

## Seeing, Hearing, Reading and Writing:

### Constructing Authority through Structure in Chaucer's *House of Fame*

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#### Introduction

Between its opening that does not seem to fit and its unfinished ending, the *House of Fame* remains one of Chaucer's most challenging and enigmatic poems. Particularly problematic is the function of Book One, which contains the dream vision of the Dido and Aeneas story, in the poem's incomplete, tripartite structure. In her chapter "We wretched wymen konne noon art: Dido and Geffrey in the *House of Fame*" Elaine Tuttle Hansen succinctly articulates the problem when she asks "why does a poem that turns out to be about the illusory nature of fame, truth and interpretive authority start as the story of a woman's response to a man's sexual betrayal?"<sup>1</sup> Some have suggested this is because Book One is not integral to the rest of the poem, that the poem itself was not intended as a single entity. William Quinn has written that<sup>2</sup>

despite its moral clarity, most attempts to perceive the *House of Fame* as a unified whole collapse in frustration or speculation or both because the dream's narrative structure seems so wobbly, itself a 'feble fundament' (1132).

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<sup>1</sup> Elaine Tuttle Hanson, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender*, University of California Press: Berkeley, CA 1992, 91.

<sup>2</sup> William A. Quinn, 'Chaucer's Recital Presence in the *House of Fame* and the Embodiment of Authority' *Chaucer Review* 43 (2008) 171–196, here at 171.

Larry Sklute observes that each of the three books raises a different conceptual issue, with the result that “the form of the House of Fame is at best inconclusive, at worst incoherent.”<sup>3</sup> Others attribute the poem’s apparent lack of coherence and continuity, as well as its lack of an ending, to its essential orality. John Steadman has argued that it was intended to be read aloud in three discrete, separate installments, perhaps to commemorate St Lucy’s Day (December 13), or some other public event that would correlate with the tenth of December, on which day the narrator claims to have had his dream (63),<sup>4</sup> while Ebbe Klitgard writes that “the ending could not have survived or even been written without an audience” and surmises that an unforeseen interruption of the poem’s performance at court brought it to a premature end.<sup>5</sup>

Yet others have recognized the thematic coherence of the poem: Hanson reads it in terms of gender, theorizing that the narrator, Geoffrey, is feminized through identification with Dido, while Jacqueline Miller reads all three books in terms of the construction of authorial identity.<sup>6</sup> Connecting the three books seems the more compelling argument. It is difficult to accept that an author as deliberate as Chaucer would include such a long extraneous section as part of a larger work, particularly a section that retells part of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, given Chaucer’s own concerns with literary authority. Rather, I would argue that the three books of the *House of Fame* are not only connected thematically, but that together they represent a structural whole, despite the apparent lack of a conclusion to the poem. Following Hanson and Miller, I would link the issues of gender and authority and suggest that Dido’s romantic experience with Aeneas serves as a model for Geoffrey of how to deal with fame, and the “lessons” the Chaucerian narrator learns about deceptive appearances in the first book inform his behavior in the third, bringing about the shift that concludes the poem. Such a reading not only explains the poem’s structure but is also consistent with Chaucer’s larger concerns about literary authority and reputation. In this way, Book One must be read as integral to the poem, and the

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<sup>3</sup> Larry Sklute, *Virtue of Necessity: Inconclusiveness and Narrative Form in Chaucer’s Poetry*, Ohio State University Press: Columbus, OH 1984, 47.

<sup>4</sup> John M. Steadman, ‘The House of Fame: Tripartite Structure and Occasion’, *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate* 3 (1993), 1–12..

<sup>5</sup> Ebbe Klitgard, ‘Chaucer’s Narrative Voice in the *House of Fame*’, *Chaucer Review* 32 (1998), 260–266, 265.

<sup>6</sup> Jacqueline T. Miller, *Poetic License: Authority and Authorship in Medieval and Renaissance Contexts*, Oxford University Press: New York, NY 1986, 48–72.

seemingly incongruous themes of love and fame are reconciled through both structure and language. In particular, through the acts of seeing and hearing, Geoffrey works through his anxieties about reputation, initially identifying with the scorned Dido of Book One but eventually learning to “read” her story so as to avoid being seduced by Fame in Book Three. But Dido’s experience represents more than just a cautionary tale for the narrator; by retelling the account of her betrayal by Aeneas and recasting it as a commentary on the illusory nature of fame, Chaucer is able to negotiate his relationship to Virgil, appropriating the Latin poet’s heroic epic as a reflection on the construction of literary reputation itself and in doing so, ultimately establishing his own authority as a writer.

