Introduction: Transporting Chaucer

At the gate of Canterbury Cathedral in February 2011, a porter informed me that access to the Becket stained glass in Trinity Chapel I had come to research was off limits. There was a service happening. There was, however, a new statue of Becket in the crypt that might interest me. The statue seemed some compensation for having to wait for the glass so I dutifully trotted off to the crypt and searched with increasing puzzlement for the new artwork. Only, there was no statue. Nor, seemingly, Thomas Becket. At first.

The sculpture had been unveiled only a week before my visit. I had not seen the press release from Canterbury Cathedral, embargoed until 16.00 GMT, 30 January 2011:

> On Sunday 30th January at 16.30hrs TRANSPORT a new sculpture created by the artist Antony Gormley will be unveiled at Canterbury Cathedral. Antony Gormley is credited with a radical re-investigation of the body as a zone of memory and transformation. The two metre long work uses handmade antique nails from the Cathedral's repaired south east transept roof to construct a delicate filter-like membrane outlining the space of a floating body. The membrane is suspended above the site of Thomas Becket's first resting place in the Eastern Crypt of the Cathedral.[1]

The sculpture, it transpired, is not of Becket (see Plate 1). But it could be. Gormley writes: 'the body is less a thing than a place; a location where things happen. Thought, feeling, memory and anticipation filter through it.'[2] Suspended above the martyr's first resting place, *Transport* anticipates recall of Becket, in part because of the sculpture's location. It extends an invitation to conjure bodies that are and are not there; to enter into dialogue with the body mould suspended *above* our heads and the bodies remembered or expected *within* our heads. There is no literal referencing

of any of the details of Becket's martyrdom: no representation of knights, archbishops, Thomas's famous head wound, or his healing blood. Contemplation of the nails, however, prompts an association of Becket's resting place with wounding and piercing. That the antique nails are rescued from the roof suggests Becket's spiritual transformation through martyrdom. But Becket's is not the only body that *Transport* bodies forth. To see a body of nails, hanging, calls both to mind and to feeling, an image of Christ suspended on the cross, riveted with nails, crowned with gouging thorns. As a metonym of crucifixion, the nails fuse the body of Christ in first-century Jerusalem with Becket's in twelfth-century Canterbury in twenty-first-century time. *Transport* conveys Becket's body with Christ's.

Crucifixion iconography is both courted and refigured. The membrane does not hang between the nave and the chancel. Its axis is horizontal, not vertical. In ecclesiastical space a horizontal body is an effigy on a tomb, or a corpse in a grave beneath a slab stone underfoot. The raised height of the sculpture reconfigures these associations of space, position and axis without necessarily leaving any of those associations behind. Suspended by a scarcely visible cable, the body appears to float in free space. Neither in nor affixed to stone, glass or wood, and with spaces between the nails, it remains unbound by any material attachments save those that an observer projects from within its Canterbury setting. While its constituent materials of nails and space suggest the tactility of marking and incision, because the nails make up the place and shape of the body while creating a membrane that is multiply pierced, *Transport* exceeds definitive representation of any particular human body. One of the ways that bodies are told one from another is through the way that they are marked; marked through anatomy, costume, paint or incision.[3] The nails in *Transport* however make up both an outer shape and an inner density. Even as the sharp materials of the nails deter the desire to touch, they inscribe spaces for the observer's projection: for the observer to fill those spaces and the space around with bodies remembered, anticipated, historically vibrant and/or angrily rejected.

One hostile respondent to the sculpture complains it is simply a model of the body of Gormley himself. Honest John from Wakefield in West Yorkshire writes, 'did you know he bases all his work (which is all the same – it is all figures) – on himself? He has a massive ego … I have more talent in my right testicle.'[4]

John's testimony notwithstanding, *Transport* has no signs, genital or otherwise, that make it definitively male, or female. It has adult dimensions but no sign of age: no face, no limbs and no costume. But the Wakefield dissident has a point about all those other Gormley bodies. To an observer familiar with Gormley's oeuvre, the membrane can't help but prompt recall of those Gormley bodies elsewhere, even though this particular sculpture is not cast from the sculptor's own body mould. Anticipated from memory, Gormley's body co-exists with those that are prompted from what he has made. Gormley's 'own' body re-fuses distinction between sculptor and sculpted. And yet this is not Gormley's body any more than it is Becket's or Christ's. The body mould is what it is made to become. My first response when I saw it was to wonder why someone had strung up a giant hedgehog in a cathedral.

There is no one stable 'source' for *Transport*. An observer can walk all around the body, looking up, and around. But not down. There is no superior vantage point, no place assigned from which to look. *Transport* yields no directed itinerary, nor point of origin. Or destination. That is one of the reasons why I choose *Transport* as a figure for the work of this book, and hence its title. *Transport* suggests movement between place(s) and/or person(s), and also to be beside oneself; a state of being elsewhere.[5] Crucially, 'transport' is both a noun and a verb. Something that is substantive is indistinguishable and inseparable from something that is in process. The *Transport* body in the crypt of Canterbury cathedral creates a movement in time and place that takes observers beyond themselves in their encounter with multiple bodies in durable time.

Why turn to this twenty-first-century sculpture to explore the movement of Chaucer through time? Are there not 'bokes ynowe' as Ymaginatif reminds the narrator of *Piers Plowman* without 'medlying with makynges' to explain such matters?[6] Yes and no. There are wonderfully supple studies of Chaucer's works in relationship to what comes after him. Sources and allusions have been richly mined. Movement between manuscript and print studied meticulously. Chaucer has been imaginatively explored as a congenial soul in future textual company and as a corpse who persists in turning up amongst the living. A huge range of Chaucer's works have been placed in fruitful conversations with those that come later, whether or not they explicitly refer back to the medieval poet.[7] My exploration in this book of encounters between

Chaucer's oeuvre, Chaucerian apocrypha, and early modern texts has been informed and enriched by this scholarship. *Transporting Chaucer* does not dispense entirely with source and analogue study, or depart wholly from the tracing of allusions, and ideas of literary followings. But, rather than reading through chronological and genealogical succession – Chaucer and Sons inc., script and print, or its flipped incarnation of ghostly presence and anxious hauntings – my analysis inhabits a temporality that is neither successive nor bounded. There is no argument between 'medieval' and 'after'; no struggle between canon and apocrypha. In a sense, this is a book about reading between the lines; the lines that have been drawn up to make sense of literary corpora to discipline them into manageable time and place.

