Mongol court, and his tale also relies on a general knowledge of Mongols possessed by his original audience. Marie Cornelia has assembled the range of information about "Tartarye" that a well-read member of Chaucer's audience would likely possess. She reminds us that persistent myths about the Mongols had a long history, and were only partially replaced by reliable accounts of European travelers to the regions under Mongol control. The result is that "[t]o the fourteenth-century imagination Tartary was a land of fable, and European geographical knowledge of it was a body of fact liberally sprinkled with fiction."[4] Ranging from vague to precise, from patently false to probably true, the claims made about Mongols in romances, chronicles, and travel accounts present them as provoking both fear and wonder in their European counterparts.

Graphically recounting the sudden advances of the Mongols into Russia during the thirteenth century, Matthew Paris's *Chronica Maiora* gives a good sense of the anxiety Mongols generated in Western Europe and foregrounds the most sensational trait ascribed to the invaders, whom it claims were "inhuman and of the nature of beasts, rather to be called monsters than men, thirsting after and drinking blood, and tearing and devouring the flesh of dogs and human beings."[5] These accusations of Mongol cannibalism were widespread in thirteenth-century Latin travel accounts and chronicles, but they lack any support and have been thoroughly refuted by modern scholarship.[6] While Paris's text is typical in its verbal description of Mongols, it is notable for the lavish illustrations, drawn by Paris himself, that accompany the text and contribute to its propagandist effects. In these images we see the Mongols depicted as animalistic, sneering creatures, and in one illustration we even see the barbaric practices of the Mongol cannibals, who are depicted as roasting men on spits and eating their flesh.[7]

But while anxiety-ridden, apocryphal legends of the Mongols and their reputed cannibalism certainly circulated in the later Middle Ages, so too did a genuine knowledge of the Mongol court enabled by a period of political and military calm referred to as the *Pax Mongolica,* during which roads to the Far East lay open for travelers until Tamurlaine rose to power after 1368. Traveling the Empire's well-guarded roads with the permission of Mongol authorities, merchants like Marco Polo and missionaries like William of Rubruck and Odoric of Pordenone brought back detailed descriptions of the economies, political structures, belief systems, clothing, and dietary habits of the Mongols and their conquered territories. Western ideas about Mongols, then, included a mixture of real and imagined practices ranging from the nomadic lifestyle of the Mongols themselves, to the idol worshipping of medieval Tibetans, to the graphically reported ritual and customary cannibalism. The resulting construction of Mongol culture engaged the imagination of Europeans long after the practical fear of military assaults faded away.

While critics have long contended that the *Squire's Tale* is loosely indebted to the many romances, chronicles, and travel accounts detailing Mongol culture, Carmel Jordan has recently demonstrated that Chaucer reveals accurate knowledge of the real Sarai, which Jordan contends was a "center of magical and optical illusion" and "a flourishing metropolis and international trade center."[8] Claiming Chaucer likely heard of Sarai's magical reputation from Genoese travelers (128–29), Jordan rightfully contends that Chaucer, in placing a tale of Sarai's reported marvels in the mouth of his Squire, "artfully . . . blended tale and setting into one great magical tapestry" and capably rendered into English verse a city that was already "the stuff of dreams" (133). However, while the *Squire's Tale* does seem to evince accurate and familiar knowledge of the Sarai court, such "familiarity" is limited to a knowledge of Sarai as an important center for international trade, cultural exchange, and, interestingly, magic. Critics, then, should avoid claiming that the tale offers a full or even balanced picture of the Mongol world. While I accept Vincent J. DiMarco's claim that "the romantic wonderland of the *Squire's Tale* is composed on the basis of, and with constant reference to, a geopolitical situation of immediate and well-realized significance," I nonetheless argue that very little specific information about Mongol characteristics or cultural practices—real or imagined—makes it into Chaucer's text.[9] In other words, the "geopolitical situation" does exert pressures that determine in part what characters and events are presented in the tale, but it does not follow that any specific ethnographic information ever gets conveyed to the text's audience, who likely bring more knowledge of the Mongol world to the text than the text itself proffers.

Nearly all the texts cited as possible sources for the *Squire's Tale* describe the Mongols in detail, discussing their religion, politics, dress, facial char-

acteristics, manner of warfare, food, and drink. Each of these ethno-
graphic details, however, is puzzlingly absent in the *Squire's Tale,* a tale
remembered primarily for its exotic setting and marvels. Chaucer's por-
trayal of the "East" thus lacks the specific details of the Mongol world
adduced in travelogues of the time, and it highlights rather than occludes
these strange omissions, asserting Mongol difference while simultane-
ously deferring descriptions of that foreign people and culture.

Consider, for instance, the much-discussed passage in which the Squire
notably refuses to describe the wondrous feast held at Cambuscan's court:

> [Cambyuskan] halt his feeste so solempne and so ryche
> That in this world ne was ther noon it lyche;
> Of which if I shal tellen al th'array,
> Thanne wolde it occupie a someres day,
> And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse
> At every cours the ordre of hire servyse.
> I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes,
> Ne of hir swannes, ne of hire heronsewes.
> Eek in that lond, as tellen knyghtes olde,
> Ther is som mete that is ful deynte holde
> That in this lond men recche of it but smal;
> Ther nys no man that may reporten al.
> I wol nat taryen yow, for it is pryme
> And for it is no fruyt but los of tyme;
> Unto my firste I wole have my recours.
>
> (V 61–75)

As scholarship has noted, after declaring that there has never been a feast
like this one, Chaucer spends fifteen lines in *not* describing it. While the
Squire mentions three dishes of varying specificity ("strange sewes,"
"swannes," and "heronsewes"), those few particularities are overwhelmed
by the sheer number of words designating descriptive or evaluative acts
("tellen," "devyse," "nat tellen," "recche," "reporten"), all of which fail to
describe the feast in any real detail. The Squire remarks, for example,
that Mongols eat a strange meat, but, after spending four lines in the
attempt, fails to identify that meat because "no man . . . may reporten al."
Where we might expect to hear about the feature of a Mongol feast most
titillating to recount—cannibalism—we are left disappointed, for instead
of substantiating Mongol difference, the text disrupts all such easy con-
trasts between its English audience and the Mongols it describes. Like
the travel accounts on which it draws, Chaucer's text asserts the exotic
appeal and cultural difference of the Mongols, but unlike those medieval
travelogues it fails to present the concrete terms upon which that cultural
difference rests.

