Spring 5-14-2016

Talking Some Sense into Chaucer: Bodies in "The Miller's Prologue" and "The Miller's Tale"

Jacqueline Joewono
jacqueline.joewono@student.shu.edu

Talking Some Sense into Chaucer: Bodies in “The Miller’s Prologue” and “The Miller’s Tale”

Jacqueline Joewono

M. A. Seton Hall University, 2016

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts

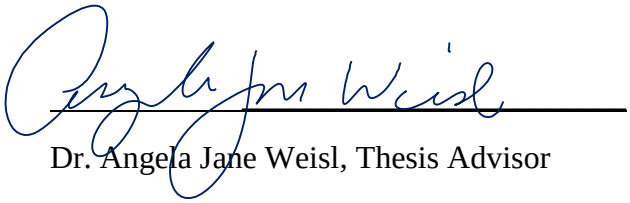
In

The Department of English

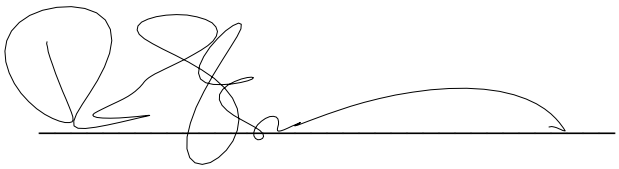
Seton Hall University

May 2016

Approved by:



Dr. Angela Jane Weisl, Thesis Advisor



Dr. Donovan Sherman, Second Reader

If there is one question that underpins the evaluation of any great literary work, it is the following: How does the text make us feel? Through affect and textural studies, the answer becomes more complicated than any old adage might readily convey, for "feeling" here becomes a matter of simultaneous tactility and sentiment. Under this lens, perhaps no historical period becomes more desirable to feel than the Middle Ages; it is here, after all, that readers' responsibilities with texts are pluralized: readers move from listeners born from oral traditions to participants of all kinds. Feeling, then, may be found in that nexus of sounds and sensation, and Chaucer's fabliaux, through their appropriation of old language sounds into a new Middle English sensibility, become important examples of linguistic friction during the late medieval period. In other words, the sounds Chaucer produces direct attention toward the way that the body is present all times and the problem that arises when bodies inadvertently cross one another. Chaucer's sounds in "The Miller's Prologue" and "The Miller's Tale" become especially apt in this investigation, because the Miller's enigmatic disposition cultivates inquiry into how much tales can be separated from their authors and how relevant or irrelevant ownership becomes under a linguistic approach, where language creates, rather than abides by, any rules or limitations. If nothing else, *The Canterbury Tales* fashions itself as a love letter to language and literature in the ways that its ambition counters all assessments of what reading and writing can do. But therein is the deepest motivation of "The Miller's Tale": to do something to its audience, and to do so through language.

Linguistic approaches to *The Canterbury Tales* and to Chaucer's corpus of work have taken on different forms within the past few decades, with each of them asserting different aspects of language to be the most critical to examine. Charles Muscatine's *Chaucer and the French Tradition* seats Chaucer's most important linguistic contributions within the historical

development of the English language. Similarly, David Burnley's *A Guide to Chaucer's Language* and Robert O. Payne's "Chaucer and the Art of Rhetoric" emphasize Chaucer's language in the context of its historical moment. Alternatively, Christopher Cannon provides an exhaustive review of all that literary criticism has claimed to know about Chaucer's language in *The Making of Chaucer's English: A Study of Words*. Cannon argues that although Chaucer is often lauded for the new ways he manipulates language, dividing "traditional" language from "literary" English would take away from Chaucer's originality. He writes that "Words are enough to cut through important misunderstandings and they also give us access to linguistic constructions they comprise and in which Chaucer's 'invention' is more generally thought to reside" (47). With this declaration, Cannon undertakes a complete dissection of every word Chaucer has used, noting its pertinence to lexical practices and engagement with other texts. Partly in response to Cannon, Mary Catherine Davidson broadens the linguistic scope under which Chaucer may be examined in her work *Medievalism, Multilingualism, and Chaucer*. She claims that her work "distances itself from a stylistic analysis of the borrowed lexis of Chaucer…in order to focus instead on those medieval language attitudes toward contact that attended the license to write formally in English" (14), which, alongside Cannon, works against Chaucer's independent lexical moves to suggest a more cohesive, minimized view of the author in his time.

Recent scholarship in body and cultural studies nearly opposes this view of Chaucer by contemplating the ways that his characters almost without aid accentuate his craft. Bodies, both whole and in parts, have been thoroughly examined as a tool to explore larger social issues and conflicts within medieval societies. Miri Rubin and Sarah Kay's *Framing Medieval Bodies* reviews the medieval body's eventual status as a cultural symbol, while R. A. Shoaf looks

specifically at Chaucer's body to negotiate similar phenomena. Shoaf's *Chaucer's Body: The Anxiety of Circulation in the "Canterbury Tales"* studies the ways that manuscript culture and Chaucer's own biography intersect at the fear of autonomy and ownership, both of which Shoaf believes are unstable under monarchy. Like many contemporary Chaucerians, Shoaf initially refuses the genial image of Chaucer that popular culture esteems; instead he aims to "tell the story of a possible rapist, a man who probably raised his wife's bastard gotten upon her by their patron, a man who was robbed and beaten…A man who circulated. And who bore the marks of circulation" (3). Shoaf's focus on the effects of society on Chaucer's body (and consequently on the bodies of those Chaucer creates) provides a more material understanding of the body that medieval studies sometimes already assumes and thus only briefly investigates. Between the body and language, however, is perhaps a more obscured, overlooked space through which "The Miller's Tale" offers analytic reconciliation.

Chaucer begins his project of language by first distinguishing its components. In "The Miller's Prologue," language develops from broader communication. Before the Miller begins his tale, he admits that his body affects the way he may tell the tale. He asserts: "But first I make a protestacioun,/ That I am dronke; I knowe it by my soun" (MillP ll. 3137-8). Although drunk, the Miller introduces a particular kind of "soun" whose ambiguities can only liken it to speech or intelligible noises; this "soun" – rather than his voice or his words – is the only essential index to the Miller's state of being and serves as the most basic unit of meaning to him, both linguistically and personally. That is, not only does this "soun" indicate a certain stupor to himself (and most obviously to others), but it also becomes that which may be owned and therefore manipulated. Chaucer's recognition of the body as an inherent source of ownership forges an association between the body and text: the power and knowledge gained from meaningful communication

also require its participants to uphold a certain responsibility. The power dynamics of ownership become effectively magnified here since, much like the apparatus of the storytelling pilgrimage whereby each pilgrim is responsible for the telling of his or her tale, the Miller both emits the "soun" and learns from it. This noise, underscored at once as both inarticulate and meaningful, is a tool that may offer something to its owner (and to others) but cannot ever be liberated from him. It has an identity only insofar as it is created and claimed by the Miller; it is a sound that is intrinsic to his body.

