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(receiving the Eucharist). More important than function is the notion of symbol. Bynum rejects the idea put forth by most modern historians of religion that the practices of these medieval women symbolized a dualistic rejection of body or an internalization of misogyny (pp. 208-9, see especially notes 66-71). The key is not their self-denial but their embrace of the suffering human body of Christ on the Cross as symbolized through the Eucharist. "They gloried in the pain, the exudings, the somatic distortions that made their bodies parallel to the consecrated wafer on the altar and the man on the cross" (p. 296).

Holy Feast and Holy Fast, well-documented and well-argued, makes a valuable contribution to scholarship. Its greatest strength is Bynum's ability to examine what to the modern mind are extreme, if not pathological practices, from the point of view of their practitioners. One is left with a respect for and deeper understanding of the religious fervor of these medieval women. While not advocating their extreme ascetic manifestations, Bynum uncovers a rich complex of religious symbolism that is not without relevance to any age.

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Leigh Arrathoon, ed. *Chaucer and the Craft of Fiction*. Rochester, Michigan: Solaris Press, 1986. Pp. xxv + 430.

These fifteen essays explore one of the cornerstones of Chaucer's narrative art—the "translation" of traditional materials to form a new work. In her introduction, Leigh Arrathoon follows the footsteps of Percy Lubbock, whose *The Craft of Fiction* (1921) noted that even as we read the text, "it melts and shifts in the memory." For Arrathoon and her fellow contributors, this process of transformation is shared by both Chaucer and the literary critic. Both face experience—whether in the medieval manuscript or in its mysterious creative process—even as its shape and design on paper slip away as quickly as they examine them.

Three essays reveal Chaucer's "metamorphosis" of his allusive materials. For John Fleming, the image of "smokey reyn," traced from Vergil through Ovid to Boccaccio and Jean de Meun provides a "muted cacophony of textual associations Latin and vernacular alike" for the text of *Troilus* (18). The purpose of all Chaucer's lucid use of language and fa-

ble, his *translatio*, is the reforming and transcending of speech. So Edmund Reiss argues in his examination of the *Parson's Tale* and Chaucer's Retraction. For the medieval person, language was both the only means to arrive at truth and at the same time an inadequate and deceptive tool. The process of metamorphosis, traced by Robert Hanning, turns logically back to Ovid. The influence of the *Metamorphoses* upon both the structure and meaning of *The Book of the Duchess* and *The House of Fame* reveals that Chaucer's treatment of dream visions and the ambiguous *fama* owes much to the struggle to pass from experience into poetry. While a "hostage to the poetic tradition," Chaucer also perpetrates *Fama's* mischief confounding the "soth" and the "fals" through his own poetic fiction.

Other contributors follow the search for allusion and wind up in rather isolated territory. Emerson Brown's investigation of "Biblical Women in *The Merchant's Tale*," Karl Wentersdorf's study of that tale's imagery, and the editor's analysis of its genre owe more to Robertsonian criticism than most of the other essays included here. Rhetorical questions are analyzed by Robert Miller (*The Squire's Tale*) and Janette Richardson (*The Pardoner*), while Bernard Levy's analysis of *The Clerk's Tale* reveals parallels between Griselda, the life of Christ, and Rebecca at the well. Similarities are also explored in Douglas Burger's "The *Cosa Impossibile* of *Il Filocolo* and the *Impossible* of *The Franklin's Tale*," and Roy Percy's application of Frye's criteria for Latin comedy to Chaucer's fabliau-tales. Charlotte Otten discusses Troilus' erotomania in light of myth, medicine, and doctrine.

Arrathoon claims that all her contributors seek the "otherness" of Chaucer. Interestingly, while the essayists explore Chaucer's alterity "in theory," only David Burnley veers near the critics who have set forth theories of medieval discourse. In their footnotes, if not their methodology, references to such scholars as Hans Robert Jauss, R. Howard Bloch, Brian Stock, and Paul Zumthor are all but absent. Not only Burnley's essay on "Chaucer's Host and Harry Bailly" but Robert Owen's focus upon the *Canterbury Tales* as "Fictions within a Fiction that Purports Not to Be a Fiction" seem to cry out for more than another allegorical paper chase.

In her previous collection of scholars' essays, *The Craft of Fiction: Essays in Medieval Poetics* (1983), the subtitle reflected Arrathoon's awareness of Zumthor's efforts to apply the insights of post-structuralism, hermeneutics, and even the *Annales* school to French and German medieval texts. This collection reveals the more traditional approaches of

Chaucer critics. Explorations of allegory and source, allusion and genre still outsell the flashier critical exports from the Continent. Whether this lack of controversial discourse within the study of English medieval literature is deplorable, desirable, or simply predictable is up to the reader to decide.

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Phyllis Rugg Brown, Georgia Ronan Crampton, Fred C. Robinson, eds., *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature. Essays in Honour of Stanley B. Greenfield.* Toronto-Buffalo-London: University of Toronto Press, 1986. Pp. xxi + 298.

It seems inevitable that a *Festschrift* compiled on behalf of Stanley B. Greenfield should celebrate him with a selection of studies which are intentionally representative of diverse critical approaches towards Anglo-Saxon literature. As author of *The Interpretation of Old English Poems* and as coauthor with Fred C. Robinson of a still-standard critical bibliography, Greenfield may well be acknowledged not only for his particular method of poetic analysis, but also for his conspicuous success as a promulgator of critical theory in general. The editors of *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature* have accordingly produced a collection of scholarship which incorporates most of the interpretative methods currently used in the study of Anglo-Saxon poetics.

The contributions to the volume are organized within the four categories of cultural criticism, stylistic/aesthetic criticism, philological studies, and source research (allegoresis is not represented). Two articles on the contextual analysis of verse formulas envelop the first section. They enclose a fine historical essay by Helmut Gneuss on the validity of Alfred's statement on the decline of learning in 9th century England, a paper by George Hardin Brown upon the appropriateness of the Old English verse form for the expression of Christian theology and paradox, and Ruth Mellinkoff's study, "Serpent Imagery in the Illustrated Old English Hexateuch." The first of the oral-formulaic essays, Peter Clemons' "'Symbolic' Language in Old English Poetry," reevaluates how the formula works in early vernacular literature. To Clemons, every formula is a symbol with culturally-determined semantic potential. This potential is activated when its audience