This often-cited passage is a somewhat atypical example of a standard rhetorical trope known as occupatio. A trope of purported non-description, occupatio usually states that either the object to be described is beyond words, the demands of narrative economy prohibit lengthy description, or the rhetorician seeking to praise lacks the ability to string together appropriate words of description. While avowedly avoiding description, occupatio traditionally ends up describing at length and is thus used, as Robert S. Haller tells us, to "dilate upon an unnecessary matter and to seem to advance [the] narrative."[10] The Squire's own father employs occupatio quite well, and Haller reminds us that the Knight presents a detailed description of a feast (I 2197–2207) while claiming to avoid description.[11] Like his father, the Squire extensively employs occupatio, but unlike the Knight, the Squire's use of this rhetorical trope is anything but traditional. In his description of the Mongol feast, for example, the Squire offers not one but five distinct rationales for non-description,[12] and the Squire's inexpert deployment of occupatio thus draws attention to Chaucer's self-conscious, strained use of a rhetorical trope he elsewhere employs appropriately. Elizabeth Scala, moreover, identifies an atypical form of occupatio that moves beyond mere stylistic ornament to constitute "an actual decline of description, a narrative economizing that 'literalizes' the abbreviating gesture of *occupatio*," and she later notes that the *Squire's Tale* typically uses this kind of occupatio.[13]

Indeed, instances of such literal occupatio inundate Part One of the *Squire's Tale,* and the Squire routinely uses the trope to avoid description, all the while staging overt and multiple protestations of rhetorical inadequacy. Consider, for example, the Squire's excuse for not describing Canacee in Part One of the tale:

> A doghter hadde this worthy kyng also,
> That yongest was, and highte Canacee.
> But for to telle yow al hir beautee,
> It lyth nat in my tonge, n'yn my konnyng;
> I dar nat undertake so heigh a thyng.
> Myn Englissh eek is insufficient.
> It moste been a rethor excellent
> That koude his colours longynge for that art,
> If he sholde hire discryven every part.
> I am noon swich, I moot speke as I kan.
>
> (V 32–41)

Providing not a single descriptive detail, this passage commits seven lines to arguing that the Squire lacks the enunciatory ("It lyth nat in my tonge"), intellectual ("n'yn my konnyng"), and linguistic ("Myn Englissh eek is insufficient") skills necessary to describe the Mongol princess in

an appropriate manner. Given Canacee's subsequent importance in the tale, the Squire's failure to offer any description is notable, and his stated reasons for employing occupatio emphasize the Squire's poor rhetorical abilities much more emphatically than tradition demands.

The Squire's egregiously bad deployment of occupatio and other rhetorical tropes has been one of the most noted features of the text. Gardiner Stillwell writes of the Squire's "excessive use of whimsical *occupatio*" and characterizes it as a "light, rather nervous *occupatio,*"[14] a judgment echoed by later critics who customarily explain the Squire's poor poetic skills by invoking dramatic readings of the *Canterbury Tales* in which the Squire, the only poet recognized as such among the *General Prologue*'s portraits, is set in ironic contrast to more rhetorically adept pilgrim tale tellers.[15] While I do not dispute the validity of such dramatic readings of the tale, I do contend that the Squire's use of literal occupatio serves a purpose not in keeping with its function in contemporary rhetorical practice. In telling us the Mongol court is exotic but failing to present any evidence supporting that judgment, Chaucer removes, rather than constructs, cultural boundaries between his exotic subject and his domestic audience. Far from substantiating cultural difference, occupatio in the *Squire's Tale* suppresses it, thus establishing the marvelous setting of the tale while encouraging a degree of identification with the Mongol court on the part of Chaucer's audience.

The work of identification accomplished by the deft deployment of literal occupatio to suppress Mongol cultural and ethnic difference is furthered by the Squire's narration of a foreign knight's arrival at the Mongol court. Bearing marvelous birthday gifts for the Khan, the knight is an emissary from the court of the King of Arabia and India, usually identified as the Mamluk Empire.[16] The arrival of this foreign emissary is emphasized as intrusive in nature, and the text thus encourages its audience to adopt the position of the Mongols whose feasting and festivities are interrupted by this intruder, who is marvelous to them. When the Mongols are awed by the marvelous gifts of the strange knight, Chaucer's audience, acclimated to the standpoint of the awed Mongols, is awed as well, and the audience thus constructs as exotic only what the "foreign" Mongols perceive as exotic. The idea of Mongol difference is nominally sustained, but the substance of that difference remains unrepresented, so that the marvelous qualities associated with Mongols in medieval romance are neglected, effaced from Chaucer's text.

In addition to domesticating the Mongols, the Squire's narrative also registers and confronts the otherness of the emissary from the King of Arabia and India. Twice referred to as a "strange knyght" (V 89, 276), the emissary bears both greetings from his king and four magical gifts for the Khan: a steed of brass, a mirror, a gold ring, and a sword. Each birthday

gift is presented in ways that stress its marvelous nature. The steed, which causes the assembled Mongol court to "murmureden as dooth a swarm of been" (V 204), can fly through the air and deposit its rider anywhere on the globe in a single day. The mirror allows one to glimpse the future, and the ring permits its wearer to communicate with birds and to comprehend the medicinal uses of plants. Finally, the sword's magical abilities confer both success in battle and the ability to heal wounds made with the weapon.

As Anne Middleton notes, Chaucer's Mongols, when confronted by the magic gifts of the Mamluk, interpret as Europeans, "Linking the splendid objects before their eyes with famous counterparts in Western heroic and intellectual legend."[17] The Squire specifically tells his audience, for example, that the members of the Mongol court "gauren on" (V 190) the marvelous horse and compare it to both "Pegasee, / The hors that hadde wynges for to flee" (V 207–208) and "the Grekes hors Synon, / That broghte Troie to destruccion, / As men in thise olde geestes rede" (V 209–11). The mirror is compared to a similar one located in Rome, and onlookers suggest that its mechanism can be explained by reference to various authorities, notably Aristotle (V 232–35). The wondrous sword is explicitly compared to Achilles' spear, "For he koude with it bothe heele and dere" (V 240), and the ring bestowed on Canacee, the Khan's daughter, is compared to rings possessed by "Moyses and kyng Salomon" (V 250). In each case, the exotic item is translated into non-exotic terms by invoking figures or locales familiar to an English audience. The effect is, as Kathryn L. Lynch explains, that Chaucer "blunts the foreignness of the genre . . . by substituting highly courtly and Western motifs," thus displaying what John M. Fyler calls "an almost irresistible human impulse to explain the exotic, to domesticate it, by recourse to the familiar."[18] The Mongol culture, language, and point of view are thus consistently occluded, replaced by a European norm that is absent and present at once.

In a section of a book dedicated to outlining what he calls "A Rhetoric of Otherness," François Hartog characterizes the use of "comparison" in ethnographic writing as a "net the narrator throws into the waters of otherness" and as a "way of bringing what is 'other' into proximity with what is the 'same.'" Still, while Hartog shows that writers seeking to describe other cultures frequently resort to this tactic, he considers it a "figure" that is more or less consciously applied, a tactic necessitated because "the problem facing the narrator" is always "a problem of translation."[19] Cultural comparisons of this sort—which employ what we might call tropes of similitude—are often, however, more deeply complicit not just in the description but also the actual construction of the object of knowledge. Edward Said describes such a mode of processing alterity as an act

of translating, and he identified it as one of Orientalism's techniques for "containing the Orient." One typical method of "domesticating" the East, Said reminds us, involves reducing that East to "pseudo-incarnations of some great original (Christ, Europe, the West)" that the Orient is "supposed to have been imitating."[20] One of Orientalism's key discursive tactics, this form of domestication constructs an image of the other that, in Said's formulation, serves to consolidate the West and its political hegemony.