### **The structural unity of the *House of Fame***

When we examine the language and structure of Book One of Chaucer’s *House of Fame*, it is difficult to understand how this section could be read as incidental to the rest of the poem. Specifically, the dream sequence in Venus’ temple mirrors the sequence in Fame’s house in Book Three, inviting the reader to draw parallels between Dido’s experience of love and the narrator’s experience with fame. These parallels are perhaps most clearly illustrated by comparing how the narrator describes the dwellings of these two fickle goddesses. In Book One, when Geoffrey first comes to Venus’ temple, he reports that he was:

*Within a temple y-mad of glas;  
In whiche ther were mo images  
Of gold, stondynge in sondry stages,  
And moo ryche tabernacles,  
And with perre moo pinacles,  
And moo curiouse portreytures,  
And queynte maner of figures  
Of olde werke, than I saugh ever. (120–127)<sup>7</sup>*

In Book Three, he notes similar images of “many subtil compassinges, / babewynnes and pynacles, / imageries and tabernacles” (1188–1190) at the

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<sup>7</sup> All quotes from Chaucer are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, Larry D. Benson ed., 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Boston, MA 1987.

House of Fame, but notes that they are built on the “feble fundament” of a hill of ice. Both descriptions give the impression of great beauty and magnificence. However, there is an underlying instability to these two divine dwellings, the fragility of glass and ice, which undermines their beauty. This theme of deceptive appearances is central to the poem and will manifest itself again in the behavior of Venus’ son Aeneas and of Fame herself. By representing the two temples in this way, Chaucer constructs literary edifices the appearance of which anticipates the actions that transpire within them. Thus, the visual descriptions of Venus’ temple and Fame’s house serve to illustrate two essential elements of the poem: the parallel nature of the first and third books, and the illusory natures of both love and fame.

Once Chaucer establishes the connection between Books One and Three through the description of the two dwellings, he moves on to the actions that take place within their walls: in the first book, the telling of the Dido and Aeneas story, in the third, Fame’s audience with her supplicants. In the parallel structure of the poem, Dido’s experience of betrayal serves as an allegory for what can happen as a result of placing too much trust in the seductive nature of fame; her story is closely analogous to the situation of Fame’s supplicants.

In both books, the action is initially apprehended by the narrator through his sense of sight, specifically, his reading of graven images. In Book One, Geoffrey sees the story of Dido and Aeneas engraved on a brass tablet in Venus’ temple; in Book Three, he finds the names of those who have achieved some manner of fame written on the hill of ice that serves as the foundation for the House of Fame. But these images fail to tell the whole story of what they represent. Perhaps subtly invoking the poem’s own performative nature, it is only through hearing the speeches of Dido and of Fame’s supplicants that the theme of deceptive appearances is fully revealed.<sup>8</sup>

When he first enters Venus’ temple, the narrator observes the opening lines of Virgil’s *Aeneid* “written on a table of bras: ‘I wol now synge, yif that I can, /the armes, and also the man, /that first cam, thugh his destinee, /fugityf of Troye contree’” (142–146). The focus here is clearly on Aeneas, and the narrator proceeds to summarize Virgil’s account of the hero’s adventures as he finds it engraved, until he arrives at the Dido material. At this point, in an ambiguous shift from seeing to hearing, the focus of the dream vision moves from Virgil’s

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<sup>8</sup> Ebbe Klitgaard, “‘Dreme He Barefot, Dreme He Shod’: Chaucer as a Performer of Dream Visions” *English Studies: A Journal of English Language* 81 (2000) 506–512.

words to Chaucer's; as Katherine Terrell notes, the Chaucerian narrator "usurps interpretative control of the story...and forges his own account of Dido's situation".<sup>9</sup> The narrator's initial act of reading of the tablet becomes one of performance, a first person account apparently spoken by Dido herself, but one the narrator seems to hear directly, with which he clearly identifies and sympathizes, and which he will later echo himself.<sup>10</sup> In this speech, Dido pleads with Aeneas not to leave her, making several arguments in support of her case. She asserts that she has never wronged him "Y-wis, my dere herte, /ye knowen ful wel that never yit /as fer-forth as I hadde wit /agilte I yow in thocht ne deed" (327–329). She calls on his love, and on his honor, "your bond, that ye han sworn with your ryght hond" (321–322), and finally she asks him to consider the consequences, "my crewel deth," (323) that his leaving will have for her.

