

violence by also considering the perceptual links between gunpowder and pollution of both the body and mind, as expressed, for instance, in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Volpone*.

The conclusion examines the evolving relationship between outdoor and indoor staging practices and aerial spaces from 1608 onwards. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* offers a welcome opportunity to draw together the various strands of argument developed throughout the monograph: "Shakespeare considers the relationship between elemental air and the imaginative transmission of his airy fictions; evokes the meteorological and atmospheric conditions of his imagined island; and alludes to open-air staging effects that might perceptibly transform a playhouse's aerial environment" (268).

Overall, this monograph offers an excellent range of readings that show how air itself acts as a crucial "theatrical signifier" (33). Written with admirable clarity and coherence, the book brings to our attention the many ways in which playwrights, actors, and audiences engaged with aerial spaces and early modern discourses surrounding the element of air. As such, this monograph forms a key contribution both to the cultural history of air and to the study of early modern drama and performance. With its combined focus on aerial environments and theater, it would also make a compelling read for anyone interested in ecocriticism and environmental humanities.

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Chaucer and the Ethics of Time. Gillian Adler.

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In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Cordelia claims that "time shall unfold what pleated cunning hides" (1.1.280). In *Chaucer and the Ethics of Time*, Gillian Adler unfolds Chaucer's narrative use of time, reading ethical implications into it, and into his poetic designs. Building on recent theoretical approaches to time as a central aspect of premodern literary texts, Adler proposes to study Chaucer's handling of time as theme and structuring principle. The interaction of both, she argues, is essential to grasping Chaucer's "temporal ethics," contending that the author of *The Canterbury Tales* is highly aware of "the various ways in which time fragments human vision and, accordingly, affects ethical choices" (3). Key for Chaucer's notion of time are Boethius and Augustine. The *Consolation of Philosophy* provided Chaucer with a frame that established the importance of the perception of time for a moral understanding of the world, namely in the image of the wheel of fortune. Augustine's *Confessions* and his distinction between time and eternity—or the awareness of timelessness—triggered repercussions in the narrative sense of time and history, for Chaucerian characters and the reader alike. Against this philosophical background and the material context of newly invented technologies for the measurement of time, like the mechanical clock, Adler examines Chaucer's ethics of time.

The book is divided into five chapters, each of them exploring a different Chaucerian work. Chapter 1 examines the relationship between the perception of time and the recovery from grief in *The Book of the Duchess*. Adler notes how “the narrative time of the dream vision . . . places a demand on the moderation of nostalgia and grief, simultaneously commemorating Blanche and advising against a debilitating longing for the past” (22). The interaction between two temporal experiences, the backward-looking grief and the forward-looking recovery and healing, generates consolation, Adler contends. This is achieved, “through philosophical intertext and the interplay between formal and discursive time, rather than overt instruction” (50).

The next chapter, “Seeing Time and the Illusion of Control in *Troilus and Criseyde*,” focuses on the Boethian material Chaucer added to the Trojan story. Adler explores the moral and philosophical framework of the story in which characters who confidently believe they are in control over time and destiny unexpectedly find themselves in a tragic ending. Their sense of inability to grasp time and change the progress of history evinces, she argues, a Boethian sense of tragedy significantly impacting characters like Criseyde. Adler points out that in *Troilus and Criseyde* “time and time-consciousness dramatically effect ethical behavior in the poem, fostering a sympathy for the characters and adding nuance to previously moralising character portrayals” (55).

The temporal dimensions of reputation in *The House of Fame* are the focus of the third chapter. Through the study of the literary devices in the poem, Adler shows that Chaucer’s poetic handling of the concern with illusory fame is conveyed with manipulations of the narrative sequence and the dislocation of story time from narrative time. In the following chapter, “The Process of Time in the *Parliament of Fowls*,” Adler examines Chaucer’s ambiguous attitude toward moral discourses on time, or rather on wasting time, considered a sin in medieval times. The final chapter, “Nonlinear Time in Chaucer’s Frame-Narrative and the Wife of Bath’s Prologue,” examines temporality in the frame narrative of *The Canterbury Tales* and the Wife of Bath’s Prologue. While the former exhibits, in Adler’s view, a multiplicity of attitudes to time corresponding to the multiplicity of pilgrims, the latter transmits the Wife of Bath’s formulation of her own temporalities, as expressed through subversive forms of time like digressions, interpolations, exclamations, and rhetorical embellishments. She challenges “expectations of sequence and order,” bringing awareness of “feminist models of time to reading narrative temporality in Chaucer’s works” (169).

Chaucer and the Ethics of Time offers an original reading of Chaucer’s works in which time is at the center of his texts. Beyond discussing the representation of temporality or the perception of time, Adler’s study deftly shows Chaucer’s awareness of the ethical implications of time, reflected in the literary design of his writings.

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