This book explores a question. What is going on when we encounter Chaucer's characters, including 'himself', in works he did not make? I argue that when we pay attention to what happens when Chaucerian bodies – their physical appearance; their costume; their names and their sounds – travel between textual corpora (whether or not Chaucer wrote all of them), then authorised versions of literary time and place cease to hold. Meeting Chaucer where he isn't supposed to be rearranges normative understandings of before and after, time and place. *Transporting Chaucer* explores the imaginative possibilities that such encounters open up. Recognition of Chaucerian bodies between texts written at different historical junctures upsets linear chronology. The movement of Chaucerian characters back and forth plays out in movements of time experienced as continuous rather than a sequence of temporal units that has been fabricated to tell the time in segments. Freed from unitary measurement and free to play, Chaucerian bodies cross the material borders of physical books and the drawn-up borders of literary history. This book ravels strange meetings with Chaucerian bodies between works that Chaucer wrote, works deemed apocryphal, and early modern plays. Between all of these works, Chaucerian bodies are in transport whether or not Chaucer can be proved to have had a hand in them. These bodies are figures of resistance to teleological versions of literary history. They are bodies that don't keep time, and they make free with place. The bodies I explore in this book travel in and between works from around 1340 to 1700. Only, they are not held up by boundaries of periodisation. At least, not in the regular ways that these have come to be told.

I use Gormley's *Transport* to form the title of this book not because I am on some grand mission to explain the process

of reading through sculpture, but because – quite simply and honestly – encountering this sculpture gave back to me, viscerally and intellectually, a recognition of how bodies are thought and felt to travel across time that I had already started to write about. *Transport* bodied forth the experience of reading between Chaucer's works and those that come after him in a way that kept getting lost when I tried to account for it in verbal language; not in the writing about the traffic between the texts themselves but in trying to give an account of what I was doing at a metacritical level. With its play with matter and space, and its room, both literally and figuratively, for the movement of an observer, *Transport* showed me a realisation of what it was that I had been trying to articulate verbally. Words, however, are supposed to be put into normative syntax and grammar. Such institutionally policed arrangements are an impediment to temporal congruity and co-existence between bodies and persons. Tense grammar and disciplined relationships between parts of speech tell out versions of experience that necessarily privilege linearity, teleology, emphasis and subordination. For reasons of clarity, written language distinguishes between sentences, and between subject and object in sentences; between who is doing what to whom and when. On a micro-level, editorial conventions about language usage predetermine the versions of bodiliness that readerly experience may or may not recognise. That certainty of unambiguously separated persons in clearly articulated relationships may not always be desirable because, as I discuss in Chapter 2 of this book, it may give only a version of some of the facts. In stumbling across *Transport*, unexpectedly (accidentally), I encountered a work of art that bypassed such regulation in its invitation to meet bodies past and present on different terms. Had the trains been on time, I should probably never have seen the sculpture; I should have gone straight to the stained glass that was the purpose of my research trip. Had I not seen the accompanying plaque which prompted reflection on the kinds of bodies I could meet there, I should probably have persisted in thinking about delusional hedgehogs or grumbling about being sent on a wild goose chase for a seemingly non-existent statue. That serendipity is important to the work of this book. On one level, this work ducks prevalent academic requirements to set out the journey in advance and meet its destination within required timelines and trajectories: to give advance notification of its outcomings and its inputtings.[8] Put less contentiously, coming across *Transport* enabled me to articulate what happens when bodies meet up between medieval

times and after that in ways that felt consistent with my experience of those unsought encounters.

It matters that my understanding of *Transport*'s coincidental bodiliness was informed both by physical artefact and by accompanying text.[9] The relationship between verbal and non-verbal forms of art informs a great deal of the work in this book. Its narrative travels in and between written texts and material artefacts: stained glass, pilgrim badges, musical instruments, mouldy bread, manuscript illustration and medieval architecture. It is also important that *Transport* hangs in a medieval cathedral, one located in Canterbury. As I explore in Chapters 1, 2, 5, and 6, Canterbury is a destination that is, and is not, reached, both in Chaucer's own works and in those that take up the narrative of what Chaucer's works are become. Chaucer's works shuttle backwards and forwards between ecclesiastical milestones that are insufficient to contain them in fixed place and time. Set in the history of a medieval cathedral for present, past and future times, the work of *Transport* re-presents a bodily confection that is so characteristic of medieval cultural practices. Within its religious setting the twenty-first-century sculpture produces bodies that are coterminously historical, contemporary, human and divine in a mould whose synthesis would have been recognisable to a medieval mind, even as it takes an unfamiliar shape.

As is very well known, cycles of mystery plays stage redemption history in local time and place. Within the duration of Corpus Christi Day, townsfolk would watch their fellows become biblical characters performing Old and New Testament stories with the materials of local guilds. With the Crucifixion staged by the Pinners, the nails of Christ's body are the tools of the soldiers' trade. With the Death of Christ staged by the butchers at the Shambles in York, Calvary is the site of the civic slaughterhouse.[10] Cycle plays would have been performed in the streets; outside the bounds of ecclesiastical buildings. But the merging of the contemporary and the scriptural with townsfolk becoming persons from the Bible has its counterpart within the walls of the church. Donors of medieval stained glass take their place alongside figures from biblical history in the windows of churches. Even as they may not take centre-stage, their persons form part of vitrine drama in which divisions of time and place are glazed over. The *Pricke of Conscience* Window in All Saints, North Street, York, combines a paraphrase of the text of the Middle English poem from which it now takes its name with depictions of the end of the world.