Although Aeneas never speaks in his own defense, we know that he ultimately rejects her claims and leaves. Dido's response to this is not the personal complaint we might expect, but a series of general realizations about the capricious nature of all men, and the false appearance of their love:

*O, have ye men swich godlyhede  
in speche, and never a del of trouthe?  
...  
For, though your love laste a sesoun,  
wayte upon the conclusioun,  
and eek how that ye determynen,  
and for the more part diffynen. (330–331; 341–344).*

She concludes her lament by acknowledging the permanent consequences of trusting Aeneas, of making him her master, and of submitting to his authority.

In Book Three, Chaucer establishes a similar dynamic between Fame and her supplicants. Just as the narrator finds the account of Dido and Aeneas engraved on the temple wall, so he finds the names of those who have achieved fame engraved on the hill of ice that supports the House of Fame. Like the straightforward narrative account of the tablet, the silent wall of ice reveals

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<sup>9</sup> Katherine H. Terrell, 'Reallocation of Hermeneutic Authority in Chaucer's *House of Fame*' *Chaucer Review* 31 (1997), 279–290; 284.

<sup>10</sup> See below, pp. 99–100.

only “facts;” it offers no lessons, no realizations. It does, however, give an indication of Fame’s arbitrariness; the narrator notices that while some of the names are protected by the shadow of Fame’s castle, others are exposed, doomed to melt into obscurity. But the full extent of Fame’s capricious nature, like Aeneas’, is only revealed through the words of those who come seeking her favor.

Like Dido, these supplicants come with legitimate claims; they have done good works, they appeal to Fame’s honor and nobility. And as with Dido, the legitimacy of their requests has no bearing on their outcome. As the narrator states, “But thus I seye yow trewely, /what hir cause was, y niste. /For of this folk, ful wel y wiste, /they hadde good fame ech deserved, /although they were dyversly served” (1542–1546). In the response of the first group to be treated in such a manner, “‘Alas,’ quod they, ‘and welaway! Telle us, what may your cause be?’” (1562–1563), we hear an echo of Dido’s own reply to Aeneas, “‘Allas!’ quod she, ‘my swete herte/ have pitee on my sorwes smerte, /and slee mee not! Go noght away! / O woful Dido, wel away!’” (351–315). But unlike Aeneas, who never offers an explanation for his behavior (although the narrator does note that, in the *Aeneid*, Mercury “bad him go into Itaile, and leve Affrikes regioun” (430–431), Fame answers them, simply and honestly “for me lyst it not!” (1564). Her capriciousness is blatantly revealed. Whereas Chaucer may have refrained from casting Aeneas, Virgil’s hero, in an overtly negative light by leaving him silent, there is no need to protect Fame’s reputation; she *is* reputation, and there is no reason to hide her arbitrary nature. Her capriciousness is heightened by her granting of fame to those who are unworthy, as well as her denial of those who are. Ultimately, like Dido, the supplicants must accept their fate as final and unchangeable, no matter how unfortunate it may be.

### **The Narrator**

The relevance of the parallels between Books One and Three is fully revealed by considering the position of the narrator in each section. In Book I, Geoffrey identifies with Dido, in Book III, with the supplicants. However, his role in relation to each of them shifts by the end of the poem, offering some resolution in its concluding lines. In Book One, the narrator remains outside of the action for the most part, matter-of-factly relating what he observes of the Aeneas

narrative. It is only when Dido speaks that Geoffrey seems to abandon this neutral position to come down on her side. In fact, his own speech is so closely aligned with hers that they are almost interchangeable; his realizations are her realizations. He laments “hyt is not al gold that glareth” (272), and despite being one, asserts the capriciousness of men, acknowledging their deceptive appearances:

*For this shal every woman finde  
That som man, of his pure kinde,  
Wol shewen outward the faireste,  
Til he have caught that what him leste;  
And thanne wol he causes finde,  
And swere how that she is unkinde,  
Or fals, or prevy, or double was. (279–285)*

So similar are his sentiments to Dido’s that when he states “Non other auctour alegge I” (314), it is unclear if he means himself or her.