The theoretical difficulties of applying Said's notion of Orientalism to the fourteenth century notwithstanding, his work still helps to elucidate the *Squire's Tale*.[21] In its representation of the strange knight's gifts, the *Squire's Tale* uses this powerful strategy of comparison articulated by Said, as the Squire employs tropes of similitude to turn the cultural other into a version of the self, thus negating differences between self and other. Perhaps even more importantly, Chaucer's youthful narrator accomplishes this by depicting cultural others themselves in the act of negating such difference, enacting a process of identification on the part of Mongols who explain the strange gifts by "Rehersynge of thise olde poetries" (V 206) from the western literary and intellectual traditions. Like the Squire's idiosyncratic, literal use of occupatio, then, these explicit comparisons and identifications nominally acknowledge Mongol difference but disavow that difference precisely at the moment of its potential articulation.

The text, however, has another, and markedly different, mechanism for processing cultural otherness, one it deploys against the "strange knyght, that cam . . . sodeynly" (V 89) into Cambyuskan's court. Far from negating distinctions between self and other as he did with the Mongols of the text, Chaucer's Squire emphasizes this traveler's difference. Upon first seeing him, the Mongols remain silent "For merveille of this knyght" (V 87) and, like the gifts he brings, the knight himself is presented, from the Mongol's perspective, as a foreign oddity. Most interesting, however, is the manner in which the knight's rhetorical skills are constructed as literally inimitable. Asserting that he himself cannot adequately represent the marvelousness of the knight's words in English, the Squire proclaims a modest ability to render the emissary's meaning but underscores the inadequacy of his own rhetorical skills to match the knight's high style:

> He with a manly voys seide his message,
> After the forme used in his langage,
> Withouten vice of silable or of lettre;
> And for his tale sholde seme the bettre,
> Accordant to his wordes was his cheere,

> As techeth art of speche hem that it leere.
> Al be that I kan nat sowne his stile,
> Ne kan nat clymben over so heigh a style,
> Yet seye I this, as to commune entente:
> Thus muche amounteth al that evere he mente,
> If it so be that I have it in mynde.
>
> (V 99–109)

What follows are the words of the emissary from the Mamluk court, but in prefacing them the Squire here stresses the impressive rhetorical abilities of the knight. At the same time, the Squire casts doubt on his own ability to translate anything more than the general contours of the emissary's speech, which is without "vice of silable or of lettre." Moreover, the Squire clearly relegates himself to a subsidiary position in referring to the knight's "heigh . . . style," metaphorically presenting the knight's exemplary rhetorical style as a fence (a pun on "stile") that presents itself as an obstacle too high for the lowly Squire to climb over.

Thus, while the *Squire's Tale* "translates" Mongols as pseudo-Europeans by undercutting cultural distinctions between the Mongols of the text and the text's English audience, the emissary's linguistic differences are underscored, presented as far too significant for the Squire to translate fully. The text thus overemphasizes the exoticism of the emissary, who is subjected to a complicated process of "othering," one that does not merely embue "the other" with markers of cultural difference, but in this case denies the other full coherence or articulation. The Mamluk is an exotic object of rhetorical wonder in the *Squire's Tale,* and that same emissary's words are praised but nowhere presented. Whereas the Mongols become pseudo-Europeans, the Mamluk here is constructed as excess built on nothing, a straw man waiting to be toppled.

By using these competing but complementary processes, Chaucer's Squire employs a standard ethnographic technique, a mode of dealing with alterity that Hartog has called the "rule of the excluded middle." Hartog, writing about Herodotus's *History,* notes that, "in its effort to translate the 'other' the narrative proves unable to cope with more than two terms at a time."[22] Writing from a Greek vantage point, Herodotus attempts to describe first Persian otherness and then the more troubling barbarism of the Scythians, who eat human flesh. But the narrative is unable to deal with three terms at once, especially since it wishes to portray Greece as the uncontested site of virtue and culture. When the Scythians are introduced, Herodotus deals with varying degrees of alterity by collapsing the distinctions between the Greeks and the Persians, a process that evacuates or excludes the troubling middle term. In Hartog's analysis, Herodotus domesticates the Persians by turning them into

Greeks and upholding the Greek way of life as normative. The Persians thus gravitate away from Scythian barbarism and become an empire of doppelgängers that might as well be Greek.

The *Squire's Tale* too invokes three such ethnic terms, and their very number defies the binary language and logic of othering. Like Herodotus's *History,* the *Squire's Tale* negotiates this dilemma by employing the rule of the excluded middle: the exoticism of his culture overemphasized, the Mamluk comes to occupy the space of the other, and the Europeans/Mongols occupy the place of the self. With no distinctive traits of their own, the Mongols are but shadowy versions of Europeans, whose culture and language alone have integrity and value. What remains is thus a foreign culture whose only recourse to articulation involves embracing the letters and words of our English-speaking Squire.[23] It is, then, not so much that the Mongol setting exceeds the descriptive abilities of the Squire as it is that occupatio allows for a kind of imaginary *occupation* of the Mongol court, which is peopled by courtiers who act and think as Europeans. When combined with the emphatic, overt otherness of the Mamluk emissary, the Squire's reluctance to describe the Mongols comprises an instance of Hartog's "rule of the excluded middle," and its use in the tale is not accidental: it is an integral part of the way the Squire processes non-Christian cultures.

We have seen how the Squire rhetorically confronts the threat of the foreign, either reducing the cultural other to something known or completely removing it from the realm of signification. In the first part of the tale, the Squire employs a powerful containment mechanism couched in a rhetoric of failure, using it as one of a series of related devices to evacuate the Mongols from the "middle" ground between marvelous Mamluk emissary and Chaucer's English audience. This strategy, however, is not without its attendant problems, for the Squire's insistence that his English is inadequate to translate faithfully the Mamluk knight's words casts aspersion not only on the Squire himself, but on the English language as well, a dangerous side-effect indeed in a text and a tradition so devoted to establishing distinctions between West and East, Christian and non-Christian, England and its others.

Central to the exclusionary tactic employed in Part One of the *Squire's Tale,* the excessive use of occupatio is the most commented on rhetorical failing in the romance, and rightfully so, but the Squire's overt uses of occupatio are not distributed evenly throughout the poem, a fact scholarship has briefly noted but not explored. John Matthews Manly writes that occupatio occurs "with special frequency in the *Squire's Tale,*" but all the examples of it he gives are from Part One of the tale.[24] Pearsall notes the "extraordinary concentration of these formulae, especially in the first part," but never seems to inquire why there is a discrepancy between Parts

One and Two.[25] Fully engaging Chaucer's use of failed rhetoric in Part One of the tale requires us to acknowledge and account for the differing tactics, trajectories, and goals of Part Two, which has drawn critical attention primarily because it supposedly has nothing to do with Part One. In what follows, I will argue that, despite the apparent narrative disjuncture between the two sections, Part Two of the poem is intimately connected to Part One. The bulk of Part Two, representing a conversation between a female bird and the Mongol princess Canacee, in fact comprises a fantasy of complete linguistic competence for the English language. Although this fantasy temporarily resolves the anxieties evident in Part One of the tale, the text's ambivalence ultimately resurges in the depiction of Canacee.