The tenth glass panel shows the destruction of buildings by an earthquake. To bring home the horror of the event to the present congregation, the newly built spire of All Saints is depicted falling. At the top of the window two panels in the quatrefoil tracery lights show St Peter admitting redeemed souls into heaven and demons ferrying the dammed to hell. At the base of the window contemporary figures look with consternation at the events going on in the panels above. Whether or not they represent members of the Henryson and Hessle families who paid for this window, or figure the parish congregation of All Saints, the kneeling figures take part in an apocalyptic history which shows the destruction of their own parish church as a sign of the end of the world. The congregation of All Saints are invited to contemplate a version of themselves facing the end of time even as they stand within the very building whose future demise the window records.[11]

The overall scheme of the window suggests that it is designed as a prompt for repentance. Such penitential mingling of the contemporary and the eschatological in stained glass was not without its critics. The narrator of *Piers Plowman* exposes the potential for financial corruption in lay sponsor of ecclesiastical glass when he recounts a mutually incriminatory conversation between Meed and the friar in Passus 3.[12] Yet the folding of contemporary persons into biblical and salvation history is a staple characteristic of the narrative of the poem. At the start of Passus 18 the events and persons of liturgical holy week unfold in scriptural history and in recognisable fourteenth-century place: in Jerusalem, at the gates of a medieval city, in a church and in the lists of a tournament. Christ's entry into Jerusalem on an ass is dramatised through the liturgy for Psalm Sunday. Will the narrator wakes from his dream to the sound of glory and praise and 'osanna' sung to the sound of the organ (19.7–8). Latin quotations score the narrative with snatches of liturgy woven into the drama of the fourteenth-century alliterative line to recreate in verse how liturgical performance in a church already made present and dramatic to the assembled congregation the scriptural events of the day that the service commemorates. The singing church also welcomes a nobleman, barefoot on a donkey coming to be dubbed a knight. Abraham as Faith, first introduced in Passus 16, is present in the episode as a herald. Standing in a window from an overhanging street like a character from a mystery play, or a figure in stained glass, he announces the name of the anonymous jouster with words from Matthew 21:9: 'cryde "*A fili David!*"' (18.15). Abraham/Faith/Evangelist/Tournament Herald/

Figure in Glass speaks in scriptural, historical, and contemporary times and places all at once:

> This Jesus of his gentries wol juste in Piers armes,
> In his helm and his haubergeon – *humana natura*.
> That Crist be noght biknowe here for *consummatus Deus*,
> In Piers paltok the Plowman this prikiere shal ride
> For no dynt shal hym dere as in *deitate Patris*.
>
> (18.22–6)

Christ is costumed, socially marked, both as a knight in armour and as a ploughman in a worker's jacket. He is both God and man; triumphant and scarred. His body is divine and human; his name Jesus, Christ, *Deus*, and Piers. To scrape out any one of the inscriptions of time, place, body and name from this episode is to gouge its theological and poetic immediacy for all of time.

The figure of Piers Plowman however, for all of his timely fullness of personhood, is not available to be confused with its maker William Langland in the way that the *Transport* body can be seen to incorporate that of its sculptor Antony Gormley. Even those later works that take up the project of rewriting *Piers Plowman* for their own times and interests do not appear to have confused the ploughman figure with the poem's author.[13] In the case of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, however, the voice and actions of its historical author become inseparable from the scribes who wrote her. She becomes conscripted into ecclesiastical space resonant with figures from contemporary devotional writing and salvation history. As the scribe recounts in chapter 62, Kempe's behaviour becomes devotionally legible to him, intellectually and emotionally, as he recalls the *Life of Mary D'Oignes*.[14] A lay woman with no established place in ecclesiastical structure becomes recognisably religious as she is reassembled alongside existing models of devotional practice: those of recent vintage and those in the Bible. How far this recognition is Margery's and to what extent the scribes' is a boundary that is probably impossible to determine.[15] One example must suffice for illustration. When Kempe is examined in Leicester before the abbot of St Mary's monastery, and the Dean of Leicester in the church of All Saints, the abbot and his assessors (with great spatial appropriateness) sit at the altar as she details an orthodox account of the sacrament of the Eucharist (p. 234). Quoting from the Bible in English, Margery publically challenges the Mayor's moral standing, while in retaliation the Mayor scoffs at the sanctity of her white clothes and accuses her of coming to lead away the townswomen

(pp. 235–6). All this while, the townsfolk stand on stools to gape at a parish drama which bears more than a passing resemblance to Christ's interrogation before the high priests in a mystery play. When she is sent to the abbey for further interrogation, the canons come out to give her shelter. To Margery, they appear as the 'Lord comyng wyth his apostelys'. She is so ravished into devotional contemplation that she is unable to stand up, 'but lenyd hir to a peler in the chirche' (p. 238). In Leicester's pre-eminent ecclesiastical space, and with consummate theatrical blocking, Margery is supported in her mystical vision of Christ's second coming by one of the pillars of St Mary's Abbey. Margery takes her fifteenth-century place in scriptural time and salvation history by using a fixture of the church as a prop for her body. The daughter of the mayor of King's Lynn, erstwhile brewer and mother of fourteen children, a woman without place within contemporary religious structures and categories, is conveyed dramatically into theological and social orthodoxy. She takes up a place in and through narratives that otherwise would exclude her on account of having no room to recognise her devotional irregularity.[16]

Chaucer's writing occupies a recognisable place in this blurring of boundaries between historical materiality, scriptural history and contemporary fictions. As in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, it is hard to separate confections of the author and 'somebody else', and it is difficult to tell text from voice. But those confusions are differently inflected from those encountered in *Kempe*. In Chaucer's writings, it is Chaucer as author who reads between the lines. Chaucer transports textual versions of his own body in and amongst those other fictional bodies he brings into being. Between diverse fragments of *The Canterbury Tales* and beyond, a body that is available to be recognised as Chaucer's, whether through voice or through narrative appearance, becomes transitive amongst bodies that are multiply told, heard and seen. Shuttled back and forth in and amongst *The Canterbury Tales* and between other Chaucerian works, bodies are confected in ways recognisable from religious texts and material cultural practices. Versions of personhood play out in vernacular poetry that confound distinctions between discrete textual productions, between maker and made, and between sacred and profane. In the process – and this is what is distinctively Chaucerian – that traffic of human bodies transports literary corpora. Literary works written in the past keep present company with those in the process of being made. The movement of Chaucerian bodies makes texts float free through the boundaries that have come to be seen to hold

them up in proper place.[17] Chaucer arrives before later writers and critics at a future he has already fashioned. *Bodily transport between Chaucer's own works anticipates the transport that is yet to be made of them in works that he did not compose.*