Unlike Dido, however, the narrator ultimately exists outside the narrative; while she eventually kills herself, and her story is subsumed into the larger adventures of Aeneas, Geoffrey continues on as an observer until he is transported from Venus’ temple by the golden eagle of Book Two and delivered to the House of Fame. Because the eagle prepares Geoffrey for what he will find in the House of Fame with his scientific explanations and rhetorical discourse, the relationship between Books Two and Three is explicit. However, it seems impossible to overlook the fact that that the eagle literally carries Geoffrey from Venus’ temple to Fame’s house, structurally connecting the first and third books. Toward the end of Book Two, when the narrator demurs from learning more about the constellations, claiming “it is no nede/ I leve as wel, so God me spede, / hem that wryt of this matere” (1011–1013) he raises the issue of written authority that ultimately links the two books thematically.<sup>11</sup> Once he arrives at Fame’s court, we find the narrator largely unchanged, still in the role of observer, despite the eagle’s chastisement; he takes in the castle itself, the engraved names on the hill of ice, the figures of the poets standing on their pillars, and finally the figure of Fame herself. Fame’s appearance reflects her

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<sup>11</sup> For more on the *House of Fame* as a work about “the nature of literature itself” see Terrell 1997, 279–282.

role as one who sees, hears, and passes judgment: “For as fele eyen hadde she/ as fetheres upon foules be...also fele up-standing eres/ and tonges, as on bestes heres” (1381–1382; 1389–1390). However, Chaucer’s description of her is also an unmistakable allusion to Virgil’s description of Rumor (in Latin, *Fama*) in Book Four of the *Aeneid*:

*Pinioned, with an eye beneath for every body feather,  
And, strange to say, a many tongues and buzzing  
Mouths as eyes, as many pricked-up ears,  
By night she flies between the earth and heaven  
Shrieking through darkness, and she never turns  
Her eye-lids down to sleep. (249–255)<sup>12</sup>*

Virgil offers this description within the context of explaining how Rumor spread throughout Africa the news of Dido’s dalliance with Aeneas and her neglect of Carthage, garnering the ire of rejected suitors and ultimately precipitating the gods’ command to Aeneas to leave for Italy. This reference so closely links Chaucer’s account of Fame to his account of Dido that it almost necessarily undermines any argument that Books One and Three are unrelated; not only does Chaucer use Virgil’s own words, but in doing so implies Fame’s responsibility for Dido’s downfall. It is the textual linchpin that connects the themes of love and fame, the goings-on in Venus’ temple and Fame’s house.

Additionally, the narrator notes that Fame’s hair shines like burnished gold, and that she is a shape-shifter, appearing to go from very small to very large in moments. These attributes reinforce the narrator’s observation from Book One that “Hit is not al gold, that glareth” and suggests that Fame, like Aeneas, might not be reliable, despite her apparent beauty. It is this second aspect of Fame’s nature that draws Geoffrey more directly into the narrative. As before, he makes no attempt to participate in the scene around him until the supplicants come forward. His consternation at Fame’s unfair judgments echoes Dido’s response to Aeneas, his own response to Dido’s plight, and the words of the supplicants themselves: “Alas, I thoughte I, `what adventures /han these sory creatures! /For they, amonges al the pres /shul thus be shamed, gilteles! /But what! hit moste nedes be” (1631–1634).

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<sup>12</sup> Virgil, *The Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. Vintage Classics: New York, NY 1990.



For all that the narrator appears to sympathize with those treated unfairly in both the first and third books, his identification thus far has been somewhat detached. It is not until the end of Book III, when an unidentified figure approaches him and asks “frend, what is thy name? Artow come hider to han fame?” (1871–1872), that the narrator is called to participate in what he has thus far only observed. This question jars Geoffrey out of his passive role and forces him to make a choice: either to continue to identify with Dido and the supplicants, or to reject their position. This is the narrator’s moment of truth, and his response represents a rejection of his identification with the poem’s victims:

*I cam noght hider, graunt mercy!  
 For no swich cause, by my heed!  
 Suffyceth me, as I were deed,  
 That no wight have my name in honde.  
 I woot my-self best how I stonde;  
 For what I drye or what I thinke,  
 I wol my-selven al hit drinke,  
 Certeyn, for the more part,  
 As ferforth as I can myn art. (1874–1883)*

With this speech, Geoffrey avoids the error of Dido and the supplicants; he is not seduced by the appearance of golden Fame into making her his master, does not seek to have his name added to the list engraved in the hill of ice. Chaucer again uses linguistic echoes to illustrate both the narrator’s identification with Dido and his ultimate departure from her position; the assertion he makes in the last line of the above quote recalls Dido’s famous lament that “we wrecched wommen konne non art” (336) even as he contradicts her sentiment.