Beginning with a brief description of the drunken court retiring for the evening, Part Two of the poem describes the early morning activities of Canacee, the Khan's daughter. Before the sun rises, Canacee calls her governess to assist her in preparing for her morning walk. Accompanied by a small group of attendants, Canacee goes to the palace park, where she immediately finds herself able to understand the singing birds around her and "kn[o]w al hire entente" (V 400). The princess soon encounters a bloody "faucon peregryn . . . / Of fremde land" (V 428–29) crying piteously. The bird, beating herself with her wings and pecking her own breast, is about to fall, swooning from loss of blood. Stretching out her skirt to catch the bird, Canacee asks, "What is the cause, if it be for to telle, / That ye be in this furial pyne of helle?" (V 447–48). The bird promptly falls from the tree, "deed and lyk a stoon" (V 474), comically missing the outstretched skirt. After Canacee revives her, the falcon tells a woeful story of a faithless lover who left her for another bird because all "Men loven . . . newefangelnesse" (V 610). Part Two ends with a description of Canacee's ministrations to the bird and a brief outline for the rest of the tale, which is abandoned after only two lines of the fragmentary Part Three.

I will discuss the issue of the text's abrupt ending later, but first I wish to address Chaucer's use of occupatio. As mentioned before, previous scholarship has shown that occupatio is employed to such a degree that nothing gets said, but unlike the Mongol court in Part One, the falcon's pain is indeed "for to telle." While describing Canacee's discussion with the bird, the Squire no longer uses occupatio, though critics have failed to observe the Squire's change in rhetorical strategies.[26] Closely related to the Squire's use of occupatio are his admissions of an inability to translate into English the emissary's marvelous speech. In Part Two, however, such distracting comments about an inability to translate are absent. The Squire's English perfectly conveys the conversation between woman and falcon, which we are told takes place "Right in hir haukes ledene" (V

478), not in English. While Canacee's ring thus allows her to speak an avian language, it is the Squire's own linguistic expertise that allows for the translation of that "foreign" language. Gone, then, are the Squire's inept paraphrases and his clumsy use of occupatio; in their place emerge a fantasy of linguistic competence and the dream of an immediate and unapologetic English translation.

In contrast to the Squire's admissions of rhetorical and translational failure in Part One, this fantasy of linguistic immediacy unobtrusively claims uncontested, immediate access not just to another culture, but to another species. If the Squire's linguistic skills are unable to catch the subtleties of the conversations at court in Part One, they are eminently adequate to this task in Part Two. Although the Squire cannot faithfully report the words of the foreign ("strange") knight, he can report the words of the foreign ("fremde") bird, which is itself a peregrine or "pilgrim" falcon, a traveler not so very different from Chaucer's foreign emissary. Initially, then, the Squire's audience occupies the place of the linguistically and spatially disenfranchised, but the Squire reduces or domesticates the other by refusing to let it evince signs of its own alterity, and in so doing he carves out a privileged space for the English language. Foreign words are supposedly voiced, but without their being written down, they vanish completely. We are left only with an English "translation," manifest, permanent, and real.

Such linguistic confidence on the part of Chaucer is not confined to the *Squire's Tale.* Near the end of *Troilus and Criseyde,* for example, Chaucer famously waxes metatextual, speaking directly to the poem he has just finished writing:

> Go, litel bok, litel myn tragedye,
> Ther God thi makere yet, er that he dye,
> So sende mygt to make in som comedye!
> But litel book, no makyng thow n'envie,
> But subgit be to alle poesye;
> And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace
> Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.

<div align="right">(V, 1786–92)</div>

In a discussion of these lines, Eugene Vance writes that, "as he wrote Troy's fall into the English tongue, Chaucer perceived both the triumph and the danger of proclaiming, with a newfound but tenuous Englishman's pride, that his culture was not only heir to but perhaps even rival of the revered classical 'auctours' of the past."[27] As Vance recognizes, Chaucer's "litel bok" is far from being subject to the textual tradition from which its story derives. Throughout *Troilus and Criseyde,* Chaucer in

fact revises his predecessors, and, through the invention of a Latin exemplar written by a clerk named Lollius, adds new matter to the story. Chaucer's invention of Lollius allows him at once to alter the traditional story matter and to attribute those alterations to a predecessor who cannot be found. Chaucer thus establishes his own self-legitimating authority to tell the story of Troy while paying lip service to the idea that his own authority derives from a higher source.

In one sense, Chaucer's poem thus defers to the previous tellers of the Troy story, acknowledging his own right to stand a step below the classical *auctores* who preceded him. In this poem and elsewhere, however, Chaucer claims English as a language as fit for poetry as Latin, Greek, or French, and in asking his "tragedye" to stand beside the great classical poets, he is inaugurating a distinctively English canon. Chaucer, moreover, quite clearly lays claim to a translational ability that improves on that of his source when he is about to present the lament of the lovesick Troilus, what in Latin is called the *Canticus Troili:*

> And of his song naught only the sentence,
> As writ myn auctour called Lollius,
> But pleinly, save oure tonges difference,
> I dar wel seyn, in al, that Troilus
> Seyde in his song, loo, every word right thus
> As I shal seyn; and whoso list it here,
> Loo, next this vers he may it fynden here.

> (I, 393–99)

Here Chaucer tellingly professes unmediated access to Troilus's words, an access to which Chaucer's purported source, Lollius, is barred. As Thomas C. Stillinger writes, this passage is "paradoxical" because this first reference to Lollius in the poem also "asserts that [the narrator] is going beyond his written source to provide a direct transcription (or rather a faithful translation) of Troilus's song" by relying on what Carolyn Dinshaw constructs as "some channel of direct communication with Troilus."[28] In claiming to write in accordance with the actual words uttered by Troilus, and not merely their *sentence* as written down in Latin, Chaucer claims access to a source of authority that bypasses his Latin model altogether. Lollius might have the gist of Troilus's song, but Chaucer replicates the exact words that Troilus utters, and he does this in English. Such a claim both draws attention to the historical rift between Chaucer and his ultimate source—Troilus himself—and yet claims an access greater than that of his more immediate literary sources to that imagined kernel of ultimate *auctoritas*. In this sense, Chaucer's fiction of linguistic immediacy does more than insert him into a line of

auctores. It in fact replicates a paradigm Rita Copeland sees as operating in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and Chaucer's own *Legend of Good Women,* works that "call attention to their own position in a historical rupture and in so doing advance their own claims to displace their sources."[29]

In a less subtle passage from the *House of Fame,* Chaucer presents Dido's lamentations following Aeneas's betrayal, and Chaucer subsequently denies any source but his narrator's dream for her grief-stricken words:

> In suche wordes gan to pleyne
> Dydo of hir grete peyne,
> As me mette redely—
> Non other auctour alegge I.
>
> (311–14)

Writing that here Chaucer "has left his literary sources behind," Jill Mann rightly claims these lines construct a narrator who has "in imagination gone behind the literary sources to recuperate the living individual from whom they take their origin."[30] In claiming no source for the words Dido has uttered, Chaucer again employs a fiction of immediacy, of immediate access to words and meaning that he elsewhere presents as filtered through external sources. As in the passage from *Troilus and Criseyde,* here too we have an unapologetic poet who makes bold assertions about the English language's capacity for poetic expression, indeed for any expression at all.