Although it attempts to promote the ideals of ownership, the Miller's trivial sound only reinforces anxieties that are exacerbated by acquisition and ownership at large. Because the possessive "my" (MillP ll. 3138) is the only qualifier that describes this sound, it reveals the possibility of sounds unclaimed or otherwise undefined in the narrative that contrast this particular noise bound to its creator. That is, if there is "my" sound, then there are sounds that definitively not owned; that a sound needs to be claimed only underscores the existence of sounds that are largely unidentified in origin. Their existence threatens the presence of the Miller's own sound whose meaning may be lost amidst too great a noise, which contributes to the Miller's decision to emphasize the sound's importance by first attributing interpretive meaning to this sound and then directing attention via "protestacioun" toward this singular interpretation. Creating multiple meanings thus becomes an improbable task, since one single meaning has already been prioritized. However, this meaning only holds authority over others as a result of speed; the accuracy or otherwise agreeability of this single meaning is rendered insignificant. In other words, that "soun" cannot be deciphered in any other materialist way than as indicative of the Miller's "dronke" state precisely because the Miller himself delineates the sound as such. The interpretive window thus closes and exemplifies the strong dependence upon

meaning-making that *The Canterbury Tales* as a whole also posits. If the pilgrims' tales are judged based on their "best sentence and moost solaas" (GenProl ll. 798), then it is in the Miller's best interest to prescribe meaning as he intends it; any deviation from what the Miller may make of his own work would compromise his candidacy as winner and authority. For the Miller, good storytelling requires the body to perform well, and language is thus broadened to incorporate the body in its making and consideration.

This connection between the body and language is essentially made at this nexus of ownership, for its uncertainties prove especially alarming for a text whose bodies are subjects of language themselves. Bodies and their descriptions occupy numerous lines in the General Prologue and the prologues to each pilgrim's tale, and in the context of storytelling (on both the pilgrim and author's parts), bodies become problematized because they are forcefully fused to other bodies. Since bodies can only exist in *The Canterbury Tales* through the amalgam of words that describe them, then Chaucer's multifarious bodies are all subject to the manipulation of textuality: they are created through the words and descriptions of another. This facet of story-retelling is particularly intensified in *The Canterbury Tales* because of the speaker's frequent interferences. The speaker constantly interjects to substantiate his own body, but it is only through his body – through his voice – that readers get to know the other pilgrims. Because of this other bodily filter, the autonomous body, then, cannot exist: a condition which the Miller resists in his possessive pronoun "my." By reclaiming the sound produced by his own body, the Miller eliminates its replication (since "my" sound will be inherently different from her sound or his sound) and consequently attempts to eradicate the potential for his body to be altered by another; whereas his drunkenness is self-inflicted, other variations of augmentation (especially as a result of textuality) diminish his entitlement to personal choice. This "soun" stands in stark

contrast to the voice with which the Miller relays the tale, since, knowing his drunken state, the Miller essentially excuses himself: "And therefore if that I mysspeke or seye,/ Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I you preye" (MillP ll. 3139-40). Unlike the inimitable sound, the words that the Miller speaks are so prone to circulation and exchange that he cannot control any of them; no singular word can belong to the Miller as his distinctive sound can. As a result, the Miller shies away from any declaration of possession initially because it offers him the opportunity to disavow ill interpretations (like that of the Reeve) later. If the body is fused to language, the Miller here divorces the two through his particular sound: the way his body communicates this language. The Miller's inebriation emphasized by his sound detaches the body from the tale and replaces the body with "ale of Southwerk" – the inanimate, the unpossessive. Thus, if anyone may understand the Miller's tale as anything other than good, it no longer belongs to the Miller, but to his drink.

And yet, the Miller employs the personal possessive pronoun in reference to the impending tale later in response to the Reeve, indicating that this exchange of words and of sounds has changed the terms under which the Miller processes meaning. Given that the Miller heretofore has equated sound with meaning and a subsequent loss of meaning with the loss of autonomy, the Reeve's objection to the Miller's story becomes a personal, violent seizure of the linguistic body and of the flesh. Opening with the imperative "Stynt thy clappe!" (MillP ll. 3144) – commanding the Miller to silence the sounds he intends to produce – the Reeve imperils the Miller and the control he claims to have. The Reeve already describes the story as "a synne and eek a greet folye" (MillP ll. 3146) before the Miller tells it, which counters the Miller's derivation of meaning from voice first; he essentially takes ownership of the story's meaning before the Miller is able to. Without a voice, the Miller's constructed wedge between the self and

the story is eliminated, and his words are subject to whatever interpretation or misinterpretation may be provided. Prone to others appropriating what is his own, the powerless Miller can only salvage the story he has not yet told by claiming authority over other pilgrims. While also using the possessive "my" to reinstate rightful ownership of his narrative, the Miller undercuts the Reeve's mind when he asks "if thou madde/Why artow angry with my tale now?" (MillP ll. 3156-7). Finding the "ale of Southwerk" response ineffective, the Miller provides the same equivalence to his tale as to his sound: that is, he intends everything he says and owns all meanings at once. The collective sounds his body will subsequently produce are all the more charged with intentionality as they underpin the fierce conflict the Miller finds in searching for the right words.

The only adjective the Miller uses to describe his tale is "noble" when he swears "By armes, and by blood and bones,/ I kan a noble tale for the nones,/ With which I wol now quite the Knyghtes tale" (MillP ll. 3125-7). The task the Miller sets for himself at this point is even more precise: he must not only tell the best story to win among the pilgrims, but this story must also be "noble." But the group provides no shared agreement on what "noble" means. The company merely agrees that the Knight recited "a noble storie/ And worthy for to drawen to memorie" (MillP ll. 3111-2); Chaucer writes that "In al the route nas ther yong ne oold/ That he ne seyde" (MillP ll. 3110-1) otherwise, which means that every single participant agrees upon or restates how "noble" the tale is and thus presents themselves, on this topic, as unified despite their individual differences. What definitions "noble" may fulfill between pilgrims becomes less important here than its circulation as an apt and shared description: the more the term "noble" is sounded between people, the more it acquires some sort of meaningful, associative equivalence. It is only after all bodies have consumed the "noble storie" that the Host searches for "somewhat