I discuss the movement of Chaucerian bodies (including Chaucer's own) between fragments of *The Canterbury Tales* 'authentic' and 'apocryphal' in Chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 3 shows how a specific body part, Chaucer's hand, moves between a bricolage of other hands that he wrote, and hands that later illustrators made of them. Chaucer's hand gets caught up in the telling not only of Chaucerian literary history but of critical stories of its reception further afield. These corporeal movements are anticipated by Chaucer's writing even before the writing of *The Canterbury Tales* and their aftermath. The fashioning of the narrator in *The Book of the Duchess* projects a version of physical and literary bodiliness that sets in motion a translation of persons – and corpora – that anticipates the work of *The Miller's Tale*. Between a dream vision written for the most powerful nobleman in the land, and a fabliau voiced by a churl, Chaucerian bodies and Chaucerian corpora are trafficked in and through some rather startling incarnations of the Virgin Mary.

When the scene of Gabriel's Annunciation is figured in stained glass windows, the Virgin Mary is seated with a book in her lap. There is a window behind her. A beam of light, often issuing forth from a dove, streams through the glass. In its passage through the glass without fracturing it the light represents the Holy Spirit penetrating Mary's human body whilst leaving it intact. The word of God is made flesh within the body of a mortal woman without breaking Mary's virgin seal. Thus is the unfathomable mystery of the Virgin Birth blazoned. Placed in front of a window, in a window, Mary becomes bathed in the artificial light of the glazier's craft, the light of the Holy Spirit, and the natural daylight of the world beyond the church's stone walls.[18] In *The Book of the Duchess* these iconographical figurations come to tell a story of literary production in which the body of the dreaming narrator becomes the body of the Virgin Mary. The Dreamer falls asleep 'ryght upon' the book he has taken to bed (274–5). The Virgin's book that symbolises the Word of God she is to bear is become an anonymous tome that the narrator is unable to keep open before his eyes. There is a 'gret hep' of birds outside (295) whose singing fills the whole chamber with a heavenly harmony that the narrator has not hitherto experienced (307–20). His chamber is full of windows glazed with stories of Troy and its walls are painted with the *Romance of the Rose*:

> And sooth to seyn, my chambre was
> Ful wel depeynted, and with glas
> Were al the wyndowes wel yglased
> Ful clere, and *nat an hole ycrased*,
> That to biholde hyt was gret joye.
> For hooly al the story of Troye
> Was in the glasynge ywroght thus,
> Of Ector and kyng Priamus …
> And alle the walles with colours fyne
> Were peynted, bothe text and glose,
> Of al the Romaunce of the Rose.
> My wyndowes were shette echon,
> And thrugh the glas the sonne shon
> Upon my bed with bryghte bemes,
> With many glade gilde stremes.[19]

Line 324 explicitly draws attention to how the glass is not cracked; there is no *hole* in it. Light shines through the 'shette' windows and bathes the narrator's bed with bright beams. As he announces the onset of his dream just before this description, the narrator has told us, in a seemingly comically irrelevant detail, that he lies in his bed 'al naked' (293). When we aggregate all the details of book, birds, window, uncracked glass, texts, and vulnerable body, we see that this is not just a dream vision; this is an Annunciation scene retold. The light that travels in through the sealed window quickens the narrator's naked body with new word from previous literary works. God's Word becoming flesh becomes the light of literary precedent that in-forms a new body of text. A new literary corpus, a naked text that is the narrator's body, becomes glossed with the spirit of Classical and Continental literary heritage. Transported to an English poem, the foundational moment of human salvation history becomes an originary scene of English vernacular writing that will fuse what has already been written with a new body of work produced by this Chaucerian narrator.

The narrator's body is simultaneously the body of the Virgin Mary and a textual corpus produced in the fullness of time. Humble, ordinary, the narrator is picked out to produce new work that will transform what has already been written in the present moment of the poem. The feminised narrator becomes pregnant with pre-existent word that forges a new testament of literary history that is already prefigured by the old and which it is in the process of fulfilling. In his textual incarnation as Mary, the narrator is intermediary between word and body, male and female, past

and future, sacred and secular. As Mary, the male narrator embodies writing as reception that plays between temporal boundaries. Material borders (the glass windows) are sealed but the images they contain are uncontained. In a literary chamber that refigures the Virgin's womb, textual containment and dissemination cannot be told apart. The dreamer is not literally Chaucer, of course; not in the historical sense. But if we follow the invitation to figure that is cued both by the reprise of iconographical signs and by the collocation of 'peynte' with 'bothe text and glose', then the windowed body is Chaucer's just as much as the *Transport* body in Canterbury Cathedral is Gormley's. The dreamer of *Duchess* narrates into being the present and future work of the poet Geoffrey Chaucer. With this audacious arrogation of incarnational theology, the Mother of God is the Father of English poetry.[20]

Even more audacious perhaps is what this annunciatory scene becomes in *The Miller's Tale*. Old Testament Noah's Flood is restaged by fourteenth-century New Testament fictional characters. In a 'legende and a lyf / Bothe of a carpenter and his wyf' (I.3141–2), John the carpenter becomes Joseph. Alison, his wife, is the Virgin Mary. She receives a somewhat secularised version of Gabriel's salutation to Mary, as Nicholas, the singer of 'Angelus ad virginem' (I.3216), grabs her by the 'queynte' (I.3274). The foundational moment of salvation history is become a student's sexual assault on his landlady. At the end of the tale, the Annunciation glass of *The Book of the Duchess* becomes the open bow shot (hinged) window in an Oxford side street. The Oseney window is not sealed and uncracked, but hinged. It can be thrown open, and 'clapte to' (I.3740). It reaches (significantly) down to the waist. Memorably, of course, it is a window out of which body parts protrude, fart and are met with kisses, and/or red hot pokers. And it is out of this window that the Virgin Mary as Alison thrusts out a body part that goes unmentioned in the Bible:

> Derk was the nyght as pich, or as the cole,
> And at the wyndow out she putte hir hole.

$$(I.3731–2)$$

Partly because the scene is set in pitch black night (no gilded dove-like beams shine through *this* window), quite which 'hole' Alison presents is left unspecified (I.3732).[21] That remains a matter of a woman's 'pryvetee' (I.3164). The inscrutability of Alison's 'hole' is a secular retelling of the theological mystery of the Virgin Birth. Neither the window nor Alison's body is unsealed in *The Miller's*

Tale; but the guarded silence about the nature of her aperture still cloaks the permeability of a woman's body in mystery. Absolon's disgust about encountering what he thinks is a beard gets us no closer to understanding exactly what hole of Alison's body he has encountered. Neither does Nicholas's gleeful riposte, '[a] berd! A berd! … by Goddes corpus' (I.3742–3). In its yoking of unclassifiable pubic hair to God's body the oath simply serves to intensify the confusion.[22] Between *The Book of the Duchess* and *The Miller's Tale*, the body of Our Immaculate Lady and the body of 'Chaucer' are become an Oxford 'prymerole' (I.3268). The translucent purity of an Annunciation window, and an originary writing scene of English vernacular poetry, is become a woman scandalously thrusting her nethers through an open window in a fourteenth-century public street. While John Joseph the carpenter tries to keep Alison/Mary 'narwe in cage' (I.3224), she escapes the spatial and temporal boundaries that would narrowly confine her. Eternal time, salvation history, fourteenth-century carnality and transport between earlier and later Chaucerian texts all come together as she (or should that be Chaucer?) plays her part faultlessly in the story of the rear window.

   The Miller's Tale restages the incarnational poetics of *Duchess* in theologically resonant fleshliness. The *Duchess* scene explicitly raises questions of how you read a text/body; the end of *The Miller's Tale* revisits these questions through the unreadability of Alison's *hole* as a figure for the inscrutability of God's body. Chaucer's dreaming corpus travels through time and through text to become incorporate with the bodies of the Virgin Mary and the coltish wife of an Oxford carpenter. Theologically quizzical fabliau keeps place with aristocratic dream vision in-formed by Classical and Continental reading. Written by Chaucer the poet and told by a miller who usurps the speaking place of a monk, Alison's body in the window incorporates past and present Chaucerian corpora with dark theology in contemporary vernacular voice.

   It is fitting, perhaps, that the body who in her earliest incarnation is a Chaucerian narrator should turn out to be one of Chaucer's most well-travelled fictional creations. Alison's is a body that is transitive not just in the work that calls her by name but also in other fragments of *The Canterbury Tales* and beyond. It is a critical commonplace that Alison has already appeared in *The Canterbury Tales* by the time she gets told by the Miller. She is, of course, Emelye from *The Knight's Tale*, still clinging to vestiges of her Marian identity from *Duchess* as she is introduced

as fairer than the lily flower (I.1035–6).[23] Set in a rather differ-
ent garden from *The Knight's Tale*, the Merchant's narration of
the encounter between Damien and May up the pear tree turns
Mary/Alison/Emelye into Eve. Helen Cooper's classic study of
the girl with two lovers is also a story of bodies in transport
between *The Canterbury Tales* and beyond.[24] Alison's body floats
through Chaucerian corpora beyond those works that Geoffrey
Chaucer wrote. I explore some of her avatars in Shakespeare's
plays in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 2 I show how Alison meets
Chaucerian incarnations of herself in the unique fragment of
The Canterbury Tales now known either as *The Prologue to the
Tale of Beryn* or as *The Canterbury Interlude*. This 'apocryphal'
Canterbury narrative upsets chronological linearity and confounds
normative co-ordinates of time and place. Although *The Interlude*
comes two-thirds of the way through MS Northumberland 455, its
story is placed in Canterbury. Not only does the pilgrim assembly
arrive at a destination that is never reached by other narratives of
The Canterbury Tales but they set off for the return to London
even as the remainder of the Northumberland sequence tells the
tales of the pilgrims as they are still striving – and failing – to
reach their journey's end. Alison is one of the many persons in
The Canterbury Interlude who has already been met several times
on a reader's journey through the Northumberland codex. As
I show in Chapter 2, Kit the tapster, the woman who plays such
a central role in *The Canterbury Interlude*, plays out a part that is
conscripted with the words and actions of Alison. In turn, Alison/
Kit reprises the voice of a Chaucerian heroine from another work
entirely: Criseyde joins the all-star cast of the *Interlude* bringing
Troilus as the Pardoner along with her.

Like Alison, the Pardoner also does the rounds between
Chaucerian works. But in contrast to Alison, the Pardoner's name
does travel with him as he commutes between the canonical frag-
ments of *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Canterbury Interlude*. So
too, do recognised fragments of his body. I argue in Chapter 1
that the Pardoner's body in the *Interlude* anticipates the memorial
newness of Gormley's *Transport* body in Canterbury Cathedral.
Dramatised in the spaces between the inn and the cathedral, sus-
pended somewhere between London and Canterbury, the Pardoner
is become a portable Becketian relic whose ontology is as inscru-
table as his sexual anatomy. Signed with signs of Becket's murder
and his healing ampullae of blood and water, the Pardoner's stig-
matised sexuality conflates the desire for the revelation of hidden

human anatomy with the parading of pilgrimage trophy. With his apparently tortured phallus, and his wounds to head, back and arms, the Pardoner is a concealed display of an abjected Becket and a tormented Christ as he rides away from Canterbury in the midst of his pilgrim group.

