Impact Factor: 8.67

ISSN:0976-8165

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Debate Over Dreams in Chaucer's "The Nun's Priest's Tale"

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14977355

Article History: Submitted-01/01/2025, Revised-25/01/2025, Accepted-11/02/2025, Published-28/02/2025.

Abstract:

Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Nun's Priest's Tale," a well-known comedy, tackles a variety of scholarly topics and maintains its inventiveness by highlighting both medieval and contemporary elements. The bestiary, a great example of Chaucer's mature work, offers commentary on a wide range of topics, including men's relationship to fortune, free will, wedded love, learning from everyday life, and the medieval debate on dreams. There, Chaucer combines two of the most important sources of dreams: the scientific and the theological. The dream metaphor has been cleverly used by the author to highlight a deeper truth, namely how people fail to recognize wrongdoing. In this dream debate, Chaucer reveals his humorous outlook on life and his calm handling of domesticity inside the family, as well as a parallel analysis of scientific and classical arguments to provide moral guidance. To address the poem's central issue, this study will examine the dream debate between Chauntecleer and Pertelote, the husband and wife.

Keywords: Argument about Dreams, Metaphor, Bestiary, Comic Narrative, and Comic Vision.

Chaucer's charisma captures the entire medieval scene in Dryden's highest laud, "Here is God's plenty" (13); he is the real reservoir of England in the fourteenth century. A well-known humorous tale, Geoffrey Chaucer's (1340–1400) "The Nun's Priest's Tale" (c. 13921) addresses a variety of scholarly topics and maintains its inventiveness by emphasizing both medieval and contemporary elements. Chaucer's mature work, The Bestiary, is a notable example of his commentary on a variety of topics, including married love, life lessons, the medieval dream argument, and the relationship between free will and luck. By Chaucer's day, dream allegory had become a common practice in poetry. Chaucer's early lengthy works, such as The House of

Fame and The Book of the Duchess also adhered to this pattern. He was familiar with the French poem of courtly love and dream tradition known as the Romance of the Rose (or Roman de la Rose) from the fourteenth century. Chaucer, however, handles dreams with elegance, metaphor, and heraldic colors, in contrast to Guillaume's amorous intervention or Jean de Meun's cynical handling of them.

The mock epic "The Nun's Priest's Tale" is a tale about the animal kingdom making fun of human stupidity and vices. However, beneath this innocent exterior, the much-discussed Chaunceter's dream dilemma is revealed. Early one spring morning, Chauntecleer, a cock, has a nightmare in which a hound-like creature is prowling around the yard and attempting to get him. The most beloved of Chauntecleer's seven wives, Lady Pertelote, blames this on overeating and chastizes her husband for giving such a trivial issue any thought. She provides digestive aids and suggests a laxative for him. "Now consider Cato. He was a very wise man. Did he not say,

'Take no account of dreams?'" She added,

"Now, sir, as we take off from these beams,

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10448030

Please take a laxative for God's sake. "The Tale of the Nun's Priest" 120–21

Although Chauntecleer expresses gratitude to his wife, he maintains that his dream is prophetic and backs up his claims with allusions to Cato, St. Kenelm, the Old Testament characters Daniel and Joseph, and other sources: "Madam," he responded, "I appreciate your knowledge. Nevertheless, in regards to Cato, without a doubt, his wisdom has some notoriety. Dreams have frequently been interpreted… (15059).

Chauntecleer's puerile thinking rejects the divine warning because his ladylove questions and hurts his manly ego. Lady Pertelote's Is it merely creative, Chauntecleer, to use a skillful approach to divert her husband's attention and force him to ignore the implications of her dream by claiming that she can no longer love a coward? "You've forfeited my heart and lost my love. I cannot love a coward, come what may" (90–91). Chauntecleer's confidence is undermined by Pertelote's constant verbal barrage. Chauntecleer must endure cowardly comments like "*h+, have you no manly heart to match your beard?" to appease the zealot. (100). My main goal is not that his dream turns out to be real, but rather the argument about his dream between The purpose of the paper is to examine Chauntecleer and Pertelote, the husband and wife. According to Payne, there are "two [major] perspectives relating that there are two explanations for the origins of dreams: the first is that they are brought on by the body's condition or disposition, and the second is that they have a supernatural meaning that predicts future occurrences (47). According to Payne, the former is as materialistic as it is physical. It is placed in the mouth of Dame Pertelote, a simple, unremarkable person whose thoughts are focused on material" possessions. The latter is attributed" to