to quite with the Knyghtes tale" (MillP ll. 3119), since "The Knight's Tale" becomes the standard for storytelling at this point in their travels. So strict is this proposition for the community that it transforms from a point of agreement to an ideal; the nobleness of each story fuels the pilgrimage and its viability as a functioning whole moving toward the same task. Emerging from and between these bodies, then, is a literal manifestation of the abstract body politic as described by Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross in the introduction to their book, *The Ends of the Body: Identity and Community in Medieval Culture*. They write that the medieval "body was not only that which was most intimately personal and most proper to the individual, but also that which was most public and representative of the interlocked nature of the group" (Akbari and Ross 3), which in this case, all hinges upon the shared system of sounds (and the understanding of them between all members). In this system, no single body is autonomous to the degree that it can remove itself from this collection of bodies because it would then depreciate the validity of corporeality. In "Outing Texture," Renu Bora acknowledges that this sense of community is rooted not merely in shared values, but in values that bodies voice together. He writes that "Often, the mere mention of moral or religious virtue, with concepts such as kindness, wonderfulness, niceness, friendliness, or decency, creates a playful reiteration of the notions to implicate both conversants" in the same way that the "noble" requirement does for all pilgrims. As a result, "It almost seems that to mention them is to recognize them is to know them is to share them is to enact them, all of which may be the same as sharing the very principle of contagion" (Bora 112). This sharing is not just an impulse that fosters community; it also imposes strict adherence. In other words, a disavowal of the "noble" pact that provides the foundation for this group – the very utterance that has consolidated them – would falsify the bodies from which these words have been encoded, since denying the accuracy of the noble

adjective for the individual would also weaken its strength for the "public and representative" body, i.e. everyone else.

Each body (both intimate and public, individual and collective) consequently becomes prone to a kind of physical examination to reinstate itself within the group and within the text. If here, everyone's bodies on the pilgrimage can only exist so long as the group as an entity exists – that is, insofar as noble stories are delivered, as mouths keep on moving – then the Miller's proclamation that he "kan a noble tale for the nones" (MillP ll. 3126) develops from a deeply political fear that he may soon meet his end; if he wants to stay within the group, he must give the group a tale that satisfies them. Given his apparent drunkenness at the time of his self-suggestion, the Miller already exists as a deficient body in the text too "pale/ So that he unnethe upon his hors he sat" (MillP ll. 3120-1). His body's performance, in action but also in literal labor, determines whether the Miller may be redeemed as integral to the body politic – whether his body may be prioritized, even if just for the length of the tale, over other, silent ones. And while silent bodies are perhaps still bodies in the abstract sense of this group (in that, ostensibly, the group may continue on the pilgrimage without sharing an agreement upon the stories' quality), they also underscore their literary viability: the group may continue, but the tales sans apparatus will not. In this way, inactive, insignificant bodies are useless to both the self and to other bodies. Akbari and Ross elucidate the tense relationship between individual and communal bodies when they note that "just as each member of the body is both partaker and a part, so too the members of the community, when conceived as a body, participate in the being of the whole and contribute to its welfare. To be excluded from the communal body is to be cut off, even to be annihilated" (3). This gruesome end is magnified through the inactive body, since the Miller, at once brave and terrified, volunteers his talents under an oath "By armes, and by blood and

bones" (MillP ll. 3125), thereby invoking yet another body (or at least body parts) to safeguard his own. His deconstruction of the body here – the annihilation of the self – differs from that to which Akbari and Ross refer in that this amputation is self-induced, and yet it yields the same results. As the Miller processes his choices, he realizes that the only way to keep himself within the group (to retain his body) is to swear against it; a body worth keeping is that also worth risking.

This corporeal foregrounding is critical to deciphering the Miller beyond his characterization as a drunk counterpart to the Knight, or even a reader's awareness of her own proclivity toward an archetypal reading. If the pilgrims can be seen precisely as their bodies rather than existences separate from the very real perception and sensation of being, then reading subsumes the beginnings of what François Laruelle terms "non-philosophy," which is defined in John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith's overview of his work as "taking the concepts of philosophy and extracting any transcendence from them in order to review them so that they are no longer seen as representations, but re-envisioned as parts of the Real" (2). In *Laurelle and Non-Philosophy,* Mullarkey and Smith explain that "The Real is indifferent to, or resists, each attempt at representing it, because every thought (philosophical or non-philosophical) is already a part of it (and how can a part be, that is, re-present, the whole?)" (4). Laurelle's non-philosophy should be seen less as a negation and more as a revision of the practices and modes generated in philosophical discourse, since they presuppose the success of a single methodology in obtaining a sense of that "Real" that otherwise exists somewhere beyond this practice and yet is reduced to suit it. This revision may be exhibited in the Miller, whose attitudes toward the narrow, limited scope of "sentence" and "solaas" as equating to success broaden the potentialities of reading, for his "noble tale" is undeniably aware of itself and of "Real"

processes (bodily functions and sensations) with which it is concerned. Simultaneously, the Miller's prologue already demonstrates similar concerns in its preoccupation with the body politic and concomitant anxieties of becoming that failed synecdochic limb.

Disengaging synecdoche under this new reading would resuscitate the linguistic problem that quite literally moves the Miller to take his turn. Yoshiyuki Nakao aligns transcendent reading and Chaucerian linguistics in his book *The Structure of Chaucer's Ambiguity.* In this work, Nakao explains through an examination of *Troilus and Criseyde* how Chaucer's poetic arrangement may compromise syntactic and lexical clarity to promote ambiguity as a pathway to meaning-making. Nakao sees this trend as crucial to the Middle Ages, wherein textuality is in a stage of infancy. He writes that especially in the shift from orality to manuscript culture, "sentence structure is not rigidly grammatical but rhetorical on many occasions…The semantic delivery of an utterance is not necessarily due to the logical relation of sentence elements but to oral sytnax [sic] …to phonetic features such as rhythm and pause" (Nakao 185), which magnifies not only the relationship between body and writing, but also that forged between the body and reading. Through Nakao's view, ambiguity in Chaucer's texts places the responsibility of interpretation unto readers, whose views are varied and innumerable. The many interjections that Chaucer's speaker creates only enhances Nakao's sense of this ambiguity, given the implicit "pause" (185) whereby the speaker turns from storytelling to a direct appeal to readers. Indeed, Chaucer often cannot remain within the space of the story without reminding readers that they are there too, advising them to "Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille" (NPT ll. 3443) or learn through other abstractions. Chaucer's rhetorical strategies through direct didacticism seat the body at the center of responsibility, both on the part of the reader and the writer. But this argument may be extended given Nakao's observation on phonetics, or more largely, on the