The first two chapters of *Transporting Chaucer* attempt to keep track of some hectic intra-travel between constituent parts of a continuously evolving Chaucerian oeuvre. I show in Chapter 2 how the work of editors has swollen the volume of traffic. Through punctuation, capitalisation and emendation, persons are brought into an already populous pilgrim band from the memory of Chaucerian works beyond the *Canterbury Tales*, and beyond the oeuvre of Chaucer's canonical texts. In one instance, Furnivall's supplying of a line to *The Canterbury Interlude* is prompted by his memory of the Great Chaucer window unveiled in Westminster Abbey in 1868. Trailed into the poem are not only versions of Chaucer but an assembly of ladies from a blend of apocryphal Chaucerian texts. *The Canterbury Interlude* has become part of a recognisable landscape of Chaucerian literary criticism. Not so the text that follows it in MS Northumberland 455. Partly because it is a long redaction of an even longer fourteenth-century Anglo-Norman romance, *The Tale of Beryn* has been seen as a no-through-road back to Chaucer. Chapter 2 argues for a different version of events. The plots of *Beryn* and *Bérinus* depend on the instability of the signs of personhood. As a consequence, characters are made up back and forth between the French version of the story and its English redaction. In their Canterbury setting, narrated by a Merchant pilgrim, preceded by a Chaucerian Prologue and in the midst of a codex of *The Canterbury Tales*, the foreign bodies of *Bérinus* become persons rather familiar from the works of Chaucer. The most striking re-semblance is between the mysterious shape-shifting person of Gioffrey/Geffrey and the inconsistent cameo appearances of Chaucer's body in different parts of his oeuvre.

The re-citation of personal names plays a significant role in the border crossings I analyse in Chapters 1 and 2. While Proper Names create the appearance of separation and distinctions between bodies, that illusion is shattered when individual names turn out to be rather more common. Names shared between texts, even when written more than a century apart, trail the memory of bodies into narratives where they ought not (strictly speaking) to appear. Names play a vital part in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is often remarked that in this play Shakespeare took the name

of Philostrate and Egeus from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*. I argue in Chapter 4 that the dramatic reality is far more complex. Nothing in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is just a name. When Shakespeare includes Philostrate and Egeus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he recalls and foretells a complex interweaving of past, present and future bodies in which *The Knight's Tale* gets caught up in an unravelling of the borders of literary history. Chapter 4 shows how the anticipated memory of characters who ought to feature as part of a story but do not appear to be on stage folds three tellings of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* into co-temporality. When Theseus lets slip in Act 5 that he has already returned a conqueror from Thebes before he has actually razed the city to the ground he unfolds a wrinkle in time that discloses the memorial presence of Emily and Arcite from *The Knight's Tale and Two Noble Kinsmen.* Emily and Arcite cannot be properly admitted to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* because they would wreck the couplings of the play on which Theseus's dynastic desires depend. As *Two Noble Kinsmen* shows, the intratemporal presence of Emily and Arcite frustrates diachronic arithmetic and plays havoc with normative couplings. When Emily and Arcite become available to the temporal imagina-tion of these three works, chronology and heteronormativity will not work.

   The chapter shows how Emily and her avatars course through the language and imagery of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, shaping up and back like the temporally incontinent moon that dominates the play. Once noticed, neither Emily nor those other unruly women she brings in train (Alison included) can be dismissed. Philostrate is Arcite in disguise at Theseus's court, stalking the boards all along, weaving in and out of the stage directions and textual cruces between Folio and quartos. For all that the Knight and Theseus try to manage time in a fashion that suits their dynas-tic plans, temporality is not theirs to determine. Like guardians of normative disciplines of literary history, their attempts to control temporal succession are defeated by the unruliness of bodies that refuse subjection to superimpositions of time and place. The con-temporaneous bodies that spill the borders of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* pose a challenge to the placing of literary texts in genealogi-cal succession. Although I do not present it first (my own subjec-tion to a semblance of chronology in the ordering of the chapters in this book), Chapter 4 was written before the other chapters. I had not gone looking for Emily and Arcite in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on purpose. Discovering them to have been lurking there

all along prompted the question I explore throughout the work that appears in this book: what is going on when we encounter Chaucer's characters in works he did not make?

Chapter 5 continues to address that question in relation to the personnel that flit in and out of *The Knight's Tale. Two Noble Kinsmen*, William Davenant's wholly neglected seventeenth-century play *The Rivals*, Lydgate's *The Siege of Thebes* and Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite* inhabit a complex intratemporality in which poetic and royal lines of succession lack distinction. While *Two Noble Kinsmen* jestingly replays the genteel apologia for vulgarity that has become so familiar from *The Canterbury Tales*, Davenant attempts to strip sexual licence from his 1664 version of Shakespeare and Fletcher's play as part of his theatrical restoration of Charles II to the English stage. But the play cannot be rid of unruliness so easily; in part because of Davenant's meddling with names. One reason why *The Rivals* has so low a critical profile is that the names of its characters are not those of *The Knight's Tale* or *Two Noble Kinsmen*. Some names are invented, but others are the names of Lydgate's characters in his telling of the 'prequel' to *The Knight's Tale* in the *Siege of Thebes*. Davenant can be seen to swerve in and out of Fletcher and Shakespeare and Lydgate and Chaucer to tell the story of legitimate royal succession. His choice of names, however, cues the memory of noble annihilation and revolution yet to come. Only by diverting the course of Theban history and the end of *The Knight's Tale* can Davenant stave off complete disaster. But he is unable to control how his revisions spark new contention; this time, between royal mistresses. Lineage and literary succession are doubly upset, on stage and off. Davenant's contributions to the Restoration stage celebrated the joining of the laurel with the Crown, but his successor in the Poet Laureateship, John Dryden, presents a rather different tale of noble collaboration. In the Preface he writes to his version of *Palamon and Arcite*, Dryden ignores his erstwhile friend and collaborator William Davenant (and William Shakespeare, and William III) by going right back to *The Canterbury Tales* and to the Tabard when he stakes his claim to poetic lineage and Chaucer's supposed bays.