Thus, whether presenting Dido's unmediated words in the *House of Fame* or those of the female falcon in the *Squire's Tale,* Chaucer tactically and unabashedly uses claims of access and immediacy to bolster both his authorial enterprise and the status of the English vernacular. In the process of underscoring English's suitability for translation, Chaucer relies on the assumption that English is an objective tool of description, a claim promulgated as well by other medieval writers and politicians who, concerned about the status of English, characterized it as a language, simpler than French, devoid of ornamentation.[31] While such a position can serve derogatory purposes, late medieval English writers often employed it to beneficial ends. For example, Thomas Usk, a contemporary of Chaucer's, establishes different characteristics for Latin, French, and English, positioning the latter as an unadorned language whose "embodiedness," while "prosaic and somewhat crude . . . gives the language an immediacy unmatched by Latin or French."[32] Perhaps recognizing such pretensions to immediacy on Chaucer's part, the fifteenth-century *Book of Curtesye* characterizes Chaucer as capable of conveying "vnto mannys heerynge / Not only the worde / but verely the thynge," and Seth Lerer describes this construction of Chaucer as one in which "meaning and intention come together," producing an image of Chaucer

that relies on and is enhanced by claims of immediacy.[33]

   In presenting a claim of immediacy framed as a fantasy of perfect communication, Chaucer's *Squire's Tale* presents the English language as one capable of flawlessly rendering the words, thoughts, and intents of "fremde" speakers. Chaucer's vacillation between his laying bare his linguistic egotism and his scrupulous hiding of it perhaps suggests the contingency of the English language's authority at the historical moment in which Chaucer wrote, but likely it represents a customary authorial pose by a writer who at one moment "complains of English's rhyming capacities and his own 'litel suffisaunce'" but who "elsewhere affirms his confidence in the complete *sufficiency* of English to match any style."[34] Read in this context, the *Squire's Tale* is not primarily about privileging West over East; it is about privileging the English language, about giving the English language the ability to translate great distances and foreign languages. Chaucer's fantasy of linguistic sovereignty follows hard on obsessive musings over the failings of English in the hands of one very inexpert rhetorician, and this strange conjunction reminds us that Chaucer's use of English, rather than French, for the kind of courtly poetry he composed was not just unusual; it was nearly unprecedented. In an essay that charts "England's grand reentry into the European political arena" and speaks of "Chaucer's newly aggressive Englishness," John Bowers argues that the *Canterbury Tales* "represented his [Chaucer's] literary response as a postcolonial writer" to the complex linguistic environment of late medieval English courts.[35] Chaucer's aggressive use of English, of course, was necessary precisely because of the problems associated with vernacular textual production in the period just before and during the composition of the *Canterbury Tales*.[36] As Roger Ellis reminds us, Chaucer was well aware of the contemporary debate surrounding the translation of sacred Latin texts into the vernacular, and at the time Chaucer composed his poetry, "support for the vernacular was far from self-evidently the best cause for a writer to embrace."[37] Given the contemporary fears about English's suitability as a tool of translation, Chaucer's fantasy of linguistic immediacy for the English language addresses more than just the Squire's poor rhetoric—it reflects and refutes fears about the status of the English language, about its worth as a vehicle of translation. When Chaucer's Squire announces he cannot describe Canacee's beauty because "It lyth nat in my tonge," he may well be voicing the concern that such poetic achievements lie not within reach of the English tongue itself. Read in this context, the subsequent reclamation of the English language in Part Two of the *Squire's Tale* is not merely the reclamation of an imagined young storyteller; it is the imaginary reclamation of an entire language whose suitability as a medium of translation was far from being universally acknowledged.

Like most medieval writers, Chaucer routinely employs modest professions of rhetorical inadequacy as a kind of stylistic feature of his poetry, but as we have seen he also mobilizes subtle but telling claims to linguistic competence. In the *Squire's Tale* Chaucer emphatically and contradictorily adopts both attitudes toward his rhetorical abilities, demonstrating that failed rhetoric in Part One is not merely a sign of poor tale-telling skills on the part of the youthful Squire; rather, it supports an ethnocentric agenda, one that ultimately constructs the English language as a fit medium for translating foreign languages and cultures. But if Part One of the *Squire's Tale* achieves this by following Hartog's rule of the excluded middle, Chaucer's strategies for evacuating this middle ground are not sustained throughout the entire text. Part Two manifests a residue, a trace of unprocessed alterity most notably surrounding the figure of Canacee, the only woman in the text. In fact, Canacee's gender overshadows her cultural difference, or, as Kathryn Lynch notes, "gender trumps geography,"[38] thus presenting itself as a more troubling form of otherness for the incorporative mechanics employed in the *Squire's Tale*.

As a romance, the *Squire's Tale* is part of a genre long associated with the use of love and marriage as plot devices to stage confrontations with foreign, and especially non-Christian, cultures. Both Dorothy Metlitzki and Norman Daniel, for example, identify in medieval romance the stock character Metlitzki calls the "enamored Muslim princess," a character who falls in love with a Christian knight who proves his worth by venturing into her father's pagan lands.[39] The lovesick state of the princess is often reciprocated, ending in the daughter's betrayal of her father and her betrothal to his Christian enemy. The pagan princess is thus a commodity of exchange, not just between men but between entire cultures of men. The pagan princess is the most tractable pagan in the romance genre and the one who can, both literally and figuratively, be married to a Christian prince and Christianity itself.

What happens in Part Two of Chaucer's tale anticipates and frustrates this stock scenario. Canacee and the female bird have been discussing the bird's inattentive suitor. The intractable love object is a staple of romance, so this is not surprising, and, indeed, the poem ends with an indication that the male will return to the female, thus solving the dilemma of the poem. Strangely, though, the birds' reconciliation does not actually take place in the poem, and Canacee, said to be married at a later date, remains unmarried at the poem's conclusion. Even more problematic is the identity of the person who wins Canacee. A few lines before the poem abruptly ends, we are told that she will marry one Cambalo, who fights with two brothers for her. The problem, as numerous scholars acknowledge, is that Cambalo the suitor bears the same name as Canacee's brother, mentioned in the first few lines of the

poem.[40] Canacee may thus potentially marry Cambalo, not just any pagan, but her own brother, and this troubling ambiguity is never resolved in the poem because the *Squire's Tale* "ends" a mere three lines after divulging the possibility of incest.

Much criticism has addressed the poem's fragmentary nature,[41] and a good number of critics connect the issue of the tale's ending to the question of incest. Haldeen Braddy first suggested that the tale is unfinished because Chaucer, his poem only partially completed, belatedly discovered the incestuous union reported of Canacee in his source.[42] Other scholars, however, rightly remind us that incest was attributed in other medieval texts to a character named Canacee, a point made in passing by Chaucer's own Man of Law, who refuses in his prologue to tell "swiche cursed stories" of incest like that "of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee" (II 80, 78). Scala, for example, has compared the treatment of incest in Chaucer's work with that in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis,* which tells of the incestuous union of Canacee and her brother Machaire.[43] While critics often discuss Gower's treatment of incest, the possibility of an incestuous ending to the *Squire's Tale* is frequently explained away as the mistaken and unintended use of the same name for two characters in the same poem, a position Scala attacks by claiming such denials constitute defensive misreadings in which "Canacee's potentially incestuous relationship with her brother produces critical anxiety, even when the relationship is not there."[44] Scala maintains that the scholarly dismissal of the possibility of incest in Part Two constitutes a "critical repetition of this absent narrative" of incest, and she claims that critics denying the possibility of an incestuous ending "bear witness to the power of the incest narrative in its absence as the 'story' of the 'Squire's Tale.'"[45] In short, critical appraisal of the *Squire's Tale,* Scala rightly maintains, has tended to replicate the processes of rejection and repression enacted by Chaucer's own Man of Law.