body's ability to articulate the person: this responsibility requires (1) a keen sense of the body's capabilities and operations and (2) a willingness to engage the body of the self in active reading. For example, Nakao's illustrations of rhythm and pause in use would prompt readers to recall how they perform and receive those actions – that is, how the Real might be reimagined in this text. But whereas Nakao might see this relationship as *representing* the Real when he writes that "When words are combined to form a phrase or sentence, the whole acquires a meaning which transcends that of its individual parts" (185), the Miller demonstrates the Laruellian non-philosophy that would counter this claim. Nakao's claimed transcendence in "the whole" marks the epistemological impulse toward the intelligible utterance whereby more components might equate to greater knowledge. But this interpretive method disregards the origin of the utterance as within the body, as always lived and *experienced in* the Real, which motivates Laruellian readings as integral to linguistic resolution in The Miller's Prologue. If most utterances in his prologue are classified as directly engaged with the body, then the most successful practice of reading that the Miller encourages is one that foregoes linguistic meaning as removed from the bodies that have produced them to instead recover the reader within the text whose presence has always existed. While traditional notions of transcendence involve little to no participation on the part of the reader (in essence, transcendence happens *to* the reader), The Miller's Prologue demands that the reader become part of the text. Writing orality fuses reading to listening and speaking; it requires that the rest of the body be as essential to the reading experience as the mind. By constructing orality into the framework of the tales' apparatus, Chaucer forces listener-readers to initiate all senses – to read with their entire bodies, to acknowledge themselves only as meaningful parts rather than a transcendent wholes – or else be dropped from the pilgrimage. To read in this way offers new ambitions for reading, embraces individual bodies, and restores the

incessant acknowledgment of the self as positioned in a community of listener-readers impervious to past and future.

The rules of the new reading method suggested by the Miller find difficulty in their enforcement, since it is not long after they are established that the narrator of *The Canterbury Tales* reintroduces the reader's complicity in immersing the self in the tale. The stark contrast in juxtaposed voices from the Miller's admonition against presumptuous husbands to the speaker's apologetic remarks signifies an aggressive act of self-imposed narrative victimization. Chaucer's pilgrim-speaker mimics the reader-equivalent in observing and retelling, engaging the body as if unwillingly and yet inexorably. He pauses the Miller's direct discourse to supply his own, writing:

> M'athynketh that I shal rehearce it here
> And therefore every gentil wight I preye,
> For Goddes love, demeth nat that I seye,
> Of yvel entente, but for I moot rehearce
> Hir tales alle, be they better or werse,
> Or ells falsen some of my mateere.
> And therefore, whoso list it nat yheere,
> Turne over the leef and chese another tale; (MillP ll. 3170-7)

The speaker here peculiarly assigns responsibility unto himself ("I shal rehearce it here") and simultaneously denounces his involvement by minimizing this very action as necessary and, comparatively, better than that of its source. This paradox, enhanced by the plea that others may "demeth nat that I seye of yvel entente," positions Chaucer in the place of submission to the narrative that unfolds, not simply in the dissociative respect of being obligated in manner, but

literally cooperating, however unenthusiastically, in the movement of his own body to present words that are not his own. Because his body is compromised by the "yvel" or questionable content he must recite, Chaucer anticipates the ideal end to all bodies ("Goddes love") as harder to obtain than before. The end to his body, then, is decidedly unpleasant if he does nothing to redeem it. By separating the self from the tale while also reinstating participation in the tale, Chaucer thus attempts to maim the body for the audience to be in the company of that audience. That is, if owning the self cannot exist in the context of the narrative, then the speaker turns to the audience because they emblematize the disembodied state of being that persists beyond all other bodies in the text.

But obfuscating the precise location of this dismemberment only underscores the impossibility of this attempt at separation, for the curious employment of the verbal "seye" rather than "write" demands that the speaker and Miller talk at once, fusing two bodies at the site of orality by rebirthing the Miller or expelling him (his words) from the orifice. This rebirth assigns motherhood to the speaker who admits to having no control over his body and furthermore submits to the sacrificial practice of this phenomenon: just as in childbirth, the medieval mother risks her life for her son, so too does the speaker incur a concession for the sake of expulsion. When the speaker "moot rehearce/ Hir tales alle, be they better or werse,/ Or ells falsen some of [his] mateere" (MillP ll. 3173-5), the Miller and other pilgrims become the children tethered to the mother from whom all material originates, and for the sake of truth and accuracy, the speaker accepts this new role, despite his refusal to acknowledge this role outside of this moment. That is, the speaker is only a mother in body but not in practice. His body thus emerges but only as a derivative: a change to the body rather than a kind of body, an augmentation that compromises the speaker, who must persist in laboring "For Goddes love" (MillP ll. 3177) after his agreement.

This change may only occur, however, once the speaker utters ("moot rehearce") another's tale, adding to the prioritization of speech that Chaucer grants over the body in The Miller's Prologue. The indicated conditionals might be considered modifications to J.L. Austin's extensive work on the performatives of language, as they approach the makings of his speech-acts. Austin's speech-acts rely on conditions such as that "they do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, are not 'true or false'; and the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of, the doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as, or as 'just', saying something" (5; author's italics). The speaker's responsibility and cooperation in the bawdiness of the Miller's story has heretofore been explained as active and self-aware but only insofar as the speaker abnegates any notion that the tale originates from his body alone, but this point does not serve as that which enacts the linguistic birth assessed previously; rather, the speaker's aside only assists the enactment. In other words, what the speaker "shall rehearce" (MillP ll. 3170) or "moot rehearce" (3173) may only "'describe' or 'report'" (Austin 5) the collection of utterances that bring forth the bodies of other characters, but they cannot transform into iterations themselves.

Only the reiterations of tales fulfill the qualifications of the speech-act with regard to its enactment, and yet they too pose exceptions to them. In *How to Do Things with Words,* Austin writes that in order to discern a "felicitous" speech-act from an unreliable one,

> there must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances; and the rule, of course, completing it, was that the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked…If the utterance is classed as a misfire because the procedure

> invoked is *not accepted*, it is presumably persons other than the speaker who do not accept it. (Austin 26-7; author's italics)

Teeming with the same notions of apparatus as *The Canterbury Tales*, speech-acts must constantly assess participation in order to move beyond the constative and "do" anything. And indeed, the "certain persons in certain circumstances" has already been delineated from the preemptive disavowal that the speaker poses earlier. At the moment of enactment, however, the participants must be broadened to include the reader herself, since The Miller's Prologue affectively works against the inactive reader. This inclusion, however, decreases the chances of the story's success: if the reader classifies the story as what Austin terms a "misfire," then the reiteration never moves beyond the constative. Moreover, the inclusion of readers here must move beyond the abstract, distanced sense of inclusion that only bestows the responsibility of inactive listening onto readers, since their bodily, physical presence is rendered critical to negotiate the circumstances under which the speech-act takes place: they all must become part of the "certain persons in certain circumstances." In other words, all bodies of readers must be present at the moment of enactment by engaging their bodies with the text, as having a deliberate option of accepting or rejecting how successful this retelling can be. It is here that senses and sensations of the body as Chaucer presents them ought to be seen as moments of reading during a time where definitions of the term were largely unfixed, thereby considering reading at the intersection of orality and print.