Dryden's attempts to 'restore' the Canterbury pilgrims to their rightful place and time is bound up, as is well known, with his desire to be buried in Chaucer's tomb in Westminster Abbey. We find ourselves again on a road well-travelled. Chaucerian bodies and those that would tell their time and place get shunted back and forth in time between ecclesiastical powerhouses. But as Chapter 6

argues, these churchly monuments are not as solid or as perma-
nent destinations as they are made out to be. Chapter 6 picks up
on where the Canterbury journey finished in Chapter 1; with the
prescient disclosure in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, that Canterbury
Cathedral, for all its wealth of stories told in stained glass, is a
feeble foundation on which to base enduring narrative. Chapter 6
shows that Shakespeare's 'man of gret auctoritee' in *Troilus and
Cressida* is not the Chaucer who tells *Troilus and Criseyde* but the
figure who does not want his name told in *The House of Fame*. The
action of the poem and play is told not in London but in the unruly
suburb of Southwark. The poem and the play share a distinctive
soundscape that collapses the distance that normative literary
history would put between them. As Chapter 2 has already dis-
cussed, voices and their sounds reverberate over time in ways that
override temporal segmentation and division. Trojan laud becomes
the tittle-tattle of Southbank stews. The levelling of value and
reputation is accompanied in both works by an acute sonic empha-
sis that eliminates difference between voice, sound, noise and air.
In both works, the trumpet plays a key role. Resulting from its
brazen lack of valves, the trumpet blows literary repute and stinky
fart with insouciant caprice. The final part of the chapter considers
the crucial role of silence and name in each work. The Chaucerian
narrator refuses to anchor the free-floating tidings of Troy with the
authority of a Proper Name. The figure of Antenor in *Troilus* is his
opposite: a name without a voice. On stage, but mute, Antenor is
a silent physical reminder of the fall of Troy that the audience will
already have known even through it remains explicitly unspoken
during the course of the play. And yet, directorial choices in the
play's performance history have yielded a scenario in which this
speechless body becomes spokesperson for all the characters in
Troy. Antenor and the narrator of *The House of Fame* are mirror
images of each other.

   A mirror image of a Chaucerian narrator will already have been
encountered in *Transporting Chaucer*; only in Chapter 3 it is a
mirror image of 'Chaucer himself'. This chapter explores how
hands are intermediated between visual and verbal *Canterbury
Tales*. Medieval thinking about hands was conflicted. In scientific
writings the hand is the supremely articulated part of the body:
what distinguishes a human from a beast; the maker of civilisa-
tion, indeed the instrument of the soul. In Christian penitential
writings, hands are always potentially agents of sin; especially
of wrath, avarice and lechery. Meanwhile, in courtesy literature,

hands are exquisite agents of delicacy and taste. Hands in *The Canterbury Tales* reproduce this confusion. Chaucer writes about the pastoral hand that is simultaneously the agent of sodomitical congress; the groping hand of knowledge that is simultaneously the agent of the devil's work of alchemy, and hands costumed with signs of aristocratic taste as the markers of death and erotic transgression. The hands in illustrated copies of *The Canterbury Tales* continue to confound distinction. The visual pilgrims of Ellesmere and Cambridge MS CUL Gg.4.27 are placed by the start of the tales that they narrate. But their place as ordinators is unsettled by the work of their hands. 'Ordinatio' is compromised by details that make available to the eye information that has yet to be read. Or information that does not textually 'belong' to earlier textual incarnations of a pilgrim. Or information that is derived from a place other than that of *The Canterbury Tales*. Readers who come to illustrated copies of *The Canterbury Tales* are brought face to face with bodies that may tell anticipated memories of textual hands they have encountered elsewhere. Their recall and their expectation replay text and image back and forth across the visual and verbal texts of the *Canterbury Tales* and other places besides.

The temporal movement of Chaucer's 'own' hands is especially complex. His left hand in the Ellesmere Manuscript is inseparable from the memory of his right hand in the image of Chaucer from the Harley Manuscript that contains Hoccleve's *De Regimine Principum*. Chaucer's left hand is a little text hand: a manicule. Manicules have lives of their own. They provide orderly navigation through a text for readers even as they re-present its contents with unruly disregard. Chaucer's left hand dramatises the full range of textual movement that manicules can orchestrate. Remembered and anticipated between Ellesmere and Harley, the work of this left manicule conflates the roles of poet, narrator, pilgrim storyteller, writer, reader; both living and dead. Without doubt, the most famous image of Chaucer, the one that is most frequently repro-duced, is his Ellesmere self, pointing with his left hand. When translated to other contexts – whether, academic books, leather bookmarks or biscuit boxes – his left index finger, as in Ellesmere, points into an empty space. For all its authoritative iconicity, however, the work of the left hand in Ellesmere can no more fix Chaucer than his shape-shifting namesake in *The Tale of Beryn* can be formally identified. After all, the narrator of *The House of Fame* wishes no one to have his name 'in honde' (1877).

A twenty-first-century readership is probably aware of how handedness has become part of a developing scientific discourse unavailable to Chaucer, but of whose significance his left hand seems pointedly prescient. Iain McGilchrist's *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* explores the different characteristics of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. The right hemisphere is associated with the left hand and vice versa. This is how McGilchrist accounts for the left-handed work of the right hemisphere. Time is experienced as duration rather than a series of individual, chronological, measured and marked-up segments. The right hemisphere processes the relational aspects of experience; knowledge in the form not of facts but encounters that are rooted in experiential encounters between one thing and something else: one person and another, or others. The right hemisphere, the part of the brain in relationship with the left hand, yields a world that is changing, evolving, interconnected, implicit, incarnate, but never fully graspable, always imperfectly known. It's the right hemisphere that allows us to understand metaphor, or to get a joke. The left hemisphere, the part of the brain in association with the right hand, produces knowledge in the form of division: clarity, fixity, and separation. Its work produces things that are known, fixed, static, isolated, explicit, disembodied: lifeless. As McGilchrist argues, we need the right and left hemispheres to work together to allow us to get around; to navigate our experiences.[25] Both hemispheres are obviously crucial to the work of scholarship. But which is the master and which the emissary? It's a coincidence (but to me, one of wonder and delight) that iconic Chaucer points with his left hand. It's a coincidence – not least, as I argue in Chapter 3 – because his left-handedness is simply a consequence of the space that was left for him to fill on a verso page. Although I have written this book with my right hand, I have tried to make it work through the guidance of Chaucer's left.

Notes

1 http://canterbury-cathedral.org/assets/files/docs/pdf/home-news/Gormley_Sculpture.pdf [accessed 6 February 2011].
2 Text cited from the explanatory notice accompanying the sculpture in the crypt.
3 As Gary Taylor remarks, 'once humans learnt to sign bodies, they could artificially mark differences between one set of bodies and

another', *Castration: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 162.