Problematically, then, the one point of comparison that could link Chaucer's Canacee to other western and English tales cannot be invoked, at least not completely. With no narrative closure to the poem, the *Squire's Tale,* Scala tells us, can only be about incest "in its absence."[46] What I am suggesting, then, is that the promised ending be construed neither as a story of incest nor as a story decidedly not about incest. Canacee is a figure caught in the middle, caught between stories, caught between cultures, and caught between men. Of course, the converse is arguably true as well: due to a text that never achieves closure, she is not caught between stories, not caught between cultures, and not caught between men. The result is that Canacee spans both cultures: she is at once the Mongol whose characteristics are excluded from the text, and she is a non-pagan princess whose representation alternately substantiates and

calls into question the legitimacy of the text's assimilative language and its incorporative mechanics.

Canacee's place in the tale thus violates the rule of the excluded middle, a rule used effectively in the first part of the text to further the text's efforts at cultural assimilation and appropriation. Neither completely same nor absolutely other, Canacee inhabits the space between self and the other previously evacuated, and her re-emergence in the *Squire's Tale* reminds us that such rules, and the power that underwrites them, are never absolute. In this sense, the middle is no longer a place of exclusion and inaction; it is a space of becoming, not being, a place of rule-breaking and narrative ruptures. Writing of what they call "the middle" in just this sense, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari claim that "The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed."[47] With all its strangeness, all its narrative fits and starts, the *Squire's Tale* fits this concept of the middle, which requires a different kind of "traveling and moving: proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing" (25). Lacking narrative closure, the *Squire's Tale* raises the specter of stories untold, the promise of power yet to be fully achieved by a masculine storyteller attempting to control both his female subject and an exotic East.[48]

In a text so thoroughly Orientalist, and one produced in a genre where women are often mere ciphers, one wonders why Canacee's difference, based on both ethnicity and gender, is so troublesome for the text to dismantle. Crane's study of Chaucerian romance illustrates the role of gender within the genre and its efforts at identity formation. She writes that in Middle English romances "the possibility of intimacy with woman does not cancel her strangeness. These narratives trace the manifold difference in woman, her consequent liminality, yet also her consequent resistance to dismissal on the one hand and to appropriation on the other."[49] Using Freud's notion of the uncanny to discuss what she calls the "oppositions that mark the feminine at the deepest levels of conception," Crane argues that, "Feminine uncanniness is enfolded in intimacy as the *unheimlich* depends for its sense on the *heimlich:* woman at once familiar and domestic now also disturbingly *unheimlich*—not at home, on the margins, undomesticated, unfamiliar" (164). Crane's language here is very telling. Chaucer's uncanny heroines are neither familiar nor strange; they are unfamiliar. His women are neither foreign nor domesticated; they are undomesticated. As such, they are kernels of difference resisting assimilation by the genre's machinery of appropriation. The dangerously familiar yet different daughter who cannot be fully processed by the Squire's methods of dealing with multiple and difficult ethnicities, Canacee remains uncontrolled, unmarried, unwestern, uneastern, and unassimilated.

As Homi Bhabha's work demonstrates, discursive control like that exercised in the discourse of Orientalism is never a complete mastery, and the discourses of power employed are neither monolithic nor fully controlled by those who mobilize them.[50] If Canacee's representation frustrates the Squire's mechanisms of control, it also, I argue, reveals that Chaucer's precolonial representation of this Eastern court and its inhabitants enacts the ambivalence Bhabha describes operating in colonial texts. In his forward to Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks,* Bhabha writes that "In occupying two places at once . . . the depersonalised, dislocated colonial subject can become an incalculable object, quite literally, difficult to place. The demand of authority cannot unify its message nor simply identify its subjects."[51] Canacee is such an "incalculable object" because she exceeds the ability of the text to process her alterity, to reduce her otherness so that it functions merely to consolidate the self. Canacee cannot be fully incorporated because Chaucer's text cannot forget her cultural difference, though it fails to represent it. And yet Canacee's difference—and her consequent resistance to full assimilation—is not merely beyond the text's control; it is in some ways a product of the text's mechanisms for control, mechanisms deeply rooted in a language and logic of binarism that cannot be sustained.

The text's ambivalence, then, is not solely centered on Canacee, but indeed rests in its anxiety-ridden attempts at dismantling all otherness. The Squire's failure to fully erase Mongol cultural difference is most notable in the case of Canacee, but the rule of the excluded middle is not absolute. The Mongols are not really European, and although they seemingly think like Europeans, the Squire's consistent reminders of that fact merely underscore the very differences that he denies. In comparison to that of the Mamluk emissary and the other Mongols, Canacee's otherness is less radical, but more troubling for Chaucer's incorporative machinery. This may be because she exists not in stark contrast to the West, but in uneasy alliance with it. As the manageable and marriageable link between East and West, the pagan woman is the linchpin between cultures. By definition she must remain securely in the middle, but it is in the middle, between self and other, that all mechanism and machinery are laid bare.

The *Squire's Tale* bears the marks of its imperfect efforts at assimilation, reminding us that the erasure of otherness is a process never completed, and that such social work requires attention to the margins, indeed to all the marginal and marginalized figures within a culture and its texts. In this I agree with Fyler, who contends that the *Squire's Tale* "serves as a metaphor for the difficulty of bridging gaps" between male and female, birds and humans, Europeans and Mongols.[52] Where I think Fyler errs, however, is in attributing the text's desire to bridge those gaps to a

tolerant attitude toward non-Christians. Fyler states that the *Squire's Tale* is unique among the *Canterbury Tales* in exhibiting "a startling cultural relativism at its heart"[53] and that "of the tales that attempt to imagine the world beyond the bounds of Christendom . . . only the Squire's does so sympathetically."[54] I contend that the *Squire's Tale,* despite its narrator's overt proclamations of respect towards Ghengis Khan and the Mamluk emissary, is antagonistic rather than sympathetic to the Mongol world, to Canacee, and to the foreign languages encountered by its English-speaking narrator. The Squire's vacillation between moments of representational control and moments of rhetorical ineptitude does not so much reveal the naiveté of a narrator who turns a tolerant eye toward the world and its diverse peoples as it reminds us of all the ways that overt displays of sympathy can mask antagonism and intolerance.