Apparent in this reading scenario is the overwhelming pressure of political decisions on the body and the redemptive qualities of speech as a means of using and consequently reclaiming the body. Reading, too, must follow speech in its activation of the body if it is to "do" anything or become a powerful political tool; it must oppose speech's imposition on the body by using the

same tactics. Michel de Certeau reviews the historical relationship between the body and political activity in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. He writes that writing without conflict only represents the body, "but in times of crisis, paper is no longer enough for the law, and it writes itself again on the bodies themselves. The printed text refers to what is printed on our body…and ultimately affects it with pain and/or pleasure so as to turn it into a symbol of the Other, something *said, called, named*" (de Certeau 140). For de Certeau, "the law" governs the body not merely in what it does or does not do, but in what capacity it may feel or be felt. It is only after the law becomes insufficient – when its own medium does not serve its purpose – that it must impede the body from engaging with itself, and thus the body is abstracted to the point of subjugation. In *The Canterbury Tales,* de Certeau's presentation of the printed word might be understood better through orality, since the rules that govern the pilgrimage are created in conversation, and, in a proto-print age, the authority of such law is maintained. Reviewing the body under this lens emphasizes its inevitable, unyielding threat to discourse, since this body must become "the Other, something *said, called, named"*—that is, something that resists the true form of what it is otherwise – to be useful to someone else. Chaucer's culmination of these issues through the speaker's interjection into The Miller's Prologue expresses an emerging anxiety about the regularization of biological processes as determined by other bodies, hence the promotion of readers from witnesses to participants in the speaker's retelling. Given the enormity of this decision on the speaker's presence, the speaker provides an alternative to this battle "For Goddes love" (MillP ll. 3172). Instead of employing the reader as one whose duty is to listen to his recitation, Chaucer reimagines a complete conception of the body by relocating the action of his responsibility.

In contrast to the pressures of language used in what he must "seye," Chaucer diverts his audience to another mode of communication in writing. Not long after Chaucer draws attention to his speech does he then implore readers to "Turne over the leef and chese another tale" (MillP ll. 3177), thus illustrating the materiality of the readers' experience. This option immediately immerses readers in manuscript culture, as Nakao has previously noted, but so much of this directive also illuminates the "leef" as a tangible, identifiable object that shares space with the reader. By commanding readers to move their bodies to interact with the page while attempting to disguise this action as a choice (only "turne over the leef" if they are "whoso list it nat yheere" [MillP ll. 3176]), Chaucer produces the virtual problem of addressing bodies not fixed in the text. That is, in contrast to the defined audience of the pilgrimage is the amorphous audience reading-listening to *The Canterbury Tales* whose bodies cannot really be assumed. Thus, the pilgrimage is threatened: if Chaucer cannot identify the bodies following the pilgrimage, then his role is undermined and the stories are weakened. Implicit in the speaker's offer is the conformity to a certain kind of reader touching a particular page, and the acknowledgement of multifarious readers prior to this line serves as a subtle reminder of the speaker's limitations with regard to active readers. These limitations contrast Chaucer's assessment of readers throughout *The Canterbury Tales* as potentially varied and unfixed; the difference in these treatments is the speaker's determination to eliminate the power of the reader. However, this drive is unsuccessful because his proposition only emphasizes his incapacity. Whereas the speaker ought to have inherent control of the text as the one who labors and produces it, the space beyond the page creates an important moment of engagement for readers, as their abilities to touch supersede the capacity for the speaker to touch back. To prompt readers to "turne over the leef" is essentially an inconsequential command, for the readers' choices are abundant in their approach to this

"turne": they may silence, interrupt, or permit the speaker his speech at any time, regardless of how often or assertively the text may address readers. In other words, the action is already implicit in reading strategies; that the speaker commands it reduces rather than boosts his control.

The prioritization of tactility here – that is, at the precise moment of movement from prologue to tale – incites the idea that the two texts are not merely juxtaposed, but touching. And because Chaucer has placed bodies at the forefront of conflict in *The Canterbury Tales*, this discernment between dispositions urges readers to feel "The Miller's Tale" more so than any previous text. Yet, given the textual crisis presented in the speaker's empty proposition of choice, the opportunity to move readers to feel must unfold without the hand's guidance or must otherwise evade tactility altogether. Bora proposes a route toward the former in his affective discussion of tactility and texture, wherein he puts forward a distinction between gauges of texture. According to Bora, language is intrinsically linked to texture: "The language of texture…involves liminal, erotic play between shiny/matte and smooth/rough distinctions…The textural codes imply bodily, manual, fecal, and digestive thrills, which pack innuendo into the sharpest, roughest crevices of pleasurable topographies and topologies" (95). For Bora, any transmission of texture automatically subsumes preconceived experiences of bodily contact that mimic an eroticism of sensation. Bora delineates this eroticism as the collection of "bodily, manual, fecal, and digestive thrills" (95) that familiarizes people with the objects they touch. Implied here in these "thrills," however, is a hidden dynamism of play between the body and the object: that touching the object is an action of contact felt or otherwise changed for both body and object. In other words, sensing these linguistic "thrills" allows the body to revisit a moment

where it has felt similarly and naturally. At the core of Bora's argument is a profound belief in the validity of sensuous words whose properties extend beyond mere description.

Because Chaucer's language in The Miller's Prologue ties itself so steadfastly to the body in anticipation of the story to be told, it lends itself to the kind of feeling-reading that Bora sees embedded within the language of texture – that is, within those terms that indicate informed tactility. Sarah Jackson understands this approach to reading as well in her analysis of Hélène Cixous' *So Close,* whose similar endeavor aims to "consider the reciprocal relationship between touch and feeling and the ways that writing can perform contact" (408), but which too is solely focused, as is Bora's work, on the impact of whole words on the senses in reading and writing and neglects the origins of writing in its study. However, Chaucer's hypersensitivity to the body's unrelenting existence – an awareness to the body at all times making noise, taking up space, doing something – might broaden the way linguistics may be assessed through texture, since it is from the body's form that all language is created and practiced. "The Miller's Tale," in its vivid descriptions of vulgarity and of myriad permutations of human contact, certainly offers texturally-encoded words to generate the kind of interactive reading posited here, but its analysis demands inspection beyond the neatness and uniformity of fixed spelling and language as it may be understood past its moment. If the body is to be treated like an amorphous subject, then language, too, must be treated in this way: as slippery, unfixed, undefined.