Chantecleer, whose creative character is contrasted with that of her wife Is the result of the occult or supernatural? From his comb that resembles red coral to his azure toes, from his burnished gold feathers to his lily-white nails, Chuntecleer is portrayed as a hero whose physical beauty serves as

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a reminder of a prince's virtuosity. However, he has conflicted feelings about his most lovable wife, Pertelote. Curry writing instruments: No matter how polite, dapper, and amiable she may be, the fair "demoiselle Pertelote" is by nature practical and unimaginative; she is a scientist who has studied numerous odd nooks and crannies of medical knowledge. Chauntecleer is an egotist who is conceited enough to pretend to be a philosopher and a serious occultist.

In his 1965 paper "The Nun's Priest's Tale" from The Art of the Canterbury Tales, Ruggiers offers an intriguing—philosophical yet humorous—interpretation of this argument from the perspective of marital domesticity. By using the argument between the wife and husband, for example, Chauntecleer politely and respectfully starts a conversation with Pertelote, but it ends in conceit when Chaucer breaks into the house and makes fun of everyday tasks. Chauntecleer's manly vanity is wounded, so he tries to assert his manliness over his wife by presenting the opinions of other philosophers to refute Cato, as his wife has suggested, and the idea that dreams do have some validity. In closing, Chauntecleer references a fable that goes, "Things may lie hidden for a year or two,/ But still, murder will out'… ("NPT" 226-27). Chauntecleer's second lesson is that people shouldn't ignore their dreams because doing so could get them into trouble: "That many are a sign of trouble breeding" (279). The foundation of

Chauntecleer's argument is the belief that dreams are ominous. And could have lethal results.

Early morning dreams also have a lot of meaning. He continues by outlining the terrible destiny of St. Kenelm, the Mercian king, who was murdered by the assassin of his dream. Chauntecleer claims that his dream has great meaning and is not the product of "an upset in his humor."

Pertelote claims that dreams are nothing more than vanity, while Chauntecleer refutes her claim by citing biblical passages. According to him, Daniel in the Book of Daniel hardly ever thought of

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dreams as vanity. The additional classical allusions Chauntecleer uses are intended to support his counterargument, which holds that his early morning dream does have prophetic meaning. As a result, his agitated mind feels threatened by a poisonous future rather than settling into the prescribed laxatives. It is important to keep in mind that Pertelote's medications for her husband are solely based on her scientific background. Chaucer foregrounds the main clash between science and theology, the modern and the medieval, by emphasizing this debate between Chauntecleer and Pertelote. The chandelier was undoubtedly given the much-needed laxative by Pertelote, but did she mean to disregard the dream entirely? She believed that her husband's dream was the result of a natural defect; therefore, it makes sense that she was unable to recognize its Implications. In addition to the two main meanings that have already been covered, dreams during the Middle Ages were also believed to be divinely inspired, to have some prophetic meaning, and to be most likely to occur in the morning. According to Pertelote, dreams are meaningless and only result from abdominal dysfunction ("NPT" 104): The redness in your dream tonight Is undeniable. Originates from the energy and superfluity of your blood's red color. Naturally. That's what makes a dreamer dreadful. (106-09) Like a devoted wife, Dame Pertelote recommends Chauntecleer plants from their farmyard as a remedy since she presupposes that the latter is constipated entirely. Pertelote elaborates on the belief held by many elderly doctors on "what kind of bodily conditions engender dreams of a particular kind" by characterizing dreams as vain and Chauntecleer's actions as foolish (Payne 47). The eminent medical authority Galen succinctly expresses this opinion. Sanguis (blood), cholera (yellow bile), melancholia (black bile: earthy element), and phlegm are the four humors that, according to traditional medical thought, can be used to identify a person's status. Despite being "courteous," "debonair," and "companionable," the elegant Pertelote appears to be a scientist who has studied many odd facets of medical history from head to toe. Imaginative and

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arrogantly self-conscious, Chauntecleer, the egotist, presents himself as a philosopher and a loyal participant in the occult.