The Squire is unquestionably attempting to domesticate the East, and the notable failures he experiences in doing so encourage critics to consider the tale mere comic parody as they discuss its "delicate humor."[55] But Chaucerian humor is rarely pointless, and I argue that the comic moments of this tale should not encourage us to ignore its serious implications. Whether or not the efforts at domesticating the cultural other are intentional tactics on the part of Chaucer's narrator, the subsequent exaltation of English and its signifying possibilities is, I think, Chaucer's own fantasy, a response to the problems and anxieties attending translation into English on the part of an English poet referred to by Eustache Deschamps as the "grand translateur."[56] Much as his Squire carves out a space for himself by acts of cultural translation, Chaucer too is engaged in staking out new territory and new authority for his literary endeavors. That we see Chaucer's fantasy of linguistic immediacy clearly in a text that is critically regarded as flawed should not so much surprise as remind us how deeply complicit Chaucer's work is in self-authorizing practices and procedures. That the text ultimately does fail—that its gaps and fissure overtake its fantasies—should likewise not surprise, for it is precisely when Chaucer advances his own claims to immediacy that he, like his Squire, most clearly frames his own fictions of power and most thoroughly engages in the exclusionary acts that underwrite them.

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1. All quotations are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer,* ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn. (Boston, 1987). For Sarai ("Sarray") as the administrative capital of the Golden Horde (rather than the entire Mongol Empire), see Carmel Jordan, "Soviet Archaeology and the Setting of the *Squire's Tale,*" *Chaucer Review* 22 (1987): 128–40, esp.128–30, and Vincent J. DiMarco, "The Historical Basis of Chaucer's *Squire's Tale,*" *Edebiyât* 1 (1989): 1–22, at 9.

2. See, for example, Kenneth Bleeth, "Orientalism and the Critical History of the *Squire's Tale,*" in *Chaucer's Cultural Geography,* ed. Kathryn L. Lynch (New York, 2002), 21–31, and Kathryn L. Lynch, "East Meets West in Chaucer's Squire's and Franklin's Tales," *Speculum* 70 (1995): 530–51 (repr. in *Chaucer's Cultural Geography,* 76–101).

3. While it is clear that discrete elements of *SqT* are drawn from specific sources, H. S. V. Jones is likely correct when he writes that "The best critical opinion favors the theory that Chaucer derived the material for his *Squire's Tale* from many quarters and worked inventively with a free hand," and most source study has found at best parallels or analogues for the larger contours of the narrative ("The Squire's Tale," in *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales,* ed. W. F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster [Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1958], 357–76, at 357). See as well "Sources and Analogues" to *SqT* in Helen Cooper, *The Canterbury Tales,* 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1996), 219–22, and Donald C. Baker, ed., *The Squire's Tale. A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* Vol. 2, *The Canterbury Tales,* part 12 (Norman, Okla., 1990), 4–23.

4. Marie Cornelia, "Chaucer's Tartarye," *The Dalhousie Review* 57 (1977): 81–89, at 81.

5. The English translation quoted above is from J. A. Giles, *Matthew Paris's English History. From the Year 1235 to 1273,* 3 vols. (1852–54; repr. New York, 1968), 1:312–13.

6. See Gregory G. Guzman, "Reports of Mongol Cannibalism in the Thirteenth-Century Latin Sources: Oriental Fact or Western Fiction?" in *Discovering New Worlds: Essays on Medieval Exploration and Imagination,* ed. Scott D. Westrem (New York, 1991), 31–68.

7. For Paris's graphic illustration of Mongol cannibalism, see Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* (Berkeley, Calif., 1987), 286, fig. 180.

8. Jordan, "Soviet Archaeology," 132, 128.

9. DiMarco, "Historical Basis," 2.

10. Robert S. Haller, "Chaucer's *'Squire's Tale'* and the Uses of Rhetoric," *Modern Philology* 62 (1965): 285–95, at 288.

11. Haller, "Chaucer's *'Squire's Tale,'*" 288.

12. As Derek Pearsall explains, the Squire does not describe the Mongol feast because "it would take too long, it would lack idealistic power (since some of the dishes, to his audience, would not be colourfully exotic at all), no man could describe it all, it would delay us (and it is already getting late), and it would not be relevant to the meaning of the tale as a whole" ("The Squire as Story-Teller," *The University of Toronto Quarterly* 34 [1964]: 82–92, at 85.)

13. Elizabeth Scala, *Absent Narratives, Manuscript Textuality, and Literary Structure in Late Medieval England* (New York, 2002), 13, 94–95.

14. Gardner Stillwell, "Chaucer in Tartary," *The Review of English Studies* 24 (1948): 177–88, at 188, 184.

15. Identifying occupatio as one of the narrative devices that contribute to the "vivid incoherence about the tale," Pearsall argues that its use is part of a "dramatic effect" underscoring the Squire's poor storytelling abilities by presenting him as a "nervous, immature, and self-conscious speaker" ("Squire," 84). Robert P. Miller contends that the Squire's "artistic infelicities . . . are Chaucer's means of representing dramatically the as-yet-unstructured mind of the narrator" ("Chaucer's Rhetorical Rendition of Mind: The *Squire's Tale,*" in *Chaucer and the Craft of Fiction,* ed. Leigh A. Arrathoon [Rochester, Mich., 1986], 219–40, at 221). Haller contends that Chaucer, who is "conscious of the uses and abuses of rhetoric in poetry, is making fun of his Squire, who has a much less subtle understanding of the art than his creator" ("Chaucer's *'Squire's Tale,'*" 285). He notes the Squire's odd use of numerous rhetorical devices, and he accounts for them by invoking a dramatic reading in which the Squire is set in ironic contrast to both Chaucer (285–86) and his own father, an older, more mature narrator (287). However, David Lawton points to the limitations of such a dramatic approach to *SqT* in *Chaucer's Narrators* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1985), 112–15.

16. The Mamluk Empire was established in Egypt in the mid-thirteenth century and, in Chaucer's time, had political negotiations with the Golden Horde. See Vincent J.

DiMarco's note in *Riverside Chaucer,* 892n110, and DiMarco, "Historical Basis," 2–6.

17. Anne Middleton, "War By Other Means: Marriage and Chivalry in Chaucer," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer, Proceedings* 1 (1984): 119–33, at 129.

18. Lynch, "East Meets West," 541; John M. Fyler, "Domesticating the Exotic in the *Squire's Tale," ELH* 55 (1988): 1–26, at 6.

19. François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History,* trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley, Calif., 1988), 225, 212.

20. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1979), 20, 62.

21. In the fourteenth century, of course, Western Europe lacked the kind of hegemony Said ascribes to it. For a brief but clear discussion of these and related matters, see Paul Freedman, "The Medieval Other: The Middle Ages as Other," in *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations,* ed. Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2002), 1–24, esp. 3–4.

22. Hartog, *Mirror,* 258.

23. Said reminds us that a typical Orientalist tactic is to represent Europe as "powerful and articulate" while Asia is "defeated and distant"; moreover, "[i]t is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries" (*Orientalism,* 57).

24. John Matthews Manly, "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians," in *Chaucer Criticism: The Canterbury Tales,* ed. Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame, Ind., 1960), 268–90, at 282.

25. Pearsall, "Squire," 84.

26. An instance of occupatio in Part Two directly precedes Canacee's discussion with the falcon (V 401–408), but such narratorial distractions are absent in the conversation between Canacee and the bird, which comprises the bulk of Part Two. At one point, the falcon herself admits she "kan nat make . . . discripsioun" (V 580) of her pain, but this instance of non-description is attributed specifically to the bird, not to Chaucer's Squire or his English.