At first, "The Miller's Tale" seems to avoid any textural approach or discourse, instead invoking various other senses to create the world of which pilgrims and readers alike ought to become part. This immersion is clearly desired over mere illustration or observation, since the tale begins by drawing attention to its own space: "Whilom ther was dwellynge at Oxenford/ A riche gnof…/ With hym ther was dwellynge a poure scoler" (MillT ll. 3187- 90). The

"dwellynge" man positions readers in a space of specificity where experience may only be defined by characteristics of that space; "dwellynge" emphasizes the spatial relationship between bodies and environment over time, which, when put forth at the start of this narrative, allows readers to occupy the same action. In other words, Nicholas "dwellynge" in this space implies that he has resided in this space beyond the moment of this introduction; this space harbors a history of the man within it. Thus, the setting becomes integral to defining both the man and the reading experience, since readers are also meant to be engaged in this space. Chaucer therefore integrates Nicholas as a way of prioritizing the senses in sensory experience. He writes that Nicholas is sly

> And lyk a mayden meke for to see.
> A chamber hadde he in that hostelrye
> Allone, withouten any compaignye,
> Ful fetisly ydight with herbes swoote;
> And he himself as sweete as is the roote
> Of lycorys or any cetewale. (MillT ll. 3202-7)

By engaging sight and smell, Chaucer plays with interpersonal contact and builds anticipation toward the textural moment. Seeing Nicholas only functions as an observable moment that becomes insufficient when Chaucer promises readers interaction through the "dwellynge" position, thereby frustrating immersive readers through the absence of tactility or connectivity. Scent begins to bridge the path between the observable and the tangible, but its apparent lack of tactility also thwarts the intimacy that Chaucer promises through the intimate space of Nicholas' home: Chaucer writes that Nicholas is "himself as sweete as is the roote" that matches the "herbes swoote" found in his own home, but underscored also is Nicholas' solitary existence, as

he is "Allone, withouten any compaignye." In other words, Nicholas is made visible to readers but essentially is reduced to a spectacle: he may be seen but not studied. Because the text offers a precise description of who Nicholas may be and yet also denies readers the ability to encounter him (he is still "Allone" despite the readers' presence), a friction of privacy begins to develop; whereas sight limits the potential to see beyond certain spaces, scent permeates these spaces so that the body becomes accessible, and moreover, familiar. Friction inadvertently occurs from the inevitable oscillation between resistance and acceptance of new bodies of readers into preconstructed spaces; although the text works to discourage any touching just yet, it only emphasizes the relative weakness each sense has working independent of the rest. The impulse of new bodies of readers to engage with these senses by use of others, even encouraged by the text through its genre, thus problematizes narrative control and initiates impending change in the power dynamics of reading.

Bora notes the friction indicated in such literary scenarios and poses that touch, out of all senses, becomes the most significant precisely because its potentiality affects all experience. He writes that "the questions of material, textural history (How did he get so smooth? Rubbing? Polishing? Heating? Fucking? Defecating?), and the questions of the desire to act upon this material are answered in overlapping, inextricable ways" (Bora 94). Bora finds that fundamentally, the role of the reader is marked by this "desire to act upon this material": to alter the text, if only temporarily, so as to become part of its "textural history." Discerning this motivation eliminates any passive, body-detached sense of mere curiosity feigning absorption in what is juxtaposed; the ultimate goal of tactility is self-serving, touching the self perhaps even more than that outside the self. That readers might use the appearance of Nicholas' body as a way of stimulating the self in "The Miller's Tale" insists that touch not only underscores every

action in the process of reading, but also reinforces the performative representation of writing. In fragmenting Nicholas' encounter with readers – through space but also through the limitations of linear reading – Chaucer can only come close to, but cannot replicate, the experience of simultaneity. While all senses may intermingle fluidly outside the text, they may only be delivered individually, mediated through syntax to be delivered to readers as a way of delaying readers from becoming part of the textural moment and thereby redeeming Nicholas from overuse and hypercriticism – the same malpractice of meaning-making that the Miller himself evades earlier. However, because "The Miller's Tale" entangles itself in the ways that the senses cannot function – it attempts a syntactic destabilization of the reified, characterized body in text alone – writing only approximates "doing" whatever is being written. Perhaps the only surviving speech-act is the one made by accepting speech in writing, because in this paradigm, the world in the text draws nearer to the reader's world through texture recovered in the representation of orality.

de Certeau stresses the importance of enunciation as part of the speech-act in order to delineate the circumstances under which hegemonic order may be investigated in language. Outlining Émile Benveniste's work, de Certeau explains that enunciation

> presupposes: (1) a realization of the linguistic system through a speech act that actualizes some of its potential (language is real only in the act of speaking); (2) an appropriation of language by the speaker who uses it; (3) the postulation of an interlocutor (real or fictive) and thus the constitution of a relation contract or allocution (one speaks to someone); (4) the establishment of a present through the act of the "I" who speaks, and conjointly, since "the present is properly the source of time," the organization of a temporality (the present

> creates a before and an after) and the existence of a "now" which is the presence to the world. (33)

The enunciation (more specifically in this case, the utterance) centralizes sound in "The Miller's Tale" as inseparable from texture, since its enactment establishes that language only becomes most significant through that which "actualizes some of its potential." To consider enunciation through the speech-act of "The Miller's Tale," (a story with its own parameters) is to repair the lack of intimacy or inclusivity of the text that was isolated through other senses, since this enunciation provides the only way to regulate storytelling as a productive exercise: all required roles (speaker, subject, audience, and time) must be fulfilled if Nicholas is to be uncovered. But for the enunciation to exist, the speaker must be called forth to determine the third presupposition that de Certeau summarizes: those problematic, unshaped readers still in control of the conversation. If the speaker attempts enunciation, the readers speak over him, yearning to touch Nicholas far before the speaker can generate his textural characteristics. To silence readers, if only temporarily, "The Miller's Tale" must indulge this desire for intimacy (a desire only cultivated by the text itself through incessant texture) through alternate means; an overindulgence would allow readers to consume the tale – essentially, to know it – before it is expressed in its entirety, and become an audience of Reeves for whom the tale fails.