While the above passage may be read as the narrator’s assertion of self and poetic freedom, it is his following two statements that mark a turning point in the narrative. When the unidentified speaker asks Geoffrey why he has come, if not for fame, the narrator responds that he came:

*Som newe tydings for to lere  
 Som newe thinges, I not what.  
 Tydinges, other this or that,*

*Of love, or swiche thinges glade.  
 For certeynly, he that me made  
 To comen hider seyde me,  
 I shulde bothe here and see,  
 In this place, wonder thinges. (1886–1893)*

In this passage, he asserts that he has come to the House of Fame not to receive fame, but to see and hear things, in so doing, claiming for himself the means of establishing authority. In the following lines, the narrator subverts Fame when he makes it clear that he finally understands her illusory nature, thus undermining her authority, and lessening his own vulnerability to it:

*But certeynly, I niste how  
 Ne wher that Fame dwelte, er now;  
 Ne eek of hir descripcioun,  
 Ne also hir condicioun,  
 Ne the ordre of hir dome,  
 Unto the tyme I hider come. (1901–1906)*

The final pages of the poem bring us back to the themes established in Book One through the description of architecture. The shifts in the narrator's position are marked by a shift in the action and location within the poem, and are represented by the House of Rumor. The House of Rumor stands in direct contrast to both Venus' temple and the House of Fame. It is not beautiful or ornate, but just the opposite:

*And al this hous, of whiche I rede,  
 Was made of twigges, falwe, rede,  
 And grene eek, and som weren whyte,  
 Swiche as men to these cages thwyte...  
 That, for the swough and for the twigges,  
 This hous was also ful of gigges,  
 And also ful eek a chirkinges,  
 And of many other werkinges (1935–1938; 1941–1944)*

However, despite its ramshackle appearance, we are told, “hit is founded to endure” (1981). In this way, it is an inversion of the “hyt is not al gold that glareth” motif. The narrator, with his reasserted powers of seeing and hearing, is able to apprehend the nature of the tidings circulating in the House of Rumor, and the way that truth and lies are inextricably connected to one another:

*We wil medle us ech with other,  
That no man, be he never so wrothe,  
Shal han that oon of two, but bothe  
At ones, al beside his leve,  
Come we a-morwe or on eve,  
Be we cryed or stille y-rouned. (2102–2107)*

This knowledge, in conjunction with his prior statement of autonomy, represents the narrator’s ultimate departure from his identification with Dido and the supplicants and brings the poem to a thematic conclusion, despite its being unfinished; armed with the knowledge he has gained, and the facilities of seeing and hearing, Geoffrey is no longer vulnerable to deceptive appearances or to the whims of Fame.

### **No ending, one conclusion**

The preceding analysis suggests that, far from being incidental to the poem, Book One shares close similarities in both language and structure with Book Three, and consequently, they should be read together as part of a coherent whole connected by the eagle’s discourse on authority. This consideration is not only structural, but also thematic; Dido’s romantic relationship with Aeneas serves as both a model for the way Fame operates, as well as a lesson in deceptive appearances. Her story both provides a means of understanding the narrator’s position, and serves as a point of departure from it. Based on this reading, Book One should be read as an integral part of *The House of Fame* and seen as essential to its structural integrity and its construction of meaning.