There will inevitably be a discussion. Chauntecleer's assertions are indisputable when the vision is genuine "omnium celeste," whereas Pertelote's judgment is well-founded when the dream is omnium naturale. Exuberant enough, Pertelote is aware of numerous more miracles regarding the Impact of humor on dreams, such as the fact that an excess of blood causes nightmares in which a man sees "red" objects or appears to be "swimming in blood," among other things. Any medieval intellect would be able to recognize the dream's warning. Pertelote is right when she gives her husband a doctorate remedy, but she ignores the underlying prophecy. On the other hand, the chancellor disregards his prescient warning because his intense love for his wife distorts his intellect. His masculine heart is absorbed by his dame's earthy splendor. As Chauntecleer's knightly virtue rejoices in ultimate delight, his passionate love for his ladylove quickly winks at his current reason: God has given me abundant grace because when I see how beautiful your face is and how beautiful your eyes are in scarlet, all thoughts of fear and confusion vanish." ("NPT" 340–43) In this poem, flattery is essential. Indeed, Chaunceler's impending calamity is accentuated by flattery. It's Interesting to note that the same flattery protected him when the fox Don Russell accidentally opened his mouth after being tricked by flattery. It is understandable why the story's lesson is that flattery weakens self-control, distorts perception, and impairs reason. Fortune's reversal, in which Chauntecleer's indigenous humor results in his escape, provides us with some insight into how man's rational behavior relates to the providential plan.

The fox's flattery overshadowed the one he used to trick his wife; once more, the cock's freedom is won by piling on flattery and praise for his protection. (Ruggiers 233) The two main sources of dreams—theological and scientific—are combined in Chaucer's "The Nun's Priest's Adventure."

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In this sophisticated work, the author has cleverly used the dream allegory to highlight a deeper truth—namely, how humans fail to recognize wrongdoing. His mastery of human nature and delicacy, his amicable sense of mocking human weakness, and his occasional use of moral teachings, as well as familiarity with a marriage that is flavored with humor and irony. Chaucer never stops being creative because of his natural comedic ability to receive the universe. Readers are therefore compelled to partake in simple pleasures. To provide lessons like "taking the grain and letting the chaff be still" ("NPT" 630), Chaucer uses this dream debate to show his humorous outlook on life, his temperate treatment of familial domesticity, and a side-by-side commentary on classical and scientific rationales.

The continued relevance of these texts can largely be attributed to their connection to Chaucer, which has shaped what we now consider a "Chaucerian aesthetic." However, the appeal of Chaucer's works is no more universal or obvious than that of poets like Lydgate. The enjoyment of a particular piece often depends on a set of expectations surrounding what defines literary creativity. In Chaucer's case, these expectations cater to a particular taste that cannot be uniformly applied to all Middle English poetry without diminishing the impact of other works.

Chaucer's writing aligns well with modern literary preferences, and while our admiration for him Is unlikely to fade, we may become more aware of how these preferences shape our understanding.

Chaucer's influence extends to how we perceive other medieval English literature. Analyzing the contexts of manuscripts and the methods of early printers and editors may provide insight into the kinds of pleasures that early readers found in these poems. The way Chaucer and his contemporaries are portrayed suggests that the works ascribed to him reflect the cultural interests and tastes of his time. By examining manuscript anthologies and early printed editions, we can better understand the preferences of readers from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This, in

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turn, highlights the role Chaucer's poetry played in both maintaining his literary significance and shaping the Chaucerian aesthetic.

The so-called "Chaucerian aesthetic" was shaped by various smaller works attributed to Chaucer, with poets such as Lydgate, Clanvowe, and Hoccleve contributing to this literary tradition. These additions were not just commercial strategies; they represented the public's strong desire for engaging vernacular poetry. By attributing all these works to Chaucer, anthologists served two purposes: first, they elevated any work of value by attributing it to Chaucer, and second, they diminished the worth of anything not associated with him. However, this practice has led to an oversimplified view of Chaucer's influence, treating all late-medieval poets as if they were merely imitating him. Such a perspective fails to recognize the individual contributions of poets like Clanvowe and Lydgate, who, while drawing on Chaucer's models, participated in a rich literary tradition that went beyond mere imitation.

The relationship between Chaucer's poetry and that of his followers Is far more intricate than it may initially appear. Chaucerian poets not only drew from English writers but were also influenced by French literary traditions that Chaucer himself had incorporated. As Boffey suggests, while many late-medieval English poets may reference Chaucer's dream poetry, they were also inspired by a range of contemporary and older French texts. Although poets like Clanvowe, Lydgate, and Roos may have followed Chaucer's lead in using French sources, distinguishing the specific influence of Chaucer from that of French writers is challenging. In this sense, Chaucerian imitation should be understood as part of a broader literary exchange, not simply a process of copying Chaucer's work.

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