27. Eugene Vance, *Mervelous Signals: Poetics and Sign Theory in the Middle Ages* (Lincoln, Neb., 1986), 267.

28. Thomas C. Stillinger, *The Song of Troilus: Lyric Authority in the Medieval Book* (Philadelphia, 1992), 182–83; Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison, Wisc., 1989), 43.

29. Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Eng., 1991), 180.

30. Jill Mann, *Feminizing Chaucer,* 2nd edn. (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2002), 14, 13. See also Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley, Calif., 1992), 106–107. Hansen claims that Chaucer in this passage "lays claim through the very act of sympathetically representing a woman to the authority of his own imagination and discourse" (106).

31. See Lee Patterson, "Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate," *New Historical Literary Study,* ed. Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton, 1993), 69–107, at 81–83.

32. Ruth Evans, Andrew Taylor, Nicholas Watson, and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "The Notion of Vernacular Theory," in *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory,* 1280–1520, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans (University Park, Pa., 1999), 314–30, at 327.

33. Frederick J. Furnivall, ed., *Caxton's Book of Curtesye,* EETS ES 3 (1868; repr. Millwood, N.Y., 1973), 35 (lines 342–43); Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton, 1993), 91. See as well Lerer's discussion of *SqT* in a chapter of the same book entitled "Reading Like the Squire," where he briefly notes the "immediacy of Canacee's knowledge" in Part Two (57–84, at 75).

34. Wogan-Browne et al., eds., *Idea of the Vernacular,* 9.

35. John Bowers, "Chaucer after Smithfield: From Postcolonial Writer to Imperialist Author," in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages,* ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York, 2000), 53–66, at 53, 55, 54.

36. Questions surrounding the value of vernacular translation of course are most clearly and heatedly framed in debates over the value and proper method of translating sacred texts from Latin, and the issue came to a head during work on the *Wycliffite Bible* in the 1380s, when, according to Nicholas Watson, "all concerned eventually had to take sides as proponents or opponents of the vernacular's capacity to provide theoretically universal access to religious knowledge" ("The Politics of Middle English Writing," in *The Idea of the Vernacular,* ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans [University Park, Pa., 1999], 331–52, at 340).

37. Roger Ellis, "Translation," in *A Companion to Chaucer,* ed. Peter Brown (Oxford, 2000), 443–58, at 448. On the perceived limitations of the vernacular, see Wogan-Browne et al., eds., *Idea of the Vernacular,* 8–11.

38. Lynch, "East Meets West," 538.

39. Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven, 1977), 161. See also Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the Chansons de Geste* (Edinburgh, 1984), 78.

40. Scala shows how criticism has typically worked hard to explain the repetition of names in *SqT,* but she reminds us that this is work done precisely to dismiss the possibility of incest in the tale (*Absent Narratives,* 83–86).

41. A good deal of criticism frames *SqT* as an intentionally abandoned work. F. J. Furnivall claims, for example, that Chaucer belatedly realized the limited value of what he had written and abandoned it, as finishing it would "have taxt [sic] Chaucer's utmost power" and "would have been a constant strain on his invention and fancy ("Forewords," in *John Lane's Continuation of Chaucer's Squire's Tale,* Chaucer Society, 2nd ser., no. 23 [London, 1887–89], xii). Stillwell likewise writes that Chaucer eventually realized it was "better to abandon his attempt to force an entrance into fairyland than to get stuck in a magic casement" ("Chaucer in Tartary," 188). Jennifer R. Goodman argues that *SqT,* as a composite romance, is part of a genre whose poems are exceptionally long ("Chaucer's *Squire's Tale* and the Rise of Chivalry," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 5 [1983]: 127–36). According to her, *SqT* was "left unfinished by design" and the tale's ending with a list of topics yet to come constitutes an "elegant compromise" between the genre's tendency toward length and the need for brevity imposed upon the poem by its placement within *CT* as a whole (135). Noting this same list, Haller claims "Chaucer clearly had no intention of finishing the story," and he contends that the ending "is not a serious outline of a potential continuation of the tale; it is a recapitulation of the faults which have already appeared and an indication that the poem would have to continue according to the same principles" ("Chaucer's *'Squire's Tale,'* " 293). Moreover, an influential dramatic reading claims the Squire's poorly told tale constitutes a deliberately unfinished text interrupted by the Franklin, who covers up his discourteous action by polite praise of the young storyteller he interrupts. See Joyce E. Peterson, "The Finished Fragment: A Reassessment of the *Squire's Tale,*" *Chaucer Review* 5 (1970): 62–74; Charles F. Duncan, "'Straw for Youre Gentilesse': The Gentle Franklin's Interruption of the Squire," *Chaucer Review* 5 (1970): 161–64; Stanley J. Kahrl, "Chaucer's *Squire's Tale* and the Decline of Chivalry," *Chaucer Review* 7 (1973): 194–209, at 205; and Pearsall, "Squire," 91.

42. Haldeen Braddy, *Geoffrey Chaucer: Literary and Historical Studies* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1971), 91–93. For a dissenting voice, see Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators,* 109.

43. Scala, *Absent Narratives,* 73–82.

44. Scala, *Absent Narratives,* 84.

45. Scala, *Absent Narratives,* 83, 88.

46. Scala, *Absent Narratives,* 88.

47. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis, 1987), 25.

48. A number of scholars have examined the way the East itself is feminized in *SqT*. See, for example, Lynch, "East Meets West," 530–43. Similarly, Carol Heffernan claims that "[t]he falcon episode in Part Two of the *Squire's Tale* is fully female and thus contrasts sharply with the maleness of Part One" ("Chaucer's Squire's Tale: The Poetics of Interlace or the 'Well of English Undefiled,'" *Chaucer Review* 32 [1997]: 32–45, at 39).

49. Susan Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (Princeton, 1994), 164.

50. Homi K. Bhabha writes, for example, that the stereotype "is a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive" and "is at once a substitute and a shadow" (*The Location of Culture* [London, 1994]), 70, 82). Moreover, "the stereotyped Other reveals something of the 'fantasy' (as desire, defence) of that position of mastery" (82).

51. Homi K. Bhabha, foreword to Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London, 1986), xxii.

52. John M. Fyler, "Chaucerian Romance and the World Beyond Europe," in *Literary Aspects of Courtly Culture,* ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Cambridge, Eng., 1994), 257–63, at 263.

53. Fyler, "Chaucerian Romance," 257.

54. Fyler, "Domesticating the Exotic," 11. DiMarco notes that the *Squire's Tale* "may well suggest an alternative, more tolerant, and realistic *modus vivendi*" than that manifest in crusading culture ("Historical Basis," 2). Similarly, Brenda Deen Schildgen notes that "the Squire assimilates Tartar difference within the familiar" and thereby "performs an act of cultural 'orientalizing,'" but she also speaks of the Squire's "cultural relativism" and sees the tale as exhibiting a "'posttraditional morality' that refuses to impose Christian norms on [its] narrative materials" (*Pagans, Tartars, Moslems, and Jews in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* [Gainesville, Fla., 2001], 46–47).

55. John P. McCall, "The Squire in Wonderland," *Chaucer Review* 1 (1966): 103–109, at 109.

56. The ballad from which this is taken is printed in T. A. Jenkins, "Deschamps' Ballade to Chaucer," *Modern Language Notes* 33 (1918), 268–78, quote at 270 (line 30).