This reading is somewhat problematized by the unfinished nature of the poem, which calls its symmetrical structure into question. However, I would argue that the ending of the poem, while appearing to be incomplete, actually

represents a satisfying, appropriate (and possibly deliberate) conclusion—perhaps a case of the poem’s form mirroring its function, with the ending yet another example of appearances being deceiving. The dream vision concludes with the arrival of “the man of greet auctoritee” and then trails off. Quinn has noted several possibilities for the man’s identity, including “John of Gaunt, Richard II, Boethius, Boccaccio, a master of Christmas revels, an Italian ambassador, and Christ”.<sup>13</sup> Alternatively, I would suggest that we need look no further than the text itself for his identity. In *Chaucer and Langland: The Antagonistic Tradition*, John Bowers has observed that, while William Langland had a problem with beginnings, starting *Piers Plowman* over and over again, Chaucer “created notorious problems with his endings,” as reflected in the unfinished *Anelida and Arcite*, *Legend of Good Women*, and the *Canterbury Tales* themselves. Bowers argues that it is just this resistance to finishing that cements Chaucer’s own fame, ensuring that his works will have an enduring reputation precisely because they are never rendered finite: “nothing so clearly indicates the poet’s sense of himself as founder of an ongoing tradition than his refusal to impose closure upon his literary projects...it was a ploy that actually solidified Chaucer’s executive position.”<sup>14</sup> The ending of Chaucer’s *House of Fame* perfectly exemplifies this dynamic: having moved through identification with the poem’s victims and instruction by the eagle, to a usurpation of Fame’s powers of seeing and hearing, at the end of the poem Geoffrey himself assumes the role of the man of great authority, but stops before his position can be challenged. As Terrell argues, “fame and authority are equally impossible without an audience, and thus readership and authorship are inextricably bound in an ongoing process of literary production.”<sup>15</sup> By denying closure to his audience, Chaucer is able to maintain literary authority on his own terms.

When the poem’s ending is read in this way, Dido’s account in Book One takes on added significance; as both retelling and revision of the *Aeneid*, it represents Chaucer’s appropriation of Virgil’s literary authority to establish his own. We have seen elsewhere where Chaucer deftly, and often ironically, adopts a stance of “deference and displacement” with his sources,<sup>16</sup> nowhere

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<sup>13</sup> Quinn 2008, 195, n 64.

<sup>14</sup> John M. Bowers, *Chaucer and Langland: The Antagonistic Tradition*, University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame, IN 2007, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Terrell 1997, 289.

<sup>16</sup> Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, Ruth Evans (eds), *The Idea of the Vernacular*, The Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, PA 1999, 7.

more notably than at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde*, where he humbly and reverentially sends his own book off to follow in the footsteps of the great classical poets while simultaneously eliding his indebtedness to Boccaccio:

*Go, litel book, go litel myn tragedie,  
Ther God thy maker yet, er that he dye,  
So sende might to make in som comedie!  
But litel book, no making thou n'envye,  
But subgit be to alle poesy;  
And kis the steppes, wher-as thou seest pace  
Virgile, Ovyde, Omer, Lucan, and Stace. (1786–1792)*

It is no coincidence that these Greek and Latin poets of the Trojan War are also among those the narrator observes elevated on strong pillars within Fame's house, among whom is also included "Englissh Gaufride" (1470), often read as Geoffery of Monmouth, but just as convincingly interpreted as Chaucer himself.<sup>17</sup> This alone should cause us to question any reading of the *House of Fame* that sees Book One as inconsequential to the rest of the poem, as it is unlikely that Chaucer would invoke the work of one of the most influential of classical poets without some sort of authorial self-fashioning in mind. As Lara Ruffolo concludes in her examination of the many lists in the *House of Fame*, once Chaucer

has destroyed the traditional idea that poetic authority inheres in the historic or sacred truth of the text, the 'anxiety of influence' that concerns Chaucer is his influence on his readership. He can control his readers' impression of his work only through his writing.<sup>18</sup>

Through Geffery's seeing and hearing in Venus' temple and Fame's house, Chaucer moves from reading his literary predecessors to establishing his own authority in writing, in large part by appropriating their ideas to meditate on the very nature of literary fame. Thus, the 'non-ending' of the *House of Fame*

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<sup>17</sup> Helen Cooper, 'Four Last Things in Dante and Chaucer: Ugolino in the House of Rumor', *New Medieval Literatures* 3 (1999), 39–66.

<sup>18</sup> Lara Ruffolo, 'Literary Authority and the Lists of Chaucer's *House of Fame*: Destruction and Definition through Proliferation' *Chaucer Review* 27 (1993), 325–341, here at 339.

seems a fitting ending indeed, as both closure to the poem's parallel structure and as an assertion of the poetic authority that that structure establishes.

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