This indulgence allows the story to continue to deny readers access to any substantial authoritative positions while also subtly fulfilling the superficiality of their desire: permitting them the feeling of feeling. This paradox is exemplified immediately after Nicholas' introduction into the story, wherein the speaker explains the carpenter's jealousy over his wife. In this section, the speaker offers no obvious textural moments; here especially, texture via illustration is decidedly avoided since the speaker even steps outside of the narrative to engender sage advice:

"Men sholde wedden after hire estaat,/ For youthe and elde is often at debaat" (MillT ll. 3229-30), which briefly alludes to but does not elaborate upon the friction inherent in a "debaat." And yet, the phonological satisfaction gained from both variation and repetition may be read as a synthesis of different textures that deceives readers into thinking that their relationship to the world of the text is more vital than syntax may suggest. Subtly and carefully, Chaucer induces a slight variant of synesthetic phenomenon as described by Brian Massumi in *Parables for the Virtual.* According to Massumi, sight and space "for example, enter into its own synesthetic fusion with the tactile: a determinate, positioned sight is a potential touch; the tropism of proprioceptive twisting and turning is assisted by past and potential bumps and the tactile feedback from the soles of our feet" (186). Like sight, sound creates presupposition before the textural moment: it affectively carries preconstructed ways of approaching and assessing texture. Helpful here in clarifying these textures is Bora's distinction between texture and what he calls "texxture." On the two terms, he states that "TEXTURE..signifies the surface resonance or quality of an object or material. That is, its qualities if touched, brushed, stroked, or mapped, would yield certain properties and sensations that can usually be anticipated by looking" (Bora 98), while on texxture he writes: "TEXXTURE, another meaning, refers not really to surface or even depth so much as to an intimately violent, pragmatic, medium, inner level (at first more phenomenological than conceptual/metaphysical) of the stuffness of material structure" (99). Whereas for Bora, texture might anticipate the impulse of tactility and operates primarily upon sight rather than touch, "texxture" bypasses the liminality of ambiguity and instead demands confirmation made through touch; "texxture" may only be revealed through the resistance (or lack thereof) it provides against that initial encounter. "The Miller's Tale" then becomes a

successful object of textural studies because of this difference: its genre promotes texture as a readerly reward, but its subtle "texxtures" are what permit the story to reach completion.

Different textures work together in the poem in Alisoun's initial description. The Miller's description of Alisoun prioritizes sight as the most significant sense; her first entrance is grounded visually. By writing that Alisoun is "Fair…and therwithal/ As any wezele hir body gent and smal" (MillT ll. 3233-4), Chaucer creates his character by first acknowledging Alisoun's body on its own. The effect of this brief description is twofold: it conceives the dimension of the body in space ("gent and small," proportionally), and it directs attention toward the body's undecorated state. Certainly, Alisoun is dressed at her first appearance – Chaucer spends eight lines (3235-3243) detailing her outfit from apron to headgear – but the very first possible moment of visualization is spent on the structure beneath her apparel: essentially, the aspect of her appearance that cannot change. In creating this framework, Chaucer emphasizes the body's role as perhaps the only object within "The Miller's Tale" that has the potential to inhabit both textural and "texxtural" dialogues; Alisoun's framework suggests a depth and growth that offers a more interesting tactile history than the inanimate objects with which she interacts (in this case, her clothes). Chaucer thus returns to Alisoun's body after all adornments, noting that "She was ful moore blisful on to see/ Than is the newe pere-jonette tree,/ And softer than the wolle is of a wether" (MillT ll. 3247-9). While the speaker's "blisful" assessment seems to keep the passage at an innocent level of sight, its role as a comparison to the "newe pere-jonette tree" invokes the necessity of touch to discern the truth: being even more pleasing to see than the maturation of another organic object questions the power of this comparative marker. Thus, readers *must* touch Alisoun if they are to validate her as "moore blisful." That Chaucer accentuates the pear tree's newness or ripeness only reinforces the inadvertent fixation any sense

may have on tactility; newness and ripeness invoke all senses to work together: they beckon the object to be sensed, touched, or experienced. Like the new pear tree, Alisoun's description cannot preserve the singularity and perhaps concomitant purity of sight alone; describing Alisoun as more enjoyable than absolute ripeness (a quality that demands touch) invites readers to desire, on in the very least become curious about, contact and eventually become part of Alisoun's and the narrative's texxtural histories.

And yet, despite Chaucer's alluring engagement of multiple senses through the pear tree, the potential for readerly tactility is thwarted still. The tactile moment of this section may emerge most apparently when Alisoun is described as "softer than the wolle is of a wether" (MillT ll. 3249), which emphasizes the preoccupation the speaker has on moving from observer to participant. But this scene of tactility is merely a representation of touch obscured by description, since Chaucer touches Alisoun instead of the reader: the assessment of touch replaces the scene of touching. Through this replacement, Chaucer prevents the reader from engaging in the moment, since the analogy made between Alisoun's softness and the softness of wool suggests that the speaker has had the prior experience of knowing Alisoun – that the reader arrives too late to the tactile moment. What results is friction predicated by language: having the knowledge of how Alisoun feels without engaging in touch puts readers in a space of resistance relative to the world of the text. The only way for readers to immerse themselves again is to find the next tactile moment and reinstate themselves as participant; they must be there as it happens.

Once the framework for the text is established (characters, setting, and conflict), traditional moments of touch begin to incorporate bodies more in their entirety. Heretofore, Chaucer has focused attention on the significance on the sounds each character makes: Nicholas, for example, is described as having a "blessed…myrie throte" (MillT ll. 3218) and "of

[Alisoun's] song, it was a sloude and yerne/ As any swalwe sittynge on a berne" (MillT ll. 3257-8). But in this reading of isolated senses, no body can surface. Chaucer's remedy for this issue arrives once bodies touch each other, which not only legitimizes entire bodies, but also immediately proposes a resonance that bodies create between each other. Helpful here is Peter Stockwell's discussion of resonance from his work *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading*, in which he poses that "Literature is valued because of this *resonance* which is difficult to articulate or define. The difficulty is…in the graded and variable sense of the phenomenon itself: resonance is not an object but a textured prolonged feeling that can be revivified periodically after the initial experience" (17). Stockwell's working definition of resonance clarifies the textural frustrations and fulfillments that Chaucer attempts to navigate through readers' experiences approaching the text. When Chaucer records one of Nicholas' and Alisoun's first encounters together, he ensures a moment of touch so that each character resonates with one another, thereby validating each other's bodies.