4 www.dailymail.co.uk/…/Antony-Gormley-unveils-new-artwork-Transport-Canterbury-Cathedral.html, posted 2 February 2011 [accessed 7 February 2011].

5 *OED* 'transport' (n) and (v).

6 William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman: A Complete Edition of the B-text*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt (London: Everyman, 1991), 12.16–17.

7 Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion, 1357–1900* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1960), 2 vols; D. S. Brewer (ed.), *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature* (London: Nelson, 1970); Alice S. Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); Ann Thompson, *Shakespeare's Chaucer: A Study in Literary Origins* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978); E. Talbot Donaldson, *The Swan at the Well: Shakespeare Reading Chaucer* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985); Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Theresa M. Krier (ed.), *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998); Daniel J. Pinti (ed.), *Writing after Chaucer: Essential Readings in Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century* (New York and London: Garland, 1998); Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (eds), *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400–1602* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999); Kathleen Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Counterfeit Canon* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001); Stephanie Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Thomas A. Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body: From Corpse to Corpus* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (eds), *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (London: Methuen, 2010); Andrew Higl, *Playing the Canterbury Tales: The Continuations and Additions* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

8 'Shew them the form of the house, and of the fashion thereof, the goings out and the comings in, and the whole plan thereof, and all its ordinances, and all its order, and all its laws, and thou shalt write it in their sight: that they may keep the whole form thereof, and its ordinances, and do them' (Ezekiel, 43.11).

9 And also, a very long-standing personal interest in Gormley's work. While I had no idea that the sculpture had been unveiled just before my visit; I should certainly have wanted to visit it when I had caught up with the news. I first encountered Gormley's works in an exhibition

at the Tate Modern in St Ives in 2001. One of those exhibits, *Bed*, informs my discussion of Chaucer's hands in Chapter 3.

10 Richard Beadle and Pamela King (eds), *York Mystery Plays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 211–36.

11 The window can be viewed at http://allsaints-northstreet.org.uk/ stainedglass.html.

12 The friar offers to absolve Meed of her sins if she will help with the glazing of a new window in their cloister, and promises her that she will have her name engraved therein also (*Piers* 3.47–50). The narrator provides an unambiguous gloss on the conversation, '[a]c God to alle good folk swich gravynge defendeth – / To written in wyndowes of hir wel dedes – / An aventure pride be peynted there, and pomp of the world' (*Piers* 3.64–6).

13 In *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede*, for instance, while the figure of Pierce commands the highest voice of authority in the poem even as he stands in a muddy field in abject poverty, he is not invested with the multiple roles of Langland's figure, and nor is he conflated with the author of the poem. While the voice of Pierce at the end of the poem merges with that of the narrator, the poem does not merge character with creator.

14 *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Barry Windeatt (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp. 291–7.

15 The issue of authority in the book, and the extent to which it can be seen to be Margery's, is explored by Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 1–38; Roger Ellis, 'Margery Kempe's Scribes and the Miraculous Books', in H. Phillips (ed.), *Langland, the Mystics and the Medieval Religious Tradition* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990), pp. 161–75, and Jacqueline Jenkins, 'Reading and the Book of Margery Kempe', in John H. Arnold and Katherine J. Lewis (eds), *A Companion to The Book of Margery Kempe* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 113–28.

16 Prior to 1934, however, Margery Kempe was known exclusively as a religious woman as a result of Wynkyn de Worde's printing of a seven-page quarto pamphlet that contained extracts from the more devotional parts of *The Book*. When Henry Pepwell reprinted them in an anthology of mystical pieces in 1521, he described the author as a 'devoute ancres', Allyson Foster, 'A Shorte Treatyse of Contemplacyon: The Book of Margery Kempe in Its Early Print Contexts', in *A Companion to the Book of Margery Kempe*, pp. 95–112. Foster notes the virtual absence of Kempe's own voice in these extracts, p. 97.

17 While I shall not be pursuing the concept of erotohistoriography, the arguments of Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2010), have helped to shape my own; not least that bodies are a relentlessly plural sign of being in time rather than escaping from it.

Memory and anticipation detach bodies from the contexts that may be seen to have produced them. I return explicitly to this work in Chapter 3 in my discussion of 'temporal drag'.

18 An example of a fifteenth-century Annunciation window which follows this schema exactly can be found in the Church of St Peter and St Paul, East Harling, Norfolk. Discussion of the glass can be found at *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi: Norfolk: East Harling*, www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/eastharling/history.html. A photograph of the glass is available at www.flickr.com/photos/stiffleaf/8244695806/.

19 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchess*, 321–37, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3rd revd edn. All further references to Chaucer's works are to this edition unless otherwise stated.

20 Dryden dubs Chaucer so in his *Preface to Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700), 'In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer or the Romans Virgil'. *The Works of John Dryden: Volume VII, Poems 1697–1700*, ed. Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 33/342. I return to this text in Chapter 5.

21 The indeterminacy of whether the hole is vaginal or anal is discussed by Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 224–6. She argues that the indeterminacy makes possible the substitution of male for female bodies.

22 Laura Kendrick discusses the play with the signs of genitalia and the Word of God in this Tale, *Chaucerian Play: Comedy and Control in the Canterbury Tales* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 20–33. Though chiefly concerned with male genitalia, she does also note that the Miller's advice that men should not be too inquisitive about 'Goddes pryvetee', nor that of his wife, invites the desire to be curious both about female sexuality and God's inscrutable power. Her argument does not extend to the discussion of the sexual theology of Alison's 'hole'.

23 In Annunciation iconography a potted lily flower is placed in the scene to symbolise the Virginity of Mary. The East Harling window places the lily in front of Mary. A mischievous version of this iconographical symbolism reappears in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, when the claws of the vigorously sexual cockerel Chanticleer are described as being whiter than the lily flower (VII.2863).

24 Helen Cooper, *The Structure of the Canterbury Tales* (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 227–30.

25 Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 67–70; 76–9; 95–6; 113–18; 137; 174–5.