One day after their introductions, Nicholas sees Alisoun "And prively he caught hire by the queynte,/ And seyde, 'Ywis, but if ich have my wille,/ For deerne love of thee, lemman, I spille" (MillT ll. 3276-8). This initial touch does not prove much in terms of longevity: he grabs her "prively" and immediately professes his love for her. And yet, he returns to her body again, as if to repeat the encounter or relive this memory: once more, he "heeld hire harde by the haunchebones" (MillT ll. 3279), reenacting contact, and restates his desire by posing "Lemman, love me al atones,/ Or I wol dyen, also God me save" (MillT ll. 3280-1)! By duplicating the same feelings and sounds, Nicholas first accomplishes a more effective recollection through double feeling (using two of his senses in sound and touch), but he also creates potential resonance to push forward his own agenda. This prolonged response is outlined by Stockwell

through mechanics, by which resonance becomes that "where two bodies share a similar or sympathetic structure so that oscillation in one at a particular frequency will cause the other object to vibrate at the same frequency…When people speak of resonance in texts, it is clear that they are using the term as a metaphorical extension" (18). Chaucer here puts forth a counterclaim to Stockwell by literalizing the oscillation that is shared between (and thus connects) two bodies.

The successful pairing of sound and touch as demonstrated by Nicholas becomes the successful resonating counterpart to the unsuccessful pairing of touch and sight as attempted through Alisoun's description. Finding a better route to participation through Nicholas, the narrative then shifts to his immediate reaction to his encounter with Alisoun. Once both parties agree to meet only in secret, Nicholas is noted as revisiting the senses yet again. Chaucer emphasizes the connection between verbal communication and physical contact when he writes:

> And thus they been accorded and ysworn
> To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.
> Whan Nicholas had doon thus everideel
> And thakked hire aboute the lendes weel,
> He kiste hire sweete and taketh his sawtrie,
> And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodie. (MillT ll. 3301-6)

Here, with his relationship to Alisoun anchored by what has "been accorded and ysworn" between each other, Nicholas returns to Alisoun's body similarly, if minimized, to the way that he first approaches her. Refraining from fully catching "hire by the queynte" (MillT ll. 3276), Nicholas now "thak[s]" her and kisses her, and thereby, in Stockwell's terms, "revivifie[s]" the moment Chaucer feels is worthy of resonance. This recognition becomes intentional through these repeated instances, where readers are also brought into moments of contact. This effect

counteracts readers' almost tardy arrival to the first scene of touching Alisoun, and its occurrence at the same site reinforces its purpose as an opportunity for recovery. Within the context of the tale, the primary purpose of Alisoun's body is to be touched by others, despite her initial resistance to such an endeavor. Swiftly, once Nicholas finds a way to touch Alisoun, so too do readers. And since tactility becomes the root sense for all others within "The Miller's Tale" (evidenced by these previous scenes), Nicholas permits readers to experience other sensations from this touching moment. Sound returns as another way of reinstating the body, for Nicholas cannot help but "pleyeth faste, and maketh melodie" (MillT ll. 3306). Although the sound of the instrument is not produced directly from the body, the body assists in this sound's creation. Thus, resonance is mirrored: the sound produced becomes that which fortifies the initial resonating experience; what best manifests resonance here is the self.

Indeed, Nicholas attempts a prolonged experience of resonance by repeating these actions, and Alisoun succumbs to his desires *because* of this resonance, despite wanting nothing to do with him previously. Once their bodies are realized through interaction, the reader too may find resonance in their portrayals. Whereas cursory readers might find mere "metaphorical extension" (Stockwell 18) in the various sentiments that liken their own bodies to others, Chaucer models good readers as those who push beyond metaphor to become what the Miller had desired to maintain all along: part of the equalized, communal body through retention of their own bodies. "The Miller's Tale" thus fulfills the "noble" ideal it had set for itself, for if read texturally – or more ideally, read with the entire body – the story is "worthy for to drawen to memorie" (MillP ll. 3112) precisely because it manufactures itself in that way. Enduring beyond the limitations of pages or owners, "The Miller's Tale" fixes itself upon the very concept of perpetuity; it embeds in itself an instructional capacity to keep itself alive. Bora says that this

fantasy of reproduction "allegorizes a complex ontological question about which 'things' are circulating with that priority through other things, these things being materials, objects, properties, motions, affects, gestures, values, or concepts" (98), and it is through most of these "things" that "The Miller's Tale" aspires to, and often does successfully, move. What Bora underscores is the interconnectedness of all "things" that cannot be compartmentalized in any manner by language without sacrificing the imminence of the lived experience. Chaucer acknowledges this movement and yet decides against its paradoxical implications; he determines a text that uses language not to represent, but to present. For Chaucer, language produces those "objects, properties, motions, affects, gestures, values" and "concepts," and in doing so, reassesses and contributes to meaning unbound by time and space. If medieval societies began the pilgrimage, then "The Miller's Tale" offers new readers the chance to join on their own: to move with them and be moved.

Works Cited

Akbari, Suzanne and Jill Ross. *The Ends of the Body: Identity and Community in Medieval Culture.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2013. Print.

Austin, J. L. *How To Do Things with Words.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1962. Print.

Bora, Renu. "Outing Texture." *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction.* Ed. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Durham: Duke UP, 1997. 94-127. Print.

Burnley, David. *A Guide to Chaucer's Language.* Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma P, 1994. Print.

Cannon, Christopher. *The Making of Chaucer's English: A Study of Words*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales. The Riverside Chaucer.* Ed. Larry D. Benson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987. Print.

Davidson, Mary Catherine. *Medievalism, Multilingualism, and Chaucer.* New York: Palgrave, 2010. Print.

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1984. Print.

Jackson, Sarah. "*So Close*: Writing that Touches." *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing* 9.3 (2012): 408-18. Web. 18 February 2016.

Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002. Print.

Mullarkey, John and Anthony Paul Smith. *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2012. Print.

Muscatine, Charles. *The Old French Fabliaux*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986. Print.

Nakao, Yoshiyuki. *The Structure of Chaucer's Ambiguity.* Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013. *EBSCO.* Web. 13 February 2016.

Payne, Robert O. "Chaucer and the Art of Rhetoric." *Companion to Chaucer Studies*. Ed. Beryl Rowland. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979. 42-64. Print.

Shoaf, R. A. *Chaucer's Body: The Anxiety of Circulation in the "Canterbury Tales."* Gainsville: UP of Florida, 2001. Print.

Stockwell, Peter. *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009. *EBSCO*. Web. 27 February 2016.